

# **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**



# In Closing





# **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**