

Live Well Be Well

"Let's Begin with a Loving Kindness Meditation"

Welcome to Live Well, Be Well! A podcast where we speak candidly about all things health and well-being! My name is Renee Dell'Acqua, and I'm a Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

We are officially in our 4th season of Live Well Be Well, and given all that has transpired this week, we want to begin our season with a beautiful, calming, and healing meditation led by our very own Christopher Spurling.

So we hope you get inspired, we hope you feel connected, and we hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started.

Hello, my name is Christopher and I'm a health educator with UCSD Health Promotion Services. Today I will be leading you on a short 10 minute Loving-Kindness Meditation. Loving-Kindness Meditations are wonderful tools that help us develop compassion for ourselves and then extend that compassion to others. There are many styles and types of Loving-Kindness Meditations, but at the core, they all are different methods to help us build self-love, empathy for others, and exploring our overall interconnectedness with each other and everything around us. To begin, simply find a way to get comfortable, wherever you are. If you're sitting, just get a little bit more comfy. If you're lying down, settle in a little more. If you're walking around, maybe slow your pace enough so your brain has room to focus on walking and on listening. If you are in a stable and safe place, and like having your eyes closed, feel free to. If you prefer having your eyes open, that's fine as well. Just BE with wherever you and whatever you're doing. Take a breath and think to yourself: What am I experiencing in this moment? What are the details I normally overlook about this experience? How can I be more and more present with what I'm doing... with

each breath. Breathing in... breathing out.... Breath normally... no need to change your natural rhythm, just... breath with yourself, and BE with yourself.

Now that you're in a beautiful headspace, we can begin the Loving-Kindness meditation. We often talk about our minds or our breath, but for this meditation, we will focus on taking that heart energy - the energy of love, compassion, empathy, joy, and support - and we will amplify it. To start, notice how you feel when I say those words again.... love... compassion... empathy... joy... support... Let's do this again... Love... compassion... empathy... joy... support... Do any of those heart-opening words resonate with you? If so, just keep that word in the back of your mind. If not, make up another heart-opening word... repeat it a few times to yourself, and keep it in the back of your mind. If at any time you feel like not following along, or if you want to focus on the word in your mind, please feel empowered to do that. This is your space. Your time for healing.

If you're following along, keep up that natural, organic breathing rhythm, and use your internal guiding voice to repeat the following phrases.... I am worthy of love... I wish joy and peace for myself... I hope my dreams for the future come true... There is room in my heart for compassion towards myself and others. Now breathe... Keep breathing... Let's go again. I am worthy of love.. I wish joy and peace for myself... I hope my dreams for the future come true... There is room in my heart for compassion towards myself and others. Now breathe... Keep breathing... Now, using that same guiding voice, repeat the following three or four times to yourself: My heart is open... my heart is open... my heart is open... my heart is open. Keep breathing... and notice how you feel. This lighthearted and openhearted feeling is available to you any time, and I don't know about you, but I hope my loved ones also experience this feeling of being lighthearted and openhearted.

So we continue to develop these feelings, but for our loved ones. In your mind's eye, bring into the forefront of your thoughts someone who you hold dear to your heart. For this exercise, try to think of someone who inspires you to be happy and fun. Someone that makes your heart smile. Once you have this person in your thoughts, either repeat your word or phrase from earlier, but with this person in mind, or use your internal guiding voice to repeat the following phrases... You, my loved one, are worthy of love. I wish you, my loved one, joy and peace for yourself. I hope your dreams for the future come true. There is room in your heart for compassion towards yourself and others. Now breathe... keep breathing... Let's go again, one more time. You, my loved one, are worthy of love. I wish you, my loved one, joy and peace for yourself. I hope your dreams for the future come true. There is room in your heart for compassion towards yourself and others. Now breathe... keep breathing... Now, using that same guiding voice, repeat the following three or four times to yourself: My loved one, your heart is open... My loved one, your heart is open... My loved one, your heart is open... your heart is open. Keep breathing... and notice how you feel, now that you've sent love and gratitude to someone you hold dear. Giving the gift of love feels great, especially when given to our loved ones. Did it feel just as good giving this open-hearted love to ourselves? Or just when given to others? The practice of Loving-Kindness extends both ways, to ourselves and to others, and self-love should bring all of those healing feelings within our hearts (like love, compassion, joy, and support). In my experience, many people have great concern for others, but put their own needs second. Loving-Kindness gently reminds us that it is ok to love ourselves and wish ourselves the best in life, just like we wish for those who we deeply care about and love. Love is like a candle, lighting up all candles it comes into contact with, including the candle in your heart.

Thank you for providing this time to yourself for peace and love, and thank you for listening.

So that concludes this episode of Live Well, Be Well! If you like what you heard today and would like to learn more about topics related to health and wellness, there's much more to come!

Please be sure to check out our website hps.ucsd.edu and also follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @UCSDHPS. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well.

Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.