

COMPASSIONATE FRIEND MEDITATION

- Please sit in a comfortable position, reasonably upright and relaxed. Gently close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths to settle into your body. Put one or two hands over your heart for a moment to remind yourself to give yourself *loving* attention.
- Now imagine yourself in a place that is safe and comfortable—it might be a cozy room with the fireplace burning, or a peaceful beach with warm sun and a cool breeze, or a forest glade. It could also be an imaginary place, like floating on clouds...anywhere you might feel peaceful and safe. Let yourself enjoy the feeling of comfort in this place. (Pause).
- Soon you'll receive a visitor, a warm and compassionate presence who embodies the qualities of wisdom, strength, and unconditional love. You may have felt a warm and compassionate presence at some point in your life. If so, see if you can remember that feeling.
- This being may be a known to you as a figure like Christ or Buddha, it can be a compassionate person from your past like a grandparent, or it may not have any particular form. This being loves you and would like you to be happy, and would like to visit you for a little while. Really imagine this being in as much detail as possible, especially how it feels to be in his or her presence. (Pause)
- You can go out and meet this visitor, or you can receive him or her into your safe space. Please greet and be with your visitor wherever you are most comfortable.
- Place yourself at just the right distance from your compassionate friend—whatever feels right. If it's someone you feel close to, this may even include resting your head on this being's shoulder. If it's the Dalai Lama, perhaps you want a little respectful distance. Hold your friend in your heart and mind and enjoy his or her good company. There is nothing special you need to do except savor the moment. (Pause).
- Now allow yourself to recall any difficulties that you may have in your life right now. Your compassionate friend has come to tell you something, something that is *just what you need to hear right now* in your life. Listen carefully to what your compassionate friend has come to say. If no words come, that's okay, too—just share his or her good company. That's a blessing in itself. Just be with your friend, listening if there is anything you should hear. (Pause).
- And perhaps *you* would like to say something to your compassionate friend. Your friend listens deeply, and completely understands you. Is there anything *you'd* like to share? (Pause).

- Soon your friend will be leaving again, but before that happens, your friend would like to give you something—a material object. As you place your hands together, your friend reaches out and puts an object in your hands, or an object simply appears in your hands—something that has special meaning for you. Wait and see what comes. What is it? Look it over carefully. (Pause).
- Now, thank your friend, enjoy your friend's good company for a few last moments, and then bid your friend farewell.
- You are now alone in your safe place again. Let yourself savor what just happened, enjoying the words and the object that was given to you. (Pause).
- Now, remember that your compassionate friend is *part of you*. Therefore, you can invite your friend back anytime you wish. Your visitor is available with words of wisdom and compassion whenever you need it the most.
- And when you're ready, slowly open your eyes.

adapted from Gilbert, 2009