

# The Four Immeasurables

## Loving-Kindness Meditation

Take nine deep relaxation breaths with long exhalations.

For the first three breaths, breathe in and bring the breath to any tension in the body, releasing the tension with the exhalation.

For the second three breaths, inhale into any emotional tension, feel where you hold it in your body and release it with the exhalation.

And, lastly, breathe into any mental tension. Feel where you hold nervousness, worries or mental blockages in your body and release them with the exhalation.

Generate a heartfelt motivation to practice for the benefit of one's self and all beings.

We do this meditation with our eyes closed.

Take three people in your life.

On your left, place a beloved or a good friend, someone you really like.

In front, place a neutral person, more someone you ignore or don't notice. Someone who is in your life but you don't really feel one way or another about. You don't connect with them very much.

On your right, place an enemy or a difficult person, somebody that you have energy around right now or someone you have had challenges with in the past. This could be someone you are holding a grudge against that you don't see anymore but you have them on your list of those you don't like or don't want to have anything to do with.

The person on your left is someone you feel close to and unequivocally like or love. In front of you is the neutral person that you don't really care about one way or another. On the right is an enemy or difficult person.

Let's start with the person you dislike and notice how you feel about them:

- physically
- emotionally
- how you feel about how they look, their appearance
- how they move
- their voice
- their political views
- their energy

Think about how your aversion to them developed. Think about what they did to you. How you found them irritating. Get a really felt sense of this energy that you feel towards them.

With an enemy, we often carry them with us for years. Even if we haven't talked to them for years, we are still carrying this feeling. Feel how it is to have this relationship with them.

Keep that awareness of them and feel like they are sitting right next to you. Like you have the feeling that you wish they weren't sitting so close.

Keeping that feeling, then feel on your left side the one you love or like. Notice how you feel about them:

- physically
- emotionally
- how you feel about how they look, their appearance
- how they move
- their voice
- their political views
- their energy

Feel that closeness you have with this person and the desire to have them close. Maybe it is even a longing or craving for that person. Or maybe it is just a nice feeling of love and comfort. Really feel how that is.

Then think about your relationship with them and how your love or attraction to them developed. Think about how good they have been to you, how they supported you, all the reasons why you feel this way about them.

In front of you, see the neutral person, but as you shift your attention, really feel the aversion on your right and the attraction on your left. Feel these presences vividly.

Now, see the person in your life whom you don't have a strong connection with, whom you neither like nor dislike, whom you don't really pay much attention to.

Notice how you feel about this person:

- physically
- emotionally
- how you feel about how they look, their appearance
- how they move
- their voice
- their political views
- their energy

Really feel this "not caring" energy you have towards them, not making any particular effort to get to know them. You are not really liking them or disliking them. Feel this kind of disconnected feeling.

Now we will begin to generate within ourselves loving-kindness, from the depths of our hearts, informed by our meditation on impartiality, and then infusing this feeling of interconnectedness and appreciation of all beings. From that, pour out loving-kindness, recognizing the essential Buddha nature of all these beings and recognizing that they will eventually become Buddhas. (We hope! Make that aspiration for them!) We do this without trying to display our own goodness or seeking any confirmation back from them. We simply offer from the depths of our heart, in our own Buddha nature, our own bodhicitta, love to all these

beings. This is love that transcends the desires we have for those we normally love, that we wish to receive something from. It is also free from the rejection and aversion that we have toward difficult people. It is also free from the ignorance, the ignoring, the lack of seeing the person we don't notice.

We expand our loving-kindness to include all those in an impartial way. We are making this heartfelt love and a love without conditions, without need for feedback.

We then expand this love to our family and friends, even our difficult family members.

Expand this love to all of those in the room.

Now, extend that outward to all the beings on the land: the humans, the nonhumans, seen and unseen. Offer this to the flying creatures, the snakes and insects and little chipmunks and squirrels and bangers and coyotes and bears. All those beings, so many beings around us that we don't normally think about, hear, or experience. Feel that our love is immeasurable in the sense of being unconditioned. Expand that out and gradually spread it to this whole area, then out further to the world in all directions. When you think about it, there are such an infinite number of beings even just in this area where we are. Think of all the insects, birds, animals and people. Offer them all loving-kindness and wishes that they be free from fear and suffering. Keep spreading this out in all directions to include the whole universe, the inconceivable immeasurable universe. Really let it go into an experience of immeasurable love, boundless...



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