



LOVING-KINDNESS FOR ADULTS

"With mindfulness, loving kindness, and self-compassion, we can begin to let go of our expectations about how life and those we love should be."

—Sharon Salzberg

OVERVIEW

Send good wishes, warmth, and kindness to others by silently repeating key phrases.

PLANNING FOR IT

WHEN YOU MIGHT USE THIS PRACTICE

- Any time during the year
- Before the school day begins, at a time when you are feeling emotional distress, or before you work with a challenging student or colleague.

TIME REQUIRED

- 15 minutes

LEVEL

- Adult
- College

MATERIALS

- N/A

LEARNING OBJECTIVE

You will:

- Practice sending loving wishes to people you know and don't know

ADDITIONAL SUPPORTS

- [Making a Practice Trauma-Informed](#)
- [Making Classrooms and Schools Trauma-Informed and Healing-Centered](#)

SEL COMPETENCIES

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management

HOW TO DO IT

REFLECTION BEFORE THE PRACTICE

- Take a moment to reflect on the lives of your students and colleagues. Who might benefit from your attention and good wishes?
- If using this practice in a staff meeting or during a professional development session, be sure to try it out yourself first.

INSTRUCTIONS

PREPARING YOUR BODY

- Close your eyes. Sit comfortably with your feet flat on the floor and your spine straight. Relax your whole body. Keep your eyes closed throughout the whole visualization and bring your awareness inward. Without straining or concentrating, just relax and gently follow the instructions.
- Take a deep breath in. And breathe out.

RECEIVING LOVING-KINDNESS

- Keeping your eyes closed, think of a person close to you who loves you very much. It could be someone from the past or the present; someone still in life or who has passed; it could be a spiritual teacher or guide. Imagine that person standing on your right side, sending you their love. That person is sending you wishes for your safety, for your well-being and happiness. Feel the warm wishes and love coming from that person towards you.
- Now bring to mind the same person or another person who cherishes you deeply. Imagine that person standing on your left side, sending you wishes for your wellness, for your health and happiness. Feel the kindness and warmth coming to you from that person.
- Now imagine that you are surrounded on all sides by all the people who love you and have loved you. Picture all of your friends and loved ones surrounding you. They are standing sending you wishes for your

happiness, well-being, and health. Bask in the warm wishes and love coming from all sides. You are filled, and overflowing with warmth and love.

SENDING LOVING-KINDNESS TO LOVED ONES

- Now bring your awareness back to the person standing on your right side. Begin to send the love that you feel back to that person. You and this person are similar. Just like you, this person wishes to be happy. Send all your love and warm wishes to that person.
- Repeat the following phrases, silently:

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

May you live with ease, may you be happy, may you be free from pain.

- Now focus your awareness on the person standing on your left side. Begin to direct the love within you to that person. Send all your love and warmth to that person. That person and you are alike. Just like you, that person wishes to have a good life.
- Repeat the following phrases, silently:

Just as I wish to, may you be safe, may you be healthy, may you live with ease and happiness.

Just as I wish to, may you be safe, may you be healthy, may you live with ease and happiness.

Just as I wish to, may you be safe, may you be healthy, may you live with ease and happiness.

- Now picture another person that you love, perhaps a relative or a friend. This person, like you, wishes to have a happy life. Send warm wishes to that person.
- Repeat the following phrases, silently:

May your life be filled with happiness, health, and well-being.

May your life be filled with happiness, health, and well-being.

May your life be filled with happiness, health, and well-being.

SENDING LOVING-KINDNESS TO NEUTRAL PEOPLE

- Now think of an acquaintance, someone you don't know very well and toward whom you do not have any particular feeling. You and this person are alike in your wish to have a good life.
- Send all your wishes for well-being to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

Just as I wish to, may you also live with ease and happiness.

Just as I wish to, may you also live with ease and happiness.

Just as I wish to, may you also live with ease and happiness.

- Now bring to mind another acquaintance toward whom you feel neutral. It could be a neighbor, or a colleague, or someone else that you see around but do not know very well. Like you, this person wishes to experience joy and well-being in their life.
- Send all your good wishes to that person, repeating the following phrases, silently:

May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.

May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.

May you be happy, may you be healthy, may you be free from all pain.

SENDING LOVING-KINDNESS TO ALL LIVING BEINGS

- Now expand your awareness and picture the whole globe in front of you as a little ball.
- Send warm wishes to all living beings on the globe, who, like you, want to be happy:

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

Just as I wish to, may you live with ease, happiness, and good health.

- Take a deep breath in. And breathe out. And another deep breath in and let it go. Notice the state of your mind and how you feel after this meditation.
- When you're ready, you may open your eyes.

REFLECTION AFTER THE PRACTICE

What are you feeling at this moment? Do you feel more connected to your school community after engaging in this practice?

THE RESEARCH BEHIND THE PRACTICE

EVIDENCE THAT IT WORKS

Studies indicate that people who practice loving-kindness for just a few weeks can experience an increase in [self-compassion](#) and [positive emotions](#), and relief from [depression, anxiety, and chronic pain](#).

In addition, this particular mindfulness practice is one of the most effective ways for increasing [empathy](#) and [compassion for others](#). In fact, one study's findings suggest that it may even play a role in decreasing [bias](#) towards stigmatized groups.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Unlike other mindfulness practices that focus more on developing the self (e.g., increasing awareness and releasing tension), this practice is also deeply relational, so it can help you to develop more positive relationships with your students and colleagues, potentially leading to a more positive school climate.

When you practice loving-kindness, you learn to extend love and care to yourself first—and then to others. Ultimately, you may reap the benefits of greater self-awareness and self-compassion, but you may also feel more energy to meet students and colleagues where they are—and to extend care to them with a more open heart.

SOURCE

Emma Seppala, Science Director of Stanford University's [Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education](#).