

## Compassion / Lovingkindness Meditation in brief

First we see a problem or difficulty; something unsatisfactory. Then we wish to alleviate the problem or remove its cause. *This is the arising of Compassion.*

Then we may wish for happiness to replace the unhappiness. *This is the arising of Lovingkindness.*

It has been written in many meditation books and has been the experience of many meditators that if a person develops Compassion & Lovingkindness strongly enough within themselves, certain benefits will be had. These include: few, if any, unpleasant dreams; sleeping & waking easily; and very importantly, more Peace & Happiness in themselves and the ability to develop the same in others.

By working with *all* the tools available to us in our meditation practice (Breath Awareness, Five Reflections, Compassion Meditation, Standing, Walking and so on), we'll be developing the Wisdom necessary to deal with *any situation* in our daily lives. We can understand the situation and then alleviate the difficulty or remove its cause.

The dictionary states that Compassion is the feeling of sympathy or sorrow for another, accompanied by the wish to alleviate the problem or remove its cause. We will adjust this definition in 2 ways.

First, having sympathy or sorrow can be beneficial however being weighed down by it is not. It's OK to feel sympathetic in an occasion, but we want to maintain a degree of balance & equanimity in order to bring about the Wisdom to deal with the situation.

Secondly, having Compassion only for others does not include *everyone*. Separation, Death, and Change are universal. Each of us encounters problems, difficulties, misfortunes and challenges. Sometimes we must be apart from that which we like; or together with that which we do not like; or we simply do not get what we want. These are just facts of life. In this way we are not separate from others but interrelated. Therefore it is important to include having Compassion for oneself as well as for others.

When there is the arising of Compassion with the wish to alleviate difficulties, there often follows a wish for Happiness. *This is a very important point.* But what is the most important thing we can wish for ourselves or others in order to have Happiness?? Money? Cars? Houses? Clothes? These are all beneficial, but limited in their ability to provide true Happiness. Going beyond the limitations of material objects lies the most important thing: it is having Peace of Mind. The abilities & characteristics of the mind in order to deal with *any situation* and not be adversely affected.... this is the most important thing we can wish for....

If we develop the mind in this way, we can have Peace & Happiness whether rich or poor, young or old, famous or obscure and so on...

A major benefit in developing Compassion & Lovingkindness is the ability to overcome anger, aversion, irritations, and annoyances. When we have anger towards another, we hurt ourselves. Anger, aversion and so on are opposite states of mind to Compassion & Lovingkindness – they cannot exist together. From large to small, all of our dislikes will decrease as Compassion & Lovingkindness grow.

Now settle into the posture in as comfortable a position as possible. In this meditation, keeping the same posture is not as important as concentrating on the words, and then using the pauses to reflect on what has just been said and the feelings we're trying to generate. Begin by focusing on the breath for a short while.

Focus your thoughts toward yourself. Reflect about and bring to mind some of your difficulties, failures, or obstacles.

Realizing you may have failed in the past, in your own eyes or in the eyes of others, try now to reflect on the power of the forces of conditioning. How difficult it is to sometimes understand and let go of negative, destructive energies, and to rise beyond them.

May I be able to see that in holding onto self-hatred and judgement, I hold onto pain and my failures, making it difficult to grow beyond them.

Realizing the limitations of my understanding, the pain of self-hatred and judgement, may I learn to forgive myself.

Allow the healing energy of Compassion to arise for yourself. Allow the energy of Compassionate Softness to gently surround and dissolve the painful feelings of lack, and the harshness of self-judgement....heal the pain.

In the warmth of Compassion and Lovingkindness may I learn to accept myself, forgive myself, and grow beyond my limitations.

May I be able to let go of anger, fear, worry, and ignorance. May I also have patience, courage, wisdom and determination to meet & overcome difficulties and problems, challenges in life.....May I find peace of mind.

Direct your thoughts to your parents or a special relative. Perhaps visualize them in front of you. Think of some of their difficulties, problems, failures, and challenges.

Reflect on how difficult it may be for them to understand and let go of negative energies and to rise above them.

Allow the spacious energy of Compassion to arise for your parents or special relative. May they be able to learn self-acceptance and forgiveness. In the warmth of Compassion and Lovingkindness may they grow beyond their limitations.

May my parents or special relative be able to let go of anger, fear, worry, and ignorance. May they also have patience, courage, wisdom and determination to meet & overcome difficulties and problems, challenges in life.....May my parents find peace of mind.

Now direct your thoughts to one or more of your friends. Reflect on some of their difficulties, obstacles, and challenges.

Allow the spacious energy of Compassion to arise for them. May they be able to learn self-acceptance and forgiveness. In the warmth of Compassion and Lovingkindness may they be able to grow beyond their limitations.

May my friends be able to let go of anger, fear, worry, and ignorance. May they also have patience, courage, wisdom and determination to meet & overcome difficulties and problems - challenges in life.....May my friends find peace of mind.

Direct your thoughts to your teachers or to those people who have helped you or taught you something valuable in your life.

Reflect that they still may have trouble understanding, letting go of attachment to negative energies, rising to their challenges or forgiving themselves for their shortcomings.

Allow the spacious energy of Compassion to arise for them. In the warmth of Compassion and Lovingkindness may they grow beyond their limitations.

May those who have helped me be able to let go of anger, fear, worry, and ignorance. May they also have patience, courage, wisdom and determination to meet & overcome difficulties and problems - challenges in life.....May those who have helped me find peace of mind.

Continue to expand the meditation in this way, thinking of other people, (those who you may like and perhaps those who you may not like), other living beings, reflecting on their difficulties and problems, in order to get to the feeling of Compassion within, and then wishing them Lovingkindness, the wish for their inner Peace of Mind.