

Mindfulness Methods

Loving-Kindness Exercise

Help to release from distress by a new attitude toward yourself and all those around you.



Loving-kindness meditation, sometimes called Metta or LKM, puts us into an unusual and important mental place. Being in place of kindness and warmth towards yourself and towards others, has a healing impact. LKM can reduce tension, anxiety, and pain.

By shifting our perspective from what we expect from others to what we give to them, we are living out the idea “love is what you give.” That enhances our self.

It reminds me of the nightly prayers taught to children, that as we lie down to sleep, we pray for our well-being, but we also ask for blessings for the important people in our lives. LKM goes even further than that.

Loving-Kindness Exercise

It is important to find a comfortable seat.

Close your eyes. Take time to allow yourself to relax fully. Pay attention to breathing. Pay attention to the softness and heaviness of your arms and legs. Just take 30-60 seconds to concentrate on that.

Slowly, take 3 or 4 full, deep breaths, not rushed, but slowly, then breathe out very slowly. Imagine the breath is flowing out of you all over your body, like water through a sieve.

Letting the body relax and be soft. Letting the shoulders hang heavy. Letting the arms be heavy and at rest.

First, bringing yourself to mind, understanding that you are just as deserving of good will and loving-kindness.

So, now imagining yourself sitting in front of you, any version of yourself at any time, young or old. Speaking slowly, and sinking into the meaning of these words,

“May I be happy and peaceful.”

Imagine yourself being happy, living a peaceful life. Bring up that image.

“May I be healthy and strong.”

Just sending this wish for yourself to be healthy.

“May I feel safe and protected.”

And just wishing yourself a life of safety and protection.

And “May I live with ease and well-being.”

Imagine yourself perfectly at ease.

And “May your heart be filled with loving kindness.”

Imagining that smile on your face.

If a self-critical thought emerged, you are revealing to yourself thoughts that have been there and are ready to release. So, it's okay to feel annoyance, disapproval, sadness, or, whatever you feel. It's a sign of being in an emotional state in which you can experience the warmth and compassion you are giving.

Now, bringing to mind someone who has helped you out in life, someone who has made a difference, a teacher, coach, relative, or whoever comes to mind. You can imagine this person sitting here in front of the you just smiling down on you.

And just feel the warmth or respect or whatever is important from this person. And so, feeling that warmth, imagining them smiling. You can even imagine a beam of light coming from that person on to you.

So quietly in your mind repeating the phrase, "May you be happy and peaceful."

And just imagine this person being happy and peaceful.

And silently repeating the phrase, "May you be healthy and strong."

And imagine them being healthy and strong.

And then repeating the phrase, "May you feel safe and protected."

Really picturing that coming true, how they may look when feeling that safe.

And then repeating the phrase, "May you live with ease and well-being."

And just imagining this person smiling, living a happy and peaceful life.

Finally, "May your heart be filled with loving kindness and may you have peace."

And feeling the well wishes coming from you and going towards this person like a beam of warm light shining on the person.

And just connect with that intention of wishing well for the other.

Then, bring to mind a more neutral person, someone who you might see on a regular basis but you don't have strong feelings about. Perhaps a clerk or neighbor or someone in your congregation or at work. Bringing them to mind, knowing they may have struggles and they also wish to be happy. Know they too have challenges and have known sadness and troubles.

So, we can just send them that. Slowly saying,

"May you be happy and peaceful."

"May you be healthy and strong."

"May you feel safe and protected."

"May you live with ease and well-being."

"May you have peace."

Just imagining these coming true for this person.

Setting the intention to wish this upon the person.

Bring to mind someone who has been a challenge for you. That person's inner life may be troubled. That may be why they have been difficult.

"May you be happy and peaceful."

In your mind, see that happening.

"May you be healthy and strong."

"May you feel safe and protected."

"May you live with ease and well-being."

"May you have peace."

Then, imagine your entire neighborhood or community.

"May you be happy and peaceful."

"May you be healthy and strong."

"May you feel safe and protected."

"May you live with ease and well-being."

"May you have peace."

Then, imagine your country, everyone in it.

"May you be happy and peaceful."

"May you be healthy and strong."

"May you feel safe and protected."

"May you live with ease and well-being."

"May you have peace."

Just bringing all beings to mind.

"May all beings be happy and peaceful."

"May all beings be healthy and strong."

“May all beings feel safe and protected.”

“May all beings live with ease and well-being.”

“May all beings have peace.”

“May all who suffer be free of suffering.”

“May all who fear be fearless.”

“May those who grieve emerge in peace.”

“May all beings find relief and well-being.”

Bringing your awareness back to your body.

And to end this meditation, we can take a deep breath together.

So, breathing in deeply and breathing out quite slowly.

In your own time, gently allowing your eyes to open

And just feeling the warmth and goodness that has been elicited by this practice

