



WEEK THREE



GATHERING THE SCATTERED MIND

“Use the breath as an anchor to tether your attention to the present moment. Your thinking mind will drift here and there, depending on the currents & winds moving in the mind until, at some point, the anchorline grows taut and brings you back.”

~ (Jon Kabat-Zinn, Meditations for Everyday)

DEEPENING AWARENESS OF THE BODY

Image: mindfulhappiness.org

In Week 3 we used practices to deepening awareness of the breath and the body in movement. Being grounded (awareness of the senses and breath) is an anchor reconnecting us to the immediacy of the present moment. This gateway to the present moment is a gift as the default mode of our mind is to be busily working away in the background- constantly keeping vigilant for potential threats whilst perhaps mulling over some past unfinished business or striving towards some future goal. All this ceaseless (time-travelling) activity can create an overloaded, reactive and scattered mind! A reliable way to intentional ‘come back’ and reconnect with the reality of the present moment, (the only moment we live and can make a change to) - is to return to the ever-present breath. By bringing our attention to the breath we can see where our bodies are holding tension and we can soften and breath into these areas. Even a few moments can give us the space to gain some perspective and maybe to make wiser choices about how to proceed. The body and breath can offer a way to gather and settle the scattered mind, easing it from its constant *doing mode* to a *being way* – so in effect we are ‘*Coming to our Senses!*’ **DOING** (*The Problem-Solver*) & **BEING** (*Intuitive*) – Two modes of mind. One is not better than other but offer different tools by which to approach different tasks (Fiona O’Donnell, Mindfulness centre)



Sitting Meditation

It helps to adopt an erect and dignified posture, with your head, neck and back aligned vertically— (the physical counterpart of the inner attitudes of self-reliance, self-acceptance, patience, and alert attention that we are cultivating). Practice on a chair or on the floor. If you use a chair, choose one that has a straight back and allows your feet to be flat on the floor. If possible, sit away from the back of the chair so that your spine is self-supporting. If you choose to sit on the floor, do so on a firm, thick cushion (or a pillow folded over once or twice), which raises your buttocks off the floor 3–6 inches. Whatever you are sitting on, see if it possible to sit so that your hips are slightly higher than your knees. (From Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2013). Copyright by The Guilford Press.)

Mindful Movement

Building on the foundations of our Body scan – Mindful movement can have a profound and soothing impact on the mind. In its simplest form this meditation involves anchoring awareness in the moving body. Strengthen the Body-Mind connection.

- As we practice, we can begin to see old habitual patterns of the mind (striving) and so on.
- Learning how to work with physical intensity & boundaries and coming to learn acceptance of our limits
- Learn new ways of self-care & relating to the body with friendliness
- Under the surface without our awareness the body often *houses our emotional* as well as physical lives- If we are aware of what is going on in our body it is easier to recognise what is going on both mentally and emotionally- giving us an additional place to stand back & look at our thoughts

The intention is not to push beyond our limits when stretching (exploration & curiosity is welcomed) but as highlighted in the Meditation poses it is vital to listen to the intuition/wisdom of your body). Particularly if you have any back or physical problems.



The 3-Step Breathing Space (Regular)

Intention: The 3-Step Breathing Pause provides a way to step out of Automatic Pilot mode & reconnect with the present moment. Whether sitting or standing adopting an upright & dignified posture, shoulders relaxed. Closing the eyes if that is good for you and now-

STEP 1: Becoming AWARE

Bringing your awareness into the present moment by intentional bringing your focus onwards- asking “What is my experience right now?” Whatever is going on be with it, don’t move any from it or want it to be different- acknowledging it. Although this often takes courage, train yourself to stay with it for a few moments...

- Now noticing what THOUGHTS are going through your mind? Acknowledge these thoughts. Noticing how they arise and behave- simply observe, no need to do anything more...simply observe and acknowledge their presence.
- Noticing now what FEELINGS you are having? Bring words to mind that describe your current emotional experience-(frustration, tiredness, sadness, hurt, happiness) Turn gently toward any discomfort, acknowledge whatever feelings are here. .

- Scan your body and pick up any SENSATIONS you are currently experiencing. They may be sensations of tightness, tension, resistance, numbness, tingling, hot or cold etc. Acknowledge these sensations. Notice these sensations without feeling driven to act on them. Be curious and non-judgemental in approach.

STEP 2: Gathering

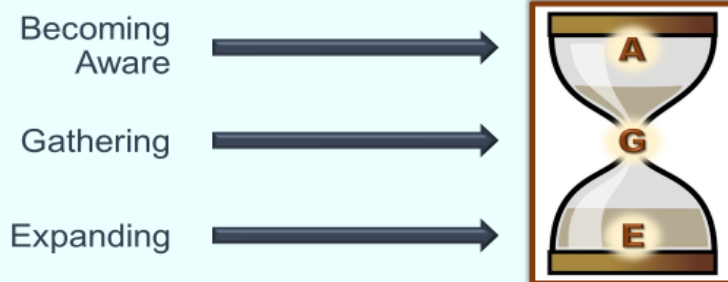
Now bringing your awareness to your BREATHING, full attention to the breath (is it shallow/deep)

Being aware of each in-breath and each out-breath- in and out. At times it helps to count internally 1,2,3,4 when inhaling and count 4,3,2,1 when exhaling. Your breathing will act as an anchor bringing you into the moment and what is specifically happening for you right now. Breath connects us to a deeper awareness and stillness in the present whilst staying with whatever is unfolding.

STEP 3: Expanding

Now, expand the field of awareness around the breathing so that it includes the body as a whole. Sensing the body from head to toe, following the breath into and out from the whole body. If sensations of discomfort, resistance or tension arise, take your awareness there by breathing into them on the inbreath- then breathing out from those sensations on the outbreath- softening and opening. As best you can, bringing this expanded spacious awareness in the next moments of your day. Ref: Williams et al 2007 and Oscailt Mindfulness Space Course Handbook 2007

3-Minute Breathing Space:



DEAR YOU

Dear you,

You who always have
so many things to do
so many places to be
your mind spinning like
fan blades at high speed
each moment always a blur
because you're never still.

I know you're tired.

I also know it's not your fault.

The constant brain-buzz is like
a swarm of bees threatening
to sting if you close your eyes.

You've forgotten something again.

You need to prepare for that or else.

You should have done that differently.

What if you closed your eyes?

Would the world fall
apart without you?

Or would your mind
become the open sky

flock of thoughts

flying across the sunrise
as you just watched and smiled.

By Kaveri Patel

HOME PRACTICE WEEK 3

1. Alternate your BODY SCAN CD and your MINDFUL YOGA CD. Please record your reflections on your Week Three Diary if you wish.
2. THE BREATHING SPACE – USE REGULARLY: Practice using the breathing space at times that you have decided in advance.
3. Complete the UNPLEASANT EVENTS DIARY (one entry per day) – use this as an opportunity to become aware of the thoughts, feelings and body sensations that arise in one unpleasant event each day. Notice & record as soon as you can, in detail i.e. put the actual words / images that come in, and the precise nature and location of bodily sensations.

NB *If you have any back or other health difficulties that may cause problems, make your own decision as to which (if any) of these exercises to do, taking good care of your body. Remember You can stay still and visualise yourself doing some of the exercises. If it is inadvisable for you to practice the yoga, practice the body scan instead every day.


Home Practice Record Form—Session 3

Record on the Home Practice Record Form each time you practice. Also, make a note of anything that comes up in the home practice, so that we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Day/date	Practice (Yes/No)	Comments
		

Unpleasant Events Diary – Week 3

Be aware of any unpleasant event *at the time it is happening*. Use these questions to focus your attention on the details of the experience as it is happening. Write it down later.

What was the experience?	What thoughts & images accompanied this experience?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind now, as you write this down?
<i>Waiting for a delivery to arrive & knowing you'll be late for work</i>	<i>"Is this what they call on-time delivery!" "This is one meeting I didn't want to be late for"</i>	<i>Tightness in shoulders & neck, temples throbbing, pacing back & forth</i>	<i>Irritation, anger, helplessness, impatience....</i>	<i>I never want to go through this again!</i>
Day 1				
Day 2				
Day 3				
Day 4				
Day 5				
Day 6				
Day 7				