Loving Kindness Meditation

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Hi everyone and welcome to Mindfulness Mondays. My name is Nancy Blackwell and I'm a therapist and doctoral psychology intern at UNC Chapel Hill CAPS. My colleague Mirella and I are really happy to be able to bring you Mindful Mondays as well as Thankful Thursdays, talking about the practices of mindfulness and gratitude and hoping those practices are bringing some peace and calm to you throughout your week. So today for our Mindful Mondays I'm going to be introducing and guiding you in the practice of loving kindness. So I'll be guiding you in a loving kindness meditation. And loving kindness is really referring to compassion and warmth - geared both towards ourselves and others in the world. And so my hope is that you'll leave this meditation today with a really nice sense of internal warmth and warmth that can also radiate outward, reaching all those people that you're thinking about and not able to see in person right now.

All right, so I'm going to go ahead and get started with the meditation. Allow yourself to become comfortable, sitting in a chair or a cushion on the floor. Sitting with a relaxed but straight posture, with your shoulders relaxed. Allow your hands to relax comfortably in your lap. And if you're comfortable, gently close your eyes or allow your gaze to focus on a spot on the floor or maybe the wall. Allow yourself to sink into where you're sitting. And to settle into awareness of the body and of the breath. Notice how it feels to breathe in. Notice how it feels to breathe out.

In.
Out.
In.
Out.

Allow yourself to connect to your breath. And as your mind wanders, as it will, just gently and steadily and without judgment bring your attention back to your breathing.

In.
Out.
In.
Out.

In this practice, we'll be cultivating loving kindness.
We all have within us a natural capacity for loving kindness. For friendship and compassion that is unconditional, open, gentle and supportive. Loving kindness is a natural opening of a compassionate heart to ourselves and to others. It’s a wish that everyone, everywhere be happy. We begin with developing loving kindness towards ourselves and allowing our hearts to open with tenderness.

Allow yourself to remember and open up to your own basic goodness. You might remember times that you have been kind or generous. You might recall your natural desire to be happy and not to suffer. If acknowledging your own goodness is difficult, look at yourself through the eyes of someone who loves you.

As your experience the love, notice how you feel in your body. Perhaps you feel some warmth. Perhaps you feel some heat in your face. Perhaps you have a small smile or a sense of expansiveness. This is loving kindness and it is a natural feeling that is accessible to allow us, always.


Invite feelings of peace and acceptance. We'll start with wishing yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself. I'll be offering a guidance of phrases that I tend to use. You're invited to alter these phrases and to choose whatever words express your wishes of loving kindness towards yourself and others. And now, offering these words in your mind to yourself.

May I be filled with loving kindness.
May I be held in loving kindness.
May I accept myself just as I am.
May I be happy.
May I know peace.
May I be filled with loving kindness.
May I be held in loving kindness.
May I accept myself just as I am.
May I be happy.
May I know peace.

Now you can open the circle of loving kindness by bringing to mind someone who is dear to you. Someone who you care about and who has always been supportive. Reflect on this person’s basic goodness, sensing what it is in particular that you love about him or her.

In your heart, feel your appreciation for your loved one. And gently offer them words of loving kindness.

May you be filled with loving kindness.
May you be held in loving kindness.
May you accept yourself just as you are.
May you be happy.
May you know peace.
May you be filled with loving kindness.
May you be held in loving kindness.
May you accept yourself just as you are.
May you be happy.
May you know peace.

Now, bring to mind a neutral person. This person is likely an acquaintance - someone you might see regularly but don't know well. Perhaps a neighbor. Perhaps a person you see at the store. Bring this person to mind now. And repeat the words of loving kindness to them.
May you be filled with loving kindness.
May you be held in loving kindness.
May you accept yourself just as you are.
May you be happy.
May you know peace.

May you be filled with loving kindness.
May you be held in loving kindness.
May you accept yourself just as you are.
May you be happy.
May you know peace.

Now, allow your awareness to open out in all directions. Within to yourself. To your loved one. To a neutral person. And now to all beings. Humans and animals living everywhere. Living in all circumstances. Humans who are aware of all the joys and sorrows of life. Offer to all beings your words of loving kindness.
May everyone be filled with loving kindness.
May everyone be held in loving kindness.
May everyone accept themselves just as they are.
May they be happy.
May they know peace.

May everyone be filled with loving kindness.
May everyone be held in loving kindness.
May everyone accept themselves just as they are.
May they be happy.
May they know peace.

May they be happy.
May they know peace.
May they be happy.
May they know peace.

And now, bring this practice to a close by coming back to extend kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to just gently bring your awareness back into the space you’re in. Allow yourself to sit. To bask in the energy of loving kindness that may have been generated here. And remind yourself that you can come back to this practice. This practice of loving kindness anytime you choose.

I hope this was a peaceful way to start your Monday. To start your week. Wishing you all well and take good care. Hope to see you back.

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