

## Loving-Kindness Meditation for Couples

All relationships face challenges at times. So, it is important to find ways to nurture your relationships. This meditation of loving-kindness for couples is designed to promote goodwill. You can use this loving-kindness meditation in times when you wish to deepen your sense of connection with each other. In this meditation, you will be offering loving-kindness and compassion to your partner and yourself, opening your heart and mind to giving and receiving goodwill.

There is no right or wrong way to do this practice. The aim is to follow the suggestion below, to be aware of your good intention, and simply notice what is arising as you are sending and receiving while letting yourself be as you are.



You can do this meditation with the partners communicating with each other or simply visualize your partner being with you. You can reflect and if appropriate, discuss your choice of 3 or 4 loving-kindness phrases that you wish to offer yourself and your partner during the meditation, focussing on our natural common desire for happiness, joy, peace, safety, ease, strength, wisdom, health, wellbeing, to thrive and to prosper. If you are doing this exercise with your partner, you can decide to say the loving-kindness phrases either out loud to each other or silently. If you have decided to speak out loud your phrases, take a moment to decide who will speak first.

- **When you are ready you can begin** by adopting a comfortable position with both of you either sitting or lying down next to each other. You can be holding hands if you both wish, or make physical contact in some other ways. You can also visualise your partner being with you.
- Then let your eyes close.
- Becoming present and aware, take a long exhale to soften and to slow your breathing. As you exhale, releasing, letting go, feeling calmer. For a moment letting go of the past, letting go of the future, having a sense of arriving in the present moment. Engaging with some relaxing, slow belly breathing for 3 breaths or so. Then breathing normally and easily.
- Being aware of your whole body... softening the face, smiling within with a sense of ease, softening the belly, the jaws, the chest, the shoulders... relaxing the whole body, if only a little more, with each breath out. (1 minute)
- You can place your hand over your heart for a moment or some other soothing place to remind yourself of your intention to bring loving awareness to yourself and to your partner.
- Coming back to the awareness of your breath in a way that is easy for you. Following the breath, as it enters at the nostrils, down the throat, chest or belly rising and contracting as you are breathing in and out. Choosing a point of focus to bring your attention to, again and again. Simply observing your breath in your own way, for a few minutes. If the mind wanders, that's okay, totally normal, if the mind wanders, notice the thought and then simply come back to the awareness of the next breath. (2-5 minutes)
- Then resting for a moment in the awareness of being aware. Seeing both of you from above, having a sense of yourself expanding. (1 minute)
- Now turn your attention to your partner, being filled with the intention of loving-kindness for your partner. Enjoying their good company. Reminding yourself of their goodness, and being grateful for having them in your life. Reminding yourself of your intention to connect with your partner. Just like you, your partner wants to be loved and appreciated, valued and cared for. Just like you, your partner wants to be happy, peaceful, strong and wise. Just like me. Being aware of your love and care for your partner. Letting the good energy flow out and radiate to your partner. If unhelpful judgments arise, come back to the awareness of your breath and reaffirm your intention to love your partner.
- Now becoming aware of the stress and struggles that your partner has been going through in the past or recently. Resting in your intention to love and support your partner. Offering your partner two or three loving-kindness phrases of your choice. You can use general phrases like: "*May you be happy, May you be peaceful, May you live with ease, May you be well and safe*". You can also choose other phrases that are meaningful for you.
- You can gently repeat the phrases out loud, in turn, or taking time to say them silently to each other if you prefer, whatever feels right for both of you. Being aware of your good intentions of wishing well to your

partner, of supporting them in good times and difficult times. Focussing on sending good wishes, but also taking a moment to savour receiving the good wishes. Remember that you are not trying to feel anything different but you are simply trying to connect, to open your heart to give and receive, resting in a gentle kind awareness. Repeating those phrases for a minute or so. (2 minutes)

- If your mind wanders, that's okay gently bring your attention back to the phrases. As you repeat the phrases to each other, notice what is arising in your mind and letting yourself be as you are. (1 minute)
- Then you can turn your attention on yourself, offering the same loving-kindness phrases you offered your partner by repeating out loud, in turn, or silently, the phrases for two minute or so, such as "*May I be happy, May I be peaceful, May I live with ease, May I be well and safe*" or some other phrases that are meaningful for you. (2 minutes)
- And whenever you notice that your mind has wandered, patiently refresh your aim, being aware of the sensation of the breath, of the presence of your partner, of your goodwill, and then, continue gently, repeating the phrases in a friendly way, to yourself.
- Notice what arises when you offer yourself those phrases and letting yourself be how you are.
- Then, when you are ready, you can begin to offer the same phrases to yourself and to your partner out loud in turn or silently, for a few minutes. Offering each other what you each wish for yourself. Using phrases like "*may you and I be happy, may you and I be peaceful, may you and I live with ease, may you and I be well and safe....*" You can also choose other phrases that resonate with you.
- Savouring the sense of togetherness, repeating again out loud, in turn, or silently: "*together, may we be happy and peaceful, together may we be strong and wise, together may we thrive and prosper*".
- Bringing to mind some current or past challenges repeating out loud, in turn, or silently: "together, may we be happy and peaceful, together, may we be strong and wise, together, may we thrive and prosper". Again if you wish you can add your own phrases.
- Then letting go of the phrases, resting in the silence, being aware of your breath and your partner's presence, notice what is arising in your mind, letting it be as it is. Remembering that there is no right or wrong way of doing it. It is what it is. Letting yourself be as you are. (1 minute)
- After a few minutes, you can open your eyes. You can end by thanking your partner and sharing your experience.

This handout was written by Marie Bloomfield, Clinical Psychologist, M. Psychol., MAPS. February 2020. This is a modified version of loving-kindness meditation for couples written by Michelle Becker and Tim Burnett.

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