

## Loving-Kindness – Metta, full practice

Start with a few minutes of silent meditation to help you feel more centered and at ease.

Then, take a few moments to arouse a motivation of profound compassion, wishing that this practice might be of transforming benefit for yourself and all beings.

### Loving-Kindness for oneself

- Recall a memory when you felt cared for or loved, and allow that love to once again warm your heart and fill the whole of your being, so that you feel comfortable, spacious and well, while silently repeating:

*“May I be happy. May I be well.”*

- Again, from your memory of being loved, consider this radiant love flowing into you melts away any negative feelings such as anger, unworthiness, or self-judgment, while silently repeating:

*“May I be happy. May I be well.”*

- Reflect on a time when you felt happy, or felt complete well-being, and re-enter this experience. Or, imagine how you would feel if you were truly and perfectly happy and well, while repeating:
- *“May I be happy. May I be well.”*

Now gradually extend your love to others, step by step, so that it becomes impartial and universal.

### Loving-Kindness for a benefactor

- Think of someone you admire, or someone who has been especially kind or loving to you. As you remember this person’s kindness and feel it again, your heart may naturally respond with love and gratitude, as you mentally wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

### Loving-Kindness for a good friend

- Remember a happy time you shared with a good friend, or recall the qualities you value in his or her friendship. Feeling appreciation for your friend, you can wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

### Loving-Kindness for a neutral person

- Think of a person you have no history with—either someone you know but feel indifferent towards, or perhaps a stranger you have recently seen. Reflect how just like you, this person wishes to be happy and well. See this person not as a meaningless ‘face in the crowd’, but in the fullness of their humanity, while sending the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- You may cultivate an openness of heart and empathy toward those you don’t know, feeling that just like your dearest friends, the strangers you meet are worthy of unconditional love, while repeating:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

### Loving-Kindness for a difficult person

- Begin with a relatively minor difficulty—someone who irritates you, or someone you simply don’t like being with, sending him or her the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Reflect on how trapped you may be, and the suffering and burden you carry, when you think of someone with dislike, resentment or anger. Reflect that there may be a benefit for you, when you practice letting go and loving this person, while sending the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Now bring to mind a person who has treated you badly, or someone who is hostile. See if you can reflect on the person in a way that enables you to see them freshly. Reflect on something positive about him or her, or a time when he or she showed kindness, while wishing:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Reflect that just as you wish to be happy, and be free of suffering, so do any people who hurt you. If they are negative or harmful, reflect that they have lost contact with their true nature, which is fundamental goodness. Sincerely wanting them to be truly well, send them the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

### Loving-Kindness for all beings

Gradually extend your love in stages, so that eventually you can send it out equally to all beings. Extend the same love, and wish for happiness, to those who live in your home, and in your region, with the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Extend boundless love to all those in your country, and then to all those on your continent, with the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Extend the exact same love to those who touch your heart, and those to whom you feel indifference or aversion, with the wish:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- To all of these people:
  - Poor people, and rich people;
  - People in places of disaster, famine or warfare;
  - Those we believe are causing the suffering of others;
  - To all beings in all forms, including animals, insects, and spirits

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

- Finally, extend your sincere wish for happiness and love to all beings everywhere throughout the universe, in all directions, limitlessly:

*“May you be happy. May you be well.”*

## Conclusion

Now, let go of the reflections and phrases, and rest for a while in an atmosphere of all-pervasive love. Dedicate the practice toward the ultimate happiness of yourself, and of all beings. You can continue to use the phrases for yourself and for others as you encounter different people and situations during the day. This can be a very enjoyable and refreshing way of relating with everyone you meet, as well as yourself.

## Recommended Resources

### Books

- **Compassion: Bridging Practice and Science**, Tania Singer and Matthias Boaz. (open access book, available as free download on Kindle or iBooks)
- **Cultivating Compassion**, Jeffrey Hopkins, Broadway, 2001.
- **Emotional Awareness: Overcoming the Barriers to Psychological Balance and Compassion**, The Dalai Lama and Paul Ekman, Times Books, 2008.

- **Facing Death and Finding Hope**, Christine Longaker, Random House, 2007.
- **Happiness**, Matthieu Ricard, Atlantic Books, 2007
- **Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal**, Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D., Riverhead Trade, 2006
- **Loving Kindness–The Revolutionary Art of Happiness**, Sharon Salzberg, Shambhala, 2002.
- **Medicine and Compassion**, Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and David Shilm, MD, Wisdom, 2006.
- **Our Greatest Gift: A Meditation on Caring and Dying**, Henri Nouwen, Harper One, 2009.
- **Start Where You Are**, Pema Chödrön, Shambhala, 2004.
- **The Art of Being a Healing Presence**, James Miller and Susan Cutshall, Willowgreen, 2001.
- **The Compassionate Mind: A New Approach to Life’s Challenges**, Paul Gilbert, New Harbinger, 2010.
- **The Healing Power of Meditation: Leading Experts on Buddhism, Psychology, and Medicine** Explore the Health Benefits of Contemplative Practice, edited by Andy Fraser , Shambhala 2013.
- **The Miracle of Mindfulness: A Manual on Meditation**, Thich Nhat Hanh, Beacon, 1999.
- **The Power of Kindness: The Unexpected Benefits of Leading a Compassionate Life**, Piero Ferrucci, Tarcher, 2007
- **The Tibetan Book of Living and Dying**, 2nd Edition, Sogyal Rinpoche, Harper SanFrancisco, 2002.
- **Twelve Steps to a Compassionate Life**, Karen Armstrong, Knopf, 2010.
- Walking Meditation, DVD and CD, Thich Nhat Hanh and Anh Huong Nyugen, Sounds True, 2006.

#### Websites

- [www.selfcompassion.org](http://www.selfcompassion.org) - online test to assess self-compassion
- [www.spcare.org](http://www.spcare.org) - offers online and residential skills-training courses for professionals: *Authentic Presence*
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bQSWsOORBFY>- Sharon Salzberg on Loving Kindness meditation
- [www.theschwartzcenter.org](http://www.theschwartzcenter.org) – Harvard center for compassionate healthcare, a framework for education in compassionate care
- [www.charterforcompassion.org](http://www.charterforcompassion.org) - international organization encouraging focus on compassion in all aspects of society
- [www.CompassionInSociety.org](http://www.CompassionInSociety.org) - organization focusing on empathy and compassion in society