

Forgiveness Meditation

Forgiveness of others, forgiveness of yourself

Breathe gently into the area of your heart, spend a moment simply breathing into your own heart space. Now we will explore forgiveness. Let yourself feel any barriers you have erected and any emotions that you have carried because you have not forgiven – not forgiven yourself, not forgiven others. Let yourself feel the pain of what it really means to keep your heart closed off. Sense this blockage that is caused from holding yourself back from forgiveness.

Now, breathing softly, begin asking and extending forgiveness, reciting the following words, letting the images and feelings that come up grow deeper as you repeat them.

We will first ask for forgiveness for any pain that we have either consciously or unconsciously caused for others. In your mind's eye recall a time where you may have caused someone pain or suffering. Allow this memory to bubble up easily and effortlessly, you may start with something small or maybe something that has been plaguing your heart for years. Trust that whatever is ready to be released will arise. Silently or aloud repeat after me.

There may be ways that I have hurt and harmed others, have betrayed or abandoned them, caused them suffering, knowingly or unknowingly, out of my own pain, fear, anger and confusion.

See and feel the pain you may have caused out of your own fear and confusion. Allow for your own sorrow and regret. Sense that finally you can release this burden and ask for forgiveness. Allow any memories to arise that may burden your heart. As these memories arise visualize each person and in your mind repeat: *I ask for your forgiveness, I ask for your forgiveness.*

Just breathe and be in this forgiveness.

Now we will offer forgiveness for ourselves and the many times that we have consciously or unconsciously caused pain or suffering within. Silently or aloud repeat after me...

There are many ways that I have hurt and harmed myself. I have betrayed or abandoned myself many times through thought, word, or deed, knowingly or unknowingly. Feel your own precious body and life. Let yourself see the ways you have hurt or harmed yourself. With words or thoughts against your body, your mind or your heart. Picture them, remember them. Feel the sorrow you have carried from this and sense that you can release these burdens. Extend forgiveness for each of them, one by one.

Repeat to yourself: *For the ways I have hurt myself through action or inaction, out of fear, pain and confusion, I now extend a full and heartfelt forgiveness. I forgive myself, I forgive myself.*

Just breathe and be in this forgiveness.

Now we will offer forgiveness for those that have caused us pain and suffering whether intentional or unintentional. Allow these memories to bubble up easily and effortlessly. Trust that when your heart is ready to forgive you will be ready. Silently or aloud repeat after me...

*There are many ways that I have been harmed by others, abused or abandoned, knowingly or unknowingly, in thought, word or deed. Allow yourself picture and remember any ways that are being called now. Feel the sorrow you have carried from this past and sense that you can release this burden of pain by extending forgiveness when your heart is ready. Now say to yourself: *I now remember the ways others have hurt or harmed me, wounded me, out of fear, pain, confusion and anger. I have carried this pain in my heart too long. To the extent that I am ready, I offer them forgiveness. To those who have caused me harm, I offer my forgiveness, I forgive you.**

Just breathe and be in this forgiveness.

Allow yourself to return to this practice many times repeated these three directions for forgiveness until you feel released from these burdens in your heart. For some great pains you may not feel a release but only the burden and the anguish or anger you have held. Touch this softly. Be forgiving of yourself for not being ready to let go and move on. Forgiveness cannot be forced; it cannot be artificial. Simply continue the practice and let the words and images work gradually in their own way. In time you can make the forgiveness meditation a regular part of your life, letting go of the past and opening your heart to each new moment with a wise loving kindness.