

In Gratitude to You

THE CENTER'S COMPASSION MEDITATION TRAINING*

“Only the development of compassion and understanding for others can bring us the tranquility and happiness we all seek.”

- His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Compassion is the wish that others not suffer, as well as having the urge to help end the suffering of others. Cultivating compassion is a source of peace and harmony in the heart and mind.

Please settle into a comfortable position and allow yourself to relax. Take a deep breath and release. For a few moments, just focus on your breath and clear your mind of worries. Notice when you are breathing in (breathe in) and breathing out (breathe out.) Let yourself experience and be aware of the sensations of breathing.

LOVING KINDNESS & COMPASSION FOR A LOVED ONE

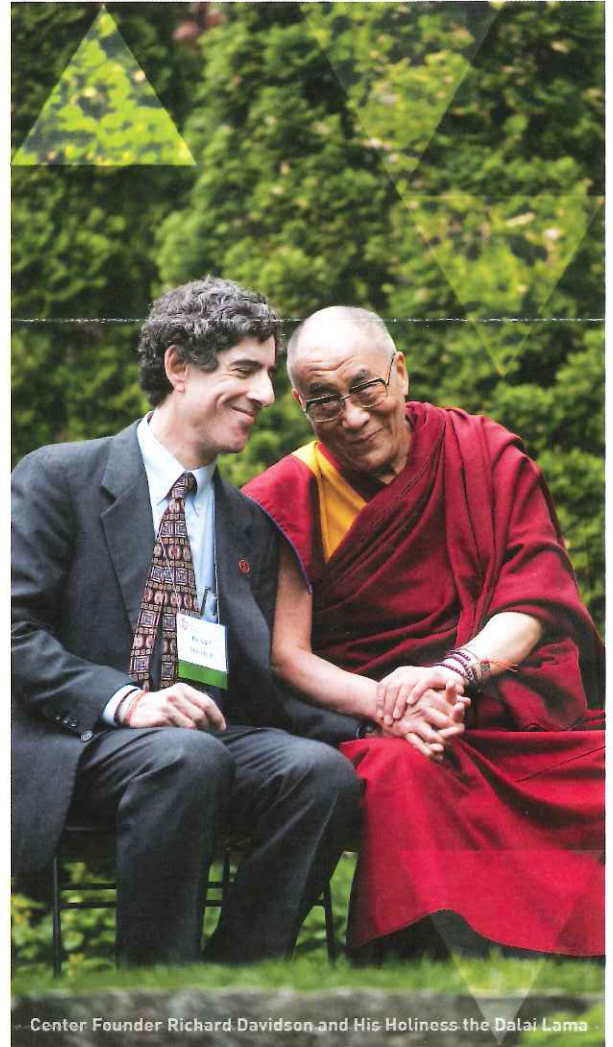
Picture someone who is close to you, someone that you feel a great amount of love towards. Notice how this love feels in your heart. Notice the sensations in your heart. Perhaps you feel a sensation of warmth, openness, and tenderness.

Continue breathing, and focus on these feelings as you visualize your loved one. As you breathe out, imagine that you are extending a golden light that holds your warm feelings from the center of your heart. Imagine that the golden light reaches out to your loved one, bringing him or her peace and happiness. At the same time, silently recite these phrases (a few or several times):

*May you have happiness.
May you be free from suffering.
May you experience joy and ease.*

Now think of a time when this person was suffering. Continue to visualize your loved one as you breathe. Imagine that you are extending the golden light from your heart to your loved one, and that the golden light is easing his or her suffering. Extend this light out to them during your exhalation, with the strong heartfelt wish that they be free from his or her suffering. Recite silently to him or her (a few or several times):

*May you be free from this suffering.
May you have joy and happiness.*



Center Founder Richard Davidson and His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Compassion meditation is an ancient Buddhist meditation practice designed to increase feelings of compassion and wanting to help others. This training was scientifically validated by the Center to show that practicing compassion meditation for 30 minutes a day for two weeks increased altruistic behavior and changed the brain's responses to human suffering.

COMPASSION FOR SELF

Contemplate a time when you have suffered yourself. Just as we wish for our loved one's suffering to end, we wish that our own suffering would end. We may also envision our own pain and suffering leaving us so that we may experience happiness.

Continue to visualize yourself as you breathe. Imagine that the golden light emanating from your heart is easing your suffering. With each exhalation, feel the light emanating within you, with a strong heartfelt wish that you be free from your suffering. Silently recite to yourself (a few or several times):

*May I be free from suffering.
May I have joy and happiness.*

COMPASSION FOR DIFFICULTY

Now visualize someone you have difficulty with in your life. Although you may have negative feelings towards this person, think of how this person has suffered in his or her own life. This person has also had conflicts with loved ones, or had dealt with failures, or may have suffered illness. Think of a situation in which this person may have suffered.

Continue to visualize this person as you breathe. Imagine that you are extending the golden light from your heart to him or her, and that the golden light is easing his or her suffering. Extend this light out to him or her during your exhalation, with the strong heartfelt wish that he or she be free from suffering. See if this wish can be as strong as the wish for our own or a loved one's suffering to be relieved. Silently recite to him or her (a few or several times):

*May you be free from this suffering.
May you have joy and happiness.*

COMPASSION FOR ALL BEINGS

Now that we are almost at the end of this meditation, let's end with a wish for all other beings' suffering to be relieved. Just as I wish to have peace, happiness, and to be free from suffering, so do all beings.

***For the full Compassion Meditation Training offered by the Center, visit InvestigatingHealthyMinds.org/cihmAudio.html for the audio training or print download.**

The Center, founded in 2008 by world-renowned neuroscientist Richard J. Davidson, continues to pioneer studies to transform our understanding of the mind, emotions and well-being. Based on decades of research on emotions and the reality that our brain circuits and structures can be shaped by experience and intentional training, our work seeks to improve well-being in communities, healthcare, schools and the workplace.



Center for
**Investigating
Healthy Minds**
at the Waisman Center