



A Deep, Uncritical Love, by Bhante Gunaratana

You can't make radical changes in the pattern of your life until you begin to see yourself exactly as you are now. As soon as you do that, changes will flow naturally. You don't have to force anything, struggle, or obey rules dictated to you by some authority. It is automatic; you just change. But arriving at that initial insight is quite a task. You have to see who you are and how you are without illusion, judgment or resistance of any kind. You have to see your place in society and your function as a social being. You have to see your duties and obligations to your fellow human beings, and above all, your responsibility to yourself as an individual living with other individuals. And finally, you have to see all of that clearly as a single unit, an irreducible whole of interrelationship. It sounds complex, but it can occur in a single instant. Mental cultivation through meditation is without rival in helping you achieve this sort of understanding and serene happiness. [...] Meditation is intended to purify the mind. It cleanses the thought process of what can be called psychic irritants, things like greed, hatred and jealousy, which keep you snarled up in emotional bondage. Meditation brings the mind to a state of tranquility and awareness, a state of concentration and insight. Meditation is called the Great Teacher. It is the cleansing crucible fire that works slowly but surely, through understanding. The greater your understanding, the more flexible and tolerant, the more compassionate you can be. You become like a perfect parent or an ideal teacher. You are ready to forgive and forget. You feel love toward others because you understand them, and you understand others because you have understood yourself. You have looked deeply inside and seen self-illusion and your own human failings, seen your own humanity and learned to forgive and to love. When you have learned compassion for yourself, compassion for others is automatic. An accomplished meditator has achieved a profound understanding of life, and he or she inevitably relates to the world with a deep and uncritical love. --Bhante Gunaratana, from "Mindfulness in Plain English"