Beacon of Love Meditation

Jack Kornfield · Notable Dhamma Teachers — Jack Kornfield · 24:55

So let yourself settle where you sit, and try to sit in a way that's comfortable—where you'll be awake, but at ease. It's very hard to do loving kindness meditation if your back is killing you or your knees. So you want to be, as you can, respectfully comfortable and present.

Once you have settled yourself, halfway between heaven and earth in this human form, you take your seat. Let your eyes close gently. Take two long breaths in and out, and let the body, the heart, and mind all begin to settle. The body breathes itself, and you can relax and let there be a gracious, loving awareness of whatever is present.

Into this space of presence and loving awareness, let us now practice the traditional loving kindness meditation in at least one form, and invite the quality of loving kindness to flower and open in your own heart and your own consciousness.

First, let yourself think of someone, some being that you know, who is easy to love—unconflicted, easy, gracious, someone you care about. It doesn't have to be this fantastic relationship, just someone where there's a natural feeling of care and love. And if there isn't any being that comes to mind, you can even use your dog, who generally speaking loves you quite unconditionally—or a little bit conditionally, depending on the dog food.

Picture and remember and envision this person, someone you naturally feel kindness and love toward. As you see them in the mind's eye, let yourself get quiet. Sense that you can wish them well, that your care can be expressed as loving kindness. Whisper in the mind or the heart some simple phrases of well-wishing, some simple intention: May you be filled with loving kindness. May you be held in great loving kindness. May you be safe and protected. May you be well and strong.

Become aware also of the measure of struggles in this person's life, as in all life—their difficulties. May you hold your struggles in great compassion. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

Repeat again, letting the feeling of loving kindness and care grow as you do. May you be filled with loving kindness. May you be safe and protected. May you be well, strong, healed. May your struggles be held in great compassion and kindness. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

As you do this, know that sometimes the feelings will arise more strongly. Sometimes it can feel a bit mechanical, or even bring up its opposite. You just keep planting the seeds of loving kindness, little by little by little, and they will grow.

Now think of another person you care about. Bring them into the mind's eye and heart—someone again where it's easy, natural to feel care. As you picture them, offer the same well-wishing and intention: May you be filled with loving kindness. May you be safe and protected. May you be well, strong, and healed. May your struggles be held in compassion and kindness. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

Now let yourself imagine or picture or sense that these two beings you have held with loving kindness, to whom you have offered your thoughts and intentions of love—that they gaze back at you. You can see them looking at you with kindly eyes. They want to send back to you the same loving kindness that you offered to them. They care about you.

They gaze at you and they say: May you too be filled with loving kindness. May you too be safe and protected. May you too be well, strong, and healed. Take in their well wishes. May you hold all your struggles in compassion and kindness. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

Taking it in, if it feels right, you can even put a hand on your heart. They've wished this for you, and you can wish the same for yourself, just as they wish for you—these people who care about you. May I be filled with loving kindness amidst it all. May I be safe and protected. May I be well, strong, and healed.

May I hold my struggles with great compassion. Feel the tenderness of that. And filled with loving kindness, may I be happy—truly happy.

Let the happiness and kindness fill your body, fill the cells, fill the whole of your being.

Now that the heart has invited the quality of loving kindness to grow, to open, let's extend it further. Let yourself think of someone you care about who's maybe struggling, who could use an infusion of loving kindness. As the heart opens and you picture them: May you be filled with loving kindness. May you be safe and protected. May you be well, healed and strong. May you hold all your struggles in compassion, kindness, tenderness. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

Now let this loving kindness spread. Pick another person and silently—whoever you choose—extend the loving kindness further, using the same well-wishing, or whatever phrases express your heart's care.

Now sense yourself as a lighthouse, a beacon of love. Let the feelings of loving kindness and whatever well-wishing phrases arise in you extend to the circle of all your friends and family—all of them. The easy ones and the not-so-easy ones. You know who I mean.

May you all be filled with loving kindness, all of you. Safe and protected, all of you. Well and strong and healed, all friends and family. May you hold your struggles in compassion and tenderness—all your struggles. And filled with loving kindness, may you be happy.

Now let the loving kindness spread across the community around you, however big it is—the neighbors and community, the place you live. You are the lighthouse, sending love to beings large and small in every

direction.

Now let your loving kindness spread across the whole world, omitting none, as it says in the Loving Kindness Sutra. Spread to beings who are struggling. You can think of all those women marching in Iran after the death of Mahsa Amini, just wanting some freedom. May they be safe and protected, filled with love—just as so many of us marched for Breonna Taylor and others in this country. But omitting none, sending the loving kindness to all beings, far and near. May your hearts open in loving kindness. Even those who are afraid, even those who are acting in ways that bring harm—may you remember love. May you foster loving kindness and well-being.

Now you extend loving kindness so naturally that it becomes who you are. You are love, connected to all, part of it all, filled with loving kindness. Quiet now, and deep. You are like the earth herself, blessing all beings.

Rest in love.

And staying with the spirit of loving kindness, let your eyes open gently. Look around at this amazing world you find yourself in, as if you were transported from some other planet. Here you are, on earth, and your assignment is to see it with the eyes of mystery and love, with surprise.

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