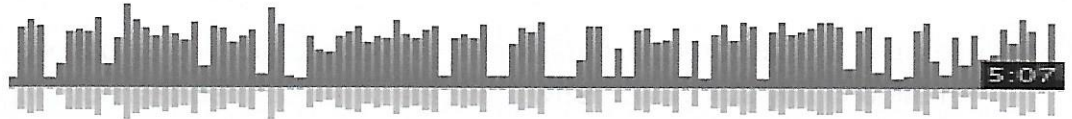


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A Lovingkindness Meditation: Won't You Be My Neighbor?



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Where Is the Unconditional Love?

Between waiting for a house project to finish and not being able to be there for my family during the pandemic, my energy has been pretty dormant lately. Because I cannot control either situation, I find my body and mind working together to do, well, nothing on some days.

I recently thought back to one of the most energetic and uplifting times in my life, which was about two years ago when I created my own Lovingkindness meditation. This type of meditation was popular in my yoga teacher training because it focuses on compassion for yourself and others. Additionally, the beauty of this meditation is that it doesn't ask that you belong to an architectural space such as a church or temple. Instead, it only asks for the ingredient of unconditional love that starts within the self and moves outward toward others.

Presently, the kitchen being banged apart and back together reminds me that we cannot always control how something gets built or destroyed around us. Knowing this, we still tend to be hard on ourselves and I am no exception. But when I tried to remember any part of the Lovingkindness meditation recently, I could only seem to remember one or two things and could not get into the ritual of putting unconditional love out there.

Because of this, I almost gave up.

Finding My Words

However, not wanting to give up on my family during this time forced me to seek out and dust off (literally) my index-size Lovingkindness meditation. I found the scent of blankets it carried from being buried under warmth for years quite comforting. It also helped me to remember what it felt like to not be so consumed by my anxieties.

With this in mind, I'd like to share my words of ritual with you, in the hopes of starting a conversation about what it feels like to move from Lovingkindness. So, won't you be my neighbor?

My Lovingkindness Meditation

May I be filled with lovingkindness.

May I be safe from inner and outer dangers.

May I be well in body and mind.

May I be at ease and happy.

These four lines can be repeated as a whole or you may choose to focus on just one that resonates the most with you. Also, give yourself permission to stay with whatever words you choose for however long you feel comfortable with.

My Lovingkindness Meditation for Others

May you be filled with lovingkindness.

May you be safe from inner and outer dangers.

May you be well in body and mind.

May you be at ease and happy.

Once again, these four lines can be repeated as a whole, or individually. Remember to continue to give yourself permission to stay with whatever words you choose for however long you feel comfortable with.

When going deeper into stillness, it's normal to notice that the breath becomes shallow or even stops every once in a while. This is because when our body and mind are both relaxed, there's less oxygen required than when the body is active. In other words, the energy is now in the mind supporting meditation.

Further Thoughts

Finally, for more information on Lovingkindness, check out Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction website [here](#). You may notice that his exercise differs in a few ways. Firstly, he asks that we focus on someone else's love for us before shifting focus to ourselves. Secondly, he adds layers by asking that we bring our words toward others with whom we feel neutral towards, and then, towards others with whom we have difficult relationships.

So, my dear neighbor, are you ready to start on our Lovingkindness journey?
