

From Jerry Carr-Brion

Meditation for a Harvest Festival

(Begin with breathing, etc., as per our usual meditation)

Imagine a seed, enclosed in the warm tilled earth.
From the seed a stem moves up and surfaces;
Roots move downwards, absorbing nutrients.
New life that we may live.

Imagine any plant that feeds us: wheat, barley,
peas, beans, potatoes or broccoli.
Imagine the plant slowly growing as the months pass by
until it is ready to harvest.
The wheat grains are ground for flour, the vegetables rushed out to shop or market.
Be grateful for your food and all those who bring it to you.

From Marianna Michell:

A Meditation on singleness in community

I invite you to join, as you so wish, this time of meditation.

As we begin, we note that though we sit alone, others are present by our side, in front, or behind us. We are grateful for their presence, acknowledging all, as we prepare for this period of stillness and attention.

[pause only]

As ever, I invite you to settle yourself comfortably, aware of the places where your body touches and is supported by the chair; with your feet placed evenly on the ground, and your head poised naturally. With eyes closed, now take a few deep and cleansing breaths.

[pause only]

Also remember to let your shoulders fall, and allow this relaxation to flow down your arms, so that your hands are calmly held, or touch each other, as they sit in your lap.

Being aware of our hands can be very restful, very quieting.

[45"]

And now, let us bring to mind a thought or greeting shared as we entered the church today. Perhaps a word of welcome, a visitor to greet, or a task to be shared.

[pause]

Spend a little time reflecting on how you felt as you arrived, this morning.

[1']

In that spirit of acceptance, of joining with others, relax once again into the stillness. We draw pure awareness on the in-breath - letting go on the out-breath.

[1']

And now as you sink a little more deeply into this quiet space, if you find your attention is wandering, come back to your breath: Pure awareness on the in-breath - letting go on the out-breath.

[1'30"]

Perhaps here, words parallel with the sequence about sensations in the body; thoughts in the mind; sounds in the environment. Maybe a bit more condensed than the usual?

In a moment, I shall ring our bell three times. And as this time of meditation draws to a close, let us appreciate we have given ourselves a time of 'being' as opposed to a state of 'doing'. Then slowly and at your own pace, begin to bring yourself back into this room.

[bell/gong]

Though we are here singly, we have held this space together. And we give thanks.

From Ruth Gilman:

**In Chapel at Othona
Barton Bradstock**

Since human history began
we have shared our experience of life
celebrating its goodness
crying out at pain and injustice
looking for stillness of soul

We have struggled
to honour the individual
and to build community

We have ventured
to fathom the mystery of life
and to give it a name
gently breathing "God"

In this chapel our guiding light
is the example of Jesus
He offered a welcome to all
regardless of status or preference
of sex race or religion
We seek to honour all faiths
as responses to the divine
as paths to liberation
We look for the Christian tradition
to evolve with new understandings
and to join hands with all
who hunger for justice and peace

What you bring to this sacred place
nobody else can bring
What you draw from it
only you will know
Here together we find space
to grow in awareness
to glimpse the inner lives of others
to learn patience when all is arid
to connect with the Divine
If love is our only offering
and Thank You our only prayer
these are riches indeed
Wherever you are on your journey
you are welcome here
to take part as you may
in spirit and in truth

From Aysha Madha (used in the service during the Self-Compassion course):

Loving-Kindness Meditation for a Loved One and the Self

Introduction

Welcome to this loving-kindness meditation. Through simple, repeated phrases of well-wishing, we'll nurture feelings of warmth, compassion, and goodwill—first toward a loved one, then including ourselves, and finally focusing on our own well-being.

There's no single, nor any “perfect way” to practice loving-kindness. You might experience warmth and tenderness, or you might not feel much at all—both are completely normal. The practice works gradually over time, planting seeds of kindness that will grow with continued nurturing.

As we begin, create a judgment-free space for yourself. We aren't trying to force any feelings; we're just staying curious about what happens as we direct our attention in this fashion. Allow whatever arises to simply be present, meeting your experience with gentleness and patience. Your mind will wander—that's natural. When you notice this happening, simply return to the phrases and images with kindness.

Meditation

As always, begin by sitting with your back straight, head balanced comfortably, hands resting in your lap and your feet placed evenly on the ground. And now, with your eyes closed, take a few deep, cleansing breaths, as you begin to settle yourself into silence.

(Loving-Kindness for a Loved one)

Bring to mind a living being that naturally makes you smile - someone with whom you have an easy, uncomplicated relationship with. This could be a child, your grandmother, your cat or dog - whoever naturally brings joy and love to your heart.

If many living beings arise, just choose one. *(Pause)*

Create a vivid image of this being in your mind's eye.

Let yourself feel what it's like to be in that being's presence. Allow yourself to enjoy the good company. *(Pause)*

Now recognise how this being wishes to be happy and free from suffering, just like you and every other living being. *(Pause)*

Now, repeat the following phrases silently, feeling the importance of your words:

May you be happy (Pause)

May you feel peaceful (Pause)

May you be healthy (Pause)

May you live with ease (Pause)

**(Repeat)*

If you notice your mind has wandered, return to the words and image of your loved one.

Savour any warm feelings that may arise. *(Pause)*

(Loving-Kindness for a Loved one and Yourself)

Now add yourself to your circle of goodwill. Create an image of yourself in the presence of your loved one, visualising both of you together. *(Pause)*

And repeat the following phrases, silently:

May you and I be happy (Pause)

May you and I feel peaceful (Pause)

May you and I be healthy (Pause)

May you and I live with ease (Pause)

**(Repeat)*

Now let go of the image of the other being, perhaps thanking your loved one before moving on, and then letting the focus of your attention rest directly on yourself.

(Loving-Kindness for Yourself)

Put your hand over your heart, or where feels comfortable, and feel the warmth and gentle pressure of your hand. *(Pause)*

Visualise your whole body in your mind's eye, noticing any stress or uneasiness that may be in you,

And with a caring tone, offering yourself the phrases, silently:

May I be happy (Pause)

May I feel peaceful(Pause)

May I be healthy (Pause)

May I live with ease (Pause)

**(Repeat)*

As we finish this loving-kindness meditation, Take a few more deep and cleansing breaths and just rest quietly in your own body, accepting whatever your experience is, exactly as it is. *(Pause)*

And when you hear the sound of the bell ring three times, gently and at your own pace, begin to bring your awareness back to this room.

From Andrew Brown:

A KIITSU MEDITATION (DRAFT)

THE SELF

Begin by sitting with your back straight, feet placed evenly on the ground, shoulders relaxed and hands resting in your lap. Take a few deep, cleansing breaths.

Now begin to turn your attention inward to the **Self**. Recognise your **Agency**, which is the core of your **Humanity**. This is your power to choose, to act, and to stand as a unique individual in the world and experience life as deeply worth living. Feel the strength of that presence.

(Pause)

Now, move deeper to the **Creativity** within you—the spark of **Divinity**. This is the free, creative and unobstructed Great Life and Light at work within you, allowing you to grow and transform. For these first few minutes, sit gently with this faith in the **Self**: a being of both human agency and divine creativity—one unique expression of the Great Life and Light.

(3/4 minutes silence)

THE OTHER

Now, let your awareness expand to include **Others**—those in this room and all those in your life and around the world.

Recognise that they, too, are filled with the same Great Life and Light of the universe and possess the same **Agency** and **Creativity** that you do. They are your neighbours in **Sociality**. Though they may name this Great Life and Light differently to you—calling it **Buddha Nature**, **The Inner Light**, or the **Indwelling Christ**¹—simply notice how all such names are expressions of the one Great Life, beautiful refractions of the one Great Light.

By having faith in your own nature to express this Great Life and Light, you inevitably have faith in theirs. Breathe in for your own humanity and divinity; breathe out in recognition of theirs.

¹ In the spirit of free-religion (*jīyū shūkyō*), we recognise that no single name can encompass the Great Life and Light. While this printed text uses three specific examples, they are simply three well-known names for something that has been named in countless other ways. All are valued and valid in the shared movement of Returning-to-One (Kiitsu). If you are leading this service, then please feel free to use the names that particularly resonate for you.

(3/4 minutes silence)

THE COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY

Now broaden your focus to the **Cooperative Community**.

Though we are individuals, our **Sociality** ensures we never exist in solitary isolation. We are bound by mutual interdependence and solidarity. Our local community is but one shared movement that can manifest the Infinite Light and Life in our world.

In this shared movement, there is no difference in priority or superiority; the **Self**, the **Other**, and the **Cooperative Community** each presuppose the other two. Rest now in the solidarity of this “trinity of being.”

(3/4 minutes silence)

THE COSMIC COOPERATIVE COMMUNITY: Returning-to-One (*Kiitsu*)

Finally, let your awareness expand to the **Cosmic Cooperative Community**. The trinity of **Self**, **Others**, and **Cooperative Community** is always-already uniting with all beings throughout Heaven and Earth.

Experience the state of this eternal **Returning-to-One (Kiitsu)**.

The boundaries of the individual **Self** open into the vast, interdependent whole. **You**, **Others**, and our **Cooperative Communities** are microcosms of the entire cosmos, interconnected with every star, every leaf, every sentient and non-sentient being. Rest now for a while in this endless, creative movement of **Returning-to-One**.

(3/4 minutes silence)

CLOSING

Now gently bring your focus back to this room and take a final, few deep breaths, anchoring this sense of universal connection, and when you hear the bell, gently bring your awareness back to the room, carrying this sense of always **Returning-to-One (Kiitsu)** back into your everyday life.

RING BELL THREE TIMES