

Well Wishes for Oneself and Others

Overview of Exercise:

Practicing kindness is one of the most direct ways to having more ease in our lives and more happiness. We all have a natural ability for kindness and yet often times it needs to be exercised to get stronger and stronger. When we are able to strengthen it through exercises, then we are able to carry kindness throughout our day. Research suggests that growing kindness helps us be more satisfied in our lives and in our relationships.

This exercise of sending well wishes to oneself and others can be practiced in a quiet place for 5 to 10 minutes per day. It is to activate feelings of loving-kindness by focusing on someone you love and then gently adding oneself to the circle of kindness.

Directions:

Find about 10 minutes of quiet and try to practice every day.

1. To begin, sit or lie down in a comfortable position.
2. Taking a few grounding breaths, gently inhaling and then letting it go. Finding your breath and allowing it to easily enter and exit. Easy in, easy out.
3. Next, putting a hand over your heart or on another place for soothing touch. (Remember the keys to compassion are physical warmth, soothing touch, and gentle voice.)
4. Bringing to mind someone (a person or living being) who naturally brings you a smile. Someone with whom your relationship is easy, friendly, and relatively simple. This could be an aunt, a child, maybe a pet – whomever naturally brings happiness to your heart. A few living beings might come to mind only choosing one.
5. Now envisioning this being and what it's like to be in presence of this being. Just picture it in your mind, allowing yourself the good company.
6. Recognizing that this being wishes to be happy and to have ease in life. This is just like you and every other living being. Repeating softly and slowly (out loud or in your mind), leaning in to these words:
 - *May **you** be peaceful.*
 - *May **you** be healthy.*
 - *May **you** be happy.*
 - *May **you** be whole.* (Repeat this twice, pause)
7. Adding *yourself* to the circle of well wishes. Envisioning yourself and the other loved being, together.
 - *May **we** be peaceful.*
 - *May **we** be healthy.*
 - *May **we** be happy.*
 - *May **we** be whole.* (Repeat this twice, pause)
8. Allowing the image of the other being to fade away, focusing your full attention on yourself.
9. Placing your hand over your heart or elsewhere, feel the warmth and gentle pressure of your hand. Visualizing you, saying these wishes.
 - *May **I** be peaceful.*
 - *May **I** be healthy.*
 - *May **I** be happy.*
 - *May **I** be whole.* (Repeat this twice, pause)