

End of Year De-Stress

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During the festive season people experience various kinds of mental/emotional hardships which can be described as stress, anxiety, depression, melancholy etc

When we teach, we try to think about the topic from our own experiences. This grounds your teachings in a shared reality with the listeners.

I prepared a short lists of things which may contribute to people's stressed, anxious, etc experiences:

- Financial pressure
- Family and social relationships
- Loneliness and isolation
- Overcommitment and time pressure
- Lack of privacy
- Heightened expectations
- Seasonal and environmental factors

We help people De-Stress through discussing these points (and or any other points that you wish to talk about from your experience) and showing how we can use aspects of dharma to de-stress our self.

There can be two approaches of how dharma help to de-stress: a general and a specific approach.

General:

- **Grasping:** This is about the truth of the situation - usually it is because we do not understand the reality of the situation we're in that we develop stress etc:
 - permanence
 - samsara
 - external to the mind
 - Truly existent
- **Perspective:** this is when we do not have the correct perspective on the situation
 - Samsaric beings (body and mind) and situations will always be lacking satisfaction
 - Self-chirishing - by centring our self we skew perspective on the situation, causing problems

Specific

We need to be careful about how we address these specific causes of stress. This is because we do not know the actual situation people in the audience are in.

Pick any one of the specific causes I listed or any other causes/factors you can think about and show how we can prepare and use dharma to mitigate the strength of that particular factor.

Few examples:

- Overcommitment - we can look at why we overcommit; inability to say no? Wanting to keep some reputation? Etc - in which case we can use various kinds of dharma training
- Financial pressures - This is assuming people are not so poor they basically can't find money for food (which in some cases may be an issue) - change the meaning of festivity from just presents to preparing small but thoughtful expression of appreciation to the people we're spending time with
- Etc...

Addressing the specific and general causes of stress etc, you should now have more than enough to teach the following two classes