



## RECOVERY DHARMA

### Compassion Meditation

Find a comfortable but alert position in which to sit. As you allow your eyes to gently close, pay attention to the body and see if there are any minor adjustments that will help you maintain the position for the duration of the meditation. Rest your hands comfortably on your legs or in your lap.

We'll start with a few minutes of concentration practice, just to help our minds settle and arrive in our present time experience. Allow your breathing to be natural, seeing where in the body you can feel the breath most clearly. It may be in the stomach or abdomen, where you can feel the rising and falling as the body breathes. It might be in the chest, where you may notice the expansion and contraction as the body inhales and exhales. Perhaps it's at the nostrils, where you can feel a slight tickle as the air comes in, and the subtle warmth as the body exhales.

Breathing in, just bring a gentle awareness to the breath. Breathing out, be aware of the breath leaving the body.

*(Pause)*

You may notice the mind wandering. This offers us an opportunity to cultivate mindfulness and concentration. Each time we notice the mind wandering, we're strengthening our ability to recognize our present experience. Each time we bring the mind back to the breath, we strengthen our ability to concentrate. Treat it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

*(Pause)*

Now begin offering compassion to someone you love and care for who has suffered in some way or is experiencing suffering now. Maybe they experienced an illness, an injury, or a difficult time in a relationship.

How do you feel when you think of their suffering? Notice the sensations in your heart. What does it feel like? Do the sensations change? You may notice feelings of warmth, openness and tenderness? Perhaps you are experiencing an aching sensation.

Notice your desire to ease their suffering. Recite silently to them:

*May you be free from this suffering.  
May you be kind and gentle with yourself.  
May you find peace and ease.*

*(two to three minutes of silence)*

Now let go of this person and breathe in and out.

When you are ready, bring your attention to yourself. Think of ways you have suffered in the past or in the present time. Perhaps you are, or have, experienced a painful relationship, an illness, a loss, or something else.

Notice the sensations in your heart. What does it feel like? Do the sensations change? You may notice feelings of warmth, openness and tenderness. Perhaps you are experiencing an aching sensation. You may decide to place your hand on your chest where your heart is. Allow space for a warm and tender heart.

Recite silently to yourself:

*May I be free from this suffering.  
May I be kind and gentle with myself.  
May I find peace and ease.*

Repeat these phrases, letting the feelings permeate your body and mind. Be patient and kind toward yourself, allowing whatever arises to be received in a spirit of friendliness and kind affection, and simply return to the phrases.

*(two to three minutes of silence)*

Now bring to mind a neutral person. Someone you neither like, nor dislike. You may not even know them personally. Perhaps it's someone you just purchased something from over the counter.

Realizing that all beings have suffered in some way at one time or another, allow feelings of compassion to arise.

Recite silently to them:

*May you be free from your suffering.  
May you be kind and gentle with yourself.  
May you find peace and ease.*

*(three minutes of silence)*

Now let these feelings for this person go and breathe in and out.

Now bring to mind someone you don't particularly like. Perhaps they have hurt you in some way. You may find it safest to not bring up someone who has done you great harm, especially in the early stages of your recovery. You may decide to bring up someone who you find mildly irritating.

Realizing that all beings have suffered in some way at one time or another, allow feelings of compassion to arise, remembering that if they were free from suffering—if they were truly happy—the world would be a much better place.

Recite silently to them:

*May you be free from this suffering.  
May you be kind and gentle with yourself.  
May you find peace and ease.*

*(three minutes of silence)*

Now, letting go of this person, conclude your meditation for all beings everywhere.

Recite silently:

*May all beings be free from suffering.  
May all beings be kind and gentle to themselves and each other.  
May all beings find peace and ease.*

Now, letting go of all thoughts of others, return your focus to your own body, mind, and heart. Notice any discomfort, tension, or difficulty you may be feeling. Notice if you are experiencing any new lightness, warmth, relaxation, relief, or joy. Then, whenever you are ready, allow your eyes to open and gently return your attention to the space around you.