Day 1: Self-Compassion Break. I will write frankly and openly. I did not find this to be a helpful practice. The moment that I conjured was one in which I witness the suffering of others, and empathically it hurts my heart to see this. I am myself suffering in this moment but focusing on my own experience of it would distract from my grieving and acceptance of the suffering of others. When I am not the focus of my own suffering it is not helpful to think of someone else in my shoes, for both of us are helpless in this moment. If we were to ease the suffering in a moment of trauma, we may fail to truly understand the plight of the victim, and be less kind as a result. I cannot not tell myself “I will be okay” while seeing someone that I care about in a state of ‘not-okay’. If I do tell myself “I will be okay” then I am telling myself that I will not suffer with them, and that I will allow them to be alone. For this reason, I could not apply these tools to this moment of suffering. (Perhaps such an argument is independent of any specific practice but one of self-compassion generally? Edit: after day 2 and 3 I believe this is not true generally)

Day 2: Affectionate Breathing. While doing this practice there were times where I was prompted to think of feelings of kindness towards others, and while doing this it was impossible to not also think of this kindness being reciprocated, and to think of my gratefulness of their kindness towards me. It seems that affection and appreciation go hand in hand in my mind. I sometimes would let my mind wander, other times focusing on the colors and shapes produced in my mind while closing my eyes.

Day 3: Loving Kindness for Ourselves. This felt quite similar to yesterday’s practice, although this one more focused on the self. A common theme seems to be giving yourself what you need. I find this to be less meditative and more provocative of thought, because the question “What do I need?” and “What do I need to hear?” are deep questions, that often do not have simple answers. It’s almost like trying to think of a mantra and then meditating with it in the same practice.

Day 4: Compassionate Friend Meditation. This one struck me as a little bit odd, but I tried to keep an open mind. This is very similar in some ways to something that I have trained myself to do, which I documented in this week’s activity. I imagine what someone who loves me (somebody real that I know, usually my dad) would tell me in this moment, and the effect of this I think is the same as the effect of this practice. I think it becomes even easier to realize that this person is a part of myself because it is somebody who I know is dear to me and has helped shape me into who I am, and it is quite natural to assume that this person would be a part of who I am.