

## The Meditations of Loving-Kindness and Compassion

The primary intention of these meditations is to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion in your own heart. Another way to say this is that we are inviting our “heart energy” to grow.

Take some time to settle into a meditative space: a few minutes with your breath or whatever focus you find that best helps you to settle.

Then bring to mind acts of love, kindness, and compassion that you have received from family, friends, strangers; from today to acts in the past; big and little acts. As you acknowledge these memories, notice a sense of appreciation and gratitude in your heart.

Select the phrases you will use, e.g., may you be happy, may you be peaceful, may you be free.

The standard, but not required sequence:

- benefactor (someone who has made your life richer because of what you learned from them)
- yourself
- someone you love or care about (this can include a pet)
- a neutral person (someone you don't have strong feelings about, you know little about them)
- a difficult person (someone toward whom you still have some resentment, anger, ill-will)
- end with all beings.

Notes:

1. You can focus on some of the persons or just one person; you can even focus on a pet
2. It is generally best to focus on one person at a time in each category.  
Otherwise, the meditation often becomes a thinking meditation vs. a heart practice.
3. It is generally best not to have more than three or four phrases during one sitting—then the focus moves from the heart to the brain trying to remember the phrases and the sequence!
4. Don't worry about which phrases are right. Over time the phrases that suit you will settle in.

As you repeat the phrases:

- Feel the response of your heart to each phrase.
- Notice where the mind goes with each phrase.
- Allow the mind and body to relax into the reverberations of each phrase.

As with other mindfulness meditations, the intentions here are to be:

(1) interested/curious and (2) accepting/non-judgmental/kind to yourself.

### LOVING-KINDNESS

May I/you be happy  
May I/you have moments of happiness today.  
May I/you be healthy  
May I/you be free  
May I/you be well  
May I/you be safe  
May I/you live with ease and kindness  
May I/you be filled with loving-kindness  
May I/you know the ease of well-being

### COMPASSION

May I/you be peaceful (at peace)  
May I/you be free from suffering  
I care about your suffering  
May I/you be free of pain and sorrow  
May I love myself just as I am  
May you love yourself just as you are  
May I/you be free from hurtfulness  
May I/you be free of troubles of mind and body  
May I/you be safe and protected

## Just Like Me Meditation (on your own)

“Realizing that the other person is also just like me is the basis on which you can develop compassion, not only towards those around you but also towards your ‘enemy.’ Normally, when we think about our enemy, we think about harming him [or her]. Instead, try to remember that the enemy is also a human being, just like me.” The Dalai Lama

### Instructions

Think of another person with whom you have some challenges.

Get into a meditative position and take a few minutes on breath, body, or sounds—calming the mind, not by force but by invitation.

Then, holding that person in your mind/heart, silently say as many of these phrases as you wish, pausing for a breath or two to let each phrase sink in.

Note that this is not a matter of forcing yourself to have loving-kindness or compassion.

Rather it is inviting yourself toward these heart states. In one sense, it is recognizing how open your heart is toward this person. The bottom line is that when we harbor great resentment and bitterness toward another person, we suffer.

A couple quotes. From the Buddha: “you are not punished for your anger but by your anger.”

Another: holding raging anger and seething bitterness toward another person is like drinking poison and waiting for them to die.

Phrases to say and then feel:

This person has feelings, emotions and thoughts, just like me.

This person has at some point felt sad, just like me.

This person has at some point been kind, just like me.

This person has at some point been hurt, just like me.

This person has at some point felt shame, just like me.

This person has felt unworthy or inadequate, just like me.

This person has at some point felt happiness, just like me.

This person has at some point felt anger, just like me.

This person worries and is frightened sometimes, just like me.

Because this person is a fellow human being, just like me.

This person has longed for friendship, just like me.

This person wants to be caring and kind to others, just like me.

This person wishes to be safe and healthy, just like me.

This person wishes to be happy, just like me.

This person wishes to be loved, just like me.

Because this person is a fellow human being, just like me.

I wish that this person be free from pain and suffering.

I wish that this person be peaceful and happy.

I wish that this person be loved.

Because this person is a fellow human being, just like me.