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**inspiration**



# A Kinder Heart

## Cultivating a Life of Compassion

by Amy Leigh Mercree

**T**he path to mentally transcending the world's intrusive bustle is to be compassionate with our self and others. It begins in a relaxed heart from which emanate daily thoughts, words and deeds. Here's a helpful centering exercise.

Sit or lie in a quiet spot for about 10 minutes with eyes closed and become aware of breaths moving in and out, then feel each one fully by filling the lungs from bottom to top. With each exhale, slowly and completely empty the lungs. On each inhale, refill the lungs again. Mentally reciting "optimum oxygen" three times helps the body deeply absorb the nourishing element.

Then bring both hands to the center of the chest to connect with the emotional heart centered there. Feel it pulsing beneath palms and fingers while quietly saying aloud, "I relax my heart." Let the shoulders release coiled tension and drop gently. Repeat saying, "I relax my heart" and sense the heart fluttering open a bit more. Rest in this feeling.

Again say, "I relax my heart" and notice awareness drop into it, a feeling of being present in the heart. Feel all tension and holding-on melting down and out onto the floor.

Then fill the lungs deeply and release the air through puckered lips; blow out with strength and purpose. Continue for a minute or two, allowing each exhalation to come straight from the center of the chest. When it feels complete, the feeling of active release will subside.

Sense how much lighter the heart feels. Further relax the heart and shoulders, letting go into the ocean of love native to our heart. Envision floating safety in this ocean. See it stretched into infinity. Feel its warm embrace.

Now choose kindness in this moment. Relax into kindness without judgment or pressure, only loving acceptance. Accept the infinite ocean of love available and open to it. It is filled with compassion, and now so are you.

Rest gently for a few minutes, until once again aware of everyday surroundings. Rub hands over both arms, legs, hands and feet to feel present in the room. Then go about a heart-centered day with the waves of the infinite ocean of love gently lapping there.

*Amy Leigh Mercree, of Naples, FL, author of The Compassion Revolution, is a medical intuitive and relationship and wellness coach. Learn more at AmyLeighMercree.com.*