

Audio Track 24: Forgiving Yourself

[00:00:00]

Try this: Forgiving yourself.

Begin by taking a moment to ground yourself and come into the present moment in whatever way works best for you. You can return to feeling your body breathing. Place a hand on your heart or elsewhere, feeling yourself supported by the cushion or the chair or opening to sounds, for example. Please spend a few moments coming into the present moment and centering and grounding yourself in whatever way feels right to you.

When you feel ready, calling to mind something for which you would like to forgive yourself. For instance, you might be feeling some remorse about what happened with the person you practiced with in the forgiving others practice. Perhaps that person didn't bring out the best in you and you know it. If you feel no guilt or responsibility for what happened, please focus on another situation in which you feel some remorse for how you behaved. Again, it's best to practice with something mild, to moderate to begin with.

Then taking a few moments to consider how your actions impacted the other person, and allow yourself to feel your regret and remorse. While opening to the truth of what you did, also recognize that it's human to make mistakes. Maybe you feel some shame. That's also human. Notice the burden you are carrying. Then beginning to offer yourself compassion for how you suffered, perhaps by saying, "May I be free from fear," "May I be free from shame," "May I be

kind to myself," "May I accept myself as I am," Or whatever feels right to you here. If it feels like you need to stay here, keep giving yourself compassion.

When you're ready, try seeing yourself more clearly and understanding some factors that led to your mistake. Taking a moment to consider if there were any current factors causing you to be less skillful than usual. For example, were you under a lot of stress? Or, were certain aspects of your personality triggered in an irrational way? Were old buttons being pushed? And also considering whether there are any cultural or societal factors that impacted your capacity, like a history of being marginalized or oppressed in some way. If your heart begins to soften with the understanding that we all make mistakes when our suffering exceeds our resources, know that your mistake, while not acceptable, was a human mistake.

And then seeing if you can offer forgiveness to yourself, saying the phrase, "May I begin to forgive myself for what I have done that caused this person harm." Or maybe you need to start with, "May I begin to open to the possibility of forgiving myself." When you feel ready, taking a few moments to rest here, by going back to following the breath, you'll find yourself grounded and safely held by the chair or cushion that you're sitting on, or offering yourself your own kind touch.

Know that you can and will tend to keeping this person and yourself safe as best you can moving forward. And consider what that means for you in this relationship right now. You may want to take a moment and pause here to take any notes that would be helpful. Please remember that this is a process and don't worry about the outcome. When we practice forgiveness, we're training the

heart to put down the burden that we're carrying. If you did feel unburdened by this practice, you can make a note of how releasing the guilt and shame you may be carrying has freed you in some way. Notice if it made it possible for you to open more fully to the pain your partner is carrying, and if it makes it possible for you to move back in toward the relationship rather than keeping yourself removed in some way.

As always, remember to thank yourself for the courage of showing up, of opening to the mistakes you've made, the harms you've caused. And beginning to forgive yourself.

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