**Gift of Time**

*Adapted from Greater Good Science Center at Berkley*

<https://ggia.berkeley.edu/practice/gift_of_time>

The gift of time is absolutely free and yet time is something we often feel that we don’t have enough of. When our worlds are busy we sometimes sacrifice our quality time with others. This reality has the potential to leave us feeling guilty, lonely and disconnected from those that are most important to us.

We know that making time for quality connection supports our relationships and produces important chemicals in our brain that help us thrive. And with social connection being shown to have direct impacts on our physical, emotional and mental health it’s worth putting intentionality into the quality of time we spend with our people. In addition, intentional time with others is a gesture of kindness and love. It can help us feel good and strengthen our relationships with our people.

In today’s practice, we are going to reflect on a moment where we spent quality time with our people and how it made us feel. So, let’s begin.

You are invited to get comfortable in your seat, maybe in a way that allows you to feel both comfortable and alert. For many, this is with our spine long and feet flat on the floor. If it feels right for you in this moment, you are invited to close your eyes. If you are feeling a little sleepy or closing your eyes is not right for you at this time, I encourage you to find a spot to fix your gaze that is not too distracting.

Take a deep inhale, and as you exhale, allowing your brain to begin settling into the moment.

Inhale again… exhale it out and maybe let your shoulders melt down away from your ears.

Inhale deeply and as you exhale, release to muscles in your jaw, your forehead, eyebrows and the muscles around your eyes.

As your breathing pattern returns to its natural rhythm, begin to imagine someone you would consider to be family. This could be biological family, a work colleague, close friend… any person whom you care about.

And as you bring them into your imagination, reflect on a memory when you spent quality time with this person.

Begin to think about what you were doing together, where you were and when it occurred. Allow yourself to bring in the details of this quality time spent together. Invite curiosity around what made this time meaningful. Was it a good conversation… laughter… an activity shared… the feeling of connection…

How did you feel during this quality time with this individual? Notice any emotions that come up and where you might feel those in your body. Do you sense a warmth in your heart, a smile on your face… bring your attention to how this moment felt. Allow yourself to feel that again for a moment.

Now, I invite you to reflect on how you can gift this quality time back, either to this person or someone else. Who would you want to give the gift of intentional time to? How would you want to spend that time? Imagine giving them the feeling you received from quality time spent with your person, realizing that when we give it to someone else, that feeling gets bigger within us as well.

Let yourself feel that for a moment longer… soaking in this feeling of connection.

Gradually begin to bring your attention back to your breath. Notice the sounds and feeling of the space around you.

If you so choose, think about how you can put this gift of time into action.