

EXPLORING MEDITATION COURSE WEEK FOUR – Loving Kindness/Metta Meditation

QUOTES:

“MEDITATION IS NOT A THING; IT’S A PROCESS. THIS PROCESS BRINGS SEVERAL BENEFITS, BUT IT IS ALSO ITS OWN BENEFIT. THE KEY IS TO LEARN TO ENJOY THE PROCESS. PRACTICE LETTING GO OF SELF-CRITICISM, COMPARISON, AND EXPECTATIONS AS SOON AS THEY ARISE. ONCE YOU FIGURE OUT THAT MEDITATION IS NOT AN ACHIEVEMENT TO COLLECT, YOU MAY ENJOY THE PROCESS MORE.” **POSITIVEPSYCHOLOGY.COM**

“QUIET THE MIND, AND THE SOUL WILL SPEAK.” – **MA JAYA SATI BHAGAVATI**

“THIS IS LOVE: THE FLOWERING OF LOVE IS MEDITATION.” – **JIDDU KRISHNAMURTI**

MORE ABOUT MEDITATION

SOME PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THEY NEED TO START WITH A QUIET MIND TO MEDITATE. THEY’LL SAY THAT THEIR MIND IS TOO BUSY OR RESTLESS TO MEDITATE. THIS IS LIKE SAYING THAT BEING FIT IS A REQUIREMENT FOR GOING TO THE GYM. HAVING A “CALM MIND” IS NOT A REQUIREMENT FOR MEDITATION. IN FACT, HAVING A RESTLESS MIND IS EVEN MORE REASON TO MEDITATE.

“HALF AN HOUR’S MEDITATION EACH DAY IS ESSENTIAL, EXCEPT WHEN YOU ARE BUSY. THEN A FULL HOUR IS NEEDED.” – **SAINT FRANCIS DE SALES**

YOU WILL COME TO REALIZE THAT NO ONE HAS AN INHERENTLY CALM MIND.

LOVING KINDNESS/METTA MEDITATION

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION OR METTA MEDITATION IS A CENTURIES OLD PRACTICE THAT ORIGINALLY COMES FROM THE BUDDHIST TRADITION. IT INVOLVES REPEATING A SET OF PHRASES SENDING OUT YOUR WISH THAT YOU, AND ALL BEINGS, BE HAPPY, PEACEFUL, AND HEALTHY.

‘METTA’ IS A PALI (LANGUAGE OF THE BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES) WORD FOR BENEVOLENCE, FRIENDSHIP, AFFECTION, AND KINDNESS.

SHARON SALZBERG:

“... IN REALITY, THE PRACTICE OF LOVING-KINDNESS IS ABOUT CULTIVATING LOVE AS A STRENGTH, A MUSCLE, A TOOL THAT CHALLENGES OUR TENDENCY TO SEE PEOPLE (INCLUDING OURSELVES) AS DISCONNECTED, STATICALLY AND RIGIDLY ISOLATED FROM ONE ANOTHER. LOVING-KINDNESS IS ABOUT OPENING OURSELVES UP TO OTHERS WITH COMPASSION AND EQUANIMITY, WHICH IS A CHALLENGING EXERCISE, REQUIRING US TO PUSH BACK AGAINST

ASSUMPTIONS, PREJUDICES, AND LABELS THAT MOST OF US HAVE INTERNALIZED.”

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION DOES NOT HAVE ANY EXPECTATIONS NOR IS IT TO ACHIEVE A GOAL. IT IS MERELY A PROCESS TO EXPERIENCE AND ENJOY.

BENEFITS OF LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY SCIENTIFIC STUDIES THAT SHOW THE BENEFITS OF THIS TYPE OF MEDITATION INCLUDING:

INCREASED POSITIVE EMOTIONS: LOVE, JOY, AND HOPE.

REDUCED SELF-CRITICISM, SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION AND INCREASED EMPATHY.

SHOWN TO HAVE DECREASED PHYSICAL PAIN & SLOWED AGING.

HAS AN IMMEDIATE RELAXATION EFFECT OF THE PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM AND SLOWS BREATHING.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION FOCUSES ON THE IMAGE OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE, INCLUDING OUR SELF. WE MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW THEM, LIKE THEM OR HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH THEM. IT DOESN'T MATTER. WE DIRECT POSITIVE ENERGY AND GOOD WILL FIRST TO OURSELVES AND THEN TO OTHERS. IT'S A VERY INTERESTING EXPERIENCE.

LOVING KINDNESS MEDITATION

CLOSE YOUR EYES, TAKE DEEP, BUT GENTLE BREATHS, FEEL YOURSELF CONNECTING TO THE EARTH AND FEEL HOW SUPPORTED YOU ARE.

NOW BRING TO MIND SOMEONE OR SOMETHING THAT EMBODIES LOVING KINDNESS FOR YOU. IT COULD BE A PET, A LOVED ONE, A WARM LIGHT. FEEL THAT LOVING KINDNESS INSIDE OF YOU AS A WARM AND GENTLE LIGHT.

CONTINUING TO FEEL THAT SAME LOVING KINDNESS, IMAGINE YOURSELF STANDING OR SITTING IN FRONT OF YOU AND SAY TO YOURSELF THE FOLLOWING:

MAY I BE HAPPY
MAY I BE PEACEFUL
MAY I BE WELL
MAY I BE LOVED

IF YOU NOTICE OTHER THOUGHTS COMING IN, LET THEM GO, AND BRING YOUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE WORDS.

IF YOU FIND THIS DIFFICULT TO SAY TO YOURSELF, IMAGINE YOU ARE A SMALL CHILD AND SAY THE WORDS. FEEL THEM AS YOU SAY THEM. WISHING YOURSELF THESE BEAUTIFUL STATES OF BEING. SEE YOURSELF RECEIVING THESE WORDS AND LOVING KINDNESS ENERGIES. TAKING DEEP BREATHS, SAY AGAIN:

MAY I BE HAPPY
MAY I BE PEACEFUL
MAY I BE WELL
MAY I BE LOVED

NOW THINK OF SOMEONE YOU ARE CLOSE TO, THAT YOU HAVE GOOD FEELINGS ABOUT, PERHAPS YOU DO LOVE OR FEEL AFFECTION FOR THEM. PICTURE THEM SITTING OR STANDING IN FRONT OF YOU AND SAY:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL
MAY YOU BE LOVED

FEEL A WARM LIGHT AND JOY RADIATING FROM YOUR HEART TO THIS PERSON IN FRONT OF YOU AND SEE THEM RECEIVING THIS. TAKE A DEEP BREATH AND AGAIN:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL
MAY YOU BE LOVED

NEXT CHOOSE SOMEONE YOU HAVE NEUTRAL FEELINGS ABOUT. IT COULD BE A CO WORKER, NEIGHBOR, OR SOMEONE YOU DON'T KNOW WELL AND THAT YOU FEEL NEUTRAL ABOUT.

PICTURE THEM SITTING OR STANDING IN FRONT OF YOU AND SAY:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL
MAY YOU BE LOVED

CONTINUE TO BREATHE. EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE NEUTRAL WITH THIS PERSON, SEND THEM LOVING KINDNESS AND SEE THEM RECEIVING IT. AND AGAIN:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL

MAY YOU BE LOVED

NOW BRING FORTH A PERSON YOU MIGHT HAVE SOME NEGATIVE FEELINGS OR MEMORIES ABOUT OR HAVE DIFFICULTY WITH. THIS MAY BE THE HARDEST TO DO. IF THE NEGATIVE FEELINGS ARE TOO STRONG HAVE THEM STAND FURTHER AWAY FROM YOU, OR EVEN CHOOSE SOME ONE ELSE WHO WOULDN'T BRING UP SUCH STRONG NEGATIVE FEELINGS.

PICTURE THEM IN FRONT OF YOU, TAKE A DEEP BREATH, AND SAY:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL
MAY YOU BE LOVED

IF THIS IS DIFFICULT, NOTICE THE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS THAT ARISE WITHIN YOU. AS MUCH AS YOU ARE ABLE, LET THEM MOVE THROUGH YOU. BRING YOURSELF BACK TO THE LOVING KINDNESS YOU HAVE FELT EARLIER, BREATHE, SEE THEM RECEIVING THE LOVING KINDNESS, AND SAY AGAIN:

MAY YOU BE HAPPY
MAY YOU BE PEACEFUL
MAY YOU BE WELL
MAY YOU BE LOVED

TO FINISH WE SEND LOVING KINDNESS TO ALL LIVING BEINGS – SPEAKING TO ALL OF LIFE.

EXPAND YOUR AWARENESS. IMAGINE ALL THOSE YOU KNOW AND DO NOT KNOW. BRING IN NATURE WITH ANIMALS, TREES, THE OCEAN, AND ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE. FEEL THE ONENESS OF ALL LIFE.

SENDING LOVING KINDNESS TO WHEREVER LIFE EXISTS, BREATHE AND SAY:

MAY WE BE HAPPY
MAY WE BE PEACEFUL
MAY WE BE WELL
MAY WE BE LOVED

FEEL JOY IN YOUR HEART, IN EVERY CELL IN YOUR BODY. THIS JOY FLOWS OUT AND TOUCHES ALL THAT IS. BREATHE AND SAY:

MAY WE BE HAPPY
MAY WE BE PEACEFUL
MAY WE BE WELL
MAY WE BE LOVED

NOW SIT FOR A FEW MOMENTS IN SILENCE. FOCUSING ON YOUR BREATH AND ANY SENSATIONS IN YOUR BODY.

BREATHING IN, I...

BREATHING IN, I ACKNOWLEDGE ANY STRESS

BREATHING OUT, I RELEASE THE STRESS

BREATHING IN, I ACKNOWLEDGE ANY ANXIETY

BREATHING OUT, I RELEASE THE ANXIETY

BREATHING IN, I ACKNOWLEDGE ANY ANGER

BREATHING OUT, I RELEASE THE ANGER

BREATHING IN, I ACKNOWLEDGE ANY FEAR

BREATHING OUT, I RELEASE THE FEAR

BREATHING IN, I FEEL PEACE WITHIN ME

BREATHING OUT, I SHARE PEACE WITH THE WORLD

BREATHING IN, I FEEL ACCEPTANCE WITHIN ME

BREATHING OUT, I SHARE ACCEPTANCE WITH THE WORLD

BREATHING IN, I FEEL LOVE WITHIN ME

BREATHING OUT, I SHARE LOVE WITH THE WORLD

BREATHING IN, I FEEL HARMONY WITHIN ME

BREATHING OUT, I SHARE HARMONY WITH THE WORLD

BREATHING IN, I FEEL STILLNESS WITHIN ME

BREATHING OUT, I SHARE STILLNESS WITH THE WORLD

REMINDER INSTEAD OF “WORRYING” ABOUT SOMEONE, SEE THEM IN GOOD HEALTH, CONNECTED, SUPPORTED, AND SURROUNDED BY LIGHT. YOU STRENGTHEN THEIR ENERGY FIELD!