

# Recognising the Inner Critic



- Sit comfortably in a relaxed, easy posture and close your eyes. Now bring to mind one thing you have done or said recently that you feel was kind or good.
- It does not have to be newsworthy! Maybe you smiled at someone or listened to their story, maybe you let go of your annoyance at a slow checkout clerk, maybe you were generous, maybe you sat down to meditate, maybe you thanked a bus driver. It's not conceit or arrogance to consider these things. It's nourishing and replenishing to take delight in the good that moves through us.
- Or you might think of a quality or skill in yourself that you like or appreciate: perhaps you are enthused about helping others learn or committed to practicing patience toward your irascible neighbour.
- If you still find yourself caught up in self-criticism, turn your attention to the mere fact that you have an urge toward happiness. There is kindness and beauty in that. Or simply recall that all beings everywhere want to be happy, everybody wants to be happy.
- Never feel ashamed of your longing for happiness. Recall that this is your birth-right. Seeking happiness is not the problem. The problem is that we often do not know where and how to find genuine happiness and so make the mistakes that cause suffering for ourselves and others. But that urge toward happiness itself is rightful, and when we support it with mindfulness, it can become like a homing instinct or a compass pointing us toward freedom.