

Building a Compassionate Image

This exercise is to help you *build* up a compassionate image for you to work with and develop (you can have more than one if you wish, and they can change over time). Whatever image comes to mind, or you choose to work with note that it *is your* creation and therefore your own personal ideal - what you would really like from feeling cared for and cared about. However, in this practice it is important that you try to give your image certain qualities. These will include:

Wisdom, Strength, Warmth and Non- judgement

So in each box below think of these qualities (wisdom, strength, warmth and non-judgement) and imagine what they would look, sound or feel like.

If possible we begin by focusing on our breathing, finding our calming rhythm and making a half smile. Then we can let images emerge in the mind –as best you can – do not too try to hard - if nothing comes to the mind, or the minds wanders, just *gently* bring it back to the breathing and practice compassionately accepting.

Here are some questions that might help you build an image: would you want your caring/nurturing image to feel/look/seem old or young; male or female (or non-human looking e.g., an animal, sea or light). Would your 'image' have gone through similar experiences to you? Would they be like a friend or even part of a team that welcomes you to belong? What colours and sounds are associated with the qualities of wisdom, strength, warmth and non-judgement. Remember your image brings full compassion to you and for you.

How would you like your ideal caring-compassionate image to look – visual qualities?
How would you like your ideal caring-compassionate image to sound (e.g., voice tone)?
What other sensory qualities can you give to it?
How would you like your ideal caring-compassionate image to relate to you?
How would like to relate to your ideal caring compassionate image?