

Guided Meditation: Goodwill for the Easy Person

Gil Fronsdal

February 09, 2026

Keywords: mettā, loving-kindness, goodwill, meditation, happiness, tenderness, warm-hearted, radiance of the heart, all beings, safety

So this week we're going to start with some of the more traditional practice of *mettā*, the practice of goodwill, loving-kindness. And kind of delightfully, the principle for some of the classic practice of loving-kindness is one principle is to start by considering a person or people for whom it is easy for you to have goodwill, easy for you to have kindness, loving kindness, *mettā*. And we start there and kind of do it, settle into it, develop it, grow it, so it can be the source of beginning to expand our goodwill to people for whom it's not as easy, until it's people for whom we have no inclination, until we bring it into people who are quite difficult for us. And it's all having to do with the radiance of the heart, the goodness of the heart, goodwill of the heart. And you don't have to actually do this in actual real life that you have to talk to people or go to them and encounter people that's difficult. But for you to live with a heart that smiles, for you to live the heart that's warm-hearted, that doesn't get stuck in being resentful, being afraid, but rather in the privacy of your own meditation to begin exploring how, the ways, that you can have some modicum of goodwill for all people.

And we start with people for whom it's easy. So that'll be the guidance today. So to assume a meditation posture and to... And then whatever posture you're in, can you adjust your posture so that it's a little easier for you to breathe? There's a little more space for your diaphragm to move, that the rib cage is a little bit more freer to expand. Some people will find it useful to pull in their spine between the shoulder blades.

So to open up the area around the chest, so it's easier, a little bit easier to breathe there. And that also makes it a little bit more accessible or the tenderness, the gentleness of the heart. Gently take some fuller breaths. Relax as you exhale. Sitting quietly, letting the breathing breathe itself and beginning to feel the experience of breathing deeply. Know the experience of breathing from the inside out.

Then bring to mind some person for whom it's relatively easy for you to have goodwill or some being. It could be someone you know personally. It could be some person you don't know personally, but that you respect a lot, value a lot. And if it's easiest to do a... It could be a child, a baby, it could be an animal. It's something that someone for whom knowing them, knowing that they are alive and present, brings a smile to your heart, delight.

You're happy to know them. Maybe if you can visualize, visualize their face, maybe visualize them happy and smiling. If it's someone you know personally... Maybe remembering an occasion where your delight and appreciation and goodwill for them was particularly noticeable. And consider simple ways that you have goodwill for them, that you wish them well. Maybe there are concrete ways or maybe there's a general kind of inspiration that you have, that they would be happy.

A goodwill and desire for their happiness that is so pretty wonderful that you would have this. It's pretty wonderful that you know such a person. Pretty wonderful that they touch something inside of you that can elicit feelings, thoughts, intentions of well-wishing, goodwill, kindness, love. And in thinking about them, what is it that has touched the most in you? Is it the delight of thoughts? Is it a warm feeling, a glow of joy or happiness?

Is it more like the intention of wishing them well that is a nice for you? Or is it all of the above? And to fold all of that into a very simple contemplative sentence that maybe you can repeat to yourself. Thinking of this person or these people, may you be happy. Repeating those four words, especially the last word, happy. As you say, happy may be kind of a letting go into your goodwill, your joy, your smile of the heart.

Maybe coordinating these four words with your breathing. The first three words, may I be with the inhale. And as a way of appreciating the last word, the meaning of it. Saying it with the exhale. Maybe letting go of thoughts as you exhale. So you can better stay connected to how happy feels in you.

Maybe a kind of quiet contemplative happiness arising from your goodwill. Okay. Adjusting how you say, may you be happy. So it's very quiet, smooth, enjoyable to say. Maybe bordering on almost not saying it at all. Almost a non-verbal expression of goodwill.

Is there a way that goodwill can be reassuring for you? That supports the mind to become quieter, stiller, clearer. So there's more room, more possibility for goodwill to flow out of you. And then as we come to the end of this sitting, to consider or feel what your own goodwill *mettā* might, what kind of influence it has on your body, your heart, your mind. Is it difficult? Is it easy?

Does it soften something? Is it reassuring? Does it bring a warmth or a tenderness? Is it something that you appreciate? Is having goodwill for others good for you? And then to expand the scope of your goodwill, as if you can turn on a light, lighthouse light that shines out in one direction.

And letting your goodwill radiate outwards in front of you, let it radiate out to the sides of you, let it radiate out behind you and above you. And may your goodwill, appreciation of others, your private capacity to have a tender, loving heart directed to all people, may it support you as you go through your day, that you're more inclined to meet people with goodwill. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

And may how we relate to them support this possibility. May all beings everywhere be happy. Thank you.