

Cultivating an Inner Smile

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



Life often gets taken quite seriously. While there are certainly times of great pain, grief, and difficulty, it is not uncommon to become unconsciously weighed down by the day-to-day.

Cultivating an inner smile is a practice that helps us to lighten up where we find ourselves contracted within the world or resistant to it. It is a way of shifting our energy and harnessing a sense of positivity, lightness, peace, and contentment.

PRACTICE:

1. Wherever you find yourself – seated, standing, or lying down – take a moment to bring a gentle smile to your inner world. This does not need to be reflected physically upon your face; rather, it is the cultivation of an inner feeling.
2. Notice where this inner smile presents itself. Is it generalized or localized? All over the body or in a particular area, such as the heart, the face, or the belly?
3. Imagine the energy of this inner smile filling you for two to three minutes. Within this time, notice if any thoughts or emotions arise in response.

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4. If challenging feelings come up, tend to these with compassion, love, and patience. Is it possible to meet these with warmth? With a soft, compassionate smile? Know that there are no right or wrong thoughts, feelings, or experiences to have here. Simply open to the possibility of holding whatever is here, even if that is some sort of duality (i.e. pain and ease).

Note: It is important to acknowledge that cultivating an inner smile is not in alignment with denying our challenging emotions or experiences. It is simply an invitation to meet our experience with kindness and compassion.

5. After a few minutes, or whenever you feel ready to finish this practice, root your attention in the breath for three to five cycles. Open your eyes when you feel ready.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What was this practice like for you today? Did it feel natural or unnatural for you to cultivate an inner smile?

2. If difficult or heavy feelings or thoughts were present, how did it feel to invite an inner smile to your experience? How did you hold this perceived duality?