

## **Introduction**

This Forgiveness Meditation practice has three steps. We begin with those whom we have caused harm, intentionally or unintentionally. Next we turn our attention to those who have similarly caused us harm, intentionally or unintentionally. And, finally, we turn our attention to self-forgiveness, for ways we may have harmed ourselves, intentionally or unintentionally. It may be best to start with someone who may be easiest to forgive or be forgiven and over time move to working with the more difficult people. You can repeat this process with the same or different people as often as you wish in the future.

## **Meditation**

Now, we'll begin practicing a guided forgiveness meditation. Remember it's a practice. It's best not to force yourself to forgive that which you do not feel ready or safe to forgive at this time. Simply acknowledge whatever comes up for you with a non-judgmental attitude, as much as you can. Let whatever emotions arise come and go. You can always come back to the breath or the feel of the body sitting as an anchor. Go at your own pace.

Begin settling into a comfortable seated posture, on a chair or a cushion. Becoming aware of the fact that you are breathing. Becoming aware of the movement of the breath, as it

comes into your body and as it leaves your body. Not manipulating the breath or controlling it but simply being aware of how it feels.

Now, when you are ready, expanding your awareness beyond the breath to include the entire body. Simply noticing sensation in the body internally or externally. Bringing your attention now to the thoughts as they come and go. Seeing each thought as it comes up in the mind as a thought, a passing event. And, when you are ready bringing the awareness to emotions that arise in the body and mind. Perhaps frustration, restlessness, peacefulness, sadness, joy, or fear. Now, simply noticing how the body, mind, and heart are feeling right now.

Returning to the body breathing. Noticing where you feel the breath moving in and out of the body. Letting the awareness ride the waves of the breath. Now, beginning to take a gentle journey of awareness through the body. Inviting the possibility of letting go and relaxing the body. Allowing a kind attention to sweep through the body. Letting go, letting be. Allowing whatever is present to be just as it is. (pause)

Now, bringing to mind someone whom you have harmed either intentionally or unintentionally. Bringing to mind someone where it feels unresolved or burdensome for you. Seeing who comes to mind, taking a few moments to visualize or imagine this person, noticing the details of their appearance.

And when you are ready, gently say this person's name to yourself and ask forgiveness for how you have harmed this person intentionally or unintentionally. Saying, this persons Name and then, saying forgive me, forgive me... forgive me for any actions I did, whether intentional or unintentional, that caused you harm... Continue with or without the name, as if speaking to the person directly.

Trusting yourself to ask for forgiveness in a way that feels right for you, without getting lost in the content of the story of whatever may have happened. Take your time, Repeat a few times at your own pace, may I be forgiven.

What's most important are not the words but the 'felt sense', as much as you can, letting it come from your heart, with the intention for healing; asking for and opening to receiving forgiveness. (pause)

Taking a few moments to transition, to let go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling now. Bring the awareness to the body, the breath. Taking a few easy, deep breaths. (pause)

Now, bringing to mind someone who has caused you harm, intentionally or unintentionally. Noticing the details of the person's appearance, noticing what feelings arise for you as you bring the person to mind. When you are ready, begin to offer that person forgiveness. Saying to the person in your own mind, using that person's name, I forgive you. I forgive you for the ways you have harmed me, intentionally or

unintentionally. I forgive you, I forgive you. Repeat at your own pace a few more times.

As before, trusting yourself to forgive in a way that feels right for you, without getting lost in the content of the story of whatever may have happened. (pause)

Now, letting go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling. Bringing the awareness back to the breath, the body. Taking a few easy deep breaths. (pause)

Now, imagining or visualizing yourself. Noticing the details your appearance. Bringing to mind anyone or any situation for which you wish to forgive yourself for ways you have harmed yourself. When you are ready, using your own name, say I forgive you, I forgive you. May I forgive myself. Again, trusting yourself to forgive in a way that feels right for you. (pause)

When you are ready, letting go of the images or thoughts. Noticing how you are feeling. Bringing your awareness back to the body, to the breath. Taking a few easy, deep breaths.

Now, taking a few more moments to offer gratitude to yourself for taking this time for yourself . For taking care of your own heart, for lightening the burdens, the hurts you have accumulated in your live. Remembering, that this is a practice of letting go and moving in the direction of more peace, happiness and freedom. Breathing in stillness for as long as you wish, and when you are ready, gently open your eyes and slowly returning to the present, to this moment, this place, to resume your day.