

Forgiveness meditation

Choose three people, a beloved (living or dead), a neutral person (a real person but with whom you have little or no acquaintance) and an 'enemy' (your self, or someone you have unfinished forgiveness issues with – living or dead).

Call the beloved to your presence. Speak with him/her. Tell him why you chose him as your beloved, what you owe to him, how you feel about him, etc. and grow in their love right now. Increase your love by praying the compassion meditation prayer for your beloved asking God to bestow on him every conceivable blessing that the loving heart of God is capable of giving.

Compassion prayer for the beloved

May you be happy, may you be free, may you be loving, may you be loved.

May God bless you and keep you.

May God show his countenance to you.

May God grace you with a surpassing peace beyond all understanding.

May you know God's love in all its fullness.

May you be forgiven your every transgression.

May you find happiness in all that you are and in all that you do.

May you forever grow before God in faith, hope and love.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Remain for a few moments in this love.

Compassion meditation prayer for a neutral person

Ask your beloved for his/her information to share, even on an emotional level, the precious love you have for this neutral person. Permission will always be granted because it is the very nature of love to share itself. Then, together with your beloved, with great sincerity and intensity offer for the neutral person this prayer.

May you be happy, may you be free, may you be loving will you be loved.

May God abide with you now and forever.

May he show his face to you and grant you his peace.

In your spiritual journey, may every day of your life bring you closer to union with God.

May God forgive all of your offenses.

May you know the joy of his love.

May you know the peace of his presence.

May you experience the grace of the Holy Spirit in all that you do.

May you recognize the presence of Christ in your daily life and in all those whom you serve.

May your heart be filled with love, your mind with God's truth in your words with wisdom.

May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Be at peace now for a few moments in love with these two persons.

Finally, you are going to call to mind an enemy. 'Enemy' may be too strong a word but we will refer it to anybody, including ourselves, with whom we have unfinished forgiveness issues.

Ask the first two persons for their information the love you have experienced with them, even on an emotional level, with this enemy. Together with them say with great intensity and sincerity the following compassion meditation prayer for your enemy (remember, this may be yourself).

God grant that you may be happy, that you may be free, that you may be loving, that you may be be loved.

May you know God's forgiveness.

Insofar as I can right now, I forgive you.

May the Holy Spirit restore you to the image and likeness of God in which you have been created.

May you experience the peace of God's mercy and grace.

May the Holy Spirit abide with you and be present in all that you do.

May you forgive others even as God forgives you.

May you walk in newness of life with the risen Christ.

May you know that Christ died for your sins and rose for your justification.

May you know that, God so loved you, that he gave his only son for your sake.

I recognize that God loves you even as he loves me. May Almighty God bless us, the father, the son and the Holy Spirit, and remain with us forever.

Now be at peace and love for a moment or two with these three persons.

Nine personality profiles

Two Christian principles

1. Humility
2. Each type finds its fulfillment in God.

Origins: Especially desert fathers.

Nine types – General principles.

Based on motivation not activity. Desire for approval, security, control, that is love. A broken humanity. Found only in God.

Example – type number one – perfectionist. Erroneously convinced that he would get love only to the degree that he did everything right.

Look at nine types from 1. Erroneous way to get love. 2. The vice. 3. The virtue. 4. The worldview.

Type 1. The perfectionist. Gets love only by doing everything right. Vice is anger, virtue is tranquility. Worldview: what's wrong with this picture?

Type 2. The helper. Gets love by serving others. Vices humility, virtue ?
Worldview: how can I help.

Type 3. The achiever. Will get love only to the degree that he is successful. Vice is deception, virtue is honesty. Worldview: how can I come out on top?

Type 4. The dramatic romanticist. Erroneously thinks she can get love by being unique. Her vice is envy, her virtue is equanimity. Worldview: this is all about me.

Type 5. The thinker. Erroneously thinks she will get love only to the degree that she knows all the answers. Vice is avarice, virtue is generosity. Worldview: How does it all fit together?

Type 6. The loyalist. Does not fit in exactly with other types: erroneously thinks he will get love only to the degree that he is loyal. Vice is fear, virtue is courage. Worldview: how can I protect myself?

Type 7. The optimist. Erroneously thinks he will get love only to the degree that he can avoid suffering. Vice is gluttony, virtue is moderation. Worldview: What's new you?

Type 8. The boss. The champion. Erroneously thinks he will get love only to the degree that he is in charge. Vice is lust, virtue is innocence. Worldview: ???

Type 9. The moderator. Thinks he can get involved if you can avoid conflict. Two ways – run away from it or solve it. Vice is sloth, virtue is industry. Worldview: ???

Contemplative (centering) meditation

In contemplative meditation I totally give myself to God in love. Love may include feelings and emotions but goes beyond them both. It is a bonding cemented by the Holy Spirit which enables us to love God with a perfect love. In this meditation, we not only love God but we love all that God loves. This includes all of those near and dear to us, those further away, e.g. whom we do not personally know and also our enemies. In fact, in our contemplative love, we embrace in a bonding union, all of God's creation, omitting nothing.

The Method

Centering (contemplative) meditation according to the "Cloud of Unknowing"

1. Begin your prayer by acknowledging the presence of God. Use the following prayer or something similar in your own words. "O God unto whom all hearts are open, before whom no secret thing is hidden and unto whom desire is eloquent, purify the thoughts of my heart by the outpouring of your Holy Spirit, so that I may love you with a perfect love and praise you as you deserve through Christ our Lord."
2. Choose a prayer word (mantra), preferably the name of God (Yahweh, Lord, Christ, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Abba, Father etc.). Invest this name with the fullness of your love for God whether it be great or small. Quietly and gently, from the heart, repeat this name as an expression of your love. Do this for five minutes at first and gradually increase it to 10 minutes, to 15 minutes and perhaps if you are so inclined, to 20 minutes as a permanent timeframe. Again as you are inclined, do this prayer every day, a few days a week, on Sundays, or whenever you feel called to it.
3. In the process of gently speaking this prayer word from your heart, three things can happen. First, the most common and frequent happening will be distractions. Do not be concerned about them. They are an essential part of the meditation. As often as you are aware that you are having a distraction simply say to yourself, "I will go back to my prayer" and continue with your prayer word. Second, you may fall asleep. This is not a problem as while you are sleeping in this context your heart is still loving God. When you wake up, simply do the same thing. Say, I will go back to my prayer. Third, you may 'transcend'. This means that your prayer word may stop, you are not sleeping, you are simply, quietly and lovingly in the presence of God. This may happen for greater or lesser period of time.
4. When you realize that it has happened, simply say, "I will go back to my prayer." Love begins when nothing is expected in return so we do not seek distractions, we do not seek sleep, we do not seek to transcend. We simply seek to love God, expressing this love with our prayer word.
5. For many people the most common experience may be to be repeating the prayer word from your heart while distracting thoughts or images are accompanying it in your brain. Do not be concerned simply focus on the prayer word and continue your meditation. Conclude your meditation with a brief prayer, maybe the Lord's prayer or the Hail Mary or in your own words.

Further instructions or information can be found in Fr. Meninger's website

<contemplativeprayer.net> also in his book "The Loving Search for God" and Father Thomas Keating's book "Open Heart Open Mind".