

## **Cultivating a Friendly Mind 2.0**

Unitarian Universalist Church of Concord NH

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### **Home Practice, Week Two: Aligning the Mind with Kindness (Metta)**

**Metta:** Always cool, always kind. Open, friendly, curious. (Definition from George Haas)

#### **Formal Practices:**

**Forgiveness Practice:** A resource for when we are caught up in blame, shame, resentment or nursing a grudge. Sit comfortably. Quietly repeat the phrases to yourself, leaving some time for the phrases to resonate and penetrate the heart. (Self guided)

—If I have harmed or offended you, in thought, word or deed, I ask your forgiveness.

—If you have harmed or offended me, in thought, word or deed, I forgive you. If I cannot forgive you now, I'm willing to be open to the possibility of forgiveness in the future.

—If I have harmed or undermined myself, in thought, word or deed, I forgive myself. I am learning, and I hold myself with kindness as I find my way.

**Or simply:** Please forgive me. I forgive you. I forgive myself.

#### **Metta for Easy person and Self: Aligning the Mind** (With recording or self-guided)

—Sit comfortably.

—Choose a person for whom it is easy to wish well.

—Establish the mind state of Metta—the attitude of friendliness. It's conceptual; you're not trying to make yourself **feel** anything particular, just **intending** to hold a view of kindness.

—Begin to radiate this intention of Metta to your Easy Person, using the phrase "May you be happy and peaceful." It's not necessary to visualize them, just have a sense of them.

—Repeat the phrase in a relaxed rhythm, letting your attention settle on maintaining the mind state of Metta, of friendliness. If the mind wanders, simply, kindly re-establish the intention to radiate Metta. Resume the phrase

—After a few minutes, shift the practice to offer Metta to yourself in the same way. If the mind protests, hold it lightly and just continue offering yourself this basic kindness. You can always return to the Easy person to refresh your intention, then return to Self. Consider sitting a bit longer when the bell rings—time sending Metta to yourself is time well spent.

**A Walking Variation:** You can also do this Easy Person/Self practice as a formal walking practice instead of a sitting practice.

—Establish a walking path of 10 to 20 steps and stand at one end. Imagine your Easy person at the other end, and radiate Metta to them. Use "May you be happy and peaceful" in time with your steps as you walk towards them. When you reach the end, stop. Turn, pause and imagine yourself at the opposite end. See if you can radiate Metta with the same clarity and ease to yourself as you walk. Continue alternating until there's no difference in the steadiness of your good wishes for yourself and the Easy person.

**Informal practice:** Activate the mind state of Metta for brief moments as you're moving through your day. Pause, look out at whatever scenario is in front of you, choose to view it through the lens of Metta, of wishing well: "May you/all be well, happy, peaceful. May things be smooth, untroubled. May difficulties calm down, be resolved."