

SPEAKER: This is a kindness meditation. Take in a comfortable position, and either closing your eyes entirely or allowing a fringe of light to come through, and simply breathe. Breathe naturally. No need to manipulate your breath in any way.

Allowing your attention to move into your breath, as though you were breathing through your heart. Imagine that your breath was coming in and out, right through the heart. Getting in direct touch with your breath, the feeling of breathing through your heart, the gentle in and out, inhale and exhale, of your breath right through your heart, allowing your breath to cradle you, to rock you, very gently, just being present.

There's nothing else you need to do except focusing your attention on your heart, being present to your breath. And now, as your breath rocks you gently, allow yourself to bring thoughts of kindness to yourself, just to you, yourself.

I'm going to be suggesting some words, guiding this meditation. Please follow along, and let the words resonate as you breathe in and out through the heart, calling yourself by your own name, and add an endearment, something that feels kind of natural to you, like friend. Or maybe it's buddy or honey.

And even though you may not be used to calling yourself with an endearment, trying it now, your name, and then honey or friend or buddy, or whatever seems natural to you. And then saying to yourself, I appreciate you.

I appreciate you-- or you might want to say I appreciate me-- just as I am right now, not needing to be any other way, not as I was in the past or hope to be in the future. At this very moment, I appreciate me.

Allowing those thoughts to resonate within, recognizing that like every other human being who has ever lived or is living now on this planet, you're not perfect. Appreciate you with all your strengths and all your weaknesses.

And again, I'm going to say some words here. Please let them resonate within. May I be happy. May I be well. This is offering a blessing to yourself.

May I be safe from inner dangers and outer dangers, and the inner dangers of the dangers of our thoughts that often want to diminish us or tell us we're not worthy. Right now, may I be safe from inner and outer dangers. May I be strong.

We're not always well physically. But whatever our circumstances, we can be strong.

May my life unfold with inner ease and grace. Allowing these words, again, to resonate.

May I be happy. May I be well. May I be safe from inner and outer dangers. May I be strong. May my life unfold with inner ease and grace.

Experiencing these words inside. And perhaps right now, you'll want to add your own words of kindness to yourself. Keep it simple, keeping it simple. I'll be silent for a moment or two.

And now again, tying in with your breath, your breath, as though you were breathing right through the heart, and allowing its natural rhythm to cradle you, to rock you, really feeling it, experiencing it, and knowing that your breath is always available, always right there.

And you can tie into it, relax into it, any time you wish. And, too, you can offer yourself kindness whenever you wish.

It's important to offer this kindness to yourself and to yourself first. We do so little of that in our days. Kindness is a practice, just as mindfulness is a practice. It's something that we have to cultivate. It doesn't happen, doesn't just strike like lightning. We practice it.

After you offer kindness to yourself and for yourself first, if you wish, you may wish to offer this kindness to someone else as well. Again, starting with yourself, because there's a problem when you try to offer kindness to someone else, but you are all tied up in knots inside with regard to yourself. So please offer it to yourself first.

And then you can offer kindness to anyone of your choice-- a dear one, a friend, someone who has helped you. You can also offer kindness to someone who has been difficult for you. This can be a powerfully healing meditation. Offering kindness can lighten your own heart with regard to any other person.

And again, you might want to use the words we've used here. Because if you remember them, then you'll be able to say them and won't have to spend energy trying to think of how you'll say it.

May I be well, or may you be well. May you be happy. May you be free from inner and outer dangers. May you be strong. May your life unfold with inner ease and grace.

Every time that you finish a kindness meditation, once again, come back to yourself. This is not selfishness. This is not self-centeredness. It is pure common sense.

To cultivate kindness toward yourself means to live from inside out, rather than trying to go around whatever you may be feeling about yourself and the diminishing thoughts, and trying to offer it outside instead, shining from the inside out. May this meditation be a blessing to you in your life.