

Guided Meditation: Giving and Receiving Metta

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Hello and welcome to our meditation.

And we are in the middle of doing a series on *mettā*, a wonderful Pāli word that relates to a friend, the friendship, and that is said to be a quality that is lubricating or moisturizing or softening. And I think of it as something that is set free when we are deeply settled, when we are not limiting this natural human capacity for friendliness, for good-heartedness. It's not being limited by clinging or preoccupation. And then one of the miracles of this practice of meditation is the miracle of settling down, becoming quiet, and discovering natural capacities for warm-heartedness, for care, for friendliness, goodwill, compassion, joy. It's quite something.

So today, the focus is goodwill towards meditation, those for whom it's easy, those who inspire you, those who maybe you want to emulate or be alike because of their good nature, their generosity, their kindness, their compassion. And what it means is people for whom something in you resonates, something in you recognizes their goodness, recognizes their kindness or generosity. And that recognition can be more than just intellectual and conceptual. It touches us in some way. It moves us in some way. It resonates in some way with something inside of ourselves, maybe our own capacity for those things.

And so it's something that, when we talk about *mettā*, goodwill for the easy person, we're talking about someone for whom it's already a resonance with us. There's already a feeling that something inside of us has moved or opened. It touches maybe the very place inside of ourselves that has some of the same qualities. And then we are kind of, it's kind of like a cycle where we feel, experience their goodness, know it, remember it, take it in, and then offer it back, offer it also to them. May you be happy, building on what they have, how they inspire us. And then getting immersed in that, getting like that being the primary activity, letting everything go for these minutes.

Because this is such an important thing. This is such a central core aspect of our humanity to be able to spend a few minutes just offering, just radiating kindness, goodwill. So assuming a meditation posture, and is taking a posture where you adjust your chest, your shoulders, your neck in such a way that your heart or your ability to feel another person, feel, be available. So that's more exposed, that you're more open. So for some people it means the chest is a little bit more expanded, not puffed up, but certainly not collapsed. Maybe the shoulders are a little bit rolled backwards.

Maybe the hands are positioned in such a way that you feel more receptive in gently closing your eyes in such a way that the receptors inside your body come to the forefront, feeling your body, the body being an antenna that both receives signals from the environment. So we know the environment. We know others. And also so that body is an antenna that transmits, transmits back into the world, communicates with others with more ways than just our words. And then gently taking some deeper breaths with the inhale somehow touching and expanding together. That inner sensitivity, inner receptivity, a willingness to be present. And the exhale relaxes the body, softens, letting your breathing return to normal.

And with a more or less ordinary breath, breathe in receptivity. Breathe in there and goodness. Breathe out, relaxing, softening. And then bring to mind a person that inspires you or delights you for their goodness, their friendliness, warmth, care, generosity. Knowing them, they don't have to personally know them, but knowing of them touches something in you. If you are with them, something about them changes you. Maybe you're more inclined to be caring, friendly.

Maybe visualizing them in front of you, maybe with a kind smile and sparkly eyes. And as you breathe in, breathe into how you're touched, how you're inspired by their goodwill, love, compassion. Breathe into what resonates inside of you, almost as if you're taking it in, and then on the exhale, from the same place that's touched, offer your goodwill to them. Let your heart smile on them, maybe on the exhales, saying gently the word happy, as if you're wishing them to be happy. On the next exhale, safe. On the next exhale, peaceful. And then free.

Calmly, remembering, feeling, their goodness on the inhale, as if you're receiving it and letting it touch you, where there's resonance. And then on the exhale, offer the same back, wish them well. Remembering your easy person as you breathe in. Remembering the place inside that resonates, receives, is warmed. And then in the exhale, send that warmth out back to that person. So you're absorbed in this wonderful cycle of warmth coming and warmth going, letting go of all other thoughts. Let everything else recede as you enter the cycle of warmth,

the cycle of goodwill, perhaps inviting a smile into your heart that's part of the inspiration.

A smile on your lips, and a smile lighting up your mind, continuing this cycle of receiving and offering goodwill. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to consider in this world, there's not only your easy person who shines forth with goodwill or care, good qualities. There are actually many people and many, many people who do it sometimes. Breathe in the vast amount of goodness, the vast amount of warmth and goodwill that does in fact exist in this world. For these minutes, breathe it in, fill yourself with it, resonate with it, and on the exhale, offer it back even more widely to all beings.

May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free. And may we remember to be kind and friendly. May we contribute to the sum total of goodness in this world. May we practice for the benefit and welfare of all beings. Thank you.