A tall man stands in front of the room holding up a half a human cranium (which eerily resembles the bowl from which I ate my Thai food the night before). This Tibetan Skull Cup is used in Tantric Buddhist rituals to symbolize impermanence and a quest for an empty mind. This symbol sets the tone for the evening’s lecture.

Dr. Barbara Fredrickson and Sharon Salzberg share the stage at the Rubin Museum in New York City as part of their Brainwave Series exploring the intersection of mind and matter. Psychologist and meditation teacher together discuss the Western science of Eastern practices of meditation.

One of Barbara Fredrickson’s contributions to the field of positive psychology is the understanding of the purpose that positive emotions play in the human experience, to broaden behavioral repertoires and build durable resources. She describes 3 to 1 as a tipping point: people who are often above a ratio of three positive emotions to every negative emotion are more likely to flourish. Meditation is a powerful way to increase the positivity ratio.

Sharon Salzberg teaches many Eastern approaches to cultivating a flourishing life.

One of the most powerful is the loving kindness meditation, also known as Metta Bhavana. This practice involves cultivating and
Fredrickson cited recent field research on 139 adults randomly assigned to practice daily loving kindness meditation and attend workshops, or to be on a wait list control group for a total of 9 weeks. The basis for the study was to test the hypothesis that loving kindness meditation could increase positive emotions, which would increase durable resources, in turn increasing life satisfaction. Participants directed loving, kind feelings towards themselves, then to loved ones, acquaintances, strangers, and finally, all beings.

The research indicated that practicing loving kindness meditation increased positive emotions including love, joy, gratitude, contentment, hope, pride, amusement and awe. Participants also benefited from an increase in mindfulness, self-acceptance, positive relationships and good physical health, as well as increased life satisfaction.

According to Salzberg, “Negative emotions fixate and narrow our world view, who we are, what we are capable of and where our joy is to be found.” The Loving Kindness Meditation opens space for people to expand their perception of themselves and their connection to others.

Each meditation experience is unique. According to Fredrickson this is one of the beauties of meditation because it counters the hedonic treadmill—the tendency to adapt and experience lower levels of pleasure out of activities after doing them often.

According to Fredrickson’s research, positive emotions tend to be fleeting, less intense, less attention grabbing and more spread out than negative emotions. Daily practice of Loving Kindness Meditation can increase the frequency and potency of positive emotions, over time increasing our life satisfaction and building resources that support flourishing lives.

References


Not seeing the pictures for the book links? Disable Adblocking for this site to view them.
Emiliya – its interesting – I started off doing resilience workshops that included mindfulness, CBT(Karen Reivich's work) and many of the PP interventions (strengths etc).

Over 3 years I have refined the material based on feedback from clients as far as what had the most impact on their lives. This now means that 90% of the program is mindfulness.

Again as I always say on this forum a mediation is only one pathway to mindfulness. The trick is learning to accept your thinking. I have found that a loving kindness meditation works for some people but not everyone. For example if relationships aren’t important then a loving kindness mediation won’t work.

I suspect BF needs to explore her work a little further. For example is LK meditation any more effective than a simple breathing exercise, or reciting a mantra – both far easier than an LK meditation.

Anyhow its great to see that the PP community is finally catching onto mindfulness.

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**CHRISTINE DUVIDIER**

April 21, 2009 - 8:42 pm

Hi Emiliya, Thanks for making the case for meditation so convincingly. Your article is easy to read and makes meditation more accessible to many. I’ve forwarded it to a bunch of people already and will forward to more.

Best,
Christine

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**NADYA PEEVA**

April 21, 2009 - 10:06 pm

What a great article, Emiliya – thank you!! You inspired me to start a loving kindness meditation practice of my own – something I’ve thought about but never actually tried. I can see how the benefits you describe would flow from a regular meditation practice that focuses on self-acceptance first and then intentionally expands the circle to include family, community and world. Love is indeed a verb as I’ve so often heard it described and one way to actualize the potential of love-in-action would be the type of practice you speak of. Thank you for this – I’ll listen to the guided meditation now!

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**RICHARD**

April 22, 2009 - 3:48 am

I really enjoyed this article which is a cut above much of what I read on the internet. So, thank you. I also like the implied integration of meditation and positive psychology. This is a direction I am completely committed to through my own work. Thanks again for an uplifting read.

best wishes,

Richard

[http://www.lifechoicemeditation.com](http://www.lifechoicemeditation.com)
Thanks for this.

As a result of reading BF’s book (on Kindle2) and several prior posts on this blog, I stared LKM with references here. It’s been a few weeks. Almost every day... We shall see...

Thanks to all for the advice and incentives...

LRMM

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MARIE WETMORE

Jan 25, 2012, 9:58 am

I love the post- and the website, I’m going to bookmark it! Thankfully a Google search led me to find you, and am so glad I did. I am by no means a Buddhist master but I do practice regularly and use meditation to inform my life coaching work. Lovingkindness has been one of the most helpful forms of meditation for me, so I hope your readers take advantage of the wonderful wisdom you are sharing. I wrote a little about lovingkindness from my perspective, including how it benefited me and some specific instruction on how to practice it. In case you’re interested here it is: [http://mariewetmore.com/2012/01/25/loving-kindness-meditation-behappier-kinder-and-more-compassionate/](http://mariewetmore.com/2012/01/25/loving-kindness-meditation-behappier-kinder-and-more-compassionate/)

I look forward to reading more of your posts!
Alex Sternick: Dear Ryan, It is so warming my heart to read your testimonial Of course, Singing in Gibberish...

Ryan Niemiec: Dear Alex, I also love singing with my kids in Gibberish! You are a real “treat” for this...

CoolWriter: To tell the truth, we lie almost constantly and every day: from small tricks and hushing up small flaws...

Admin K.H.B.: John, Given that this article was posted in 2009 and the work by Brown, Sokol, and Friedman to...

Ruth Hayes: Nice article. Related to this – a framework for ethical speech that was shared with me and that I...

John: You support a completely discredited hypothesis (Losada Line)?

John: Thank you Elaine. your review very great

Rebecca: This article really resonates with my personal journey of understanding my own cycles. Thank you for further...

David: As a man, I can say you nailed everything there is to know about men in relationships. In 2 lines! Secret #1:...

robinhood: Yeah! Very true, actually I heard about Carin Rockind even in the past that she has taught thousands of...

Lisa Buksbaum: You are both talented and wise.... think of all the lives you've enhanced. Twice graced with...

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The Loving Kindness Meditation opens space for people to expand their perception of themselves and their connection to others. Each meditation experience is unique. According to Fredrickson this is one of the beauties of meditation because it counters the hedonic treadmill—the tendency to adapt and experience lower levels of pleasure out of activities after doing them often. According to Fredrickson’s research, positive emotions tend to be fleeting, less intense, less attention grabbing and more spread out than negative emotions. Daily practice of Loving Kindness Meditation can increase the fr Positive Psychology News Daily » Loving Kindness Meditation instead of the Hedonic Treadmill. Emiliya Zhivotovkaya, MAPP, is the founder of Flourish, Inc. She is the creator of www.emiliya.com and www.positivepsycharticles.com, a site through which users can browse research in the field of Positive Psychology and add to the database. Full bio. positivepsychologynews.com. Compassion meditations such as wishing the well-being of others (loving-kindness meditation) seems connected to increased feelings of happiness. ‘How happy we are is changable, because the ‘wiring’ in our brain is not fixed and is subject to changing through intentional experience and practice. Practicing loving kindness meditation helps people increase the love that they have in their hearts not only for other people, but also for themselves. 4. Accept your emotions, whether they are positive or negative. Emotional avoidance can lead to many psychological problems. If you want to truly get past the mindset of the hedonic treadmill, then I suggest trying one or two of the strategies mentioned above. After you find that a few of them are working for you, continue on down the list. Free Step-by-Step Checklist (and Report): The Morning Routine for Peak Performance.