

Meditation on Loving-kindness

This meditation uses words, images, and feelings to evoke a loving-kindness and friendliness toward oneself and others. With each recitation of the phrases, we are expressing an intention, planting the seeds of living wishes over and over in our heart.

Begin with yourself. Breathe gently, and recite inwardly the following traditional phrases directed to your own well-being. You begin with yourself because without loving yourself it is almost impossible to love others.

May I be filled with lovingkindness.
May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.
May I be well in body and mind.
May I be at ease and happy.

Adjust the words and images in any way you wish. Create exact phrases that best open your heart of kindness. Repeat these phrases over and over again, letting the feelings permeate your body and mind. For example, a personal favorite adopted:

May I know discernment and the sources of discernment.
May I be free of dis-illusion and the sources of dis-illusion.
May I know bliss and equanimity and the sources of bliss and equanimity.

Be aware that this meditation may at times feel mechanical or awkward. It can also bring up feelings contrary to loving-kindness, feelings of irritation and anger. If this happens, it is especially important to be patient and kind toward yourself, allowing whatever arises to be received in a spirit of friendliness and kind affection.

When you feel you have established some stronger sense of loving-kindness for yourself, you can then expand your meditation to include others. Picture this person and recite the same phrases or a shortened version:

May you be filled with loving-kindness.
May you be safe from inner and outer dangers.
May you be well in body and mind.
May you be at ease and happy.

The rule with loving-kindness practice is to follow the way that most easily opens your heart. Jack Kornfield, (2002).