

HANDOUT 12.7: EXPRESSING GRATITUDE

Let's start by closing our eyes or looking down and feel how we sit in our chair right now. Settle into your compassion posture ...Now slow your breathing, and with each slower and deeper breath mentally repeat with a friendly tone of voice, simply begin whispering several times, slowly, the words thank you....thank you...thank you.... let your mind space out in all directions and be curious about what emerges when you mentally repeat this word...perhaps you might see images of people...faces...situations...in which you felt that someone did something important for you...let these images come while you continue repeating these words...

Now, let your mind land and bring to mind someone who has done something for you, towards whom you feel extremely grateful, but with whom you've never had a chance to share your gratitude. Someone who, in this flow of life in which we all find ourselves, in some way has helped you with the real intent to do it...

Now write a letter to this person:

- Write as if you were speaking directly to this person (Dear...)
- Don't worry about using correct grammar or vocabulary
- Write why you are writing this letter, what your intention is
- Describe what this person has done using specific terms, why you are grateful to this person, and how the behavior and the choices this person has made have influenced your life in a positive way. Try to be as concrete as possible.
- Describe what you are doing with your life now as a result of this person's gift, this person's presence and energy, and how happy you are remembering what this person has done for you
- If you want, finish with a wish



Optional practice

You might want to send the letter, or, if possible, make a “gratitude visit” – that is, choosing to visit the person you wrote the letter to and read it to them.