

humantold

Mindfulness: Loving Kindness Meditation

This activity helps cultivate kindness and compassion toward themselves and others.

This category of meditation is called **Metta** meaning kindness. Making this practice part of your routine may allow you to feel more compassion and connected towards others, but also yourself.

In this meditation you will repeat the phrases:

**May I/they be happy,
May I/they be free,
May I/they be at peace.**

Then you will be directing this positive energy toward five groups or people.

Repeat the phrase 3 times for each:

1. A person you respect (mentor, teacher, role model).
2. A friend.
3. A neutral person.
4. Yourself.
5. A person you have negative feelings towards.

Important Ingredients of Metta practice:

- The use of the word “may” is intentional for a few reasons, but mainly to deviate from making it a deterministic statement such as using “make.”
- Shifts the focus away from the self.
- Cultivates positivity! Be careful to understand you are not attempting to minimize or deny their struggles, you are simply aiming to hope and wish for someone to be happy, free, and be at peace.
- Generate as much authentic and genuine compassion towards the person or group you direct your focus towards.
- Reflect on this practice after and switch up the order based on easiest to hardest such as some people might move themselves up on the list while others it may be more difficult to generate positive thoughts about themselves than others.

Step 1: Abdominal or Belly Breathing

- Start by sitting up straight
- As you inhale, first focus on your abdomen (belly) to breathe
- Push your navel out and let the belly expand as you inhale
 - Many people put a hand on their belly to help them.
- Exhale and contract the abdomen.
- Do these 5 times to get comfortable.

humantold

Step 2: Loving Kindness Meditation

**May I/they be happy,
May I/they be free,
May I/they be at peace.**

For each instance bring the person into your mind. Imagining them, taking a breath and repeating the Metta phrases above **three times**.

1. *Someone who you respect or appreciate.*
2. *A friend.*
3. *A neutral person.* They might be an acquaintance or someone you met in the last few days. Picture them as best you can.
4. *Yourself.* Try imagining yourself as if you are floating above yourself in the room.
5. *Lastly, someone you have negative feelings towards.* It may be harder to bring compassion in this instance, but try anyway.

Step 3: Returning

- Relax your hands and breathe naturally.
- Bring into awareness any gratitude you may have for the moment.
- When you are ready take two slow deep breaths and when you exhale on the second breathe open your eyes.

Reflection:

- Was it difficult to generate authentic compassion for any of the people you decided to focus on?
- Were some people easier than you expected?
- What thoughts, feelings, urges arose while doing this.