Guided Meditaitioin: Breathing in Goodness to Inner Challenges

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Hello and welcome to this guided meditation, meditation on *mettā*, building to a universal goodwill.

Maybe or maybe not, it's good for the universe, but it's certainly good for those of us who practice it. Because when we allow our goodwill to be all-encompassing, it frees the heart, it liberates the heart, liberates our mind from its hostility, it liberates it from its clinging. And there's a saying in ancient Buddhism that it's a temporary limitation from our karma. And I interpret that to mean it's a temporary kind of stepping out of all our conditioning, the conditioning that we've contributed to or participated in, the conditioning that somehow has affected us through our life, that all these things that are how we've been conditioned temporarily are put down.

And one of those is how we are any part of ourselves that we don't somehow hold in kindness and love. Any place where we're tense or tight or somehow blocked or somehow stressed, somehow have a negative attitude maybe towards ourselves. And so part of loving-kindness, part of this goodwill, is to specifically include the parts of ourselves which are difficult. It could be that there aren't too many parts that are difficult, except the very way in which we think, the way that we are the agent of our experience, the recipient of our experience. There's something there about the sense of self that has within it some tension, some pressure, some contraction. And even that, we can step out of that. Even that can dissolve or relax in the warmth of a kind of universal goodwill that we have.

So today I'm going to offer you this way of doing goodwill practice meditation that we did last week. And that is to think of an easy person to be inspired by because of their goodwill, their compassion, their goodness. And feel the resonance of their goodness in you, how that

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inspires you, what inside of you recognizes that, what inside of you somehow delights in that, appreciates it. And imagine that person, somehow their goodness, their well-being, comes into you or how that resonates with you, comes and fills you on the in-breath. And as it fills you, have it particularly go into those parts of yourself which are difficult for you. The parts of yourself where there is holding or tension, anxiety, hostility, resentment, those places that are somehow bunched up inside because it's a place of being hurt.

And not to make anything go away or be disrespectful, but allow that goodness to kind of come, that inspiration, that resonance that you feel in knowing this person. Take on the in-breath, let it come and fill and spread through what is difficult in you. And then on the exhale, to relax that part. Relax it with warmth of your own goodwill, where your attitude is, may this part of me be well. May this part of me be happy, peaceful. So there's a kind of a rhythm.

And if this rhythm with in-breaths and out-breaths is too fast for you, there's a way of doing this, maybe over two breaths, considering the easy person. And then after that, a couple of breaths with oneself, and so you can adjust it as it works for you in a nice pace. So assuming a meditation posture and a posture of ease. Maybe there's something about a posture that allows for a deeper sense of relaxing, letting go. Maybe trusting yourself to your body and then gently taking some deeper breaths, relaxing on the exhale, and letting your breathing return to normal.

And with a normal breath, feel where in your body, in your mind, your heart, where there's some contraction, some stress, some sense of unease that you might have. And feel that area as you breathe in. And as you exhale, soften, relax around it. And then settling in to your body breathing. On the exhale, all the way at the end, follow the exhale to the grounding spot, the settling spot, maybe at the end of the exhale, maybe deep in the torso, and the arising spot where the breath inhales begin. The sensations of inhale spreads out with the expanding lungs.

And then bring to mind some person that you know or know about that inspires you for their goodness, their love or care, compassion, their integrity, a person for whom if they were with you, you would feel that they accept all of you. Their heart's big enough to care and love you as you are. Some person who you know is alive and present, who brings a smile to your heart, just that you know them, and feel their resonance inside of you of kind of what is it in you that recognizes that goodness in them? What emotionally recognizes them? What physically recognizes them? Maybe there's some pleasure or joy.

And as you breathe in, let that person's goodness, let the way that you're inspired by that person fill and grow inside your body, inside your heart, to spread and touch the places inside

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of you that are difficult or have some stress or anxiety, places where you brace yourself. And on the exhale, allow that goodness to help that area soften, perhaps supported by your own goodwill. May this area, this place inside, may it be well, may it be safe. And this gentle rhythm of feeling the acceptance of another person that touches all of the difficult places within and on the exhale offer your own well-wishing to that place. Maybe with a single word, well, safe, happy.

Breathing in the joy or the compassion, love of someone you know who holds that well, who embodies that. Breathe it in. Or breathe in filling yourself with the way, the good way that that person is felt or known within. Touching the places that are difficult, reminding you to offer your own well-being. May these places be well. May they be accepted, be cared for, and relax, letting the thinking mind be quiet, so you can feel your way into the deepest place of care and love, goodwill within you, however strong it is or weak it is.

Yes, appreciating that it's there and allow it to touch, to move and hold some of the deepest places of challenge within you. Goodwill that offers wellness, acceptance, care.

And as we come to the end of this sitting, to turn yourself inside out, to allow your goodwill and your deep sensitivity to take in the whole world, including what's difficult in this world. And as you breathe out, let your goodwill, the healing way in which we can know and accept and be peaceful, offer to heal the whole world, holding it in goodwill, spreading a universal care. May all beings be happy. May all beings be safe. May all beings be peaceful. May all beings be free.

And may each of us not hold back, not restrict our goodwill, at least for a few moments here, not to hold back for any reason, as if your goodwill has a mightest touch that whatever it lands on, it brings a wellness, makes things well. May all beings be well. May all beings know they are accepted so their hostility, their greed, their bias can relax and soften. May all beings be loved so they can feel and know their own capacity for love and care. Trusting the power of goodwill, may all beings be happy and well, and may we contribute the welfare and benefit of all beings everywhere. Thank you.

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