

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

Meditation Steps:

1) Breathing meditation (at least 2 minutes):

- First spend a few moments focused on the breath, to allow the mind to settle.
- As thoughts naturally arise, simply notice them with gentle attention and then consciously let them go. Keep returning attention to the breath.

2) Motivation (at least 1 minute):

Now set your motivation to do this meditation practice not only for your own development and peace of mind but so that you can thereby be of most benefit to others.

3) Body of the Meditation (at least 4 minutes):

Take a minute to recall the fact that all living beings want to be happy and avoid suffering. They misbehave and cause suffering because they are confused about the causes of happiness and suffering. Think about your own situation and how more likely it is for you to cause harm when you are in physical or mental pain and how much easier it is to be kind when you're happy.

Then, imagine that your mother (or a mother-figure) is seated at your left and that your father (or father-figure) is seated at your right. Imagine your closest friends and other relatives behind you and people you don't get on with in front of you. Take a moment to stabilise your idea of this...

Then, from your heart, imagine a well-spring of loving kindness spreads through your whole body and then goes out, taking the form of golden light.

Think that this loving-kindness light spreads outwards from your heart to your left, to your right, in front of you, and behind you. Imagine everyone you know well (whether you like them or not) is filled completely with this love and is made happy by it.

Then think this loving-kindness golden light goes further out to all humans, including those you don't know at all, people in other countries. People who are rich, who are middle class, who are poor and who are destitute. Imagine your good will spread out equally to all people, in areas of peace and areas of war and natural disaster. This kindness goes out to people who are kind and loving and to people with hatred in the hearts. Your light goes out to all of them... then out to all living beings, animals etc...after awhile imagine everything dissolves into light.

The light then collects back into you, filling you with the resolve to meet others with loving-kindness.

4) Dedication (at least 30 seconds):

Dedicate the positive energy/merit put into this practice to quickly ripen to your full potential, especially loving kindness, in order to help all other living beings achieve the same.

IMPERMANENCE: MEDITATION ON CHANGE

Meditation Steps: 1) *Breathing meditation* (in order to gather the attention/focus inward and settle)... 2) *Setting the motivation* (give yourself a few moments to let it sink in): Decide to use this meditation to tame your mind and develop your potential to be the most immediate and long-term benefit to yourself and others.

3) *Body of the meditation:* Examine with logic & experience.

Challenge the premise that there is stability or permanence in any relationships

1st Establish that change is certain and cannot be avoided:

- Is there anything in this world that doesn't change every moment?
 - Is there any material that can withstand the elements and remain forever?
 - Everything disintegrates and becomes part of something else ...
 - Is there any living being that will not age subtly in every moment?
 - There is no thought that doesn't shift every second...
 - Think of your life's accumulation of knowledge, experience & opinions...
 - Is there any emotion that is without interruption?
 - Can you have any feeling or mood that doesn't constantly undergo varying degrees of intensity? Think of just today...
 - Even in a relationship of many years with a solid continuity – have you had the exact same thoughts, opinions, emotions, and responses about a person from minute to minute, day to day, month to month, year to year, decade to decade...? Even within continuity, were there shifts?
 - Even in the course of one day with one person, how many different moods do you each have? How many shifts in energy between you from excited, connected, in tune to detached or distracted, annoyed with each other etc...?

2nd Think analytically about how grasping at and expecting stability, reliability, consistency and permanence leads to suffering:

- Reflect on how change has effected your life:
 - When you were ready for and assumed change was coming...
 - What would have been different if you hadn't prepared yourself?
 - When you didn't expect change and were caught off guard...
 - What would have been different if you had prepared yourself?
- Is it sometimes my own expectation of permanence that gives me grief...?
 - Do we suffer more from the fact of change or the false expectation of solidity?
 - When has there ever been a person or situation that didn't change in some way, for better or for worse...?
- Is it that the strength, health and intimacy of our connections with people ebb and flow that causes suffering **or** the fact that we expect them not to (stability)?
- If thought people were only visiting, if we had no expectation of them staying forever, would it be easier to enjoy them while they're here and be more prepared for them to go...? Would relationships and life in general be easier and better with less resistance to change?

4) Dedication: Think that the positive mental energy you put into these thoughts to ripen your full potential of compassion, wisdom and ability in order to best aid all living beings.

PATIENCE MEDITATION

*"Where would I possibly find enough leather with which to cover the surface of the earth?
But adding leather to the soles of my shoes is equivalent to covering the earth with it.
Likewise it is not possible for me to change completely the external course of things
But should I restrain this mind of mine, what would be the need to change all else?"*
Master Shantideva

Preliminary Instructions:

Scan the body letting go of any physical tension. Think through the structure of the meditation before you begin. Settle the mind. **Set your motivation altruistically...**

Challenging the premise that anger is justified:

- If harmful behaviour **is** human nature then anger is irrational...
 - Is it rational to be angry at fire for being hot – what choice does it have?
- If harmful behaviour **is not** human nature then anger is irrational...
 - Is it rational to be angry when smoke in the sky temporarily obscures it-it's changeable, why worry?
- If you're angry at what **directly** inflicts the harm,
 - then you will have to be angry at the words spoken or the fist that hits you, or even your own mind's response to the words or actions. Analyse objectively the exact portion of the event that was harmful – is there ever only one thing going on for you to feel the way you do? If you were thinking differently is it harm?
- If you're angry at the harm doer who **indirectly** inflicts harm,
 - then, just as the person directs the negative action, the negative action is directed by their hostility, and their hostility is impelled by their suffering. In that case compassion is more logical than anger...
- If people with distressed minds even do things like kill themselves (and their own self is what they hold most dear), why am I upset or amazed if they direct harm at me?
- If we're angry because we assume harmful actions seem within the power of the person to control, then we dig down to examine what is it that might actually be controlling the person when they are at their worst.
 - Would they have said/done destructive actions if they were stress-free?
 - Could it be their **stress** and worries be controlling them?
 - Would they have said/done destructive actions if they knew or remembered how much it hurts you and your relationship?
 - Could it be their **ignorance** and/or distraction what was controlling them?
 - If the person had complete control, peace, happiness and wisdom, would they have done what they did? Are they negative and harmful when they're at their best? Are joyous and grounded people the most likely to be harmful?
 - Could we choose to see negative behaviour as a **symptom** of the other person's distress and suffering?
 - Could we use those times when people are at their worst or out of control to develop **compassion** that they are struggling and suffering?

Dedicate the positive mental energy you put into these thoughts to ripen your full potential of patience, compassion, wisdom and ability in order to best aid all living beings.

LOVE VS. ATTACHMENT MEDITATION

Gather your focus and set your motivation...

Identify Loving Kindness

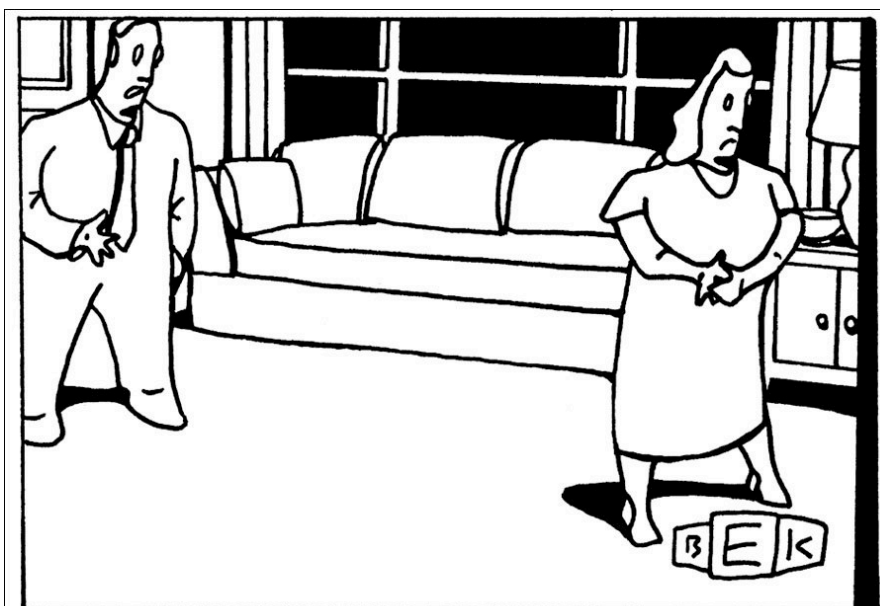
- Remind yourself of what love is: the wish for others to have happiness.
- Ask yourself what love is like when it's present in you & in others, what happens?

Identify Attachment

- Remind yourself of what attachment is – an exaggerated mind that craves, grasps or seeks a person, object or scenario based on the mistaken idea that obtaining it will bring satisfaction and happiness.
- Conjure up a sense of what attachment feels like when you're "in it."
 - o What do you say to yourself under its influence? Think of instances...
For example: "I just need to have _____ and then things will be fine."
 - o When is it most commonly present in you? Be specific...
For example: When you feel insecure or out of place? Lonely? Tired?
 - o What do you say and do under the influence of attachment?
For example: Asking useless questions to get attention...

Identify what seems like love but is actually attachment

- Remind yourself of times when some action started pure, simply wanting happiness for someone else, and then it got mixed with expectations and desires and the situation turned difficult or even ugly...
- Remind yourself of when you thought someone was acting out of love but actually they wanted to "get" something from you (attention, affection, resources, etc.). How did you feel? Then ask yourself honestly when you have had the behaviour and words of love but your motivation was actually attachment...what do you think the impact was?



"Of course I care about how you imagined I thought you perceived I wanted you to feel."

Conclude that:
Attachment is deceptive, harmful & to be abandoned. Love is accurate, beneficial and to be cultivated.

Dedicate the mental energy you put into these thoughts to developing your full potential for infinite benefit to all.

EQUANIMITY MEDITATION

Preliminary Instructions: Think about the structure of the meditation before you begin.

Breathing meditation (in order to gather the attention/focus inward and settle). **Set your the motivation:** decide to use this meditation to develop your mind's potential to benefit all...

Challenging the attitude that labels we attribute people determine our degree of goodwill

Equanimity is having good will, whether the person is close and dear to you - a "friend," or someone you have aversion towards - an "enemy" or someone you are indifferent towards - a "stranger." Equanimity generates kindness regardless if the person is harmful, helpful, etc.

Visualise in front of you three persons: at the left a good friend, in the middle a stranger, to the right an enemy or someone you cannot stand.

- Now concentrate on the friend in front. Observe and examine your feelings towards him or her. Think about how this person might become your enemy if they harmed you.
- Now concentrate on the stranger in the middle and examine your feelings towards him or her. Think about how this person could become your friend or enemy in the future...
- Now concentrate on the enemy on the right and examine your feelings towards him or her. Think about how this person might become your friend in the future if helping you.

- Again look at your friend and try to strongly feel your love and appreciation for them...
Now look at the stranger and try to hold and direct that feeling towards this stranger.

- Again look at your friend and again try to strongly feel your love and appreciation for them...

Now try to hold this feeling while looking at the enemy; is it possible to feel some love and compassion?

Is true that all three; friend, stranger and enemy are completely equal in trying to become happy and trying to avoid suffering? That sometimes their methods towards those aims are spot on and sometimes they are misguided? Is how we label is based on our experience of someone – not the totality of who they are? Is it that we isolate certain traits and then fixate and build a story about the person due to them...?

We then imagine sending all three people (thinking that they represent everyone) loving kindness and compassion in the form of golden light coming from our hearts. With that light we think to all of them "May you be well. May you happy." Generate genuine good will the best we can. Send it in all directions equally. Then everyone dissolves into light, into you...

Dedication: Direct the positive mental energy you put into these thoughts to ripen your full potential of compassion, wisdom and ability in order to aid all living beings regardless if they help or harm.

Forgiveness and Healing Process

Adapted from the forgiveness process outlined in
Unconditional Love and Forgiveness by Edith R. Stauffer

Also based on the work of Elizabeth Kübler-Ross

Reframed to a Buddhist perspective by: Venerable Tenzin Chödrön and Venerable Lozang Yönten 2011

- Begin by gathering your attention by doing a 2-5 min. **breathing meditation**
- Then set your **motivation** for this process – that your internal work heals your own hurt, distress and anger and opens up your wisdom and compassion...
 - That you release your expectations of the other person and instead offer unconditional goodwill, the best you can...
- Visualize that the person that you are having difficulty with is sitting across from you.
 - Think of details like the type of clothes they wear the expression the often have on their face...
 - How do their eyes look? How is their body positioned in the chair?

They are not allowed to speak to you or touch you without your permission or an invitation to do so. You are safe and free to be as direct and honest as you can...
- Then, as clearly as you can, tell them your truth - tell them about your anger, your pain, the sadness and the hurt that you feel...
 - Try not to blame them or to make them wrong, but to offer them the gift of your truth (with the knowledge that your truth carries the natural bias of being from only your perspective).
 - Remember specific events as well as overriding themes.
 - Journal or list these for yourself or if you have a trusted friend who's up for helping you with this process, tell them about it (ask them to bear witness while remaining silent).

Stay as centered on your own feelings and pain as you can. Say (*out loud, written or internally*) everything you need to say, leaving nothing back.

Frame things in a positive way - **example:** "I would have preferred that you had spoken kindly to me, but you didn't, so I cancel that expectation." (NOT "I wish you hadn't been critical...")

With each event/issue: "I would have preferred that you had _____, but you didn't, so I release/cancel that expectation." Repeat until you've said all you need to.

- Then recite the following prayer, beginning with their full name:

_____, I forgive you for any pain that you have ever brought to me in this life or in any other life, whether real or imagined, deliberate or unintentional.
I give you full and complete responsibility for **your own** actions and I release you from **my** expectations.

Take a moment to forgive _____ for having had angry, destructive or fearful thoughts about you...

- Then, when you feel ready, shift:

I ask that you, _____, forgive me for any hurt that I have ever brought to you, in this life or in any other life, whether real or imagined, deliberate or unintentional. I take full responsibility for **my** own actions. May you be released from **your** expectations of me.

Take a moment to forgive yourself for having had angry, destructive or fearful thoughts about the other person...

- Then, when you feel ready, say (*out loud or internally*):

I release you from the burden of our past conflict to the pursuit of your true potential.

I release myself from the burden of our past conflict and to the pursuit of my potential.

I set us both free.

- Then, having made those statements (*out loud or internally*) in as genuine way possible:

Visualize at the centre of your chest lives your naturally present pure loving kindness and compassion. Imagine that this unconditional goodwill takes the form of warm golden light. That light slowly and gently expands and fills your whole body gradually. Sit with the experience of self-acceptance...

Draw in a deep breath from that golden light, and let the love slowly circulate all through your body, filling the areas that were full of sadness, fear and/or hate just a few moments ago.

Breathe deeply and slowly, and notice any lightness you might feel. Stay and rest in this healing peaceful experience as long as you need to...

- Then, if you can, send this experience of healing peace and self-acceptance to that person in your life whom you've been struggling with.

Imagine them filled with your compassionate presence...

- You can choose to go further and then expand your golden light of acceptance and compassion to everyone in your life (whether they help or harm, etc.).

- Then to all living beings everywhere....

- Then, when you feel ready, imagine everyone then dissolve into light, and they then dissolve into you.

Imagine you carry them at your heart. Not as a burden but as a lightness and sense of joyful responsibility to work for the welfare of others as best you can, without expectations or judgment...

Thinking that this is one contribution you can make to the world, a way to make your life more meaningful...keep that sense joy and lightness...

Have a sense of how you'd like to be motivated in the future – put this intention into your own words in a way that resonates and hits home for you. Let that intention sink in for a few moments...

Bring that intention into your day and life the best you can, returning to this process whenever you need to.