

Introduction to Mindfulness and Meditation

Session 2 - Awareness of Body

- How did you get on with your practice in the week?
- Have you experimented with your time and space for formal meditation?
- What you think of the Jon Kabat Zinn video?
- Which attitude resonated with you the most and why?

The 9 Attitudes of Mindfulness

Beginner's Mind

- Ⓞ Viewing our experiences through fresh eyes.
- Ⓞ Aim not to carry our past knowledge and experience to a situation but to look at it again with a new 'gaze'.
- Ⓞ Allowing room for novelty and possibility.



Patience

- Ⓞ Impatience that means that we are always thinking of what's ahead rather than having an awareness of the present moment.
- Ⓞ By cultivating an attitude of allowing things to 'unfold in their own time' rather than trying to rush things along.
- Ⓞ Greater sense of calm and a deeper understanding of our experiences.



Non-Striving

- Ⓞ Sometimes referred to as 'non-doing'
- Ⓞ To be aware of your thoughts but not try to change them.
- Ⓞ Recognising what is here, now is good enough.
- Ⓞ The practice of not trying to make anything happen or achieve any kind of specific state of mind but simply to allow things to be as they are.

Non-Judging

- Ⓞ Humans have opinions and make judgements about everything.
- Ⓞ By merely paying attention to it, and noticing when we are making a judgement we can free ourselves of a dualistic view of the world that can inhibit the clarity of our experiences, ie. this is good and that is bad.
- Ⓞ We can begin to view our experiences with greater discernment and understanding.
- Ⓞ To make judgements is a very human trait but we also try not to judge our judgements.

Acceptance

- ⓐ A recognition of how things are, even if we don't like the way they are.
- ⓐ This doesn't mean that we passively resign ourselves to 'how things are'.
- ⓐ Rather we increase our awareness of how things are – whether it be good or bad, rather than ignoring it.
- ⓐ Through acceptance we are able to obtain greater clarity of our situation and consequently are able to take appropriate action in response to it.



Trust

- ⓐ Humans tend to trust our bodies will work for us and therefore pay very little attention to them.
- ⓐ We trust our eyes to see and our lungs to breathe and don't really notice how much trust we instill in them until they start not to work.
- ⓐ However, we don't always trust our own mind, hearts and 'gut instinct', why should these things be any different from our trust in our physiological bodies.
- ⓐ By cultivating a trust in our minds we ourselves become more trustworthy and trusting of others.
- ⓐ Makes a positive contribution to our experiences, relationships and challenges we might face in the world.

Letting Go



- ⓐ Humans tend to cling to bad experiences; this is an innate response to danger and pain and is perfectly natural.
- ⓐ Originally a form of learning and self preservation at a time when humans were more physically vulnerable in their environment.
- ⓐ The practice of mindfulness enables us to cultivate a wider field of awareness where we are able see things as they really are and allow us to just 'be'.
- ⓐ In developing this awareness we free ourselves of the habit of 'clinging on'.

Gratitude

- ⓐ We take being alive for granted
- ⓐ We take our bodies functioning for granted
- ⓐ Noticing what we have and being grateful can instill sense of wellbeing.

Generosity

- ⓐ Powerful when you give yourself over to life
- ⓐ Giving joy to others
- ⓐ Demonstrating that you care about them
- ⓐ Giving time attention and attention and thought o something other than yourself
- ⓐ Makes you feel 'connectedness'.



The Farmer and the Horse

An old farmer saved up small amounts of money over a year to buy a new horse. Just a day after the farmer bought the horse, it ran away. His neighbour expressed grief, but the farmer himself was calm. *“I hope you can get over this bad news”* said the neighbor. *“Good news or bad news, can’t say”* replied the farmer.

The next day, the horse returned to the farmer’s house by itself, and brought another stray horse with it. *“Cheer up, we’re going multiply our farm income. That’s great news”* said the farmer’s son. *“Good news or bad news, can’t say”* replied the farmer and carried on with his work.

A week later, the farmer took the first horse to his farm and his son took the second horse to follow his father to work. On the way, the second horse pushed the boy down and ran away. The boy’s leg was fractured badly. That evening back home, the farmer’s wife groaned *“We will have to spend all our extra savings on our son’s broken leg. What a terrible news”*. Once again, the farmer replied: *“Good news or bad news, can’t say.”*

A month later, the farmer’s King announced a war on the neighbouring nation. Citing a lack of foot soldiers, the King ordered all able-bodied men in the nation to get drafted into the military without excuses. The farmer’s son was spared because of his broken leg. Later, the inexperienced soldiers got slaughtered in the war. *“You are lucky that your son did not get drafted. Mine returned with severe injuries. Many have been handicapped or killed”* complained the farmer’s best friend. Unabashed, the farmer responded: *“Good news or bad news, can’t say”*.



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- **Q. Which of the attitudes is the farmer practising?**

Journal activity

- How are you cultivating these attitudes in your daily life?
- Think about ways in which you can integrate each of them more fully in your life?
- Remember to be non-judgemental towards yourself as you are doing this exercise. Self Love is the key.

How to distinguish thoughts from feelings.

- Ⓢ **Thoughts** are usually experienced as words or sentences in the mind, sometimes as pictures or images. They are fleeting and do not always represent the truth of a situation.

They are influenced by many factors including our mood, our life experiences, changes in hormone levels and even by temperature and weather.

It is thought that the human brain has over 7,000 thoughts a day, most of which are not based in fact. We often don’t have all the information we need to process a thought fully

and our brains will compensate for this by filling in the blanks with information based on our previous experiences.

🕒 **Feelings** are shifts in emotional state usually experienced as sensations directly within the body. e.g. Butterflies in the tummy for nervousness, etc.

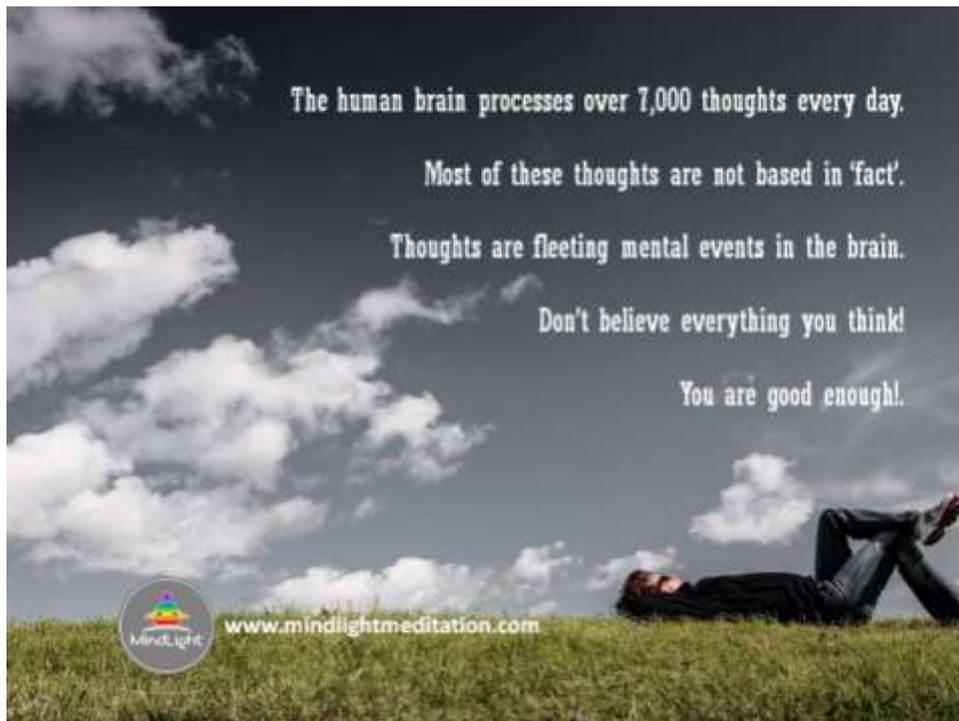
Western culture and lifestyles have cultivated a situation where many people ignore messages from their bodies and therefore their feelings, e.g. the English stiff up lip when feeling distressed. This causes the body and mind further distress as if the problem is not being attended to. Over time this can result in physical and even mental ill health.



We have lost the connection between our minds and bodies and tend to treat our bodies as merely transport for our heads. Our bodies, however, have a lot of wisdom to share with us and when we meditate we can restore the connection between the mind and the body and tune into its messages more effectively through the signs and sensations it provides.

Through this process we obtain a greater awareness of our whole being, our completeness. When we focus on our feelings (instead of pushing them away) we become more resilient in dealing with the more negative ones creating a sense of balance, peace and calm within ourselves.

Remember:
If it doesn't stand up in a court of law it's not a fact!



When we step out of judgment we begin to free ourselves of anxiety.

One of the ways we can restore the connection between the mind and body is with 'The Body Scan Meditation', the added bonus is that it's super relaxing too.

Homework:

- ④ Practice focusing on your breath for a few minutes a day.
- ④ Practice the body scan meditation
- ④ Journal your experiences – any sensations to you feel in the body, insights.
- ④ Think of ways in which you can apply the 9 attitudes mindfully in your everyday life and put this into practice.

