

Moods and Emotions

We can have easeful and delightful emotional resonances in the body-heart-mind, and we also can have hard to bear ones. The pleasant emotional resonances can come from meditative experiences of well-being. And the way we meet the unpleasant emotional ripples can turn them much more pleasant than we typically find.

Moods and emotions are how the 'fabric' of body-heart-mind feels. An emotion is to some degree a feeling resonating both in the heart-mind and in the body. This opens a lot of possibilities with working with our emotions.

Meeting Emotions

We do not have to dive into this. It may be more appropriate to practice skilful non-attending. Only come into contact when there is sufficient resilience born of nourishing well-being. If we do choose to meet it, how we meet is so significant. Part of the experience of hard to bear emotions is the level of rejection that comes with the perception of pain. We can meet this with kindness. Even bringing phrases like (may you feel) allowed, cared for, released from (narrow) demands.

As we have been developing our sensitivity in the body sense, we can find and feel the emotion in the body. Perhaps breathing around, or into and through, the tension of the emotion. If we are familiar with working mindfully with thoughts we can meet this directly in the thinking and emoting heart-mind sense. Step back from them with a light non-identification, the thought occurred. Notice that thoughts have a direction, born of their intent: what is the mood of the thinking that is occurring? Is this leading to dukkha or to freedom? Can we not feed the dukkha leading forms of thought and emotion?

Types of emotions and ways to recognise

The emotional world can be complex to bring a mindful and steady attention to. In the Dharma we often simplify experience to gain a contact point. A simplistic view is not the goal; meeting well is. We can notice whether they are:

- ❖ High energy or low imprint on the body-heart-mind
- ❖ Difficult to meet or easy to connect with
- ❖ Hard to find or difficult to ignore

Short list of emotions:

We could view these are the foundation of all types of our complex emotional life

- Enjoyment
- Sadness
- Fear

- Anger
- Anticipation
- Surprise
- Disgust
- Trust

We could imagine these as being on four spectra

- Joy is on a spectrum with sadness.
 - Physiology: Connect vs withdraw
- Fear is on a spectrum with anger.
 - Physiology: Get small and hide vs get big and loud
- Anticipation is on a spectrum with surprise.
 - Physiology: Examine closely vs jump back
- Disgust is on a spectrum with trust.
 - Physiology: Reject vs embrace

Plutchik's wheel of emotions

