



Compassionate Image

Take a few moments to rest your attention on the flow of the breath. This mindful awareness fuels our mind and allows us to open our heart to deepen our compassionate intentions towards ourselves. This practice is designed to create a compassionate image for you to use in times when kindness and nurturance is needed but might be challenging for you to cultivate. For many of us self-compassion does not come naturally or effortlessly, and so creating a compassionate image can help you feel supported during the most difficult times. Once you've allowed your attention to settle on the breath for a few moments, I invite you to set the intention to get in touch with your inner compassionate self throughout this meditation.

Compassion involves the genuine concern of another person that's coupled with the desire to alleviate their pain and increase their wellbeing. What do you envision a compassionate image might look like, when you reflect on this description of compassion? This might be the image of an object, a person or animal, or a place. There is no right or wrong image. Simply someone or something that has your best interest at heart – that wants only the best for you. Once you build this image, consider some of the qualities that this compassion image might embody.

What does your ideal warm and caring compassion image appear like?
What visual features or characteristics make this image special?
How would you want this compassionate image to feel?
Are there other sensory qualities to this compassionate image?
How would you want it to sound like?
What is the tone in which this image speaks to you?
Is there a certain smell when this image is around?
How would you want this compassionate image to relate to you, especially in times of difficulty?
What does their warmth and nurturance feel like?
How do you want to relate to this image?

Now momentarily let go of this compassionate image and think back to a recent time when you had been struggling, facing difficulty, or feeling judgmental towards yourself. Recall how you had responded to yourself during this event. What did you do, what did you say, and what was the tone in which you talked to yourself? Allow all of this to resurface. Bring awareness to any painful emotions that might be present as you recall this moment - perhaps its sadness, shame, or anger. How did you not meet your need for self-compassion?

Allow the inner critical voice to fade as you bring your compassionate image to mind. This compassionate being wants whatever is best for you. It wants you to be happy, be your best and be free from stress. This compassionate image wants you to be free from suffering and to thrive. The compassionate self understands that we are all just doing the best that we can, and it understands that suffering is not our fault. Experience what it's like to focus on the feeling that another being values and cares for you unconditionally. Focus on the idea that your compassionate self is looking at you with warmth and kindness. Imagine that they have the following desires for you as you repeat these compassionate phrases:

May I be kind to myself.
May I overcome difficulty.
May I know that I am valued, loved and accepted.
May I thrive and reach my full potential.
May I experience endless joy and wellbeing.

And extending any additional words of compassion that you may wish to share from the compassionate image to yourself.