

Cultivating Appreciative Joy

Appreciative joy (Sanskrit *mudita*, Tibetan *gewa*), often translated as "sympathetic joy", leads to happiness now and good fortune in the future by uncovering our inherent kindness, compassion, equanimity, and wisdom.

It is traditionally taught to cultivate appreciation for resources, virtues, and Dharma. Make a daily practice of reflecting upon the good that arises in your life, and add specific appreciations to the following lists.

Take delight in the richness of the world

- ❖ The beauty and abundance of nature: a flourishing planet of intricate self-sustaining ecosystems, with water, sunlight, weather, soil, teeming with millions of species providing life to each other.
- ❖ The amazing human body with bones, joints, muscles, nerves, and biochemicals, breathing and balancing and moving, an integral organism with awareness of itself and the world.
- ❖ Delight in ever-evolving communities of care and creativity, skills and productivity, the arts of clothing, shelter, medicine, food, music, and spirituality.
- ❖ Rejoice upon seeing or recalling any being's wholesome success, good fortune, and happiness.
- ❖ Appreciate friendship, love, leisure, freedom, and life itself.

Take delight in the virtues of oneself and others

- ❖ Observe and appreciate generosity, kindness, compassion, and goodness wherever they appear.
- ❖ Be grateful for the virtues of patience, ethical behavior, diligence, enthusiasm, and all efforts for good.
- ❖ Notice acts of kindness, human and non-human, constantly and endlessly arising throughout time and space.
- ❖ Delight in how beings bring benefit and happiness to themselves and others with kindness, compassion, and intelligence.

Take delight in the Dharma

- ❖ Dharma is *what arises*: the truth of phenomena. Dharma is the *laws of nature* by which all phenomena arise, interact, and come to an end. Dharma is also *living life in alignment* with the laws of nature and the way things are.
- ❖ Every sentient being, without exception, has buddha-nature: inherent, indestructible awareness and intelligence and the sensitivity to respond to what arises with compassion and wisdom.
- ❖ Even a momentary aspiration to awaken for the sake of others can set in motion the intention and effort to actually do so. Delight in *bodhicitta*, the spirit of awakening, whenever and wherever you see it arise.
- ❖ Delight in the Three Jewels and take refuge in them. *Buddhas* and teachers show us how to awaken for the benefit of all beings. *Dharma* teachings and practices awaken wisdom and compassion. *Sangha* is the community of Buddhist practitioners, and every sentient being who is aware and responsive.
- ❖ Delight in the benefit you and others receive from teachers, mentors, and friends. Appreciate everyone who helps and supports others.
- ❖ Delight in experience itself—always revealing the nature of things, showing us what we need to see, self-releasing upon arising, a spontaneous and beneficial interdependence.

Additional Resources

Lovingkindness, compassion, sympathetic joy, and equanimity are the traditional Four Immeasurables.

[Introduction to the Four Immeasurables](#) at NaturalAwareness.net

The classic sequence for cultivating mudita is described by Buddhaghosa in *The Path of Purification* (*Visuddhimagga*, [section A v 342](#)).

[An Extensive Commentary on the Four Immeasurables](#) by Buddhagupta.

[Karaniya Metta Sutta](#): (Sn 1.8): The Buddha's Words on Loving-Kindness.

Sharon Salzberg, *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*.

Compiled by George Draffan in November 2025. NaturalAwareness.net