

Compassion with Equanimity

Equanimity -- bringing mental calmness, composure, and evenness of temper, to a difficult situation.

Get comfortable.

Close your eyes.

Take a few cleansing breaths to settle into body and into the present moment, and then let your breath be easy.

You may like to put hand over heart as a reminder to bring affectionate awareness to this experience and to yourself.

Call to mind your challenging person. Someone who pushes your buttons, or 'stirs you up', or depletes your energy.

Visualize this person and imagine or call to mind an encounter with them clearly in your mind,

Allow yourself to feel, or sense, any struggle in your body as you bring this encounter to mind. Notice if there are places you experiencing physical gripping or holding...areas of tension.

See if it makes sense to you to acknowledge that you are struggling and perhaps even suffering in the midst of this relationship. Remember here: "When love meets suffering and stays loving, that's compassion."

Now, bring your awareness back to the feelings/sensations of the stress in your body - *inhale* fully and deeply. Draw in a nurturing breath with a gentle sense of compassion. Let yourself be soothed by the breath. (stay with this for a few breaths).

Now, bring your attention to your *exhale*. As you breathe out, keep your challenging person in mind and begin sending compassion out – with each exhale - to that person. Breathing out compassion for the person who is associated with your discomfort. (pause and practice)

Continuing... let your breath be filled with a sense of compassion –

"I breathe in compassion for me,
"I breathe out compassion for you.

"Inhaling for me....Exhaling for you."

Invite your body respond to the natural comfortable rhythm of your breath. Keep the focus of the in-breath on, compassion for you and your out breath, compassion for your person.

“In for me. Out for you.” (Stay with this.)

If your attention wanders gently guide it back by feeling your hand over your heart, your feet on the floor and continuing to breathe.

You may want to occasionally scan your body for signs of distress, tension or holding.... If you detect tension or holding it may help to keep focus of the breath just on yourself for a bit longer. When you feel grounded you can resume sending the exhale to the other person.

Natural breath. Easy breath. Whole body experiencing the caress of your breath in... and the breath out. Your breath like an ocean, ocean of compassion, limitless compassion that embraces suffering.

Now let's begin letting go of this practice --- Take a deep cleansing breath in, open your mouth and let it go.

Pause here for one moment more, and allow your self to be just as you are right here, just like this, standing here fully human.

Once more breathe in deeply....and out. Connect with your physical self by introducing movement to the body (wiggle fingers/toes...). Gradually open your eyes, keep a soft gaze and then begin to take in the room around you. Stand here, and allow your self to be just as you are, just like this, fully human.

This exercise has been adapted (for the NT/SC, *Nurturing YOU Retreat for Teachers*) from the wonderful online resources of Christopher Germer.

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