

Metta Round the World

Malaysia

1 January 2012 - 2013

Metta Circle

- Connect
- Communicate
- Commune

Global Meditation for Compassionate Love



Message by Bhante Mahinda

METTA or loving-kindness is the wish for all sentient beings to be well and happy. It is a powerful healing force for the individual as well as the world at large. It helps to open our hearts and transmute negative emotions such as anger, hatred and grudges. It also promotes the development of virtues such as compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity.

There are different ways of cultivating Metta. There are also different levels of practice and realisation. As such, guidance is necessary to familiarise oneself with the different approaches as well as to experience the full benefits of the practice.

As we live through these times of great change and instability – with growing anger, violence and aggression, expressed in protests, riots and wars amongst the citizens of the world – we need to turn to the advice of the Buddha and other great spiritual masters. The practice of compassionate love is universal.

Dhammapada Verse 5:

*Nahi verena verāni – samantī'dha kudācanam
Averena ca sammanti – esa dhammo sanantano*

Hatred is not overcome by hatred, but by love alone...

In order to transmute negative energies around the world, we need collective effort on a global scale. Uniting all our positive mental energies will make a difference to the peace, harmony and stability of the world we live in.

The Metta Circle provides a platform to connect like minded people to radiate Metta together. The Metta Ambassador programme has been introduced with the aim of strengthening the practice amongst individuals as well as reaching out to the wider community, both young and old.

We welcome your interest in promoting the practice of Metta as a Metta Ambassador.

You will be joining other like minded people in connecting people to radiate Metta together for world peace, harmony and stability. As you grow in your practice, you will be able to reach out to more people, to learn and to share. Thus, be a path way in building a community based on love and compassion.

As a Metta Ambassador, you become a channel to lead people into the practice of Metta. As the members of the Metta Circle grow and develop in their practice, they should seek concurrent guidance under qualified Metta Meditation teachers.

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem be with you always.



What Is Metta Round the World

Dramatic changes are taking place around us, with or without our knowledge. Information about the global situation, including predictions and warnings for 2012 and beyond are increasing day by day.

These information are meant to prepare us to face the challenges ahead, and to wake up to the realities of life and the world around us. According to the sayings of the Buddha in the first verse of the Dhammapada:

“MANO PUBBANGAMA DHAMMA...”
Mind is the forerunner of all phenomena ...

As such, we need to harness all our positive mental energies with one heart and mind through meditation and prayer for peace, harmony, and stability in the world.

Our efforts, individually and collectively, will make a difference.

Metta in Pali or Maithri in Sanskrit means “loving-kindness” or “boundless love” – love that is unconditional and without boundaries.

Metta, the universal dharmic principle which upholds peace and happiness, is a positive and powerful healing force that transmutes the negative and chaotic energies in the world.

Practised together with wisdom and insight, Metta will transform us all into a caring, compassionate and sustainable community.

“DHAMMO HAVE RAKKHATI DHAMMACARI”
The Dhamma protects one who lives according to the Dhamma

Objectives of Metta Round the World

- Connect like minded people to radiate Metta for world peace, harmony and stability
- 15 mins on new and full moon days, any time any where around the world
- To encourage people to practice Metta as part of their lives



Why Metta Circle

Everything we do in life revolves around relationships, literally everything. Relationships take place when two or more people get together. There are two kinds of relationships:

1. Vertical relationship or hierarchical relationships.
2. Horizontal relationships, which is also social or peer relationships.

The vertical relationship represents the personal relationship of the laypeople to the monastic order and the Buddha. But there is no good achieving spiritual high without any form of earthly goodness. The horizontal relationships bring balance to our lives. It is the commitments to live with each other, to become connected with one another within the basic Buddhist community.

In life, the temple should remain large enough to celebrate and communion together while the Metta Circles enables the group to be small enough to care for each other.

A Metta Circle is one that actually:

- Worship and celebrate together,
- Spend time learning from each other,
- Partakes in fellowship with one another,
- Caring through the sharing of one's possessions,
- Be able to meditate and pray together and for each other,
- To be able to meet with each other on a regular basis, and
- Finally, we must be able to ADD NEW MEMBERS to grow the group.

There are four objectives to achieve when joining a Metta Circle:

- Worship
- Instruction
- Fellowship
- Expression of one's faith

But why do we have Metta Circles?

We are trying to make Buddhism an irresistible community where a person can:

- Love and be Loved
- Know and be Known
- Serve and be Served
- Celebrate and be Celebrated

Metta Circle is actually a small group or cell group concept. It provides that horizontal relationships. *Metta* is a wish for all beings to be well and happy, one of the 4 Brahma Vihara propagated by our Lord Buddha. *Circle* is the bond we establish with our loved ones and friends. For life is about loving one another and circle reflects the care or attention we give to each other.



To allay all fears that this is not going to be any Buddhist cults of sorts, the Metta Circle actually acts as a MAINTENANCE system. It will not do away with the temple and we are seeing strong possibilities of it integrating with the temple. We are trying to reinforce and support the temple. Where today's generation looks at the practices of our past with much disinterest, we are trying to bridge across the gap that has appeared. The Metta Circle is bringing in a culture that they are interested in and for all, an opportunity to exercise our faith through sharing and expression. With proper nurturing, many with totally different interest scales can slowly be integrated into temple culture without aversive reactions.

Objectives of Metta Circle

- A platform to connect with like minded people to radiate Metta together for world peace, harmony and stability
- Facilitate communication to learn and to share
- Build a community based on love and compassion



Developing the Metta Circle Infrastructure

1. We must create a core team to manage the resource base. Resources are the lifelines of the program. We do not expect the Metta Ambassadors to develop materials and lesson-plans. Their main job is to grow and maintain a functioning circle and care of the members in the circle.
2. We must develop an environment conducive for fellowship, inspiration and meditation.
3. We must develop Dhamma discussion topics.
4. We must develop a Prayer Request and Maintenance System to make a culture of requesting for help in times of need.

How a Metta Circle Grows?

The basic grouping is of 5 to 15 people and when it reaches the size that is dictated either by space limitation or by quantity then it breaks into two separate circles at the core. The circle could be based on locality or in the interest of the members.

Locality means to hold in the member's house, temple, Buddhist centre or any other suitable venues. And interest implies that it could be in an institution like a temple or in the university. Metta Circle that centers on the member houses tends to have a large age-group mix whilst that which is hosted in a university could be narrow in range. Whichever method is used, the structure for both is still the same. One important rule to remember is to keep the group small, not to make the group too large. There could be many circles instead of one. Large group gets very impersonal.

The Metta Circle Model

There are three different leadership areas that we have to take into consideration. They are the planning, programming and public relations. The activity for each of the role is:

1. Planning - the main duty is to make sure the activities carried out is in accordance with the organisational plan. The Metta Ambassador also acts as the source of direction for the rest. Sometimes there could be extra activities planned for the group, or in the future when we may need to split up the group grown too large.
2. Programming - when carrying out activities, the role of programming is to prepare props, equipments and refreshments. Its job is also to track and maintain the overall focus of the circle. It acts as the timekeeper for the entire circle.
3. Public relations - to make sure everyone in the circle is fully brief of any upcoming events, to call up members when they are not present for the meeting. To act as the cheerleader of the circle. To help to keep the spirits up in the circle.



In a circle, the Metta Ambassador must be sensitive to the needs of the members. When a person is depressed, the immediate need is to make the person feel he is not alone. A depressed person would withdraw unless he feels the circle of friends and family is something he can turn to. The Metta Ambassador must also place a happy disposition into the group.

When at times the Metta Ambassador feels unwell or down due to some reasons or another, then another Metta Ambassador (assistant) could assume the lead role.

A Five Member Model

Metta Ambassador (Planning & Programme)		
Assistant Metta Ambassador (PR & Programme)		
Member	Member	Member

In a five-member model, the Metta Ambassador takes care of planning and assistant assumes public relation role. The programming is shared between the two of them. For overall circle activity, the Metta Ambassador could handle the first session necessities and the assistant could do the light refreshment. When it comes to the discussions, the Metta Ambassador could lead the discussion and assistant the timekeeper. The roles could be interchangeable when it comes to programming.

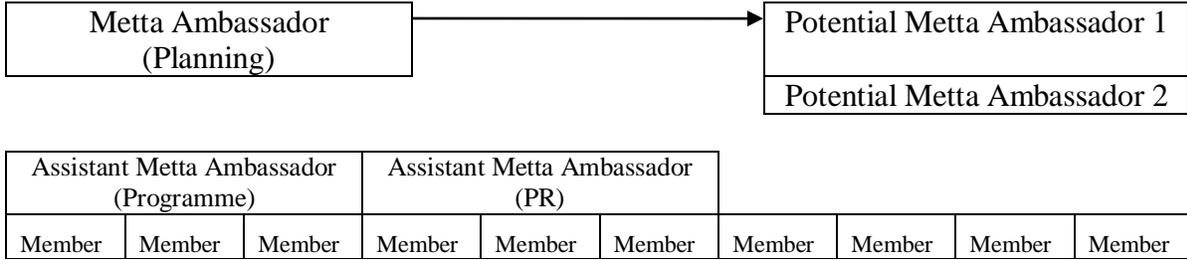
A Ten Member Model

Metta Ambassador (Planning)						
Assistant Metta Ambassador (Programme)				Assistant Metta Ambassador (PR)		
Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member	Member

When the group grows to a ten-member model, the leadership is now under the care of three leads. The Metta Ambassador focus on planning for the circle and the two assistants manage the program and public relations respectively. The duties are still the same.



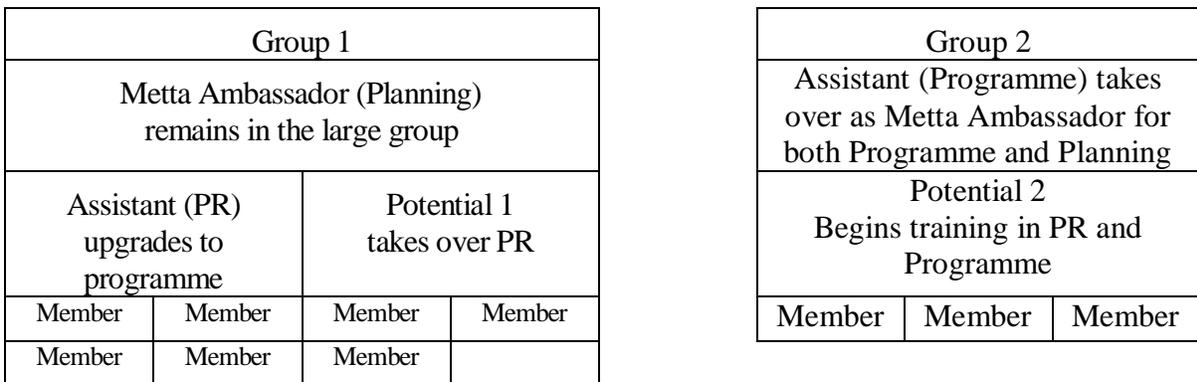
A Fifteen Member Model



Growing to a size of fifteen members, you find that this is about the time for the group to split into smaller units. The larger the group, sharing consumes more time. This could be counter-productive. Therefore it should be done within a stated time frame. It is a mistaken belief that sharing is to really spill out one's guts, not a single iota of details to be missed. Sharing is to really make each person chooses what he or she values as real concern for the rest to know. It could be something good or bad.

Getting to a size of fifteen members, the Metta Ambassador should start to look early for potential Metta Ambassadors in the group to share the load when the circle splits. There should be two more potential Metta Ambassadors identified. If they haven't attended courses that help them to be Metta Ambassadors, then they should be encouraged to first attend such courses. They will start the training by helping out with the public relations. This will be very crucial when the group splits.

A Group Split (TEN – FIVE Model)



When it comes to splitting the group, the leadership goes through basic transformation. The first original team will be splitted up according to this formula:

1. Metta Ambassador and Assistant (PR) to Group 1 handling the ten members while the Assistant (Program) leads the rest of them to Group 2.
2. The two potential Metta Ambassadors will each split up to the two groups. Each will start their new position as public relations.



The split should be taking geographical boundaries into consideration. They should have a distance from each other. This allows for better growth; as Group 1 still requires some room for growth and not stagnation. We grow with potential development of members from our own estates, so it could be stifled when the proximity of the groups are too close. In short, Group 2 should be at the boundary of Group 1's evangelical circumference.

Group Session

Divided into two halves:

Formal Session	Workshop and Instruction
Informal Session	Fellowship and Mentoring

Formal Session	
Puja	Let the group pray for each other & others.
Metta Meditation	Let the group sit together with love and compassion.
Discussion	Metta Ambassador should lead the discussions. This is not a dhamma talk.

Informal Session	
Light refreshment	Helps to bring the situation to a more relax and casual atmosphere

Fellowship	Cross Instruction	Mentoring	Prayer
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Formal Group Session

The puja (prayer) is an important aspect of the session. In many religious groups, prayer is a term for personal devotion to a god. But prayer is about reaching out, with our heart, mind and consciousness. We can reach out to our Triple Gem, reach out to the Devas to share merits, reach out to our departed ones to transfer merits to them, and reach out to each other to care and reach out to ourselves.

Metta Meditation takes on the crucial role of being the experiential aspect of our spiritual practice and development. We cannot do away with it, but we can use it to our maximum benefit. Metta Meditation introduces new buddhist to one of the core aspect of Buddhism leading to the development of the 4 Brahma Vihara (Metta, Karuna, Mudita and Uppেকka) which are the intrinsic Buddhist values.

Discussions are integral part of sharing. Rather than the one sided affair of instructions, sharing allows each of us to air our views and learn through the process to allow corrections if the views are not conducive to personal development. Sometimes we handle situations that seems overwhelming and is at a loss of choices, then sharing allows others with similar encounters to



share the ways they overcome the problem.

Informal Group Session

When the group breaks out of the formal session, light refreshment (or potluck) is a way to wind down. This is when in terms of group dynamics further discussions could take place. A few things could be noted in the due process:

- In small circles, further discussions could be taken into consideration. Topical Dhamma studies could ensue.
- In larger circles, smaller circles could be formed by interest or age, and further studies could start. There is also further sharing by members of the circle with others. There could be discussions that are outside of the basic doctrinal issues to more up-to-date affairs.

Group Frequency

The frequency should not be too tight or too lag, as the interest would wane. A weekly or fortnightly meeting is good. For weekly session, it takes only four nights in a month, leaving ample space (26 nights) for other activities to be slotted in eg. new moon and full moon puja & sitting with other Metta circles at the temples or Buddhist centres.

The Basic Fortnightly Preparation Outline

Let say the Metta Circle meeting is conducted every second and fourth Thursday of the month.

Metta Ambassador and Assistant(s) preparation prior to meeting:

Mon	Tues	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
			Review discussion topic	Call members to attend - advise topic - prayer request - refreshment		

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
	Prepare for Metta Circle & review discussion topic - props & equipments - stories - venue, etc		Metta Circle Meeting			

Metta Circle Meetings

Meetings could be held once a week or every fortnight. This is a maintenance circle, therefore if any member that does not attend any other activities should try to make their time available for the circle.



Metta Ambassador (Circle Leaders) Meetings

Once in a while, even the physician requires healing. Metta Ambassadors and assistants that try to heal the circle need to feel that they can come together and get healing from one another. To ignore this need is to see the potential desertion of Metta Ambassadors to greener pastures.

It is also the opportune time for the overall organisational needs be addressed and direction emphasized. Also the running through of the Circle's Dhamma discussion details, inputs and directions could be given.

We intend to have quarterly gathering of all Metta Ambassadors for “Meeting with Bhante Mahinda Session” which include review, feedback and fellowship session.

Let's RECAP ...

Metta Circles is only a maintenance system. It helps the Buddhist community to grow by fostering close harmony.

Information dissemination becomes easier as we concentrate on the immediate hierarchy and let the flow go to the bottom through a series of channels. It allows better feedback and surveys could to be done discreetly without much hassle.

Development is now a shared load. As the structure grows, there will be more potential people coming out to help. Now, we are faced with a shortage of talents. In Metta Circles, we can easily spot talent and groom them.

Metta Circles frees leadership, and allows more room for growth. It also gives potential Metta Ambassadors a chance to learn and training is more efficient. No more textbook knowledge. It becomes practical and useful through practice.



Guidelines for Metta Ambassadors

Welcome to our Metta Circle!

We are living in very interesting times. The social challenges amidst of the global economy have reshaped all religious structures. To counter the new and uncharted waters, many systems were considered and tested. Few survive the onslaught and have since been shelved. One of those more successful systems is the Cell Structure.

Against the popular believe that the communist invented this system, this structure of empowering people to spread the organisation was there way before the communist even appeared. It was used in large-scale management but industrialization and now globalization has made the need for managing small economies of scale. In a society, the government is the largest in the grouping and the smallest unit in the society is a family. A society has to be macro-manage but in reality many of the social problems stamp from the inability for the system to micro-manage the basic family unit. If the family unit goes wary, then the society has to pay for it. So the spiritual foundations all over the world have now recognized this fact.

Looking ahead, it creates the opportunity to learn to share, and the opportunity to learn to give! We ask ourselves how can we grow in Buddhism? How can we make Buddhism practical to our life? How can we use Buddhism to excel ourselves? Then look no further because Metta Circles promises to make all this comes true especially to you.

Metta Circles is your chance to grow in Buddhism through the process of sharing. As leaders, you will also learn how to see Dhamma in practical ways and to share this with everyone else. What better way to grow! Metta Circle is also a measure of success in life. In running the session, we can see real world situation, the gaining of real world comforts lacks the necessary love from one another. Love starts with basic sharing, and gradually we surpass the limitation of material success and see it just as a tool for achieving higher forms of spiritual aspirations. The choice is really ours.

What does a Metta Circle do?

The Metta Circle is to provide the basic infrastructure to assist individuals to grow wholesomely, in spiritual and emotional sense. To do that, one has to be able to interact with proximity to another Buddhist.

So the Metta Circle provides that basic service to the individuals by gathering them together into smaller units. You are now appointed as the leader of the Metta Circle. You will learn to grow with them when they show you how to really grow yourself. Going through with the responsibility, you will learn to ground yourself emotionally and psychologically.

There are many ways to approach our life. You can say "I must be strong to carry forth this journey" or you can choose "By this journey, I will be strong". Whichever way you decide, but by learning, leading and guiding, you will cherish this union and through it, you will be definitely strong.



What Takes Place within a Metta Circle?

Firstly the sessions are broken into two sections: the formal group session and the informal group session.

The formal group session is conducted with prayers to realign us with the Buddha, Dhamma and Sangha. There is also the act of recollection of the unwholesome to repent from and recollection of the wholesome. Then for unity, we meditate on loving kindness towards ourselves and all sentient beings. This is then followed by Dhamma discussions where we will learn to share and at times, simply the outstretched arm to assist each other. We will then topped the entire session with the sharing of merits with devas, departed ones and with each other.

The informal group session is conducted with light refreshment to wind down to a comfortable level where we can interact socially. During this period, we can learn more from each other. Anyone that requires more spiritual uplifting can request for prayers to be made for the situation they encounter. New member can learn through guidance and mentoring. Such one-to-one system benefits both parties; the student and the teacher.

One thing we should remember,

By praying for you, I am praying for myself.

By healing you, I am healing myself.

By teaching you, I am learning myself.

By loving you, I am loving myself.

By sharing with you, I have uncovered a part of me to myself.

How to get ourselves ready for this journey?

The first step to this journey is to be oneself. Recognized that we are not invincible, infallible of sorts. We are exactly the opposite. We are leading them into the land that is conducive to enlightenment. We learn as we walk with them. We will learn to see the pitfalls coming, dangers that are lurking and shadows that are hiding.

You already have some guidance to equip you for the journey. Now it is time to journey forth. Do not be worried, when there is a need to rest, there's always an oasis to stop and take that needed rest.

In the rest of this manual are guidelines and instructions on how to run a Metta Circle.



Metta Ambassadors

Objectives of Metta Ambassador

- To connect with like minded people to radiate Metta together for world peace, harmony and stability under the Metta Round the World initiative
- Facilitate communication to learn and to share
- Build a community based on love and compassion

Overview on Role and Responsibilities

1. Invite family, relatives and friends to be part of Metta Circle
2. Encourage member of Metta Circle to register as Metta Participants
3. Conduct weekly or fortnightly Metta Circle
 - a. Puja
 - b. Metta Meditation
 - c. Discussion Topic
 - d. Dedications of Merits
 - e. Light refreshment / informal session
4. Identify and mentor potential Metta Ambassador(s)
5. Provide monthly feedback to Metta Circle Central Committee
6. Attend quarterly Meeting with Bhante Mahinda
7. Attend quarterly review session with Metta Circle Central Committee

NOTE:

Metta Ambassador is NOT a Metta Meditation teacher. As a Metta Ambassador, you become a channel to lead people into the practice of Metta. As the members of the Metta Circle grow and develop in their practice, we hope that they will seek concurrent guidance under qualified Metta Meditation teachers.



Habits of a Good Leader

1. Always remember that to be a leader, one must be ready to serve.
2. Be prayerful in nature.
3. Be ready to share ourselves with the others.
4. We tread the same road, breathe the same air, drink the same water and eat the same food as the rest of the circle does.
5. We are not supernatural beings. We help by extending our hands out.
6. Why we must share? All forms of materialism is a tool to enhance life; by sharing we will enhance life.
7. Practice the basic qualities of Loving-Kindness, Compassion, and Celebrating Joy.
8. Let our heads be ruled by love and feet be ruled by the brain.
9. Let our love be in front and down-to-earth consideration to temper that love.

Before the Metta Circle Meeting Preparation

1. Always plan the Dhamma discussions ahead, never at the last minute.
2. Call up relatives and friend to invite them to join the Metta Circle.
3. Call up all the members and encourage them to attend the session.
4. If there are any props needed, secure that ahead of time.
5. Make sure you go through the session details with the assistant.
6. Do not take anything for granted.
7. If in doubt about anything, discuss with buddy, Metta Ambassador Circle members and/or Metta Circle Central Committee



A. Formal Group Session

How to Lead the Prayer Session

Recommended list of suttas to be chanted:

1. Homage
2. Salutation to the Buddha
3. Salutation to the Dhamma
4. Salutation to the Sangha
5. Dependent Origination
6. Paean of Joy
7. Discourse on Loving Kindness
8. Auspicious Blessing
9. Sharing of Merits with all Devas
10. Transference of Merits to the Departed
11. Forgiveness of Shortcomings from the Triple Gem
12. Aspirations for Oneself and the World

You may chant all the above, delete some and add others or create your own list of suttas and/or mantras.

Style

- Try to maintain the same sequence for every meeting.
- Try to maintain the same chanting tune for every meeting.
- For beginner's sake, have the list of suttas/mantras to be chanted written down with the page nos. if a Chanting book is used.



How to Lead the Metta Meditation Session

Metta meditation guide

- Download and play the Metta meditation guide
- When you are ready, you may verbally lead the Metta meditation

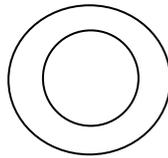
Decide and advise members before the start of the Metta meditation the duration of the session – 15 minutes, 20 minutes, 30 minutes or as agreed by all members.

Atmosphere and ambience

- Venue is well ventilated
- Quite and minimal traffic

Sitting Arrangement

- In a circle
- If group is big, can be in 2 circles – an inner and an outer circle



How to Lead the Dhamma Discussion Session

Dhamma discussion to be based on the discussion topics provided. Preparation before the Metta Circle session includes:

- Review the topic to be discussed
- Have some related Metta stories to shares
- Identify relevant Dhammapada verses
- Identify related Suttas

Advise Metta Circle members to do the same before the session.

Dealing with New Members

1. Always let the leader introduce the new member to the group.
2. Tell his name and how they met. (No personal details of sorts).
3. After which, ask the circle members to introduce themselves one at a time. (Keep it short and simple.)
4. Then let the new member give an introduction of himself/herself. (Prepare the new member for some questions from Metta Circle members and allow new member to ask some questions).

Dealing with Disagreement

1. Conflicts occur when two people hold on strictly to their own sets of interpretation. There will always be people with perverse views around.
2. If dealing with the details of the doctrines. Defer it and try to always get some authority to confirm on it.
3. Do not directly use your authority to put it down. Even though we are clearly in the right, always defer it. Put it to the other members of the group for their personal opinion. Then make a collective summary.
4. If our explanation is not acceptable, do not directly challenge it. Put it to the other members of the group for their personal opinion. Then make a collective summary.
5. If the person is clearly on intend to discredit or to disrupt the group. Defer it and carry on to the other points with the other members consent. Then make it known to the Metta Circle Central Committee immediately after the session.



Dealing with Emotional Outpourings

1. Some members of the group while sharing may have strong emotional outpourings like crying, anger, etc. Do not let it continue for too long with the rest of the group. Do not let it become a run-away talk shop. This will affect sharing by dragging it too long to be really productive. They need to come to terms with it. A listening ear is very important instead of suggestions. If the session is getting out of hand, stop the session and pray for the person in question. Then continue the session with discussion with the other members.
2. Always make the second session of sharing (informal session) an opportunity for the members (item 1 above) to talk. Restrict the audience. We want to help the person to heal not prolong it. Too many people may prolong the situation. Always pray with them on such occasions.

Discussion Leading Techniques

1. Try to rehearse your discussion topic first, though the stuff may seem simple. A personal run through will help to smoothen the delivery process.
In the rehearsal, try to use more analogies and examples rather than just plain straight talk. This will broaden your own perspective.
2. A leader must be prepared for the unexpected. Frank when the topic is out of the domain. But must always follow up.
3. Do not hog the entire session. Let no one else do it either.
4. Always spread the questions around, you do not need everyone to share on the same stuff.
5. Do not joke about someone else; even what that person shares could be funny. Do not steal copyright! Let that person relate it.
6. When doing discussions, do not just direct a question to one person immediately. Open it to the group first. This is very important: **DO NOT MAKE ANYONE FEEL YOU ARE TARGETTING THEM.** If there are no starters, then solicit for a request; use the more mature members first.
7. Maintain good eye contact and smile always. Use hands or body language if possible.
8. Know your members characteristics. Try to use that to your favor. Do not try to force someone who is not willing to cooperate in front of everyone to open up. We are not trying to crack a nut! When a person is introverted, we want to draw him out. Instead talk to them on the side, and be patient. They will speak out in their own time, not yours!
9. Due to the limited time, keep to schedule. If you feel the topic is too wide, then it is your initiative to narrow the focus. Have the assistant do some form of timekeeping. There could be an agreed form of signal to tell you that time is going to be up soon.



10. New comers cannot usually understand an already established culture within the circle. Do not make them participate in the discussion immediately. Allow them some time to absorb themselves into the culture. Ask them questions nearer the end of the session and keep it very simple. Give them first of all, confidence. With this build up, they will participate as well as any of the other members.

Conclude the Formal Group Session with Dedication of Merits.

Dedication of Merits guide

- Download and play the Dedication of Merits guide
- After playing the recording of the dedication of merits:
 - Add the sharing of merits to those who requested for prayers (refer to prayer request list).
 - Make your wish make your aspirations. May you be able to fulfill your worldly duties and at the nearest instance be able to walk the noble path and realized the bliss of Nibbana as soon as possible.
- When you are ready, you may conduct the whole dedication of merits session verbally.

B. Informal Group Session

The informal group session is conducted with light refreshment (or potluck) to wind down to a comfortable level where members can interact socially.

- During this period, members can learn more from each other.
- Further discussions and sharing on the topical dhamma studies may ensue.
- Discussion and sharing outside the topical dhamma studies may also take place.
- It is an opportunity for member(s) with emotional outpourings like crying, anger, etc during the Dhamma Discussion session to talk. Restrict the audience. Metta Ambassador role is to help the person to heal not prolonged it. Too many people may prolong the situation. Refer member to specialist if necessary when the issue is beyond our domain.
- New member can have further guidance and mentoring.

NOTE:

DO NOT at any time make propaganda speeches. We are not a political party or a cult.



Suggested Metta Circle Programme

	Duration	Activities		Comments
2 hours	5 mins	Gathering everyone	Formal Session	
	15 mins	Puja		
	20 mins	Metta Meditation		Between 15 – 30 mins*
	5 mins	Dedication of Merits		Between 30 – 45 mins*
	45 mins	Discussion Session		
	30 mins	Light refreshment	Informal Session	Between 20 – 30 mins*
	120 mins			

* duration to be adjusted according to members preference. E.g. where most team members are regular meditators, the Metta meditation duration may be up to 40 mins by reducing discussion & refreshment time.

Items to be prepared:

1. Chanting Script / book
For beginner's sake, have the list of suttas to be chanted written down with the page nos. if a Chanting book is used.
2. Metta Meditation Guide download into Notebook/CD/mobile phone
3. Dedication of Merits Guide download into Notebook/CD/mobile phone
4. Discussion Topic Notes
5. Prayer List
6. AV player (as necessary)
7. Venue
8. Light refreshment



Metta Ambassador Schedule

Weekly/Fortnightly	Monthly	Quarterly
Conduct Metta Circle	Feedback to Metta Circle Central Committee 1. Issues/Concerns 2. Highlight 3. Lowlight 4. Pictures and write-ups (if any)	Meeting with Bhante Mahinda Review with MCCC 1. New topics 2. Format Changes 3. Metta Circle members' potential 4. Metta Ambassadors' role switch 5. Group dynamics / etc

Metta Circle Central Committee (MCCC) Schedule

Monthly	Quarterly	Metta Ambassador Workshop
Update Metta Ambassadors 1. Feedback from all Metta Ambassadors 2. Uploaded Metta Circle's pictures and write-ups 3. Update on discussion topics eg. special message from Bhante Mahinda, new topics, etc	Arrange for Quarterly Meeting with Bhante Mahinda Include review with Metta Ambassadors 1. New topics 2. Format Changes 3. Metta Ambassadors' potential 4. Metta Ambassadors' role switch 5. Group dynamics / etc	Periodically: 1. New Metta Ambassadors 2. Enrichment workshop for existing Metta Ambassadors
Monthly MCCC meeting 1. Review feedback from Metta Ambassadors; supporting action, etc 2. Monthly Newsletter content 3. Quarterly Discussion Topics	Review and update the Metta Circle Manual	

Note:

- Metta Ambassadors include Assistant Metta Ambassadors
- Any queries or feedback for *Metta Circle Central Committee*, please email to Lim Guat Cheng at guatcheng@alokafoundation.org



Metta Circle

Metta Ambassador	<Metta Circle Leader>
Location	<venue when the weekly or fortnightly Metta Circle will be held>
When	<eg. weekly – every Tue>
Start Date	<when Metta Circle begins: DDMMYYYY>

Group Name: <if any>			
No.	Name	Email	Telephone
1			
2			
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Email to: radiate@mettaroundtheworld.org



My Metta Ambassador Buddy

No.	Name	Email	Telephone
1			
2			
3			

My Metta Ambassador Circle

No.	Name	Email	Telephone
1			
2			
3			
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Resources:

What is Metta

Metta, in Pali, or Maithri in Sanskrit language, means 'loving-kindness', or boundless love'. It is the wish for all sentient beings to be well and happy. It is also referred to as boundless or universal love, a love that transcends all barriers, such as caste, colour or creed.

Metta is the basis for cultivation of virtues, such as compassion, altruistic joy and equanimity, which are very important qualities to develop as we live through these times of great change and uncertainties.

The practice of Metta helps to reduce the tendency of anger, hatred and grudges. Metta is a great healing force. It also promotes patience, tolerance, gratitude and above all, a forgiving heart. Forgiveness is an important factor which helps in releasing certain emotional blockages due to grudges, remorse or guilt conscience. When one is clear from those emotional blockages through seeking forgiveness from others, then forgiving others as well as forgiving oneself, one's heart will become lighter, one will experience light heartedness and one will be happier and more cheerful.

The release of emotional blockages through Metta and the practice of forgiveness have great therapeutic values. Many health problems are related to anger and other negative emotions.

Metta promotes the true spirit of friendship or friendliness. As such human beings will be near and dear to one. One will be able to make friends easily. Even animals will love one. This is how the yogis who practice in deep forest or jungle can live in harmony with wild animals.

According to the instructions given in the Karaniya Metta Sutta, one needs to practise until one's heart is completely suffused with loving-kindness:

in all directions: above, below and all around

UDDHAM ADHO CA TIRIYAÑ CA

and at all times; whether standing, sitting, walking or sleeping

TITTHAM CARAM NISINNO VĀ SAYĀNO VĀ

When practised together with wisdom and insight, Metta will indeed become a powerful healing force which will transform us into a more compassionate and caring community, as well as transmuting all negative energies and entities in light, love and harmony.



Metta in a nutshell

1. Metta is a wish for all sentient being to be well and happy.
2. Metta does not seek self-benefit, and therefore has no expectation.
3. Metta is a generosity of the heart. It is openness.
4. Metta is not dependent on external conditions.
5. Metta will not turn into disappointment, ill will or jealousy.
6. Metta makes no distinction between people.
7. Metta embraces all beings – has an immeasurable and boundless quality.

Benefits of Metta

1. One sleeps happily
2. One wakes happily
3. One does not suffer bad dreams
4. One is dear to human beings
5. One is dear to non-human beings
6. The gods protect one
7. No fire or poison or weapon harms one
8. One's mind gets quickly concentrated
9. The expression of one's face is serene
10. One dies unperturbed
11. Even if one fails to attain higher states, one will at least reach the state of the Brahma world



Scripts

1. Chanting Suttas
2. Prayer of Love

Metta Circle Session

1. Metta Circle Fortnightly Preparation Schedule
2. Metta Circle Members List
3. Metta Circle Programme
4. Discussion Topic Schedule
5. Discussion Topic Notes
6. Prayer Request



Related Articles / Links

Articles / YouTube

- Planetary Challenges and Spiritual Evolution – Summary for Citizens of Planet Earth by Susan Rennison:
http://www.susanrennison.com/Planetary%20Challenges%20&%20Evolution_June_2011.pdf
- The Power of the Collective by John Hagelin:
<http://istpp.org/pdf/Shift-PoweroftheCollective.pdf>
- One World One Time One Metta 5 May 2012
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA5LG_BZkQk

Aloka Production

- Bhante Mahinda's talk (Metta Gem 1)
<http://mettaroundtheworld.org/blog/2012/01/31/metta-gem-1-cherishing-thoughts-for-others-how-to-change-and-transform-ourselves/>
- Bhante Mahinda's talk (Metta Gem 2)
<http://mettaroundtheworld.org/blog/2012/02/03/metta-gem-2-bhante-mahinda-on-good-thoughts-and-feeling-a-sense-of-well-being/>
- Bhante Mahinda's talk (Metta Gem 3)
<http://mettaroundtheworld.org/blog/2012/02/06/metta-gem-3-bhante-mahinda-on-when-encountering-anger-and-agitation/>
- 24-hour Metta 31Dec11 – 1Jan12 <http://youtu.be/zAsOpdtvN78>
- Metta Round the World Song - Prayer of Love
<http://mettaroundtheworld.org/> (on one of the sliders on Home Page)

Metta Round the World Website

- Download <http://mettaroundtheworld.org/downloads/>
- Registration <http://mettaroundtheworld.org/register/>
- Getting Involved <http://mettaroundtheworld.org/getting-involved/>

Others

- Moon Phases <http://www.stormfax.com/moon.htm>
- Time Converter <http://timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

