**Mindfulness Meditation Series, Week #6 Handout**

Center for Faculty Development & Advancement, April-May 2021, Jeff Franklin

 “In a study of 691 undergraduates, those with higher self-compassion based on the Self-Compassion Scale (Neff, 2003) were more likely to engage actively in the classroom, asked more questions, sought out help more frequently and were more likely to engage with their teachers outside of lectures (Long & Neff, 2018). The results provide a strong foundation that self-compassion can be a factor in developing resilience in overcoming perceived negative feedback and improve academic engagement.” Positive Psychology.com, “[What is Mindful Self-Compassion?](https://positivepsychology.com/mindful-self-compassion/)”

**Mindful Compassion Practice Instructions**

Among the purposes of practicing mindfulness is to nurture our capacity for nonjudgmental loving-kindness, first for ourselves and then for others. We all have this capability, but suffering and emotions such as fear, anger, and sorrow can deplete our self-healing reserve. This practice can build up that reserve and our resilience. Consider setting this as your intention for this practice.

1. As in all prior mindful practices that we have covered, start by finding your mindful posture—or, if you prefer, lying down, or walking, or anytime you choose—and in any case taking a few minutes to tune in to your body and begin following your breathing. . . .
2. The practice is then to repeat silently a series of wishes, hopes, or blessings—however you would like to think of them—starting first with yourself, as follows:
	1. May I be safe.
	2. May I be healthy and happy.
	3. May I be joyful with others.
	4. May I be at peace.

You may substitute different terms if they feel more authentic to you. Here is one example: “May I. . .be treated with kindness” / “May I. . .be free from suffering” / “May I. . .be healthy” / “May I. . .be at ease.”

1. You may choose to synchronize with your breathing, breathing in as you say “May I” and breathing out with the rest of the sentence, repeating this breath-synchronized pattern.
2. Now, when you are ready, bringing to mind a loved one, friend, benefactor, someone for whom your heart naturally and easily opens. Holding an image of them in your mind and heart while repeating: “May **you**. . .be safe” / “May you. . .be healthy and happy” / “May you. . .be joyful with others” / “May you. . .be at peace.”
3. Now, when you are ready, bringing to mind a person for whom you have no strong feelings, good or bad, just a neutral feeling, someone you might see around but without much contact. Holding their image in your mind, sending them the four wishes for well-being as above.
4. Now, when you are ready, bringing to mind someone with whom you have a difficulty, not the most challenging person—that might be too hard—just someone irritating or bothersome. Seeing if you are able to send them the four intentions, maybe even if you don’t mean it 100%, just saying the words. And, if you find this too difficult, take care of yourself without self-judgment by shifting to again wishing yourself safety, well-being, joy, and peace.
5. Finally, when you are ready, broadening your intentions to include everyone you care about, then all of those who live near you, progressively expanding the scope of your awareness to encompass your city. . .your state. . .the nation. . .and then the planet, repeating these words: “May **all beings**. . .be safe” / “May all beings. . .be healthy and happy” / “May all beings. . .be joyful with others” / “May all beings. . .be at peace.” Repeat as many time as feels good to you.

The invitation of the homework is to practice the above for a minimum of 10 minutes and up to 14 minutes per day. You can access a video of me leading this practice by clicking [this link](https://ucdenver.techsmithrelay.com/WtUh).

“A human being is a part of the whole called by us universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feeling as something separated from the rest, a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.” – Albert Einstein

“Compassion isn’t some kind of self-improvement project or ideal that we’re trying to live up to. Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted parts of ourselves, all those imperfections that we don’t even want to look at.” – Pema Chodron



**KINDNESS**, Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is

you must lose things,

feel the future dissolve in a moment

like salt in a weakened broth.

What you held in your hand,

what you counted and carefully saved,

all this must go so you know

how desolate the landscape can be

between the regions of kindness.

How you ride and ride

thinking the bus will never stop,

the passengers eating maize and chicken

will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness,

you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho

lies dead by the side of the road.

You must see how this could be you,

how he too was someone

who journeyed through the night with plans

and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside,

you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow.

You must speak to it till your voice

catches the thread of all sorrows

and you see the size of the cloth.

 Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,

only kindness that ties your shoes

and sends you out into the day to mail letters and purchase bread,

only kindness that raises its head

from the crowd of the world to say

it is I you have been looking for,

and then goes with you everywhere

like a shadow or a friend.