



Loving-Kindness Meditation



The loving-kindness meditation, also called Metta Sutta, can be traced to ancient India. Studies have shown that expressing kindness and compassion can increase happiness! This meditation promotes connection with others—from close family and loved ones to friends and even strangers. Practicing this meditation can decrease our attention on ourselves, which has been linked to a reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms.

The exciting thing about all this meditation research is that some studies have indicated that in a little as 10-20 minutes a day we can reap the benefits of these practices.

You can find many versions of loving-kindness meditations by searching online or by downloading phone apps that feature meditations. I've provided a script for you to practice this meditation here. Adapt it to fit your needs.

BODY AND BREATH

Sit in a comfortable position. Relax your body. Close your eyes and turn inward as you concentrate and gently repeat the phrases to yourself. Take several slow breaths in and out.

RECEIVE

Think of someone whom you love from your past or present, who is living or not. Imagine this person with you now, sending you love. They send you wishes for happiness and well-being. Receive these wishes of kindness and love.

Think of someone who loves you from your past or present, who is living or not. Imagine this person with you now, sending you love. They send you wishes for health, wellness, and happiness. Receive these wishes of kindness and love.

Imagine yourself surrounded by people you love and who love you.

Think of all your loved ones and friends. Imagine all of them surrounding you. Each one is sending you wishes for your health, happiness, and well-being. Receive these wishes of kindness and love.

As you receive these wishes, feel yourself filled with warmth and love.

SENDING

Think again of the person who you love. Send love to this person as they did for you. Recognize that you and this person are similar—they wish to be happy and well. Send kind and loving wishes to this person. Repeat this mantra to yourself: *May you be happy, may you know peace, may you be loved.*

Think again of the person who loves you. Send love to this person as they did for you. Recognize that you and this person are similar—they wish for a good and happy life. Send kind and loving wishes to this person. Repeat this mantra to yourself: *Just as I wish, may you be happy, may you be safe, may you be healthy.*

Think again of the loved ones and friends. Send love to these people as they did for you. Recognize that you and these people are similar—they wish for happiness. Send kind and loving wishes to this person. Repeat this mantra to yourself: *May your lives be happy, healthy, and satisfying.*

EXPANDING

You may also wish to think of acquaintances or neutral people to send loving-kindness to just as you've done with the others above.

Next, you can expand your thoughts to the entire world and all beings. Send your love and wishes for happiness. Recognize that, like you, they want to be happy.

Just as I wish, may you live a life of happiness, peace, and wellness.

REST AND RETURN

You should take as long as you'd like to imagine yourself sending and receiving love and repeating these phrases.

Rest for a time in the state of mind you've cultivated. Raise your awareness regarding how you're feeling.

Concentrate on your breath. As you feel ready, open your eyes.