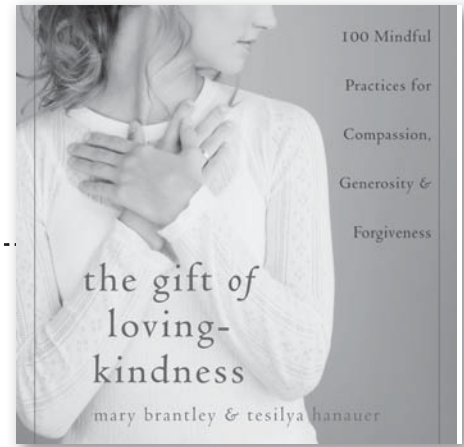


LOVING-KINDNESS IS A GIFT THAT EVERYONE CAN GIVE.



About the Book

Mary Brantley and Tesilya Hanauer took different paths to their discovery of the ancient practice of loving-kindness, but in their new book ***The Gift of Loving-Kindness*** they explain the concept of unconditional well-wishing so that it is accessible even to those unfamiliar with meditation.

“Kindness and compassion are qualities that live within all of us,” say Brantley and Hanauer, adding, “Loving-kindness meditation is a road map that shows us how to nurture and share this gift.”

Loving-kindness is defined as “unconditional well-wishing and an openhearted nurturing of ourselves and others, just as we are.” Opening one’s heart to others in the spirit of compassion, kindness, and altruism can lead to lower stress levels, better physical health, and increased feelings of happiness and contentment. In addition, practicing loving-kindness can teach us to treat ourselves and others like dear friends, putting aside judgement and choosing instead to open our hearts to greater generosity, forgiveness, and compassion.

In ***The Gift of Loving-Kindness*** Brantley and Hanauer explain to readers specific techniques, meditations, mindfulness exercises, and actions that they can take to cultivate kindness towards themselves and others. Readers will learn the skills of forgiveness (of self and others) and of taking compassionate action in the world.

The most of important, and ultimately the most powerful, lesson of this book is that when we plant the seeds of loving-kindness we can overcome our own fears, judgments, and worries, and face our own pain with greater compassion. We can then extend that compassion out into the world and become a healing force for others.

“***The Gift of Loving-Kindness*** skillfully guides us to train our minds and hearts in the practice of loving-kindness meditation. The meditative exercises in this book can spark one’s journey into greater love and compassion or enrich it anywhere along the path. Combining internal reflection and mindful exploration of our heart’s capacity, these pragmatic exercises open us to genuine transformation.”

— **Sharon Salzberg**, author of *Lovingkindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness*

“Keep ***The Gift of Loving-Kindness*** on your bed table and let its wisdom guide you. This book offers a rich assortment of contemplations that will open and free your heart.”

— **Tara Brach**, Buddhist teacher and author of *Radical Acceptance: Embracing your Life with the Heart of a Buddha*

“Simply reading these words will awaken you. Actually doing even one of these practices could profoundly transform your life...”

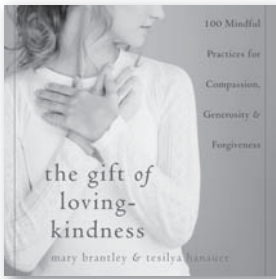
— **Jeffrey Brantley, MD**, author of *Calming Your Anxious Mind*

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THE GIFT OF LOVING-KINDNESS

100 Mindful Practices for Compassion, Generosity, & Forgiveness
Mary Brantley, MA, LMFT, and Tesilya Hanauer, CMT
September 2008 / 978-1-57224-562-4 / \$15.95 / 6 x 6 / 288 pages



THE GIFT OF LOVING-KINDNESS

100 Mindful Practices for Compassion, Generosity, & Forgiveness

BY MARY BRANTLEY & TESILYA HANAUER

Excerpt: Be Your Own Friend

The foundation of loving-kindness meditation is knowing how to be your own best friend. How do you treat your best friend? Is it with care, attention, love, and concern? Here is an exercise that offers you those same deep feelings of care and friendliness you show toward others. This practice helps you remember your core goodness and points you back to yourself.

1. Take a few deep breaths. Breathing in, feel the expansion of your chest and abdomen. Breathing out, feel yourself relax.
2. Remember times when you have felt open and friendly. It's the feeling you get when a child takes your hand, your dog comes running to greet you, or your sweetheart wraps you in a warm embrace. The feeling is one of peace and deep contentment.
3. As these memories and feelings emerge, let yourself feel warm emotions. Now gently direct these phrases toward yourself:

May I be kind to myself.

May I rest in this moment.

May I be at ease.

May I be happy.

These words should not be expressed in a hurried or mechanical manner. Receive the meaning of these phrases as best you can. Let go of the outcome. Be very patient with yourself; remember you are practicing kindness.

PHOTO BY LANCE RICHARDSON, CHAPEL HILL, NC



Mary Brantley, MA, LMFT, teaches mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and loving-kindness meditation at Duke Integrative Medicine. She participated in a seven-day professional training in MBSR under the direction of Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D., and Saki F. Santorelli, Ed.D. Brantley has practiced meditation for more than twenty-five years and attends yearly intensive retreats.

About the Authors

PHOTO BY JAYMIE SCOTT



Brantley is a licensed marriage and family therapist who has maintained a private psychotherapy practice since 1983. She is co-owner of Seeds of Kindness, a business that makes loving-kindness prayer beads. You can learn more about Brantley's loving-kindness prayer beads at www.seedsofkindness.biz.

Tesilya Hanauer, CMT, is a freelance writer and certified massage therapist. She received her massage training at Heartwood Institute in northern California, where she also studied Iyengar yoga. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Interview Questions

1. Please explain the concept of loving-kindness.
2. Those who are unfamiliar with loving kindness meditation may not feel much kindness toward themselves. How do you suggest they work with such doubt?
3. How can loving-kindness meditations help someone cope with every day worries, relationship troubles, or health problems?
4. Those who are unfamiliar with meditation may feel daunted by the concept. How do you suggest they approach your book?
5. What are some benefits to sending kindness to a difficult person?
6. Most, if not all of us would find it impossible to be generous, forgiving, and compassionate all the time. What would you say to someone who thinks this inability means the practice of loving-kindness is not for them?

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