

Guided Meditation: Steady Kindness for Easy Person

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Hello and welcome. And as I sit down here to bring to all of us our capacity for kindness, for love, for goodwill, I am thinking about the monks who are now in Washington, D.C., and the photographs of them being in the National Cathedral. And one of the things that inspires us, like many of us, about them, was the consistency of their purpose. They gave themselves over for over a hundred days to walk from Texas to Washington, D.C. And that takes a lot of repetition of the same thing, one step after the other, and to give yourselves over to the simplicity of just walking. Is what we're doing also when we give ourselves over to kindness, to goodwill, to *mettā*.

One breath at a time, the *mettā* practice starts being consistent, steady, and more than that, steady, so that we start becoming unified, we're gathering together. And somehow there's so many people who are gathered around these monks, unified, and... And even in news outlets that normally wouldn't cover peace walks or Buddhists, for that matter, are speaking with great appreciation for what they're doing, the unification around something. And so as we practice *mettā*, we're unifying ourselves, steadying ourselves, being consistent in a loving, kind way around the topic of goodwill and generosity of heart, warmth, a tenderness that expresses itself in well-wishing, goodwill. And it is a natural capacity we have to have goodwill. What's unnatural is the way our minds spin and get caught up in thoughts and get caught up in fear and anxiety and anger and distress and self-preoccupation, conceit of all kinds, where we live in our thoughts.

There's a certain way that that's not natural because it's a narrowing of the focus. It's keeping only a part of who we are in the picture. A simplicity of being, where we don't live in stress, don't live in resentment and anger, aversion, don't live in desires or greed, or don't live in fear, but are here, present, right there, without even trying. If we meet someone, we meet

them with care and kindness, simplicity. Maybe we're just delighted to see them. And it's the goodwill of delight, goodwill of appreciation, the goodwill of respect and rapport, the goodwill of just caring for people, the goodwill of being together in a trustworthy way.

Something releases and relaxes, and the natural state is one that's ready for goodwill, for love. So that's what we're doing here, learning to steady ourselves, unify ourselves, breath after breath, in this field of goodwill, a form of generosity. So to assume a meditation posture and to gently close your eyes and to appreciate this body of yours, of ours, that this body is the home for so many ways that we are tucked away in a closet or in a seldom used room, in this home of ours is love, is kindness. That reveals itself if we get settled and relaxed. Gently taking a few long, slow deep breaths. Relaxing as you exhale.

Taking some deep breaths in. And settling into some place within of tenderness, warmth. The place where love might reside in your body. And letting the breathing return to normal. And continue a little longer to feel the inhale, maybe arising from the place of tenderness, kindness, and relaxing back into the place of goodwill, kindness. And then gently, letting yourself to breathe lightly, simply, letting breathing breathe itself, or being unconcerned if your breathing is being controlled or it's not simple.

Allowing it to be as it is, allowing yourself to be as you are, as a good friend would sit with you and allow you to be as you are, accepting you as you are, and then bring to mind someone for whom it's easy for you to have goodwill or kindness, loving kindness. Maybe if you can visualize their face or a circumstance in which they're happy, seeing if you can gaze upon them, consider them in a way that wishes them well. You want them to be happy. It would make you happy if they were happy. You want them to be peaceful and safe. It would be deeply settling, reassuring, inspiring, to know that they smile and feel at ease.

And just maybe if they knew that there were people like you who wished this for them, just that is good for them. Just that is appreciated. Wishing them well. Maybe repeating gently the four words, may you be happy? Or just the last word, happy, in their direction? Or maybe there's a non-verbal way in your heart to send forth like a light, a warmth, your care and goodwill as you exhale.

Letting the last word reverberate through you and beyond you to your friend. Letting go of thoughts that are nothing to do with this. Letting go of discursive considerations and stories. Trusting a process of becoming very simple, consistent, breath after breath, on the path of kindness. Care. Gathering yourself, simplifying yourself around goodwill, no matter what, step after step.

Goodwill. You can continue with your friend or this one person. If that's simplest and allows for a consistency, a steadying, a unifying around goodwill, kindness. Or when you're ready you can shift to another person, to whom it's also relatively easy to have goodwill. And you can vary the four words. Could be, may you be joyful? May you have joy.

May you be happy. May you be filled with goodwill. Breath after breath, settling into whatever capacity you have that's related to goodwill, kindness, love, by which you make yourself a safe person for others. With every breath, softening, relaxing, relaxing into a simplicity of being where goodwill, friendliness, is also present with every breath, settling and remembering. *Mettā* may be a form of goodwill that shines a little stronger, more inspiring if you have a small smile on your face, a smile of kindness. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to continue to offer kindness to your easy people, but now broaden the scope, widen the field to all the people for whom it's easy to have goodwill, as if you can broaden, widen your heart, widen your vision of who is the recipient of your goodwill, and wish them all well-being.

Wish them all to be together as a group, safely, kindly, enjoying each other, being respected, and you showering them, pervading them with a kind gaze, relaxed, friendly, gaze of appreciation. May they all be happy, and then broadening wider out into the world. From the simplicity of being and meditation, bring to mind, in some sense, the whole world, the whole globe, and to gaze upon it kindly, wishing them all well, doing something that you wish we could all do for each other. May we all wish each other well. May we all be kind, friendly. May all beings be happy.

May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. Thank you.