

# Why Can't I Seem to Get Along? Finding Empathy



In this meditation, we are going to focus on accepting the beautifully imperfect nature of relationships.

Find a quiet comfortable place to sit and close your eyes. Start to inhale and exhale, focusing attention on your breath.

Think of a recent conflict that you had with a spouse, your child, a friend or co-worker. What is bothering you about this? What do you want to say to this person? Get out your point of view.

Think or state out loud why are you upset and how you've been wronged. Notice the feelings that come up when you think of about the conflict. Don't be afraid to let yourself be angry, hurt or sad. Acknowledge the hurt or pain you feel and let out all the negativity.

Now, switch gears and let go of thinking; feel the sensations in your body that arise. Is your heart racing, your chest or throat becoming tighter? Where is the sensation located? What color is the pain or hurt? What shape?

Texture? Now breathe into that area and give these feelings space to dissipate. Give yourself some compassion for the hurt feelings you are experiencing. Take some more breaths and breathe into those areas that need it.

Now, focus on the other person and cultivate some empathy. This doesn't mean what they did is okay; we are simply trying to understand their intention without assumptions. Get into the other person's shoes without being defensive. What is their point of view? Are there other possibilities for what they did than to hurt you? Were they protecting themselves? Can you truly see where they are coming from? Again, not making excuses for their behavior, just try to understand their intentions. After all, their actions are based on their experiences and may not at all be personal to you.

Pretend you are now an independent, wise observer without bias, watching

# MINDFUL MANTRA: "I WILL EMBRACE THE IMPERFECT NATURE OF MY RELATIONSHIPS."

the conflict—or maybe your highest self, without your ego attached. Take a few breaths and think about this situation. What would that wise neutral observer say? What advice would he or she give you?

With your newfound knowledge, would you change anything you said or did? Take some time to reformulate your points and thoughts about the situation. Did you tell yourself a story that was not fully accurate? What judgments or assumptions did you make? Stick to the facts without judgments and opinions. Does that change anything? Can you see the good qualities in this person? Is it possible to accept them for who they are without liking or condoning their behavior? What did you like or love about them in the first place?

Maybe you can put down your imaginary protective shield when they act a certain way. Imagine yourself doing this. You will take away their power if you don't let them control your feelings. No one can make us feel anything; we are in control of how we feel.

What can you learn from this interaction? Each conflict has something to teach us if we can listen. Now repeat this mantra to yourself: "I will embrace the imperfect nature of my relationships." Continue breathing until the sound of the bell and when you're ready, slowly stretch and open your eyes.