

Compassion Meditation

Compassion meditation is a way to cope with stress while increasing empathy for your relationship partners. It only takes a few minutes to practice. Plus, you don't have to practice it every day. You can practice it as often or as little as you want.

INTRODUCTION

Compassion meditation comes from the Buddhist religion. However, compassion meditation is not a religious practice. There are no religious beliefs involved in compassion meditation. You don't have to accept religious beliefs at all in order to practice it. You can practice compassion meditation with a completely secular world view.

Several studies have shown that compassion meditation works.

Compassion meditation benefits people who practice it. People who practice compassion meditation tend to deal better with their own stress.¹ This includes serious stress from things like schizophrenia and chronic lower back pain.²⁻³

Compassion meditation also increases empathy for others. Neuroscientists have discovered that compassion meditation activates areas of the brain involved in emotion, empathy, and the ability to take the perspective of others.⁴ Psychologists have found that compassion meditation decreases negative emotions, increases positive emotions, and increases how similar and connected people feel toward others.⁵⁻⁶

INSTRUCTIONS

The following instructions explain how to practice compassion meditation. There's nothing special about the phrases used in these instructions. Please feel free to come up with phrases that feel better to you.

Some examples of other phrases might be:

- May I feel relaxed.
- May I be filled with kindness.
- May I be free from suffering.
- May I feel safe and secure.
- May I live with ease.
- May I be free from anger.

- May I be free from sadness.
- May I be free from fear and anxiety.
- May everything in my life work out fine.
- May I experience well-being.

The phrases only need to express love and kindness towards yourself and towards others.

Say your set of phrases once or twice to make sure you feel comfortable with them. When you pick a set of phrases, stick with them for each person in the meditation. You can change phrases next time you meditate.

Step 1. Get Comfortable.

Let your body and mind relax. Don't worry if you can't get perfectly comfortable or perfectly relaxed. Perfection is not required. You will eventually be able to practice compassion meditation anywhere.

Step 2. Develop Compassion for Yourself.

Recite the phrases, directing them toward yourself:

- May I feel healthy.
- May I feel happy.
- May I feel peaceful.
- May I feel loved.

Say the phrases over and over until you have warm and positive feelings toward yourself. Let yourself fully experience and enjoy the positive feelings.

Step 3. Develop Compassion for Your Partner.

When you are ready, recite the same phrases as before, directing the feelings towards your partner:

- May you feel healthy.
- May you feel happy.
- May you feel peaceful.
- May you feel loved.

Continue repeating the phrases until you have warm and positive feelings for your partner.

Step 4. Develop Compassion for Your Partner's Partner.

Now recite the same phrases as before, directing the feelings toward your partner's partner (i.e., the person whom you feel jealous about).

- May you feel healthy.
- May you feel happy.
- May you feel peaceful.
- May you feel loved.

Continue repeating the phrases until you have warm and positive feelings for your partner's partner.

Step 5. Develop Compassion for All People.

Finally, recite the same phrases as before, directing them towards all people.

- May everyone feel healthy.
- May everyone feel happy.
- May everyone feel peaceful.
- May everyone feel loved.

Continue repeating the phrases until you have warm and positive feelings for everyone.

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