

Hi everyone. I'd like to teach a meditation tonight that's an alternative to the traditional LovingKindness meditation. LovingKindness is sometimes better known as Metta, and it's one of the Brahma Viharas or Heart Practices. It's another form of meditation that's an alternative to the traditional concentration practices.

Metta is used as an antidote to fear and anxiety. It's a way of getting in touch with our love and compassion for ourselves and for other people, both those known and unknown. In a moment, I will ring my bell to signal the beginning of our practice.

[BELL RINGS]

Let's begin by grounding ourselves. Start by checking in with your body. What sensations may you be feeling? Is there anywhere where you feel a little bit of tension and you could relax a little? Maybe make a small shift in your position?

Once you've found a position that you can be comfortable in for the next 15 minutes or so. Start by turning your attention to the contact points that your body is making with the surface that you're either sitting or lying on.

This could be your feet, on the footplate of your wheelchair, or on the ground.

Once you've tuned into your body a little bit and made whatever adjustments you need, If it's accessible to you, start by taking a few intentional breaths. Breaths will be different for every single person, so don't worry too much about how deep your breath is or how long your breaths are. Just do what's comfortable for you. And if it's not comfortable for you to focus on your breath, that's totally okay too.

To begin the LovingKindness practice, start by focusing on your heart space. There's a few different techniques to do this. You can think of generating a light in your heart, or perhaps a sort of energy field or warmth.

If none of those work for you, you can also think of someone you have a strong, loving relationship with. Ideally, this person is someone you have a fairly unconditional love for, like a pet or a child. A relationship where there isn't much conflict.

Spend a little time soaking in the loving feeling and letting it grow inside of you.

Once you've built up some loving feelings and thoughts, start to imagine it radiating outwards, sort of like a spotlight.

Next, imagine different people in your life. stepping into that light. In Metta, we generally focus on one benefactor, one loved person, one difficult person, one stranger, and ourselves. But with this practice, we're not limiting the number of people who we focus on or the relationship that we have with them, but just bringing people that come to mind into that light.

You can either briefly bring people through this loving energy field, or maybe there's someone in your life who needs some extra care, and you can let them linger there for a while. Don't forget to include yourself.

If you'd like, you can also offer some of the traditional Metta phrases, such as, "May you be safe. May you be happy. May you know healing. May you live with ease." But it's not necessary to do this. The goal is just to share the light with as many people as possible and take in all the people in your life that you care for and who care for you.

If you'd like, you can continue with this practice, but you can also transition to another more traditional anchor such as your breath, the sounds that you hear, or sensations in the body.

I'm going to leave you here for a little while, and I'll come back about halfway through the meditation to remind you of your practice.

[Halfway Point]

We're about halfway through the meditation now. If you find that your mind has drifted away from your anchor, that's totally fine and to be expected. So just gently guide yourself back to the meditation and resume your practice, gently and kindly, without judgment.

[One minute remaining]

We're at the end of our practice now. In a moment, I will be ringing three bells to signal the end of the meditation. And as you come out, always remember There's no report card on your meditation. It doesn't matter whether you felt distracted or very deeply in touch with your meditation. What matters most is that you did the practice and that, in this case, you focused on your loving feelings of compassion and care for other people.

[BELL RINGS TO END MEDITATION]