

Meditations of Innate Love and Wisdom June 2015

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Introduction and Definition of Terms

Love here is the power to commune with persons in the goodness of their being, while wishing them deeply well. Your *benefactors* are those who have quietly extended such love to you, often in little moments long forgotten. A *benefactor moment* is a moment you can recall when someone was with you in a simple loving way, taking joy in you, in a moment of play, laughter, care, deep listening to you, or quiet caring presence. If it makes you happy to recall such a moment, it is suitable to bring to mind for this practice. Your benefactors may also include spiritual figures that inspire you from near or far.

To receive and extend love helps the mind relax into its most natural state—a wisdom of openness, inner tranquility and simplicity. By resting in its natural state, the mind can further unleash its underlying capacity of love. As this unity of love and wisdom unfolds, we can become more fully present to others, communing with them in their fuller humanity, instead of reacting from habitual judgments.

In one meditation session per day, do Meditation One, take a short break on your seat to relax, then do Meditation Two. Do that as daily practice for several months. After that, when you feel the urge to explore Meditation Three, do Meditations One and Two more briefly to allow time to do relevant parts of Meditation Three. *Before* entering into these meditations, please study the “TIPS” section at the end of this handout. For fuller explanations, study the manual *Awakening through Love*, by John Makransky. *For orally guided meditations*, and further support for these practices, go to foundationforactivecompassion.org, links for *audios/videos/texts, schedule of events, and meditation groups*.

MEDITATION ONE: Receiving love, releasing into a natural state of openness

--(1) **Identifying benefactor moments** – Recall a moment with someone you loved to be with in that moment, with whom you felt happy, safe, well, loved. A benefactor moment is a moment with such a person from any time in your life, such as a friend, an older or younger family member, a teacher, camp counselor, or mentor that you felt joy to be with, or a stranger who smiled upon you in a moment. If you have difficulty at first in thinking of such a person, you can think of a moment with a beloved pet. Or you can think of your benefactor moment as a moment in a special place or in nature, where you felt blessed, at home, deeply well. A benefactor moment may also be a time that you felt blessed by the presence or words of a spiritual figure—such as the Buddha, Jesus, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa or the Dalai Lama.

--(2) Sit in relaxed way, back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. **Do three cleansing breaths**, inhaling deeply into the lower abdomen, holding briefly, and releasing all worries on the exhale.

--(3) **Communing and receiving loving energy** – Recall a benefactor moment, and imagine that person present to you now in that way. Consider that moment as occurring right now (not just as a memory from the past). Imagine that person is communing with you now in the goodness of your very being, your unconditional worth and potential beyond limiting judgments, taking joy in you, wishing you deeply well. Feel the

happiness of holding that person in mind—opening, accepting, letting him or her commune with you in the depth of your being, wishing you well. Imagine that loving wish for you as a shower of gentle, healing energy that permeates your whole body and mind. Explore just opening and accepting it—like a puppy lying on a rug in sunlight. Receive this gentle energy into every part of your body, letting physical tensions soften under its touch. Receive this energy into every cell, into every drop of blood—*every part of you loved in its very being*. After a little while, receive this gentle loving energy into every part of your mind--- every feeling of worry, tension, frustration, longing, sadness, anger, joy. Let any such feelings come up and be embraced in this energy. Let every thought and feeling, even as it arises, be permeated by this healing energy—*every part of you loved in its very being*....

--(4) **Releasing into a natural state of openness** – Relax into that feeling of loving energy and kindness. Without holding onto any vision of anything, just merge into oneness with that gentle energy; letting the mind release all its frameworks, relax, and fall completely open. With all senses open, let the mind be completely unconfined, unrestricted, wide open. Let this expanse of openness and awareness itself do the knowing, the meditating. Let all patterns of thought and feeling that arise in this openness of mind just unwind and release, like patterns on water, letting all be.

MEDITATION TWO: Three Letting Be's of body, breath, and mind

Do three cleansing breaths as instructed in Meditation One above. Sit in relaxed way, back comfortably straight, eyes open, gazing slightly downward.

Body: Drop down from the thinking mind into the feeling **body**, feeling the body as a whole in a relaxed way, with a sense of openness. Notice any feelings of grasping or holding on within the body, and gently let those places of tension relax, letting bodily feelings settle in their own way, surrendering to the natural power of the body. Deeply let be within the body, letting the body draw you into oneness with it, as if letting the body do the knowing.

Breath: Feel the breath within the body. Sense any feeling of holding on to the breathing process, and let that relax. Let the **breath** settle into its own natural flow, surrendering to the natural power of the breath. Deeply let be within the breath, letting the breath draw you into oneness with it, as if letting the breath do the knowing

Mind: In the **mind**, notice any grasping to the thinking process or thought of 'self,' and let that feeling of holding on relax deep within. Give the mind permission to fall completely open; totally unconfined, wide open. Deeply let be into this openness of mind, letting it draw you into oneness with it. Let this expanse of openness and awareness itself do the knowing. Let patterns of thought and feeling that arise just relax and unwind within this openness of mind, this space of deep accepting and allowing, by letting all be.

MEDITATION THREE-- Taking the position of benefactor

--1) Sit in a relaxed way with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Do five **cleansing breaths** as instructed in Meditation One step (2).

--2) **Commune with benefactors behind you:** Imagine one or more benefactors, this time *behind* you and just above. Imagine they are communing with you in the goodness of your very being, wishing you deeply well. For a little while, just accept the loving

energy of that wish into your whole body and mind—every part of you loved in its very being.

--3) **Extend to a person dear to you:** Bring to mind someone dear to you, for whom it feels natural to extend this energy and wish of love. While *continuing* to receive the loving energy from your benefactors behind you, let the energy come through you now to the person envisioned before you, as if you were a windowpane. Imagine this loving energy pervades her or his whole body and mind; that you are communing with her from the depth of your being into the depth of hers beyond all limiting judgments, affirming her deep dignity and unconditional worth, wishing her deeply well.

--4) **Extend to a stranger:** Together with the dear one in front of you, envision now also a stranger that you have seen or know of, letting the loving energy from behind you extend to him or her, wishing him deeply well. *Explore relying on this wish more than the thought of him as just a stranger;* communing with him beyond limiting judgments, simply affirming his deep dignity and unconditional worth, wishing him deeply well.

--5) **Extend to someone you think of as dislikable:** After awhile, together with the dear one and stranger in front of you, envision now also someone you dislike or don't like to be around, and let the loving energy from behind you, and wish of love, extend to them. *Explore relying on this wish more than your thought of her or him as dislikable,* communing with her beyond limiting judgments, simply affirming her deep dignity and unconditional worth, wishing her deeply well.

--6) **Commune now with all three persons in front of you, equally, in the same way.**

--7) **Becoming one with benefactors in the unconfined capacity of love:** After some time, *imagine that the benefactors behind you dissolve completely into your heart.* Imagine now that your heart, one with all benefactors, radiates like the sun, transmitting the energy of this loving wish to everyone around you, gradually in widening circles until it encompasses all beings, communing with them all in the basic goodness of their being, wishing them deeply well.

--8) **Release into the natural state of openness** – Relax into that feeling of loving energy and kindness. Without holding onto any vision of anything, just merge into oneness with that gentle energy; letting the mind release all its frameworks, relax, and fall completely open, with all senses open. Let this expanse of openness and awareness itself do the knowing, the meditating. Let all patterns of thought and feeling that arise in this openness of mind just unwind and release, like patterns on water, letting all be.

Tips for Progress in the Meditations

--You can spend many weeks or months deepening in Meditation One: receiving loving energy from benefactors, merging into oneness with them in that energy and letting everything be in a natural state of openness. Progress involves thinking of further benefactors, becoming more open and receptive to the loving energy that comes through them, and learning to relax and release the grip on self more fully into the natural openness of awareness. The Three Letting Be-s of Meditation Two help us further release that grip into the natural state of openness and awareness, which is the basis for extending love in Meditation Three across the apparent divide between self and others.

--In Meditation Three, when you feel the wish of love as strong and stable at one stage of extending love, you are ready to progress to the next stage. *You can spend many weeks or months in daily practice of Meditations One and Two.* Then many weeks continuing from that to the first stage of *Meditation Two*, extending love to dear ones. Then many weeks continuing from that to the next stage of extending love to strangers, and so on.

--If you get stuck or have difficulty at any stage, back up and spend more time familiarizing with the prior stage in daily practice.

--**For orally guided meditations**, and further support for these practices, go to foundationforactivecompassion.org, links for *audios/videos/texts*, *schedule of events*, and *meditation groups*.

Supportive readings with guided meditations

--**John Makransky**, *Awakening through Love* (Wisdom, 2007).

--**John Makransky**, meditation handouts of *Innate Love and Wisdom*, *Innate Compassion and Wisdom*, *Compassionate Presence to Feelings and Thoughts*, and *Offering Practice* available at: foundationforactivecompassion.org, “audios/videos/texts.”

--**Tsoknyi Rinpoche**, *Open Heart, Open Mind: Awakening the Power of Essence Love* (Harmony, 2012) and “Tsoknyi Rinpoche” website.

--**Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche and David Shlim**, *Medicine and Compassion: A Tibetan Lama’s Guidance for Caregivers* (Wisdom Publications, 2006).

--**Tulku Thondup**, *The Healing Power of Mind* (Shambhala, 1996) and *The Heart of Unconditional Love* (Shambhala, 2015).

--**Pema Chodron**, *Start Where You Are* (Shambhala, 1994).