

Guided Meditation: Goodwill Informed Mindfulness

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Hello and welcome. One of the concepts or attitudes that I think of as a synonym for mindfulness, or a near synonym or a partner, is goodwill. I like the word goodwill or well-wishing because it's a relatively ordinary and simple attitude. It doesn't require something as challenging as love. It doesn't have to be as big of a deal as even kindness, which means a little bit more actively involved in doing something nice or extending ourselves to others. Goodwill is very simple and ordinary and hopefully something that's accessible to us, even in certain circumstances, for people who are challenging for us.

That maybe not in all circumstances, but if someone who we have a lot of challenge with, and maybe even they're considered an enemy of some kind, that in certain circumstances, if they were in distress, we would help them. We would have goodwill for them, and may they be well. So it's a broad term. But think of it as a synonym for mindfulness. Maybe it allows us to sit down and to practice mindfulness meditation by beginning with goodwill, beginning with a basic orientation towards goodwill.

So to assume a meditation posture and to gently close your eyes, and with an attitude of goodwill for yourself and your body, adjust your posture. Good. And take a few long-ish breaths with the idea that you do so with goodwill for yourself, for your body, refreshing your body, relaxing your body with fuller breaths. Relaxing as you exhale, and then letting your breathing return to normal. And consider for a few moments your own experience, way of having goodwill, living with goodwill for the people around you, the people you care for, wherever goodwill is easy for you. And what is that experience of goodwill like?

How's it experienced in your body, in your heart, in your mind? And then, goodwill, which is kind of a well-wishing, that doesn't have to have a specific wish involved. It's just a general attitude that suffuses people with positive regard, with care, with meeting them with

our goodness, our good intentions. And to bring that goodwill to the attention of mind, to breathe mindfully, maybe in such a way that goodwill is suffused into your breathing through the attention to breathing. To have goodwill included as part of your meditation, a form of goodwill that's not a lot of work, kind of goodwill that can be called on easier with less effort than any kind of ill-will that there might be.

Ill-will takes a lot of energy, even if ill-will is well-oiled, takes effort, tension, stress. Goodwill in the simplest form is easeful, relaxed, open. And the primary reference for goodwill is happiness. As you sit here, breathing in and breathing out, maybe on the exhale, quietly, softly, say to yourself in your mind, or imagine saying to yourself in your mind, saying the word happiness or happy, as a way of bringing more to the forefront, an attitude of goodwill as you meditate, happy. If you find yourself thinking a lot, see if there's a way to return to a simple, mindful goodwill, a simple goodwill form of mindfulness. That's more satisfying than wandering off in thought.

That's maybe more peaceful, easier, easeful, a general nourishing goodwill simply because you're alive, breathing, heart beating, animate human, animate form of life. Such a miracle, happy. Meditating with a silent disposition for goodwill, a quiet attitude of goodwill that doesn't require a reason for goodwill or an object for goodwill. In the quiet and stillness of your meditation, maybe it can be a simple attitude that requires no thinking except maybe repeating the word happy. As we come to the end of this sitting, to begin by saying there's an intimate reciprocal relationship between goodwill and happiness, happiness and goodwill.

When we are happy, goodwill is kind of a natural disposition. We're ready to be friendly. When there is strong goodwill, there's a natural happiness. We're ready to be happy. Goodwill and happiness do not require things to be going right in the world. Do not require an object, something that's happening. It can be the outcome of simply meditating, sitting quietly, coming into harmony, homeostasis, into a sense of ease with being alive right here and now without a lot of thoughts and concerns.

And may it be that whatever way, may it be that whatever benefit we have from this meditation, may it predispose us to enter the world with goodwill, with enough sense of being present for ourselves and others, to stay close to whatever well-being we feel that we know we have, so that our own well-being radiates out as well-wishing. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may these wishes include ourselves as part of all beings. Everyone is included in the simple attitude of goodwill. Thank you.