

## Meditation on Interconnectedness

**Purpose:** We live in a world in which we are completely dependent on the kindness of other living beings. The idea that we are independent, self-sufficient is a complete illusion. And all these sentient beings we depend upon also want to be happy and avoid suffering just as much as we do. It's essential to understand how deeply we are connected to others.

**Preparation:** Start with a 5-minute breathing meditation. Focus the attention on the breath. Let all thoughts go, like clouds floating through the sky. If distractions arise, be aware of them without getting involved and without judgment, then gently bring the attention back to the breath. And **set a motivation:** I am going to do this meditation in order to better understand how I think so that I might be happier and be better able to my loved ones, my community and all living beings.

**Body of Meditation:** Reflect on the ways you are dependent upon others.

I am able to be aware of my breath because I am alive. Being alive depends on so many causes and conditions. The primary fact that I am alive is due to my parents. My birth was due to them. I am still alive due to the kindness of those who cared for me when I was small, my mother, father, grandparents, aunts, uncles, babysitters, neighbors - all those who looked after me from the time I was born, when I was completely helpless. If it wasn't for others taking care of me, cleaning me, feeding me, dressing me; if it wasn't for them, I wouldn't be alive now...

From the time I was born up to now, how many beings have supported me? There are all those strangers farming, working in food kitchens, driving trucks, stocking grocery shelves who are part of the chain of events of getting food into my body, keeping me alive. There are those that taught me how to read, how to drive, how to get a job; all those who guided me so I could function in the world. The people who build traffic lights, road signs, install them, paint the lines on the streets, all who make it possible to get from place to another without constant chaos and danger. Those in lumberyards, in factories creating the materials for my home, my car, my clothes, my computer, my tv, my iPod. Everything I have; the food, the clothes, the comforts, the things that keep me safe, keep me fed, keep me warm, entertain me are due to the efforts of others. Thousands of others support me...

And all these others, just like me, really want to be happy, really want to be free from problems. We are all exactly the same in this way. The only difference between us, in any given moment, are the methods that we use to attain happiness and avoid suffering. So just try to get an idea, to feel this equality; the fact that we are all the same in wishing for happiness and freedom from suffering. Every moment of my life is interconnected with so many other lives...

**Conclusion:** Try to generate a feeling of gratitude, of loving concern, compassion, for all these others who help you in your life, who you are actually completely dependent upon.

**Dedication:** I dedicate any positive energy I have created from meditating in this way to be a cause for happiness so I can be of benefit to my loved ones and others in this very life and to be a cause of enlightenment, to complete the wings of wisdom and compassion to be of benefit to all sentient beings.