

## Guided Meditation: Peace and Goodwill

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Hello and welcome to our meditation on this holiday in the United States.

And for this day, I would like to begin over this week at the topic of the *samādhi* of *mettā*, the deep kind of unification of mind and body and heart around this topic of goodwill or around this capacity we have for goodwill, for love, well-wishing, loving-kindness. And it's a phenomenal thing that we can have the ability to become unified around this, to gather it around this so that goodwill becomes the kind of more or less the singular orientation, focus, engagement of our lived life as we're meditating. We're now no longer distracted, no longer scattered, no longer shut out. And to spend time in this kind of holistic experience of love can be life-changing. So the *samādhi* of *mettā*.

So to begin to take some time as a way of beginning this unification process, gathering ourselves together. Spend some time organizing your body, gathering your body together, aligning it, adjusting it, even the smallest little details of posture, caring for that, doing so with a kind of a love of putting everything right, the best way you can. The position of the head, maybe even rotating the head a little bit to help you kind of find a midpoint. Maybe even rolling the shoulders a little bit, wiggling shoulders back and forth a little bit. Just to be more careful and attentive to what might feel really good, a way of letting your shoulders hang. Maybe a small adjustment in the spine would feel good.

Small adjustment to how your hands are and arms, and to the legs and feet. And doing so is both because it makes things maybe more awake, more comfortable, more engaged in the meditation. But it's also a way to express a care for your body, maybe even a goodwill or love for it, that you value it, you want it to do well. Gently closing your eyes and with some care to do it in a nice way. Maybe slowly take some fuller inhales and a longer relaxation as you exhale, partly just to become familiar with your breathing. Maybe having an interest, loving interest to how you're breathing, what breathing is like.

Then allowing your breathing to return to normal, and seeing if there's very simple, small ways to adjust your breathing, to make it nicer, more comfortable, offering this care, love to yourself, to see if breathing can be adjusted to be nicer. Maybe relaxing the belly, maybe allowing the exhale to be a moment longer so you linger there slightly, long enough so there's a wonderful feeling, maybe gratitude, relief, appreciation when you begin to breathe in. And then also as a way of caring for yourself and benefiting yourself. See if you can experience some place in your present moment, sitting, meditating, where things are peaceful for you. A peaceful spot somewhere in your body, somewhere in your heart or your emotional, in your emotions.

Or perhaps you can feel a peace around you, in your room, in the place you are, or maybe with a kind of sense of visualization of the vast sky above. Maybe that feels peaceful, or the solid earth below. As you breathe in, breathe in that peace. As you breathe out, gently spread it through your body. If there are ways you feel the opposite of peace, that's okay. The peace can meet that with peacefulness, not challenging it, but holding it gently, kindly with every breath.

Breathing in peace, breathing out, spreading it through your body. As you breathe out, relaxing the thinking mind, relaxing it under the gentle influence of whatever peace you feel. And breathing in peace, and then breathing out *mettā*. Breathing out, goodwill, love, kindness, maybe in the form of a heartfelt warmth, glow. Breathing in peace and spreading goodwill, kindness, warmth through your body on the exhale.

And then as part of the peace, part of whatever calm that's here, breathe in, goodwill, kindness. Breathe in a gentle pleasure or sweetness of care, love, warmth, and exhale that goodwill on the out into your whole body. Maybe feeling the pleasure of goodwill, kindness, or the tenderness, the warmth as you breathe, breathing in peace, goodwill. And then on the exhale, letting whatever resistance or tightness, contraction begin to soften, like your body would slowly relax on a cold day, standing in the sun, in the sun of your goodwill, your love. Say hello to all of who you are, kindly, gently, as you breathe in love or goodwill, well-wishing, as you breathe it out through your body.

Maybe there's a sense that goodwill, *mettā*, is a wonderful envelope or bubble or blanket that holds all of who you are within it. Breathing in, *mettā*, spreading it throughout your body as you exhale, quieting your thinking mind. Maybe having a very simple thought that just keeps other thoughts away. Maybe the thought, yes, maybe whenever you exhale, yes to goodwill. Maybe the thought, love, or *mettā*, goodwill. And maybe a gentle smile of appreciating whatever degree of love, kindness might be here.

And then as we come to the end of the sitting, breathing in, peace and goodwill, exhaling it out into the world, a gentle wind, a gentle warmth that flows from your heart, from your goodwill, out into the wider world, in a large circular way, like a spreading bubble, or spreading out across the land, ever wide and large that bubble of care can be. No stress, no shoulds, or whatever you do is enough. Opening your heart wide to the world as you breathe out love, kindness, and then seeing if you can have the wish that today's meditation is a support for goodwill, kindness, for the whole world. That it supports you in whatever known, unknown and known ways to care for the welfare and happiness of all beings. May it be that this practice we do helps others be happy. May it be that our practice helps us to spread safety into this world. May it be that our practice contributes to this world being safe for the people we meet. May it be that this practice helps all of us, everyone, to be free of suffering. May all beings be happy. Thank you.