

MINDFULNESS SCRIPTS





BREATH AWARENESS SCRIPT

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to begin with just a few minutes and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our breath awareness practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

We will begin by finding a comfortable sitting position in your chair with your feet solidly on the floor, your back tall, but not stiff or uncomfortable and your hands resting in your lap.

In invite you to close your eyes if that feels comfortable to you, or if you prefer you can leave your eyes open with a softened gaze.

Notice the feeling of your feet on the floor and your hands in your lap. Notice the places where your body makes contact with the chair.

Bring your attention into your body, become aware of your breathing, and see if you can discover the place in your body where you most clearly experience the sensation of your breath moving in and out. Some people most clearly feel their breath in the rise and fall of their chest, or their belly. Others notice the feel of air as it moves through the tip of the nose or the back of the throat. It doesn't matter where it is, you are just trying to discover where you personally most easily sense the flow of your breath.

(Pause for your students to explore their breath.)

Once you have discovered where you most easily feel your breath, allow your attention to settle there, observing with curiosity as the breath moves in and out. Allow your breathing to be at your normal pace. For this practice, we are not trying to control our breath, we are simply observing it and becoming aware of it.

(Pause)

You may notice almost immediately, that your attention wanders from the breath. This is normal and natural. We can easily be distracted by noises we hear or thoughts we have. Without struggling or judging yourself, simply notice that your mind has wandered, then release the thoughts, returning your attention again to the rise and fall of your breath. If it helps you can think to yourself, “in” on the inhale and “out” on the exhale.

As we are doing this, we are not trying to stop our thoughts; we are just learning to notice when our thoughts pull us out of the present moment. And when we notice that we’re going to kindly return our attention back to our breath with patience and without judgment.

Let’s take a few moments to focus on our breath. Remember, just notice it – breathing in and breathing out. And as your mind wanders, refocus again on breathing in and breathing out.

(Pause again so your students can continue to explore their breath.)

As this practice comes to an end, I invite you to take a deep breath in and let it out.

When you’re ready, go ahead and open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)

BELLY BREATHING SCRIPT



Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to begin with just a few minutes and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our belly breathing practice.

This is a fundamental stress management skill and one that can be used in many situations.

As you know, breathing is both involuntary and under our voluntary control. Your breathing can reflect your mood and also be used to change our mood.

What might happen in the body if we breathe more deeply from our belly or diaphragm? There are several benefits of this type of breathing, such as increase oxygen to the body, decreased heart rate and blood pressure, and stimulation of the immune system. Importantly, belly breathing activates the parasympathetic nervous system, the calming part of our autonomic nervous system, that calms and quiets the fight/flight/freeze system.

Let's begin by finding our diaphragm. Try standing up, press your fingers into your belly under your sternum where your ribs attach, and make a sharp, hissing sound. Making this sound engages the diaphragm, and most people are able to feel their bellies bulging as they hiss. This can take some practice, so don't worry if you can't feel it.

Unlike many other practices, for this practice it is helpful to kind of scoot down in your seat, lounging back a bit, making sure you are comfortable. When you practice at home later, you may want to lie down on the floor or bed.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

First, we are going to get familiar with the way our bodies naturally breathe. Allow your eyes to close and put one hand on your chest and one hand on your belly. Begin by breathing normally, and just notice whether the hand on your chest or the hand on your belly moves more as you breathe.

(Pause for a few breaths)

If your chest hand moves more, that suggests that you are a natural chest breather. Many people are and that's perfectly fine. It just means that it may take you a bit more practice to figure out how to breathe with your belly.

Now place both hands on your belly, and let's work on starting to breathe more with our bellies. As you breathe in, push your belly out, as best you can, so that your hands rise up. And then let your hands sink back down as you breathe out. It may help to imagine a balloon being blown up in your belly as you breathe in. And then the balloon deflating as you breathe out. Feel your hands riding up and down as you breathe.

(Pause)

If you are not used to breathing with your belly, you may feel like you are struggling at first. If you need to stop and take a big deep breath and then go back to belly breathing, that's okay. Remember, this is a new skill, and it takes practice to learn.

(Pause)

So as we're focusing on this belly breathing, your mind will likely wander because that's what our minds do. When you notice your mind has wandered, simply bring your attention back to the feel of your hands on your belly, riding up and down with your breath.

Let's take a few minutes now to practice this. You can try to slow and deepen your breath if you'd like. You can do this by counting to 3 on the inhale and exhale. So a slow deep inhale for a count of three and then a slow deep exhale for a count of three.

(Pause for a few minutes. You want to make sure you give your students enough time to develop some mastery of the skill and experience the calming effects.)

If your mind has wandered, just kindly bring your attention back to the breath and the rise and the fall of your belly.

(Pause)

As we end this practice, I want to invite you to try this belly breathing the next time you are feeling stressed or perhaps even the next time you that you are having difficulty falling asleep. The slow belly breathing as we are focusing on the rise and the fall of our belly with our breath can help relax us and help us get some sleep.

When you're ready, feel free to open your eyes and reacquaint yourself with the room.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)

GUIDED IMAGERY SCRIPT

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to begin with just a few minutes and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our guided imagery practice.

Guided imagery is a means 'to calm yourself, to change your mood, to take a vacation in your mind'. There are other ways to use guided imagery, such as visualizing a specific desired outcome (like acing an exam, speaking confidently and articulately in front of an audience). Guided imagery can also be used to support healing, as when cancer patients imagine their immune systems' cells attacking their cancer cells.

The most important part of imaging is to use all of your sense when visualizing. In this manner, you can 'trick' your brain into believing that you are really in the place you are imaging. Scientists can now place people in functional MRI's while they are imagining and see, for example, the engagement of the part of the brain that controls vision.

Occasionally people feel strong feelings when doing guided imagery, this is natural and ok. You can open your eyes and end the exercise any time you want.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Allow yourself to sit back and relax...see that your arms and legs are in a position that feels comfortable for you. And...slowly and gently close your eyes. Or if you prefer you can leave your eyes open with a softened gaze. You can do this practice lying down or sitting, whichever feels the most comfortable to you.

(Pause for about 10-15 seconds)

Allow your attention to move to your breathing. Let your breathing become even and comfortable. Breathing is one of the most conscious influences you have on your nervous system.

(Pause)

So now I'd like to invite you to see yourself in a very special place...it could be a real place – a place you've actually been – a beautiful spot in nature or a comforting place in your own home. Your special place may be an imaginary place – a place in fairy tales – indoors or outdoors – it doesn't really matter. Should more than one place come to mind, allow yourself to stay with one of them for today.

(Pause)

The only thing that matters is that it is a place in which you are completely comfortable and safe. So imagine yourself in this place. Appreciate this scene with all of your senses. Hear the sounds – smell the aromas – feel the air as it touches your skin – experience the ground securely under you – touch and feel the whole environment that you are in. There may also be an opportunity to imagine taste associated with your special place.

(Pause)

Notice what you're wearing.

(Short pause)

Notice what you have on your feet, if anything.

(Short pause)

What time of year it is?

(Short pause)

What is the temperature? It is warm or cold against your skin?

(Short pause)

What time of day is it? Can you see the sun, the stars, or the moon?

(Short pause)

Notice the colors that surround you. What colors are in the environment that you are in. Be curious if these colors are ones that you tend to find soothing and comforting.

(Short pause)

Are you alone or with another person or people? Or perhaps you are with a pet or another animal.

(Short pause)

Notice the qualities of the place that make it safe and comfortable.

(Pause)

Now look around you to see if there is anything else that would make this place more comfortable for you.

Perhaps something that you need to remove from the place or something that you need to bring in...

(Pause)

Now notice how your body feels in this place...

Take some time to enjoy the feeling of comfort in this place...

(Pause for at least a minute)

Remind yourself that you can return to this place or a similar place whenever you wish. The nice thing about guided imagery is that it doesn't require anything. Just a few moments of your time to be able to think about a safe, comfortable place.

(Pause)

And when you are ready...at your own pace...let your breathing deepen... Take some deep breaths.

Very gradually let the awareness of your body against the chair or the floor return...

Bring yourself back to the room slowly and comfortably...

And now when you are ready, gently open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



MINDFUL LISTENING SCRIPT

Time Required

At least 1 minute. It is often helpful to begin with just a few minutes and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our mindful listening practice.

Our lives are filled with sound, yet we often go through our day without truly listening and paying attention to the sounds around us. By practicing being mindful of sounds, we can strengthen our awareness and ability to remain mindfully present in the moment.

Mindful listening can be done various ways. You could listen to the existing sounds as they naturally occur in your environment. Or you could select a sound as your anchor to listen to until the sound stops.

Today we are going to use the sound of our meditation cymbals as our anchor. I invite you to be curious as you listen to the sound and what you notice about it.

Focus your attention on the sound of the cymbals until you can no longer hear it. If your mind wanders, kindly bring your attention back to the sound without judgment.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

(Pause)

(You can choose to strike the meditation cymbals together again to lengthen the practice if you'd like to do so.)

As this practice comes to an end, I invite you to take a deep breath in and let it out.

When you're ready, go ahead and open your eyes.

What did you notice?



BODY SCAN SCRIPT

Time Required

At least 10 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to begin with a shorter session and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our body scan practice.

In this practice you will use the sensations in your body to 'anchor' your awareness to your experience in the present moment. You will find that your mind frequently wanders away from your anchor, this is normal. See if you can notice when your mind has wandered, and without judging yourself or your ability to do this practice, simply gently bring your attention back to the sensations in your body. It is the nature of our human minds to think and we're not trying to stop the mind from thinking. We're just training our mind to focus better, by learning to notice when it has wandered away and gently bringing it back, over and over to the experience of the present moment.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Let's begin by getting into a comfortable sitting position with your feet on the floor and hands resting in your lap. See if you can keep your back tall, but not stiff and allow your muscles to relax. If you'd prefer, you are welcome to choose to do this practice lying down. I invite you to close your eyes, if this feels comfortable to you. If you prefer you can leave your eyes open with a softened gaze.

Begin by bringing your awareness to the bottom of your feet. If you are sitting, notice the feeling of your feet resting on the floor. Be curious about the sensations in your feet...notice the touch of your socks or the air on your skin...notice if there are any other sensations in your feet.

Now, as you maintain your attention on your feet, allow yourself to become aware of your breath moving in and out of your body. See if you can imagine that your breath is moving in and out through the bottom of your feet. As you imagine your breath moving in and out through your feet, allow your awareness to sharpen with every in-breath and then with each out-breath allow tension and tightness to be released from your feet. Breathing in focus your awareness, breathing out release tension.

(brief period of silence)

Now move your attention to your lower legs, noticing any sensations in your skin or muscles. As you allow your attention to settle in your lower legs, begin to imagine your breath moving in and out through your calf muscles, noting any sensations you feel.

You may notice tightness or tingling, the feeling of air, or your clothes against your skin, or perhaps nothing at all. Just be curious if there is any sensation to notice. With each in-breath sharpen your awareness of any sensations, and with each out-breath release tightness or tension.

If your mind wanders, see if you can just notice that with an attitude of kindness and patience and then bring your attention back to the sensations in your lower legs.

(brief period of silence)

Now move your attention to your upper legs, noticing any sensations in your skin or muscles. As you allow your attention to settle in your upper legs, begin to imagine your breath moving in and out through your thigh muscles, noting any sensations you feel. Notice the sensation of your legs against the chair if you are sitting or the floor or bed if you are lying down. With each in-breath sharpen your awareness of any sensations, and with each out-breath release tightness or tension.

(brief period of silence)

Next move your attention up to your abdomen. What do you notice? As you allow your attention to settle in your abdomen, begin to imagine your breath moving in and out through your belly, noting any sensations you feel. Notice the sensation of your back against the chair, floor, or bed. With each in-breath sharpen your awareness of any sensations, and with each out-breath release tightness or tension.

(brief period of silence)

Now move your awareness to your hands. Do you notice any sensations? Can you imagine your breath moving in and out through your hands? Sharpen your awareness with each in-breath and release tension with each out-breath.

(brief period of silence)

Move your attention up to the muscles in your shoulder and neck. What sensations do you feel? Begin to imagine your breath moving in and out through this area. With each in-breath sharpen your attention and awareness of any sensations, and with each out-breath release tightness or tension.

(brief period of silence)

Now become aware of the muscles in your jaw. Pay attention and see what you notice. Is your jaw clenched or relaxed? Breath in awareness and breath out tension and tightness.

(brief period of silence)

Notice the muscles around your eyes and across your forehead. What do you notice, anything? Again, imagine breathing in through this area. Breathing in awareness and attention, breathing out tension.

(brief period of silence)

Finally, take a few moments to slowly scan your awareness through your body from head to toe. If you notice any areas of tightness or tension, let your awareness settle there for a few moments, breathing in and out through that area and allowing the tension to be released.

(brief period of silence)

As this practice comes to an end, I invite you to take a deep breath in and let it out. When you're ready, allow your eyes to open.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)

SOOTHING COLOR IMAGERY SCRIPT

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to begin with just a few minutes and work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our soothing color imagery practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

We will begin by finding a comfortable sitting position in your chair with your feet solidly on the floor, your back tall, but not stiff or uncomfortable and your hands resting in your lap.

I invite you to close your eyes if that feels comfortable to you, or if you prefer you can leave your eyes open with a softened gaze.

During this practice, if your mind wanders, kindly bring your attention back without judgment.

(Pause)

Begin by taking a deep breath inand exhale. Another deep breath inand exhale.

Now allow your breathing to be at a rate that is calming and comfortable to you.

When you are ready, image a color that you associate with compassion....a color you find calming or soothing. Be curious about what color or colors come to mind. Be patient with yourself if you find this difficult. There is no right or wrong color, different people will find different colors soothing. Try not to overthink this. What color do you see?

(Brief Pause)

Now imagine that this soothing, calming, compassionate color is in front of you. You may want to imagine this color taking the form of light or mist. Notice how having this soothing and calming color around you makes you feel. If you can, imagine that this color has an awareness – it wants to support you, help you feel soothed and calm.

(Brief Pause)

Get a sense of the support that this compassionate, soothing color is giving you. I invite you to create a friendly or warm facial expression.

(Brief Pause)

You may want to imagine that this color is entering your body through your heart area and flowing through your body, soothing and calming you.

Continue to mindfully pay attention to the image of this soothing color, noticing any sensations that you experience.

(Pause)

As this practice comes to an end, I invite you to take a deep breath in and let it out.

When you're ready, go ahead and open your eyes.



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Introduction to the practice, with just the person you care deeply about)

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 10 minutes. This version is meant to be a first step to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

Loving-kindness is a useful meditation for building upon our natural capacity to feel empathy and compassion. Loving-kindness is simply the practice of paying attention to ourselves and others with a sense of interest and care. It can help us feel less negative judgment towards ourselves and increase our sense of connection to others, both things that enhance our general well-being. Loving-kindness helps us build our ability to see ourselves and others more fully and accurately. We tend to get over-focused on the negative, which produces a skewed picture that ignores the more positive attributes that also tend to be present in all of us: moments of patience, kindness and concern for others.

Loving-kindness is not about trying to force or fake any feelings. You can send loving-kindness to people without liking them. So don't get caught up in trying to force any feelings or judging yourself for feeling whatever it is you feel.

This practice takes time to develop. So like other practices that we have tried, I invite you to keep an open mind, and just see what happens.

We do loving-kindness by repeating a series of phrases, which serve as the anchor for your attention. You can repeat these phrases to yourself at a pace that is pleasing to you and helps to hold your attention. For today, we will use the phrases: May you be safe, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live with ease. It is OK for you to make up phrases that work best for you personally.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

We are going to bring to mind the qualities of compassion that we have discussed: caring-commitment, wisdom, and strength. Focus first on what it would be like to have a deep sense of caring-commitment – to be motivated to be caring and committed to alleviate your own and other people's suffering. Next, focus on the quality of wisdom. Imagine that your compassionate self has a deep understanding about the nature of suffering and knows that much of what happens inside of us is 'not our fault', rather it is a result of our tricky brains and we've been shaped by life experiences that can lead us to think, feel and act in certain ways. Finally, bring to mind the quality of strength and courage that your compassionate self is strong and has an inner confidence and authority to it that enables you to engage with distress. Imagine how what your body language would be like with this caring motivation, wisdom, and strength. How would you think and feel? How would you try to respond to people as your compassionate self?

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Now as your compassionate self, think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them. Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

Continue repeating the phrases silently to yourself at a pace that feels comfortable to you. If your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Second step in the practice, person you care deeply about & neutral person)

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 10 minutes. This version is meant to be a second step in the process to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script

(information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Third step in the practice, person you care deeply about, neutral, and self-compassion)

Time Required

At least 5 minutes up to about 15 minutes. This version is meant to be a third step to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Now, let's practice sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

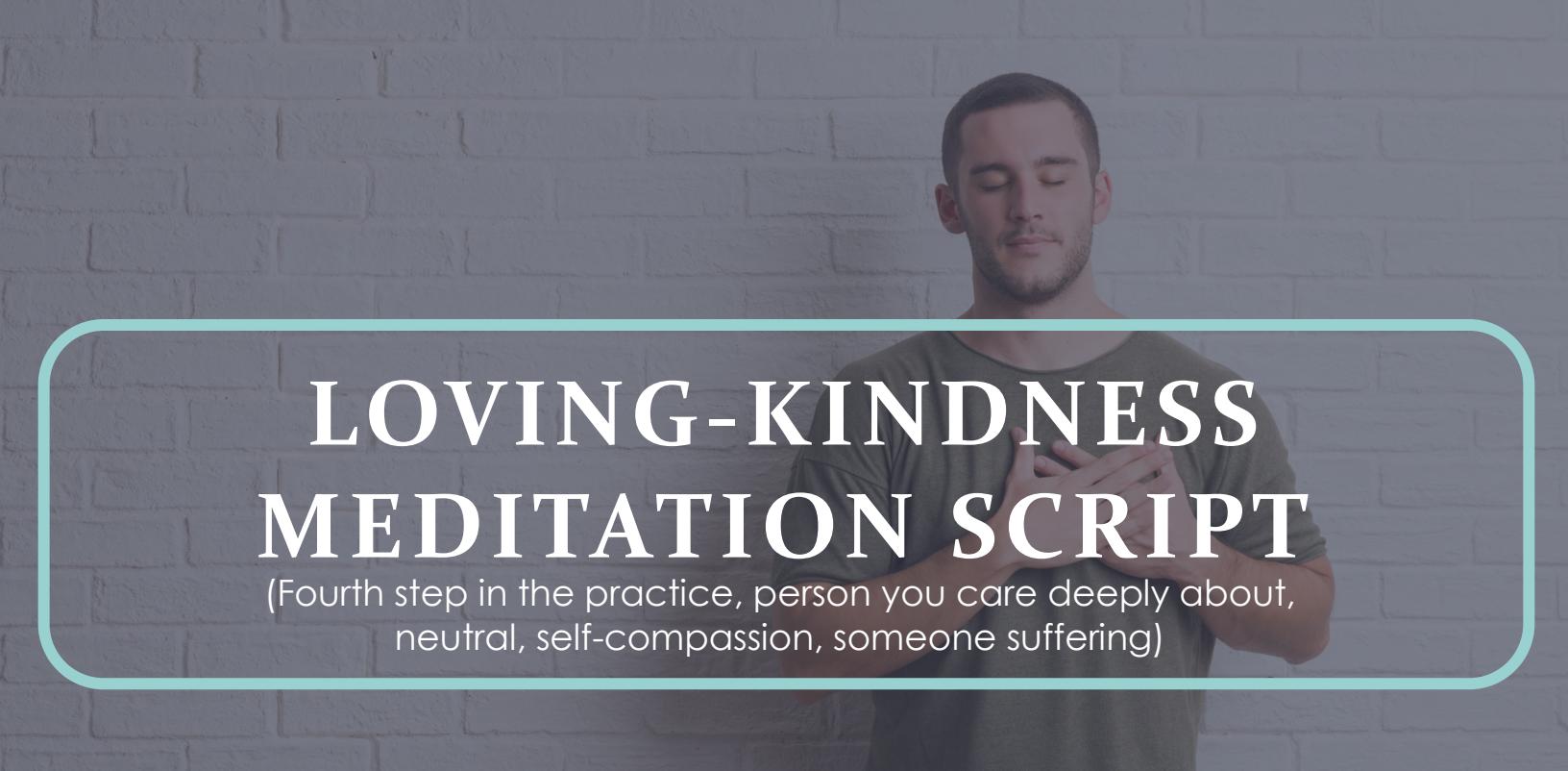
Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Fourth step in the practice, person you care deeply about, neutral, self-compassion, someone suffering)

Time Required

At least 10 minutes up to about 20 minutes. This version is meant to be a fourth step to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Now, let's practice sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is hurting or struggling)

Think of someone you know is hurting or struggling. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Fifth step in the practice, person you care deeply about, neutral, self-compassion, someone suffering, difficult person)

Time Required

At least 10 minutes up to about 20 minutes. This version is meant to be a fifth step to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Now, let's practice sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is hurting or struggling)

Think of someone you know is hurting or struggling. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is difficult for you)

Think of someone who is difficult for you, hard to bear in some way, who typically or presently evokes negative feelings of some sort. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Practice offering the phrases to this person. If it feels too hard, you can try with a less-difficult person, or go back to offering the phrases to yourself as a way of not-judging yourself for the difficulty of this exercise.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Sixth step in the practice, person you care deeply about, neutral person, self-compassion, someone suffering, difficult person, multiple people)

Time Required

At least 10 minutes up to about 25 minutes. This version is meant to be a sixth step to slowly introduce students to the practice.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Now, let's practice sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is hurting or struggling)

Think of someone you know is hurting or struggling. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is difficult for you)

Think of someone who is difficult for you, hard to bear in some way, who typically or presently evokes negative feelings of some sort. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Practice offering the phrases to this person. If it feels too hard, you can try with a less-difficult person, or go back to offering the phrases to yourself as a way of not-judging yourself for the difficulty of this exercise.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness toward Multiple People)

Now try directing the phrases towards multiple people, starting with the people in this room. Send all your wishes for well-being, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May all in this room be safe
May all in this room be happy
May all in this room be healthy
May all in this room live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(Seventh step in the practice – Complete version for in-person class)

Time Required

At least 15 minutes up to about 30 minutes.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

Loving-kindness is a useful meditation for building upon our natural capacity to feel empathy and compassion. Loving-kindness is simply the practice of paying attention to ourselves and others with a sense of interest and care. It can help us feel less negative judgment towards ourselves and increase our sense of connection to others, both things that enhance our general well-being. Loving-kindness helps us build our ability to see ourselves and others more fully and accurately. We tend to get over-focused on the negative, which produces a skewed picture that ignores the more positive attributes that also tend to be present in all of us: moments of patience, kindness and concern for others.

Loving-kindness is not about trying to force or fake any feelings. You can send loving-kindness to people without liking them. So don't get caught up in trying to force any feelings or judging yourself for feeling whatever it is you feel.

This practice takes time to develop. So like other practices that we have tried, I invite you to keep an open mind, and just see what happens.

We do loving-kindness by repeating a series of phrases, which serve as the anchor for your attention. You can repeat these phrases to yourself at a pace that is pleasing to you and helps to hold your attention. I will use the phrases: May you be safe, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live with ease. It is OK for you to make up phrases that work best for you personally.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has always been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Now, let's practice sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you...perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is hurting or struggling)

Think of someone you know is hurting or struggling. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is difficult for you)

Think of someone who is difficult for you, hard to bear in some way, who typically or presently evokes negative feelings of some sort. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Practice offering the phrases to this person. If it feels too hard, you can try with a less-difficult person, or go back to offering the phrases to yourself as a way of not-judging yourself for the difficulty of this exercise.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness toward Multiple People)

Now try directing the phrases towards multiple people, starting with the people in this room. Send all your wishes for well-being, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May all in this room be safe
May all in this room be happy
May all in this room be healthy
May all in this room live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Everybody Everywhere)

Finally, you can try directing the phrases towards family and friends, all the people you know, and then even directing the phrases out to all living beings, everywhere. Extending your wish for happiness and health to everybody, everywhere.

Send all your wishes for well-being, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May everybody, everywhere be safe
May everybody, everywhere be happy
May everybody, everywhere be healthy
May everybody, everywhere live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)



LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION SCRIPT

(online course version)

Time Required

At least 10 minutes up to about 30 minutes. It is often helpful to work your way up to longer practice sessions.

Script (information in parentheses are instructions for the facilitator and are not meant to be said)

Welcome to our loving-kindness meditation practice.

Loving-kindness is a useful meditation for building upon our natural capacity to feel empathy and compassion. Loving-kindness is simply the practice of paying attention to ourselves and others with a sense of interest and care. It can help us feel less negative judgment towards ourselves and increase our sense of connection to others, both things that enhance our general well-being. Loving-kindness helps us build our ability to see ourselves and others more fully and accurately. We tend to get over-focused on the negative, which produces a skewed picture that ignores the more positive attributes that also tend to be present in all of us: moments of patience, kindness and concern for others.

Loving-kindness is not about trying to force or fake any feelings. You can send loving-kindness to people without liking them. So don't get caught up in trying to force any feelings or judging yourself for feeling whatever it is you feel.

This practice takes time to develop. So like other practices that we have tried, I invite you to keep an open mind, and just see what happens.

We do loving-kindness by repeating a series of phrases, which serve as the anchor for your attention. You can repeat these phrases to yourself at a pace that is pleasing to you and helps to hold your attention. I will use the phrases: May you be safe, may you be happy, may you be healthy, may you live with ease. It is OK for you to make up phrases that work best for you personally.

To begin this practice, you will hear the cymbals chime once, when the practice is over, you will hear the cymbals chime twice.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together once.)

Sit in an upright and comfortable position, allow your eyes to close if that feels comfortable. Take a couple deep breaths, then allow your breathing to become relaxed and natural.

We are going to bring to mind the qualities of compassion that we have discussed: caring-commitment, wisdom, and strength. Focus first on what it would be like to have a deep sense of caring-commitment – to be motivated to be caring and committed to alleviate your own and other people's suffering. Next, focus on the quality of wisdom. Imagine that your compassionate self has a deep understanding about the nature of suffering and knows that much of what happens inside of us is 'not our fault', rather it is a result of our tricky brains and we've been shaped by life experiences that can lead us to think, feel and act in certain ways. Finally, bring to mind the quality of strength and courage that your compassionate self is strong and has an inner confidence and authority to it that enables you to engage with distress. Imagine how what your body language would be like with this caring motivation, wisdom, and strength. How would you think and feel? How would you try to respond to people as your compassionate self?

As we go through this practice, if your mind wanders, just bring it gently back, beginning again with the phrases. Remember that we aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this manner.

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Oneself)

Let's begin by sending loving-kindness to yourself. Allow yourself to remember and acknowledge your own basic goodness. You may remember times when you have been kind or generous. It may help to use your imagination and picture yourself as a young child standing before you... perhaps 4 or 5 years of age...

Begin to wish yourself well by extending words of loving kindness to yourself by repeating the following phrases, silently:

May I be safe
May I be happy
May I be healthy
May I live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Loved One)

Think of someone you care deeply about, someone who has been supportive of you. This may be a partner, parent, grandparent, friend, sibling, or a beloved pet -- someone you smile when you think of them. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

When you feel you have connected with your intent towards this person or pet that you care about, hold them in your mind's eye, as if you can see them in front of you. Then direct the phrases towards them.

Begin to repeat the following phrases, silently to yourself, leaving a short pause between each phrase.

May you be safe
May you be happy
May you be healthy
May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is hurting or struggling)

Think of someone you know is hurting or struggling. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to a Neutral Person)

Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feelings; someone you feel neutral about. You may see this person regularly, but don't necessarily know their name. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Bring this person's image to mind as you direct the phrases towards them.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Someone who is difficult for you)

Think of someone who is difficult for you, hard to bear in some way, who typically or presently evokes negative feelings of some sort. Say their name to yourself, call to mind their image as you get some sense of their presence. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life. Practice offering the phrases to this person. If it feels too hard, you can try with a less-difficult person, or go back to offering the phrases to yourself as a way of not-judging yourself for the difficulty of this exercise.

Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be safe

May you be happy

May you be healthy

May you live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

(Sending Loving-Kindness to Everybody Everywhere)

Finally, you can try directing the phrases towards family and friends, all the people you know, and then even directing the phrases out to all living beings, everywhere. Extending your wish for happiness and health to everybody, everywhere.

Send all your wishes for well-being, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May everybody, everywhere be safe

May everybody, everywhere be happy

May everybody, everywhere be healthy

May everybody, everywhere live with ease

(Pause to allow students to repeat phrases silently)

As we finish this practice, take a few deep breaths and when you hear the sound of the cymbals, I invite you to open your eyes.

(Strike the meditation cymbals together twice to end the practice.)