

LOVING-KINDNESS FOR BEGINNERS

- Allow yourself to settle into a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down. If you like, putting a hand over your heart or another location that is soothing as a reminder to bring not only awareness, but loving awareness, or our experience and to ourselves.
- Now bringing to mind a person or other living being who naturally makes you smile. This could be a child, your grandmother, your cat or dog—whomever naturally brings happiness to your heart. Perhaps it's a bird outside your window. Letting yourself feel what it's like to be in that being's presence. Allowing yourself to enjoy the good company.
- Now, recognizing how this being wishes to be happy and free from suffering, just like you and every other living being. Repeating softly and gently, feeling the importance of your words:

May you be safe.
May you be peaceful.
May you be healthy.
May you live with ease.

- When you notice that your mind has wandered, returning to the words and the image of the loved one you have in mind. Savoring any warm feelings that may arise. Taking your time.
- Now, adding *yourself* to your circle of good will. Putting your hand over your heart and feeling the warmth and gentle pressure of your hand (for just a moment or for the rest of the meditation)

May you and I (we) be safe.
May you and I (we) be peaceful.
May you and I (we) be healthy.
May you and I (we) live with ease.

- Now, letting go of the image of the other, and letting the full focus of your attention rest directly on yourself. Visualizing your whole body in your mind's eye, noticing any stress or uneasiness that may be lingering within you, and offering yourself the phrases.

May I be safe.
May I be peaceful.
May I be healthy.
May I live with ease.

- Perhaps there are different words that speak to you more directly than the ones we already used. See if you can offer yourself some words that you might like to hear from others, or you would say to others.
- Finally, taking a few breaths and just resting quietly in your own body, savoring the good will and compassion that flows naturally from your own heart. Knowing that you can return to the phrases anytime you wish.