

Meditation 37

A Concise Alternating Tonglen Practice

Start by doing the tonglen meditation for one person. When your heart starts to open, and you feel you genuinely care about this person—you aren't trying to care but actually do care about them—let go of trying and let the mind rest for as long as it's restful. It's okay if you hardly recognize that millisecond of rest because it went by so fast.

At that point, return to tonglen, and do it for another person, and then again rest. Keep alternating like that and, each time, expand the scope of beings you're doing practice for.

If it's hard to even do the meditation, you could start by practicing with the challenges in your meditation. Visualize and do tonglen first with however the obstruction appears to you, rest with that, expand the practice to others, rest with that, and then continue to expand the visualization, alternated with resting the mind, until it embraces all beings.