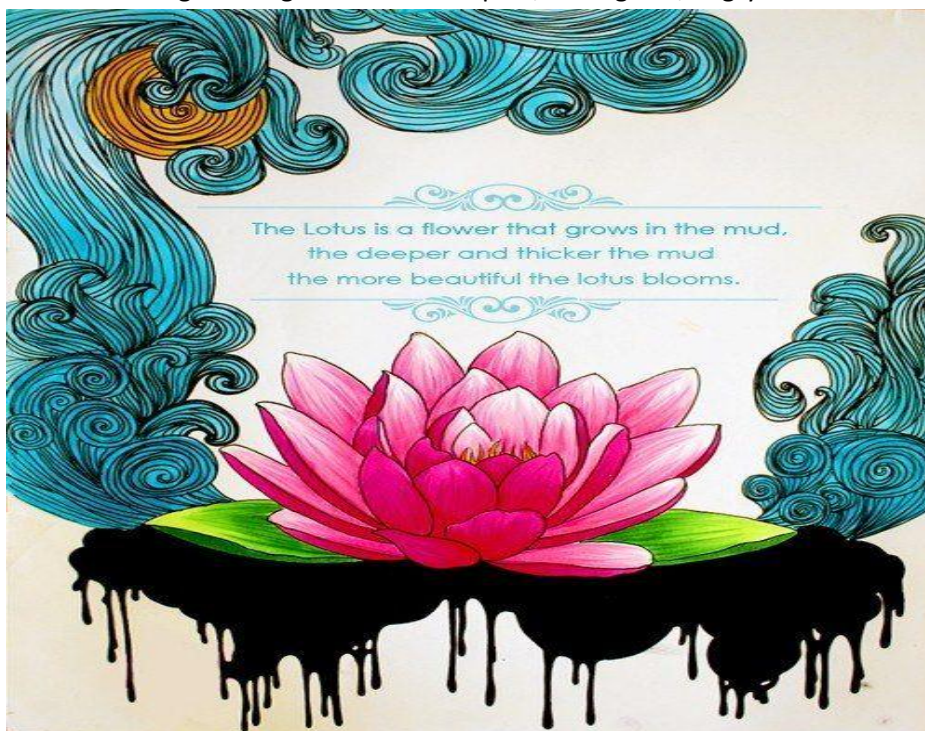


## From Mud to lotus

Various Buddhist Practitioners and mindful teachers will mention this idea about having to wade through the mud of “no lotus no flower like in the talk we sampled partially today from Tara Brach. Thitch Nhat Hahn in his book “ No mud no lotus” will go on about states of transition between suffering and happiness that they are all connected and one state flowing into another. Thus we can only be alive and present, when we also are accepting and present with the “mud” or tricky feeling states that we go through in life such as pain, feeling low, angry.



Looking at a lotus flower or any flower closely and how they are made makes us appreciate that without mud, earth and water the flowers wont grow and would not exists. Thus without us being present to the trickier emotions and feelings we are no truly open and connected to life and often this avoidance in itself can become a problem and lead to unhappiness in the form of constantly having to stay busy, keep avoiding what makes us unhappy or getting addicted to substances and other things in life.

Focusing occasionally with an open accepting heart on our more “muddy” feeling inside us can be truly liberating if we do it with the same curiosity and kindness in our attitude as we are with other mindful practices. In that state often these feelings move and morph into other feelings which are all the more bearable and sometimes we may even learn to like.

Tara Brach in her podcast on the muddy lotus also spends a long time talking about our need for connectedness to the body as a way to freedom and a more transformed state of gratitude / acceptance in life. Thus whenever you do welcome tricky feelings thoughts into you meditation try becoming aware where in your body you feel this maybe as tension tightness and than make a warm, welcoming space for it. This can initially seem completely contrary to what we are used to and belief in, as it is only natural NOT to want negative feelings. But this not wanting and trying to get rid of feeling states in itself can create suffering and tension in our bodies and minds. By staying

with what's hard and tricky with an open curious heart this pain, tension can often morph slowly into something else maybe a pulsing in our body or another energy.



Lotus flowers cannot grow without muddy ponds it needs this to nurture the beauty within. Thus accepting some of our own “muddy/ murky” waters with kindness can transform our own suffering slowly into something else. This is not meant to be a practice of getting “stuck in mud” and only focussing on suffering, but rather an also including it in an open awareness of what else is there and then sowing the seed to what is truly important to us in life.

"The lotus is the most beautiful flower, whose petals open one by one. But it will only grow in the mud. In order to grow and gain wisdom, first you must have the mud --- the obstacles of life and its suffering. ...

The mud speaks of the common ground that humans share, no matter what our stations in life.

... Whether we have it all or we have nothing, we are all faced with the same obstacles: sadness, loss, illness, dying and death. If we are to strive as human beings to gain more wisdom, more kindness and more compassion, we must have the intention to grow as a lotus and open each petal one by one. "

- - Goldie Hawn