

## Guided Meditation: Radiating the Light of Love

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Welcome, and I welcome you to this meditation, ongoing meditations on love.

Generally, these meditation sessions are associated with mindfulness meditation. And two things about that. One is that both \*mettā\*—the meditation on goodwill or love—is considered to be the integral partner to mindfulness. Mindfulness and \*mettā\* support each other, go hand in hand. And the second thing is that they don't simply go hand in hand. There's a way of understanding them to be the same thing, or they grow into being the same thing.

Also, I'm thinking these days that love is a powerful force. And the hope is that love is a more powerful force than hatred. And it's a more powerful force than fear. But my understanding of how love works in Buddhism, how practice and how living a life works in Buddhism, is that the world begins with each of us. The world that each of us lives in is centered, happens to be centered, situationally centered, in ourselves. And that's a certain center, the beginning of the world, where we begin within ourselves, and how that reaches out into the world is crucial.

For it to begin with love, with kindness, if nothing else, the kind of love, kind of self-care, self-concern, self-respect, self-compassion, that is to address our own suffering in a deep way, to really find out how not to suffer, and then to spread that into the world. But also to find that the source of love is in us, and that source of love, I think of as turning on a light bulb. If you could slow down the speed of light so you can visually see the spread of light, you would see that when the light bulb gets turned on, the light lights up the area first right around the light bulb, and then a little bit further away and further away and further away until it fills a room. And so when we turn on the light bulb of love, we find it deep inside. It's going to radiate and shine and warm that which is closest to it, which is ourselves. That love goes here, kind of as a spread, on its way to touch the people we love, on its way to touch the people who we

don't have much love for, they're neutral strangers, on the way to the people who are difficult to love. Just like the light shines on everyone equally, there's a power and value in shining the light of love on everyone, to highlight another aspect of human beings, another aspect of human society that's different than hate, different than fear.

The Buddha said, hate is not overcome by hate. By love alone is it overcome.

So to begin with, sitting in a posture that supports your idea, supports the recognition that this is the spot, this is the beginning, this is the center in your world that you experience. You're at the center of it all. And to assume that center, to kind of find yourself rooted here in a way that is definitive, is irrefutable, is completely recognizing how valuable it is to be rooted, to be connected deeply to this place at this time here. Because to really center here, so that this centered location becomes a basis for a healthy way of being in the world, viewing the world.

So to gently close the eyes and to feel the sitting bones on your chair, your cushion, your feet on the floor. If you're on your bed, to feel the bed. Whatever surface is holding you up is the place of here in the most intimate way. And then, rising out of that spot where you sit, to gently take some deeper breaths, fuller breaths, and relax as you exhale, settling in deep inside to a grounding place, a settling place deep within. Finding deep within, on the end of the exhale, some place where the body is stable, still rooted, maybe in your sitting bone, maybe deep in your belly, the base of your spine. Breathing normally, settling, relaxing on the exhale.

And then feeling your global body, the world of your own body, and feel whatever more subtle sensations of aliveness, maybe a hum, glow in your body, tingling that's wider, broader through your body than any particular body sensation, thought, feeling. Relaxing into the wide, broad body, rooted in that place deep inside where there's some stability and steadiness. And that combination of an inner place of stillness, stability, and the wide hum of life.

And then to slowly lower, drop the word *\*mettā\** or love or goodwill into that field of vibration, hum, the global body. Like you would drop a pebble in a pond and let the pebble sink down into the bottom and see if you can find rest at a still point or a warm point or a gently glowing point of love within you, of *\*mettā\**. On the exhale, lightly saying the word love, a whisper, maybe in a tone of voice that's loving, saying the word as you exhale and following the exhale deep inside, allowing the thinking mind to be quiet so you can feel a place inside of tenderness, gentleness, a place inside that you associate with love, with care, goodwill. Could be deep in the belly, could be in the heart, it could be in the mind.

And on the inhale, let the love radiate outward into your body like a light bulb that's gone on, spreading the goodness of love throughout your being, even around and through and with the challenges you might have. The light of love doesn't differentiate. It lands on everything. It's possible that one of the most important aspects, qualities of our life is our capacity to love, be friendly, have goodwill, a generosity of heart that no matter how small or weak it is, even if it seems almost inaccessible, to center yourself there and let it radiate whatever distance it goes.

And as we come to the end of our sitting, do once again on the exhale, settle in, feel your way in to a place within that you associate with love, \*mettā\*, at the very end of the exhale. Rest in that spot. And as you inhale, let the glow, radiance of that care, let the gaze that you have be a gaze of kindness, of love. The radiance, the gaze, looks out upon the world, spreads from you like light spreading across the lands. The light of love radiating from you, from your center, trusting, being as if your love goes out into the whole world, not worrying whether that is true or not. Just feel what it would be like if it was true, even if your love only reaches a few inches beyond your body. How good it feels to have \*mettā\*, kindness, be spreading beyond you.

And may each of us, may the goodness we have, the love we have, our dedications to living a life of integrity and care for our world. May we have confidence in it. May we believe in it. May we give life to it. May it flow out into the world. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.