

Metta –Lovingkindness Meditation

Loving-kindness meditation (sometimes called “Metta” meditation) is a great way to cultivate our propensity for kindness and compassion, especially towards ourselves. Metta is a practice which brings about positive attitudinal changes as it systematically develops the quality of “loving acceptance”. Compassion helps us repair relationships and move forward while building emotional intelligence and general well-being. It acts as a way of healing the troubled mind to gain freedom from its pain and confusion.

Metta is first practices toward oneself, since we often have difficulty loving others without first loving ourselves. This technique is designed to overcome any feelings of unworthiness, self-doubt, or negativity towards yourself, and then we turn towards others.

Some people find lovingkindness for themselves so hard, that they begin their practice with love directed at other loving presences in their lives first. Expressing gratitude and love for those who we know love us comes naturally and easily. The rule in loving-kindness practice is to follow the way that most easily opens your heart.

Metta meditation is a combination of Mantra and Visualization meditation. First, we direct loving-kindness toward ourselves and then, in a sequence of expansion towards the following types of people:

		Loving-Kindness (Metta) Meditation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Someone that you love or admire already 2. Someone that you are neutral towards 3. Someone that you have difficulty with 4. Ultimately towards all beings everywhere without distinction. 	<p>Kind of Meditation</p> <p>Degree of difficulty</p>	<p>Combined Mantra and visualization concentration/focus</p> <p>Advanced Beginners</p>	
<p>Reflection, visualization and repetition of a mantra such as “loving-kindness” or “May I be happy” are all techniques to help you arouse feelings of loving-kindness. You can use them all or the one that works best for you.</p>	<p>Advised duration</p> <p>Posture</p>	<p>5 to 45 minutes</p> <p>Sitting</p>	
<p>Starting with yourself, then systematically sending loving-kindness from person to person in the above order, will break down perceived barriers between you and others.</p>	<p>Advantages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It improves your concentration • It gives you a clear, calm mind. • It improves your breathing. • It helps against stress. • It improves the quality of your life. 	
<p>Reflecting on your own positive qualities or those of another person, then using your own words, create a positive statement about the person.</p>	<p>Remarks</p>	<p>One of the most widely practiced meditations in the world. It is an exercise for beginners that you can do for the rest of your life.</p>	

Loving-kindness is a heart meditation and so not just a sitting meditation, expand your practice into your everyday life at home, at work, and all of your relationships.

Metta Meditation Exercise- Using a statement or mantra is the simplest and most effective technique in Metta meditation.

1. Sit down, close your eyes, and direct your attention to your breathing.
2. Be aware of every breathing in and breathing out.
3. Let your breathing be something automatic and do not try to steer it.
4. Observe how the air slowly goes in through your nose, fills up your lungs, and goes out again.
5. Slowly withdraw all of your attention from all sounds in the room.

6. When, after a few breaths, you really feel at ease, you begin:
7. Begin by using visualization, and bring up a mental picture. See yourself smiling at your own reflection.
8. Repeat the following phrase, silently:
 - May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.*
 - May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.*
 - May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe. May I be peaceful and at ease.*
 As you say these phrases, sink into their intention and heartfelt meaning.
9. After a period of directing Loving-kindness towards yourself,
10. Imagine a person close to you **who loves you very much**. It can be someone past or present, living or dead, it can also be a spiritual teacher or guide.
11. See yourself with the person that the feeling is directed at smiling back at you.
12. Imagine that person is sending you their warm wishes and love, wishing you perfect wellness and happiness. With every breath, you feel the positive energy stream into your being.
13. Then imagine that you are also sending that same feeling of love, happiness, and well-being back to that person.
14. Repeat the following phrase, silently:
 - May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be at peace.*
 - May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be at peace.*
 - May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be at peace.*
 As you say these phrases, sink into their intention and heartfelt meaning.
15. Think of the person **that you feel neutral towards**. See yourself with that person smiling back at you. Repeat the following phrase silently:
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 As you say these phrases, sink into their intention and heartfelt meaning.
16. Think of the person **that you experience difficulty with, and** see yourself with that person smiling back at you. Repeat the following phrase silently:
 - Just as I wish to be, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - Just as I wish to be, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - Just as I wish to be, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 As you say these phrases, sink into their intention and heartfelt meaning.
17. When you breathe in, take in this wonderful feeling of love, and when you breathe out, you imagine that all negative feelings escape from your body together with the air you breathe out.
18. Now imagine **all beings everywhere without distinction**.
19. Repeat the following phrase silently:
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
 - May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.*
20. Slowly bring your attention back to your breath. Be aware of every breathing in and breathing out.
21. Slowly take your attention back to the rest of your body and the sounds in the room.
22. Move a little, stretch your muscles, and open your eyes.
23. Notice your state of mind, and how you feel after this meditation.