

***Guidelines for***

***Extended Loving Kindness***

Adopt your meditation position and bring your awareness to your breath for a time before expanding your attention to include your body as a whole. Stay with this awareness for a little while.

When you are ready, bring to mind a feeling of being loved, by a person or maybe a pet, now or in the past. Really feel their love and their kindness towards you. If it’s difficult to bring to mind such an experience at this moment, it is just as effective to imagine how it would feel to receive such love and kindness.

Breathe with these feelings of love, bathe in them, rest in the warmth and radiance of this embrace. Experience the feeling of being unconditionally loved and accepted as you are, without having to be different, and without having to be particularly worthy or deserving of this love.

And as you experience this warmth of this field of loving kindness repeat silently to yourself -

“May I experience ease and contentment”

“May I be safe and protected”

See if you can become the source as well as the object of these feelings of loving kindness, as best as you can taking on these feelings as if they were you own, rather than those of someone else.

Hold in your own heart these feelings of love and acceptance and kindness for yourself, beyond judgment of any kind. Bathing in your own kind regard from moment to moment.

As you experience your own complete acceptance of yourself as you are, right here, in this very moment, repeat silently to yourself -

“May I experience ease and contentment”

“May I be safe and protected”

At first it may feel artificial to be expressing such things to yourself but as best as you can stay gentle and open to whatever you find. Even tiny tastes of loving kindness are healing for any negativity or self criticism and self dislike that we may hold.

Stay for a while in the warmth of this radiant field of loving kindness, allowing your heart to be bathed in your own positive regard.

If you wish, when you are ready, you can move your attention and focus to a friend or someone you know. Or a group of people, such as “all my friends” or “all my family”. Wish them ease and contentment, safety and protection, or whatever is appropriate for them.

When you feel able and ready you can also experiment with difficult people in your life. Try sending them kindness and maybe a wish that they might be happy, and with a gentle curiosity observe your inner response.

In doing loving-kindness for a person you find difficult, you are not allowing them to take advantage of you or hurt you, but you are coming to see that they too are human beings who seek happiness and contentment and it may happen that this can change our relationship to the situation and help release resentment that we may hold.

Sit for as long as you wish with these feelings of loving kindness and when you are ready to let go, bring your awareness to your body and your breath as you prepare yourself to end your meditation and as best as you can take this feeling of loving kindness, towards yourself or others, into the next moments of your day.

**Note** *In doing Loving Kindness Meditation, we are likely to experience many different feelings, including things like sadness, grief or anger. This is quite normal. It is common for deeply help feelings to be released as we practice loving kindness. This release can be very healing in itself. As best as you can simply observe the feelings, keep breathing, and continue with the practice.*