

The Most Important Ingredient.

Some monks once asked the Buddha why the food offered by a particular lay person was so delicious and the Buddha replied that the food contained "the most important ingredient" which was love.

In the life of a community, a family, an individual the active cultivation of this ingredient is paramount.

Deeds of secret kindness - that which no one is ever going to know about, making offerings without strings and letting go of small irritations are all ways of doing this.

One of my favourite ways of practicing this, which brings me great joy, is to rise before everyone else on some mornings and make something particularly nice for breakfast- to put all my undistracted attention into it and love.

Letting go is love, doing a job thoroughly and to conclusion is love, going to meditation when you don't feel like it is love, the whole of the call to the monastic life is love. Rev. Master Jiyu stayed in her seat for all those years and cherished us - that was love.

In conclusion - It is common for people to regard despair, hate and fear as real and compassion and love as delusional. To practice Buddhism we go beyond ordinary and common points of view. In fact it is compassion and love that are the reality - no matter what happens around us or to us no one can take away our ability to try to respond from stillness and that too is love.

in gassho,

HKoten