

# Lovingkindness Meditation

Become comfortable in your chair or cushion, sitting with a relaxed but straight, posture, with your shoulders relaxed. *(Pause)*...

Allow your hands to rest comfortably in your lap. Gently close your eyes... *(Pause)*...

Settling into awareness of the body...and the breath.

Feeling into our body right now...noticing what's here.

Open to whatever is to be experienced in the body in this moment

Connecting to the breath...noticing the wave-like movements of the belly...

In this practice, we'll be cultivating loving kindness. We all have within us, this natural capacity for lovingkindness. Or...friendship that is unconditional and open...gentle...supportive.

Lovingkindness is a natural opening of a compassionate heart...to ourselves and to others. It's a wish that everyone be happy.

We begin with developing lovingkindness toward ourselves...allowing our hearts to open with tenderness,

Now, allow yourself to remember and open up to your basic goodness. You might remember times you have been kind or generous. You might recall your natural desire to be happy and not to suffer. If acknowledging your own goodness is difficult, look at yourself through the eyes of someone who loves you. What does that person love about you? Or, you may recall the unconditional love you felt from a beloved pet...

It may help to use the imagination and to picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age... if that allows tender feelings of kindness to flow more easily...

And, as you experience this love...notice how you feel in your body. Maybe you feel some warmth...or heat in the face. A smile...a sense of expansiveness. This is lovingkindness, a natural feeling that is accessible to all of us...always. Resting with this feeling of open, unconditional love for a few minutes ...*(Pause)*

Letting yourself bask in the energy of lovingkindness...breathing it in...and breathing it out...inviting feelings of peace and acceptance...

So, beginning now to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself.

I'll be offering as guidance the phrases that I've chosen to use in my own practice. You're invited to alter these phrases and choose whatever words express your wishes of loving kindness toward yourself and others.

And now, offering these words in your mind for yourself...

May I be filled with lovingkindness  
May I be held in loving kindness...  
May I feel connected and calm...  
May I accept myself just as I am...  
May I be happy...  
May I know the natural joy of being alive...

And, now repeating in the mind these words of friendship and kindness to yourself once again...

May I be filled with lovingkindness  
May I be held in loving kindness...  
May I feel connected and calm...  
May I accept myself just as I am...  
May I be happy...  
May I know the natural joy of being alive

Now you can open the circle of lovingkindness by bringing to mind someone who is dear to you. Someone whom you care about and who has always been supportive. Reflect on this person's basic goodness, sensing what it is in particular that you love about him or her. In your heart feel your appreciation for this dear one, and begin your simple offering...

May you be filled with lovingkindness  
May you be held in lovingkindness...  
May you feel my love now...  
May you accept yourself just as you are...  
May you be happy...  
May you know the natural joy of being alive...

Now bring to mind a "neutral" person. This is someone you might see regularly but don't know well...It might be a neighbor, a grocery store clerk

Bring this person to mind now, and repeat the words of loving kindness...

May you be filled with lovingkindness  
May you be held in lovingkindness...  
May you feel my love now...  
May you accept yourself just as you are...  
May you be happy...  
May you know the natural joy of being alive...

And now, if it's possible for you, bring to mind someone with whom you've had a difficult relationship. Perhaps it's someone you don't like to feel sympathy or compassion for. Seeing if it's possible to let go of feelings of resentment and dislike for this person. Reminding yourself to see this person as a whole being...deserving of love and kindness. As someone who feels pain and anxiety...as someone who also suffers.

Seeing if it's possible to extend to this person the words of loving kindness in your mind...

May you be filled with lovingkindness  
May you be held in lovingkindness...  
May you feel my love now...  
May you accept yourself just as you are...  
May you be happy...  
May you know the natural joy of being alive...

Now, allow your awareness to open out in all directions...yourself, a dear one, a neutral person and a difficult person...and of all beings...humans and animals living everywhere...living in richness, poverty, war, peace, hunger, abundance...Aware of all the joys and sorrows that all beings experience...

May all beings be filled with lovingkindness...  
May all beings be happy...  
May all beings awaken and be free...  
May all beings be happy...

And now, bringing this practice to a close by coming back to extend kindness to yourself. Sitting for a while and basking in the energy of loving kindness that may have been generated here.