

Metta or Loving-Kindness Meditation

Metta is the heartfelt wish for the well-being of oneself and others. *Metta* practice is the cultivation of our capacity for loving-kindness. The practices of mindfulness and loving-kindness support one another. *Metta* practice complements mindfulness by encouraging an attitude of friendliness toward our experience regardless of how difficult it may be. Mindfulness complements loving-kindness by guarding it from becoming partial or sentimental.

Gil Fronsdal, *The Issue at Hand*, pages 82–83

Here are three versions.

May I be safe and protected.

May I be happy and peaceful.

May my body be healthy and strong.

May I live with ease of well-being.

May I be happy.

May I be well.

May I be safe.

May I be peaceful and at ease.

May God protect me. May I be safe.

May God enlighten me. May I be enlightened.

May I see God's face in every face I see

and thus find peace.

This is based on the Priestly Benediction, which is recited in both Christianity and Judaism. It is based on the Hebrew prayer that starts: *Yevorechecha Adonay ve-yishmerecha*

As Gil Fronsdal points out, after a period of directing loving-kindness toward yourself, bring to mind a friend or some someone in your life who has deeply cared for you. Then slowly repeat phrases of loving-kindness toward them:

May you be happy. May you be well. May you be safe. May you be peaceful and at ease.

As you continue the meditation, you can bring to mind other friends, neighbors, strangers, or animals or you can direct the loving-kindness to all the people in this room, in this university, in this town, in this state, in this country, on planet Earth as well as to all living beings anywhere in the universe.

Traditionally one directs the loving-kindness to people in the following sequence:

1) oneself, 2) benefactor, 3) dear friend, 4) neutral person, 5) difficult person.