

Guided Meditation: For the Sake of All Beings

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February 20, 2026

Keywords: mettā, mettā samādhi, samādhi, goodwill, forest bathing, Buddhism, generosity of spirit, all beings, meditation practice, heater of love

Hello and welcome to this meditation on goodwill, *mettā*.

And two things I'll say about this today. One is, as over this time that we've been introducing love and *mettā* and now the *mettā samādhi*, I'm hoping you're getting a sense of how to connect to *mettā*, to goodwill, to some kind of love. And this week, to be able to feel how goodwill can be there in our connection to an inner peace, an inner stillness or calm, that it could be there with sensitivity to our capacity for love and care, and that...

And so one of the qualities of *samādhi* is associated with the Japanese practice of forest bathing, that if you go walking in the forest there, you allow yourself to take in and feel the atmosphere of the forest in a way that's healing. So as I've talked about, we do the same thing with beginning to take in the atmosphere, the mood, the sensations of... of *mettā*, the experience of it, in a calm, peaceful, receptive way.

And one thing that makes this is all the whole Buddhist meditation, the Buddhist path of practice, the practice of *mettā*. At some point as we do it, it only makes sense to continue doing it if we're doing it for the sake of others. At some point, doing it for one's own sake kind of doesn't make sense anymore. It kind of is not really something there to really, you know, just, there's not a need for it or something. And what gives the whole motivation for practice and deeper practice for oneself is to understand we're doing it for the benefit and welfare of others. We're not just doing it for ourselves.

And so this idea that we're doing it for others is part of this forest bathing, part of this field of goodwill, field of receptivity, field of care and goodness. Yes, the field of yes, not resisting, not despairing, but beginning to come from the source within that is untroubled in its capacity to offer kindness and love, to radiate it in all ways.

And so another analogy to forest bathing is having a small heater in our deep inside, heater that radiates the warmth of kindness, well-wishing, love. And we allow it to warm us, we allow it to fill us first. And then with all beings in mind, wanting to benefit all beings because we're not in some ways we're very deeply connected very deeply integrated with all beings and the goodness, the goodwill that radiates out into the world is part of what we forest bathe in.

So those two things today. So sitting quietly and closing your eyes and taking a moment or two to just check in, see how you are as if any way that you are is okay. It's just how you are now, whatever way you are now. This is what the heater of love is going to warm up. Touch and hold and care for.

The tensions in your body, the challenges of your heart, the tensions of your mind, they all okay to have, to be held, to be warmed, in the warmth of kindness, in the forest bathing of *mettā*. And feeling, sensing the influence on your, all of you, from the rhythm of breathing, expansion and contraction of breathing in and out.

And then orienting yourself towards how you can stay connected to goodwill through words of well-wishing, through a word that opens you to love, to a feeling inside, by thinking of a person that you care for easily, by some sense of yes, to kindness, goodwill, love for yourself, for others, for the whole world. So you're here to practice for the benefit of all, bathing, immersing yourself in the influence of goodwill on all of who you are and beyond. Letting the thinking mind become quiet and still, so you can better be attuned to feel, sense what goodwill can be like for you today. A gentle yes to *mettā*, goodwill, bathing in the pleasure of goodwill, bathing in the goodness of a goodwill for all beings, practicing for the sake of all beings.

And as we near the end of this sitting, to see if you can orient yourself to a source or a feeling of love, goodwill, which flows from somewhere within, not connected to what you take to be yourself. Sometimes we identify the self with the thoughts in the control tower, I think, therefore I am. Sometimes we identify with particular feelings. It could be the attention around anxiety. Sometimes we identify strongly with the body. But perhaps there's some kind of deeper sensitivity, deeper love, generosity of spirit that comes from some other source or is wider, bigger than any place that you take to be me, myself and mine.

And relax into that love. Settle down into it or expand outward into it. And let the love, the care, the goodwill, let it turn out into the world. Let it grow and expand. Let your gaze softly... Look upon the whole world, maybe as if you can see the world in space and see the whole world in one glance. And independent of any way you identify as yourself, let something

broader and wider and deeper from you have a free generosity, free, easy, soft goodwill for the whole world.

May all beings be happy, may all beings be safe, may all beings be peaceful, may all beings be free. And may it be that your own practice of meditation, Buddhism, practice of *mettā*, may it be more gentle, more receptive, more unassertive, by remembering to practice for the sake of all beings. May our practice support this difficult world. May this practice of *mettā* we do inspire us to be generous to the people around us. May all beings be happy. Thank you.