

Audio file Transcript

Compassionate Friend for Shame

This practice is the compassionate friend for shame. In this practice, you'll have an opportunity to visualize a being, real or imagined, that embodies the qualities of compassion and wisdom. You don't have to be particularly good at visualization to do this practice because the primary focus of this meditation is how it feels to be in the presence of a being who offers unconditional love and support. So please practice in a relaxed manner with a minimum of expectations, allowing the meditation to unfold by itself and letting images come and go. If no images arise that's also fine. You can just linger with any compassionate feelings that you may be feeling. And remember that you can disengage from the practice anytime you wish. You know better than anyone what's right for you.

So to begin, please find a comfortable position. And then gently close your eyes. And if you like, you can take a few deep breaths to settle into your body, into the present moment. And you could put one or two hands over your heart or another place, again as a reminder that we're bringing not just awareness, but loving awareness, to our experience. Now, please recall a place that brings up feelings of ease and well-being. It might be a cozy corner in a familiar room or a natural setting like a forest or a beach, or even an imaginary place like floating on clouds. Anywhere that makes you feel comfortable and relaxed. And when you've found such a place, then just take a moment to savor how it feels to be in this place. And soon you'll receive a visitor, a loving and compassionate being or a presence that embodies the qualities of warmth, kindness, compassion, strength, and wisdom. So this may be a person known to you from your past or in your present. It could be a spiritual figure like Jesus or Buddha. Or even an abstract image like warmth or light. So please allow a compassionate image or presence, a compassionate friend if you will, to appear in your mind's eye. And if a few different figures arise, then just let the measure of warmth that you feel help you choose one. And you now have an opportunity to spend some time with your compassionate friend. So please, in your mind's eye, place yourself in relationship to your friend in a way that feels just right for you, not too close, not too far. Just right. And then let yourself savor what it's like to be in the presence of this compassionate being. Just being there together. There's nothing you need to do right now except to enjoy the good company. And now with this warmth and the feeling of love and compassion in your heart, we're going to shift gears just for a moment.

And I'd like you to bring into your mind something that you feel mildly ashamed about. So it could be a habit you don't like or a physical attribute that makes you feel ashamed. It could

be something you did that you blame yourself for or something emotionally painful that just happened to you. So again, please choose something that you feel only mildly ashamed about. We only want to touch shame. And again, visualizing your compassionate friend or the felt sense of being with your compassionate friend. And knowing that your compassionate friend is aware that you feel shame about this and wants you to have some relief. So your compassionate friend or this presence might have some words to share with you, words of kindness, understanding, words that you need to hear, words that might make your heart rest, find some ease. So please listen carefully to what your compassionate friend might have to say. And if no words come, that's okay too. Just continue to enjoy the good company. The company is a blessing in and of itself. And if some words have come, just taking a moment to savor those words, to appreciate those words. And now, is there anything you'd like to say in return? If so, know that your compassionate friend wants to hear what's on your mind and completely understands you. So you could take this opportunity to speak if there's anything that you'd like to say. Your friend might also have a gift for you, a material object. In your mind's eye, if you like, you can turn your palms upward and see if something appears. If so, what is it? What does it mean? Now, please take a few more moments to continue to enjoy the company of your compassionate friend. Your compassionate friend will soon be leaving. So if you like, you could say goodbye for now, slowly releasing the image of your compassionate friend and allowing your awareness to drop inside your body. Just feeling what it's like again to be inside your body and gradually allow yourself to recognize that your compassionate friend arose from within you and has always been a part of who you are. All the compassionate words and images that you just experienced, and also the feelings that they evoked, all came from deep within you. Because inside you is an inexhaustible spring of wisdom and compassion. Your compassionate self.

So please take a moment to savor this simple truth, that your friend arose from within you and is always a part of you. And remember that you can connect with this source of wisdom and compassion any time you wish by visualizing your compassionate friend. And then when you're ready, you can slowly release this entire exercise, this practice. And if you like, you can reflect on the experience. How did you feel at different parts of the practice? What did your compassionate friends say, if anything? Did you receive an object? If so, what was it? What did it mean? And perhaps most importantly, what was it like to recognize that wisdom and compassion, what you experienced, actually came from within yourself? So if you like, you can record, write down some of your experience. And if you're artistically inclined, you can even draw a picture of your compassionate friend as a way of accessing your friend whenever you need in your life, a little extra wisdom and compassion. Thank you for your practice.