



## LOVING KINDNESS TECHNIQUES

- **Loving Kindness Meditation** – Through this meditation you extend loving kindness and general goodwill to others and oneself. Done on a frequent basis, this can result in long term emotional gains, and the ability to build resources (Fredrickson et al., 2008).
  - Here is an excerpt of how a Loving Kindness Meditation can flow – Close, your eyes, and allow your attention to rest naturally on your breath. The breath coming and going, softly, all by itself, within your body, without any conscious thought or effort. Follow the even, constant rhythm of your breath, in and out (Pause), in and out (Pause). Now turn your attention gently within, towards yourself, and direct some care towards your own wellbeing. Silently say, in your heart – may I be free from suffering, may I be at peace. As you breathe, and as you whisper these words within your mind, relate to yourself with kindness and care. Send wishes to yourself, for your own wellbeing as you say – may I be free from suffering, may I be at peace. Repeat these words slowly, and gently, with each in breath, with each out breath, as the extending of loving care to yourself. Notice whatever limits this love, this willingness to be healed and cared for by yourself – may I be free from suffering, may I be at peace. Let the heart openly receive this tenderness, this kindness – may I be free from suffering, may I be at peace. Now direct your attention to the world around you. Send wishes to the people of the world, by repeating the words – may you be free from suffering, may you be at peace. Again, notice whatever limits this goodwill, without judgment, with curiosity and compassion. Follow the even rhythm of your breath, in and out (Pause), in and out (Pause), as you repeat - may you be free from suffering, may you be at peace. Though at first these may only feel like words echoing in the mind, gently continue. There can be





no force here, as force closes the heart. May the whole world be free from suffering, may you all be at peace.

- **Use of imagery** (Hinton et al, 2013)
  - Imagine cooling water going out from your heart in all directions. Imagine that water extinguishing anger.
  - Warmth or light imagery – Warmth or light spreading from the heart, projecting compassion for those who are suffering, including the self.
  - Floating cloud imagery – Mood visualized as a cloud entering the sky and then floating away. Through this detached observation, mood can be neutrally observed, and experienced as more transient.
  - Bamboo imagery – This image of flexibility can increase parasympathetics, lead to relaxation, flexibility and the sense of being able to adjust to situations.
- **Positive attention** – Positive emotions can be extended from an identified positive object to a person (Fredrickson et al., 2008). Hold an identified positive object in your hand, and as you do, consider extending the positive feelings that it elicits to a person who maybe upsets you.
- **Pay attention to anger** – Anger is a signal that we are bothered by something. Maybe some injustice or mistreatment, of ourselves or others. Breathe into the anger to give yourself a beat, and use it as motivation to act, maybe by advocating for others, or by getting involved.
- **Engage in acts of generosity** – Big or small, these acts of generosity are a meaningful expression of kindness towards others. Something as simple as calling a friend you have not spoken to for a while, or sharing something you have cooked, could create a sense of goodwill and positive feelings, for you and the person or people you are reaching out to.





## References

- Fredrickson B. L., Cohn, M. A., Coffey, K. A., Pek, J., & Finkel, S. M. (2008). Open hearts build lives: Positive emotions, induced through loving-kindness meditation, build consequential personal resources. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 95, 1045–1061. [PubMed: 18954193].
- Hinton, D. E., Ojserkis, R. A., Jalal, B., Peou, S., & Hoffman, S. G. (2013). Loving-Kindness in the Treatment of Traumatized Refugees and Minority Groups: A Typology of Mindfulness and the Nodal Network Model of Affect and Affect Regulation. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 69 (8), 817-828.

