Today and for the next few weeks I’d like to draw on reflections from the book *Comfortable With Uncertainty* by Buddhist nun Pema Chodron. In it, she offers training for what she calls Bodhisattva Warriors: not warriors who kill, but warriors of nonaggression who are dedicated to uncovering the basic, undistorted energy of bodhicitta. Bodhicitta is the noble or awakened heart. Just as butter is inherent in milk and oil is inherent in a sesame seed, she writes, the soft spot of bodhicitta is inherent in you and me. No matter how committed we are to unkindness, selfishness, or greed, the genuine heart of bodhicitta cannot be lost.

Those of us who have taken up the practice of metta are Bodhisattva Warriors. I suspect some of us may be uncomfortable thinking of ourselves as warriors, but I find it refreshing to acknowledge that sometimes–perhaps more often than not–we have to do battle with the impulse toward aggression in all of its sneaky forms and disguises.

Indeed, authentic metta practice requires that we become intimate with our habits of aggression. In this sense, we can think of ourselves as warriors who are willing to take off our armor. We allow ourselves to acknowledge our pain, our anger, our desire for revenge, our ill will and whatever else stands in the way of liberating our heartmind. This is what it means to uncover the basic undistorted energy of bodhicitta.

Pema writes that healing can be found in the tenderness of pain itself. This point is at once both self-evident and easy to overlook, because our deep fear of being hurt often leads us to organize our life with protective walls made out of strategies, opinions, prejudices, convictions and fixed views that keep us at arms-length from our deepest hearts. But these carefully built protective walls are merely a misguided way to help create a sense of certainty and control; we sometimes refer to our prejudices and opinions as “where we stand.” That expression connotes solid ground. If we are lucky to live long enough, we learn that there is no such thing as solid ground, for the ground is always shifting under our feet.

For the bodhisattva warrior, Pema says, the question is not how we can avoid uncertainty but how we relate to discomfort—ordinary, everyday discomfort like having to stand in line to wait or being stuck in traffic; feeling embarrassed at forgetting someone’s name; listening to or reading the news and feeling rageful and utterly powerless; being disappointed that Amazon did not deliver the package when it was supposed to; these and myriad other mundane events afford the opportunity to get to know how discomfort hardens into blame, resentment, righteousness, and alienation. We can learn to recognize how and when these crusts begin to form and cover over even the deepest pain in our hearts.

For the rest of our time together this morning, let’s practice resting in uncertainty. I’m going to dispense with our usual format. I’ve not formulated intentions for us to focus on. Instead, I’d like us to sit silently and let the silence speak. Gather all of your attention and intention toward lovingkindess, and if you are moved to speak, please do so by offering a brief, simple intention with no explanation or justification. It doesn’t have to make sense; it doesn’t have to be eloquent; it doesn’t have to be anything. The only rule is to observe how you relate to any discomfort that arises. Can you see any habitual patterns of judgment, chatter, hiding, impatience, boredom, annoyance, planning, or other reactions to uncertainty? Can you see what reactions arise from those reactions? Can you simply rest in the wide open space of not knowing?