

# TONGLEN MEDITATION

Refuge Recovery, Page 258

Find a comfortable posture that is alert and upright, but also relaxed and soft. Allow your eyes to close and bring full attention into your heart center. Allow the breath to feel as though it is entering and exiting directly through the heart.

## ***Pause***

Begin to reflect on all of greed, hatred, and confusion in this world we live in. Acknowledge how all beings are suffering on some level or another. Some are dying of starvation, some are dying of obesity. Some are suffering from oppression, some are suffering so much that they are oppressing others. Turn your heart and mind toward the truth of suffering in this world.

## ***Pause***

Now began to breathe in all the suffering in the world that you are aware of. Allow your heart to open and be filled with the sorrow of the world. Feel that pain, feel the grief, feel the sorrow. Let it all in.

## ***Pause***

Then let it all out, exhale waves of compassion in all directions. Send mercy and forgiveness to all living beings, to the whole world.

## ***Pause***

Do this over and over. Breathing in the suffering. Breathing out compassion.

## ***Three minutes of silence***

Begin to add a visual quality to the meditation. As you breath in, visualize the pain and suffering as black, heavy, and hot. Breathe in the dark fire of the world's sorrow.

## ***Pause***

As you exhale, visualize the mercy and compassion as white, light, and cool. Breathe out the soothing, cool, and refreshing intention of compassion.

## ***Pause***

Continue the hot/cold breathing for a few minutes.

## ***Three minutes of silence***

Next we come to the personal aspect of the practice, bringing to mind the specific situations in your life that are painful. Breathe into your heart the pain of your life situation, feeling it completely. Breathe out mercy and compassion for yourself.

## ***Pause***

Over and over, inhale suffering, exhale compassion.

## ***Two minutes of silence***

Begin to expand again. This time include the people in your life whom you love. Breathe in the pain and sorrow of your loved ones. See it as heavy, dark, and hot. Breathe out compassion for their sufferings. Experience the out breath as light, white and cooling.

## ***Pause***

Breathe in the sorrow. Breathe out loving, caring compassion.

## ***Two minutes of silence***

Now expand to include all the people that you do not already love. Include the pain and sorrow of the masses and even of your enemies. Everyone is suffering on one level or another, just like you.

## ***Pause***

Breathing in the suffering of humanity. Breathe out compassion for humanity.

Breathe in the pain that closes the hearts of our enemies. Breathe out the compassion that heals the wounds that create the unskillful actions of our enemies.

Work with this level for as long as it takes to begin to mean it. Eventually, you will sincerely care for the suffering of all living beings, including the most unskillful of your enemies.

### ***Two minutes of silence***

Last, we let go of the personal levels of our lives and of the human realms and expand the practice in all directions to include all forms of life. Include animals, insects, birds, fish, and so on. Breathe in the pain and suffering of all living beings. Breathe out compassion and love for all the world.

### ***Pause***

In – black, heavy and hot. Out – white, light and cool.

### ***Pause***

Remember to include yourself in this last section. You are part of this interconnected web of existence.

### ***Two minutes of silence***

Now, let go of the visualization and just breathe normally. Feel your breath and body. Pay attention to your heart and mind.

### ***Pause***

Ending the practice with the simple statement, *May I awaken the compassionate heart for the benefit of all living beings.*

### ***(Ring Bell)***