Generating Warmth for Yourself and Others

Mindfulness isn’t a special trick that comes to us from the outside—it’s an inherent human ability you can nourish.

Is mindfulness a special trick that comes to us from the outside, or is it an inherent human ability? Answer: It’s an inherent ability. Everyone has a natural capacity for mindfulness, awareness, kindness and compassion.

So, let’s start with a simple kindness practice to nourish this ability: It’s about getting in touch with the warmth we already have and directing that warmth toward ourselves and toward others.

Read the practice:

1. **Wherever you are, find a good seat.** If it's in a chair, notice how your bottom is touching the chair and your feet are touching the ground. If you're sitting on a cushion, then you might have your legs crossed gently in front of you or even in a lotus position.

2. **We'll begin by closing our eyes.** Or if you like, leave them open. We’ll pay attention consciously to three breaths going in and out: the entire process of three breaths. Let's start that now: Three conscious breaths.

3. **For some of you that might have been four or five.** It doesn’t matter—we’re just taking a moment to get in touch with our breath and our body.

4. **Now, let's start with some basic mindfulness practice** where we just notice the breath as it comes in and out. As your attention drifts off to thinking, notice that you’re thinking. Touch your thoughts gently and come back to the breath. Just do that repeatedly: As you notice the thinking, touch it gently and come back to the breath. Let’s do that for a minute or so.

5. **Now I’d like you to notice the warmth you have in your own body.** It’s 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit, or thereabouts, so it's quite warm. Imagine if that were the temperature outside what a hot day that would be. So, you have that much warmth throughout your body. You can feel it. As you get in touch with that warmth, if you have any kind of anxiety or sense of judging yourself harshly, let the warmth overtake that.
6. When we talk about kindness and kind people, we say they're warm, they exude warmth. That's literally true warmth and kindness. They go together. Think of the feeling of a warm touch or a warm embrace.

7. Again, allow the warmth to overtake your anxiety or fear or harsh judgment. And now let that warmth expand beyond yourself to other people. It's a naturally occurring kindness that emerges out of that warmth.

8. As we wind this practice down, I want you to remember that warmth is available all the time—for yourself and for others.