

# Transforming Ill Will

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts?  Heart?  Body?  None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



[MindfulnessExercises.com/Transforming-Ill-Will](https://MindfulnessExercises.com/Transforming-Ill-Will)

### ■ PURPOSE / EFFECTS

Ill will, negativity, aggression, even hate...these things seem like unavoidable consequences of modern life. These emotions self-perpetuate; “hate breeds hate.” Transforming negative will into positive will not only makes you happier; it empowers you to promote positive change in the world around you. Building good will doesn’t make you a pushover or a sissy. Instead, it gives you the strength to change your life and others’ lives.

### ■ METHOD

#### Summary

Through a collection of techniques and gentle reminders, you can change ill will into good will.

#### Long Version

1. **Avoid situations that promote anger and negativity.** This could be as easy as making sure you get enough sleep and aren’t running on an empty stomach or as complex as cutting a toxic, negative person out of your life (at least for a time).

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2. **Don't argue.** Take slow, deep breaths and walk away from a heated situation. Yelling and screaming rarely resolve conflict.
3. **Keep an eye on your "trigger."** Figure out what provokes you to get your claws out and examine it mindfully. You will usually find that the trigger is as much you as anything. Don't allow yourself to justify overreaction.
4. **Practice understanding.** Contemporary society has disconnected us, so that we all feel like the most important person in the room, leading everyone to step on one another's feet and to feel extremely insulted by said stepping. Despite this, most people are generally good intentioned and do not seek to insult or harm us. Remember this, and find the good in the situation.
5. **Cultivate the good in you.** Feed your compassion and lovingkindness and nourish your calm. These resources will only grow as you do so.
6. **Be generous.** Instead of feeling affronted when others seem to take from you, give freely. This may mean walking away from situations where somebody seems to have taken minor advantage of you. Remember, small things aren't worth big anger.
7. **Self-examine.** Investigate minor bouts of ill will in your life, their causes and ramifications. Under this microscope, they often look smaller than they had appeared in the heat of the moment.
8. **Remember that your own anger and negativity hurts you** more than anyone else. It is an affliction to be overcome.
9. **Allow your anger and negativity to pass through you.** Fighting it will amplify it. Examine it and let it go.
10. **Life is (sometimes) suffering.** Accept that pain and misfortune are part of living on this planet.
11. **Be realistic.** It's true: "You can't always get what you want." Don't get frustrated chasing false hopes.
12. **The world is not perfect nor can it be perfected.** Let go of your personal perception of the ideal world and replace it with the reminder that we are good-enough human beings in a good-enough world.

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- 13. Give your ego a break.** When “I” am wounded, “I” get upset. Remember that there’s a whole world greater than you. You are important, but you are not more important than anyone else.
- 14. Meditate,** pray, and use whatever techniques cultivate good will in your life.
- 15. Meet ill will with good will.** Hate cannot dispel hate. Recall all the beautiful souls who prove this lesson—Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi, the Dalai Lama. We have much to learn from them.
- 16. Cultivate positive emotion.** Allow yourself to be happy, content, and calm. A positive state of mind promotes good will outside the mind.
- 17. Communicate.** Speak up for yourself and for others, while remembering that even your biggest opponent has his or her own truth. Consider the thoughts of others, and talk about problems instead of arguing about them.
- 18. Have faith in karma.** It’s not your job to punish others. Those who deserve punishment tend to find it.
- 19. Don’t try to change people with anger.** Cultivating ill will toward someone will almost never be the path to their eventual renewal. Especially don’t cultivate anger toward those to whom you can’t express it. It’s an exercise in futility that only leaves you feeling helpless.
- 20. Practice forgiveness.** Forgiving others, even for grievous wrongs, is the most important step in your path to healing.

### ■ HISTORY

Most of the world’s religions offer teachings on changing ill will into good will. Whether it’s the Christian “treat others as you would like to be treated” (wouldn’t we all like to be forgiven for our transgressions and talked to with respect, understanding, and compassion?) or the Buddhist urging away from extreme emotions, the idea that anger is best when it can be turned into lovingkindness is a universal.