

Guided Meditation to Cultivate Self Compassion

Introduction: Cultivating compassion for others is only half of the story. It's also important to cultivate self-compassion! This meditation on gratitude and loving kindness is one way to cultivate self-compassion.

Suggestions: If you're in a group setting, ask someone to read this meditation out loud, with a slow, calm, and soothing voice. If you're by yourself, tape record the message and listen to your recorded voice.

Guided Meditation:

Take a moment to settle into your chair. Uncross your legs and feel the earth beneath your feet. Let the chair support you. Close your eyes if you are comfortable - or just look out and down without really focusing on anything... Turn your attention to your breath... For these few moments, you have nowhere else to go and nothing else to do. You can take this time to just be with yourself and empty your mind of all thoughts and relax.....

Notice the coolness of the air as you inhale through your nostrils and how it's warmer as you exhale.... Follow the next breath down to your lungs...where it mixes with blood and is pumped by your heart.... imagine how that breath brings the oxygen you need to every cell of your body. ... and then as you exhale, notice the miracle of the cycle of life and how the outward breath removes all that you don't need... Refreshing, renewing breath in.... Cleansing, releasing breath out... Renewal and rebirth with every breath... What a miracle... how brilliant and capable is your body...

Now bring your attention to your feet... feel them planted on the ground... Give them some gratitude and appreciation for supporting you and carrying you wherever you choose to go...And then notice your hands – so strong and skillful – enabling you to do whatever work you choose... Give them gratitude and appreciation... What a miracle is your body... Feel a sense of wonder and gratitude flood through you...

Now bring your attention to your heart, that center of your being... You may place your hands on your heart, and imagine breathing in unconditional love and acceptance for yourself... to your precious heart... Bathe yourself with gratitude and appreciation... you who work so hard and mean so well... ...

Now imagine yourself as a small child... see that pure sweet essence of the innocent one within... Imagine holding yourself tenderly... On every in-breath, breathe in unconditional love for yourself, embracing yourself as a loving parent might gently hold their child – that tender, pure love. ... see yourself holding yourself, cherishing yourself... Call yourself a name of endearment, as if you are your own beloved... what is your name of the Beloved? Call to yourself in your loving embrace...

Feel infused with this loving kindness, tenderness, compassion... Keeping this sense of relaxation and centeredness, when you are ready -- wiggle your fingers, wiggle your toes... and when you are ready, open your eyes.