

The Four Immeasurables

Metta or Loving Kindness

"It takes boldness, even audacity, to step out of our habitual patterns and experiment with a quality like kindness - to work with it and see just how it might shift and open up our lives."

"Love is not a feeling, it's an ability"

Sharon Salzberg

Perhaps as we practice over the years these qualities emerge naturally by themselves, but it also seems a good idea to try to cultivate them, give them a nudge, so to speak. Metta is a concentration practice, so, like in meditation, we gently return our mind to here and now instead of ruminating on the past and future. We gather some of the energy wasted on habitual reactions and use it in a more wholesome way. This is generally accomplished by repeating certain phrases like:

May I live in safety

May I have mental happiness

May I have physical happiness

May I live with ease

This is then expanded to include our family, friends, neutral acquaintances and, finally, people we don't get on with so well.