



RECOVERY DHARMA

Forgiveness Meditation

Find a comfortable but alert position in which to sit. As you allow your eyes to gently close, pay attention to the body and see if there are any minor adjustments that will help you maintain the position for the duration of the meditation. Rest your hands comfortably on your legs or in your lap.

We'll start with a few minutes of concentration practice, just to help our minds settle and arrive in our present time experience. Allow your breathing to be natural, seeing where in the body you can feel the breath most naturally. It may be in the stomach or abdomen, where you can feel the rising and falling as the body breathes. It might be in the chest, where you may notice the expansion and contraction as the body inhales and exhales. Perhaps it's at the nostrils, where you can feel a slight tickle as the air comes in, and the subtle warmth as the body exhales.

Breathing in, just bring a gentle awareness to the breath. Breathing out, be aware of the breath leaving the body.

(Pause)

You may notice the mind wandering. This offers us an opportunity to cultivate mindfulness and concentration. Each time we notice the mind wandering, we're strengthening our ability to recognize our present experience. Each time we bring the mind back to the breath, we strengthen our ability to concentrate. Treat it as an opportunity rather than a problem.

(Pause)

Now begin offering forgiveness to yourself. We start with ourselves because it is almost impossible to truly forgive others while we still harbor self-resentment.

There are many ways that we have hurt and harmed ourselves. We have betrayed or abandoned ourselves many times through thoughts, words, or actions, knowingly or unknowingly.

Feel your own precious body and life, as you are today. Let yourself become aware of the ways you have hurt or harmed yourself. Picture them, remember them. Be open to the sorrow you have carried from this and give yourself permission to release these burdens.

Breathing gently, repeat silently to yourself the following phrases:

“I forgive myself for the ways I have hurt myself through action or inaction.” “I know I have acted out of fear, pain, and confusion, and for today, I offer myself forgiveness.” “I forgive myself.”

Repeat these phrases, letting the feelings permeate your body and mind. Feelings contrary to forgiveness, like irritation, guilt, and anger, may come up for you. If this happens, be patient and kind toward yourself, allowing whatever arises to be received in a spirit of friendliness and kind affection, and simply return to the phrases.

(three minutes of silence)

There are also many ways that you have been harmed by others. You may have been abused or abandoned, knowingly or unknowingly, in thoughts, words or actions.

Let yourself picture and remember these hurts. Be open to the sorrow you have carried from these actions of others in the past, and give yourself permission to release this burden of pain—at least for today—by extending forgiveness, when your heart is ready.

Bring to mind the people who have hurt you, and then silently repeat the following phrases:

“I now remember the ways you have hurt or harmed me, out of your own fear, pain, confusion and anger.” “I have carried this pain in my heart too long. At least for today, I offer you forgiveness.” “To all those who have caused me harm, I offer my forgiveness.” “I forgive you.”

(three minutes of silence)

There are also many ways that we have hurt and harmed others, have betrayed or abandoned them, have caused them suffering. We have caused harm, knowingly or unknowingly, out of our own pain, fear, anger and confusion.

Let yourself remember and visualize the ways you have hurt others. Picture each memory that still burdens your heart. Acknowledge the pain you have caused out of your own fear and confusion. Be open to your own sorrow and regret. Give yourself permission to finally release this burden and ask for forgiveness.

Offer each person in your mind the following phrase:

“I know I have harmed you through my thoughts, words, or actions, and I ask for your forgiveness.”

(three minutes of silence)

Now, letting go of all thoughts of others, return your focus to your own body, mind, and heart. Notice any discomfort, tension, or difficulty you may be feeling. Notice if you are experiencing any new lightness, warmth, relaxation, relief, or joy. Then, whenever you are ready, allow your eyes to open and gently return your attention to the space around you.