Metta meditation

A five-minute script, for an ordinary day.

Metta meditation repeats a few well-wishes, first for yourself and then for other people. Say one line, let a breath pass, and say the next. You do not need to produce a feeling.

THE FOUR PHRASES

May I be safe.
May I be happy.
May I be healthy.
May I live with ease.

May you be safe.
May you be happy.
May you be healthy.
May you live with ease.

The five directions: yourself, someone you love, a neutral person, someone difficult, all beings.

The five-minute script

SETTLE 30 seconds

Sit in a way you can hold for five minutes. Let your hands rest on your legs or in your lap. Take three breaths and let each one out slowly.

YOURSELF 1 minute

Bring yourself to mind, starting with the body sitting here. Repeat each line silently and let one breath pass before the next.

> May I be safe.
> May I be happy.
> May I be healthy.
> May I live with ease.

If one line feels wrong, keep the other three.

SOMEONE YOU LOVE 1 minute

Bring to mind one person you are glad to see. Picture them at a moment when they were at ease. Offer the same four lines, changing I to you.

A NEUTRAL PERSON 1 minute

Bring to mind someone you saw today and do not know. The person at the counter, the driver, someone in the hall. Offer the same four lines.

SOMEONE DIFFICULT 45 seconds, optional

Bring to mind someone who has been irritating you. Choose someone mild, not the hardest person in your life. Offer the same four lines. If the phrases stir up more than they settle, return to the neutral person.

ALL BEINGS 45 seconds

Let the one person go. Wish the same four things to everyone in the building, then the city, then the world.

> May all beings be safe.
> May all beings be happy.
> May all beings be healthy.
> May all beings live with ease.

If a phrase feels hollow, slow down and say one line per breath. If the difficult person brings up more than you can hold, stop and return to the neutral person.

The fifteen-minute script

The full sequence, with time to settle between directions.

SETTLE 2 minutes

Sit upright enough to stay awake. Let your eyes close or lower. Listen to the room before you do anything else. Take four slow breaths, each one longer on the way out than on the way in.

YOURSELF 3 minutes

Bring yourself to mind. Start with the first line and say it until it has room around it. After a few rounds, check the jaw, the shoulders and the hands. Let one of them soften, then return to the lines.

> May I be safe.
> May I be happy.
> May I be healthy.
> May I live with ease.

SOMEONE YOU LOVE 3 minutes

Bring to mind one person you love, someone alive and easy to feel. Picture them at a moment when they were at ease. Stay with one person; when the mind adds other people, let them go.

> May you be safe.
> May you be happy.
> May you be healthy.
> May you live with ease.

A NEUTRAL PERSON 3 minutes

Bring to mind a person you neither like nor dislike. Someone you see but do not know well. Notice whether the phrases are easier or harder than they were for someone you love. Either answer is information.

> May you be safe.
> May you be happy.
> May you be healthy.
> May you live with ease.

SOMEONE DIFFICULT 2 minutes

Bring to mind someone mildly difficult. Someone who annoyed you this week, not someone who harmed you. Keep the person at arm's length. If anger or grief rises, name it and return to the neutral person.

> May you be safe.
> May you be happy.
> May you be healthy.
> May you live with ease.

ALL BEINGS 2 minutes

Let the person go. Start with the room you are in, then the street, then the city, then the world. Let the phrases get wider without getting louder. Sit for a few breaths before you open your eyes.

> May all beings be safe.
> May all beings be happy.
> May all beings be healthy.
> May all beings live with ease.

Traditional wishes in our own words. Source: Mettasutta, Sutta Nipata 1.8. More notes at mettabell.com/learn/metta-meditation-script