

TONGLEN
གཏོང་ལེན་
Radical Compassion

Metta Prayer

May all beings be
peaceful.

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be safe.

May all beings awaken to
the light of their true
nature.

May all beings be free.

Michela Sborchia
Heart Alchemy Institute



TONGLLEN

གཏོང་ལེན་

Radial Compassion

Dearest Hearts,

Let's talk about Compassion for a moment. Compassion is a powerful word that carries so much heart opening and healing energy. Studies have demonstrated that using the word Compassion and feeling its energy has the power to connect us deeply with our heart centre. Because the focus of this monthly meditation is to help you open and access the heart centre and to raise the vibration of love on earth, we are going to work with an ancient practice called Tonglen.

Tonglen is a Tibetan word (གཏོང་ལེན་) that can be translated with "giving and taking or sending and receiving". It is a very ancient and sacred meditation practice in Tibetan Buddhism. Some people find resistance when they start practising Tonglen, because the idea of breathing in the suffering of the world seems counterproductive. However, these sacred teachings show us that we are limitless divine being, with an infinite source of Love and Compassion and the ability to transform any suffering with love and kindness, through the power of the breath. And Breath is life, is the Divine flowing through you.

I came across the ancient Buddhist practice of Tonglen some years ago. It took me a long time to move through it properly. I am telling you this story because if you find it difficult to properly perform Tonglen or you are resisting it, it is a very normal process. This is an extremely powerful meditation and with some practice, it'll bring both you, your loved ones and this world many blessings and love.

When we start practising TONGLEN, we need to keep in mind some important points:

1. Tonglen is a powerful and the easiest meditation to transform energy I have ever experienced. It is easy and straightforward! Don't overthink this.
2. You don't announce to the world that you are doing Tonglen. You do it without expecting anything in return. You don't do it to be appreciated or loved, you do it because you are love, you are compassion, you are kindness made manifest.
3. Do not overcomplicate Tonglen. It is a very easy practice: Breathe, Connect and Breathe. That is it!
4. When the meditative practice is over, do not jump in your daily tasks straight away. It is important that you take some time to integrate the work and reflect upon it. If you have a busy day, do Tonglen in the evening before going to bed.
5. Check in with your heart, without arrogance or pride but with a light and joyful energy to see if the session went well.
6. Dedication to the practice and making sure that you give your 100% to it is fundamental. Please choose a place and a time that will make this possible. I find that meditating in the early hours of the morning works best for me.
7. Through the practice, you'll awaken your empathy and compassion for the benefit of all sentient beings. When this starts happening, you may experience some form of resistance. It is very normal, so please be patient and keep trying. You are coming up against yourself and it means that it's working.
8. Motivation and intention are important, and it is always towards you and the rest of existence (giving + receiving).

9. This is about awakening Divine love and compassion in our heart, so that you can lead others on the path of Love and Compassion.

What I find incredible about this sacred practice is that the moment we break through the resistance for the pain we take in and feel it, the heart opens so much allowing us to reach levels of awareness we never experienced before. We are all One and this means that with the practice of Tonglen, we become more aware of the Oneness and all it represents.

Traditionally, you do Tonglen for someone you love and care (Service and Compassion). However, if you are stuck, you can do Tonglen for yourself to allow you to release the suffering and at the same time, for all those who feel the same kind of suffering. For instance, if you are feeling angry, breathe that anger in for yourself and everyone in your situation, then breathe out peace, bliss, or serenity for example.

For the monthly meditation we are going to work with Tonglen to breathe in fear from the world and breath out LOVE, JOY and PEACE.

Sometimes, in my practice, before I start, I use these prayers to send me into that space of compassionate love. You can choose to do the same or you can simply do the practice without the prayers.

Metta Prayer

May all beings be peaceful.

May all beings be happy.

May all beings be safe.

May all beings awaken to the light of their true nature.

May all beings be free.

St. Francis prayer for Peace

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:

where there is hatred, let me sow love;

where there is injury, pardon;

where there is doubt, faith;

where there is despair, hope;

where there is darkness, light;

where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

to be consoled as to console,

to be understood as to understand,

to be loved as to love.

For it is in giving that we receive,

it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,

and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

The Great Bell Chant

May the sound of this bell penetrate deep into the cosmos

Even in the darkest spots

Living beings are able to hear it clearly

So that all suffering in them cease

Understanding comes to their heart

And they transcend the path of sorrow and death.

The universal dharma door is already open

The sound of the rising tide is heard clearly

The miracle happens

A beautiful child appears in the heart of a lotus flower
One single drop of this compassionate water
Is enough to bring back the refreshing spring to our mountains and rivers.
Listening to the bell
I feel the afflictions in me begin to dissolve
My mind calm
My body relaxes
A smile is born on my lips
Following the sound of the bell
My breathe brings me back to the safe island of mindfulness
In the garden of my heart
The flowers of peace bloom beautifully

TONGLLEN MEDITATION

Preparation

Stage 1

1. Practice this meditation from a sitting position please. You need to be relaxed but also alert.
2. Place your hands on your heart and start by breathing slowly and deeply.
3. Keep your eyes closed throughout the meditation.
4. When you start with Tonglen, centre yourself in your heart and be silent for a while.
5. Keep connecting with your heart. Breath in deeply and slowly and breathe out deeply and slowly, connect with your breath. Feel at one with your breath and your heart.

6. Smile at your heart and feel or see the heart smiling back at you.
7. Feel the Joy of that smile opening the heart a little bit more. Sense that energy moving through your body and radiating outside of yourself encompassing everything around you (take your time doing this, move from body part to body part, move through the chakras and aura and to the space around you).
8. With each breath become aware of the energy moving in you and all around you. Feel gratitude and appreciation for anything and anyone in your life, so that the heart opens even more.
9. Keep breathing and keep smiling for a while until you feel it's time to move into the next stage.

It is important to work with the feeling of the energy and the texture. When you breathe in, feel the hot or dark, or heavy energy, and when you breathe out feel the lightness, joy, love and of freshness of the opposite energy. Breathe in completely, with your entire body and breathe out, radiate out, completely, through your entire body.

Meditation for the world and for yourself

Stage 2

Traditionally you begin by doing Tonglen for someone you care about and wish to help and in this meditation our focus is on healing fear from this world. However, if you are stuck, you can do the practice for the pain you are feeling and simultaneously for all those just like you who feel that kind of suffering. For instance, if you are feeling fearful, you breathe fear in for yourself and all the people and animals experiencing the same energy, and you send out peace, bliss and serenity in any form you wish (light, rainbow, colours white clouds, crystal clear pure water for example).

- Breathe out the healed emotion and feel it with your entire being. We are limitless divine beings and by breathing in fear to heal it, we are not damaging ourselves. As St Francis said in his absolute stunning peace prayer: "... For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned...". We do this for the world.
- Continue with the breathing until you feel in your heart is done. Do not rush through the process simply feel and be.

Rest in the space of Loving Kindness you have created, keep smiling at your heart, the people in your life and the world.

Breathe in slowly and deeply and start by moving your body a little: your ankles and feet, your hands and wrists, your head....

Lie down for 15 to 20 minutes to integrate the work.

If you choose to use one or both prayers, you can add them at the beginning and end of your practice.

Enjoy this sacred practice and if you have any questions please feel free to reach out.

With Love and Blessings

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