

Loving-Kindness Practice for Couples

The practice of Loving-Kindness is designed to promote goodwill and caring relationships for ourselves and others.

We can use this loving-kindness practise in good times as well as in times of upset when we need to reconnect remembering our intention to offer loving-kindness and compassion to ourselves and our partner. There is no right or wrong way to do this practice. Simply follow the suggestion, resting in your good intentions and notice what arises for you.



- To start you can discuss with your partner two or three loving-kindness phrases that you would like to share. You can use general ones like: *“May I be happy, May I be peaceful, May I live with ease”*. You can also come up with other phrases that are more meaningful for you for your specific situation.
- Then find a comfortable position with both of you walking, sitting or lying down. You can experiment with how you wish to express your loving-kindness phrase for your partner. You can gently repeat the phrases in turn or you may wish to whisper it, in turn, into each other’s ears. Whatever feels right for both of you.
- Decide who will speak first, letting your eyes close fully or partially. Whatever is comfortable for you.
- Becoming present and aware, take three long exhales to relax, to soften and to slow your breathing. Having a sense of arriving in the present moment.
- You may want to check in your body... feeling grounded. Maybe smiling within, softening the face, softening the belly, the chest, the shoulders.
- You may want to place your hand over your heart or some other soothing place to remind yourself of your intention to bring loving awareness to yourself like a good friend would.
- You may continue to be aware of your breath in a way that is easy for you. Choosing a point of focus to bring your attention back to, when your mind wanders. Simply observing your breath for a minute or two.
- Then when you are ready, letting go of the focus on the breath and offering yourself the two or three loving-kindness phrases that you have chosen. You can do this silently repeating your own phrases at your own pace in your own way offering it to yourself. Or you may wish to say it aloud in turn whatever you prefer.
- Beginning to you offer yourself the loving kindness phrases, practising self-compassion together. Offering yourself the phrases that are most meaningful. Opening your heart to these words, speaking them gently.
- And whenever you notice that your mind has wandered, patiently refresh your aim, being aware of the sensation of the breath, of your body and then, continue gently, repeating the phrases in a friendly way, to yourself.
- Then, when you are ready, you can begin to offer the same phrases to your partner out loud such as *“may you ...”*. Or you may also want to address them using their name such as *“may you Tom...”*
- Allow yourself to rest in your good intention, in your goodwill, allowing your heart to be filled with loving-kindness for this person as best as you can. Letting yourself be as you are.
- After a few minutes of this, you may stop and share your experience.

This handout was written by Marie Bloomfield, Clinical Psychologist, M. Psychol., MAPS. July 2019. This is a modified version of the core practice use in the Compassion for couple program(M. Becker)

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