

Loving Kindness Meditation

The goal of Loving Kindness meditation is to cultivate kindness for all beings, including yourself. Like other types of meditations, the practice is beneficial for mental, emotional, and physical health. It's especially useful for reducing stress, anxiety, and negative emotions toward yourself and other people.

The main technique of this Loving Kindness meditation involves reciting positive phrases toward yourself and these beings. You silently recite phrases toward yourself and others. These phrases are meant to express kind intentions.

Some examples of phrases include:

- “May I be safe. May I live with ease”
- “May I be happy. May I be healthy.
- “May I be strong and confident.”

You can substitute the ones listed here for other positive emotions. It's important to repeat each phrase with awareness. This helps you focus on the phrase and the associated emotions.

How to Practice

Try to choose a spot to sit where you're least likely to be distracted, then follow these steps:

1. **Sit in a comfortable position.** Close your eyes. Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose and continue breathing deeply for a few minutes.
2. **Move your focus to your heart.**
3. **Choose a kind, positive phrase.** Silently recite the phrase, directing it toward yourself. You can say, “May I be healthy. May I be happy. May I be safe. May I live with ease.” (You can create your own phrases based upon what positive states and emotions you want more of.)
4. **Slowly repeat the phrase.** Acknowledge its meaning and how it makes you feel. If you get distracted, avoid judging yourself. Just return to the phrase and keep repeating it.
5. **Now, think about your friends and family.** You can think about a specific person or a group of people. Repeat the phrases toward them, “May you be healthy. May you be happy. May you be safe. May you live with ease.” Again, recognize the meaning and how you feel.
6. **Continue reciting the phrase toward others, including neighbors, acquaintances, and difficult people in your life.** Recognize your emotions, even if they're negative. Repeat the phrase until you experience compassionate feelings. This may take practice doing this exercise before kind or compassionate feelings arise. You may notice a slow shift from negativity to neutral to kinder emotions.

Some people use visual imagery while reciting each phrase. For example, you can imagine light emitting from your heart or the person you're thinking of. Remember, you can also change the phrase as needed.