

Just Like Me Female Voice (18 Minutes)

00:00: When practicing this meditation, try to find a quiet place and time that works best for you to practice free from distractions or interruptions, remembering also to always care for yourself, including easing up on a meditation practice or discontinuing it altogether if it ever feels too challenging for you for any reason, and perhaps instead, choosing to go for a mindful walk or to speak with a trusted friend. This is a just like me compassion meditation.

00:46: So beginning this meditation now by settling into a comfortable seated position, one for you that reflects a sense of comfort in the body and also a wakeful, kind attentiveness. Choosing to either gently close your eyes or keeping your eyes open with a soft, fixed gaze, allowing your hands to rest comfortably, feeling your feet in contact with the floor, perhaps noticing the weight of the body being held and supported by the chair or the surface it rests on now, and maybe becoming aware of a sense of coolness or warmth in the room you're sitting in now.

02:01: And when you're ready, if you'd like, taking in two or three deeper, fuller breaths, as you breathe in, inviting ease. And as you breathe out, allowing the out-breath to fully release. With each out-breath, as best you can, letting go of what's already been today and is yet to come and allowing your attention to be here now.

[25 second pause]

02:50: Letting go of the deeper fuller breaths and becoming aware now of the natural rhythmic quality of the body breathing, being with each full in-breath and out-breath, noticing how the body knows just how to breathe, so there's no need to control the breath, simply observing its sensations. And should your attention wander away from the sensations of the breath, just waking up to this and escorting your attention back to the breath and beginning fresh and new again.

[43 second pause]

04:04: When you're ready, allowing this focused awareness on the breath to recede into the background. Of course, you can always come back to the breath to refresh or regroup. But for the remainder of this practice now, we'll be working with creating a connection with another person. Starting to notice similarities and commonalities with another, as opposed to the differences that often divide us. So now, in your awareness, allowing yourself to bring to mind someone with whom you have a small bit of difficulty. So not someone for whom there's a big challenge or a great deal of tension with, but someone that you may have a bit of difficulty with, or someone that you find having difficulties relating to from time to time.

05:11: As you bring this person to mind, as you recall them now, holding an image of them in your mind's eye or having a felt sense of what it's like to be in their presence. Whatever feels most appropriate and comfortable for you. So simply holding them in your awareness now and perhaps at a bit of a distance, if you'd like.

05:54: As you hold this person in your awareness, you may notice that there are thoughts or stories that are starting to emerge around the difficulty or the challenge that you have with this person. And if this arises, just allowing it to be there in the background. But in the foreground of your attention, taking another moment or two to just have the image or hold the felt sense of this person.

06:33: And now, taking a slightly deeper inhale in a slightly deeper exhale to allow yourself to really connect with your own body and your breath. Noticing what's present for you with some care and kindness. And now, from this embodied presence, allowing yourself to notice that this other person has a mind and a body just like you. In this way, this person is just like me. And recalling that this person has feelings, they have thoughts, they too experience all the ups and downs of being human, including physical and emotional pain and difficulty, and at other times, a sense of ease and well-being. Just like me.

07:46: Reflecting that this person has, at some point in their life, probably been frustrated, sad, or they've been hurt or confused. Just like me. Seeing if you can sense this commonality, this just-like-me aspect of your shared humanity with this other person. And now, reflecting on how this person is probably doing the best that they know how, just like me. Even if the impact may sometimes be difficult on you, they're doing the best that they know how, just like me. And remembering that this person wishes to be happy, healthy, to have a sense of meaning and purpose in their life and to belong, just like me.

[30 second pause]

09:24: So now, taking another slightly deeper inhale and slightly deeper exhale, connecting again with your body and your breath, noticing what's present, holding it all with a gentle compassion, as best you can.

10:06: And now, if you'd like, gently beginning to cultivate some goodwill towards this other person, this fellow human being, offering simple intentions of well wishes to this person, gently repeating the phrases silently to yourself or modifying them as you'd like. Or maybe letting them go all together if, for any reason, they don't feel right for you, and instead, resting in a gentle, mindful awareness of whatever may arise in your body, thoughts and emotions as you sit in stillness, so offering goodwill towards this other person. May this person be healthy and strong of body, mind, and spirit. May they feel supported. May this person find ease and joy in their life, just as I wish for ease and joy in my life.

[30 second pause]

11:40: I offer these well wishes for this person because they are a fellow human being, just like me. Offering these simple wishes, the sense of goodwill or well wishing, to this other person, as best I can without conditions or strings attached.

12:21: Now for a few moments, you might even imagine that this person is offering you these well wishes because they are a fellow human being experiencing a sense of shared humanity

with you. Just as you are wishing for my health, my sense of ease, and joy, I too wish for your health, for your sense of ease, and for joy in your life.

[20 second pause]

13:11: And if that's too difficult or doesn't feel right or accessible to you right now, then don't force it. You might just open to all the goodwill that you've received from others throughout your life, from friends from your family of origin or your family of choice, even from strangers who have offered a smile or held a door open for you. All of these ways that you've received kindness and goodwill in your life, taking some time to really take this in now and seeing if you can soak it in, almost like a sponge. Taking in this kindness and this goodwill. Feeling it in the body. Breathing into the feeling.

[30 second pause]

14:47: And remembering that all of us, in the best way that we know how, are trying to find happiness, to find a life that includes ease and joy, and even if the way we go about it doesn't always have the intended effect, but we're all human and we all have a basic shared wish to be happy, to belong, and to have a sense of joy and ease in our lives. So now, taking some time to appreciate your willingness to try this practice. It's not an easy practice for many of us, this cultivation of our mind and heart. This sense of acknowledging a common shared humanity with another can sometimes be challenging. This exploring what connects us rather than that which divides us and creates separation. This requires practice, patience, and compassion for ourselves and others. It often also takes courage and time to cultivate this understanding and some wisdom to know perhaps when we need to take a break. Always knowing that you can come back to this practice, whenever you need it, or that you can change individuals, perhaps finding someone where there's less difficulty or less struggle to begin with.

17:02: So now, allowing this just like me compassion practice to come to a conclusion. Gently opening your eyes if they were closed and softly looking around the room maybe for a few moments, reorienting yourself. Perhaps feeling the support offered by the chair or the surface you're resting on now. Maybe stretching the body a bit or choosing to sit in stillness for a while before choosing to slowly resume the activities of your day.

