



# Cheltenham Zen 6-week course

## Meditation for beginners

### Session 3: Opening the heart

In this session we looked at how we can use meditation to cultivate beautiful qualities of the heart-mind and bring these into our daily lives.

This week we have introduced the following ideas:

- **Meditation isn't just about non-judgemental awareness.** While this is useful, it isn't the whole story, and you might find that a different approach is easier for you to get into.
- **Two key qualities are metta (loving kindness) and compassion.** Metta is about treating people with kindness, wishing that they be happy and well. Compassion is the recognition of suffering in ourselves and others and the heartfelt wish that we all be free of that suffering.
- **Not everyone will get on with these practices, and that's OK.** It's important to be true to yourself rather than force yourself to behave in a false way because you think you're supposed to 'be nice'.
- **Self-compassion is at least as important** as compassion for others.

### Suggested home practice

This week's practices are metta and compassion. See if you can try both, and notice if one comes easier than the other.

Optionally, each day, come up with three things from that day that you're grateful for, and maybe write them down or tell someone else. Enjoy the sense of gratitude.

### Guided audio

I've recorded guided metta and compassion meditations using both phrases and visualisations. Find these at <https://www.cheltenhamzen.co.uk/audio.html>.