



LOVING-KINDNESS (METTA) MEDITATION

What is Loving-Kindness (or Metta) Meditation?

Loving-Kindness Meditation, also known as Metta Meditation, is an awareness practice where one recites specific words and phrases evoking a boundless, warm-hearted, and peaceful feeling. We begin by making a wish for happiness and well-being for ourselves, but then extend that wish for others and finally for all other living beings with whom we share our world.

Instructions for Practicing Loving-Kindness Meditation

Sit in a comfortable and relaxed manner. If you are seated in a chair, place both feet on the floor. When you feel comfortable, allow your eyes to softly close. Take two or three deep breaths with long, slow, complete exhalations. Let go of any concerns or preoccupations and simply focus on your breathing. Continue breathing for a few minutes, while feeling or imagining the breath moving through the center of your chest in the area of your heart - your heart's center.

Metta is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without loving ourselves first. Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following phrases:

May I be happy.

May I be well.

May I be safe.

May I be peaceful and at ease.

While you say these phrases aloud, allow yourself to sink into the intentions they express. Allow your feelings of loving-kindness to grow as you repeat the phrases. As an aid to the meditation, you might hold an image of yourself in your mind's eye. This helps reinforce the intentions expressed in the phrases.

[Instructions continue on the back]



Keep Practicing...

There is a reason we say that we 'practice' meditation -- because it really does require patience and repetition.

It may not come naturally at first; you may find yourself distracted or disappointed at your inability to focus. However, the more you practice, the more skillful you will become, reaping the benefits of peace, harmony, and serenity.



Loving-Kindness Meditation Practice

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After a period of directing loving-kindness toward yourself, bring to mind a loved one or someone in your life who has cared for you deeply. Slowly repeat phrases of loving-kindness toward them, allowing your feelings of loving-kindness to grow as you repeat the phrases:



*May you be happy.
May you be well.
May you be safe.
May you be peaceful and at ease.*

Next, bring to mind someone in your life with whom you have experienced difficulty. Again, slowly repeat the phrases of loving-kindness to them as you hold their image in your mind's eye:



*May you be happy.
May you be well.
May you be safe.
May you be peaceful and at ease.*

End by imagining all the people in the world, and wishing each and every one of them loving-kindness by slowly repeating:



*May you be happy.
May you be well.
May you be safe.
May you be peaceful and at ease.*

As you repeat these phrases, sink into their intention and heartfelt meaning. If any feelings of loving-kindness arise, connect the feelings with the phrases, so that the feelings may become stronger as you repeat the words.



Namaste - The Light In Me Honors the Light Within You

Sometimes during Loving-Kindness Meditation seemingly opposite feelings such as anger, sadness, fear, or worry may arise. Take these to be signs that your heart is softening, revealing what is held or stuck there. With whatever patience, acceptance, and love you can muster for such feelings, direct loving-kindness toward them. Above all, remember that there is no need to judge yourself for having these feelings.

During your Loving-Kindness Meditation you can bring to mind other friends, neighbors, acquaintances, strangers, animals, and even individuals who have caused you hurt or pain. Also, you can either use the same phrases from above, repeating them again and again, or make up phrases that better represent the loving-kindness you feel toward these beings.