

## **Practicing Generosity of Body, Mind and Spirit: Loving Kindness**

**Workshop Description** – The pulse of generosity that runs through all of creation may be as close as your next breath. How do we tune in and align ourselves, body mind and spirit, with its Source? This workshop will offer theory and practices of mindfulness that incorporate gentle movement, breath, and meditation, to explore the theme of ‘Loving kindness.’

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### **Mindfulness defined:**

So, mindfulness is about paying attention in a particular way:  
on purpose....in the present.....without judgment and  
...without avoidance

### **Benefits of mindfulness:**

- Focusing and clearing the mind
- Reducing/contradicting the effects of stress on the mind and body
- Working out and working through emotions
- Calming anxiety,
- Opening the heart
- Making space: for new perspective
- Setting intentions that may be experienced first through conscious attention in the mind and body and then carried into our daily routine

### **For our purposes**

Bringing awareness to God’s gift of loving-kindness, that we may  
cultivates warmth, compassion and love toward our selves  
Deepen our capacity to extend compassion and kindness to others  
Be fully present to the loving-kindness that already exists  
for us, in us, through us, and through all that God has made.

### **Begin with the Breath**

Option to remove shoes. Begin by getting comfortable. Tall straight back, relaxed.  
Both feet on the floor, feeling rooted, grounded.

Allow the arms to rest gently in your lap, palms up and open, to receive.  
Or, if you wish, palms down, resting gently on the knees to further ground you.

Close the eyes. Relax the jaw. Swallow and let the tongue rest gently in your mouth.  
And bring your attention to the breath.  
Breathe naturally, as you allow the mind to settle down.

After a day or part of a day of travel. Arrive. Here. To this space.

For now, let all that you left behind at home, rest in God's care.  
Let all that awaits you, in the time we will share together here,  
be held in the loving attention and intention of God.

With no where else to be. Nothing else to do, but to bring your full attention to this moment, to this breath.

As you breathe in, be aware of breathing in  
As you breathe out. Be aware of breathing out

The Psalmist writes, "Be still and know that I am God." (Psalm 46:10)  
Be still and Know.  
Be still.  
Be.

Slowing the breath.

At my invitation breathe in through your nose to a count of `four. Hold it at the top for a count of four and then exhale through your nose, to a count of four.

Inhale, 2, 3, 4  
Hold, 2, 3, 4  
Exhale 2, 3, 4

Deepening the breath -  
Inhale, 2, 3, 4  
Hold, 2, 3, 4  
Exhale 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

Return to a rhythm of breathing that is natural, for you.

Notice if your mind is busy. As thoughts come, notice them, let them go,  
And return your attention to your breath.

As we continue stilling the mind and relaxing the body,  
contemplate the steadfast love and deep faithfulness of God  
to which the Scriptures bear witness.  
Let go of critique. Relinquish judgment. Surrender your need  
get it right and just be.

Breathe into your heart center and try to generate feelings of warmth  
and friendliness toward yourself.

It may help to place your hand over your heart, as you visualize lovingkindness  
coursing through your veins, infusing your whole mind, body and spirit....

“As God’s chosen one, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion... kindness...humility...gentleness and patience. Put on love, which binds all of these together in perfect unity. (Colossians 3:12)

Still breathing into the heart center give your full attention to compassion.....to kindness.....to humility.....to gentleness....to patience....and to love

Return hands to your lap. Allow these words and this awareness to generate feelings of warmth that flood through your body. And give thanks....

Pause

Now if your eyes have been closed, you can open them.  
We’re going to begin to bring some gentle movement  
and simple phrases into our practice.

Set an intention for the gift of loving-kindness to flow more freely in and through us.

### **Focusing Movement for Loving-kindness**

Gentle movement of the head, to stretch the muscles of the neck

Rolling of shoulders in both directions.

Circle sweep the arms up, over the head, reach as high as you can and feel the stretch. Place your hands in prayer position over your head, and draw them down to your chest.

Breathe

Keeping your thumbs and pinky fingers touching, spread open the remaining fingers open, making a bowl or lotus blossom.

Hold this position while you return attention to your breath. Set an intention for the expansion of lovingkindness in and through you.

Repeat silently to yourself, these phrases of lovingkindness.

May I be happy.  
May I be safe.  
May I be healthy  
May I be at peace.

Offer the words your full attention, as you repeat them again.

Visualize these qualities filling the space you have opened, at your heart center.

Circle sweep the arms up over the head...side body stretches, left and right.

Circle sweep your arms and return your hands to prayer position at your chest.

Circle sweep your arms over your head and lower them to goal post arms.  
Close forearms and palms. Open arms again, and bring attention to the stretch of the pectoral muscles, the opening of the area around the heart. Slowly draw the arms together, with a bit of resistance, feeling the muscles in the arms, waking up. Bring forearms and palms together.

Wake up the spine with seated cat and cow movements:

Sitting up straight, open arms to goalpost position; feel the shoulder blades draw together and your back arch.

Bring the arms back together, round the shoulders, draw in the belly, bow the head.

Continue at your own pace. When you've completed this flow,  
Circle sweep the arms up and return them to prayer position  
at heart center. Breathe. Close your eyes.

Then as you bring your arms back together, round your shoulders, draw in your belly, bow your head.

Repeat this seated cat and cow movement a couple of times....  
inhale,open your arms and arch your back  
close your arms and round your back

Continue at your own pace. When you've completed this flow,  
Circle sweep the arms up and return them to prayer position  
at heart center. Breathe. Close your eyes.

May I be happy.  
May I be safe.  
May I be healthy  
May I be at peace.

Pause

Savor the words as they soak into your mind, wash through your heart, and open space in the body. Silently repeat the words

Open eyes

Warming up the spine with spinal twist to the right and left.  
our right hand on the chair behind you. Look over your left shoulder. Breathe.

Return to center and place hands on thighs.

Raise and extend your right leg. Circle the ankle....clockwise, and counter clock wise, point and flex the foot a few times. Scrunch your toes and then spread them. Return your right foot to the ground. Repeat with left leg.

Help yourself to a standing position.

Swing arms from side to side. Keep swinging. Feel the movement start to loosen the tight places.

Come to stillness, for Mountain Pose:

Feet slightly apart

Bring hands down by the side, palms turned forward.

Let shoulders fall down and away and from the ears.

Keep head erect, chin tilted forward.

Straighten spine, Slightly tuck pelvis.

Bring attention to the ground beneath your feet. Gently close the eyes.

Breathe in. Breathe out. Slow it down. Listen.

First, bring your attention to the sounds in the room. What do you hear?

Now listen to this prayer of TERESA OF AVILA

“May today there be peace within.

May you trust God

That you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities

That are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received,

And pass on the love that has been given to you.

May you be content

Knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones

And allow your soul the freedom

To sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.”

Circle sweep arms up, and this time swan dive, bending from the waist and reaching toward the floor in a forward fold.

Let your arms dangle toward the floor or touching the floor and feel the release.

In the ham-strings, in the low back.

Send yourself a little more lovingkindness with a gentle bend in your knees....dangle your arms or wrap them

and hold your elbows in a rag doll pose.  
Sway from side to side if you want and then come to stillness.

Pause

Inhale and come half-way up: place palms on shins, flatten back  
Exhale: let the breath out and dangle the arms toward the floor again.

Inhale again and come half-way up, palms on shins,  
This time, with an open mouth, exhale and sigh it out as  
drop again into a forward fold. Repeat a couple of times.

Circle sweep the arms all the way up to a standing position.  
Bring Hands to heart center.

Return attention to the breath in Mountain pose.  
Close the eyes and repeat silently **these** words of loving-kindness:

May I find forgiveness  
May I have an open heart  
May I live with ease  
May I rest well tonight

Now...open the eyes...

Move into Warrior 2/Peaceful Warrior Flow/Triangle pose

On the right side

Step forward with your left foot, so both feet are standing together.  
Place your hands at heart center and breathe. Repeat the words silently

May I find forgiveness  
May I have an open heart  
May I live with ease  
May I rest well tonight

Warrior 2/Peaceful Warrior Flow/Triangle pose

On the left side

Step forward so both feet are standing together.  
Place your hands at heart center and  
return to a comfortable seated position, on your chair.  
Feet flat on the floor, hands resting in your lap.

Notice how your whole body feels compared to when we began.  
What feels different? Do you notice any areas that are more relaxed, open, light?

### **Closing Meditation**

[Adapted from **Daily Calm**]

As we move toward closure with our loving-kindness practice,  
we want to begin to direct loving-kindness toward others.

So, close the eyes one more time. Return attention to your breath.

Bring to mind someone you have affectionate feelings toward.  
Envision a person who makes you feel happy the moment you think of them.

Picture this one. Hold him. Hold her. in your awareness  
as you silently repeat the 4 lovingkindness phrases

May you be happy.

May you be safe.

May you be healthy

May you be at peace.

Pause

Notice how extending these phrases to someone close to your heart  
feels good, brings feelings of expansion, warmth

Repeat each phrase softly and silently,

Pause

Bring to mind the image of someone you have neutral feelings toward: A colleague,  
neighbor, acquaintance

Visualize that person in your mind and send out words of loving kindness to them as  
well. Repeat the phrases mindfully, prayerfully giving them your full attention

May you be happy.

May you be safe.

May you be healthy

May you be at peace.

Pause

Bring to mind an image of someone you regard as difficult

It could be someone who hurt you in the past,

or someone who is causing you pain now

Anyone toward whom you have difficult or challenging feelings.

As best as you are able, Open your heart. Breathe into the feelings that come with  
giving attention this person.

Pause

To the degree you feel able, begin to extend loving kindness to this one. Repeat the phrases as a prayer, inviting God's lovingkindness to go where you find it difficult, maybe even impossible to go.

May you be happy.  
May you be safe.  
May you be healthy  
May you be at peace.

Finally we'll extend lovingkindness outward to all beings.

Focus attention on the people of your congregation and the community you seek to serve; bring to mind people all over the world, the earth and its inhabitants.

What would it be like to extend affection without boundaries or limits?! To spread lovingkindness in all directions?!

May all beings be happy.  
May all beings be safe.  
May all beings be healthy  
May all beings be at peace.

Notice how it feels to generate loving kindness that begins with yourself and extends to others, in ever-widening circles. Pause.

As we close, Listen, now to this song that is a prayer for loving-kindness.

<https://sarahpirtle.com/hope-sings/teresa-of-avilas-prayer.htm>

Now, if your eyes are still closed, open them. Circle sweep your arms up and return them to heart center. To close our practice, let's Inhale together and exhale.

The loving-kindness in me sees and honors the loving-kindness in you. And so may this loving-kindness flow through us, an expression of God's generosity, healing the world.