

# Metta Bhavana

## meditation to develop loving-kindness

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Sit quietly for some minutes, until you have 'arrived', settled on your seat and become present and alert.

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1

Turn your attention inward. Bring an appreciative, kindly awareness towards yourself. Set the intention to wish yourself well. Phrases like - 'May I be healthy, may I feel happy, may I be understood' may help. Try and rejoice in yourself, notice ways you're sensitive to yourself and meet your own & others' needs. There may be sadness (for your suffering, or when you've over-ridden or not valued yourself). Hold it all with gentle awareness.

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2

Turn your attention to a friend. Set the intention to wish your friend well. Allow warmth, care, appreciation to arise. Fan the flames of loving-kindness. Longing for your friend to be fulfilled; perhaps using imagination to make this specific. There may be mourning too, if so acknowledge this.

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3

Call to mind someone you hardly know. Bring their face or a felt-sense of them fully to mind. Include them in your sphere of well-wishing. Take an interest in them. Simply becoming aware of this person may alter the connection. Reflect that they too have needs, they suffer, they hope to be happy. Let a sense of solidarity with a fellow human being gradually emerge. Imagine this person content and at peace.

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4

Bring to mind someone you currently find difficult. Set the intention to wish this person well. Acknowledge any resistance, pain or judgements that arise. Bring empathy to your own pain here. Then reflect that this person too has their hopes and fears; there's more to them than you currently see; their friends see them quite differently. Steadily hold a sense of this person; encourage any softening in your heart. If you drift off or harden, gently return to a sense of self-metta, then open out again to this person.

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5

Expand your focus to the wider world. Look for a sense of connection with all living creatures. Sit with an aspiration that hatred and violence cease, and everyone experience satisfaction and peace. 'May all beings be safe, well and happy.' Reflect that around the world often people's needs are not met or valued. Sadness and compassion may arise, with hope that this change. Using image, felt-sense, intention, or emotion, find ways to expand your heart. Encourage an attitude that's unwilling to limit what you're prepared to do or hope for others.