



Forgiveness Meditation

Giving is part of forgiveness. When we give, we make an offering to ourselves and others, creating a willingness to make peace with the conflict and pain that fuel our anger, resentment, and bitterness. Although it feels easier to be critical “I hate my body,” “She makes fun of my efforts to eat mindfully” in fact, it’s actually easier to forgive.

A form of letting go, forgiving creates a space to establish skillful habits and mind states that are in harmony with the desire to change. Forgiveness also diminishes the stress that comes from judging ourselves and others.

The process begins by forgiving ourselves: our mistakes, feelings, and habits. From this perspective, everything is equally forgivable, whether it’s our laziness, self-hatred, impatience, large thighs, or tendency to overeat. Just the willingness to be mindful of what is calling for forgiveness is a radical step.

It can be very helpful to make a list of the things you find hardest to forgive yourself for and to use the list in the following exercise.

Sit in a quiet and comfortable place, in a relaxed sitting position. Repeat the following phrases until you complete your list. Begin with smaller things like “not getting enough exercise” and build up to bigger issues such as “the habit of beating myself up for not being perfect.”

To the extent that I am able, I forgive myself for any hurt or harm I have caused myself intentionally or unintentionally. To the extent that I am able, I forgive myself for not getting enough exercise. Even if I can’t forgive myself, I forgive myself for that. For as long as it takes, I will continue to offer myself the priceless gift of forgiveness.

It’s helpful to do forgiveness practice every day, including any aspect of yourself or your experience that could benefit from this practice. Next, we focus on forgiving others. Again, begin with small issues and build up to bigger ones, making a list if it’s helpful.

To the extent that I am able, I forgive my friend Mary for the hurt or harm I’ve experienced. Even if I can’t fully forgive her, I forgive myself for that. For as long as it takes, I will make the effort to offer Mary the priceless gift of forgiveness.

With diligent practice, we begin to realize that forgiveness is a unique form of nourishment, a way of providing ourselves and others a spaciousness around our conflicts and difficulties. We no longer feel as alone, stuck, or doomed to fail. The resulting peace of mind provides an inner fullness that no amount of food can ever offer.

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