

Metta

Metta is a Pali word most often translated as loving-kindness and goodwill or loving-friendliness. The practice originates from Buddha's the Metta Sutra.

It involves extending unlimited, universal love and good-will to all living beings without any kind of discrimination or judgment, 'just as a mother loves her only child.'

Metta can move you into a more loving connected state of mind. It can be practiced anywhere at any time; during meditation, driving in traffic or walking down a busy street.

Benefits of Practicing Metta:

- More compassion for ourselves and others
- Increases self-love, self-compassion and self-worth
- Facilitates the transformation of emotional pain
- Enhanced sense of connection and belonging to the world
- Better mental and emotional health
- Better relationships social and familial
- Decreased anxiety and stress
- Changes the way we see ourselves and how we see the world - Become more honest and loving toward ourselves and others

During metta meditation we wish happiness, safety and ease toward ourselves by using simple phrases. It is not necessary to manufacture the feeling of love and warmth. The phrases do the work for you. Eventually the feeling will follow. Metta meditation is part of the living tradition of meditation practice that cultivates spaciousness of mind and openness of heart. The phrases we choose are expressions of the very powerful force of intention in our minds. Every time we say one of the phrases we are harnessing the power of intention. This is an important element of the practice.

Metta is considered a concentration practice. During the practice of Metta we shift our focus from our breath to the phrases we are repeating. If your mind wanders, just as you do during your meditation practice, you simply shift your attention to the phrases you are repeating. These phrases are your focus. Every time we bring our attention back to the phrases we are gathering our own energy back into ourselves which is very healing and .

Metta Meditation Practice:

These phrases reflect loving kindness. When sending Metta, you send a feeling of love or warmth toward people. This loving kindness and good-will first is extended to oneself and then to someone you know and love. It can be sent to someone you feel neutral towards; and to someone with whom you have difficulty and finally to all beings.

There are many phrases that can be used. Here are phrases used for loving-kindness meditation:

Just as I want to be free from suffering, may all beings be free from suffering

Here is a short form of loving-kindness practice used toward all beings:

May all beings be safe, happy, healthy and free from suffering. May all beings be liberated or if you are sending

When sending Metta to yourself it might go something like this.

May I be free from suffering and the cause of suffering.

May I have ease of well being.

May I be protected and safe.

May I be happy.

May I be safe, healthy and happy and live with ease.

May I be safe.

May I be healthy

May I be happy

May I live with ease

May I be filled with loving kindness

May I be peaceful.

Some of us might find this practice as too mushy or sentimental or struggle to feel the connection inherent in metta. This is why it is recommended that one starts with the practice of metta with ourselves; then a being we consider beloved, then we can work up to a difficult person. If we practice metta over time, it can be transformative.

Format for Metta Meditation:

Slowly repeat the phrase. Acknowledge its meaning and how it makes you feel. If you get distracted, avoid judging yourself. Just return to the phrase and keep repeating it.

Tonight when we practice metta, we will first send it to ourselves: then our Circle of Light group. You can think about a specific person or send it to the entire group. Recite the phrase toward them, “May you be happy. May you be safe. May you find peace.” Again, recognize the meaning and how you feel. Continue reciting the phrase for others, including neighbors, acquaintances, and difficult individuals. Recognize your emotions, even if they’re negative. Repeat the phrase until you experience compassionate feelings. Your emotional tone may change during this practice. This is completely normal. You may also experience negativity. Just return to the phrases. **Consider these beginner tips:**

- Be patient. Don’t expect instant results. Metta is a practice that’s meant to evolve.
- Let go of perfection. Your mind will likely drift, so don’t worry about getting distracted. Just acknowledge that this is normal. Try to focus on the present moment instead of the potential results.
- Avoid judging yourself. When you get distracted, avoid criticizing yourself. Recognize the distraction and gently return to the practice.
- Experiment. Meditation can be done in any location or pose, and at whatever time works best for you. Try meditating in different places and poses and at different times of the **day to find what works best for you.**

May Metta bring you happiness and peace. Barb Meyer

Sources:

Lions Roar: **“Metta Meditation: A Complete Guide to Loving Kindness”**

Tara Bennett-Coleman; **“Emotional Alchemy How the Mind Can Heal the Heart”**,
2001

Salzberg, Sharon; **“Loving Kindness”**, 2018

Metta Meditation Script

Prepare Intention and Connection: Center yourself and connect with your own deepest intentions for happiness, ease, safety and a fulfilling Life. Open your heart in Joy.

Create and repeat your own needs / intentions such as:

“May I be safe.”

“May I be healthy.”

“May I be happy.”

“May I be loving-kindness.”

Repeat these in full presence as many times as you feel it connecting deeper.

Next we send our blessings to someone else >>Tonight to the Circle of Light group.<< This may be a loved one, a friend, a teacher or mentor, or even a pet. Connect with your natural desire to see this person joyful and whole.

“May you be safe.”

“May you be healthy.”

“May you be happy.”

“May you be loving-kindness.”

Next create phrases of loving-kindness, directed to someone you have had problems with.

“May xxx be safe.”

“May xxx be healthy.”

“May xxx be happy.”

“May xxx be loving-kindness.”

Next create phrases of loving-kindness, connecting with the intention for the good of all beings.

“May all beings be safe.”

“May all beings be healthy.”

“May all beings Awaken”

“May all beings be loving-kindness.”

Now receive the blessing sent from other spiritual beings to you.

Repeat this in receptivity to other spiritual beings:

“safe.”

“healthy.”

“happy.”

“loving-kindness.”

Continue to repeat this receiving and sending loving-kindness with each repetition. It flows into you, flows through you and then out to the universe.