

Kindness Meditation

To practice the kindness meditation, sit in a comfortable position. Take two or three long breaths. Focus on feeling the breath move in and out.

Kindness is first practiced toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves.

Sitting quietly, mentally repeat, slowly and steadily, the following phrases - or one that feels authentic to you.

May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.

While you say these phrases, allow them to sink in. The kindness meditation consists of wishing ourselves or others happiness and well-being. If feelings of warmth, friendliness or love arise in the body or mind, connect to them. Allow them to grow as you repeat the phrases. As an aid to the meditation, you might hold an image of yourself in your mind.

After a period of directing kindness toward yourself, bring to mind a friend or someone in your life who has cared deeply for you. Then slowly repeat phrases of kindness toward them.

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

As you say these phrases, sink into their heartfelt meaning. Connect to your wish for this person's happiness.

As you continue the meditation, you can bring to mind other friends, neighbors, acquaintances, strangers, animals, and even people with whom you have difficulty. You can use either the same phrases, repeating them again and again, or make up other phrases that better represent the kindness you feel towards these beings.

Benefits of kindness meditation:

- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Lifts mood & produces positive emotions
- Increases feelings of hope
- Decreases physical and emotional pain
- Reduces anger
- Activates empathy
- Improves social connections