

# MOM'S COMPASSION PRACTICE

When you are in the throes of everyday motherhood, sometimes all you see are problems to be solved. You manage the calendars, the schedules, the to-do lists. You manage the friendships, the play dates, the doctor and therapy appointments. You manage the sibling relationships, the growth mindset, the emotional regulation. You manage the meals, the chores, the housework, the carpools. You manage all of this and so much more that isn't even listed.

It's exhausting just reading this incomplete list of all the things you are managing. In the thick of all this, it's easy to get caught up. It's easy to get lost. It's easy to only see the problems to be solved and issues to deal with.

This mindfulness practice is just for you- the overwhelmed mom. Give yourself a few minutes to read through it once, then go back through more slowly, really leaning into it.

Find a comfortable, stable position, either seated or lying down, and observe several breaths.

Notice how you're feeling while letting go of striving or effort to feel otherwise. You cannot force yourself to feel relaxed, nonjudgmental, or anything else in particular.

Let yourself simply feel whatever you feel.



Picture your child. Imagine what you most wish for him.

This unbounded affection, deeper than any surface emotions, has traditionally been encompassed within four phrases: “May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you feel safe. May you live your life with ease.”

Use these phrases or any that capture your deepest wishes, and silently repeat them at a comfortable pace, timed to your breathing.

Continue repeating these wishes for your child, reminding yourself of your deepest intentions.

“**May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you feel safe. May you live your life with ease.**”

After several minutes, move on to yourself. Your inner critic may resist. Yet in spite of all your seeming mistakes, you have the same rights as anyone: “May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I feel safe. May I live my life with ease.”

Without any sort of demand, offer yourself the some wishes for well-being you extended to your child.

**May I be happy. May I be healthy.  
May I feel safe. May I live my life  
with ease.**



After several minutes, imagine a close friend or someone unconditionally supportive, a person for whom you have almost entirely positive feelings. This person also desires happiness, whether going through a stretch of relative ease or more acutely in need of your emotional support. If no one comes to mind, that's fine and quite common; just continue with the practice for yourself

After a few minutes have passed, move on to a neutral person, a stranger, someone you see around but don't really know—maybe someone at a local store or gas station, or who works nearby. Extend the same wishes to this neutral person without judging whatever you actually feel or aiming to push yourself. You're simply paying attention in this way.

Now think of a difficult person—not the most difficult, but someone you've disagreed with in a smaller way. Your perspectives differ and you must firmly take care of yourself, yet this difficult person's actions are also driven by a wish for happiness. If this person found relief from his own suffering, it's likely that his behavior would change. If it's easier, include yourself: "May we both be happy. May we both be healthy. May we both feel safe. May we both live our lives with ease."



**May we both be happy. May we both be healthy. May we both feel safe. May we both live our lives with ease.**

Next, picture your entire family for a while: "May all of us be happy. May all of us be healthy. May all of us feel safe. May we all live our lives with ease."



**May all of us be happy. May all of us be healthy. May all of us feel safe. May we all live our lives with ease.**

### Exercise Reflections

When you were focused on your child and repeating these wishes for them, what came up for you??

When you were focused on yourself and repeating these wishes for you, what came up for you??

When you were focused on others and repeating these wishes for them, what came up for you??