## Lovingkindness for a Friend and a Difficult Person

Give yourself a moment to connect with your body. Notice the sensation of your body sitting here… the sense of your head resting on your neck resting on your shoulders, back, your lower body, all being supported by gravity. Sitting in a dignified posture in which your spine is upright but not rigid. (Pause)… Alert and relaxed…

And turning your attention to the waves of the breath. Maybe having a curious attitude toward the breath. Can you notice where one in breath ends and the next out breath begins? Can you feel the temperature of the breath? (Pause)…Just allowing the breath to move with its own rhythm as you follow it.

Notice that with each outbreath, your body sinks a little further into your seat.

Let’s again start by bringing to mind a time when you experienced a sense of warmth, connection, or safety with another being. You can choose a situation you have already chosen before, or you can choose one you have not yet used…. Let that situation come to mind…If your mind is having trouble settling on a situation to choose, just choose the first one that comes to mind. Let yourself drop into that moment… As much as you can recall, put yourself back in that situation in all of the details that you can see in your mind’s eye... Can you recall the feeling in your chest?... Do you sense the curve of a smile wanting to form on your face or in your eyes?... The safe feeling in your belly?... Just drop in for a moment.

Next, bring to mind the image of someone you care about, have warm feelings toward, or feel a sense of positive connection to.

As best you can, try to get an image or sense of that person or being in your mind’s eye. You might imagine you are with them, sitting beside them or walking alongside them. Maybe it is helpful to imagine that you are placing a hand on their back or shoulder. You are really present for this person you care about. Now, we will begin to wish this being well by extending words of kindness to them. I’ll be offering some phrases as guidance. You’re invited to use these phrases or choose whatever words work to express your wishes of love or kindness toward this being.

And now, using these phrases or ones of your own choosing, silently repeat to yourself:

May you be well

May you be kind to yourself

May you be joyful

May you be safe and at ease

And again, while you say these phrases, allow yourself to connect with the intention that they express:

May you be well

May you be kind to yourself

May you be joyful

May you be safe and at ease

And again, extending wishes of kindness and warmth toward this person you care about:

May you be well

May you be kind to yourself

May you be joyful

May you be safe and at ease

Next, I’d like to invite you to imagine someone you don’t get along with very easily. It may be someone you have had difficulties with for a long time, or it may be someone who is usually easier to get along with, but you have difficulties with them right now… Call this difficult person to mind. If your relationship with yourself is difficult at the moment, you may choose to use yourself in this practice right now… to practice offering kindness to the part of yourself that you struggle with. Be honest with what you feel, opening up your heart to whatever is there without making it bigger or trying to get rid of it… Notice any tendency you have to think badly of the person or any tendency to make the difficult feelings bigger, and let go of those tendencies.

Instead, wish them well, silently repeat phrases of kindness to yourself. I am going to use the word “you” in these phrases, but you may direct them either to someone else or to yourself, whatever is right for you right now.

May you be well

May you be kind to yourself

May you be joyful

May you be safe and at ease

Again, holding the image of this person in your heart, extending wishes of kindness and warmth toward this person:

May you be well

May you be kind to yourself

May you be joyful

May you be safe and at ease

For another minute or so I’ll be silent and let you gently repeat phrases like this or other phrases of kindness while picturing this person in your mind’s eye. Some people like to time the phrases with their outbreath, others don’t. It’s up to you.

And now you can gradually let any imagery fade away. And now being attentive to what is present for you, as you sit here in this space where you are. Appreciating the sounds around you, the light, the air touching your skin. Appreciating that you’ve been doing something skillful in the last few minutes. That you’ve been consciously cultivating an attitude of kindness and of friendliness and generosity toward others as well. Noticing once more the feeling of your body in this chair, resting here with any feelings of warmth or kindness that may have emerged……And if your eyes were closed, when you are ready, you can open them and return your attention back to the room.