

Guided Meditation: Enjoying Metta

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March 10, 2026

Keywords: mettā, goodwill, benefactor, friendliness, kindness, love, happiness, joy, well-wishing, warmth

So hello and welcome to this meditation on *mettā*.

And sometimes it's nice to not describe exactly what *mettā* is, but rather to describe it very generally so that each person can have their own sense of what it is for them. And one way to do that is to evoke the sentiments, the emotions, the goodwill you might have for a benefactor, a person that you know that has inspired you tremendously, inspires the best in you, makes you very, very happy just to know that they exist. Very happy and grateful for their support or for a dear friend. And exactly what that sentiment, the attitude, feelings anybody will have, we can't say, except for you. And I think there's probably a range.

And the idea here is to find what it is for you and to have confidence in your own goodwill, your way of being friendly or loving, and to make room for that, give time for that. So you get to know it well, and so it can become stronger in you, fuller in you, without distractions, without being interrupted, for these minutes we have now during the meditation. And so for today, think of a person, anybody at all. It could be a benefactor, someone who supported you. It could be some person you had never met personally, but somehow they're... how they live is inspiring and fills you with maybe hope and goodness and goodwill.

It could be someone you know, a friend, and to find how it is for you to have pleasure in your goodwill, pleasure in your delight in knowing them, pleasure in your friendliness, your kindness, your inspiration around this person. So with that as a backdrop, to enter into a posture that has some degree, maybe a small degree, but some degree of greater confidence with which you would normally meditate. It might mean that you sit up straighter, somehow straighten out your spine. Some people have a little more confidence when they have a little bit more space between the last vertebrae of the spine and the skull, with kind of a gently lifting up and tipping forward to the head. And to settle into the meditation so that you're

also settling more fully into yourself, in that you're the instrument, the musical instrument that plays the notes of *mettā*, kindness, friendliness, taking some fuller breaths, settling on the exhale.

As you exhale, releasing the weight of your body into the place that supports it, the chair, the floor, the cushion, sometimes releasing the weight of the body there to settle more. In the same time, provide a lift, lift in the torso, letting your breathing return to normal. And still with the exhale, settling, relaxing the body. As you exhale, settling into the place in your body that provides you with the most sense of stability or subtleness, maybe a place where you feel grounded, and bring to mind a person who inspires you the most with friendliness, kindness, love, *mettā*. Maybe it's easy to smile when you think of this person.

And is there any joy or pleasure that you feel inside your heart, your body, your mind when you think of this person? And as you breathe, settle into a confidence, confident in your well-wishing, your friendliness, your inspiration, confidence in the pleasure, the smile, holding this person in your mind. And as you breathe in, breathe in the pleasure, fill in the pleasure of *mettā* into your body. Breathe in the goodness of your friend, your benefactors. And on the exhale, send your goodwill out towards your friend, almost like there's a bird in your hand. And as you open up your hand and stretch out your arms, the bird takes off, so on the exhale, your goodwill flies off, free, open, out into the world towards your friend.

And for these minutes, see if you can have confidence in your own goodness, your own goodwill, the source of your smile, confidence in the rightness of friendliness, allowing yourself to feel the pleasure or the joy associated with knowing your friend, associated with your goodwill. And if it's nice, offer your goodwill through the phrases of, may you be happy, safe, peaceful, free. As you breathe out, letting the thinking mind become quieter, as the mind too settles into the goodwill, into the pleasure of *mettā*. And as we come to the end of this sitting, to again think of your, the person who inspires friendliness, goodwill in you, and feel the pleasure of that, the smile of that, the goodness, however small it might be, appreciate that this comes from you. And imagine you can send it out into the world widely, opening your hands so the birds of *mettā* fly in all directions, there to help others smile, feel the pleasure of someone's warmth, wishing all beings well.

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 warmth, your friendliness, your kindness and care stays present in you as you go through the world, allowing your heart to smile in goodwill, wishing everyone well, wishing everyone to have a inner warmth and happiness. May we together spread love and care into the world. May all beings be well. Thank you.