

ANUx - SP | 20180606_Carol_Beynon

Hello. This is the next component of the ANU Counseling Center's Mindfulness Course. My name's Carol Beynon, and I'm one of the counselors at the center. Today, I'm going to be talking through two meditations. The first one is on loving kindness for ourselves. And the second meditation and mindfulness script is on the giving and receiving of compassion.

Loving kindness for ourselves-- please find a comfortable position sitting or lying down, letting your eyes closed fully or partially. Taking a few deep breaths to settle into your body and into the present moment. Putting your hand over your heart or wherever it is comforting and soothing as a reminder that you are bringing, not only your awareness, but loving awareness to your experience and to yourself.

After a while, feeling your breath where you notice it most easily, feeling your body breathe in and out. And when your attention wanders, noticing the gentle movement of your breath once again. Then gently releasing the focus on your breath, or continuing to have a background awareness of your breath, as you begin to offer yourself words of kindness and compassion over and over-- words that you need to hear, words that you can savor. If you already have phrases that are meaningful to you, please use these. If you're new to meditating with phrases, please open your heart and mind to whatever you need to hear-- words of wisdom and compassion that speak to you in the deepest way.

Open your heart to these words, whispering them gently into your own ear again and again. Perhaps hearing the words from the inside, allowing them to resonate within you. Allowing these words to take up space, to fill your being, if only for this one moment. Whenever you notice that your mind has wandered, refreshing your aim by feeling the sensations in your body, coming home to your own body. And then feeling the importance of your own words, coming home to kindness.

Then finally releasing the phrases and resting quietly in your own body. And then when you are ready, gently open your eyes.

The next exercise I'm going to describe is the giving and receiving of compassion. Please sit comfortably, closing your eyes. And if you like putting a hand over your heart or another soothing place as a reminder to bring, not just your awareness, but loving awareness to your experience and to yourself.

Now look at savoring the breath take a few deep, relaxed breaths noticing how your breath nourishes your body as you inhale and soothes your body as you exhale. Now letting your breathing find its own natural rhythm, feeling the sensations of breathing in and breathing out. If you like, allowing yourself to be gently rocked and caressed by the rhythm of your breathing.

Warming up awareness-- now focusing your attention on your in breath, letting yourself savor the sensation of breathing in. Noticing how your in breath nourishes your body breath after breath, and then releasing your breath.

As you breathe, breathing in something good for yourself-- whatever you need- perhaps a quality of warmth, kindness, compassion, or love. Just feel it. Or you can use a word or image if you like.

Now shifting your focus to your out breath, feeling your body breathe out, feeling the ease of exhalation. Please call to mind someone whom you love or someone who is struggling and needs compassion. Visualize that person clearly in your mind. Begin directing your out breath to this person, offering the ease of breathing out. And if you wish, intentionally sending warmth and kindness, something good to this person, with each out breath. In for me. Out for you.

Now letting go of what you or the other person may need and just focusing on the sensation of breathing compassion in and sending something good-- in for me, and out for you. One for me, and one for you. If you wish, you can focus a little more on yourself or the other person. Just let it be an equal flow, whatever feels right in the moment. Or you can send something good to more than one person. Allowing your breath to flow in and out like the gentle movement of the ocean-- a limitless, boundless flow, an ocean of compassion.

And when you're ready, you might just want to gently open your eyes.