

10-minute loving kindness meditation

Become comfortable in your chair or cushion, sitting with a relaxed but straight posture, with your shoulders relaxed. Allow your hands to rest comfortably in your lap. Gently close your eyes, settling into awareness of the body and the breath.

In this practice, we'll be cultivating loving kindness. We all have within us this natural capacity for loving kindness. Friendship that is unconditional and open, gentle and supportive. Loving kindness 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 loving kindness 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 four or five years of age, and see 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 loving kindness, a natural feeling that is accessible to all of us, always. Resting with this feeling of open, unconditional love for a few minutes, letting yourself bask in the energy of loving kindness...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 towards yourself and others. And now, offering these words in your mind for yourself:

May I be filled with loving kindness
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 repeat in your mind these words of friendship and kindness to yourself once again.

Now, allow your awareness to open out in all directions, to yourself, a dear one, a neutral person and someone with whom you have a difficult relationship.

May you be filled with loving kindness
May you be held in loving kindness
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

Bring this practice to a close by coming back to extend kindness to yourself. Sit for a while and bask in the energy of loving kindness that may have been generated here.

Have a wonderful day.