

**How to Live Life from Genuine Wisdom and Compassion**  
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**By Melissa Moore**

**Dear Karuna Training Community,**

This year Karuna Training is offering a series of free online talks and emails - with engaging insight into a variety of Karuna related topics. Here is a little in depth discussion from Karuna Founder and Senior Teacher Melissa Moore about our next topic, which will be further explored in our next online interactive session: Karuna Live....

**How to Live Life from Genuine Wisdom and Compassion**

This month, we want to address how to live life more genuinely from a place of wisdom and compassion. That sounds like a good idea, doesn't it?

It's difficult when we find that we are on red alert a lot of the time; between the latest poetic weather disaster headlines, the reality TV political free-for-all on display; the deadly potential of imbalance in the world stage of power, and oh yes, then there is paying this month's bills, and it's almost the holidays, too. Gosh, we almost begin to desire to become 'minimalists'<sup>1</sup>. Maybe you already are, which may turn out to be the best idea yet of 2019.

*One can feel into everything we collectively and individually have on our plates, and have deep compassion for those of us that need to find ways to evoke some space in our lives for ourselves.*

Some of us may desire to cut this constant materialism at its roots. Materialism, in this context, meaning the ways we are always turning everything into a self-improvement project. Cutting materialism means finding ways to short circuit and disbelieve the self-messages of 'not good enough', 'not doing enough', and in general the idea that we are 'not enough as we are'.

Then, we have to meet the challenges of today's mass media and the demand of our devices with their algorithmic seduction of endless 'click bait.' Imagine meeting all of that information with complete equanimity? Maybe you already do. That would be an embodiment of genuine wisdom and compassion.

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<sup>1</sup> **Minimalism** is all about living with less. This includes less financial burdens such as debt and unnecessary expenses. ... For many minimalists, the philosophy is about getting rid of excess stuff and living **life** based on experiences rather than worldly possessions. Wikipedia Mar 12, 2019

Myself, I'm simply learning to develop a 'touch and go' attitude with the enormous amount of information streaming by me – so that I can sleep well at night and pay attention in my life to the things that actually do matter - as opposed to being abducted by all the sensationalism that is competing for my awareness.

We actually can determine what we pay attention to and what really does matter... especially if we ask ourselves, 'Is this something that is going to matter to me at the moment of death?' If the answer is no, then let it go. If the answer is yes, then we have to choose our battles and involve ourselves and our emotions on certain issues that do matter. Excuse my morbidity but it is almost the Day of the Dead and things are beginning to seasonally die all around us– it's good to tune into this truth -- at least during this time of year.

### **Finding Wisdom in the Midst of Life's Stressors**

At one point in my own life, I co-founded and then ran for 12 years, a research and training division in one of the oldest social service agencies in the San Francisco Bay area. One of the many renovations to the over 100-year-old agency I was involved in was designing and implementing a new data management system. This project fell into my lap, probably because I had complained the loudest that it was shameful that in 2005 a social service agency did not utilize email effectively.

This data management project, among with many other agency-wide renovation projects fell into my life and lap. I jumped into it all with gusto and worked myself to death. I did so because I knew that I had asked for this job - I had aspired for a position to 'make a difference with my skills' in an area that I cared a lot about. It was mental health where the vast majority of my work experience had been, and I wanted to have my finger on the pulse in health care in a developmental contributing capacity. With what was originally a very noble and good intention – with years of training in meditation, compassion and wisdom – I managed to bring myself so much difficulty and stress!

The point being, there is a seed of compassion at the beginning of almost every project, and then the magic of something suddenly starts to happen--- but it is so easy for ego to get involved.

*The do-gooder's ego of wanting to make a difference in the world is still ego, so even when we are hoping to change the world for the better, we have a dog in the fight. Suddenly we want our project to be funded, and to succeed. Then we are back in this conventional mess we find in the world which is so stressful.*

All life, no matter what our projects, reaps certain stressful and difficult moments in which it is hard to hold onto a vision, to hold on to the space of meditation. So having a daily practice of

sitting meditation at some point becomes mandatory – at least it very much has for me as someone who wants to contribute in the world.

I only recently realized that I really have one thing to teach and that is what I most need to learn; how to live a life from genuine wisdom and compassion.

We all are seeking time to contemplate the meaning of our lives, whether we make the time and space to meditate or not. We all need time to be less materialistic in our approach toward ourselves – meaning we don't always have to engage in a self-improvement project and we do not always have to be goal oriented.

### **Practicing Meditation**

One offering that is time tested for learning to live genuinely from wisdom and compassion is the practice of sitting meditation. Sitting meditation is helpful for tuning into things around us that matter at the moment of death - primarily ourselves for starters and how we are feeling. It's good to start simply and meditation is the ultimate act of kindness towards ourselves. The very embodiment of meditation is an action of self love.

*Meditation practice, is a designated body/mind discipline, designed to slow us down and check in with ourselves and on our emotional weather. We learn to take time to feel into what is true in the moment. We learn to see if we can even feel our own hearts beating or to see if we are even breathing today. We also take time to simply be and rest our mind, relax our mind in the space of doing nothing, achieving nothing.*

Even if the mind is busy planning and carrying on its ideas of what there is to do today or tomorrow or next quarter, there are actually techniques which invite space into this habitual busyness and we can learn to let our mind unwind themselves in the space of being.

### **Genuinely Being Who We Are**

Of course meditation, like everything else, can be perverted into another self-improvement project; like much of the 'wellness' world today has become. At the heart of meditation, there is a process of letting go of our goals and accomplishments -- if one is to genuinely relax. This gets us to the 'genuine part' of who and what we are, which isn't found by trying to manipulate ourselves into being something other than we are.

If we approach meditation as something that is good for us and will make us a better, well liked, and a more decent and peaceful person – we are probably trying to override our genuineness. Who we are may not be this peaceful loving person in the moment – who we meet may be a screaming mean angry person, or a depressed under engaged person, or a heart broken

person... or what have you --- and whatever it is we meet is genuine wisdom and something to have compassion toward, because for sure we are not the only one's feeling this way.

*Meditation is simply giving ourselves some space to be who and what we are, as we are, without polluting the rest of the world with our emotional energy – sitting with ourselves and taking stock of our energy – whatever it is that we find in ourselves in the moment.*

In reality; sometimes we only have 5 minutes in our daily routines to sit and be quiet. We have our daily commutes and transitions – where sometimes we can find a few minutes at our desks before meetings to pull ourselves together and rouse ourselves into caring. If we take those moments to relax into what is true in the moment and see what genuinely comes up, that is a good start for giving ourselves a little space to be.

You may find you are freaking out and just trying to keep up the mirage. Taking space may make you feel like crying. This is wisdom too and is actually a strong message that we may want to pay attention to ourselves a wee bit more.

### **Holding Ourselves Without Judgement**

This is where compassion comes in. Once we slow down we begin to feel into the genuine indestructible truth of our reality – directly and fully. It doesn't always feel good – sometimes we see how we are over-riding ourselves and everyone else around us too – and keeping up appearances. This is not living a life of genuine wisdom and compassion; this is called the rat race of ordinary conventional survival and its heartbreaking that this is reality for many of us right now.

In Karuna Training we learn many techniques and methods to help stay embodied through out our day, and in touch with ourselves emotionally. We are invited to work with our energy as we find it without pushing it away or trying to manage it, just to feel it.

*Emotional energy always has wisdom - but we can't get at it if we are approaching the energy habitually. We have to slow down and feel it as it is – with a lot of space and non-judgmental awareness. Whatever it is we find in our being – we learn to hold it without judgement. This will be hard if what we are going for is peace and tranquility – sometimes what we find is fury and legitimate outrage.*

Meditation is also demanding for some, and at certain times in our life and in certain periods of the year. That is always TRUE. In order to not be ruffled in our practice by the demands of daily

life; one must have a deeply established ritual of sitting down and setting a strong intention of space, in a designated place on a comfortable and inviting cushion or chair.

It is a lot easier to learn to sit and meditate with others in a group, before we transplant a sitting meditation practice into our homes and lives. Incorporating a meditation practice occurs in very organic and natural ways for each of us. This should never be the source of giving ourselves a hard time. There is always a lot of wisdom if we slow down and have a look at what works and doesn't work in creating space for ourselves in our lives.

Meditation is simply a habit that can be established, like brushing one's teeth -- and it will only work when meditation and slowing down makes sense as a true antidote to our hectic existence. We usually need to have some taste of fruition for us to continue. I always like to say that "The problem with meditation is that you have to do it!"

Having a taste of fruition in sitting meditation practice usually takes more time and a bigger dose of meditation practice, like a month-long retreat or at the very least a weekend can get us started.