

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



4 TONGLÉN PRACTICES FOR WHEN YOUR HEART HURTS



FROM THE SEAMLESS PRACTICE SERIES

Lama Lekshe

RESPECTING THE PRACTICE



TONGLLEN IS VERY POWERFUL, RESPECT THE PRACTICE.

Tonglen, a profound practice in Tibetan Buddhism, embodies the essence of compassion and interconnectedness. Rooted in the Mahayana tradition, Tonglen translates to 'giving and taking' or 'sending and receiving' in Tibetan. At its core, Tonglen uses a transformative meditation where one visualizes taking in the suffering of others and giving them happiness and relief in return.

The practice challenges conventional notions of self-centeredness by encouraging us to embrace the suffering of others as our own. This empathetic exchange serves to dissolve the boundaries between self and other, fostering a deep sense of empathy and interconnectedness. Rather than recoiling from pain or being out of balance is seeking gain mostly for ourselves, we cultivate the courage to confront suffering head-on and alleviate it through the power of compassionate intention.

In Tonglen practice, the breath becomes a powerful tool for transformation. With each inhalation, we visualize ourselves drawing in the pain, fear, and discomfort of others, willingly allowing these negative emotions to dissolve within our own being. With each exhalation, we radiate out warmth, relief, and happiness, offering solace and comfort to those in need. This cyclic exchange of suffering and compassion is not only a practice of empathy but also a profound act of altruism and spiritual growth. It's also generosity practice. We give away the very things we most wish to keep. And we do it a way that is not transactional. We're not expecting compensation, or even recognition.

Tonglen is not about denying one's own pain or bypassing personal struggles; rather, it's a practice of expanding the heart to embrace the suffering of all beings, recognizing that individual well-being is intricately linked to the well-being of all beings. Like many Buddhist practices, this exercise of compassion and generosity can also have a profound impact on our sense of the very nature of our lives, our being, and all phenomena.

The practice of Tonglen traces its roots to ancient Tibetan Buddhist traditions, particularly within the Mahayana and Vajrayana lineages. Tonglen is part of a practice tool-box called Lojong. Although its exact origins are not precisely documented, Tonglen as we practice it here is often associated with the renowned Tibetan saint and scholar, Atisha (982–1054 CE). Atisha is credited with integrating the practice of Tonglen into his teachings as a means to cultivate compassion and bodhichitta, the altruistic aspiration for enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. Over the centuries, Tonglen has been passed down through oral transmission and written texts, becoming a treasured means for awakening. Today, it continues to be embraced and taught by spiritual teachers and practitioners around the world as a profound method for developing empathy, compassion, and wisdom, especially in these difficult times.

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A note for beginners

Because Tonglén changes our energies in a powerful way, I recommend exploring it gradually. When you think of a person who challenges you, begin with someone you find mildly annoying. Over time, you can work your way up to someone you more ardently dislike.

Also, I recommend not using children as the object of your practice in the beginning. Because we're so attached to our children, we can find ourselves derailed in all kinds of concerns like whether we are good parents or not. Those are valid questions, of course, but Tonglén done for adults seems to derail fewer people than Tonglén done with children, so start that way.

The last piece of advice is that when you finish a session, be sure to take time to let your energy settle. Just rest, seated or lying down and relax for a few minutes. Any energies that were stirred up will settle and you'll be balanced and at ease—ready to go!

Thank you for your practice. May it go well.

Lama Lekshe

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #1: ALL HEARTS ARE BROKEN. ALL HEARTS ARE WHOLE.

TONGLEN FOR YOURSELF

- If it is your Custom to do so, Take refuge in the 3 jewels and cultivate the heart of awakening.
- Rest in open awareness, fully present. Now relax, centered in this moment, this place. Come home to the body.
- Next, Visualize yourself in front of yourself, facing you. Spend a few moments feeling your suffering. no storytelling. Just feel the broken heart, or whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being (who is you) arise in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from your visualized self as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your actual body, and is brought inside on the inbreath. Stay present, thinking that your visualized self is relieved.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, such as your sense of humor or your intelligence or your health and offer all of those to your visualized self, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized self, where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch. Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE AN EASY, LOVING RELATIONSHIP

- Next, Visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you. Get in touch with their suffering. Spend a few moments feeling it. No storytelling. Just imagine if their heart was breaking, or their body was aching or any kind of suffering and whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it. Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #1: ALL HEARTS ARE BROKEN. ALL HEARTS ARE WHOLE. (CONT.)

TONGLEN FOR YOURSELF

- If it is your Custom to do so, Take refuge in the 3 jewels and cultivate the heart of awakening.
- Rest in open awareness, Fully present.
- Now relax, centered in this moment, this place. Come home to the body.
- Next, Visualize yourself in front of yourself, facing you.
- spend a few moments feeling your suffering. no storytelling. Just feel the broken heart, or whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being (who is you) arise in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from your visualized self as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your actual body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking that your visualized self is relieved.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, such as your sense of humor or your intelligence or your health and offer all of those to your visualized self, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized self, where it is received.
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- Next, Visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you.
- Get in touch with their suffering. Spend a few moments feeling it. No storytelling. Just imagine if their heart was breaking, or their body was aching or any kind of suffering and whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
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HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #1: ALL HEARTS ARE BROKEN. ALL HEARTS ARE WHOLE. (CONT.)

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE 'NEUTRAL'— WHO YOU FEEL NOT MUCH (OR EVEN NO) CONNECTION TO

- Next, Visualize the so-called neutral person in front of yourself, facing you. Notice their body, their expressions and so on. Notice your reactions when facing this stranger.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. No storytelling. Just feel how it is for you to be in the presence of their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this stranger of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from the other person as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking the stranger in front of you is in fact, relieved.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of the 'neutral person', where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU FEEL CHALLENGED BY

- Now, visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you. Notice the things about them that you don't like. Try not to get caught up in a story, make it more like watching them from across a room. Notice the reactions in your body and mind as you imagine this person there near you.
- Understand that all beings want to be happy and safe. So like you and me, and everyone else, look at this person from this view. Some beings are very confused about how to get happy and safe, and they do all kinds of things that actually increase their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart. It might be faint. You might have to fake it. Go easy. If you get distracted, just return to the visualization keep cultivating the compassionate heart.
- Without needing to name or correctly identify their suffering, as you engage in the compassionate wish that you might take on their suffering and its causes, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. Breathe it in with the wish to take it on so they don't have to. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #1: ALL HEARTS ARE BROKEN. ALL HEARTS ARE WHOLE. (CONT.)

- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly. Notice what arises for you. Don't turn away from your genuine reactions. Just notice whatever arises. It might be familiar; it might surprise you. Stay connected to your experience.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received. Give fully and freely as much as you can.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR ALL BEINGS

- Now visualize all beings. Imagine they fill all of space in front of you, behind you, under you, above you. All beings throughout all of space and time. Understand that every being has suffering of some kind: the suffering of pain; the suffering of change and the suffering of living in this realm, where we are always driven by our confusion, grasping and aversion.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. How is it to be in the midst of all this suffering. Do you feel fearful or challenged? Do you check out? Do you immediately want to fix every last bit? Just notice.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve all of these beings of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind. If you get distracted, just keep bringing awareness back to the suffering of all beings.
- Staying present with their suffering, imagine it rises from the whole of all sentient beings as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath. Of course, this is a visualization, so it will fit! Imagine yourself receiving it all. Notice how that experience is for you. Don't slip into belief—take note of your ACTUAL experience.
- Stay present, thinking all beings present with you are actually relieved. How does that feel in your body and mind?
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that you offer them to each being on a flash of blinding light that enters all beings, and imagine that they really do experience those blessing.
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive, over and over. Do your experiences change? Stay in touch with body and mind.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—feeling and remaining present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle. Don't rush this stage. Let your experiences and energy settle like snow in a snow globe. Settling. Settling.
- Now relax for a few breaths.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #1: ALL HEARTS ARE BROKEN. ALL HEARTS ARE WHOLE. (CONT.)

DEDICATE THE MERIT OF THE PRACTICE

- Great goodness comes from aspiring to be compassionate and generous. Even when it is difficult and we feel stuck, things are changing and growing. No need to judge. Insights may also arise. The less you infuse your tonglen practice with storytelling, the more you just rest in direct experience, the more powerful it will be.
- Gather the virtue in the practice and share it with every single sentient being for the benefit of their awakening. Make the wish that all of us be freed from confusion, anger, jealousy, greed, pride and other obstacles; and that we recognize the truth of our being. ♥

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PRACTICE #2: HARM IS THE CAUSE OF HARM. LOVE IS THE CAUSE OF LOVE.

INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE #2

- When someone is confused (as we all are, sometimes, though of course, some beings are more confused than others) we cause harm. Often it's because we feel unsafe, or because we are confused about what causes the happiness and safety we so deeply wish for, and in that confusion we do things that we hope will make us happy, but those words or actions actually make us feel worse.
- Some of our suffering is caused by circumstances in our life. When we are hurt, we retaliate or withdraw and the result is often more confusion and even more suffering. As our suffering increases, we tend to inflict it on others. Some people say, "Misery loves company." But actually misery demands company! Those experiences that have harmed us create wounds and we carry them around, and sometimes we develop complex strategies to avoid such stuff in the future. This is not only true for us, but also for the people we have a hard time with. Our basic nature is good, and so is theirs, but lifetimes of not being able to deal skillfully with suffering can leave a person's basic goodness deeply buried under protective strategies and habits, many of which cause harm to the person, and also cause them to harm or alienate others.
- Since we are all to some degree in the same boat when it comes to this cycle of suffering, if we come to understand it in ourselves, we can begin to experientially understand others. This can help us more naturally be inclined to compassion instead of aversion or hatred. By naturally hating less, we heal more.
- Tonglen practice does more than 'fix' our broken patterns. It does more than heal old wounds and increase our tolerance for the suffering and harm of others. It helps us connect in a way that words cannot really describe to a deep tenderness for all beings—including ourselves, friends, strangers, and 'enemies'. This tenderness heals us and helps us feel more connected to the very fabric of existence and our own highest potential.

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PRACTICE #2: HARM IS THE CAUSE OF HARM. LOVE IS THE CAUSE OF LOVE.

TONGLEN FOR YOURSELF

- If it is your Custom to do so, Take refuge in the 3 jewels and cultivate the heart of awakening.
- Rest in open awareness, fully present.
- Now relax, centered in this moment, this place. Come home to the body.
- Next, Visualize yourself in front of yourself, facing you.
- spend a few moments feeling your suffering. no storytelling. Just feel the broken heart, or whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being (who is you) arise in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from your visualized self as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your actual body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking that your visualized self is relieved.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, such as your sense of humor or your intelligence or your health and offer all of those to your visualized self, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized self, where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE AN EASY, LOVING RELATIONSHIP

- Next, Visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you.
- Get in touch with their suffering. Spend a few moments feeling it. No storytelling. Just imagine if their heart was breaking, or their body was aching or any kind of suffering and whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
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TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE 'NEUTRAL'—WHO YOU FEEL NOT MUCH (OR EVEN NO) CONNECTION TO

- Next, Visualize the so-called neutral person in front of yourself, facing you. Notice their body, their expressions and so on. Notice your reactions when facing this stranger.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. No storytelling. Just feel how it is for you to be in the presence of their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this stranger of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from the other person as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking the stranger in front of you is in fact, relieved.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of the 'neutral person', where it is received.
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- Understand that all beings want to be happy and safe. So like you and me, and everyone else, look at this person from this view. Some beings are very confused about how to get happy and safe, and they do all kinds of things that actually increase their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart. It might be faint. You might have to fake it. Go easy. If you get distracted, just return to the visualization keep cultivating the compassionate heart.
- Without needing to name or correctly identify their suffering, as you engage in the compassionate wish that you might take on their suffering and its causes, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. Breathe it in with the wish to take it on so they don't have to. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly. Notice what arises for you. Don't turn away from your genuine reactions. Just notice whatever arises. It might be familiar; it might surprise you. Stay connected to your experience.

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- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received. Give fully and freely as much as you can. Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

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- Now visualize all beings. Imagine they fill all of space in front of you, behind you, under you, above you. All beings throughout all of space and time. Understand that every being has suffering of some kind: the suffering of pain; the suffering of change and the suffering of living in this realm, where we are always driven by our confusion, grasping and aversion.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. How is it to be in the midst of all this suffering. Do you feel fearful or challenged? Do you check out? Do you immediately want to fix every last bit? Just notice.
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- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath. Of course, this is a visualization, so it will fit! Imagine yourself receiving it all. Notice how that experience is for you. Don't slip into belief—take note of your ACTUAL experience.
- Stay present, thinking all beings present with you are actually relieved. How does that feel in your body and mind?
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that you offer them to each being on a flash of blinding light that enters all beings, and imagine that they really do experience those blessing.
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive, over and over. Do your experiences change? Stay in touch with body and mind.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—feeling and remaining present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle. Don't rush this stage. Let your experiences and energy settle like snow in a snow globe. Settling. Settling. Now relax for a few breaths.

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DEDICATE THE MERIT OF THE PRACTICE

- Great goodness comes from aspiring to be compassionate and generous. Even when it is difficult and we feel stuck, things are changing and growing. No need to judge. Insights may also arise. The less you infuse your tonglen practice with storytelling, the more you just rest in direct experience, the more powerful it will be.
- Gather the virtue in the practice and share it with every single sentient being for the benefit of their awakening. Make the wish that all of us be freed from confusion, anger, jealousy, greed, pride and other obstacles; and that we recognize the truth of our being. ♥

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PRACTICE #3: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING

INTRODUCTION TO PRACTICE #3

- Grieving is a natural response to loss. There's no reason to feel shame or guilt about a grieving process. One of the possible things about a prolonged grief experience, though, is that we can begin to feel alone in our grief. This can trigger difficult habit-patterns related to both loneliness and grieving. Tonglen gives us a way to be intimate with grief and and to fortify our experiential understanding that in any moment of grieving, we are connected all those who are grieving, have grieved or will grieve
- Tonglen practice can give us contact with the grief of the world in general. We can even feel we have met grief itself in a kind of on-going relationship, and we can begin to see what it teaches us. Grief can eventually become an ally to awakening—a friend on the spiritual path.
- As before, there is nothing to believe in this practice. It's an experiment. If you choose to run this experiment, please do it wholeheartedly. You are more likely to experience satisfying insights and experiences. Take your time. Be gentle but determined in your practice.
- Since some amount of grief is inevitable in life, doing Tonglen with the experiences of grief allows us to use the grief for awakening. Since our gradual awakening impacts others, when we heal ourselves, we heal each other, too.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #3: TONGLÉN FOR WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING (CONT.)

TONGLÉN FOR YOURSELF

- If it is your Custom to do so, Take refuge in the 3 jewels and cultivate the heart of awakening.
- Rest in open awareness, fully present.
- Now relax, centered in this moment, this place. Come home to the body.
- Next, Visualize yourself in front of yourself, facing you.
- spend a few moments feeling your suffering. no storytelling. Just feel the broken heart, or whatever comes up.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being (who is you) arise in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from your visualized self as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your actual body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking that your visualized self is relieved.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, such as your sense of humor or your intelligence or your health and offer all of those to your visualized self, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized self, where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLÉN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE AN EASY, LOVING RELATIONSHIP

- Next, Visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you.
- Get in touch with their suffering. Spend a few moments feeling it. No storytelling. Just imagine if their heart was breaking, or their body was aching or any kind of suffering and whatever comes up.
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- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
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PRACTICE #3: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING (CONT.)

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- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU FEEL CHALLENGED BY

- Now, visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you. Notice the things about them that you don't like. Try not to get caught up in a story, make it more like watching them from across a room. Notice the reactions in your body and mind as you imagine this person there near you.
- Understand that all beings want to be happy and safe. So like you and me, and everyone else, look at this person from this view. Some beings are very confused about how to get happy and safe, and they do all kinds of things that actually increase their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart. It might be faint. You might have to fake it. Go easy. If you get distracted, just return to the visualization keep cultivating the compassionate heart.
- Without needing to name or correctly identify their suffering, as you engage in the compassionate wish that you might take on their suffering and its causes, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. Breathe it in with the wish to take it on so they don't have to. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly. Notice what arises for you. Don't turn away from your genuine reactions. Just notice whatever arises. It might be familiar; it might surprise you. Stay connected to your experience.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #3: TONGLÉN FOR WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING (CONT.)

- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received. Give fully and freely as much as you can.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLÉN FOR ALL BEINGS

- Now visualize all beings. Imagine they fill all of space in front of you, behind you, under you, above you. All beings throughout all of space and time. Understand that every being has suffering of some kind: the suffering of pain; the suffering of change and the suffering of living in this realm, where we are always driven by our confusion, grasping and aversion.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. How is it to be in the midst of all this suffering. Do you feel fearful or challenged? Do you check out? Do you immediately want to fix every last bit? Just notice.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve all of these beings of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind. If you get distracted, just keep bringing awareness back to the suffering of all beings.
- Staying present with their suffering, imagine it rises from the whole of all sentient beings as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath. Of course, this is a visualization, so it will fit! Imagine yourself receiving it all. Notice how that experience is for you. Don't slip into belief—take note of your ACTUAL experience.
- Stay present, thinking all beings present with you are actually relieved. How does that feel in your body and mind?
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that you offer them to each being on a flash of blinding light that enters all beings, and imagine that they really do experience those blessing.
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive, over and over. Do your experiences change? Stay in touch with body and mind.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—feeling and remaining present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle. Don't rush this stage. Let your experiences and energy settle like snow in a snow globe. Settling. Settling.
- Now relax for a few breaths.

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #3: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING (CONT.)

DEDICATE THE MERIT OF THE PRACTICE

- Great goodness comes from aspiring to be compassionate and generous. Even when it is difficult and we feel stuck, things are changing and growing. No need to judge. Insights may also arise. The less you infuse your tonglen practice with storytelling, the more you just rest in direct experience, the more powerful it will be.
- Gather the virtue in the practice and share it with every single sentient being for the benefit of their awakening. Make the wish that all of us be freed from confusion, anger, jealousy, greed, pride and other obstacles; and that we recognize the truth of our being. ❤️

HEALING THE BROKEN HEART



PRACTICE #4: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE REJOICING

INTRODUCTION PRACTICE #4

- Tonglen is not just a practice for difficult times! When we practice tonglen, we are also practicing the Four Immeasurables of loving-kindness, joy, compassion and equanimity. Those practices, too, are done in all kinds of circumstances. So here's a practice of tonglen for a time of rejoicing.
- The basic method and principles are the same: you take on suffering with a heart of compassion, and send out joy, with a heart of loving-kindness. You might wonder, "Why would I send out joy and blessings at a time when I am already in a situation that is causing me to rejoice?" There are lots of reasons.
 - One is that there's no such thing as too much joy and rejoicing. Why should we create false limits?
 - Another is that even in times of joy, because of the truth of impermanence, suffering is not far away. So, without clinging to any hope that the joy which arises by causes and conditions will last forever, let's enjoy it while we can.
 - Another thing is that the practice of the perfection (paramita) of generosity should incline us to celebrating not only our own joy, but we can celebrate all the joy, even the joy of those with whom we have challenging relationships (or perhaps especially those folks) as it undermines our tendencies to limit our love and care to those to whom we feel some affinity—thereby limiting our joy, unintentionally, and reinforcing our aversion.
 - Another reason to practice tonglen in times of rejoicing is that not all beings are rejoicing. As I write this booklet, there are more than 140 large-scale armed conflicts on our earth.
 - We practice all practices in all kinds of circumstances. This moves us towards non-duality. This trains us away from picking and choosing, and attraction and aversion—which are all part of the root system of human suffering.

GROWING THE JOYFUL HEART



PRACTICE #4: TONGLÉN FOR WHEN YOU ARE REJOICING

TONGLÉN FOR YOURSELF

- If it is your Custom to do so, Take refuge in the 3 jewels and cultivate the heart of awakening.
- Rest in open awareness, fully present.
- Now relax, centered in this moment, this place. Come home to the body.
- Next, Visualize yourself in front of yourself, facing you.
- Spend a few moments feeling your joy. Notice the joy of others, too. Now feel into the situation to see if there is any suffering. Not the suffering that might come later, but right now, in this moment. Can you find suffering, even in this joyful occasion? Can you feel a textural difference? Is there one? Where is it?
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve the suffering of your own body, heart and mind. Feel into that suffering so you know it first hand.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from your visualized self as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your actual body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking that your visualized self is relieved.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, such as your sense of humor or your intelligence or your health and offer all of those to your visualized self, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized self, where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLÉN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU HAVE AN EASY, LOVING RELATIONSHIP

- Next, visualize a person with whom you have a good relationship, in front of yourself, facing you.
- Get in touch with their joy in this moment, if they have some. Then, shift to look for their suffering. Spend a few moments feeling it. No storytelling. Just imagine if their heart was breaking, or their body was aching or even just perhaps that their joy will come to an end.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, Breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.
- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly.
- Now, Find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

GROWING THE JOYFUL HEART



PRACTICE #4: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE REJOICING

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE 'NEUTRAL'— WHO YOU FEEL NOT MUCH (OR EVEN NO) CONNECTION TO

- Next, Visualize the so-called neutral person in front of yourself, facing you. Notice their body, their expressions and so on. Notice your reactions when facing this stranger.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering, knowing that they, too, have suffering even in the midst of joy. If you don't know what their particular suffering is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. No storytelling. Just feel how it is for you to be in the presence of their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this stranger of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind.
- Staying present with the suffering, imagine it rises from the other person as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath.
- Stay present, thinking the stranger in front of you is in fact, relieved. How does it feel to notice their relief?
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of the 'neutral person', where it is received.
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle and then move to the next stage.

TONGLEN FOR SOMEONE WITH WHOM YOU FEEL CHALLENGED BY

- Now, visualize a person with whom you have a challenging relationship, in front of yourself, facing you. Notice the things about them that you don't like. Try not to get caught up in a story, make it more like watching them from across a room. Notice the reactions in your body and mind as you imagine this person there near you. Allow those feelings to arise, abide and dissolve.
- Understand that all beings want to be happy and safe. So like you and me, and everyone else, look at this person from this view. Some beings are very confused about how to get happy and safe, and they do all kinds of things that actually increase their suffering. They also have joy, and they may also be confused about how to encourage joy, and so, in seeking it, exacerbate their suffering.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve this being arise strongly in your heart. It might be faint. You might have to fake it. Go easy. If you get distracted, just return to the visualization keep cultivating the compassionate heart.
- Without needing to name or correctly identify their suffering, engage in the compassionate wish that you might take on their suffering and its causes, imagine it rises from their body as a dark cloud, or dark smoke. Breathe it in with the wish to experience it so they don't have to. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath, where you do indeed experience it.

GROWING THE JOYFUL HEART



PRACTICE #4: TONGLÉN FOR WHEN YOU ARE REJOICING

- Stay present, experiencing having taken on their suffering willingly. Notice what arises for you. Don't turn away from your genuine reactions. Just notice whatever arises. It might be familiar; it might surprise you. Stay connected to your experience.
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that they leave your actual body on a flash of blinding light that enters the body of your visualized loved one, where they are received. Give fully and freely as much as you can.
- Stay in touch with your feelings at this giving. Notice them without any judgement or commentary. Just watch.
- Repeat this on many in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—learning and present. Then rest.

TONGLÉN FOR ALL BEINGS

- Now visualize all beings. Imagine they fill all of space in front of you, behind you, under you, above you. All beings throughout all of space and time. Understand that every being has suffering of some kind: the suffering of pain; the suffering of change and the suffering of living in this realm, where we are always driven by our confusion, grasping and aversion. They also all have joy of some kind.
- Spend a few moments connecting with their suffering. If you don't know what it is... no problem, make some guesses without too much thinking. Everyone suffers. How is it to be in the midst of all this suffering? Do you feel fearful or challenged? Do you check out? Do you immediately want to fix every last bit? Do you feel some people deserve it? Just notice. Let go of narratives and rest in experience, as if watching a movie.
- Let the compassionate wish to relieve all of these beings of their suffering arise in your heart. Notice this experience in your body-mind. If you get distracted, just keep bringing awareness back to the suffering of all beings.
- Staying present with their suffering, imagine it rises from the whole of all sentient beings as a dark cloud, or dark smoke.
- On an inbreath, when you feel ready, breathe in that suffering with the willingness to experience it yourself. Imagine it enters your body, and is brought inside on the inbreath. Of course, this is a visualization, so it will fit! Imagine yourself receiving it all. Notice how that experience is for you. Don't slip into belief—take note of your ACTUAL experience. Each time you do the practice, it will be different,
- Stay present, thinking all beings present with you are actually relieved. How does that feel in your body and mind?
- Now, find many blessings that you have and cherish, as before, and imagine that you offer them to each being on a flash of blinding light that enters all beings, and imagine that they really do experience those blessing. .
- Stay in touch with your feelings as you give and they receive, over and over. Do your experiences change? Stay in touch with body and mind.
- Repeat this on in-breaths and out-breaths, staying in touch with all your experience—feeling and remaining present.
- When you have done enough, rest and let the energy settle. Don't rush this stage. Let your experiences and energy settle like snow in a snow globe. Settling. Settling. Now relax for a few breaths.

GROWING THE JOYFUL HEART



PRACTICE #4: TONGLEN FOR WHEN YOU ARE REJOICING

DEDICATE THE MERIT OF THE PRACTICE

- Great goodness comes from aspiring to be compassionate and generous. Even when it is difficult and we feel stuck, things are changing and growing. No need to judge. Insights may also arise. The less you infuse your tonglen practice with storytelling, the more you just rest in direct experience, the more powerful it will be.
- Gather the virtue in the practice and share it with every single sentient being for the benefit of their awakening. Make the wish that all of us be freed from confusion, anger, jealousy, greed, pride and other obstacles; and that we recognize the truth of our being. You might also take the time to make the wish that all beings have joy of every kind. ♥