

Metta Bhavana: Cultivating Loving Kindness

Week 6 · Yoga Wise Meditation Course

Introduction

Metta Bhavana is a traditional meditation practice for cultivating loving kindness and compassion. The word *Metta* comes from the Pali language and is often translated as loving kindness, friendliness, or goodwill. *Bhavana* means cultivation or development.

Metta Bhavana supports the development of warmth, empathy, and connection, both towards ourselves and towards others. Rather than being an emotional exercise, it is a practice of gently inclining the heart towards kindness.

In this course, Metta Bhavana is taught as a **guided practice**, allowing the qualities of loving kindness to arise naturally, without force or effort.

The Role of Metta in This Course

Metta Bhavana comes at the end of the course for a reason. It rests on the foundations established in earlier weeks.

Through stillness of the body, awareness of the breath, refinement of attention through mantra, observation of the mind, and resting in the heart space, we have gradually created the conditions for compassion to arise naturally.

Metta Bhavana allows this inner steadiness to extend outward.

How to Approach the Practice

During the guided meditation, you are invited to follow the guidance gently, without striving to feel a particular emotion.

Loving kindness is not something we force or manufacture. It is a quality that emerges when the heart and mind are steady and receptive.

If phrases or imagery are used in the guidance, allow them to be received lightly. If emotions arise, simply notice them. If very little is felt, that is equally fine.

There is no correct way to experience Metta Bhavana.

The Nature of Loving Kindness

Metta is not sentimental or sentimentalised. It is a steady, inclusive quality of goodwill.

It includes kindness towards ourselves, those we care about, those we feel neutral towards, and those we may find difficult. This is not about approving of behaviour, but about recognising a shared wish for wellbeing.

Over time, this practice can soften fixed views and support healthier relationships, including the relationship we have with ourselves.

After the Practice

After the guided meditation, it can be helpful to notice the state of the body, breath, and mind.

You may feel warmth, softness, or openness, or you may simply feel quiet and settled. Whatever is present is enough.

Allow yourself a few moments before moving on with your day.

Bringing Metta into Daily Life

Metta Bhavana is not confined to formal meditation. Small gestures of kindness, patience, and understanding in daily life are expressions of the same practice.

You may find that phrases from the meditation return to you naturally during the day, offering moments of pause and perspective.

Completing the Course

This final practice brings together everything explored during the course.

Rather than being an ending, Metta Bhavana is an opening. It offers a way to carry the steadiness, awareness, and insight you have cultivated into your wider life.

You are encouraged to continue working with whichever practices from the course feel most supportive for you.

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