Explorations in mindfulness

metta meditation for loving kindness

# Metta Meditation for Loving Kindness

By: Danielle Palli (15 minutes)

Studies suggest that Loving-Kindness meditations can support feelings of wellbeing, a greater sense of connection to others, less loneliness, better self-awareness, more compassion for self and others, and greater empathy, while also giving our immune system a boost.

The Process:

1. Wherever you are out there, just get nice and comfortable. I am going to sit tall as if there is a string from the base of my spine out through the crown of my head and I'm going to bring my tongue to the roof of my mouth and keep the jaw relaxed. Some people prefer to sit back and just be comfortable, do whatever is appropriate for you. We will take a moment to begin to draw our awareness inward … Just becoming aware of our breath. And throughout this entire practice, you are just letting your breath be relaxed, you are not trying to control it in any way.

2. Take a moment to check in with your body, making any adjustments that you need to, to feel more comfortable. For example, if you feel any tension in your neck, you might want to roll your head from side to side. Perhaps roll the shoulders up, back, and down, away from your ears. Maybe shift a little in your seat. Your feet might be planted on the ground or cross-legged in front of you, or you might even be lying down. Your hands can be resting on your knees or one hand over the other in your lap. We will take a moment to turn our awareness in … letting any of the concerns outside this experience be put on hold for just a little while. A reminder that your eyes can be open or closed ... If they are open, just taking a soft gaze …

3. For this Metta meditation, I am going to go through the same words five different times. The first time, I will ask you to direct the intention to yourself, then we will do the experience where we re-direct it outward. So first, we are going to send the loving kindness to ourselves. You can repeat this in your mind, or if you are by yourself and you choose to repeat it out loud, you can. And it is simply “May I be happy,” understanding that all of us collectively want to be happy.

4. May I be happy ... Sit with that feeling of what happiness feels like to you … May I be happy … May I be healthy … We all deserve and desire to be healthy … What does the feeling of health feel like in your body? … What does it mean to be healthy? … May I be healthy … May I be safe … Perhaps repeating that to yourself or softly out loud, May I be safe … Particularly in this time, we all need to feel that sense of security … What can you do in your space to cultivate a feeling of safety? … May I be safe …

5. May I live with ease … Or if you choose, May I be peaceful … What does ease and peace feel like in your body and in your mind? … We all deserve to live in peace, physically and emotionally … May I live with ease … … Take another moment, you might even put your hand on your heart if you choose. Sitting with those feelings of happiness, health, safety, and peace.

6. Now I would like you to call to mind someone that you love. It could be a friend, a spouse, a family member, a pet even. Visualize that chosen person or animal and imagine they are in front of you, and your heart is connecting to their heart, and you are sending them these same loving intentions. May YOU be happy (with “YOU” being the intended person). May you be happy ... May you be healthy … May you be safe … May you live with ease … So, imagining that person in front of you in as much detail, sending them the loving energy of happiness, health, safety, and peace.

7. Now call to mind somebody who is neutral or perhaps somebody that you like. This could be a neighbor, a friend. It could be somebody that you have seen, but do not even know particularly well. Understanding that we *all* wish to be happy and healthy. So, as you call to mind, whomever this person is, once again, send them loving energy. May you be happy … May you be safe … May you live with ease … I am thinking how good it feels to be able to be in this space where we can send loving energy to people we do not even know very well. Sending them happiness, and health, and safety, and peace.

8. The next one is a little tricky. So, I am going to give you two options. This is to call to mind someone you do not like very much. Now, sometimes it is hard to send loving energy to somebody that you do not care for. So, if you need to, instead of saying YOU, you might choose to say WE. I am going to say WE, as we move forward with this one. And the understanding is that if all of us truly had these things of health, happiness, safety, and peace, we would likely be kinder. We would likely have better relationships. So perhaps this person, who is not your favorite person, needs a little bit of this energy and you can help them. So, as you call this person to mind, let us begin again. May we be happy … May we be healthy … May we be safe … May we live with ease … Cultivating as genuine a feeling as you can, understanding that this is difficult. Sending that person happiness … health … safety … and peace.

9. Lastly, in your mind's eye, and you can do this any way that is appropriate for you, we are going to send this energy out to all beings without exception. So, for me, that means the planet and animals and people. And sometimes I imagine the group gathering around me and just growing outward. So, whatever that image is for you. Some people might choose to imagine the world. Imagine you are sending this loving energy that you have so much power to send love out, that you can reach *all* the corners of the earth and beyond. So, one more time … May we be happy … May we be healthy … May we be safe … May we live with ease …

9. Slowly relaxing your mind, drawing your awareness back to your breath, noticing the inhalation and the exhalation … … see if you can hold this space for another minute. If your mind wanders simply return to noticing your breath … … Relaxing your mind …then slowly bringing yourself back into the room … perhaps wiggling your fingers and toes, perhaps rocking your head from side to side … and in your own time, go ahead and open your eyes.