



Meditating on Loving-kindness and Compassion

Over the next few months, we will explore the practice of loving-kindness and compassion meditation, learning how to open our hearts to the world around us and relax the self-centered tendencies that lead to anxiety, dissatisfaction, and suffering. Cultivating loving-kindness and compassion helps us to see the basic goodness that all beings share. By relating to others in an open-hearted way, we bring peace to the mind and develop a sense of confidence and purpose. This, in turn, naturally brings harmony to our relationships and enables us to work with challenging situations more effectively.

August 4th – August 25th ~ Meditating on Loving-Kindness

All beings share the basic desires to be happy and free from suffering. When we recognize these impulses in our own experience, we can use this recognition as a basis for opening our hearts to others. Cultivating the wish to bring happiness to all beings not only increases our willingness to enrich the lives of others, it also instills within us with a sense of confidence and joy that does not depend on the shifting circumstances around us.

Reading: *Joy of Living*, pp. 172-177

September 1st – September 29th ~ Meditating on Compassion

Suffering and dissatisfaction are symptomatic of being out of touch with the basic goodness of awareness itself. When cultivating compassion, we learn to relate to ourselves with tenderness and unconditional acceptance, viewing every thought, feeling, and experience as a new opportunity to awaken. Over time, this attitude will naturally begin to radiate outward, allowing us to expand the scope of our compassion to include all beings.

Reading: *Joy of Living*, pp. 178-189



~ Daily Meditation Practice ~

Sitting meditation practice:

- Begin by *resting in open awareness*:
 - Relax your mind and remain present.
 - Don't try to focus on anything in particular or control your mind, yet do not get lost in thoughts either.
 - Leave all of the sense doors open, without trying to block any aspect of experience.
- Next, *cultivate loving-kindness toward yourself*:
 - Repeat the phrase “May I be happy and free from suffering.”
 - After a few minutes, *pause and rest in open awareness*.
 - When it feels natural to do so, *again cultivate loving-kindness toward all beings* by repeating the phrase “May all beings be happy and free from suffering.”
- End by letting go and *resting once again in open awareness*.

Meditation in action:

- When you wake up, set the intention to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion throughout the day.
- Remind yourself of this intention as often as you can:
 - Pick specific moments to remind yourself, such as during breaks, at meal times, or when you get up to do something.
 - Place reminders, such as sticky notes, around your home and office in places where you will see them frequently, or use digital reminders on your computer or phone.
- When you remember this intention, direct your attention to the people around you and silently repeat the phrase “May you be happy and free from suffering.” If you are alone, silently repeat the phrase “May I be happy and free from suffering.”
- Come back to this practice as often as you can throughout the day.



~ Teachings, Guided Meditations, and Other Resources ~

Online Readings

- [Loving-kindness and Compassion](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Online Videos

- [Transforming Anger into Loving-kindness](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche
- [We Are Always Looking for Happiness](#) by Mingyur Rinpoche

Guided Meditations and Other Online Audio

- [Bodhichitta: Vastness of the Heart](#) by Myoshin Kelley