



## Meditations of Innate Compassion and Wisdom

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*This practice is adapted from Tibetan Buddhist meditation traditions for people of all  
backgrounds and faiths to explore.*

### **Introduction and Definition of Terms**

Practice the meditation on “Innate Love and Wisdom” for some weeks or months before taking up these meditations regularly. Recall the meaning of *love* – the power to commune with beings in their fundamental goodness while wishing them deep well-being and happiness. Recall the meaning of *compassion*—strong empathy with beings in their suffering while wishing them deep freedom from it. Your *benefactors* are those who have quietly extended such love and compassion to you. They include many persons you have liked to be near throughout your life and spiritual beings who have inspired you from near or far, such as the Buddha.

In this practice you first receive your benefactors’ energy and wish of compassion into every aspect of your being. Your task over time is to open more fully to the protective energy of your benefactors’ compassion so your mind can gradually permit more subtle, unconscious layers of your own suffering to be revealed to you. This, in turn, helps reveal similar layers of suffering that other beings are experiencing, deepening your empathy and compassion for them. Compassion for self and others helps your mind relax into its natural state—the wisdom of openness and pure awareness beyond self-clinging. By resting in its natural state, your mind can further unleash its innate compassion. As compassion and wisdom thus empower each other, they help open the door to inner freedom for yourself and others.

*Before beginning, please read through the entire practice and "Tips for Meditation" at the end.  
Then follow the instructions below, pausing for a little while at each section marked (✿)*

When you are familiar with Meditation One below, you can do it a bit more briefly to allow time to do Meditation Two as well. If you do Meditations One and Two in different sessions of the day, begin Meditation Two in its own session with the three naturals as instructed below

### **Meditation One: Receiving the Energy of Compassion and Releasing into Natural Wisdom**

Sit in a relaxed way, take three deep breaths, and let everything settle for a little while. Recall your benefactors and envision them just above and behind you. They are sending you love in the form of compassion, the wish for you to have freedom from suffering and its inmost causes. Bathe in the loving energy of that wish. Receive its healing radiance like a soft rainfall into every layer of your suffering, step by step:



- Receive the gentle energy of compassion into physical pains, letting all such areas of tension relax under its healing warmth.
- Experience your worries over security, finances, or meeting your obligations. Sense what it's like for someone to undergo such worries through your experience of them, and receive the healing energy of compassion into those feelings.
- Experience your anxieties over how others are judging you, how they think of you, and receive compassion into those anxieties.

Similarly, step by step, receive your benefactors' radiant compassion into:

- feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy, regret;
- into emotions of anger, betrayal, or feeling hurt by others;
- into feelings of loneliness, loss, grief or sadness;
- into feelings of despair or hopelessness;
- into feelings of longing, incompleteness, or addiction.

Sense what it's like for someone to undergo such feelings, then cradle each one in the gentle energy of compassion.

\*Bring to mind your fears of severe injury, illness and dying, and receive compassion into those feelings. Bring to mind fears you have for your loved ones and pets in their vulnerability and mortality, and receive compassion into those fears.

\*Receive the gentle radiance of compassion into your inmost patterns of grasping to self, of trying to hold onto anything at all.

Let go of the visualization and merge into oneness with that gentle, radiant energy. Let all thoughts, feelings and sensations settle in their own spacious ground, like snowflakes settling in a pond, letting all just be, as it is, in utter simplicity,. All senses wide open, mind unconfined, unrestricted, totally open. Let the natural power of openness and awareness itself do the knowing, the meditating. Let thoughts and sensations arise and dissolve of themselves within this sky-like expanse of openness and awareness.

**After a little while, go directly to Meditation Two below.**

**(If you do Meditations One and Two in different parts of the day, begin Meditation Two with the three naturals below, then follow Meditation Two directly below that)**

**Three naturals of body, breath, and mind--** 3 deep breaths, then: Notice feelings of grasping or holding on within the **body**, and gently let those places of tension relax. Let all bodily sensations settle naturally in their own way. Surrender to the natural power of the body, feeling it embody you. Sense any feeling of grasping to the breathing process, and let that relax. Let the **breath** settle into its own natural flow, feeling the breath breathe you. Similarly in the **mind**, notice any grasping to the thinking mechanism and let that feeling of holding-on relax its grip.



Give the mind permission to fall completely open into deep allowing. Disengage the thinking mechanism and let all thoughts, feelings, and sensations just settle in their own spacious ground, like snowflakes settling in a pond; letting all be just as it is in natural simplicity. All senses wide open; mind unconfined, unrestricted, all pervasive like the sky. Let this expanse of openness and awareness itself do the knowing, the meditating.

### **Meditation Two: Extending the Protective Energy of Compassion to Others**

Recall your benefactors, including spiritual beings that inspire you. Envision them above and just behind you, sending you compassion—the radiant wish for you to have deepest freedom from suffering and its inmost causes. Bathe in the loving energy of that wish from head to toe. Receive that compassionate energy into all the layers of your suffering: into all the worries, struggles and terrors of living and dying; into the inmost patterns of grasping to self. Join your benefactors in their wish for you: **“May this one have deepest freedom from suffering.”** Mentally repeat this wish for yourself as you receive the healing energy even more deeply into every part of your body and mind.



Now envision several beings that are dear to you in front while sensing their layers of suffering as similar to your own. While receiving your benefactors’ radiant wish from behind, let the radiance come through you to the dear ones before you. Repeat the wish of compassion in your mind while transmitting its healing energy to those in front of you: **“May they have deepest freedom from suffering.”** Gradually, at your own pace, extend that radiant wish to more dear ones in front, permeating every layer of their experience, body and mind, with its compassionate energy.



Now, envision several strangers in front along with the dear ones, sensing their layers of suffering as similar to your own. Let the radiance from your benefactors come through you to them while repeating the wish of compassion for them in your mind: **“May they have deepest freedom from suffering.”** Explore trusting this wish more than your thought of them as “strangers” while illuminating them with its compassionate energy. At your own pace, extend that radiant wish similarly to more and more strangers in front, bathing them completely in its compassionate energy.



Now, along with the dear ones and strangers, envision a few people you have disliked or wanted to avoid. Sense them as similar to you in their layers of suffering and their deep desire to be free of it. Let the radiance come through you to them while repeating the wish of compassion for them: **“May they have deepest freedom from suffering.”** Explore trusting this wish more than



your thought of them as dislikable, illumining them with its compassionate energy. At your own pace, extend the wish similarly to more and more people that you have disliked, hated, or wanted to avoid.



Now *imagine that the luminous field of benefactors behind you merges completely into your heart*. Sense the compassionate energy radiating from your heart as one with all your benefactors. Let your heart, unified with all those benefactors, radiate boundlessly like the sun to all beings in all directions at once. Repeating the wish of compassion, illumine everyone with its energy while communing heart to heart with them: **“May each being have deepest freedom from suffering.”** Let the energy of that wish overwhelm any remaining inhibitions you may have, radiating out spontaneously and all-inclusively, as if Buddha or Christ in your heart was radiating through your mind and body to all beings at once.



#### **Releasing Compassion into the Simplicity of Natural Awareness:**

After some time, drop the visualization and just let go into oneness with that compassionate, insubstantial radiance. Release all frames of reference into boundless openness and translucent awareness, pervasive like the sky -- beyond separation. Let this expanse of openness and awareness sense all that appears as empty patterns of cognizance, like ripples on water, self-arising, self-releasing.



**Dedicate** the power of this practice to everyone’s fullest realization of their deepest potential for healing, well-being, inmost freedom and peace.

#### **Tips for meditation in the section on “Extending Compassion”:**

- In daily practice, begin with Meditation One—receiving compassion from benefactors, merging with them in that radiance and letting be in natural awareness.
- *You can spend many weeks or months in daily practice on that first meditation.* Then spend more weeks adding the next stage of extending compassion to dear ones, then more weeks including the next stage of extending compassion to strangers and so on.
- In extending compassion to others, when you feel the wish of compassion to be strong and stable for dear ones, you can begin to extend it to strangers. When it is strong and stable for strangers, you can begin to extend it to disliked ones.
- If you get stuck or have difficulty at any stage of extending the wish, back up and spend more time familiarizing with the prior stage.



### **Further Information**

- For more information about these practices, meditation groups and workshops see the Foundation for Active Compassion website: [foundationforactivecompassion.org](http://foundationforactivecompassion.org)
- For more on the theory and practice of these contemplations, see *Awakening through Love: Unveiling Your Deepest Goodness* (Wisdom publications, 2007) and the “FAC Supportive Materials” link at the Foundation for Active Compassion website.