

Meditation 5

Just Like Me

Begin by establishing pure motivation for doing this meditation. Imagine someone you're biased against, and remind yourself, "This person—just like me—wants to be happy and doesn't want to suffer, yet, out of ignorance, they're working at cross-purposes to that very goal. The actions I've judged so harshly actually result from their efforts to be happy or stop suffering." Ask yourself how many times you've done the same thing. You may have acted to differing degrees than they have, with differing kinds of beings in differing arenas with differing values, but your thoughts, words, and actions have all stemmed from the same attachment to your own ideas of what's best, and you're both caught in the same counter-productive cycle. How tragic!

Expand the visualization to include others who behave similarly to this person. Remind yourself that they, like you, want to find happiness and avoid suffering. Unaware of the actual causes of happiness and suffering, they're sowing seeds of future misery, just as we've done and continue to do, in each moment, day after day, in the confused belief that pursuing our own needs and desires over those of others will produce stable well-being.

Continue to expand the content and scope of your meditation, in stages, to include more people with whom you disagree, those with whom you agree, and those toward whom your attitude is neutral until, eventually, you open to a pervasive awareness of everyone's shared human experience.