

Exercise 6.4: Compassion flowing out to others in difficulty (pages 164-5)

In this exercise we are again going to imagine compassion flowing from you out to another person or animal, but in this case that other individual will be facing a difficulty that you want to help them with. Try not to choose a time when that person (or animal) was very distressed, because then you are likely to focus on the severity of their suffering, and possibly your inability to dispel it, rather than on your own compassionate feelings.

It can help to prepare by jotting down the name of the person or animal you want to help, and the difficulty you want to help them with.

Sometimes you might want to talk to the person you have focused your compassion on; this is great if you think they are able to receive and use your compassion. However, this exercise is simply to learn to experience developing the flow of compassion to others in a deliberate and safe way. You are ready to start doing this in the real world when you feel you have the wisdom to know who you can offer compassion to, how it will be received, and how to deal with times when your compassion is not appreciated (at least at the time you initially offer it). For now, use the audio to help you imagine your compassion flowing from you to another.