



NORTON SIMON MUSEUM

LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

GRADES 6-12

Loving-kindness meditation, also known as *metta*, is a practice of sending positive thoughts and wishes to ourselves and to others. Research shows that practicing loving-kindness produces positive changes in the brain. Some of these benefits are reduced stress, anxiety and anger, improved social connection and increased positive emotions and empathy. Ultimately, it changes how we relate to ourselves and to others. By having compassion toward ourselves, we can be more compassionate toward others. We start to feel less isolated and more connected. Loving-kindness meditation can help people of all ages get in touch with their feelings.

Tara is the goddess of compassion in Buddhism, a faith based on the teachings of the Buddha Shakyamuni, a historical figure who lived sometime during the sixth to fifth century BCE. Tara is often depicted wearing jewels—a crown, necklaces, rings and bracelets—to show her divinity and high status. She protects her followers from their fears, offers healing and helps them to overcome challenges. Here, her right hand is in the gesture of charity.

Tara, 14th century, Nepal or Tibet,
gilt-copper alloy with semiprecious stones and pigment,
34¾ in x 11 in x 5½ in. (88.3 x 27.9 x 14 cm),
The Norton Simon Foundation

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In the spirit of compassion, take a moment to practice loving-kindness:

Sit still, close your eyes and repeat to yourself:

May I be well.

May I be safe.

May I be peaceful.

Now think of a loved one and direct loving-kindness toward them:

May you be well.

May you be safe.

May you be peaceful.

Now think of a person you feel neutral about (that is, a classmate that you don't really know and neither like nor dislike) and direct loving-kindness toward them:

May you be well.

May you be safe.

May you be peaceful.

Now think of a person you have a difficult time dealing with and direct loving-kindness toward them:

May you be well.

May you be safe.

May you be peaceful.

Finally, direct this loving kindness toward everyone:

May all beings everywhere be happy, be safe, be peaceful.

Slowly open your eyes and notice how you feel.