

Guided Meditation: Cultivating Kindness (9 minutes)

00:00: For this meditation, it's helpful to have a comfortable and relaxed posture. So taking some time to make any minor adjustments you might need to bring in more ease and relaxation. Whatever that means for you in this moment. It can also be helpful for this practice to allow the eyes to gently close. But if that doesn't feel supportive then knowing that you can keep your eyes open with a soft, relaxed gaze. I'm beginning by taking several deeper inhales and exhales. Allowing ourselves to really oxygenate the blood.

[10 second pause]

01:27: And then allowing your breath to be natural and easy, not needing to change it or alter it in any way. Inviting your attention to notice the felt sense of your body in this moment. And in particular, noticing if there are any places in your body where you're holding, bracing or constricting. And as you gently sweep your attention through your body, noticing any places of holding or bracing. Seeing if you can invite a certain kindness and gentleness so that you can acknowledge these places in your body but not needing to fix them or judge them or label them good or bad rather holding them in the field of your attention almost like you're enveloping them with your awareness. So even if your body doesn't relax or doesn't soften you can still relax your mind and relax the way that you're relating to the sensations in your body bringing in a real sense of kindness, of friendliness.

[20 second pause]

03:44: And taking a moment now to reflect on the fact that your body, despite whatever challenges or difficulties or limitations it may have, it's done whatever you've asked of it to the best of its abilities. And as you reflect on this fact, seeing if you can invite in a sense of appreciation. So as you reflect on this fact, inviting in any sense of appreciation. You might even notice if there are parts of your body that feel pleasant, warm, alive, and tingling.

[20 second pause]

05:03: And as you notice, any of these places in your own body, inviting them to expand and grow as your attention becomes aware of this pleasantness or this warmth or this aliveness. You might even imagine that these sensations are slowly expanding to include your entire body, almost like a cup of tea where the tea starts to suffuse in the water.

[20 second pause]

06:04: Almost like a cup of tea where you're steeping in these different sensations as they continue to expand throughout your entire body.

[15 second pause]

06:30: And now noticing in your experience and how your body is feeling now if there's any places where you're using too much energy or effort. You can soften a bit more in your body, not needing to hold or brace, really resting into the support of the chair or the support of the floor, a sense of being held and even in effortlessness.

[20 second pause]

07:29: And noticing if there're any thoughts that might be passing through your mind, might be thoughts that are judging or labeling, or it might be distracted thoughts, and seeing if you can bring kindness even to the flow of thoughts so that thoughts are not a problem. They're just another experience that can be held in this field of kindness, of real friendliness, an open acceptance.

08:23: Perhaps taking another slightly deeper inhale, deeper exhale and inviting your mind and your body to relax into greater stillness, greater ease remembering that as long as you are alive, as long as you are breathing, there's more right with you than wrong with you. There's a fundamental okayness.

09:15: And with your attention, seeing if you can inhabit this sense of contentedness, of okayness, or of wellbeing, letting this moment be enough. This moment is complete, nothing lacking, nothing needed, allowing your mind and body to completely rest in this field of real gentleness and kindness and ease and noticing that right now, all of experience can flow and happen. Nothing is a problem. That's just the unfolding process of experience moment to moment thoughts, sensations, feelings, sounds.

[20 second pause]

10:53: And you might even imagine for a moment what your life would be like if you were to inhabit this state on a regular basis, moving from this place of kindness and ease a sense of contentedness, allowing this experience to really be a source of nourishment, allowing yourself to be nourished to be restored almost like you are recharging a battery, and in these final moments allowing yourself to perhaps hold the intention that others may also experience the state of kindness of wellbeing and that the more that you inhabit this state, the more that others can begin to access it for themselves when setting the intention to really hold kindness as a reference point, a place to return to throughout your day.