

A Sea of Benefactors

Sitting comfortably, bring attention to the points of contact where your legs and back are resting on the chair or cushion. Feel the weight of the body resting, supported.

See if you can rest in the experience of the the sensations and movements of the breathing body. Inhaling, the body expands. Exhaling, the body contracts. Sitting and breathing, the body balances itself, supported by the chair or cushion and the ground underneath. Sitting, breathing, resting, supported.

Now recall someone whose actions have benefited you -- maybe someone in your family or a friend. Or it may be a clerk at the store, or someone in the street who spontaneously smiled at you, bringing you a moment of friendliness or a sense of ease. It doesn't matter how well they know you, or how much or how purely they intended to benefit you. Some action they did, large or small, actually did bring you some benefit.

Now recall your parents, siblings, and other family members. You may have some difficult relationships with some of them, perhaps some painful memories, but also acknowledge that since you were born they have been there, feeding you, taking care of you, sharing their time and energy and experience with you. Before they knew what you would go on to do, before they knew who you would become, they sheltered and educated and supported you. Recognize the enormity of what you have received from your family.

Now bring to mind a few of the countless people involved in the production and delivery of food, clothing, shelter, heat, material goods of all kinds. You don't know most of these people personally, but they are all around you, doing what they do and making available all the things you need to survive and thrive. Their energy, knowledge, and actions are supporting you. The interdependence of beings and events is deep, broad, subtle, and profound.

Recall the natural environment from which you draw life and sustenance and enjoyment: the earth, the cooling breeze, the warm sun, clean flowing waters, plants and animals that provide you with food and companionship and kinship beyond species.

Recall a teacher who taught you something. It might be a teacher from grade school or high school, or a college professor.

Recall someone who went beyond teaching knowledge -- a mentor who supported you and encouraged you to grow and fulfill your own life.

Recall spiritual teachers and guides who have written or spoken or shown you something that made a difference in your life, whose work or example have been an inspiration to you.

Continue to recall mentors, teachers, friends, and benefactors of all kinds, large and small, spiritual or practical or mundane, those from the past, those who support you now, and those who will support and benefit you in the future. Imagine this large and growing group -- a sea of benefactors surrounding you.

There is nothing you have to do to earn their support, to receive all these benefits. All these benefactors, known and unknown, have been supporting you since before you were born. They have been there your entire life, and will always be there, giving you what you need, teaching you what you need to know, supporting and inspiring you spiritually.

Imagine your benefactors smiling, accepting you just the way you are, wishing you well, acting on that wish in order to benefit your health and well-being.

Feel yourself surrounded by this sea of benefactors, supporting you physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Recognize, acknowledge, and appreciate the benefit you receive from this sea of benefactors. Feel the support and rely on it. Rest in the experience of being supported and receiving infinite benefits.

In the center of your body, feel a warm radiating light. Gradually, naturally extend that warm radiating light to fill your body. Then let it radiate beyond your body, sending warm friendly light into your surroundings, where it is received by everyone. Continue to sit for a while, breathing, supported, radiating wishes of well-being to yourself and to everyone, all human and non-human beings.

*With deepest gratitude for all teachers and benefactors this contemplation is offered by George Draffan.
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