

Giving and Receiving Compassion Meditation

I first heard this compassion meditation given by Kristin Neff. Use this meditation when you or someone you know is hurting.

1. Close your eyes and settle into a comfortable posture, either sitting or lying down.
2. Come home to your body. Notice your seat on your chair or your feet on the floor.
3. Now notice any internal sensations that may be arising right now. The beating of your heart. Feeling pulsing, energy, tingling, warmth.
4. Now bring loving awareness to your experience. Make a caring gesture. Put both hands on your heart.
5. Notice how your body responds to the physical touch.
6. Now, move your attention to your breath. Take a few deep breaths. Slow inhalations and exhalations. Allow yourself to release tension as you exhale.
7. Now, let your breathing return to a normal, natural rhythm.
8. Your mind will probably wander immediately. When it does, call back your attention to your breath, gently and firmly. Let your awareness rest on your breath. Breathing in and breathing out.
9. Pay particular attention to the inbreath. Notice you are giving yourself the oxygen you need. Nurturing yourself with each inbreath.

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10. Perhaps, if you are aware of any ways in which you are struggling, you may breathe in other qualities. Kindness, love, or compassion. Breathe in these qualities with each inbreath.
11. Perhaps you might find that there is a word that rests easily in each inbreath, such as “love,” or “Compassion.”
12. Or perhaps more generally breathe in a warm, golden light, a radiant, loving energy.
13. Allow yourself to receive with each inbreath something good for yourself.
14. Now release your focus on the inbreath and focus on the outbreath. As you breathe out, bring to mind someone you know or are aware of who is struggling right now and who needs compassion. Allow an image of them to form in the mind’s eye.
15. Direct your outbreath to this other person. Breathe out to them what they need in this moment: kindness, love, compassion. This may take the form of a word on your outbreath, or a feeling. Maybe an image of golden light. Send something good to this person on each outbreath.
16. Now bring both together. Acknowledge that you struggle and so does this other person. Breathing in something good for yourself and breathing out to the other. In and out. One for me, one for you. In for me, and out for you.
17. If your mind starts to wander, you can refresh the image you have of yourself and the other. Bringing your hands to your heart if you wish.
18. Breathe in compassion for yourself. Breathe out compassion for the other.

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19. If you are struggling, feel free to breath in more for yourself. Perhaps three for me, one for you.
20. Conversely, if the other is drawing your attention more strongly, you can focus more on the outbreath, sending them the compassion they need.
21. Otherwise, just letting your breath flow easily, equally, in and out. Like the waves of an ocean. In and out. A limitless, boundless ocean. Enough for me and enough for you. The ocean of compassion.
22. Let yourself be fully absorbed by the breath. Breathing in and breathing out. Compassion in, compassion out. No limits. No boundaries.
23. You can hold your own suffering fully. And the suffering of this other. Letting it ride like the waves of an ocean. In and out.
24. If other beings come to mind who are suffering, or groups of beings, from this place of limitless boundless compassion you can breath out to them as well. Always including yourself with each inbreath.
25. There is no need for separation. Let this ocean hold all of it. All suffering in love and compassion.
26. Now come back to your body. Allow yourself to feel whatever it is you are feeling. To be exactly as you are.

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