



***ACCESSING OUR BEST INNER RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL SERVICE AND ACTION--
MEDITATIONS OF NATURAL WISDOM AND COMPASSION***

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Content: The meditation training in these retreats and workshops is for all who serve others, whether professionally or in home or community—such as teachers, parents, counselors, social workers, therapists, pastors, health-care providers, hospice workers, community organizers, and volunteers. *In these workshops, participants are guided into powerful meditations of compassionate connection and wisdom* that have been adapted from the *natural ease* tradition of Tibet in newly accessible ways for people of all backgrounds and faiths. The meditations help our minds relax into their most natural state of simplicity, openness and presence, with much more compassion for self and others, energy and inner joy. From that state of natural wisdom and compassion we can be more fully present to others—communing with them in the dignity of their being instead of reacting from habitual judgments. This can be a powerful force to help heal our selves and the world around us.

HOW MEDITATIONS OF WISDOM AND COMPASSION HELP EMPOWER SOCIAL SERVICE

-- **Preventing or healing burnout and compassion fatigue:** Those who serve others need to know how to access a level of awareness beyond stress and burnout, where we can find deep rest, inner safety, and replenishment of energy and motivation. These meditations help us integrate feelings of frustration, sadness, anxiety and anger into our life of service, by learning to experience them within the embrace of a spacious compassion, which can extend through us to those we serve.

--**Becoming more fully present**—We are most effective when most fully present to those we serve—sensing their deep worth and dignity, listening with full attention, helping them to sense their hidden strengths. These meditations of compassion and wisdom help our minds relax into their most natural state of simplicity, presence and openness. That is a place of deep listening and communion, in which we can be more fully present to others, more discerning, creative, and responsive.

-- **Means and ends are one**—As Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Thich Nhat Hanh have taught, to help people find safety and well-being in their lives, we need to come

(For further information about teachings, retreats or meditation groups, see:
www.foundationforactivecompassion.org)



from a place of safety and well-being in ourselves. To establish peace, we need to come from peace. To support the dignity and potential of others, we need to embody our deepest dignity and potential. To bring more goodness into the world, we have to be in touch with our deepest goodness. Practices of natural wisdom and compassion help us become more receptive to the depth of our being, so as to respond to others in the depth of their being.

-- To be effective, we need to embody the spirit of our work. To do that, we must know how to return to that spirit when we get lost from it. When we get stuck in frustrated reactions to people who disappoint or anger us, we tend to burn out and drive others away. When we sense those around us in their essential dignity and worth, no matter what is happening, and work with them from that attitude, we inspire others and help them replenish their own energy for action. These contemplative practices help us return to the spirit of our work when we feel lost from it.

--A powerful force for social change is to be for *everyone* as a basis for challenging the status quo—A great force for social change is to be *for everyone* in the wish of compassion, and as the expression of that very attitude, to challenge the status quo in which everyone is involved. Gandhi's approach to social activism involves "holding to the deep truth" in everyone involved in the social situation, which he also called "truth force" and "love force" (*satyagraha*). Martin Luther King taught similarly, focusing on impartial and unconditional love as the inner power of activism. These meditations of wisdom and compassion can help put us in touch with the part of ourselves that senses the dignity of everyone involved in an issue. Such meditations help evoke in us an impartial compassion willing to challenge others while harboring ill-will to no one. This contemplative training provides a complement to the social activist understandings of figures like Gandhi, King, the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, and Aung San Suu Kyi.