**Birmingham Southern College**

**Mindfulness Meditation**

**Compassion and Lovingkindness Practice—Metta**

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The practice of cultivating Compassion and Lovingkindness, sometimes called Metta Practice, is an ancient practice and is seen in some form in most religious traditions. The fundamental idea is that we can build the ability to be in a state of happiness, joy, peace, calm, and kindness by practicing these states.

We also learn from this practice that holding on to bad feelings is counterproductive, and we only hurt ourselves. We can choose to be responsible for our own state of mind. This doesn’t mean we allow other people to hurt us or others. In fact, our intention is to develop greater ability to choose our response mindfully.

Remember that we are learning something new. As we say in class:

1. Rule Number 1 is **Be Kind to Yourself.**
2. Rule Number 2 is **Remember Rule Number 1.**

It’s important that when you practice this and any other mindfulness tools, stay within your own comfort zone. Just take it slow and with kindness. Never try to power through. Remember we have to practice with the same intention as what we want to build. It’s better to do a little that way than to keep going when your mind isn’t ready.

On the following page is a guide to a basic Metta Practice. As always, different tools appeal to different people at different times. It’s up to you to decide if this is a good practice for you right now. If you would like to try it, on the second or reverse side is an outline you can use.

More information about Compassion and Lovingkindness Practice:

1. Thupten Jinpa, **A Fearless Heart:** **How the Courage to Be Compassionate Can Transform Our Lives**

<https://smile.amazon.com/Fearless-Heart-Courage-Compassionate-Transform/dp/1101982926/ref=sr_1_2?dchild=1&keywords=thupten+jinpa&qid=1596472000&sr=8-2>

**Basic Metta Practice:**

Here is the basic form for Metta Practice, although it can always be modified to suit whatever is up for you.

*May you be safe and protected.*

*May you be healthy and strong.*

*May you know happiness and the causes of happiness.*

*May you live in peace and ease.*

**Order of Metta Practice:**

The order of bringing people/beings to mind is:

**First round**:  Someone with whom you have a relationship of mutual ease and unconditional love. This can be a person, a spiritual figure, a pet, or an image of your choosing, whatever evokes the state we are cultivating.

**Second round:**  Someone with whom you have a pleasant, uncomplicated relationship. It can be someone you know well, slightly, or even not really at all.

**Third round**:  Yourself, remembering that kindness, compassion, unconditional love and acceptance of yourself are prerequisites to cultivating this state for others. The Form is “May I be . . .”.

**Fourth round:**  Someone with whom you are experiencing some difficulty, challenge, or uneasiness. Remember you are responsible for your practice so make sure you have the time and bandwidth to be with whatever you choose.  If you find yourself pretty disturbed, then simply move on to the fourth round, return to an earlier round, or stop.  You also should remember the resources available to support you if you need them.

**Fifth round:** In the Fifth Round, we remember we are all in this together.  The Form is “May we all . . . “ You can call to mind the World, the Universe, all of Creation--however you can best hold all of it in your mind.