

Sustainable Compassion and Wisdom Training (SCT)

Guided Meditation Instructions

John Makransky, PhD

Sustainable Compassion and Wisdom Training (SCT, also called Innate Compassion Training, ICT) is a method to help us realize a power of unconditional care from within that can be deeply healing and sustaining, make us more present to ourselves and others and help empower compassionate action that can be less subject to emotional exhaustion. SCT highlights our need to experience how it feels to be held in love and compassion in order to extend love and compassion inclusively to others, our need to be seen in our unconditional worth in order to see the same in others, and our need to become present to our feelings with kindness in order to become sustainably present to others with kindness.

For these purposes, SCT meditations cultivate **three modes of practice**: The **receptive mode** helps us find an access point to experience the energies and qualities of love and compassion throughout our body and mind from the depth of our awareness. This establishes the secure base needed for the other two modes of practice. The **deepening mode** helps us deepen into the non-conceptual source of those qualities—the openness, clarity, and compassionate capacity of the deep nature of mind (buddha nature). The **inclusive mode** draws on those qualities and energies to help us extend love and compassion inclusively to others. On the basis of those three modes of practice, further meditations for **cultivating empathy and compassion** are engaged, which are designed to generate compassionate solidarity with others in a sustainable and inclusive way that helps avoid empathic distress and compassion fatigue.

The meditations instructed here are engaged progressively. Start with the meditation that is most connecting and meaningful to you. For many people, that has been Meditation 1 or 2 below in receptive mode. Do it every morning for a little while as your anchor for the day. Then reconnect with that meditation in many brief moments of the day. Frequent repetition for short periods each day gradually retrains the brain to access qualities of love, compassion and wisdom with greater ease, empowering our lives and work with others.

As you familiarize with that first meditation through much daily repetition, it empowers you to explore further meditations that build on that one in each mode of practice.

For further SCT teachings, retreats, workshops, videos, and audio meditations, go to foundationforactivecompassion.org or sustainablecompassiontraining.org

For a good training program that incorporates SCT, see the Margha program website of Natural Dharma Fellowship: www.naturaldharma.org/get-involved/margha-program

For an organization that incorporates SCT into a focus on systemic change for more compassionate institutions and structures, go to Courage of Care Coalition: courageofcare.org

Please contact the author if you wish to replicate this handout in any form.

FOUNDATIONS: CULTIVATING MINDFUL AWARENESS

Mindful awareness contributes to all other practices. Cultivating mindful awareness involves placing our attention on an object such as the body, a sense object, a feeling, thought, or the mind itself, and letting our attention settle into it with increasing fullness and stability. The mind tends to identify with trains of thought, causing it often to wander. When you notice the mind wandering, just recall the object of attention and let that object draw the mind back to it. To repeatedly notice the mind is wandering, and let the object draw it back, is not a problem. It is how we learn to meditate. When meditating, various isolated thoughts will also continue to arise in the background of your awareness, even when you are not strongly identifying with them. That is fine. Just consider whatever thoughts arise as peripheral to your attention. The main focus of attention is the object you are instructed to focus on and repeatedly return to.

Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed, comfortable way with back straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Inhale gently into the abdomen so it expands, then make a long, slow exhale while relaxing and releasing all worries. Pause for a moment at the end of the exhale before inhaling again. Repeat several times.

Placing attention in the body with the breath: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expand and contract with each breath. When you notice the mind wandering, let the feeling of the abdomen with the breath, like a magnet, draw you back to it. Let the feeling of the abdomen expanding and contracting draw you into it more and more.

Placing attention in sound: While listening to any ongoing sound, such as a gong, let your awareness settle deeply into the sound, hearing fully. When you notice the mind wandering, let the sound, like a magnet, draw you back to it, to settle into the sound more and more fully. Let the sound draw you into itself more and more.

Walking meditation: While walking at a slightly slower pace than usual, feel the sensation of walking on your feet as fully as you can, step by step. When you notice the mind wandering, let the feeling of the foot in each step draw the mind back to it, to feel it more fully. Each step is drawing you into the present moment of feeling. Alternatively, if you wish, you may let your attention settle into the full sensory field, just seeing or hearing fully, wide open. When you notice the mind wandering, let the visual or auditory field draw the mind back to it, to sense it more and more fully, wide open.

Purposes of such practice: To strengthen the power and stability of attention; to sense more of what is here now; to penetrate deeply into the nature of our experience. This brings fuller awareness of self and others, the natural world, our habits of reaction and what lies beyond them, and fuller presence to what we are doing (“becoming one” with our activities, when walking, washing dishes, listening, etc.). Mindful awareness also supports all other practices. Ultimately, it can support increasing freedom from inner causes of suffering, thereby helping to unleash the capacities of our buddha nature, as do all the other meditations below.

RECEPTIVE MODE: MEDITATIONS 1, 2 AND 3

Meditations 1 and 2 help us access capacities of our fundamental awareness, our “buddha nature,” to heal our hearts and minds in its unconditional warmth, to settle deeply into its openness and clarity, and to establish the secure base of love and compassion that is needed to extend care reliably to others.

Preparing for Meditation 1: Field of Care

In this meditation we experience ourselves held in the love and compassion of a field of care. This evokes loving qualities from our underlying awareness, in which to process all of our feelings, and from which to become more present to others. How to establish a field of care for meditation? There are three options—please choose one for this practice: **Option (1) Caring moment**: Recall and reinhabit a caring moment. This is a moment with another person or being that makes you happy to recall, or feels heartwarming to remember. A moment when someone was joyful to be with you, or seeing you in your deep worth, or listening, or radiating warmth to you, or rooting for you, or wishing you well. This could be with another human being or a loving animal. Or it could be a moment when you were joyful to see others who were caring for each other. Or a moment when you were a loving figure for another (which we will explore more in Meditation 3). Or think of a moment when you were in a place special to you, perhaps in nature, where you felt deeply safe, well, at peace, and at home. Reinhabit any such caring moment as happening right now. **Option (2) Benefactor**: Bring to mind a benefactor—someone that you are truly grateful has been in your life or in your world. Someone who has inspired, blessed, or uplifted you by their presence, way of being, or mentorship. Imagine that person as being here with you now. **Option (3) Spiritual field**: Bring to mind a spiritual figure, or a group of such figures, that is deeply meaningful to you, who hold you and your world in unconditional care, compassion and wisdom, such as a field of buddhas and bodhisattvas, or spiritual ancestors, or a saint or divine figure of your own tradition. Or the presence of God. Imagine that present here with you now, radiating unconditional, enduring love, compassion, and wisdom.

Take a few moments now to explore each option in turn. **Which of those three options is most effective to help you sense that you are held in a field of love, care, and compassion?** Use that option in the meditation as your field of care.

In this meditation, we use the field of care to bring out loving qualities from our underlying awareness—a sense of being held in care, of being accepted, being seen, inner rest, inner safety, deep well-being, warmth, tenderness, ease of being, spaciousness, and so forth. When we start to experience such qualities, we just relax into them and let those loving qualities embrace all of our physical and mental feelings. We focus only on the felt sense of those qualities, not on stories that our minds may create about the field of care or about our relationships. Dropping any such stories when they arise, we settle more and more fully into the feeling of those loving qualities, letting those qualities permeate our whole body and mind.

MEDITATION 1: FIELD OF CARE

-1) Abdominal breathing. Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Field of care: Now bring to mind your field of care: your caring moment, benefactor, or spiritual field. Bring this to mind not just as a memory or an abstraction, but as happening right now, present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy, feeling its tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and mind—into every part of your body, into every layer of feeling and emotion. As if every part of you is loved in its very being.

Let any pattern of thought or feeling that arises during this meditation be gently embraced in the spacious warmth and acceptance of this field of care. Let any such pattern have all the space it needs within this field of care to relax, find its own place, and settle in its own time.

If you lose the feeling of the loving qualities, freshly recall your field of care as present here with you now, and let its loving power draw you back into the feeling of it.

-3) Releasing: After a little while, just settle deeply into this felt sense of love, warmth, and acceptance. Let this help your heart and mind to trust, relax, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. Let this total openness of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness, this space of deep allowing, by letting everything be.

Processing Meditation 1: (1) **Name a few of the loving qualities** that you experienced during step 2 of the meditation. This meditation helps us immediately start to access the loving qualities and dignity of our fundamental awareness, our buddha nature. (2) Now **identify a difficulty or problem** that came up for you during the meditation at some point, **which signals how some part of you was reacting** to the meditation, e.g. a part of you that wants to think about other things; or a part of you that doubts any caring moment is good enough; or a part of you that doesn't think that you deserve love; or a part of you that wants to grieve the loss of someone brought to mind by your field of care. "Part of you" refers to the **sense of self** that is operative in you at that moment, with its patterns of thought and feeling.

Preparing for Meditation 2: Becoming More Deeply Receptive to Love and Compassion

The next meditation uses the field of care to help us become increasingly receptive to the powers of love and compassion that are available in our underlying awareness. You will bring your field of care to mind, but this time, after you start to experience the loving qualities that come with that, notice when a part of you comes up that has doubts about the meditation or wants to think of other things (as in the examples above). When you notice that happening, let that part of you and its feelings be gently embraced in the spacious love, acceptance and compassion available within your field of care.

MEDITATION 2: BECOMING MORE DEEPLY RECEPTIVE TO LOVE AND COMPASSION

-1) Abdominal breathing. Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Reconnecting with love: Now bring to mind your field of care: your caring moment, or benefactor, or spiritual field. Bring this to mind not just as a memory or an abstraction, but as

happening right now, present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy, feeling its tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and mind—into every part of your body, into every layer of feeling and emotion. Every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

If part of you is having difficulty with this practice, or starts to draw your attention away, just settle back into your field of care and become compassionately aware of that part and its feelings in a fully allowing, spacious way. Let that part of you, and what its feeling, have all the space it needs within this field of care to find its own place and settle in its own time.

If you lose the feeling of the loving qualities, freshly recall your field of care as present here with you now, and let its loving power draw you back into the feeling of it.

-3) Releasing: After a little while, just settle deeply into this felt sense of love, warmth, and acceptance. Let this help your heart and mind to trust, relax, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. Let this total openness of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness, this space of deep allowing, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 2—Five key learnings:

(1) **This meditation purifies qualities of love and compassion toward greater unconditionality.** We may start with an experience of *relatively* unconditional love, e.g., by reinhabiting a caring moment from our life, but its qualities become purified, stronger and more unconditional through the instruction (“Every part of you loved in its very being.”). This process brings out the unconditional capacity of love and compassion from our basic awareness, our buddha nature. From that secure base, we can bring greater unconditionality to others.

(2) **The mind is learning that it does not have to be totally identified with any one part of ourselves,** by letting each part (each sense of self) be embraced in the compassion of our fuller awareness, which is larger than any part. Our basic awareness is freed from being caught up in any one part, not by rejecting it, but by holding each part in compassion. This is called “unblending.”

(3) In this way, **we begin to reunite with our fuller, basic awareness** (buddha nature, the depth of our being), the larger awareness that can embrace all parts of us—all senses of self and feelings—in compassion without being completely identified with, or caught up in, any one part.

(4) **As all parts of us feel the deep safety and healing power** of such unconditional acceptance and care, **they can learn to trust the source of those loving qualities**, which is our basic awareness. As this trust deepens with repetition of practice, at the releasing phase of the meditation, the mind is willing to release more fully into the total openness, clarity, and warmth of our basic awareness, our true nature. This process of deepening trust and fuller release, reunifying with the openness and clarity of our deep nature, begins to draw us into the **deepening mode** of practice, which is further developed in meditations 4 and 5 below.

(5) **Just as our basic awareness**, when not identified with any one part, **can embrace all of our parts and feelings in unconditional care and compassion, the same awareness can hold others and their feelings in the same compassion**, without contributing to emotional exhaustion or “compassion fatigue.” The utter openness, clarity and compassion of our basic awareness is our **ultimate secure base**, from which to extend love and compassion to others sustainably and inclusively as in meditations 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 below.

In Daily Life: Do meditation 2 first thing in the morning, however briefly, then reconnect with it briefly many times throughout the day, every day, over coming months. Each time you reconnect with this practice, make it a point to reaffirm that the loving energies and qualities you are experiencing are qualities of your own awareness. This helps you become increasingly conscious of how available these qualities are to you, whenever you remember to evoke them.

To reconnect many times a day in little moments strengthens the neural pathways that support these experiential qualities, strengthening the secure base of love and compassion that is needed for us to extend care, love and compassion more sustainably and inclusively to others in our lives and in our work.

The application here of Sustainable Compassion Training to “parts of ourselves” draws from the Internal Family Systems Model (IFS) developed by Richard Schwartz.

Preparing for Meditation 3: Being the loving figure with another being

Some people find the next meditation their most effective access point to experience the loving qualities of their basic awareness. It is also a powerful supportive practice for all of us to explore. In this meditation, we recall a moment when we were holding another being in love, kindness or care. This helps us further access, nurture, and embody the capacities of warmth, acceptance, love, compassion, openness, reverence, etc. that come from our basic awareness. To prepare for the next meditation, recall a moment when you were a loving presence to someone else, human or animal—a moment when you were radiating love or warmth to them, or rooting for them, or taking joy in them, or seeing them in their deep worth, listening, making them happy, etc. Try to recall a moment like that from anytime in your life. That will be the “field of care” for this meditation.

MEDITATION 3: BEING THE LOVING FIGURE

-1) Abdominal breathing. Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Reconnecting with love: Now bring to mind a moment when you were a loving figure for someone else, and the place or setting of that. Consider that moment not as a distant memory, but as happening right now—you are present in that way now with the other. Feel the loving energy and tender qualities that accompany this way of being with another being. Let this loving energy flow freely to the other. Steep in its tender qualities, letting them infuse your whole being and world.

If part of you is having difficulty with this practice, or starts to draw your attention away, just let it be gently embraced in the spacious acceptance and warmth of this field of care that you have generated. Let that part of you, and what its feeling, have all the space it needs within this field of care to find its own place and settle in its own time.

-3) Notice your loving qualities: Notice the loving qualities occurring in this moment, such as warmth, care, acceptance, openness, responsiveness, peace, inner strength. Let yourself fully accept, own, embody these qualities of your caring self.

-4) Releasing: After a little while, just settle deeply into this felt sense of love, warmth, and acceptance. Let this help your heart and mind to trust, relax, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. Let this total openness of

awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness, this space of deep allowing, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 3: What qualities of your caring self did you notice? Name several. Is there a connection between being a caring presence to others and being a caring presence to various parts of yourself and to your feelings? Meditation 3 draws from a meditation form that was adapted from Tibetan Buddhism by Paul Gilbert and also by Brooke Lavelle.

DEEPENING MODE: MEDITATIONS 4 AND 5

Preparing for Meditation 4: Compassionate Presence to Feelings

In the field of care meditations 1 through 3, we learned how to provide a space of acceptance and care for all of our feelings, so they could process themselves in a deeply healing way, from which to become a more healing and loving presence to others. In the next meditation, called compassionate presence to feelings, we explore an even more direct way to become present to all of our feelings in a spaciously compassionate and healing way.

This meditation supports all other SCT practices. In this meditation, we learn how to welcome feelings into a compassionate space where they can relax, find their own place, settle in their own time, and deeply heal in their own natural way. “Feelings” here refers to the pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feeling tones that accompany our physical and mental experiences, and to all the emotions with which they are associated. To train in this meditation prepares us to become compassionately present to all of our feelings in the same deeply healing way as they arise throughout our ordinary days.

Intense, stressful aspects of our daily lives trigger many difficult feelings in us. We typically try to avoid unpleasant feelings by trying to suppress them or distract ourselves from them. But when we repeatedly avoid or suppress feelings, over time, we tighten up inside, which manifests also as physical tightness. This inner stress and tightness make it difficult to open to the qualities available in our basic awareness that we cultivate in all of our practices—qualities of spaciousness, love, compassion, equanimity, and wisdom. Such stress and tightness also make it hard to be fully present to other people in an open-hearted and discerning way.

Meditation 4 shows us that we don’t have to avoid or suppress our feelings and reactions. Instead, we can become spaciously, compassionately present to them, in a way that helps them relax, settle, and find their own place—ultimately a place of inner healing and releasing. This transforms our ways of being with others, since our ability to be present to our own feelings with compassion is what enables us to be present to other people in the same way.

This practice has four principles: 1) **Notice the feeling** within any state of mind or body. 2) **Fully allow it to have all the space it needs to find its own place.** 3) **Rest with or within the feeling.** 4) Then just **let everything be, with a sense of spaciousness.**

MEDITATION 4: BECOMING COMPASSIONATELY PRESENT TO OUR FEELINGS

(1) Becoming compassionately present to bodily feelings: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body, letting the breath settle into its own natural rhythm, while inhaling into the abdomen. Now settle into the feeling of the body as a whole. Notice the physical sensation in any part of your body, and become aware of it in a deeply allowing way, without trying to change it at all. Just let it have all the space it needs to find its own way of being. If another physical sensation replaces it, become aware of that sensation in the same deeply allowing, spacious way.

(2) Becoming compassionately present to emotional feelings:

Now sense whatever emotional feeling is present within you, from within your body. Not just thinking about it, but sensing how it feels from within. At first you may think you are not feeling anything, but often you can become aware of a subtle emotional feeling that wasn't fully conscious to you, such as a little anxiety or worry, or liking or disliking a little how things are, or a feeling of trying to hold on to things, or feeling a little confused. Or you may feel a stronger emotion, like fear, frustration, annoyance, or joy. Or you may just feel numb. Those are all feelings with which you can practice. Or, if you wish, you are welcome to recall an emotional feeling that is quite familiar to you and let yourself feel it now.

Become aware of that feeling within you, with a sense of deep permission for it to be here—fully allowing it, gently welcoming it. Without being caught up in it, without rejecting it, without trying to solve or change anything in it, without ruminating about why it's here. Like a friend quietly present to a friend, let this feeling have all the space it needs to find its own way of being or to settle in its own time. Rest with the feeling spaciously in that way, or rest within it, without trying to change anything, just letting everything be. One feeling may open into further feelings—just be with each feeling in the same spacious, accepting way.

If part of you is having difficulty with this practice, notice the feeling within that reaction, and become compassionately aware of that feeling in the same spacious way, letting it have all the space it needs to find its own place, to settle in its own time.

When the mind wanders into chains of thinking, notice the feeling associated with those thoughts, and become present to that feeling in the same spacious, allowing way.

As this practice deepens, you may find your mind resting right in the essence of a feeling, which may open into a space of deep warmth, calm, and peace from within. If that happens, just relax deeply into that and let everything be.

(3) Releasing: After some time, just settle fully into this feeling of spacious allowing. Let this help your heart and mind to trust, relax deeply, release all frameworks of mind, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. Let this total openness of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that arise just unwind and release within this backdrop of spacious awareness, a space of deep allowing, by letting everything be.

Processing Meditation 4: This practice is done in meditation sessions in order to know how to do it throughout our day. We begin the practice with physical sensations, then became aware of emotional feelings. We can learn to do this practice at any time with any feelings: physical or emotional, unpleasant, pleasant, strong feelings, subtle feelings. If there is no strong feeling at any moment, you can do the practice with your felt sense of body and mind at that moment, even with a subtle feeling of dullness or numbness.

All the other meditations of SCT take us into a way of being that is somewhat different from what we may have been accustomed to. This stirs up many emotions and reactions. In this

way, all SCT practices generate the material for compassionate presence to feelings. Whenever you are having a difficulty or reaction to any other practice, notice the feeling within that reaction, and do this practice of compassionate presence for a little while. If the feeling deeply settles, you can return to the practice at hand. Or you can continue with this practice of compassionate presence, letting things settle and deeply heal by themselves.

This practice is adapted from the *handshake meditation* teaching of Tsoknyi Rinpoche.

Preparing for Meditation 5: Letting Be: Meditations 1-4 above bring out powers of love, compassion, spaciousness, and deep acceptance that can embrace all of our perceptions, thoughts, and feelings. In the final releasing phase of those meditations, we let those loving qualities help the mind feel safe enough to release its narrow frameworks and begin to settle deeply into the spacious ground of those loving qualities—a pervasive openness, clarity, simplicity and warmth of awareness that is beyond all constructs of mind. In that way, we start to settle into the deep nature of the mind, a unity of total openness and pure awareness—the empty, cognizant ground of experience. In the next meditation, “Letting be,” we learn to settle even more directly and fully into that spacious ground, to learn to reunify with it. That is the ultimate secure base from which to become more fully present to others.

MEDITATION 5: LETTING BE OF BODY, BREATH AND MIND

-1) Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Letting be of body: In a relaxed way, let your attention settle into the feeling of the body as a whole. Notice any feeling of tightness or holding on in the body, and let that relax, allowing bodily feelings to settle in their own way. Deeply let be into the body, letting the body draw you into unity with it more and more.

-3) Letting be of breath: While still breathing from the abdomen, notice any sense of holding on to the breathing process, and let that relax. Deeply let be into the feeling of the breath, letting the feeling of the breath draw you into unity with it more and more, breath by breath.

-4) Letting be of mind: Now raise your eyes to look straight ahead, with a gentle panoramic gaze that spaciouly encompasses the whole visual field. Leave all senses wide open, and just relax into that panoramic awareness.

After a little while, notice any grasping within the mind to any mental construct--any holding on to a sense of self, thought, or framework of mind. Let that feeling of holding on relax deep within. Let the mind settle back a little, release its grip, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. In this way, let the mind settle back into the spacious awareness that has always been in the background--naturally wide open, pervasive, and radiant. Let this spacious backdrop of awareness unveil itself more and more, drawing you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that begin to form just unwind and release within this total openness of awareness, by letting everything be. Let thoughts and feelings subside by themselves, as the mind relaxes into the simplicity of natural openness and clarity.

When the mind closes up again, holding on to a narrow frame of thought or feeling, again let the mind settle back into the natural spaciousness and clarity available in the background of

its awareness, naturally wide open and radiant. Let patterns of thought and feeling that start to form just unwind and release within this openness of awareness.

INCLUSIVE MODE: MEDITATION 6

Preparing for Meditation 6: Extending Love

With repeated practice of meditation 2, deepening our receptivity to love and compassion, we notice two further things important for our lives and work with others: (1) **When the mind is totally identified with one protective part of yourself, your perception of others is automatically reductive**, and your capacities of love and compassion are much impeded. For example, in a moment when the mind is totally identified with a part of yourself that is focused on managing things, others in that moment are reduced just to objects of management. Or if your mind is completely identified with a part that is angry at another person, the other is perceived in that moment as only an object of anger—just bad. (2) **When the mind unblends from that part of yourself**, by holding that part in compassionate awareness (as in meditations 2, 3, and 4 above), **your perception of others starts to open**, so you can sense more of their humanity and potential—e.g. sensing them now not just as objects of management or anger, but as fuller human beings who have dignity, potential and who wish to be well and happy as you do. With this opening of perception, your capacities of care, love and compassion become less impeded, so you can be more compassionately present to them.

To enter now into the inclusive mode of meditation 6, we begin in the receptive mode (in step 2 below), then let its flow of loving energy extend to others (in step 3), which helps us commune with them—to sense them as more than our reductive thoughts of them in their fuller life, dignity, and potential, and to wish them deeply well. “**Communing**” here means a preverbal sense of closeness to another, sensing the other as a subject, a whole life and fuller person beyond superficial impressions and judgments, possessed of great worth and potential. It is to relate to others as what the philosopher Martin Buber called I-Thou, rather than I-it.

When we are first learning this meditation, it is helpful to begin extending the loving energy and wish to someone nearby, or to someone you think of, who seems easy to commune with in this way. This could be someone familiar to you or a stranger, but not one you have strong aversion for. As the practice becomes more familiar through repetition, you can extend it more inclusively, eventually also to those you for whom you have had aversion. Beginning this extending practice with someone nearby helps us learn how to do it in our daily lives in any moment, in relation to someone nearby.

MEDITATION 6: EXTENDING LOVE TO OTHERS IN RELATIONSHIP AND ACTION

-1) Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Reconnecting with love: Now bring to mind your field of care: your caring moment, or benefactor, or spiritual field, as present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy and tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving

energy and its qualities into your whole body and heart and mind—every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

-3) Extending love to someone nearby: Now notice someone nearby (or think of someone) with whom you can commune. While continuing to receive the loving energy from within your field of care, let that energy come through you now to that person, as if you are a windowpane for it. Imagine this energy infuses this person's whole being. Let this flow of loving energy help you commune with them in their deep dignity and worth, wishing them well. Instead of relating to a superficial impression of the person, let this flow of energy help you sense the human being beyond your limited impressions, with their whole life, deep worth and potential. Sensing them as like you in wanting to be well and happy, wish them deeply well.

If a part of you is having trouble with this, or starts to draw your attention away, just settle back into your field of care and become compassionately aware of that part of you and its feelings in a fully allowing, spacious way. Let that part of you have all the space it needs to relax and find its own place. If it settles, you can return to the extending practice.

If your mind becomes tired or uptight at any point, take a short break, rest your heart and mind, and begin afresh.

-4) (when ready for this step) Let this flow of love extend more broadly: After some time, if you wish, you can let the loving energy come through you now more broadly to everyone nearby around you (or to anyone that you think of), infusing their bodies and minds. Let this flow of loving energy help you sense them in their dignity and worth beyond limiting impressions and wish them deeply well.

-5) Releasing: After a little while, just settle into this felt sense of love and compassion. Let this help your mind to trust, relax deep within, release its grip, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. In this way, let the mind settle back into the spacious awareness that has always been in the background--naturally wide open, all-pervasive, and radiant. Let this spacious, unwavering backdrop of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that start to form just unwind and release within this total openness of awareness, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 6: Extending love

This practice helps us **experience ourselves as an extension of the field of care in which we are held.** We hold as we are held, love as we are loved, know as we are known.

By practicing this extending meditation in our days, with whoever is around and whoever we become aware of (including the daily news), it becomes increasingly inclusive.

In step 3 above, if you have difficulty seeing another person as more than a reductive impression (“but she’s just a stranger,” or “just dislikable”), then your mind is identified with a part of you that is only seeing through that narrow lens. Notice that part of you, that sense of self, and settle back into your field of care from step 2, letting that part of you and its feelings be included in that compassionate space. When that part begins to feel safer and more at ease, **notice your lens on the other person begin to open**, so you can sense them in their fuller life and dignity, with more ability to wish them well. This practice introduces a new degree of freedom to choose whether to continue to relate to our reductive impressions of others, or to the actual persons beyond those impressions. We experience what it is like to relate to the dignity and worth of other persons more than to our own limiting thoughts of them as just “strangers” or “dislikable ones” (or even as just “my friends”).

When you are first introduced to this practice, you can do steps 1), 2), 3), and 5). When you become familiar with those steps through repetition of practice, you can also include step 4). **We familiarize with the practice** by doing it each morning in a meditation session (however brief) and then **repeatedly reconnecting with it many times throughout the day**—noticing whoever is around us, or whoever we think of, communing and wishing well as instructed.

It is wise to **keep this inclusive mode practice private**, to make a protected space for it to unfold, to avoid imposing our ideas about it on others or inviting others' misinterpretations.

The process of unblending from limiting parts of ourself and reunifying with the openness and clarity of our larger awareness, which further unfolds with repeated practice, **helps us sense more possibilities** in each situation beyond any one lens upon it, with greater space in the mind for innovation, creative responsiveness, and humor ("skillful means"). We can find **greater freedom to take up various roles** or parts of ourselves as needed, but now without being so fully identified with them. There is greater space in the mind to be who or what is needed in the situation.

The three modes of SCT meditation bring out a power of love, compassion and awareness that can take us increasingly **beyond in-group bias**, by cutting through our habits of reductive labeling and extending care more inclusively to others in our days (see Meditation 8 for more on this).

Many people in caring roles, service and activism seek a power of care and compassion that can help them avoid empathic distress and compassion fatigue. **Empathic distress** occurs when we empathize with others who are suffering and our attention turns inward on ourselves, so we get caught up in the pain of our own empathy. **Compassion fatigue** occurs when the caring motivation that brought us into our work with others shuts down, often because of repeated experience of empathic distress, secondary trauma or inefficacy in our work. And these difficulties are exacerbated when administrators and co-workers, who are subject to the same difficulties, co-create work environments that feel uncaring, unsupportive or overly demanding. This inclusive mode meditation helps us **avoid empathic distress** because the outward directedness of its loving energy keeps our caring attention on others, while any part of us that struggles with caring for others is embraced in the compassionate healing qualities that are evoked by our field of care. Meditations 7, 8 and 9 below further empower our ability to avoid empathic distress. We are **inoculated from "compassion fatigue"** by learning how to access a replenishing secure base of love, compassion and wisdom in the meditation, and how to reconnect with its energies and qualities often in our days through repeated practice.

Authentic love confirms people in their deep dignity and worth, while also confronting harmful behaviors. Extending love inclusively does not involve accepting anyone's harmful thoughts or actions. It puts us in touch with their fuller humanity, dignity, and potential. By learning to connect to that dignity and potential in them, we can challenge people's harmful ways of thinking and acting on behalf of that potential, on their behalf, not just on behalf of others whom their actions harm.

In Daily Life: After establishing a strong secure base through much practice of meditations 2, 4, and/or 5, you could take up meditation 6, extending love, as a main practice. Do meditation 6 first thing in the morning, however briefly, and reconnect with it many times throughout the day. To reconnect with it briefly many times daily strengthens the neural pathways that support the capacity to be present to others in this caring way, more sustainably and inclusively.

Pre-blessing your day: When you do the meditation in the morning, you can think of all the places you will go, and all the beings you will be near (even when commuting), and include them all in step 4 of the morning meditation. Then to arrive at any of those places, of itself, can evoke the practice of communing and wishing them well. It is as if your morning meditation pre-blesses your day, so when you arrive anywhere, you receive its blessing.

GENERATING EMPATHY AND COMPASSION FOR ACTION: MEDITATIONS 7, 8, 9

You can progressively practice Meditations 1-6 for months before taking up Meditations 7, 8, and 9 on compassion regularly. Compassion is a form of love, the form of love that wishes beings free of suffering and its causes so they can be deeply well. The next meditation, 7, draws on the secure core of love, compassion and awareness that we have established in all the prior meditations. With that secure core in place, it can now feel safe enough to become more conscious of our own difficult feelings, so we can let them inform our empathy for others who have similar feelings. In this way, **we learn to experience our own suffering feelings as *connecting* instead of isolating, drawing us into compassionate solidarity with others right through our feelings.** This meditation can be a joyful discovery, because it provides a way to experience our own painful feelings not as disconnecting and meaningless but as profoundly meaningful and deeply connecting.

Compassion for self and others helps the mind release its grip and settle into its deep nature—the unity of spaciousness, cognizance and warmth that is our natural wisdom. By resting in its expansive natural wisdom, the mind can further unleash its capacities of love and compassion. As compassion and wisdom empower each other in that way, they become a force for healing and compassionate action.

Please familiarize with Meditation 7 for several weeks or months in daily practice. That establishes the foundation for Meditations 8 and 9. For fuller explanations, please study the manual, *Awakening through Love*, by John Makransky.

Preparing for Meditation 7: Taking our Suffering Feelings into Compassion for Others

Meditation 7 helps us become more conscious of layers of struggle, stress and suffering in ourselves that others also experience in their own ways, as a basis of empathy and compassion for them. To prepare for this, you need first to recall your field of care, in order to access the secure core of love and compassion that is needed to feel safe to explore your feelings. After that, you will bring to mind a difficult feeling that is familiar to you, which many others also experience in their own ways. Below is a list of difficult situations and associated feelings. Please examine the list and select one feeling to explore in the meditation below. As you do the meditation repeatedly over time, you can explore many such feelings, and let repeated practice evoke your own list of further feelings to explore.

--Become conscious of a feeling of physical pain anywhere, or of anxiety that you feel about your body or your health, or any fears you have of severe illness or injury.

--Recall a feeling of not being seen, of being looked down upon, or of humiliation.

--Recall a feeling of strong anger from being betrayed or hurt by what someone did.

--Bring to mind a feeling you have of failure, hopelessness, or despair.

--Recall a feeling of intense longing, loneliness, or feeling abandoned.

--Bring to mind any fear you have about supporting yourself or your loved ones, or of meeting all of your obligations or debts.

- Bring to mind any grief you feel at the loss of a relationship, a job, or a way of life.
- Recall any grief you feel from the loss of a loved one who has died.
- Recall any fear you have for a loved one now alive, in their vulnerability and mortality.
- Bring to mind any fears you feel at your own impending death.

MEDITATION 7: TAKING OUR OWN SUFFERING FEELINGS INTO COMPASSION FOR OTHERS

-1) Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Reconnecting with love and compassion: Now bring to mind your field of care as present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy and tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and heart and mind—every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

-3) Experiencing a suffering feeling as a doorway to empathy: Now, while continuing to feel the resonance of that care, bring to mind the feeling you selected from the list above (or any other difficult feeling). Take some time to sense what it's like for someone to experience that feeling, through your own experience of it (pausing after each question to explore): How does it feel in your heart and mind? How does it feel in the body? What other feelings come up in association with this feeling? How does the whole world look and feel from within this feeling?

Many other people experience feelings like this in their own ways. So now sense right through your feeling what others feel. Feel, through your feeling, what they feel. In this way, sense this feeling as not just your own, but as your deep connection to many others.

-4) Receiving compassion for all: After exploring in that way for a little while, recall that your whole being is held in the unconditional love and compassion of your field of care, and let all of your feelings be embraced in this compassionate energy, every part of you loved in its very being. By accepting this loving energy into your own suffering feelings, imagine that you are accepting it into everyone who has similar feelings, by letting the radiance of this energy extend through you to them all, while wishing them deeply well and free of suffering.

-5) Releasing: After a little while, just settle into this felt sense of love and compassion. Let this help your mind to trust, relax deep within, release its grip, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. In this way, let the mind settle back into the spacious awareness that has always been in the background—naturally wide open, all-pervasive, and radiant. Let this spacious, unwavering backdrop of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that start to form just unwind and release within this total openness of awareness, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 7: Often our experience of suffering makes us feel terribly isolated from others in our own pain. With this meditation, **we learn to experience our own painful feelings not as isolating us from others but as *connecting us to them***—as compassionate solidarity with others. People all over the world experience hidden layers of suffering like the feelings listed above, though they do so in their own ways in their contexts and cultures. This meditation

prepares us for meditation 8, in which we sense all those around us as harboring hidden layers of suffering, just as we do, which empowers deepening compassion for all of us.

We get **overwhelmed by suffering when it feels like it comprises our whole reality**. **This practice prevents that, by helping us experience suffering feelings as encompassed in a larger awareness** of compassionate openness, deep acceptance and warmth, where such feelings can heal, transform and release.

MEDITATION 8: EXTENDING COMPASSION TO OTHERS IN LAYERS OF SUFFERING WE SHARE

-1) Abdominal breathing. Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

2) Reconnecting with love and compassion: Now bring to mind your field of care as present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy and tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and heart and mind—every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

3) Extending: Now **envision someone dear to you** in front. While continuing to receive the loving energy from within your field of care, let this energy come through you to that person, as if you are a windowpane for it. Let this flow of energy help you commune with them in their deep dignity and worth, while sensing them in their hidden layers of suffering and wishing them deeply well and free of suffering. After a little while, **do the same while envisioning a stranger** in front; then (when ready for this step) **someone you have disliked**.

If a part of you feels doubtful about this or starts to draw your attention away, just settle back into your field of care and become compassionately aware of that part of you and its feelings in a fully allowing, spacious way. If it settles, you can return to the extending practice.

4) Releasing: After a little while, just settle into this felt sense of love and compassion. Let this help your mind to trust, relax deep within, release its grip, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. In this way, let the mind settle back into the spacious awareness that has always been in the background—naturally wide open, all-pervasive, and radiant. Let this spacious, unwavering backdrop of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that start to form just unwind and release within this total openness of awareness, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 8: We do this practice in the morning as an anchor for the day, and reconnect with it throughout the day in many moments. As we do so, we increasingly sense everyone around us as possessed of hidden layers of stress and suffering analogous to our own. By sensing those hidden layers in all others, including strangers and even those we have disliked, **the practice further breaks down biases** that impede more inclusive and unconditional love and compassion. It thereby prepares us for Meditations 9 and 10 below. Meditation 8 can also further empower us to be less self-defended, readier to listen to others whose culturally, socially, racially, ethnically, sexually or religiously embedded experience differs from our own. **Accessing our capacities** of care, empathy and compassion **through meditation is necessary** to

support our empathy for others, **but not complete**. **To further educate our empathy, we need to build relationships with others whose life experiences differ from our own, through ways of coming to know each other:** opening new spaces for people to connect and find their voice, literature, film, theatre, etc.

Preparing for Meditation 9: Generating a Strong Will of Compassion for Action

The next meditation, 9, makes us very present to others' suffering without getting overcome by it or thinking that we have to turn away. With our field of care practice, we learned to establish a secure inner core of love and compassion. With that secure core in place, our awareness of others' suffering can fuel a power of compassion for them that does not get overwhelmed or depleted and can generate a strong motivation for action.

Compassion *empathizes* with others in their suffering and wishes them free of it. The empathy of compassion resonates with others in their adversity, sensing or imagining what it must feel like for them to experience that. **Empathic distress** occurs when we turn inward and get caught up in the pain of our own empathy for others who are suffering. Repeated empathic distress in caregivers and activists can lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout. In this meditation, we learn how to avoid empathic distress, by letting the power of love and compassion from our field of care **guide our empathic attention caringly outward toward others**, so we don't internalize the suffering as empathic distress. Instead, we generate a powerful energy and attitude of compassion that is ready to respond.

Two key purposes of this meditation, then, are **to develop skill at channeling empathy into compassion instead of empathic distress, and to bring out a strong willpower of compassion for action**. You will begin by reestablishing your secure core of love and compassion with your field of care. Then you will bring to mind someone, or some group, whose suffering deeply touches your heart—like you can't bear that they have to experience that. You may think of someone in your family or community in that way. Or you may think of someone or a group you have heard of anywhere in the world, whose suffering moves you.

MEDITATION 9: GENERATING A STRONG WILL OF COMPASSION FOR ACTION

-1) Abdominal breathing. Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

2) Reconnecting with love and compassion: Now bring to mind your field of care as present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy and tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and heart and mind—every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

3) Letting what touches your heart evoke strong care and compassion: Now, while continuing to feel the resonance of that care, bring to mind a person or group whose suffering deeply touches your heart, sensing the suffering they must be experiencing. How must it feel for them in heart and mind? What other feelings may be arising for them? Take some time to deepen your empathy in this way.

But don't get stuck in the pain of this empathy. Instead, let the power of this empathy generate an intense compassion from your heart that wishes them free of all the pain and suffering that obstructs their wellbeing. Let this wish and energy of compassion radiate powerfully from your heart to that person or group, infusing their whole being and environment in the healing power of compassion, wishing them deeply well and free of all causes of their distress and suffering, each in their own best way. After a little while, let this compassionate wish and energy now extend to all beings who experience the sufferings of living and dying in this world, infusing their whole being and environment in the healing power of compassion, wishing them deeply well and free.

4) Releasing: After a little while, just settle into this felt sense of love and compassion. Let this help your mind to trust, relax deep within, release its grip, and become completely open like space, beyond reference points. In this way, let the mind settle back into the spacious awareness that has always been in the background—naturally wide open, all-pervasive, and radiant. Let this spacious, unwavering backdrop of awareness draw you into unity with it. Let any patterns of thought or feeling that start to form just unwind and release within this total openness of awareness, by letting all be.

Processing Meditation 9

Again, **empathic distress** occurs when our attention turns inward on ourselves, so we get caught up in our own feelings of pain from empathizing with others that are suffering. In contrast, the power of love and compassion in **this meditation directs our empathic attention compassionately outward toward others**, so we don't internalize the suffering as empathic distress. **A further protection from empathic distress** is the wisdom we have cultivated in all prior meditations of SCT—the awareness that suffering is never the only reality here, but is embraced in a much larger reality of openness, warmth and care in which it can transform and deeply heal. The instruction of Meditation 9 also **points us in a direction of creative responsiveness for action**, by turning our attention to causes of distress and suffering, encouraging us to deepen our learning and response to such causes.

APPLYING SCT TO SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL ACTIVISM: MEDITATION 10

When we progressively train in meditations 1 through 9 in daily practice, they empower meditation 10, which applies SCT to activism for social and ecological change.

Preparing for Meditation 10: Extending Compassion for Social and Ecological Action

Think of some injustice you deeply care about in empathy for those who are suffering, e.g. protection of immigrants and refugees, protecting living beings and the natural world, racial injustice, women's rights, affordable healthcare for all, protecting the unborn, protecting LGBTQ+ persons, gun laws, good education for all, protecting the unjustly imprisoned, or another issue you care deeply about. Think first of those who are suffering in that way, for whom you deeply care. Then think of someone who fights for the other side of that issue, against the changes that you see as necessary to address that suffering.

MEDITATION 10: EXTENDING COMPASSION BOTH TO THOSE SUFFERING FROM INJUSTICE AND TO THOSE FIGHTING THE CHANGES YOU THINK NEEDED TO ADDRESS THE INJUSTICE

-1) Abdominal breathing: Sit in a relaxed way, with back comfortably straight, eyes gazing gently downward. Come down from the thinking mind into the body. Let the breath settle into its own natural rhythm while breathing into the abdomen so you feel it expand on each inhale. Feel the abdomen expanding and contracting with each breath. Let that feeling draw you into it more and more, breath by breath.

-2) Reconnecting with love and compassion: Now bring to mind your field of care as present here with you now. You are being seen as deeply worthy of love and care, beyond judgments. Relax into the felt sense of this experience, steeping in its loving energy and tender qualities, and letting them infuse your whole being. Accept this loving energy and its qualities into your whole body and heart and mind—every part of you loved in its very being. Feel the unconditional quality of this care.

-3) Extending: Let the loving energy come through you to those who are suffering under the injustice (humans or other beings). Let this caring energy help you connect with them in their dignity and potential, sensing them also in their layers of suffering, and wishing them deeply well and free of the causes of the suffering. After a little while, let the loving energy come through you both to that first group who is suffering, and now also to those who are fighting the changes you think are needed to address that suffering. Let the loving energy help you connect with them in their dignity and potential, sensing them also in their hidden layers of suffering, and wishing them deeply well and free from the causes of their suffering.

If a part of you feels doubtful about this or starts to draw your attention away, settle back into your field of care and become compassionately aware of that part of you and its feelings in a fully allowing, spacious way. If it settles, you can return to the extending practice.

-4) Releasing: After a little while, just relax into this felt sense of love and compassion. Let this help your heart and mind to trust, calm, release all of its frameworks, and become completely open. In that way, let the mind reunite with the natural openness that is already here, beyond reference points, like space. Let this unity of space and awareness do the meditating. Let patterns of thought and feeling that arise just unwind and release within this utter openness of awareness, this space of deep acceptance, by letting everything be.

Processing Meditation 10

The purpose of this meditation is to help us retain connection with the dignity, worth, and potential of all the persons involved in any issue, without erasing disagreement on the issue. The aim is to empower our ability to confront people's ways of thinking and acting, not only on behalf of those suffering from an injustice, but also out of care for those who oppose the changes we see as necessary to end the injustice. From this fundamental posture of care for all involved can come a fuller capacity to hear all others, and the layers of pain that they may be speaking from. We need this to more fully inform any work we may do for social and ecological change.

This approach aligns with the principle of “nonviolent resistance” that Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. taught and modeled: “There is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies. When we look beneath the surface, beneath the impulsive evil deed, we see within our enemy-neighbor a measure of goodness and know that the viciousness and evilness of his acts are not quite representative of all that he is. We see him in a new light. We recognize that his hate grows out of fear, pride, ignorance, prejudice, and misunderstanding, but in spite of this, we know God's image is ineffably etched in his being. Then we love our enemies by realizing that they are not totally bad and that they are not beyond the reach of God's redemptive love.” *A Gift of Love*, 47-48

FURTHER RESOURCES

For orally guided meditations, SCT retreats, workshops, and videos go to **foundationforactivecompassion.org** or **sustainablecompassiontraining.org**.

SOME READINGS THAT INFORM SCT PRACTICE

- John Makransky, *Awakening through Love* (Wisdom, 2007).
- Paul Condon and John Makransky, “Sustainable Compassion Training: Correlating Meditation Theory with Psychological Science,” to be published soon.
- Paul Condon and John Makransky, “Recovering the Relational Starting Point of Compassion Training: A Foundation for Sustainable and Inclusive Care,” in press, *Perspectives on Psychological Science*.
- Tsoknyi Rinpoche, *Open Heart, Open Mind: Awakening the Power of Essence Love* (Harmony Books, 2012).
- Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche, *Training in Tenderness* (Shambhala, 2018)
- Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche, David Shlim, *Medicine and Compassion: A Tibetan Lama’s Guidance for Caregivers* (Wisdom Publications, 2006).
- Tulku Thondup, *The Healing Power of Mind* (Shambhala, 1996) and *The Heart of Unconditional Love* (Shambhala, 2015).
- Nyoshul Khenpo, Surya Das, *Natural Great Perfection: Dzogchen Teachings* (SnowLion, 1995)
- Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, *Crystal Clear: practical advice for Mahāmudrā meditators*
- Pema Chodron, *Start Where You Are* (Shambhala, 1994).
- Richard Schwartz, *Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model* (Trailheads, 2001).
- Martin Luther King, Jr., *A Gift of Love* (Beacon Press, 2018)