

Lovingkindness meditation

Length: 20 minutes

Intention: To practice lovingkindness towards self and others

Practice frequency: 1-2x/week

Lovingkindness meditations aim at facilitating feelings of goodwill, kindness, and compassion towards ourselves and others. It helps us to open our hearts to ourselves and others through our shared human experience. It is a meditation that can be used in times of worry, restlessness, fear. It's not wishful thinking or imaginings things to be different, or other than they are. It's about setting our intention to kindness and compassion. This practice takes approximately 20 minutes. You do not have to follow this script exactly as it is. However, the order in which each part appears in this script is intentional so as to ease you into the practice of being able to receive and accept the same feelings of lovingkindness as you wish to others.

Begin by sitting comfortably in a quiet place. Notice how your body feels, how your body touches the cushion or chair. Bring yourself to this moment, right here and now. First take three deep breaths to let out any tension that you may be holding onto. Invite your awareness inwards, not paying attention to any sounds that you may hear, but simply noticing them and letting them go. Now begin to notice your breath as it comes in and out of your nostrils. No need to change the breath but simply become aware of it. If your mind wanders, just gently bring it back to the breath.

Now bring into your mind's eye the image of a person who has been unconditionally kind to you. It may be family member, a good friend, a mentor. Think of what they sound like and how you feel in their presence. Imagine that this person is sitting across from you and you will send kindness and wish for their well-being, by repeating the following phrases silently.

Made you safe.
Maybe you healthy.
May you be filled with loving kindness.
May you live peacefully and at ease.

As you repeat these sentences in your mind, try to connect with genuine feelings of kindness and goodwill that you feel towards this person. If your mind wanders, simply bring your awareness back to your breath and begin repeating the phrases once again.

Now bring to your mind's eye someone who you feel neutral towards. It can be someone you don't know very well or someone who you have no particular feelings towards. Perhaps a neighbor, or a colleague. Think of that person as if they are present with you and begin to send them wishes of wellbeing by repeating the same phrases.

Made they be safe.
Maybe they be healthy.
May they be filled with loving kindness.
May they live peacefully and at ease.

Now as you see yourself sitting across from that person you care about and the person you are neutral towards, and include yourself in the circle of goodwill.

Made we safe.
Maybe we healthy.
May we be filled with loving kindness.
May we live peacefully and at ease.

Now focus your attention on yourself. Remembering that you too deserve unconditional goodwill, compassion, kindness, and love and let your feelings of lovingkindness genuinely be poured onto yourself.

May we be safe.
Maybe we be healthy.
May we be filled with loving kindness.
May we live peacefully and at ease.

Now bring to your mind's eye the people who you care about. These can be your friends, family members, your inner circle. Remember that they too wish you goodwill and kindness, just as you wish it onto them. Include yourself in the circle so you can both give and receive these feelings of kindness.

May we be safe.
Maybe we be healthy.
May we be filled with loving kindness.
May we live peacefully and at ease.

Now, expand your awareness to include all beings. The people in your community, country, the whole world and all living creatures as you remember that all beings deserve to live free from suffering and in peace. You share the gift of lovingkindness.

May all beings be safe.
Maybe all beings be healthy.
May the whole world be filled with loving kindness.
May all beings live peacefully and at ease.

Take a few moments to experience the peaceful compassion of this practice, before opening your eyes and resuming your day. Notice how you feel now and try to carry the warmth, joy, and openheartedness to the rest of your day.