

## SUNLIGHT ON SHADOWS: Embracing Great Compassion

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### Meditation 29

#### *Alternating Meditation on Loving Kindness*

To cultivate loving kindness, begin with pure motivation, reminding yourself that others want contentment and joy as much as you do. Open the scope of your awareness by reminding yourself that everything they're doing is a part of their effort to find stable happiness. Make the wish that their fulfillment be at least equally as important to you as your wish for your own.

Think of someone it's easy to love, and you genuinely wish for their welfare—not just in the short run but in the long run. Think about how you wish them everything good, everything fulfilling, and how you're so committed to their welfare that you'd do whatever you could to help them. Give rise to the wish and then the commitment to develop a greater capacity to fulfill them, to meet their needs, to ensure beneficial outcomes for them in the short and long run, and then rest in the essence of that commitment.

Then, let go of the effort to awaken your love and let it just be—not only the love you've given rise to in relation to that person but your love itself, abiding within your heart and independent of them. Simply allow the love you've cultivated to sink in. Let yourself experience it without concept, being with the experience of love instead of the idea of love and the effort to be loving.

Then pray that, by the blessings of limitless wisdom, loving kindness, compassion, and capacity to benefit, this commitment may come to fruition, your capacity may truly increase, and this person and all beings may know only temporary and ultimate benefit and happiness. Then, rest the mind, one with the experience of those blessings.

When the mind starts to get busy again, go back to cultivating love, this time for a different person or type of person, and then, once again, let the mind rest. Next, think of someone you feel more neutral about, and repeat the contemplation alternated with resting the mind.

Expand the visualization to include others that you find easy to love. Walk yourself through wishing the best for them, wishing you had the capacity to bring that about, committing to developing that inner and outer capacity, and praying, alternating with rest.

Continue to expand at your own pace to those you feel more neutral toward, including those it's more challenging to generate love for.

Then think of someone you feel aversion toward—someone that it's tough for you to wish them happiness. Although it's a lot harder to wish for this person's welfare, ask yourself, if you don't do it, who

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will? Remind yourself you can't expect everyone else to go around loving people who are hard to love so you don't have to. Ask yourself why wouldn't you want this person's welfare? Why would you want them to suffer? Why would you think their suffering will benefit you, them, or the world?

Really think this through, considering individuals you know as well as groups of people, and alternate these contemplations with resting the mind. Keep expanding the scope of your loving kindness to include more and more kinds of people until it encompasses all beings. Keep expanding at your own pace, alternating until the scope of your intention embraces a vast, limitless love for all beings. Then dedicate the merit.