

Healing through Loving-Kindness:

The effective use of meditation in
personal and professional practice

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Ten thousand flowers in spring,
The moon in autumn,
A cool breeze in summer,
Snow in winter—
If your mind is not clouded
By unnecessary things,
This is the best season of our life.



– Wu Men

What Meditation Is *A way of providing*

- Greater calm
- Improved concentration & increased awareness
- An enhanced connection to others
- More effective responses to difficulties and stress
- Renewed energy and balance

What Meditation Isn't

- It is not a religion
- It doesn't require special skills
- It doesn't demand a huge amount of your time every day
- It isn't an attempt to stop thinking
- It doesn't eliminate sadness or rough patches from your life

Core Principles in Meditation Practices (from Christina Feldman)

- ◆ Attention
- ◆ Awareness
- ◆ Understanding and Compassion

A simple meditation to learn and to teach is

Breath Awareness

- Settle into a comfortable position, which may be sitting, lying down or standing.
- Bring awareness to sensations of the breath.
- Simply bring awareness to the experience.

- When your thoughts wander, just let them be or let them go, return your focus to the breath sensation.
- You could pay attention to breath sensations at the nostrils, the mouth or notice the sensations as your abdomen or chest rises and falls.
- Let the breath come to you, relax and just feel it.

What is Loving-Kindness?

Loving-Kindness is a basic human response of friendliness and kindness.

It exists as a seed or a potential that can be cultivated by anyone.

Loving-kindness means great friendliness to self and others.

It is a well of kindheartedness and wholesome deeds that are freely shared.



The Kindness Handbook

•By Sharon Salzberg

Loving-kindness is classically taught along with meditations that develop

- Compassion
- Sympathetic Joy
- Equanimity

Compassion

- The stirring of the heart in response to pain or suffering-our own or that of others.

Appreciative Joy

- The ability to rejoice in the good fortune and happiness of others.

Equanimity

- Is the unshakable and steadiness that comes as we learn to keep our hearts open through the changing circumstances of our lives.
- With an open heart our response is likely to be wiser and more effective.

Qualities That Support and Enrich Loving-Kindness Practice

- Generosity
- Forgiveness
- Gratitude

Practicing Loving-Kindness Using Phrases

Loving-Kindness Phrases

- ❖ May I be happy
- ❖ May I be healthy
- ❖ May I be peaceful
- ❖ May I be safe

Directing phrases to the following five groups:

- ❖ Yourself
- ❖ A loved one, good friend, benefactor, teacher
- ❖ A person you feel neutral about
- ❖ A challenging person
- ❖ All people

The Way We Practice with the Phrases Is:

- ❖ Attending to one phrase at a time
- ❖ Don't rush
- ❖ When your mind wanders, notice and come back to the phrases
- ❖ Keep repeating the phrases

Practical Suggestions to Support your Personal Practice

- Choosing time of day
- Choosing your location
- Deciding how much time you practice

- Knowing your motivation
- Summoning determination
- Practicing gratitude
- Remember to include yourself

Ways of Developing Kindness Toward Yourself

- Spend time reflecting on the good you have done.
- Think of someone who has helped you, been kind to you.
- Spend some time each day in self-care.
- In your loving-kindness meditation practice remember to begin with yourself.

Loving-Kindness for Caregivers

- **May I offer my care and presence unconditionally, knowing it may be met by gratitude, indifference, anger or anguish.**
- **May I find the inner resources to truly be able to give.**
- **May I offer love, knowing I cannot control the course of life, suffering or death.**

- **May I remain in peace and let go of expectations.**
- **I care about your pain and I cannot control it.**
- **I wish you happiness and peace and I cannot make your choices for you.**
- **May this experience help me open to the true nature of life.**

**You do not have to
separate your meditation
from your life.**

How to Develop *Informal* Loving-Kindness Practice

- **Direct kindness toward yourself or others throughout the day.**
- **Send kind thoughts to yourself if you are upset, worried, feeling low, can't sleep.**
- **You can direct thoughts of compassion to your clients.**

**How to Help Clients
Learn to Use
Loving-Kindness
for
Themselves**

Keep it simple!

**Try using a favorite
single loving-kindness phrase**

- May I be peaceful
- May I be free of anger
- May I be held in compassion
- May I be free from pain and sorrow
- May I be undisturbed by the coming and going of events

What's the Evidence?

- Research on meditation has soared over the last decade, with the first studies published thirty years ago.

Neuroplasticity

Brain's ability to change its structure and function.

Expanding or strengthening circuits that are used.

Weakening those that are rarely engaged.

**Documented Benefits of
Loving-Kindness Meditation**

- More emotional positivity
- More socially attuned
- More cognitively aware
- More resilience
- Improved cardiovascular health

**Open Hearts Build Lives:
Positive Emotions, Induced Through
Loving-Kindness Meditation,
Build Consequential Personal Resources**

Barbara L. Fredrickson, et al., (2008)
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,
volume 95, issue 5, pages 1045-1062

**How Positive Emotions Build Physical
Health: Perceived Positive Social
Connections Account for the
Upward Spiral Between
Positive Emotions and Vagal Tone**

Bethany E. Kok, et al., (2012)
Psychological Science on line version
<http://pss.sagepub.com/content/24/7/1123>

**Loving-Kindness Meditation to
Enhance Recovery from
Negative Symptoms of Schizophrenia**

David P. Johnson, et al., (2009) *Journal of
Clinical Psychology*, volume 65, issue 5, pages
499-509

**Factors that get
in the way of practice**

- Don't have time
- Can't remember to meditate
- Don't believe that it can make a difference

This will help!

- Learn one phrase that is meaningful to you and repeat it often for yourself.
- Take a moment to drop into the meaning of the phrase before your client walks into the room or you walk into a difficult situation.



“The most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside of us as we do it.

The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more surefooted our teaching – and living – becomes.”

Parker Palmer