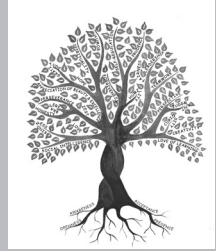


M BSP Handout 5.4

Session 5:

Loving-Kindness Meditation



General

Loving-kindness practice, often called “metta,” is a type of meditation that involves generating and directing one’s capacity for love/kindness toward oneself, toward other people, and toward all living beings. The origins of this practice date back over 2,500 years to Buddhism.

Research

The science of loving-kindness and related practices of self-compassion have exploded. Research has found links with the building of resilience and personal resources over the long-run. Benefits that are emerging from this practice include: feelings of happiness, optimism and curiosity; decreased anxiety, depression, and rumination; fewer feelings of failure and inferiority; less self-criticism, perfectionism, anger and closed-mindedness; stronger buffers against negative social comparison and public self-consciousness; greater social connectedness, emotional intelligence and wisdom; improved initiative and mastery of goals.

Practice

Loving-kindness involves directing mindfulness toward specific character strengths within you. Some ideas for practicing loving-kindness meditation follow. Create an intention to be loving and kind to yourself – to treat yourself with compassion. You might begin this exercise by thinking back to a moment in time when you felt deeply and genuinely loved by someone; as you recall this specific experience of love, reflect on how you felt this love. Where do you feel it in your body? Is there an image that is associated with this? State the meditation/gatha below to yourself; allow yourself to “feel” and experience each line in a deep way. It might be helpful to form a pleasant image for each phrase as you say it.

Loving-Kindness Meditation (gatha on the strengths of love and kindness)

May I be filled with loving-kindness,
May I be safe from inner and outer dangers,
May I be well in body and mind,
May I be at ease and happy.

Additional Resources

Loving kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness (Sharon Salzberg, 1995)
The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion (Christopher Germer, 2009)
Self-Compassion: Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind (Kristin Neff, 2011)