

## Mindfulness: Meditation 7 – Befriending

Meditation 7: befriending

*[bell chimes].*

This is a befriending meditation. So in this sitting you're cultivating a sense of kindness and friendship towards yourself and others. Acknowledging that no matter how we appear on the outside, all of us can feel fearful, sad, or lonely on the inside. So deliberately taking this time to wish yourself well, and then extending this kindness to others. So taking a few moments now to become settled. Reconnecting with a posture that for you embodies a sense of dignity and wakefulness. If you're sitting, checking in with yourself so that the spine is straight, the shoulders relaxed, and the head balanced. And coming to focus on the breath.

*[silence].*

And then expanding attention to the whole body.

*[silence].*

And when you're ready, bringing kindness and friendship to yourself. By silently saying to yourself, may I be safe and free from suffering. *[pause]*. May I be as happy and healthy as it is possible for me to be. *[pause]*. May I have ease of being. *[pause]*. Taking your time. Imagining that each phrase is like a pebble dropped down a deep well. Dropping each one in turn, and listening for any responses. Thoughts. Feelings. Body sensations. There's no need to judge what arises. This is for you. May I be safe and free from suffering. May I be happy and healthy. May I have ease of being.

*[silence].*

If you find it difficult to bring any sense of friendship towards yourself, bringing to mind a person, or even a pet, who loves you, or loved you, unconditionally. Once you have a clear sense of their love for you, see if you can return to offer this same love to yourself. May I be safe. Happy and healthy. Ease of being.

*[silence].*

Now at a certain point, bringing to mind a loved one and wishing him or her well in the same way. May they be safe and free from suffering. May they be as happy and as healthy as it is possible for them to be. May they have ease of being.

*[silence].*

And now choosing a stranger. This may be someone you see regularly. Perhaps in the streets, or on the bus, or subway. Someone you recognize, but may not know the name of. Someone you feel neutral about. Although you don't know them, they probably also have a life full of hopes and fears as you have. They too wish to be happy as you do. So keeping them in heart and mind, repeating the phrases, and wishing them well. May they be safe and free from suffering. May they be happy and healthy. May they have ease of being.

*[silence].*

Now if you choose to extend this meditation further, you might wish to bring to mind someone whom you find difficult. This doesn't have to be the most difficult person in your life. It may be someone you feel a bit distant from. Perhaps a person at work, or in the family, who you're finding rather difficult at the moment. Whomever you choose, now intentionally allowing him or her to be in your heart and mind, as best you can. Acknowledging that they too may wish, or have wished, to be happy. May they be safe and free from suffering. May they be happy and healthy. May they have ease of being.

*[silence].*

And don't worry if there are no feelings of warmth or friendship. It's enough to hold the intention, to incline the mind in this way. And remembering if at any time you feel overwhelmed or drawn away by intense feelings or thoughts, you can always come back to the breath and the body, to anchor yourself in the present moment, treating yourself with kindness.

*[silence].*

Finally, extending love and kindness to all beings. Including your loved ones, and strangers, and those whom you find difficult. The intention here is to extend love and friendship to all living beings on the planet. And remembering that all living beings includes you. May all be free from pain and suffering. May all be happy and healthy. May all of us have ease of being.

*[silence].*

And now coming to the breath and the body. Resting in clear awareness of the present moment. Allowing yourself to be just as you are. Complete and whole.

*[silence].*

*[bell chimes].*