

The Gift of Loving-Kindness



Sit comfortably on a cushion or a chair with your back straight. (If sitting is physically difficult, feel free to lie down instead. Relax into the meditation position.

Take note of being present in your body and your environment. Breathe. Take your time. Notice how your body accommodates each breath. Settle in.

Turn your focus to the heart. Feel or imagine your beating heart with gratitude and warmth.

Call to mind a person (or pet) of past or present whose steady love and unconditional acceptance of you touches your heart in a special way. Allow yourself to experience their loving-kindness as if they were near to you, happy for your presence and grateful for you just as you are.

Notice how this image eases your body and your mind. Relax into this warm feeling of connection. Keep it simple. Allow thoughts to arise and evaporate and come back to the heart. Take your time.

Now put this loving-kindness and warmth that you are receiving into words. If helpful, you can imagine that these kind thoughts are what the person (or animal) you've called to mind wants for you and picture that they are wishing them with you.

Adapt the words so they reflect your personal wishes and situation. Here's one example:

Repeat the wishes at least three times, out loud or in your mind. Savour them. Take your time. Feel their ability to warm and open the heart.

May I be held in loving-kindness.
 May I be happy and safe.
 May I be healthy in body and in mind.
 May I always have enough.
 May my heart know peace.

May you be held in loving-kindness.
 May you be happy and safe.
 May you be healthy in body and in mind.
 May you always have enough.
 May your heart know peace.

Next, bring to mind someone who means a lot to you, someone in whose presence you can relax and be fully appreciated for who you are. Feel the goodness of this heart connection, feel your mutual gratitude.

As you offer your well-wishes, imagine that the person is touched by them and experiences happiness and peace.

Repeat the wishes at least three times, out loud or in your mind. Appreciate the sincerity of the words. Feel their ability to warm and open the heart. Take your time.

Next, bring to mind someone you've met casually, someone you recognize but don't really know - a school crossing guard, the person who manages the produce department at your grocery store, a neighbour you nod to. As you think of them, wish them well.

Repeat the same words and imagine that they receive the full benefit of them. Gone, their aches and pains, material worries, concerns about the future. Imagine that as your wishes touch them, their hearts and minds are at ease.

Repeat the wishes at least three times. Appreciate the sincerity of the words. Feel their ability to warm and open the heart. Take your time.

May you be held in loving-kindness.
 May you be happy and safe.
 May you be healthy in body and in mind.
 May you always have enough.
 May your heart know peace.