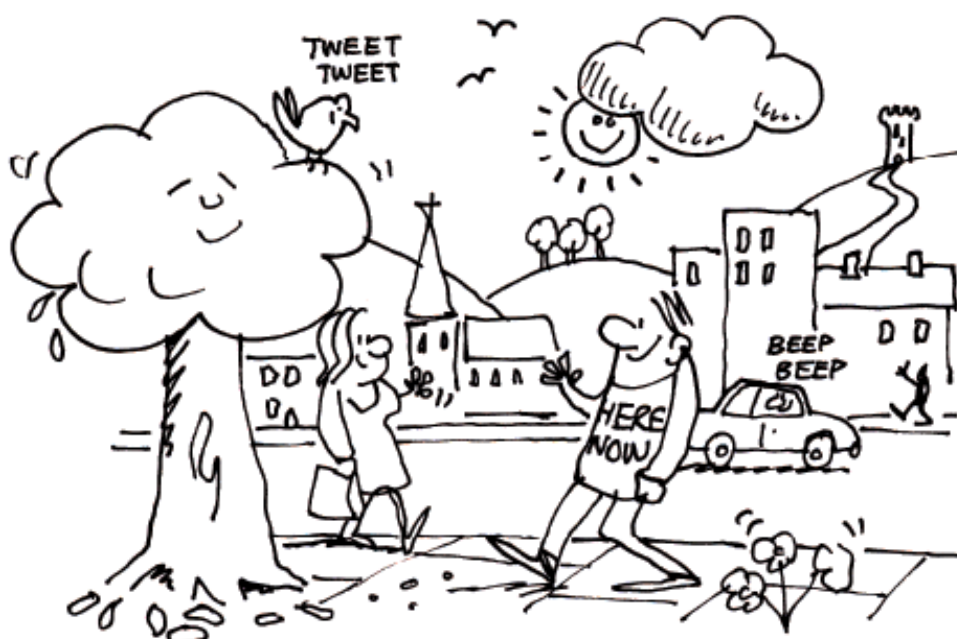


# Mindfulness and a path of wellbeing.



**A workbook for mental and emotional health.**



---

# TABLE of CONTENTS

---

<b>INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION AND WELCOME.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<i>Commitment and homework.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Being in a group.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>How to use the workbook and recordings.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Skilful applications.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Mindful movement.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Acknowledgements.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>SESSION ONE: STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, AND WAYS TO BE FREE WITH MINDFULNESS.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<i>Session overview.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>The first truth: Being overwhelmed and unhappy or stressed.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Physical, emotional, mental and behavioural reactions.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Anxiety and depressive disorders.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Depression and anxiety.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>The Second Truth: The causes of anxiety and depression.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Auto Pilot.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The third truth: Happiness.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>The fourth truth: A path of freedom.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>What is Mindfulness?.....</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>What are we mindful of?.....</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Related qualities.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Some beginning mindfulness practices.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Invitation to eating mindfully.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Eating Mindfully.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Mindfulness of sound.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Progressive Relaxation.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Activities to do between sessions.....</i>	<i>30</i>
<i>Pleasant events diary 1.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<b>SESSION TWO: HAVING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<i>Session overview.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Acting without purpose.....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>Having purpose and direction.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Goals.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>The risks of goal directed behaviours.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Time management.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Valued directions.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>“Noting” as a tool to develop mindfulness.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Choices and intentions.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Mindfulness of daily activities.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Remembering the day’s events.....</i>	<i>42</i>

<i>Body scan.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Body scan-instructions .....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Clarifying long term goals.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Important or valued life directions.....</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Goal setting .....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Activities to do between sessions.....</i>	<i>48</i>
<i>Pleasant events schedule .....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Activity schedule .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<i>Daily Experience Diary.....</i>	<i>51</i>
<b>SESSION THREE: WISDOM, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND MEDITATION .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<i>Healthy lifestyle, meditation and wisdom work together. ....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>Healthy lifestyle: caring for our bodies and caring for our minds .....</i>	<i>54</i>
<i>Wisdom and understanding that actions have consequences.....</i>	<i>55</i>
<i>Problem solving skills.....</i>	<i>56</i>
<i>Hints for problem solving.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Hints for sleeping well.....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Mindful physical exercise .....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Meditation or mental and emotional training .....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Recollection. ....</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>Posture.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Mindfulness of breath.....</i>	<i>64</i>
<i>Mindfulness of breath as a calm meditation practice. ....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Anxiety with mindfulness of breath.....</i>	<i>65</i>
<i>Mindful walking.....</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>Mindful walking - instructions.....</i>	<i>67</i>
<i>Mindfulness of breath: Body, belly and nose tip-practise.....</i>	<i>68</i>
<i>Mindfulness of breath at your abdomen- instructions.....</i>	<i>69</i>
<i>Five obstacles to meditation.....</i>	<i>70</i>
<i>Activities to do between sessions.....</i>	<i>72</i>
<i>Response/reaction record.....</i>	<i>74</i>
<b>SESSION FOUR: MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS AND THE CHOICE TO BUY INTO THEM OR LET THEM PASS BY. ....</b>	<b>76</b>
<i>Thinking.....</i>	<i>76</i>
<i>Dealing with stinking thinking.....</i>	<i>81</i>
<i>Delusions .....</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>Investigation .....</i>	<i>84</i>
<i>How to be mindful of thinking. ....</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Mindfulness of hearing .....</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Listening to thoughts with mindfulness .....</i>	<i>92</i>
<i>Mindfully watching thoughts .....</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Activities to do between sessions.....</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Mindfulness of sounds and thoughts.....</i>	<i>95</i>
<b>SESSION FIVE: MINDFULNESS OF HEART-MIND AND HEALING PAINFUL EMOTIONS .....</b>	<b>97</b>
<i>Emotions .....</i>	<i>97</i>
<i>Feelings .....</i>	<i>99</i>

<i>Moods</i> .....	100
<i>States of mind</i> .....	102
<i>Being mindful of emotions, moods or states of heart-mind</i> .....	103
<i>Emotional regulation</i> .....	105
<i>Coping with painful emotions</i> .....	106
<b>THE GUESTHOUSE</b> .....	<b>107</b>
<i>Mindfulness-based stress management – checklist</i> .....	110
<i>Words to help identify emotions.</i> .....	112
<b>SESSION SIX: REACTIVE CYCLES AND URGE SURFING</b> .....	<b>114</b>
<i>Overview</i> .....	114
<i>Cultivating the helpful and letting go of the unhelpful</i> .....	114
<i>Examples of helpful and unhelpful tendencies</i> .....	115
<i>Unhelpful tendencies as obstacles to meditation</i> .....	115
<i>Reactive and cyclic patterns as a cause and continuation of stress</i> .....	117
<i>Urge surfing</i> .....	119
<i>Urge surfing-practice</i> .....	120
<i>Activities to do between sessions</i> :	121
<i>Urge diary</i> .....	122
<i>Stress reactions cycle breakdown exercise</i> .....	123
<i>Alternative response possibilities to stress reaction cycles</i> .....	124
<b>SESSION SEVEN: CARING FOR SELF, CARING FOR ALL BEINGS</b> .....	<b>125</b>
<i>Love</i> .....	125
<i>Sublime relationships</i> .....	126
<i>The four sublime states and their near and far enemies</i> .....	126
<i>Cultivating the four sublime qualities</i> .....	127
<i>Risks with attempting to cultivate the sublime states</i> .....	128
<i>Using recitation to cultivate the four sublime states</i> .....	129
<i>Loving kindness</i> .....	130
<i>Letting go of ill-will</i> .....	130
<i>Practicing loving kindness meditation</i> .....	131
<i>Loving kindness meditation</i> .....	133
<i>Activities to do between sessions</i> .....	137
<b>SESSION EIGHT: PROGRESS AND RELAPSE PREVENTION. EQUANIMITY: FINDING THE STILL POINT IN THE EYE OF THE STORM</b> .....	<b>138</b>
<i>Relationships</i> .....	138
<i>Equanimity clarified</i> .....	140
<i>Thoughts on equanimity</i> .....	142
<i>Phrases to use with equanimity meditation</i> .....	142
<i>Progress</i> .....	142
<i>Relapse prevention</i> .....	143
<i>Ongoing practice</i> .....	145



## INTRODUCTION, ORIENTATION AND WELCOME

We, the leaders of this program, warmly invite you to travel on a path that leads to wellbeing, happiness and the freedom from the anguish of stress, anxiety and depression. The primary aims of these programs are to help you cultivate mindfulness, kindness, concentration and wisdom. These skills and qualities help to prevent the relapse of depression as well as manage anxiety and stress. In particular, mindfulness is considered as a way to help deal with difficult and painful thoughts and emotions and generally reduce or stop us getting caught up in old unhelpful reactive patterns.

Working with that which gets in the road of wellbeing and happiness takes time. To avoid disappointment, it is best to have realistic expectations about the program or course and understand that progress is best measured over months and years rather than days and weeks. The skills that you will learn and the insight you will develop from this program can be used throughout your whole life and will serve to protect you from falling back in unhelpful patterns associated with stress, anxiety and depression.

### Commitment and homework

Like any skill, developing mindfulness requires energy and practise. We strongly encourage that you practise this practice because it leads to skills development and insight. There is homework to do, which we have called “Activities to do between sessions”. The main homework we encourage commitment to, is devoting some time every day to purposefully practising mindfulness skills. We encourage that, as the course progresses, you build up the time you practise a formal mindfulness exercise (such as mindfulness of breath) to at least 45-50 minutes a day. Depending on your temperament, the type of mindfulness exercise can vary. You may choose, for example, mindfulness in daily activities and actions, movement exercises (such as Chi Kung or yoga), walking (slow or fast), mindful physical exercise such as swimming, and of course, meditation in sitting postures. We also understand that finding time to do formal mindfulness exercises may be difficult. If you can't practise the ideal, it is extremely important to be kind to your self, not fall into feeling inadequate or guilty, and simply do the best you can with what is appropriate and suitable for you.

You will also notice that there are written exercises to do if you find them useful. The benefit of the written work varies from individual to individual. If you find these types of exercises useful we strongly encourage you to put in the effort to do them.

### Being in a group.

It is possible to do this program by your self in a self help manner. It is best however, that you learn these skills as part of a group. As a group of people, we have all come to this program for different reasons and we may be different ages and from different backgrounds. Some of you may know nothing about mindfulness and never have practised, whilst others may be very experienced. Something that unites us regardless of age and experience is that we all want to learn about mindfulness and are willing to do this in a group format. Many of you have been in groups and even conducted groups yourselves. In order that groups run smoothly and the conditions are conducive to learning there is always a need to clarify basic agreements. Even though most of these agreements are obvious we like to clarify them so that there is no confusion.

1. No drugs or alcohol. If you use non-prescription drugs or alcohol we ask you not to come to the group under their influence.

2. Punctuality. We ask you to be punctual because it is easy for lateness to become a habit and our time together is precious.
3. Letting someone know if you can't come. If you are unable to come for a particular session, please let us know.
4. Letting people have their say. Part of each session is devoted to either a leader presenting a topic or us (together) sharing our wisdom about life and ways to be free. We will be discussing many issues, especially about ways to manage stress, anxiety and depression with mindfulness and related strategies. You are not obliged to speak up. However, if you are the type of person who talks a lot please be sensitive to let others have their say. If you are the type who is shy to speak up, please see this course as an opportunity for you to have your say if you wish.
5. Appropriate disclosure and being discreet. Even though our discussions will be therapeutic, please understand that this is a skills based program and not a 'therapy group'. Therapy groups often involve individuals talking about their personal issues and sharing lots of personal information. These types of groups can be very beneficial. Our collection of individuals, however, is not one of these groups. If you have a personal crisis that you need to talk about, we cannot give it the time it may need in this group context. This group cannot be used as a substitute for personal counseling or an opportunity to ventilate personal problems.
6. Confidentiality. Even though we ask you to be discreet, some personal disclosure inevitably and often occurs. When this does occur please respect each other's privacy and maintain confidentiality about it.
7. Let us know if problems with the practice arise. Meditation is an enormously beneficial practice. But like anything there can be problems or negative side effects. If weird and uncomfortable reactions happen let us know before they spiral into problems. Similarly, if you find that the practice is making your stress, anxiety and depression worse, talk to us about it so the problem can be addressed earlier rather than later. If you don't feel comfortable talking about practice issues within a group setting talk to a leader during a break, by phone or make an appointment to see one of the leaders at the earliest convenience.
8. Cultivating respect and kindness. The theme of this group is finding ways to be free from those tendencies that cause suffering. Finding freedom is dependent on good conditions. We are united in that we all suffer in some way or other. It is extremely important that the group space is one of acceptance and respectful kindness. We ask you to be kind to yourself and others.
9. Being careful of destructive patterns. Being kind to ones self and others involves not being lost in behaviours that are generally unhelpful for the health and wellbeing of all group member. These behaviours are those types of intentional actions that get in the road of progress towards the aims of the program. Some of these behaviours may include:
  - Purposefully acting (which includes speaking) in ways that harm or hurt any members of the group including a leader.
  - Being argumentative and overly critical in ways that are not constructive.
  - Being discouraging in unhelpful ways.
  - Creating a sense of discouragement Inciting discontent in other group members such as complaining that the group processes are not useful when these statements are not founded.
  - Purposefully coming excessively late on a regular basis or in some other way causing disruptions to the group.



## **How to use the workbook and recordings**

These notes may seem dense with information, exercises and ideas that may be overwhelming. Please work through this manual in steps and at a rate that is suitable and appropriate for you. If you are going through or coming out of a depressive episode or feeling completely overwhelmed with stress, it will be hard for you to concentrate and focus. It is important that you don't condemn your self if you cannot follow all the information presented. Most importantly be kind with your self and take on that which is useful and timely for you and put the other information aside until a time when it may be useful.

Some of you will find the ideas expressed in these notes to be common sense and the exercises simple, while others may find the ideas hard to understand and the exercises difficult to practice. Everyone is different. The workbook should therefore be utilised to the degree that each individual finds helpful.

Some people may, for example, find the progressive relaxation exercise from session one useful and not be ready for other exercises. Some individuals may be unable to do the formal sitting meditation exercises and resonate more with exercises that utilise movement and daily activities. Others may relate better to the content of latter chapters (such as loving kindness) than the material in earlier ones.

All these individual variations are perfectly OK. You are simply encouraged to use what is helpful and be content with making progress at your own pace. For those who are not ready to work through the workbook completely it can serve as a map for another time.

The notes are part of a course which is conducted by experienced mental health practitioners. If you start using these notes and the guided meditations that are part of this course without suitable guidance please exercise gentle awareness of your reactions to various exercises. If for any reason you begin to have unhelpful reactions please consult with a health practitioner before they become worse.

The handouts make reference to guided meditations, and audio CDs are provided as part of the program. Some exercises may not suit the individual and some practitioners may choose not to use the recorded meditations at all. Some meditations may be timely whilst other meditations may not be timely or be inappropriate. You are advised to consider the guided meditations offered and utilise those that may be helpful. When you feel confident, you can practise the chosen meditation exercise or exercises without the aid of a recording. There are probably hundreds of different ways to meditate. It is usually best to find a meditation practice that suits and be consistent with it. It is also helpful to experiment and to combine a variety of different meditation practices if they support each other. Ultimately, with a broad repertoire, you can utilise practices as and when they are needed.

## **Skilful applications**

Though this workbook can be used in a self-help manner, it was originally designed as a reference manual for course participants who received suitable instruction. Skilled guidance is particularly important if you have had, or suffer from a clinical condition such as severe depression, debilitating anxiety disorder or some form of psychosis.

## Severe depression

As far as depression is concerned, the exercises explained in this workbook are most helpful as a way to prevent relapse once an individual is over an episode. Those who are severely depressed may not be able to concentrate enough to read the workbook and do many of the mindfulness exercises, thus not benefiting much from the program. Sometimes, attempts to practise mindfulness may be misunderstood and shift to unhelpful self-analysis and rumination, which only makes the depression worse. In these cases, anti-depressant medication may be necessary and can be used with suitable mindfulness exercises to help cultivate concentration. Mindfulness of daily activities and gross movements, such as physical exercise can help to strengthen concentration and shift attention away from unhelpful rumination. Recommendations discussed in the first few sessions can also be helpful. Having goals, supportive social contact and finding pleasant and fulfilling activities to do and doing them are particularly helpful ways of coping with severe depression.

## Anxiety and other conditions

We ask you to understand that there are other specialised group and individual programs for conditions such as violent and abusive temperament, drug and alcohol abuse, eating disorders, chronic pain, complicated grief, personality disorder, social phobia, agoraphobia, panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and post-traumatic stress. Nonetheless, the exercises and concepts described in this workbook may be helpful with a variety of anxiety disorders and other conditions. Of all the anxiety conditions, this program and workbook is most suited to Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), and research using this program for GAD has had positive results.

## Psychosis or mania

Working through the program and reading the handouts is not recommended for those who are acutely psychotic or manic. In these situations medication is usually the best option and working closely with a mental health practitioner is highly recommended. A mental health practitioner may, however, utilise some ideas and exercises found in the program and handouts. Mindfulness in daily activities, mindful physical exercise and progressive relaxation, found in the first few sessions, may be helpful in these circumstances. Therapist assisted understanding of “urge surfing”, which is explained in one of the later sessions may be helpful to offset over engagement with manic emotions. Generally, however, the ideas and exercises in this workbook are best utilised when one is over an episode.

## Undesirable reactions

When new to the practice, mindfulness can be confused with focusing on oneself and one's distress, an unhelpful habit, which is also known as self-focussed attention. When one focuses on one's distress and the circumstances surrounding it, the effect can be unsettling and if vulnerable, unwanted reactions can be triggered. Self-focussed attention is particularly prevalent with individuals who are prone to panic attacks or depressive episodes.

With depressive episodes, self-focused attention can draw attention to negative self-concepts or beliefs. This can trigger feelings of being overwhelmed and distressed.

Panic attacks refer to the sudden and rapid onset of the fight or flight mechanisms of fear. Obviously these mechanisms have a biological function. When the fear function is not necessary, however, panic attacks can be extremely debilitating and develop into a disorder. When individuals suffer with panic disorder, there is a tendency to focus on physical sensations and misinterpret the significance of these sensations. Some mindfulness exercises require

practitioners to bring attention to physical sensations or the breath. Sometimes these exercises can be distressing for those who suffer with panic disorder because of self focussed attention and catastrophic misinterpretations.

Mindfulness is not the same as self-focussed attention. With mindfulness, distress may be brought into awareness but is seen with curiosity, acceptance, in context and does not need to be taken personally or misinterpreted. Exercises explained throughout this workbook, which cultivate awareness of external events, such as mindfulness of sound, can help to deal with self-focussed attention. If one is vulnerable, skilled guidance can be particularly helpful. With panic disorder, sufferers are encouraged to slowly and gradually become familiar with physical sensations so they need not elicit panic reactions.

Another untoward reaction is Relaxation Induced Anxiety (RIA). This reaction occurs when some individuals relax, and, in the process of relaxation, unresolved emotional issues surface and trigger anxiety. Again, the workbook details how to deal with emotional issues but, nonetheless, caution is warranted. The advice and support of experienced practitioners can be particularly helpful.

Those who choose to use the handouts and recordings in a self-help manner should monitor for untoward reactions. If exercises lead to calm and peaceful states of heart-mind, continue their use. If, however, a particular exercise causes distress that is unsettling and overwhelming, suspend using that exercise for a period and utilise coping skills that are helpful. Later, as confidence builds and it is timely, the distress eliciting exercises can be revisited in a sensitive and wise manner. Such timely exposure to anxiety provoking experiences can be helpful and healing, but it should be done gradually. The healing process of exposure is explained as the course progresses.

## **Mindful movement**

Posture and movement are important components of mindfulness practice. You will be invited to participate in mindful movement in the form of gentle yoga, Chi Kung or self-massage throughout this course. The gentle movements we show are demonstrated as some ways you can be mindful of posture and movement. They are voluntary and you must use your own discretion about their appropriateness or inappropriateness for you and your body. Please do not do anything that causes pain or you feel may be damaging. You need to judge and be responsible for yourself. All these movement exercises are completely voluntary and you can sit out if you wish. All exercises (emotional and physical) are voluntary and participants choosing to do these exercises are asked to do so in a responsible manner that respects their personal ability and limitations and in a way that is not harmful.

Thank you for finding the time to read this introduction to the course. We, the leaders of this course, welcome you to this liberating journey with openhearted warmth and gratitude. We hope that we can share with you our understanding about cultivating mindfulness wisdom, kindness and joy and we wish you all the best.

## **Acknowledgements**

Many of the notes have been copied from other workbooks about mindfulness written by Malcolm Huxter. The comic illustrations have been kindly provided by Robin Hall, an artist, musician and therapist who lives and works in Belfast, Ireland.

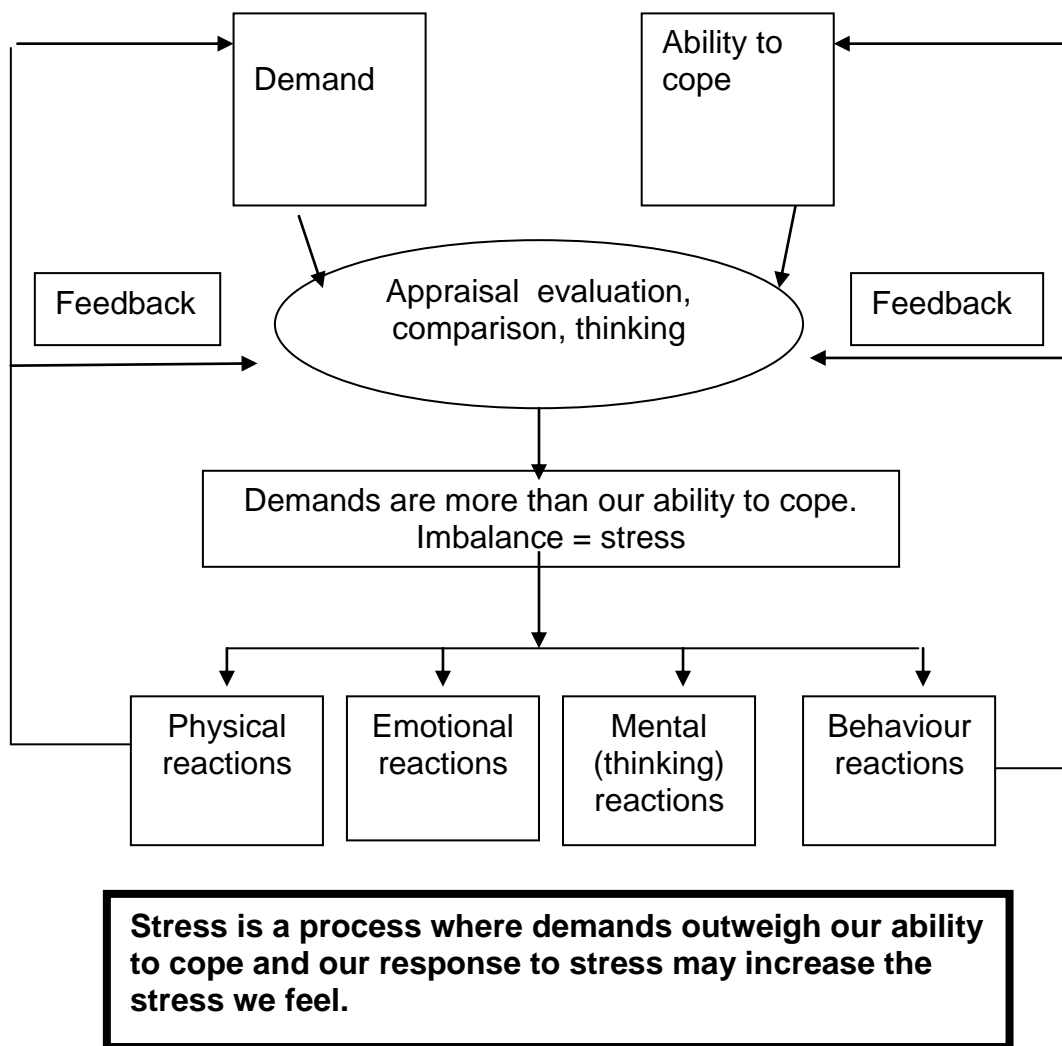
# **SESSION ONE: STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, AND WAYS TO BE FREE WITH MINDFULNESS.**

## **Session overview**

The aims of this session are to begin to understand how we get stuck in stressful patterns and discover some ways we can break free from these unhelpful habits. We will also begin to understand depression and anxiety and what it means to be free from these conditions. Stress, the causes of stress, freedom from stress and ways to be free, will be described as four truths about life. Though it is true that we may suffer with stress, anxiety and depression, it is also true that we can find freedom from the suffering. Remembering to be here now, or mindfulness, is one skill that can help us find freedom and happiness. Mindfulness will be introduced as an important part of the way that we can short circuit stressful habits.

## **The first truth: Being overwhelmed and unhappy or stressed**

Stress is a word that everyone uses but there is not agreement on what it means. There are many different ways stress is described and explained. Sometimes it is simply described as that which is difficult to bear. Sometimes we may be stressed because something very difficult may occur to us, like becoming ill. Stress can involve the despair we feel when we don't get what we want, or get what we don't want or we lose that which is dear to us. Another way to think about stress is when demands are more than our ability to cope, and as a result we react physically, emotionally, with our thoughts and with our behaviours. All sorts of emotions like being out of control with anger, feeling depressed, anxious, worried and tense have been related to stress. Being overwhelmed by things that are happening within us and around us is another way to describe stress.



## Physical, emotional, mental and behavioural reactions

When we are stressed we may act mindlessly, doing things without care and attention, and make mistakes. Some of the behavioural reactions involved in stress include acting in ways that are harmful for our self or others either in the short term or long term. Like, for example, getting hijacked by destructive urges and hurting ourselves or hurting people we care about. Other examples of behavioural reactions could include drinking or smoking or drugging as a way to cope. Unfortunately these types of behaviours can lead to heedlessness or becoming physically unwell. Feeling angry, worried, confused, jealous, frightened or depressed are emotions that may be involved with stress. At a physical level stress may lead to muscle tension, increased heart rate, increased blood pressure, sweating, diarrhoea, nausea, aches and pains, headaches and a whole range of illnesses. Mental reactions to stress could include not being able to think clearly, lack of focus, forgetfulness and more.

Psychologically, stress may lead to symptoms such as depressed mood, anxiety, worry, loss of confidence, irritability, time pressure and more. Anxiety and depression as disorders are often triggered by stress.

## **Anxiety and depressive disorders**

A psychological disorder usually involves some form of distress and/or problems with the ability to function in daily life. There are a many different psychological disorders where people experience anxiety and depressive symptoms. Even though there are differences between disorders, symptoms found in one disorder may also be found in others. Further to this, everyone is different and so, even though many people may have the same disorder, an individual's particular symptom pattern is unique to them. Often people do not clearly fit a particular diagnosis or they feel stigmatised by having what is happening to them named as a disorder. As long as people do not identify with their disorder, naming them can, however, be very useful. Naming symptom patterns as a disorder can help to share information and ultimately help people understand how best to manage their distress.

Names for disorders have changed over the years and will probably change further as science refines understanding. At the time of writing these handouts some of the anxiety disorders include:

- Generalised Anxiety Disorder or GAD,
- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD where there are anxiety responses related to one or more traumatic situations,
- Agoraphobia, where there is fear of being in places or situations (such as shopping malls, in cinemas, in buses and more) where escape may be difficult or embarrassing,
- Obsessive Compulsive Disorder or OCD, where there may be strange and unwanted thoughts as well as possible compulsions to act in ritualistic ways to neutralise the thoughts,
- Social Phobia where there is excessive fear that others will judge in a negative way and as a result the person avoids social circumstances,
- Panic disorder, where panic attacks happen in situations where most people would not be afraid.

Depression, as a disorder, is very common and there are few different types that include:

- Bi-polar disorder (manic depression) where there is clearly a biological illness and there are often severe swings between feeling down and manic,

- Reactive depression where depressive symptoms emerge after a very difficult circumstance,
- Endogenous depression. With the endogenous depression, symptoms emerge without any particular reason except, perhaps, chemical imbalances in the brain,
- Post natal depression, which affects some mothers within a few months after the birth of a child.

## Depression and anxiety

Depression usually involves a sad, discontented and miserable mood, while anxiety usually involves fear and feeling physically excited and on guard. The symptoms of depression and anxiety, however, overlap. For example, a symptom of Generalised Anxiety Disorder (or GAD) (a common anxiety disorder) is uncontrollable worry for at least six months. Those suffering with GAD may also experience some of the following symptoms to a degree that interrupts their ability to function in life:

- Restlessness or feeling keyed up,
- Being easily fatigued,
- Difficulty concentrating or mind going blank,
- Irritability ,
- Muscular tension,
- Sleep disturbance.

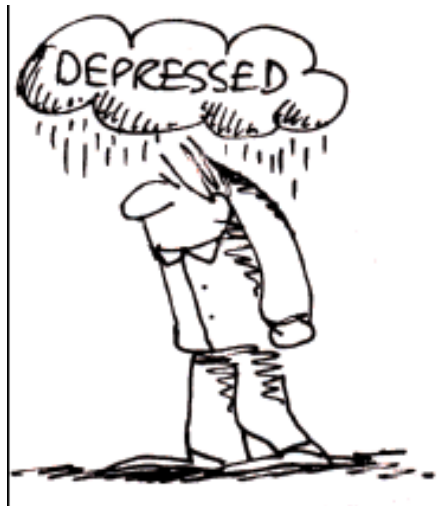


In a manner similar to GAD the symptoms of major depression can include:

- Depressed mood,
- Diminished interest and pleasure,
- Weight loss or gain,



- Insomnia or hyper-somnia (over sleeping),
- Psycho-motor agitation or retardation,
- Fatigue,
- Excessive guilt or feelings of worthlessness,
- Recurrent thoughts of death,
- Low self esteem,
- Feelings of hopelessness,
- Poor concentration or difficulty making decisions.



## **The Second Truth: The causes of anxiety and depression**

The causes of anxiety and depressive disorders vary. Stress, as it has been described in the diagram above, can lead to anxiety and depression. Excessive worry and rumination can also lead to these disorders. In some cases anxiety and depressive disorders may have physical causes including physical illness. In other cases, significant events, occurring throughout our lives, may lead to emotional reactions, anxious or depressed patterns of thought and eventually depression or anxiety. Depression and anxiety can also have strong genetic links and the predisposition to be anxious or depressed can be inherited. For some people difficult social circumstances or plain hardship may be causal factors. In other cases, depression or anxiety may arise with no particular causes. On the whole, anxiety and depressive disorders can have many genetic, biological, social and psychological factors, which all interact.

Sometimes things just happen and or don't work out or we lose something and we feel sad.



One point to consider with these disorders is that habitual reactions can be learned. We learn habits, both helpful and unhelpful, in many complex ways. One way we learn is through behavioural reinforcement. Reinforcement refers to strengthening or supporting something. When behaviours are reinforced they are strengthened or increased. When we are rewarded or something pleasant occurs at the same time as, or shortly after, a particular behaviour, that behaviour is likely to increase and get stronger. Or, if an unpleasant experience is stopped or made less after a particular behaviour, then that behaviour is also likely to increase. Reinforcement is one of the main ways in which living creatures, including humans, learn.

Psychological patterns driven by avoidance and aggression, craving and addiction or simply being unaware can be causative for much of our psychological anguish.

### Avoidance and aggression

Many experiences in life including thoughts, situations and physical sensations are unpleasant. Avoiding what we find unpleasant provides relief, which is reinforcing. Sometimes avoidance is necessary for survival and wellbeing. Often, however, it is not and the more we avoid the stronger the habit of avoidance becomes. When avoiding experiences of life becomes a habit, we do not get evidence about the way things actually are. Avoiding some experiences may increase our stress and suffering. If we avoid investigating our stress, for example, it may become entrenched. Avoidance tends to reduce our ability to learn positive coping skills including different ways to think about and respond to difficult experiences. The flip side of avoidance is aggression. Sometimes we are aggressive, mean and nasty to ourselves, and this is a cause for an enormous amount of misery. Sometimes we get lost in being hostile and

aggressive to other people or animals, and this also eventually ties us up in knots of unhappiness.

### Addictions

Sometimes, rather than avoiding certain experiences we seek them out because they are pleasing and enjoyable. Like avoidance, seeking out experiences is often necessary for survival, health and wellbeing. Sometimes, however, the pleasant experiences we want may not be conducive to long-term happiness. They may provide pleasure in the short term but, in the long run, increase our stress and suffering. In these cases clinging, grasping and craving patterns become unhelpful habits. When we are addicted to pleasant experiences at the expense of long-term health, happiness and wellbeing we are like slaves to habits of pleasure seeking.



### Being unaware

Sometimes experiences are not particularly pleasant or unpleasant yet we fall into habits with them because we simply do not understand and are ignorant about the effects of what we are doing. The more we follow habits the more they are reinforced.

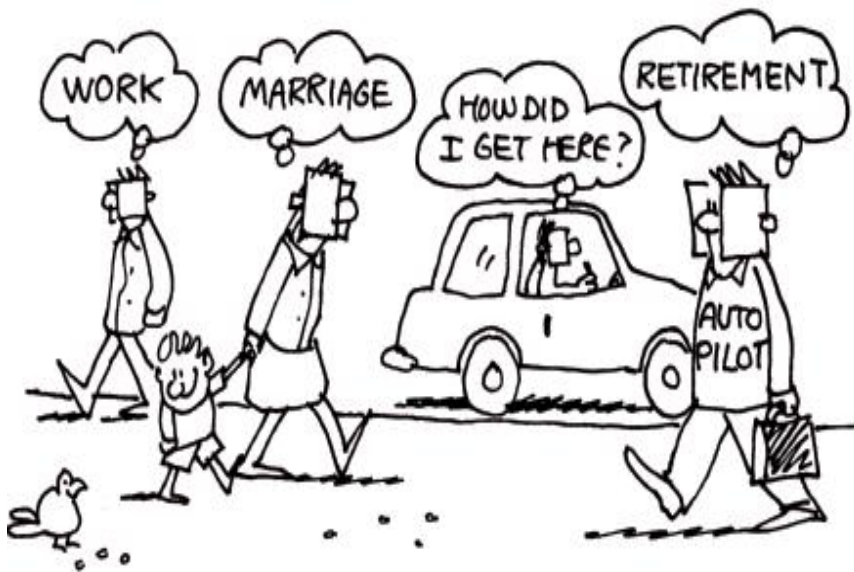
Habits driven by addictions, avoidance or ignorance can become automatic and unconscious. When our lives are ruled by habitually unconscious and automatic patterns our reactions to things may become stuck. Being trapped in automatic patterns we forget the awe-inspiring mystery of life and instead, life seems stuck, flat, stale, dull and grey. Or, we are constantly on guard against the possibility that we may meet that which we are avoiding or lose that which we enjoy. When we are stuck in automatic and unconscious habits, we fail to see the possibilities that life has to offer and we may be bound by anxiety and depression. The psychological healing of anxiety and depression is often based around de-conditioning unhelpful, habitual and reactive learned responses.

Some ways to de-condition and be free from unhelpful automatic patterns include:

- Facing and investigating what we are avoiding,
- Reducing addictive type patterns and,
- Developing understanding about our behaviours.

## Auto Pilot

Being on autopilot is one way that stress might continue. Autopilot is like being entrenched and stuck in unhelpful habits and reactions. Very often we do things automatically, without noticing what we're doing. We forget to pay attention to our present moment realities and instead get entangled, lost and blinkered by thoughts and feelings about the past or future.



This course will outline ways that understanding, skilful action, resolve/determination, mindfulness and concentration can help us to manage stress. One function of mindfulness is that it helps to develop understanding that can free us enslaving habits. One function of concentration is that it gives penetrative power to mindfulness and it can calm and counter negative coping responses such as unwarranted and excessive fear.

## The third truth: Happiness

Like the word stress, the meaning of happiness varies for different people. Positive psychologists see happiness in three ways:

1. The simple feeling of enjoyment and pleasure, such as when we eat something that that is very nice or do enjoyable and fun activities.
2. The uplifted feelings that are related to getting completely engaged with something, like, for example, doing a project, reading a great book, surfing, playing music or sport.

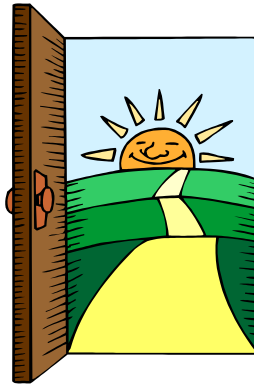
3. The sense of wellbeing and peace of mind we get when we do something that is important or meaningful for us. This could include being kind to someone or helping a friend out when they might need us. Loving and being loved are probably the most meaningful things for most people.

Positive psychologists say that the first type of happiness is healthy and very helpful for a sense of wellbeing. Unfortunately this type of happiness is precarious because, most of the time, it depends on getting what we want all the time. Not only do things that are enjoyable not last, but even if we got what we wanted all the time, the way we feel about them could also change. Like for example, the first time you go to your favourite restaurant it may be very enjoyable. If however, you had the same meal, over and over again, day after day, the level of pleasure could quickly wane. Advertising marketing often tries to convince us to buy into the first type of happiness. They say that we will be happy when we get what we want. The things that money buys can bring happiness to certain point, but we all know that in the long run money can't buy happiness. For example, multi millionaires and lottery winners aren't always very happy. There may be short cuts to the first type of happiness. Like, for example, having endless holidays going on spending sprees, having affairs, using drugs and alcohol etc., Unfortunately, the highs of holidays do not last, the money quickly runs out on spending sprees and other short cuts may have hidden costs that lead to misery and despair in the long run.

There are no short cuts to the second and third types of happiness because they often depend on us doing something, training in some way or other, or creating positive habits. Being engaged and having purpose are more fulfilling types of happiness than the first type described above. Scientific research shows us that people who have the second and third types of happiness are healthier, live longer, have more success with their work and are more able to cope with life difficulties.

Many mindfulness practitioners say that happiness arises from developing calm and insight. With insight we are able to disentangle ourselves from the causes of anguish and are more skilled at creating the causes of happiness. They say that one aspect of happiness is a form of contentment with your self and the things around you and this contentment comes from wisdom, healthy lifestyles and mind training with mindfulness and concentration.

## The fourth truth: A path of freedom.



How do we manage stress? How do we turn off the autopilot and switch on to life?

There are many ways to short circuit stressful patterns and many pathways of happiness. Some of the things on these pathways could include:

- Decreasing demands by, for example, being wise about what we take on and saying no to things that are not wise or could be overwhelming.
- If we don't have a choice with demands, like when we get sick for example, we can do what we can to change what needs to be changed and accept the things that can't be changed.
- We can increase our ability to cope by learning helpful strategies.
- We can investigate, change and be creative with the way we see and think about things.
- We can decide to not to do actions that may hurt or harm ourselves and or others.
- We can change aggressive and craving patterns and let go of unhelpful mental, emotional, behavioural, physical reactions.
- We can develop good feelings towards our self and others.
- We can develop wisdom, which helps us make wise decisions about how to act.
- WE CAN TRAIN IN MINDFULNESS. THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT SKILL THAT CAN HELP US ON THE PATH OF HAPPINESS.

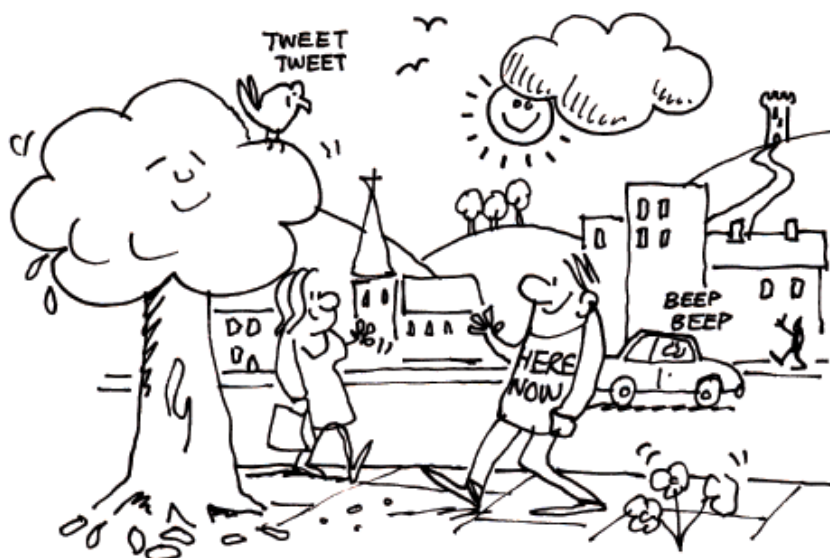
## What is Mindfulness?

There are several features of mindfulness. Some of these features are: remembering, attention, present centredness, being open minded and purposefulness. Traditional definitions of mindfulness emphasize remembering and contemporary psychological perspectives emphasize attention. In this workbook both remembering and attention are taken into account.

The original meanings of attention were to “attend to” “care for” and “watch over”. The attention aspect of mindfulness may therefore mean caring for and watching over what is happening in the present moment. Mindfulness can refer to **remembering to bring kind, open-hearted attention to experience**. Mindfulness has also been described as **remembering where we are, what we are doing and who we are with** (Hanh, 1999). Other ways we can describe mindfulness include: present centred awareness, remembering to pay attention to what is

happening with care and discernment, self awareness, and listening to oneself. Yet another way of describing mindfulness is **presence**.

**Remembering to bring attention to the present** or simply enjoying the moment is intrinsically liberating from much of our emotional distress. Mindfulness helps to keep us on track with our chosen directions. Mindfulness also generally engenders a non-reactive stance that can de-condition or short circuit unhealthy reactive patterns. Mindfulness can help us to not be seduced and intoxicated with the highs of life while protecting us from not being deceived and lost in the lows. Mindfulness is the opposite of being mindlessly on automatic pilot. With mindfulness it is possible to relax with joyous awe to the mystery and beauty of life. Mindfulness can help liberate us from stress, anxiety and depression.



---

**Remembering the lessons from the past, remembering your purpose and remembering to be here now.**

---

## **What are we mindful of?**

You can be mindful anywhere and with almost everything in life. You can be mindful when you are playing music, eating, talking, walking, running, sitting, lying down, and breathing. You can be mindful as you negotiate a business deal, or when you are gardening. Wherever you are able to be aware, in those situations and circumstances you can be mindful. As mentioned earlier, however, mindfulness is more than just being aware in the moment. In order to be successful, bank robbers or snipers need to be in the moment and aware of what they are

doing. This type of present moment awareness, however, is different than mindfulness. With mindfulness you do not intentionally harm or cause harm to anyone or anything.

There are four domains or areas of mindfulness, which are:

1. Body and bodily experience, such as posture, actions, physical sensations as well as the breath.
2. Feelings of whether something is comfortable or pleasant, uncomfortable or unpleasant or in the middle/neutral.
3. Moods, emotions and states of mind such as a happy mind, a sad mind, an angry mind, a peaceful mind and so on.
4. Emotional, mental and behavioural patterns and reactions, both helpful and unhelpful as well as other things.

## **Related qualities**

On the path of freedom, mindfulness is not alone. There are many other skills and qualities that go with it. They all help to develop each other. Some of these skills and qualities are:

### Relaxation:

Being able to relax is very important, especially in a modern world where everyone seems stressed and tense. Relaxation is basically being able to let go of tension. Relaxation is a primary ally to being mindful. Relaxation is the bedrock on which you build the stability of mindfulness.

### Focused attention:

Focused attention includes attempting to pay attention to one thing at a time. It involves “relaxing into” and “opening up” to an experience rather than forceful concentration. It involves simply bringing attention back to the object of attention or action.

### Non-judgemental stance:

Non-judgement does not imply one should not utilise wise discrimination about life's events. For the practice of mindfulness, however, it generally refers to suspending the filter of evaluating comments so that objects of mindfulness can be perceived as they are. It means suspending unnecessary condemnation. This involves staying with the facts rather than our opinions of the facts, such as “good” “bad” “should” “should not” etc.



### Acceptance:

Acceptance refers to the willingness to experience that, which happens in our mind and body. Acceptance does not refer to apathetically condoning dysfunctional patterns or events. Rather it means seeing things as they are in the present moment. Acceptance may not always be best in situations that are negative or not constructive. In the realm of private internal experiences like thoughts and emotions, however, acceptance allows choice in how we may react. Acceptance refers to being open to experience and being willing to take what has been offered by life. Willingness is like being open to the mystery of life with a big “yes” as opposed to rejecting life’s experiences with a “no” or a “yes but.....”.

### Commitment:

Commitment could be considered to be the willingness to put forth effort. Ironically the type of effort needed for mindfulness practice is sometimes described as effortless. It involves the motivation and willingness to continue to practice even when it seems boring or unpleasant. It could be compared to digging for water. We need to resolve to keep going even if results do not quickly emerge. The need to practice cannot be over emphasised. Positive results are more probable with practice.

### Patience:

Patience is like acceptance. One cannot push the natural unfolding of change. Patience involves opening up to experiences in every moment as they arise and giving our minds the space to have these experiences. Patience also involves the understanding that as we learn to cope, emotional or mental distress will arise from time to time and it may be intense. We can develop tolerance, however, because we know the distress will change.

Patience also involves a deep and warm acceptance of our self and the rate of our “progress”. Remember that breaking old negative habits takes time and judging ourselves harshly makes matters worse.

### A beginner’s mind:

A beginner’s mind refers to a quality of curiosity about life. As a beginner, one is open to experience and everything is new and fresh. It also refers to a quality of investigation, which means inquiring into the nature of something. This usually means seeing beyond concept and understanding the changing, interdependent and mysterious nature of our mind and body.

### Kindness:

Kindness is an essential part of mindfulness. Often we are unkind to ourselves, engaging in negative judgment and condemnation. Mindfulness practice requires a quality of tender “OKness” about ourselves. Like acceptance this does not mean we condone unwise actions or behaviours, but it means that we begin to understand that things arise because of many interrelated causes and conditions. Being kind to ourselves enables us to have the courage to be open to experience.

### Non-grasping:

Sometimes this attitude has been described as non-striving. It is important to have goals, a direction for action and in some cases apply courageous effort to achieve our goals. The process of how we attain our goals, however, may be more important than the goal. Being too concerned about an outcome can become an obstacle to being here now. Sometimes a non-striving attitude is described as being important with relaxation/meditation. A non-striving attitude means that when one does an exercise it is not done with attachment to a goal in the future. Rather, an exercise is done for its intrinsic value or for its own sake. Non-grasping may be a better way to describe this attitude because this word highlights the importance of not being too attached to outcomes.

It is important to understand that these attitudes and skills develop naturally, in due time and with practice. Do not be discouraged if, at first, they seem not to be present.

## **Some beginning mindfulness practices**

It is good to start being mindful with simple everyday activities and objects. In this way you can see how mindfulness is a part of life and a skill that you can cultivate and use in all situations. One every day activity is eating. Learning to be attentive to eating is one way to experiment with mindfulness, and experience the benefits for your self. Another good practice to start with is learning how to relax. Relaxation and mindfulness often go together, and progressive relaxation is a basic mindfulness of body practice. An important point about relaxation, however, is that sometimes with some people it can be uncomfortable. If this is the case for you another good place to start is by being aware of sounds. These three beginning practices are described over the next few pages. There are also audio tracks available for mindfulness of sounds and progressive relaxation.

## Invitation to eating mindfully

Eating is often an automatic and unconscious behaviour. Sometimes we have barely finished one mouthful before we shove in the next, and we often do other things like listening to the radio or watching TV rather than enjoying our meals.



To break auto pilot mode, it helps to do one thing at a time. With eating this involves just eating when eating. That is, not talking, or walking or reading or watching TV or something else while eating. With mindful eating you bring curious and interested attention to all the different parts of the eating process. Before you eat it is also very helpful to think about and reflect on how the food got on your plate, or in your hand. This pre-consuming reflection helps to slow you down and develop understanding about the interdependence of all things including a simple morsel of food. Such reflection also helps to cultivate gratitude, which can be a healing emotion.

## Eating Mindfully

Before you begin to eat your food, sit down and spend a few moments reflecting on how this food got to be in your hand or on your plate. Did someone give it to you? Or did someone spend time and effort preparing for you? How did it develop and grow or how was it prepared? Reflect on all the things that were needed for it to grow, such as the sunshine, water, and the nourishment from the soil. Reflect on where this food came from. Perhaps it came from far away, in which case there was effort and energy spent bringing to you. Think of all the people involved in preparing it and bringing it to you.

If you are eating a piece of fruit, feel the fruit in your hand. Notice the weight, shape, size and texture of this piece of fruit. Be very curious. Look at this piece of fruit. Notice its size and all the

colours and shapes and other thing you can see. Notice the way the light shines on it. Smell it. What does it smell like? If you were to describe this smell to someone else how would you describe it? Bring it to your mouth and have a bite. Listen to the sounds that the biting makes then taste all the tastes. Notice all the bursts of experiences and let them come and go. What does it taste like? Notice all your judgements as well. Do you think it is nice, not nice or somehow in the middle. Slow down your chewing so that you can savour the experience. Feel how the morsels move around in your mouth and how your tongue automatically does its thing. Then when the time is right, notice the urge to swallow your mouthful and let it move down your throat and into your belly. How does that feel?

Now notice if there is wanting for more. If there is wanting, notice the urge to have more and be present with the urge. Then, when you decide to follow the urge notice how you bring the piece of fruit to your mouth for another new moment of experience and be mindful of everything and continue to enjoy your food, mindfully.

## **Mindfulness of sound**

- Make yourself comfortable, sitting upright and relaxed.
- Scan your body and release what ever tension you may feel.
- Make the intention that for the period of this exercise, you will not to follow concerns about things other than being here and now being mindful of sound.
- Also make the intention to be open and kind to other experiences if and when they come up.
- Now bring your awareness to sound.
- Be aware of sound as sound or vibration.
- There may be sounds of music, birds, cars, traffic, air conditioning, wind, rain or just the hum of silence.
- Notice how you may create pictures and names around the sound such “my favourite music track”, “dog barking”, “traffic”, “birds” or whatever. Don’t struggle with the names or the pictures and simply listen to sound as vibration. Noticing how the sounds arise and pass away.
- Notice how some sounds are pleasant, some sounds are unpleasant and some sounds are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Be aware of all your judgements, but don’t worry about them. Simply remember to be aware of sound as sound.
- Now arising .....now changing...now passing away.

- Let your mind be as if it is the sky, open, expansive and clear, and let sounds arise and pass through.
- By listening to sounds, as an orchestra of life, you can become very peaceful.
- By listening to sounds and noticing how they all change you can become very peaceful.
- Be content and at peace to listen to sounds.
- When the time is right you can end this period of mindfulness.
- If mindfulness of sounds was helpful for you, remember that you can be mindful of sounds when ever it feel like the right thing to do.

## **Progressive Relaxation**

With Progressive relaxation you are asked to tense you muscles. Don't tense your muscles for longer than 6 or 7 seconds. Also don't tense your muscles if it causes you any pain.

- Find a comfortable, quiet place to sit or lie down. A place that you will not be interrupted for about 20 minutes.
- Make the intention that for the next 15-20 minutes you will not be too concerned about anything except being mindful in the moment and practising relaxation.
- Remember that you cannot force relaxation to happen, and it is more of something that happens when you let go of tension.
- First, close your eyes and focus on your breathing, keeping it slow and even. Say the words "let go" to yourself a few times as you breathe out.
- Tense up your right foot, squeezing your toes together and pointing them downwards. Focus on that tension. Slowly release that tension as you breathe out, saying the words "let go" or "relax" to yourself.
- Now tense up you're the rest of your right leg
- Slowly release the tension as you breathe out.
- Go through the other muscles in your body, working through the muscles of your right leg, left leg, buttocks, back, abdomen, chest, shoulders, left arm, left hand and fingers, right arm, right hand and fingers, neck, jaw, lips, eyes, and forehead.
- When you finish, scan through your body and make sure most tension has been released. If some areas are still tense you can spend extra time just relaxing those muscles.
- Slowly open your eyes and remember that throughout the day you remind your self to let go of tension by saying to your self "let go" or "relax".

## Activities to do between sessions

- Practise progressive relaxation once or twice a day for about 20 minutes. If a recording is supplied, use it. Otherwise follow the instructions in this workbook.
- Notice experiences and use the noticing diary at the end of this chapter. Record how you became aware of pleasant experiences throughout the week. Simply notice experiences without feeling that you have to do anything about them. If you can, notice the thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and how you responded to the experience.
- Endeavour to practice “Mindful eating” at least once a day with a meal, snack or cup of tea.
- Attempt to enjoy simply being in the moment.

## Pleasant events diary 1

(adapted from Hayes et al, 1999 and Kabatt-Zinn, 1990)

DAY	Experience: What happened?	Emotions: What were the emotions you experienced?	Thoughts: What were the thoughts you experienced?	Physical sensations: What bodily sensations did you experience?	Responses/reactions: How did you respond/react to your emotions, thoughts and sensations?
MONDAY					
TUESDAY					
WEDNESDAY					

DAY	Experience: What happened?	Emotions: What were the emotions you experienced?	Thoughts: What were the thoughts you experienced?	Physical sensations: What bodily sensations did you experience?	Responses/reactions: How did you respond/react to your emotions, thoughts and sensations?
THURSDAY					
FRIDAY					
SATURDAY					
SUNDAY					



## **SESSION TWO: HAVING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION.**

### **Session overview**

In this session we will explore the importance of having a direction with life and bringing mindfulness to daily activities. When we know where we are going it is easier to act mindfully and remember the purpose of what we are doing. Having purpose and acting with purpose are ways to give us meaning (the third aspect of happiness according to positive psychologists). Not only can having a direction, even with simple every day activities, counter anxiety and depression, it can also help find “flow”. Flow is when things get so interesting that there is no time to feel bored or miserable. Flow is similar to the second type of happiness where we are so engaged that worries and concerns all fall away. Flow is like being in a very creative and enjoyable mental and emotional zone. Flow will be explained in more detail later. For the moment it is helpful to remember that that being the moment, with mindfulness, can include acting with purpose. In this session we will introduce “noting”, which is a very helpful tool for mindfulness and give more explanation about how to practise mindfulness with daily activities. There will also be guidance in practising “body scan”, another body oriented mindfulness practise.

### **Acting without purpose**

When people become depressed they are often overwhelmed with hopelessness. They may be acutely aware of distress in their lives but not be able to see a way out of this suffering. Life can seem meaningless and the thought “why bother” can often arise. People caught in depression may withdraw from social contact and general activity and retreat into what seems like an emotional black hole. As we discovered in the last session, anxiety and depression, as disorders, can occur together. With anxiety however, the avoidance of activity is more clearly related to fear. People suffering with anxiety may feel as if they are backed into a corner of avoidance. In this way they are often frozen into inactivity and social withdrawal.

Sometimes rather than being inactive we frantically engage in nervous activity in an effort to get everything done at once or to avoid an array of feelings including a sense of boredom, inadequacy and failure. This type of activity is often done in a chaotic and unconscious manner. We may rush around from one activity to the next not really being sure of what we are doing or why we are doing it. At the end of the day we may feel exhausted and also feel unsatisfied because nothing was achieved. This type of undirected or confused behaviour is stressful and consequently adds to our suffering.

If we act in a purposeless or meaningless manner it is easy to fall victim to old anxious and depressive patterns. Avoidance and not feeling motivated to act are symptoms of depression and anxiety. If we can slowly and gradually confront our avoidance it can decrease the anxiety we feel. Ironically, if we can be more active with goal directed behaviour this can increase our motivation and help us get above depression.

Energetic and courageous effort is often required to:

- Stop destructive patterns,
- Prevent these patterns arising again,
- Cultivate helpful patterns and,
- Maintain the helpful patterns.

Here effort does not mean a struggle and strain to achieve, rather it is energy and motivation to follow that which is meaningful to us. Confidence about helpful paths of action arises when, with understanding, we realise that unhelpful patterns are keeping us in reactive cycles of stress. Confidence gives rise to commitment or motivation. When motivated, we can endure short-term hardship and difficulty because we can see the possibility of long-term release from the negative bind.

## **Having purpose and direction**

Mindfulness is one strategy that can help us to confront automatic habits, quell emotional over-reaction and reduce unhelpful learned responses. Having purpose and acting with purpose are ways to reduce tendencies associated with anxiety and depression. Mindfulness can also help us act in a manner that is suitable and appropriate to achieve our goals and aspirations.

When we know the directions that are important to us, it is easier to navigate according to those directions. Having purpose and acting with purpose are ways to manage our stress. One aspect of mindfulness is acting with clear understanding that what we do is in line with that which is important to us.



## Goals

Goals provide us with purpose and direction. Goals can be immediate (i.e. daily or weekly), short term (1-12 months) and long term (10 years to life). If a possibility or a goal can be clarified, motivation for action can arise. Goals can be like ideal circumstances or ways of being (i.e., feeling, thinking and behaving) that we can aim for. Goals can also be like having a positive template which provides us with a view on life that is counter to one that is enmeshed in cycles of stress or suffering. Having a goal or aspiration when we are suffering is like being in a small dark room but being able to see out a window to a beautiful view.

To be meaningful and satisfactory goals need to be realistic, achievable and clearly defined. A useful acronym for goals is SMART.

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime measured

In order to achieve something worthwhile it can help to start with an ideal or a “dream” of how we would like things to be as a long-term goal. It helps to be specific by clarifying exactly how and in what areas of one’s life things could be different. Then, thinking constructively and realistically, consider the steps that may be needed and make these immediate or short term goals.

Goals are particularly important when we feel stuck with a disorder. As avoidance is an ally to both anxiety and depressive disorders, having realistic and concrete goals helps to reduce this tendency. We may have long-term goals but trying to achieve those goals all at once may be unrealistic. Therefore, we need to achieve our goals gradually. With anxiety it is helpful to start by clarifying exactly what we are avoiding and what we would like to achieve. Then, plan how to get closer and closer to our long-term goals. The step-wise approach needs to involve graduated

approximations that meet realistic challenges. Someone suffering with agoraphobia, for example, may have a long-term goal to be able to go to a large mall, do a few hours shopping and manage anxiety. The step-wise approach to meet this goal could start by committing to visiting the local corner store for a few minutes, then at a later date, to go to the local small supermarket for 30 minutes. Slowly and over time this person could increase the time they spend shopping as well as the size of the shops they visit.

When people are overwhelmed by sadness or depression they are not motivated to set goals and be active. Yet, if they become active the activity can build energy and motivation and lift their mood. Further to this, when people who are prone to depression participate in pleasant activities, and/or activities that give a sense of achievement, this participation can also influence a lift in their mood. Goals can be made on a daily basis and can be very simple. Cleaning one's room, for example, can be an achievable goal which, when completed, can give a sense of satisfaction.

It is particularly important to participate in activities that are enjoyable. Such activity increases the possibility that joyful emotions will arise. Joy is a wholesome emotion that can be healing, help focus attention and counter despondency as well as fear. Including enjoyable and satisfying activities in our daily agendas helps to counter stress, depression and anxiety. Enjoyable and satisfying activities vary from one person to the next but could include: dancing, participating in interesting projects or hobbies, sports, music, reading, visiting friends, movies, being in nature, surfing and so on. Sticking to a Pleasant Event Schedule (included in these handouts) can be very helpful when people are depressed.

As everyone is unique, the type of goals which help overcome destructive patterns need to be designed and planned on a person-by-person basis.

## **The risks of goal directed behaviours**

Goals are important because they give us direction. We need to hold them lightly, however, and be flexible to change. We can never be certain about how things may turn out and if we cling to a specific outcome we may be disappointed if that outcome doesn't occur. Goals are future oriented and thus, one risk with clinging to goals is that if we become too focused on achieving something in the future we may forget to appreciate what is happening to and with us in the present. When goals are not SMART, another risk with goal-oriented behaviour is that if our expectations are too high or unrealistic it is possible to be discouraged when we don't achieve our goals.

## Time management

Time management refers to being realistic about how long tasks are likely to take and allocating an appropriate amount of time to achieve one's goals. Prioritising the steps helps in making decisions about what should be done first. Effective time management involves setting out the day's goals and prioritising the steps needed to achieve them. Decisions about what needs to be done and when, involves priorities being given to each task and determining how long each step may take.

## Valued directions



The destination or goal is important but so is the journey. Values are different from goals. Goals tend to be specific or definable achievements or outcomes. Values, on the other hand, tend to describe ways of being that are lived. Valued directions involve that which we think or feel is important, our fundamental purpose, and that which is meaningful to us. It is possible that people hold values that could be harmful to themselves or others. Generally, however, values adhere to principles of non-harm and the following discussion is based on these types of valued directions. Valued directions include how we would like to “be” as we aim to achieve our goals. Living in accordance with our values gives us a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction. That which we value includes the way we would like life to be. When people live according to their valued directions they often feel vital. When they act contrary to valued directions they often feel inner turmoil and this can lead to depression and anxiety.

It is helpful to be conscious of our values and prioritise the most important ones. If we know our values we are more able to make decisions about our actions and we can act with purpose and

direction. Mindfulness helps to ensure that our actions are in line with our valued directions and thus is a way to protect wellbeing and happiness.

We often discover our valued directions when we are faced with life crises. We can also discover our values when consider what is really important and what we really want.

## **“Noting” as a tool to develop mindfulness**

There are many specific strategies, techniques and approaches that are used in mindfulness training. One strategy used to develop mindfulness is that of “noting” or labelling (sub-vocally giving objects of mindfulness a name).

“Noting” can serve to concentrate the mind as well as clarify what is happening. Noting can be used in formal sitting or walking mindfulness practices or it can be used in one’s daily activities or busy work life as attention focuses on whatever is predominant. For example, attention to the rising and falling of the abdomen while breathing can be labelled "rising, falling". Thoughts of the past can be labelled "remembering", and thoughts of the future, "planning". Emotional tendencies can be identified and labelled appropriately such as "anger", "worry", "fear", “sadness”, “joy”, “peace” “excitement” etc. Actions also can be labelled accordingly. One may, for example, use the note "brushing" for brushing one's teeth, or “reaching” for reaching for a door handle.

Putting a name to distressing experiences can often diminish the destructive power of these experiences. Noting can therefore help to give us mental or emotional space from destructive habitual patterns and give us the possibility to choose alternatives. The choices we make have outcomes. Noting is a tool of mindfulness. When we are mindful we are more able to choose to act in a manner that reflects our true aspirations or valued directions.

With noting it is important to understand the difference between making judgements about the world and ourselves and simple descriptions. The approach used with mindfulness involves simple descriptions as opposed to judgemental evaluations. Judgemental evaluations may take the form of, for example, rejection with angry undertones. With mindfulness, opinionated judgements are not helpful.

## **Choices and intentions**

When our valued directions are clarified, the types of emotional and behavioural habits or patterns that block us from living our life to its full potential become more obvious. Part of

changing such habits involves choosing to act in accordance with valued directions. Choices or intentions are impulses to action that are driven from the “here and now”. Thus intention directed behaviour is different from goal driven behaviour which is future oriented. Healthy or wholesome choices can steer us in directions that are congruent with our values. Intentions or choices can be macro or micro. At a macro level, intentions can steer us through the bigger picture of our whole life. When we are clear about our values it is easier to make important decisions about the direction we wish our lives to take. At a micro level, intentions are involved in moment-to-moment actions of our every day life. Simple actions such as getting up from a chair, scratching our face, going shopping, or saying something to someone, etc. all involve intentions. At the micro level we may have thousands of intentions every day. If we want to short circuit reactive patterns it helps to be mindful of skilful and unskilful intentions. Skilful intentions are those intentions, which lead to happiness. Unskilful intentions are those intentions that lead us to act in a manner that may add to and further complicate our stress. If we can begin to be mindful of some of our intentions, both macro and micro, it can become a very powerful way to give us choice with our actions and their consequences. Mindfulness may help to restrain impulsive unskillful actions and engender skilful actions.

Noticing intentions to do something helps us to make the choice to either follow through with our intentions or not. Mindfulness of intentions is a refined practice of mindfulness and it will be explained in more detail later. For the moment, however, it is very helpful to start to become aware of some intentions to do simple activities.

Mindfulness counters forgetting our true aspirations and being unconsciously caught up in blind reactive habits. Mindfulness can provide the mental “space” within which we can see the process and navigate according to our purpose (Kearney, 2002). In this way mindfulness and the wisdom it develops guide the choices and commitments we make moment-to- moment or year-to-year.

As well as providing understanding of purpose, mindfulness enables us to determine the timeliness and appropriateness of an action. By bringing attention to our actions and their effects we begin to understand which actions serve our values and which ones don’t.

## **Mindfulness of daily activities**

It is possible to be mindful of whatever you are doing throughout the day. Ideally, it is helpful to be mindful during all of your waking hours. Mindfulness in activities generally means being attentive to what is being done while it is being done and doing it in the best way possible. When you are

being mindful, you are likely to do things more skillfully and effectively, and in a manner that is not harmful to anyone. This means you are more aware of the purpose of your actions so that they are in harmony with your goals and what is important to you. In addition, you are more likely to get into flow and fully engage with what you are doing. Actions that may have once been boring might become really interesting and enjoyable.



Mindfulness in daily life can be naturally relaxed and begin from the first moments of awareness as you wake up in the morning. When you wake up, wake up to your senses: look, listen and remember to be present, instead of getting caught up in habitual autopilot regrets about the past and worries about the future.





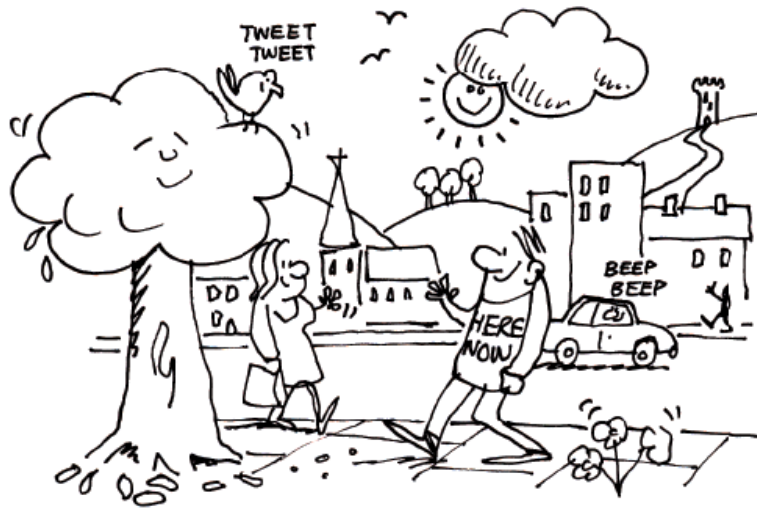
Tune into what is happening in the present moment and be openly curious about it.



Greet the new day with a fresh beginner's mind.



As you go about your daily activities you can remember to PAUSE, RELAX, and BE AWARE. even it is for just a few moments. You can also be present an engaged with life and the world around you.



Throughout the day, you can purposefully choose to be mindful with everyday activities such as: washing up, cleaning the house, talking on the phone, etc. When you do these things try to bring all your attention to what you are doing. When you notice that your mind has gone off task, simply bring it back. If you choose to do activities that are enjoyable or interesting, you may notice that it is easy to focus and be mindful because the mind naturally wants to stay anchored on interesting or enjoyable things.

## Remembering the day's events

An aspect of mindfulness is non-forgetting or recollecting. When you can remember the day's events in a way where you don't get caught up in negative judgements about your self or others, you can start to see how one thing affects another. In this way you can begin to understand any negative patterns and reactions you have as well as what worked to bring focus, happiness and joy. Spending a few minutes, at the end of the day to recollect the day's events and actions can help to develop understanding. In particular, it is very helpful to remember the positive things that happened and how they came about. This type of recollection also provides a boost to mindfulness the next day because we begin to pay attention in a way that we can remember what happened and how it unfolded. If you feel it would be helpful for you, you could use the daily experiences diary (at the end of this chapter) to make a record of some of the things that happened throughout the day. To begin with, see if you can remember pleasant events. Later when you are able to not get caught up in thinking negatively about events, you can remember difficult situations and how you coped with them. Bring curiosity to the events, so that you can remember what happened, what thoughts you had, what emotions occurred or what mood you were in, how it felt, how you responded and so on.

## Body scan

The body scan is one practice that many people find very relaxing. It is similar to progressive relaxation without the tensing first. It involves mindfulness of the body and can help you become sensitive to how the whole of the body feels. Some people very occasionally find the body scan exercise disturbing and unsettling at first. People who are prone to panic attacks sometimes find focusing on physical sensations triggers panic attacks. If this or something similar occurs to you, it may be better to put this body scan aside for a while and do something else such as mindfulness of sound or mindful movement. Slowly, gradually and in a very sensitive manner, returning to this body scan eventually de-condition these panic or similar reactions. If difficulty is experienced, discussion with an experienced practitioner is advised. A recording of a guided body scan is available and instructions are below, but the exercise basically involves becoming aware of the physical sensations throughout your body. Body scan can become relaxing because there seems to be an untangling and a “letting go” of muscular tension, like that experienced with progressive relaxation. If you choose to note when you practice body scan, it is best done in a non-intensive manner.

### Body scan-instructions

- Allow yourself to be as comfortable as you can either lying face up or sitting on a chair or cushion.
- Make the intention that, for the next 20 or so minutes, you will try not to fidget or move unnecessarily or be too concerned about anything other than being here now and bringing attention to the sensations in your body.
- When thoughts, emotions, sounds or other things pull your attention away from physical sensations do not struggle. Let these experiences arise and pass away but have them on the edge of your awareness
- Let physical sensations be the central focus.
- At first bring attention to your body as a whole and with the out breath, let go of tension in your legs, body, arms and head.
- Then bring curious, focused and open-minded awareness to the top of your head.
- Notice sensations as they are, without thinking that they should be other than the way they are.
- Then begin to scan with your awareness so that it progressively and systematically covers the whole of your body from the top of your head to the tips of your toes.
- Feel and be aware of whatever sensations there are without feeling that you need to change them.

- Slowly shift attention to your forehead. Be aware of sensations in your forehead.
- Try to be open to experience without condemnation or judgment.
- Then bring awareness to your face, your eyes, your nose, your cheeks, your mouth, your jaw and your whole face. Feel the experience.
- As you bring mindfulness to the various parts of your body it is as if, without trying, whatever tightness, that may have been there melts and falls away.
- Bring awareness to the physical sensations at the back of your head and the top of your neck. Your neck your throat, the top of your chest and the top of your shoulders.
- Move attention around every corner and aspect of your shoulders letting your awareness touch upon every sensation.
- Bring awareness to your arms, the inside of your arms the outside of your arms your biceps, moving down your arms to your elbows, your forearms, your wrists and your hands.
- Know and be aware of physical sensations with a curious and open mind.
- Bring awareness to the top of your chest, upper back, your whole chest. Move and scan with your awareness through your body, being open and accepting of experiences as they are.
- If there is any pain or discomfort, try to be gentle, kind and compassionate.
- It is as if when you bring compassionate awareness to distress it is healed.
- Be mindful of your belly, back and hips.
- Slowly and bit by bit scan with awareness to the sensations from the top of your thighs down to your knees.
- Shift awareness down to your shins, your calves, your heels, your ankles, toes, top part of the feet, and base of the feet.
- Then bring attention to the whole of your body.
- Bring attention to the quality of aliveness in your whole body. This aliveness may feel like vibrations.
- If you are feeling relaxed and it feels good sit or lie back and enjoy these feelings. When your mind wanders off somewhere simply remember to bring it back to the nice feelings. Continue to do this for a few minutes.
- As you end the exercise slowly move your fingers and toes, then your hands and feet, become aware of the room that you are in, open your eyes, give yourself a stretch, and go about your daily activities with the understanding that you can be aware of your bodily sensations as you need and it can help you to feel peaceful and relaxed.

## Clarifying long term goals

One way to clarify goals is to imagine how things would be if a “miracle” occurred and the suffering associated with your problems was released and unbound and issues disappeared and were resolved . If this were the case, how would things be different? What would be different about you, your behaviour and what you do, the way you think and feel, how you relate to yourself and others etc... These ideals can then become long-term goals.

### My ideals or “dream” situation

Where am I?

---

---

---

---

Who is with me and how do I relate to others?

---

---

---

What am I doing and how is this special?

---

---

---

How am I thinking, behaving and feeling?

---

---

---

## Important or valued life directions

What valued directions are embedded in your dreams or visions for the future? What is important for you in various domains of your life? How would you like to “BE” in these domains? How would you like to “BE” in various areas of your life to feel that every moment was truly valued?

Relationships?

---

---

---

---

Health: emotional, physical, mental and/or spiritual?

---

---

---

---

Work, education or occupation?

---

---

---

---

Other?

---

---

---

---

## Goal setting

My values and ideals are like a wish list that I want to have and put into practice in my life.

By setting realistic long-term goals for my future I can envision a time ahead when I will be enjoying some or most of my values. This gives me motivation so that I can take steps toward my goals. Taking steps towards goals can give a sense of achievement, which can counter fear, feelings of hopelessness and sadness.

### Short-term goals (1-12 months)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Immediate goals (daily or weekly)

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

## Activities to do between sessions

- Begin to slow down and do one thing at a time with some of your daily activities.
- Be attentive and aware in different areas of your life, e.g.: at work, recreation etc.
- Reflect on what is important for you and consider your goals and valued direction. Complete the forms on the previous few pages about goals and reflect on the values embedded in the goals.
- Attempt to act in a manner that reflects helpful values. This may include participating in pleasant events or activities that will give you some sense of achievement on a daily basis. These purposeful activities can be very simple such as cleaning up a room or doing some other chore in a mindful manner. Completing the activity schedule handout may be helpful if you tend to be the type of person that gets stuck in a rut of inactivity. If you are the type that needs to be on the go and active all the time it may involve having some time for doing nothing in particular other than relaxing and “pottering around”.
- “Get into” something that is enjoyable. Consider being spontaneous without being impulsive.
- Substitute Body Scan for progressive relaxation and practise this at least once or twice a day. Revert to progressive relaxation if you find it more beneficial.
- Spend a few minutes at the end of the day, recollecting and processing the day’s events and your actions. Be careful not to slip into rumination. You can complete the daily experience diary as a way to help you develop your ability to recollect and remember the days activities.



## Pleasant events schedule

### Step 1:

Gradually increase the amount of things that you do by planning specific activities each day. This gives you more control over what happens and provides more opportunities for enjoyment and achievement. Planning specific activities in a detailed way helps you to pace your day and lessens the tendency to slip back into passivity and negative thinking. Use the activity plan as your guide.

### Step 2:

Rate the degree of pleasure (P) and achievement (A), which you experience from each activity. Rate your activities from 0 to 5 (after completing them) on the following scale.

The Pleasure Scale (P) refers to the feeling of enjoyment that you get from the activity. By increasing your opportunities for pleasurable experiences you can make yourself feel better. Maintaining a reasonable degree of pleasure can also help prevent you from becoming depressed again.

0 _____	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
No Pleasure		Some Pleasure			Maximum Pleasure

The Achievement Scale (A) refers to the sense of accomplishment or achievement gained from having taken on the activity. Achievement is affected by how difficult the task was for you at that time. If the activity is a difficult one for you right now and you attempt it, then you give yourself a high Achievement (A) rating. For instance, getting yourself off to work when not depressed may not seem like a very difficult task. When down, it may be an ordeal. Cooking, going to the bank, or seeing friends may all be high achievement tasks when you are feeling down.

0 _____	1 _____	2 _____	3 _____	4 _____	5 _____
No Achievement		Some Achievement			Maximum Achievement

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USING THE ACTIVITY PLAN

1. Plan one day at a time.
2. Plan the activities the night before for the following day.
3. Plan activities on an hour to hour basis.
4. Break tasks into small steps.
5. Plan to include some activities which usually give you pleasure and also include some increasingly difficult tasks.
6. Work towards getting back to the routine you had before you were depressed and include activities that you used to enjoy.
7. Keep to the activity plan as closely as possible. However, you will also need to be flexible.
8. If an activity is missed, just proceed with the next one.
9. Record your Pleasure (P) and Achievement (A) ratings for each activity as soon as possible after the event. The ratings between 0 & 5 refer to how you were feeling during the activity.

(Adapted from Beck, 1976; Lewinsohn, Ricardo, Youngren & Zeiss, 1986; World Health Organisation, 1995)

## Activity schedule

Please list all activities undertaken during the day. Rate each activity for sense of pleasure (P) and sense of achievement (A)

	SUNDAY	P	A	MONDAY	P	A	TUESDAY	P	A	WEDNESDAY	P	A	THURSDAY	P	A	FRIDAY	P	A	SATURDAY	P	A
8.00am																					
9.00am																					
11.00am																					
12.00md																					
1.00pm																					
2.00pm																					
4.00pm																					
5.00pm																					
6.00pm																					
7.00pm																					
8.00pm																					
10.00pm																					

RATING SCALE FOR SENSE OF PLEASURE (P AND SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT (A)

None                      Mild                      Moderate                      Maximum  
 0 \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ 5

## Daily Experience Diary

(adapted from Hayes et al, 1999 and Kabatt-Zinn, 1990)

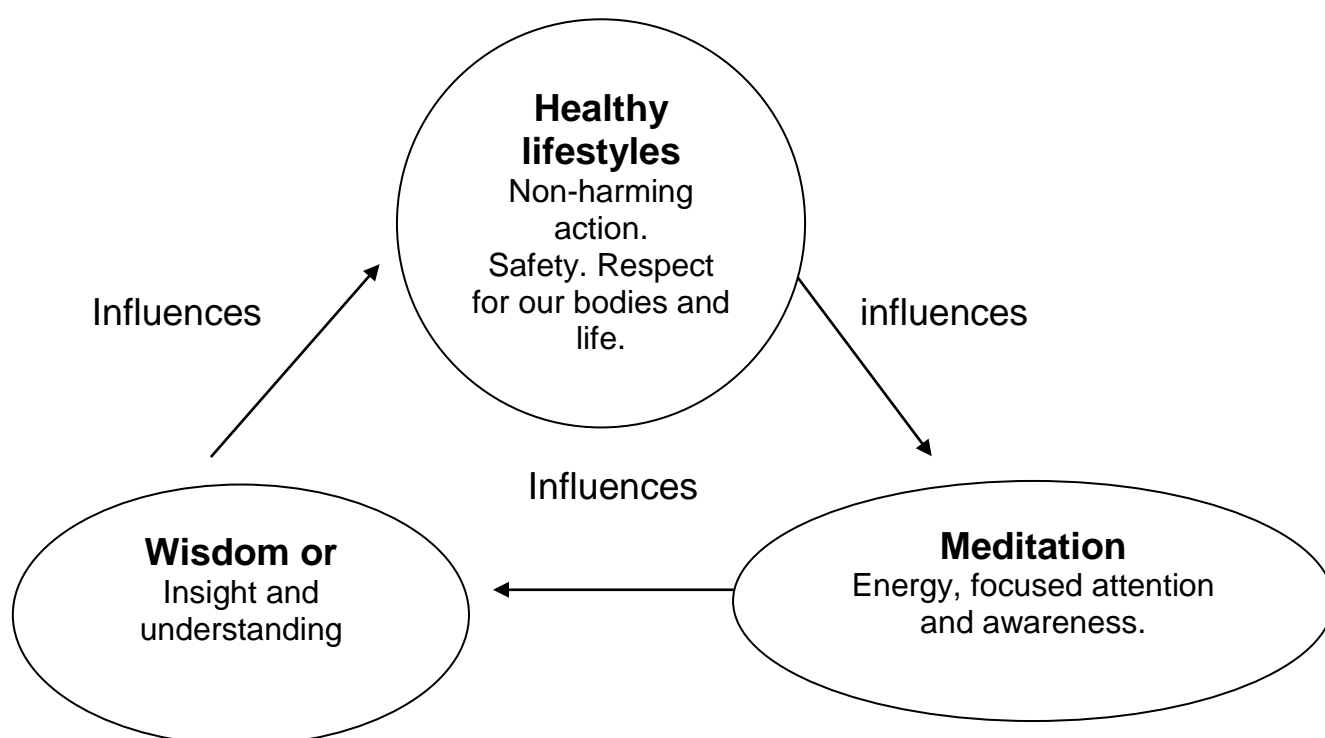
DAY	<b>Experience:</b> What was the experience? What happened?	<b>Feeling:</b> did you like it, not like it or feel indifferent. (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?)	<b>Emotions:</b> what were they? Try to name them e.g., sad, happy, frightened or other?	<b>Thoughts:</b> What sort of thoughts were you having? What were you thinking?	<b>Body:</b> What were your bodily sensations? What happened in your body?	<b>Response/Reaction:</b> How did you respond to your emotions, feelings, thoughts, or bodily sensations?
MONDAY						
TUESDAY						
WEDNESDAY						

DAY	<b>Experience:</b> What was the experience? What happened?	<b>Feeling:</b> was the experience pleasant or comfortable, unpleasant or uncomfortable or neutral?	<b>Emotions:</b> what were they? Try to name them e.g., sad, happy, frightened or other?	<b>Thoughts:</b> What sort of thoughts were you having? What were you thinking?	<b>Body:</b> What were your bodily sensations? What happened in your body?	<b>Response/Reaction:</b> How did you respond to your emotions, feelings, thoughts, or bodily sensations?
THURSDAY						
FRIDAY						
SATURDAY						
SUNDAY						

## SESSION THREE: WISDOM, HEALTHY LIFESTYLES AND MEDITATION

The journey of freedom from stress, anxiety and depression, that includes mindfulness also involves wisdom and wise actions. Wisdom, healthy non-harming lifestyles and mental development all work together to unbind us from stress. The basic aim of this session is to introduce the idea and practice of meditation as a form of mental and emotional training. This session entails understanding that effective meditation arises in a context that includes understanding and skilful actions, which are based on this understanding.

### Healthy lifestyle, meditation and wisdom work together.



Having a healthy lifestyle basically refers to caring for our bodies and our minds. Healthy lifestyles include acting in ways that are not harmful for our selves or others. When our actions are healthy then it is easier to practise mindfulness and concentration. When we practise mindfulness and concentration then we begin to understand how things are and how they interact. When we develop this type of wisdom, we know how to act in ways that will support the directions we want and free us from the anguish of stress anxiety and depression.

## **Healthy lifestyle: caring for our bodies and caring for our minds**

Everyone is different but some ways of caring for our bodies may include:

- Doing regular physical exercise,
- Engaging in relaxation exercises,
- Having a healthy diet,
- Avoiding unwise use of alcohol and illicit drugs, and
- Ensuring we have enough and regular sleep.

Caring for our mind depends on numerous factors coming together and interacting. Events in our lives and the way we respond to these events can influence our capacity to manage stress and the way stress affects us. Mindfulness may be an essential factor for caring for our minds.

Other helpful factors can include:

There are many ways to care for our minds, which generally include:

- Being honest with ourselves and others,
- Remembering our positive attributes and knowing our strengths,
- Using our strengths in a way that helps our self and others,
- Not intending to harm ourselves, others or the environment,
- Being generous, kind and compassionate and helping other beings
- Having enjoyable and satisfying things in our lives,
- Engaging in enjoyable and satisfying projects,
- Finding meaning and a sense of achievement in our lives,
- Doing things that are meaningful,
- Being assertive with or avoiding those who try to abuse or harm us,
- Getting to know thoughts and emotions so that we don't get caught up in harmful ones and create helpful ones.
- Associating with wise, caring and supportive people,
- Being able to think clearly about problems and try out solutions,
- Having gratitude about what we have,
- Generally respecting life.

A healthy lifestyle involves skilful action. Skilful action basically refers to acting in ways that are not harmful for one self or others. Further to this, skilful action involves acting in ways that are helpful for both our selves and other beings.

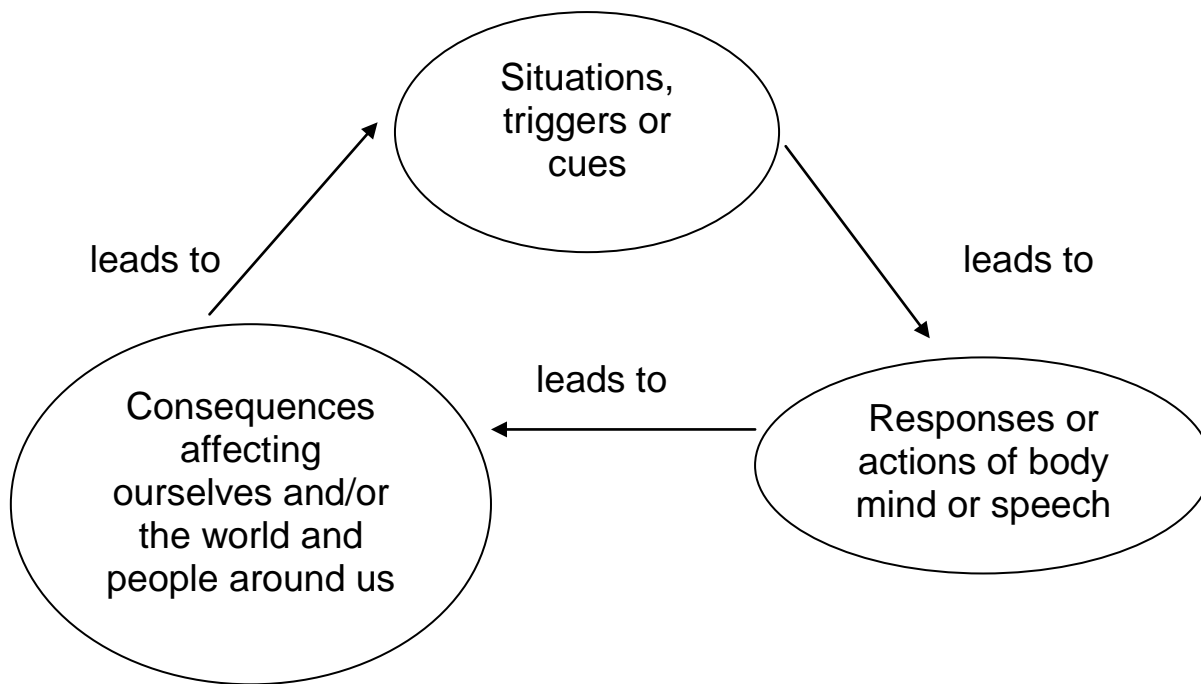
## **Wisdom and understanding that actions have consequences**

Wisdom involves knowing that actions have consequences. Wisdom also involves knowing how to act in ways that increase happiness and decrease unhappiness.

When we are not intentionally harming ourselves or others it is less likely that our minds will be plagued with hatred, guilt or fear. When we avoid harmful speech, actions and occupations, our conscience is more likely to be clear and our minds easily able to focus on the present moment. If we lie, deceive and use abusive speech, much of our mental energy may be spent worrying about being exposed or ways to defend our self against counter attacks. For most of us, blatantly harmful acts such as unnecessary killing, stealing or sexual behaviour that hurts someone rarely leaves our minds free of disturbance. Further to this, the unwise use of alcohol and non-prescription drugs can cloud our minds and lead to a range of harmful and regretful behaviours. The basic message is that intentionally harmful actions have negative consequences. The more we allow harmful intent to dominate our action the harder it is to have the type of mental composure conducive to managing stress.

According to one Buddhist monk called Thanissaro Bhikkhu “the Buddha had a simple test for measuring wisdom. You're wise, he said, to the extent that you can get yourself to do things you don't like doing but know will result in happiness, and to refrain from things you like doing but know will result in pain and harm.” (from Access to Insight, 2006). This measure of wisdom emphasizes the importance of skilful action.

When we act skilfully, we are more able to be present for the experience of life. When we are present (mindful) we get to know ourselves: our likes, dislikes, our important life directions, actions that are helpful and actions that are unhelpful. This knowledge is a form of wisdom and with this knowledge we are able to think clearly and accurately. We can develop wisdom from hearing wise words, reading wise words or thinking clearly. Wisdom can also grow out of meditation.



Wise actions often lead to beneficial outcomes. Unwise reactions often lead to unbeneficial results affecting our self and or other people. Ultimately, wisdom leads to happiness and helps us maintain and protect our happiness. Wisdom also helps us to think clearly, which is the basis of effective problem solving.

## **Problem solving skills**

Sometimes ignoring, denying or not dealing with problems can make them worse. Becoming overly worried or relying on unhelpful ways to deal with problems can also make the problem worse. One helpful way to deal with problems is to approach them in a realistic, logical step-by-step manner. Problem solving skills often include the ability to think logically and realistically. They involve looking at an issue from an objective perspective and considering a number of alternatives to deal with the problem. Mindfulness can help with problem solving as it enables us to monitor our emotional reactions and ensure that we don't lose our objectivity. If a particular problem is causing stress it is helpful to be mindful and think in a constructive manner. One must be careful however, not to let such thinking turn into rumination or worry. If a time limit is placed on problem solving activity then it helps to offset the possibility of destructive automatic thinking patterns taking control.



## Hints for problem solving

(adapted from Manicavasagar & Blaszczynski, 1995)

The following are some steps you can take to help with problem solving.

1. **Define the problem.** This means being clear about what the problem actually and exactly is. When you look at defining the problem you may notice that it may in fact be a combination of a number of smaller concerns. Each smaller concern could be easier to deal with than one big one.
2. **Consider possible solutions.** Once you have defined the problem or problems accurately you can brain storm and or write down all the possible solutions for the problem or problems. You can be as creative, imaginative and outrageous as you like.
3. **Rate the solutions.** Once you have written down all possible solutions rate these solutions as either good or poor, with good solutions getting a high score and poor solutions getting a low score.
4. **Decide the best possible solutions** or combination of solutions then write down these decisions.
5. **Consider how, when and where you can implement the solutions** and write them down. Then, put into action the solutions you decided on with an experimental attitude.
6. **Review your efforts.** Once you have tried the solutions review these actions. Review the effectiveness and difficulty of your actions as either: effective, neither effective or ineffective, or ineffective. Also rate them as easy, neither easy or difficult or difficult.
7. **Consider modifications to the solutions.** If they were not effective and then continue to review the effectiveness of modifications or try new solutions. Try to be patient and objective with outcomes.



## Hints for sleeping well

1. Go to bed only when you are sleepy and arise at the same time every morning. Do not sleep late in the mornings trying to make up for “lost sleep”. If you think you have insomnia, do not take naps during the day.
2. Try to establish a routine by doing the same thing every night before you go to bed.
3. Limit daily in-bed time to the usual amount present before the sleep disturbance and do not do other activities, such as watching TV in bed.
4. If you experience insomnia, avoid drinking caffeinated drinks after mid-afternoon and don't drink more than two cups of caffeinated drinks per day. Don't have a cigarette at least one hour before bed as nicotine increases heart rate, blood pressure and the body's state of arousal.
5. Do not use alcohol or illegal drugs to help you sleep. Alcohol, for example, has now been found to reduce both light sleep and deeper rapid-eye movement sleep (REM). Try drinking a herbal tea or a mug of hot milk instead.
6. Sleeping pills don't provide a long-term solution to sleeping problems and therefore should be avoided or not taken for long periods.
7. “Compartmentalise” time for problem solving during the day, not last thing at night. Identify any problems that are causing you to be anxious and try to resolve these problems by making decisions at allocated times other than when you go to bed.
8. Do not lie in bed worrying for long periods of time, particularly if you wake up during the night. If you cannot sleep, get out of bed and do something that is calming such as, meditating, listening to music, or reading light fiction (plan appropriate activities in advance). Return to bed only when you are sleepy again.
9. Eat at regular times daily, and avoid large meals near bedtime as eating late and going straight to bed may give you indigestion and a restless night.
10. Regular exercise during the day or early evening can improve sleeping patterns. Try to avoid exercise late in the evening as this may make it more difficult for you to get to sleep (with the exception of sex which may help you to sleep).
11. Ensure the room you sleep in is comfortable, dark with a minimum of noise. If you have a tendency to oversleep, it may be helpful to let the morning light enter the bedroom.
12. Avoid evening stimulation: substitute radio or relaxed reading for television. Avoid disturbing movies or programs before going to bed
13. Practice evening relaxation routines, such as progressive muscle relaxation.
14. Try hot, 20-minute, body temperature- raising baths near bedtime.
15. Practice exercises that develop loving kindness before going to bed.

## **Mindful physical exercise**

Mindful physical exercise can enhance both physical and emotional health. Mindful physical exercise can include any number of different activities such as yoga, surfing, dance, tai chi or other martial arts, recreation, sport or work involving movement.

Mindful physical exercise can involve bringing attention to our postures, slow gentle or vigorous energetic movements. It generally involves comprehending the purpose of your actions and bringing attention to the bodily experiences of posture and activity. Being attentive to physical sensations can be one aspect of this practice. We can be attentive to different parts of the body as it moves or we can be attentive to the whole body. The key point is that we do not get caught up with “thinking” about our bodies but we are attentive to tangible bodily experience. That is, the experience of stretching, heat, cold, softness, hardness, movements, tightness, looseness, painful sensations, pleasurable sensations etc., Being generally aware of our posture is another way to be mindful with physical exercise.

If you are involved in competitive sports, being mindful while doing this activity generally means that you participate 100% in the activity and you enjoy the sport for its intrinsic value.

## **Meditation or mental and emotional training**



Meditation can lead to wisdom. The term “meditation” has many meanings and it can conjure up many mystical ideas. At a very practical level, one way that we can understand meditation is as a training to develop insight or wisdom and a calm, serene or tranquil mind. Yet another related

meaning of meditation is “familiarisation”. Familiarisation means that we get to know our selves and what leads to what.

All meditation usually involves some form of effort, mindfulness and concentration or focus. The effort involved with meditation is not the same as strain or struggle. The type of effort required in meditation can involve rousing enthusiasm, energy, and commitment to persist. It can also involve knowing when there is too much energy or enthusiasm and letting go or letting be. Just as tuning a guitar string cannot be too tight or too loose, the effort for meditation is a level of energy that is not too much or too little. Concentration is the gathering together, focusing and collecting of attention. It is the stabilising, centring and unification of attention. Mindfulness is, of course, remembering to be aware.

Meditation is a skilful and balanced interplay of energy, mindfulness and concentration where sometimes mindfulness is emphasised and sometimes concentration is emphasised. Different formal meditation practices are inclined towards either the development of concentration or mindfulness. There are two broad categories or varieties of formal meditation practices: Calm and Insight. With the calm variety, concentration or sustained and focussed attention is brought to one particular object. With the insight variety, mindfulness of changing objects is emphasised. There is, however, much cross over with insight meditation requiring concentration to ensure depth in awareness whilst calm meditation requires awareness to monitor concentration and ensure it is sustained.

Even though there are probably hundreds of different ways to meditate, all meditation practices are Calm meditation practices, Insight meditation practices or a mix of the two.

With insight meditation you enquire and investigate things about your self and the world around you. With insight meditation you may start focusing on one thing, but your focus could change to something else. You may for example, bring attention to and investigate what ever grabbed your attention away from what you originally focussed on.



With insight meditation there are primary and secondary objects of attention. Primary objects of attention are chosen objects that are easy to bring attention to. Physical experiences are often chosen as primary objects because they are more tangible than more insubstantial experiences such as thoughts. It is possible to make less tangible objects such as thoughts and mind states primary objects but this requires experience and practise. It is also possible to have “choice-less” or open awareness where the primary object is the flow of changing experience or the sense of knowing, but this also requires practise and skill.

Since mental and bodily phenomena are constantly changing, it is normal that many objects will come into our sphere of awareness with insight meditation. If objects, other than the chosen primary one, become so strong that they draw our attention away, we then make those objects “secondary” objects of attention. We stay mindful of secondary objects until they no longer stand out, and then return our attention to our primary object. Primary or chosen objects can become an anchor or a resting place for our attention. Physical sensations, sound and the breath are common primary objects of attention in insight meditation practice.

With Insight meditation enquiry or investigation is emphasised. It is as if we go *inside* an object to *sight* or see what is happening. It is as if one asks about the nature of the object of attention with the question “what is happening here?” or “how should this object be seen or *insighted*?” Sometimes, experience need not be strong and we can choose to be attentive to and investigate subtle experience, such as the types of thoughts and mind states that underlie and

influence more surface level reactions and responses. In this way we bring kind, and curious enquiry to the various levels of our experience.

According to philosophy behind Insight meditation there are three characteristics of life. These characteristics are that all things are: 1/impermanent or changing, 2/interdependent or contingent on other things for their existence and 3/uncertain, unreliable or ambiguous. Insight meditation is usually directed at noticing one or all three of these characteristics by bringing detailed and penetrating awareness to experience. In the beginning, we usually notice the characteristic of change. However, as individuals vary, one of the other characteristics may be, at first, more obvious. The basic instructions for insight meditation are: bring precise yet kind enquiry to present moment experience, be aware of reactive patterns and stories but do not get lost in them and stay present. Also notice one of the three characteristics of existence, in particular change. More details about the three characteristics and insight meditation will be explained in as we progress through this workbook.

Serenity meditations sooth and quell emotional and physical disturbance. They help us to feel at ease, relaxed, happy, peaceful and serene. With calm or serenity meditation practices one chooses an object to focus on, and then places single-minded attention on that object. Sometimes the focus with serenity meditation is considered like a funnel or tunnel like narrowing of attention. Often however, is more experienced like a stilling, stabilising, centring and settling of mind. In this way serenity meditation serves to collect attention and create a sense of composure and integration. When attention is collected, some activities of mind fall away and one's attention centres on one thing. Of course other things may come to mind. However, as interest in the object of attention grows, concerns, worries, hankerings or desires about other things lose significance and attention becomes absorbed into the object of interest. The progressive sequence with serenity meditation is firstly 1/relaxation then 2/stability then 3/vividness or seeing the details of the object.



There are many objects one can choose to focus on, including: visualisations, mantras, particular states of mind, reflections, tasks that one is doing, bodily experiences, the breath and so on. The basic instructions for serenity meditation are: choose an object of attention, stabilise attention on that object, use what ever helps attention stay focused, work through and eventually let go of that which blocks the flow or obstructs attention and allow absorption into the object. Apply soft and gentle energy to return attention to the object repeatedly. Notice the pleasantness, happiness, peace and single pointed attention related to the practice.

Serenity meditation stills, unifies, composes and concentrates the mind. Insight meditations develop insight or wisdom. As mentioned above, calm and insight meditations often overlap so that insight meditation also develops calm and calm meditations can develop insight. Sometimes meditation practitioners consciously develop serenity meditations first, so that their minds are stilled and when they investigate the nature of an object of attention it is seen clearly and distinctly with insight. Sometimes meditation practitioners find that they can't concentrate well and they cultivate moment-to-moment attention and this eventually builds the power of more sustained concentration for calm meditations. With experience, meditation practitioners may often switch back and forth between calm and insight aspects of meditation within the one meditation session. The insight practices help to provide understanding that can uproot negative stressful patterns and the calm practices help to keep the negative patterns at bay and provide some peace and wellbeing. Insight influences and often alters the way we see things by directly looking at and investigating patterns of experience. Serenity can also give rise to understanding by providing an alteration in the way we experience things. This alteration can range from minimal and subtle to significant and obvious. A subtle change could be simply feeling a little bit more relaxed than previously. An obvious change could be strong feelings of pleasure and wellbeing.

Ultimately individuals learn the dynamic relationship between calm and insight and they learn to skilfully develop both mindfulness and concentration. The sequence followed in this workbook involves developing mindfulness for insight first. In latter sessions, specific serenity practices based on concentration will be explained in more detail.

## **Recollection.**

A helpful part of meditation is being able to recollect what happened during the meditation period. Being able to remember what happened and how one negotiated difficulties and skilfully cultivated mindfulness and related skills, works in a way that it builds wisdom and general

understanding. After a formal meditation period is highly recommended to spend a few moments or if you have time, a few minutes, reflecting on and recollecting what happened during the meditation period. This type of meditation review helps to developing understanding about what works when for particular states of mind and ultimately builds meditation skill.

## **Posture**

The way we sit, stand, lie or move is important with meditation. The basic recommendation is to ensure that your posture does not block or impede a healthy flow of life energy. If you are sitting, this may involve sitting with minimal or no muscular tension, an erect back, shoulders relaxed, chest open, head upright and hands placed comfortably on your legs or in your lap. A posture reflecting peace and dignity is helpful when meditating.

## **Mindfulness of breath**

Mindfulness of breath is one practice that can be either an insight meditation practice or a calm meditation practice. Mindfulness of breath has been a traditional object of mindfulness for a number of reasons. Awareness of the breath not only encourages diaphragmatic breathing, which has numerous benefits on a physical level, but also helps us monitor our mind. In this way it provides a way to integrate and connect the mind and body. Another reason why awareness of breath has been a popular object of mindfulness is because as long as we are alive we breathe. Hence, it is always there to provide us with an object to be attentive to.

Whatever the nature of the breath, it is accepted and allowed to be as it is. There are many ways to be mindful of the breath such as just knowing that you are breathing or following the breath as it moves past your nose tip down into your abdomen and back up again. Another way to be mindful of the breath is by noticing the sensation somewhere in your torso, such as the abdomen, as it rises and falls with the breath. In this way you can track the changing physical sensations. You follow the breath from the beginning of the rising motion right to the end and note 'rising' as your abdomen is rising. The inward breath movement will stop for a split second then change to an outward breath. As it changes you pay attention to how it feels then as the abdomen is falling you pay attention to how that feels and note "falling". There are many different ways to practice mindfulness of breath and it can be both an insight practice and a serenity practice. There are many different ways to practise it as a serenity meditation.





## **Mindfulness of breath as a calm meditation practice.**

Mindfulness of breath can be used to relax the whole body and parts of the body. As described above, you can also focus on how your belly feels as it moves up and down your breath.

Another traditional way of being mindful of the breath is by being aware of how it feels as it passes your nose tip, or the area on your upper lip.

All three ways develop relaxation, stability and vividness. Mindfulness of breath with the whole body or parts of the body is, however, very good to develop relaxation. Mindfulness of breath in the belly is very good for stability and mindfulness of breath at the nose tip is particularly good to develop vividness. If you want you can use these three places of focus like changing gears on a car. You start relaxing the whole body, then shift to second gear with mindfulness of the belly rising and falling. Then, when you are relaxed and feeling stable with your focus, you can shift to the more refined focus at the tip of the nose or the area above your lip. At the area around your nose you can focus and get very clear about the subtle sensations. If you feel the need, however, you can change gears back down to the body or the belly. You may feel, for example, you are getting too tense at the nose tip and you need to relax. So, you can shift gears back to the belly or the whole body. You may also feel the need to just stay in first gear, relaxing, for the whole of your meditation journey. Or, if it is going well, you may feel like setting cruise control and stay focusing on the sensations at the tip of nose.

## **Anxiety with mindfulness of breath**

If being mindful of the breath seems to make you more anxious discuss this with an experienced practitioner. Eventually, problems associated with mindfulness of breath can be managed with practice. When practitioners find mindfulness of breath uncomfortable or it triggers unwanted reactions they can substitute something other than the breath as their primary object. It is possible, for example, to pay attention, in a focussed manner, to sensations in different parts of your body such as your hands or various “touch points” such as your feet or

the sensations in your buttocks on a chair or cushion. It is also possible to be aware of objects outside your body such as sounds or sights. Noticing and focusing on the quiver of a leaf in the breeze, the changing dance of a flame or the rhythmic movement of the ocean are examples of how objects of sight can become objects of meditation.

## **Mindful walking**

Mindful walking involves the practice of making the action of walking the primary object of mindfulness. It can be calming and, like the breath, serve as an anchor to orient attention back to the present moment. With mindful walking one can begin to understand another way in which mind and body are interconnected. The movement of the feet and consequently the way physical sensations change (body) depends on an intention (mentality or mind). With mindful walking the focus of attention is on how the physical experience changes. However, you can also notice the relationship between intention and action.

Mindful walking can be done at different speeds. When you very walk fast, such as with power walking pace, the attention is broader and may involve awareness of your whole body moving. With slow walking the focus of attention is narrower and usually at the feet. At a very slow pace the sensations at the base of the feet as they touch, press, shift and lift from the ground can become the focus of attention. Generally it is best to start each walking session at a fast pace then eventually slow down if this feels comfortable. Attention is brought to the process of walking and is directed to the sensations in the legs or the feet whilst noting “right” “left” “right” “left”. You can walk mindfully at a fast pace or, after a period you can slow the pace down and note “lifting” “placing” “lifting” “placing” and so on. If it feels comfortable you can walk very slowly, taking many seconds to make one step, noting, for example, “lifting” “moving” “dropping” “touching” “pressing” etc., in reference to the feet in the stepping motion. Noting each and every movement at the beginning of the movement helps to ensure that awareness follows each and every movement from its beginning till its end. Many people find walking mindfully very helpful if they are feeling too restless to sit mindfully.

## Mindful walking - instructions

- Ensure that there is space enough to walk for at least a few paces in front of you and set the intention that for the next 20 minutes or so you will commit to being present here now.
- Begin by standing and bringing attention to your posture. You should be relaxed upright and dignified, with eyes open looking few metres in front of you. Let your chest be open, relax your shoulders, making sure your knees are not locked and place your hands where they are comfortable
- Become aware of sight, sounds and what is happening around you and, without rejection, let these things be on the periphery of your awareness. With curious interest, notice the sensations in your body standing, letting go of unnecessary muscle tension.
- Let “standing” be the centre of your awareness.
- For a minute or two, enjoy the simple activity of standing
- Then allow your attention to focus on your feet and the sensations in them, whether cold or pressure or whatever you may be feeling.
- When you are ready, notice the intention to take a step.
- Notice the changing sensations as you shift your weight onto one foot and pick the other one up.
- Notice how your foot feels as it travels through the air and the changing sensation of pressure as you place it on the ground.
- If you wish you can use noting such as “lifting, moving, placing” or if you wish to walk a bit faster you may use “left, right”
- Walk at a pace and find a rhythm that is comfortable for you.
- If you are walking at a slow pace, attention will be more acutely focused on your feet, at a faster pace, the attention can be broader such as your legs or the whole of your body.
- When thoughts, sounds, sights and emotions pull your attention away from walking, simply note the experience and refocus your attention.
- When you come to the end of your walking pathway, stop, be aware of turning, then walk back mindfully back along your pathway.
- If you feel comfortable you can gradually slow the pace and the rhythm down.
- Continue walking for a period that is suitable then let the mindfulness cultivated during mindful walking carry over into your daily life.

## **Mindfulness of breath: Body, belly and nose tip-practise.**

Find a secluded and peaceful place and make yourself comfortable. If you tend to fall asleep do not lie down, but sit comfortably in an upright and dignified manner. Make a clear intention or resolve that for a particular period of time you will endeavour to cultivate concentration, joy, tranquillity and peace by focusing on the breath. Put aside all concerns and worries about the world. Also suspend cravings after things not present, and allow your attention to settle on your breath. Like other meditation practices couple relaxation with the breath, and focus on both the breath and letting go of muscular tension. Bring single-minded attention to that process and when the mind goes off somewhere else, bring it back to relaxation and breath. After a while it may start to feel very nice or pleasant. Those pleasant feelings can be included into your awareness and they help you focus. You can continue to relax with the breath and this could be your whole meditation.

Remember to let the breath be completely natural. Just as you don't try to control the breath when you are asleep, let the breath be as if you are asleep. Let the breath breathe you.

If you want to can focus your kind attention to the rising and falling of the breath as you feel it in your belly. Make it so that focussing on the breath is very important. So important that you have no time for anything else, and if thoughts and disturbing emotions come up, try to let them go with the breath. In this way you stay with the rising and falling of the breath in your abdomen. Track the movements and be with it all the way. Sometimes it may feel as if there is a warm glow in your belly that feels very good. If the movement of the breath in your belly is enjoyable, enjoy it and let the enjoyment increase your focus. Feel your self become very stable with the breath.

If you feel that you would like to increase the vividness of your experience, you can shift your attention to the feelings either at the tip of the nose or the area above your top lip. Stay focused, and try to notice the very subtle sensations. Let awareness of the breath at your nose tip be very relaxing and calming and hone in on all the subtle aspects in the sensations. Let yourself get absorbed in focusing on the breath. So absorbed that thoughts and other experiences simply do not have a chance to take the spot light. Simply get into it. Relax and let go into being here now with the breath. Let your self be relaxed, calmed and soothed with the breath. Let problems and concerns fade away and let the sensations of the breath become vivid and clear.

The breath is all there is and be at peace with it.

If you feel the need to change gears to be aware of the breath in your whole body or in your belly, simply do that which is needed to maintain relaxation, stability and clarity. Remember however, to bring single-minded care and attention to the breath where ever it is.

When the time is right, feel ready to come out of the meditation period. Firstly, however, spend a few moments going back over the meditation exercise and remember what worked for you and what happened. Put these recollections in your memory banks for future reference, and then slowly move your body and open your eyes if they were closed. Then go about doing what you do knowing that you and practise relaxation, stability and vividness as and when you choose.

## **Mindfulness of breath at your abdomen- instructions**

- Loosen any tight clothing or other constrictions.
- Allow yourself to be as comfortable as you can, either lying face up or preferably sitting on a chair or cushion
- When you sit ensure that your back, neck and head are upright and straight in a dignified and relaxed posture. You can close your eyes, or if they remain open, let their focus be diffuse.
- Make the resolve that, for the next 20 minutes or so, you will endeavour not to fidget or move unnecessarily. Nor will you be too concerned with future goals or anything other than being here now and bringing attention to your primary object.
- Bring attention to your body as a whole and let go of tightness. You can briefly let your awareness scan throughout your body, finding tension and letting it go using your out breath to help you.
- As you let go of tension, it is as if your awareness of your bodily experience becomes clearer and sharper.
- As you sit or lie there, you notice the movement of your breath in your abdomen. If you can't feel the movement in your abdomen, be attentive to the movement in your chest or in both your chest and abdomen.
- Don't force your focus, rather let your mind be open and sensitive.
- Keep you breathing natural, neither speeding it up nor slowing it down. Let yourself be accepting of the breath without judgement that it should be other than it is.
- You can use noting such as "rising" or "falling" to help you bring attention to the movement of your abdomen or chest as you breathe.

- Pay attention to the beginning, middle and end of the rising movement and the beginning, middle and end of the falling movement.
- Do not struggle with thoughts, feelings or other experiences but let them arise and pass away, bringing your awareness back to your breath.
- You can use noting to help be mindful of the things that draw attention away from the breath, such as “thinking, thinking” or “remembering, remembering” or “hearing, hearing” etc.,
- Allow your open, yet focused mind to notice just one breath at a time, connecting mind and body. It is as if the knowing of the breath and the breath are not separate.

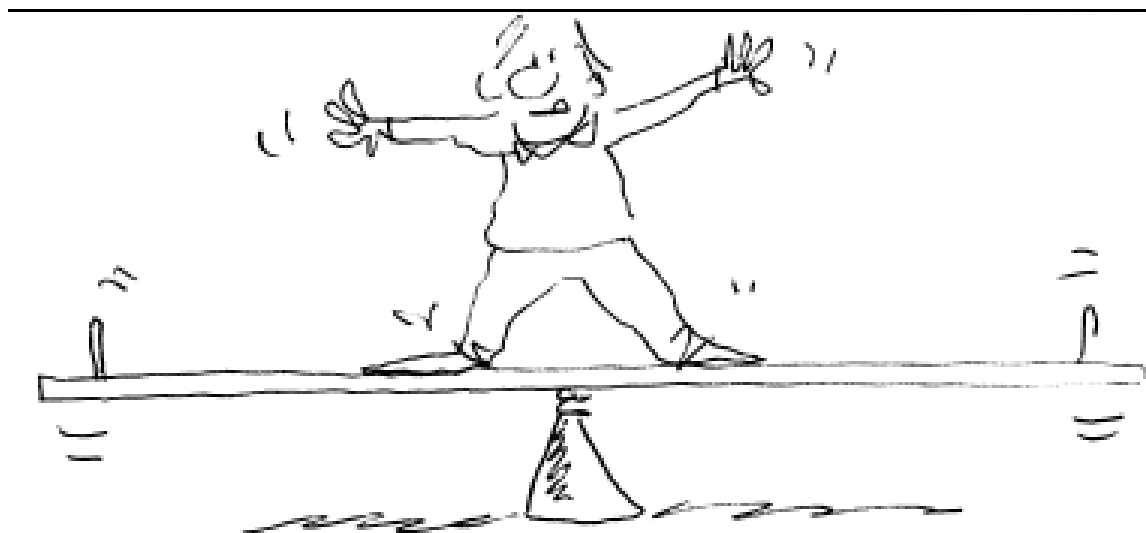
## **Five obstacles to meditation**

Meditation is simple but very difficult. As we try to follow instructions for meditation it is inevitable that obstacles to our practice will come up. Skill negotiating these obstacles develops with experience and it becomes part of our ongoing meditation practice. In essence the obstacles are patterns of thought, emotions and behaviour, that entangled us. We may experience many different obstacles. Meditation teachers, however, point to five groups. These groups are:

1. Unnecessary craving. An example of this is like getting lost in thinking about chocolate when you don't have or need any.
2. Feeling hostile, hating things or being bored. These feeling can get in the road of getting in the flow of meditation.
3. Lethargy or a sense of being mentally dull. An example of this is going to sleep during meditation, when you don't need or want to sleep.
4. Restlessness, agitation or worry.
5. Procrastinating or feeling uncertain about the usefulness of meditation and travelling on a path of freedom. This type of block stops you from getting experience and learning about the benefits for yourself.

We experience many different obstacles to meditation and being content, peaceful, psychologically free and living a valued life. Much of this workbook is about learning ways to work with that which gets in the road of moving along the path of happiness and freedom, and each and every individual eventually learns for themselves strategies for the obstacles. More details about these obstacles will be given in session six. For the time being, however, it is helpful to get to know the five groups because when you can be aware of them it is easier to work with them.

Much of dealing with the difficulties of meditation is about finding balance.



## **Activities to do between sessions**

- Recollect the days events. Reflect on the consequences of your actions. Use the response/reaction record if you feel this may help.
- Engage mindfully in some appropriate physical exercise. This may include power walking, swimming, jogging, yoga or other movement that is not harmful.
- Practise, either with or without a recording, mindfulness of breath for about 15-20 minutes, once or twice a day. If you find mindfulness of breath unhelpful, continue with either body scan or progressive relaxation once or twice a day. If you find both body scan and mindfulness of breath helpful you can alternate between the practices. Otherwise just practise mindfulness of breath.
- Experiment with mindful walking (with or without recording) for about 20 minutes once or twice a day. If you wish, you can combine mindful walking with mindfulness of breath doing mindful walking for a period (10-15 minutes) followed by mindfulness of breath (15-20 minutes).
- Commit your self to formal meditation practice. If you can't, do not judge yourself harshly and endeavor to make mindfulness and wise action a way of being in the world and living.
- Try being mindful of your breathing for a few breaths a few times a day during your daily activities, practise finding breathing spaces in your life.
- "Just notice" events in your life without feeling that you have to react to or "do" anything with these events. The domains of noticing can include unpleasant experiences as well as neutral and pleasant experiences. You can record these experiences on the daily experiences diary.
- Continue to use "noting" in formal mindful activities such as walking or sitting mindfully as well as in daily activities.
- After a formal meditation period, spend a few minutes reflecting on what happened during the time you meditated. If you want you could start to keep a journal. See if you can track back and recollect the period and remember any features.





## Response/reaction record

Our response or reactions to situations have consequences that affect our thoughts, emotions, and physical feelings. Sometimes they also affect the people and the world around us. Complete the record below as a way of considering response options for each situation.

Trigger/ situation	Response/ reactions	Consequences: How did your response affect yourself and or others around you?	Was it in line with or in opposition to your goals and values?	If it was in line, how can you increase these types of responses?	If it was in opposition, what are some alternative responses?

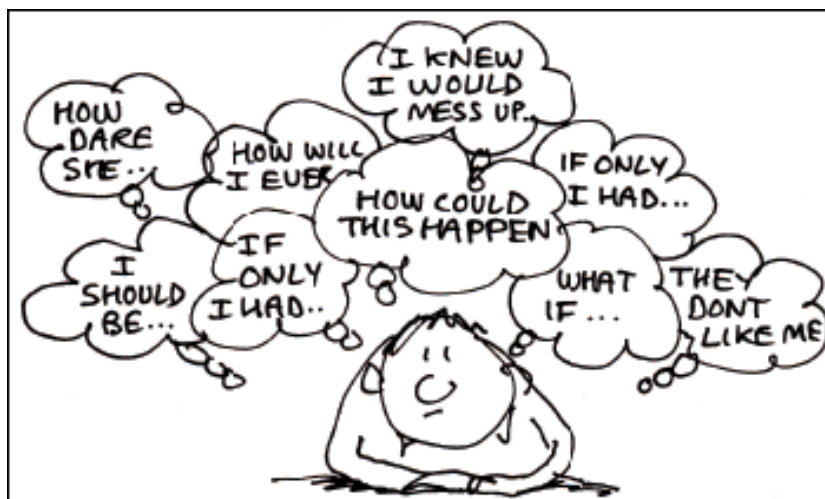


## SESSION FOUR: MINDFULNESS OF THOUGHTS AND THE CHOICE TO BUY INTO THEM OR LET THEM PASS BY.

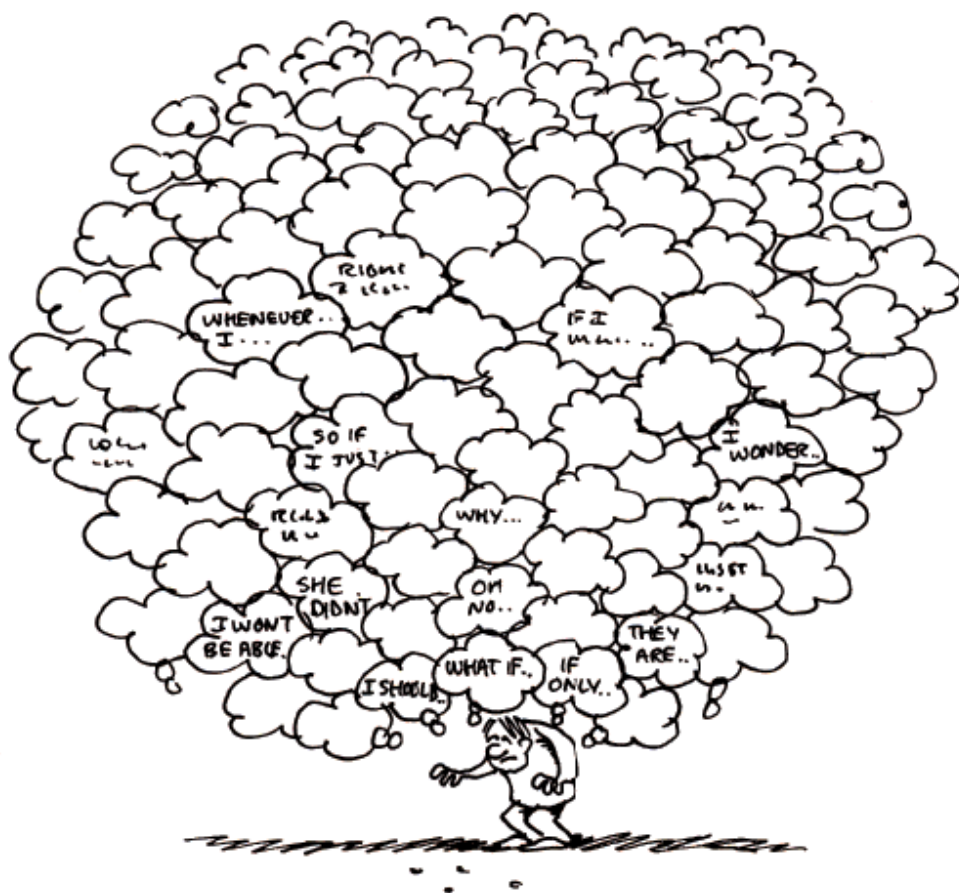
This session involves developing awareness about thinking. On the path of freedom from with stress, thinking can be both helpful and unhelpful. It can be both our friend and/ or our enemy. If we can be aware of thoughts and thinking patterns and how they affect us, we have more choice in either acting or not acting on them. When we are aware of thoughts we don't believe untrue thoughts and are able to use creative, smart and intelligent thinking to our advantage.

### Thinking

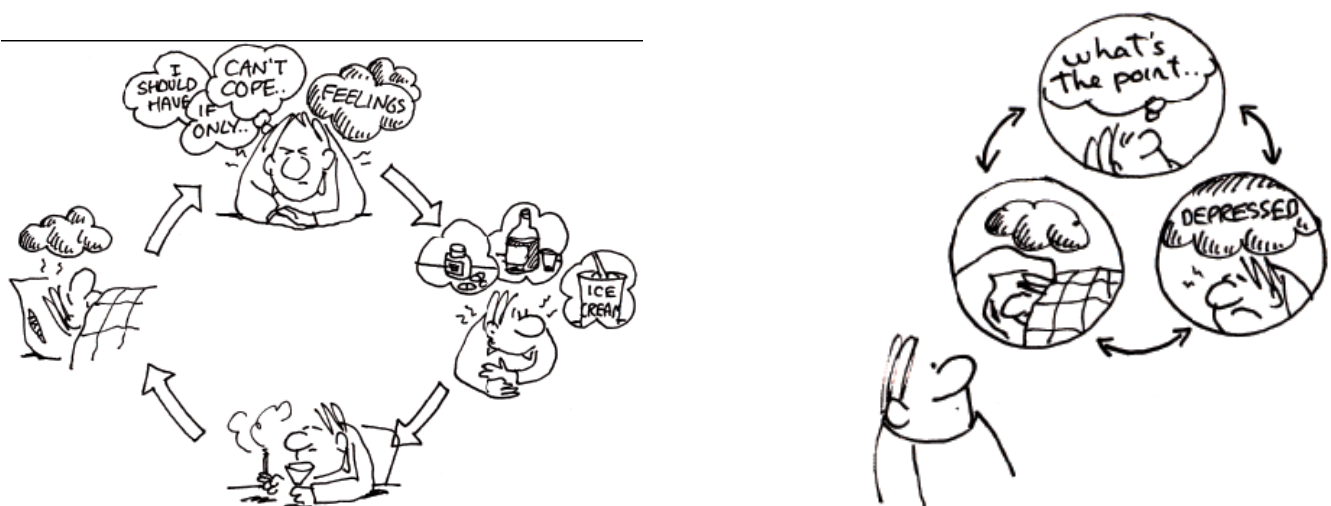
"Thinking" can have many meanings. Thinking can involve messages in pictures and words. Sometimes thoughts are random and make no sense. Or they string together as if we are talking to ourselves. The internal chatter may be working something out, planning something, remembering, judging, evaluating, commenting, analysing and so on. Helpful thoughts or attitudes about the world and ourselves can steer us on wise pathways and help us cope with the obstacles we may meet along the way. Unhelpful thoughts and patterns of thought, on the other hand, can create stories that are not real and lead to all sorts of destructive emotional reactions. Sometimes people become completely stuck in their heads and all they do is think about life rather than actually experiencing it. Sometimes our thoughts torment us with what seems like a never ending blah blah blah.



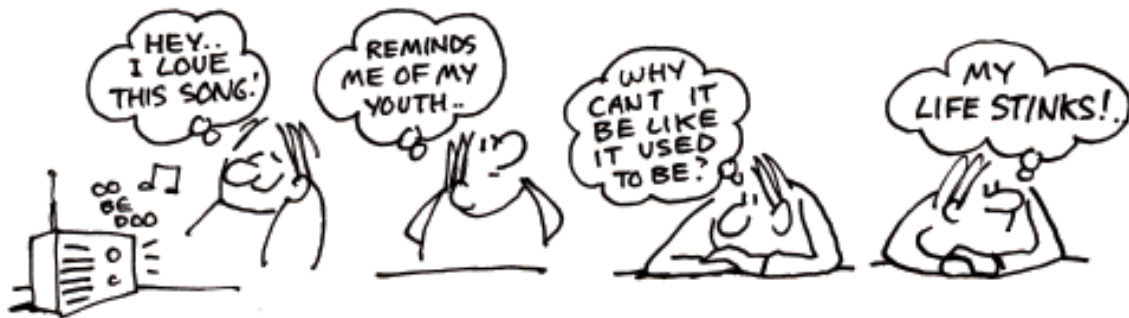
We think so much it is a wonder that we have any room left to experience life!



Thoughts can be a part of vicious destructive cycles that can also include emotions, behaviours and the way our body feels.



Some people have called the types of thoughts that lead to feeling miserable or unnecessarily anxious, stinking thinking. Sometimes people also call them toxic thoughts because they do not make us feel very good.



Sometimes, when we meditate, thoughts seem to get out of control.



And the more we try to stop them or blank the mind the more they grow and grow.....



**It is important to remember that even though thoughts influence our sense of being we are not our thoughts and that even though thoughts can be powerful and lead to action we can choose to not act on them.**

There are many unhelpful messages that thoughts can convey. Thinking that “my life stinks” is an example of a toxic thought. Other examples could be: “life sucks” “everything is horrible”

“my life is a failure and I am a failure”, “I can never feel safe any where”, “everyone one hates me” “everything is hopeless” “I am worthless” etc., Believing toxic thoughts does not lead to happiness and wellbeing.

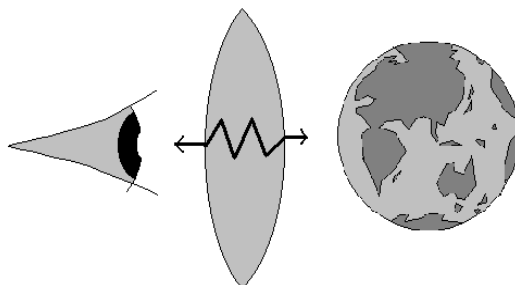
Cognitive Behavioural Therapists say that it is not an event that makes us feel good or bad but the way it is perceived and interpreted. They say that people often make assumptions about things, which may not be accurate. There was a scientist who used to have a program on TV, who wanted to make a point about assumptions. He would sometimes write up on a board the word ASSUME and say that it makes an ASS out of U and ME. Stinking thinking often involves assumptions that are unrealistic, focused on the worst, not very accurate, and destructive.

There are many different types of thinking patterns which are not very helpful. Some of these unhelpful thinking patterns include:

- Mind reading, where we make assumptions about what other people are thinking about us.
- Fortune telling, where we think that something terrible will happen in the future as if we know what the future will bring.
- Overgeneralisation, where we may interpret failure at one thing to mean failure at everything. Or, because we failed at something it is generalised to mean that we are complete failures.
- Catastrophising or terribilising. Where we might think that something “terrible” will happen even when the probability is very low.



Just like dirty glasses lens distort the way we see things, unhelpful thinking patterns also distort the way we see things.



The interesting thing about unhelpful thoughts and thinking patterns is that they only hurt us when we buy into them. In other words, negative thoughts are only toxic when we believe them. When we realize that thoughts are just thoughts and not necessarily facts to be believed their power to cause suffering is greatly reduced



## Dealing with stinking thinking

There are many ways to deal with toxic thinking. One way is to change what you are thinking, so that it is more inline with what is actually happening. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) therapists often use this approach. The other way is to change the way you relate to thoughts, so that you see thoughts as just thoughts and not necessarily facts that are always true. Both

ways decrease the chance that you will believe untrue thoughts about the world and your self. Mindfulness is involved in both ways and when we combine mindfulness with investigation, insight and wisdom grows.

## **Delusions**

Delusions usually involve thinking and feeling in an extreme way. Delusions include extreme beliefs that are outside the social and cultural norms of the individual experiencing them. For the individual experiencing the delusions, they feel real. However, delusions are not supported by evidence to validate their reality. Delusions involve both the content of thought and the relationship to thoughts. Not only is the content of thought out of alignment with the way things are, but the relationship to the thought is one of adamant belief.

Some common delusion that occur when someone is suffering stress, anxiety and depression associated with bipolar disorder can include:

Persecutory delusions occur when people believe that they are being conspired against or persecuted in some way. They may, for example, involve the person having the belief that other people are looking at them with the intent to harm them or trick them. Sometimes people believe the government is bugging their house, or that they are being followed, or that they are being laughed at etc., Obviously, in the world, there are occasions when people are really being followed, houses are bugged, people are laughed at etc., With delusions of persecution, however, there is no evidence and it is not really happening.

Delusions of sin or guilt involve the belief that someone has done something terrible or something unforgivable. Sometimes people believe that that they were responsible for a terrible disaster or they magnify, totally out of proportion, something they did as a child and feel very guilty about it. Sometimes it is a very extreme form of worry and rumination. Like all delusions, the content of the delusion is not inline with reality, and the individual sufferers unnecessarily.

Grandiose Delusions involve the belief that the individual has special powers of abilities. The individual may think, incorrectly, that they are actually a famous person like a rock star or Jesus Christ. They may think that they are writing a special book that will solve the world's problems

and that the whole world will want to read it, and pay lots of money for it, or they have magical powers that only other special individuals can recognise. etc., Even though people with bipolar disorder may often have many great skills and creativity, and many famous people have bipolar disorder, delusions of grandeur are totally out of proportion. Often people with grandiose delusions will come down with a thud, and fall into a depressive phase when they realise the truth of their delusions.

Delusions of being controlled involve the subjective experience that one's actions and feelings are controlled by some outside force. They are more than normal spiritual or religious beliefs, in they involve the sense that one's will or choice has gone. Sometimes it may feel as if the person is occupied by an alien force that is moving their bodies.

Religious delusions refer to preoccupations with delusions of a spiritual or religious nature. People with these delusions may believe that they are possessed by evil spirit or the devil. Or they may believe that they are the second coming of the Christ, the next Buddha, about to set a new religious order, spiritual movement or become the next famous guru. Religious delusions can become mixed up with other delusions such as delusions of grandeur, delusions of guilt or delusions of being controlled. Having religious or spiritual beliefs and values is not the same as having religious delusions. The extreme and unlikely nature of these delusions separate them from what could in fact represent reality.

Somatic delusions involve extreme and unrealistic beliefs about one's body. Such as, feeling there are ball bearings in ones head because they can hear a clunking noise when they shake it, or because their arms are heavy they actually have lead in them.

Delusions and ideas of reference are when individuals feel that insignificant remarks, statements or events have a special relationship to them. Seeing a news program, an individual may feel that the newsreader is actually talking about them, perhaps using special code. Sometimes an individual may think that things seen or heard or read in the paper on radio or TV, have special and significant reference to them. With an idea of reference the individual may suspect the reference is about them, but they can see it may not be a fact. With delusions of

reference the individual actually believes with conviction that the information, news, event, program, statements etc., is actually about them.

(adapted from the Scale for the Assessment of Positive Symptoms (SAPS) by Dr Nancy C. Andreasen Copyright 1984)

It is not easy to be free from delusions, because they feel so real. Working with thoughts, however, is a beginning.

## Investigation

Like a detective or scientist who investigates the facts, we can investigate the truth of what we are saying to ourselves, or our self-talk. With both CBT and insight meditation we ask WHAT is happening and HOW is it happening. Sometimes the question WHY also comes up. Though understanding why we may be thinking something could be helpful, at first it is best to put the WHY type questions aside because it is too easy to make unrealistic assumptions.



When we use CBT we become like thought detectives. A thought detective looks for the evidence about something being true or not true. They also check out the probability of something being true, alternatives for the thought and or whether it really matters if the thought is true or not.



With CBT, mindfulness helps us to catch what we are thinking.

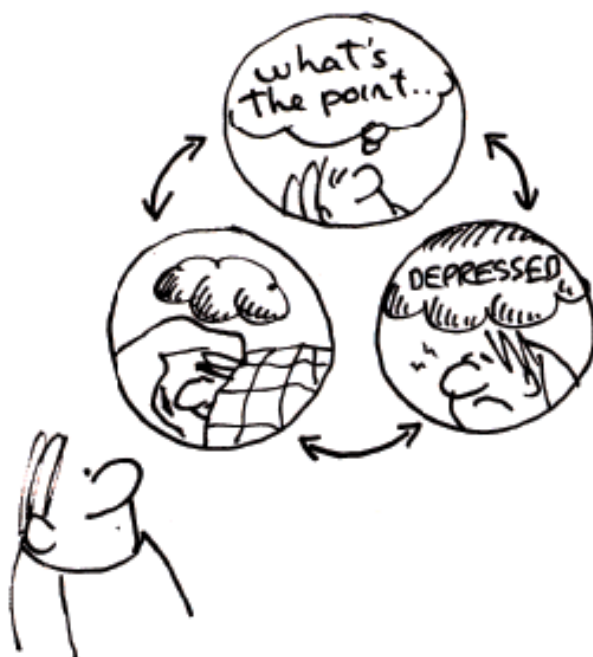
Sometimes, however, thinking about thinking can get us caught in a knot. Another way that mindfulness can be used to gain some space from toxic thoughts is to develop insight and wisdom about the truth of the thoughts themselves. In this way we change the relationship to thoughts. With insight meditation you enquire into the nature of thoughts. For example, you can ask questions like, "What is a thought?" "Where does it come from?" "where does it go?" "How do I know that I am thinking?" "Who is the star of my thought movie?" "what emotions happen when I have particular thoughts?" etc., The strongest line of investigation with insight meditation involves the question: "Does this thought change?"

As you start to explore thoughts, like a scientist or a detective, you may discover many thoughts. You may realize that all thoughts change, and that thoughts about things are not the truth of those things. That is, they are not facts to be believed. These insights can give you space from toxic thoughts so that they do not harm you.

As you explore thoughts you may also discover that your awareness can become a safe refuge from difficult thoughts as well as destructive emotions.



The refuge of mindfulness will alert you to any negative cycles that may be maintaining a problem.



Sitting mindfully with thoughts often clarifies any underlying deeper fears or beliefs

IS THIS JEALOUSY  
BECAUSE I'M  
AFRAID OF BEING  
ON MY OWN?



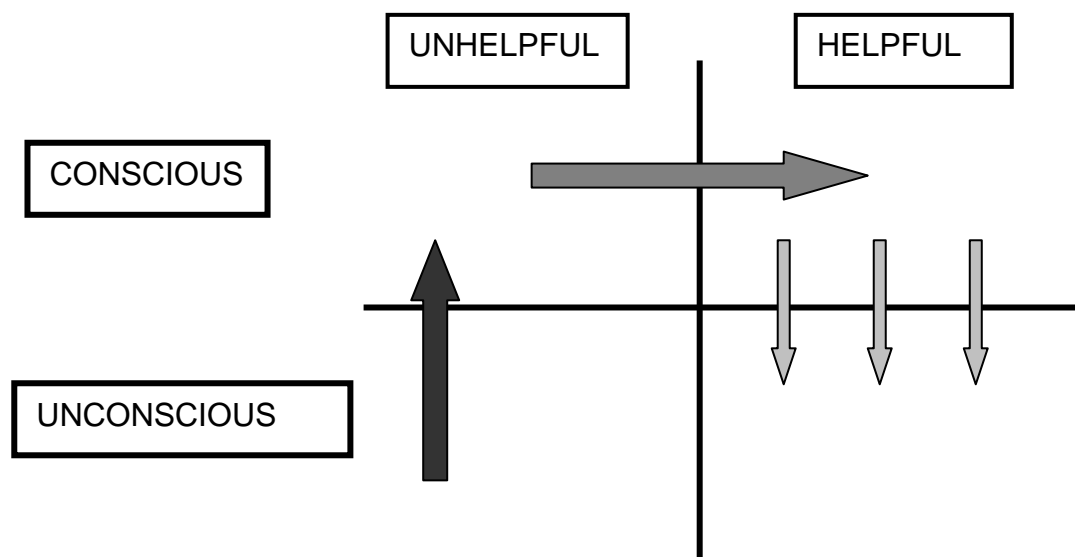
SUE JUST SET  
THIS ANGER OFF..  
I'VE BEEN MOODY  
FOR DAYS...



I'M GETTING  
ON JUST LIKE  
MY FATHER  
USED TO ..



Being mindful of thoughts, seeing thoughts from a space of awareness helps you move unconscious thoughts into awareness and transform them from being unhelpful to helpful.



### How to be mindful of thinking.

Be careful not to get caught up and lost in thinking about thoughts if you start to investigate them when you are meditating. It is usually best to calm your mind first, so that you can keep



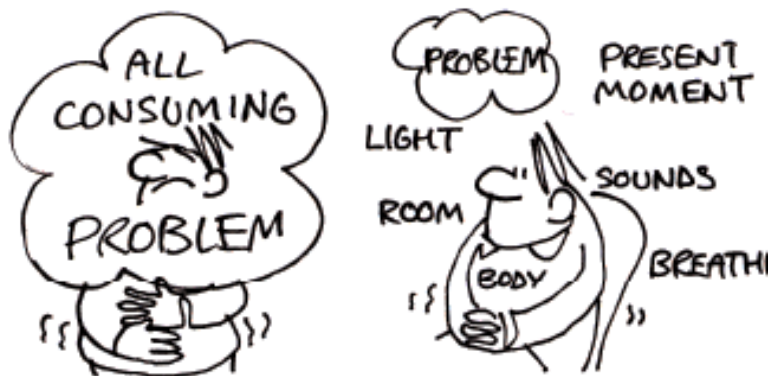
some space from them. Just like listening to sounds coming and going listen to your thoughts as an interested listener or watch them like an interested bystander. It is not easy to step back from unhelpful thought. Sometimes you may be bombarded by toxic thoughts before you have a chance to still your mind. At times it seems as if our mind is overwhelmed with unwanted thoughts. Even though your mind may be flooded, try, as much as possible, not to follow or get caught up with these thoughts. There are lots of strategies to get some space from negative thoughts. Sometimes people sing their toxic thoughts or say them out loud in a cartoon voice, and this helps to get some space from them. Sometimes bringing comparisons to thought is helpful. A common comparison is seeing thoughts like clouds across the sky, the sky is like awareness and the clouds are like changing thoughts, they don't last.

Other comparisons we can use with thoughts include: seeing them like things passing in a river flowing by. Sometimes there are beautiful things and sometimes there is garbage. Either way you don't have to dive into the river of thoughts and swim after them. Sometimes people see thoughts as if they are like buses coming down the road. Each bus has its destination clearly displayed and stops to allow you to get on board. If the destination says "road to misery" you can choose not to board. If on the other hand the sign says "road to happiness" you can choose to board and figuratively buy a ticket on that thought bus. Remember you are not squashing negative thoughts down, just seeing them for what they are and letting them go.

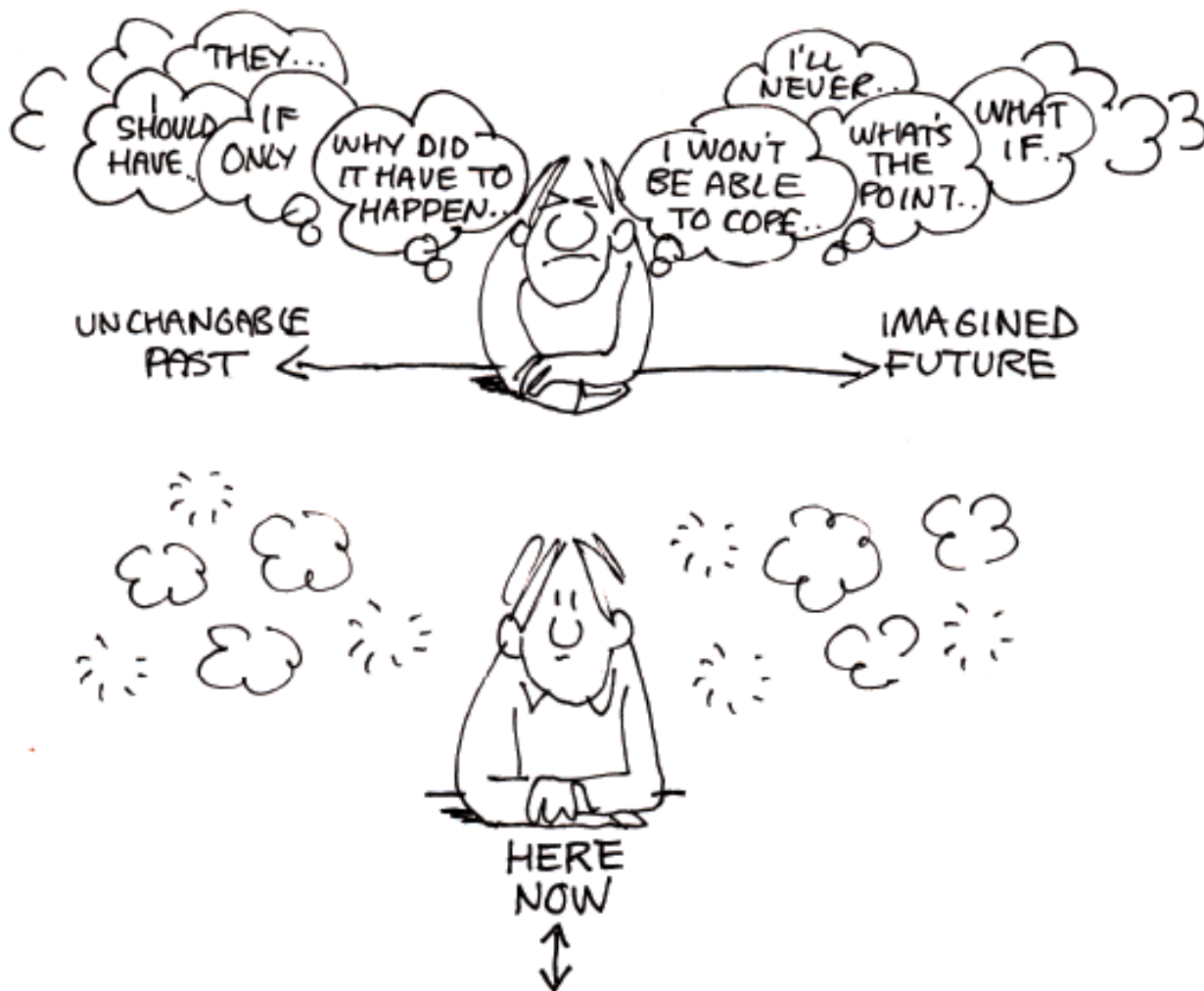
Noting and naming is often good to catch negative thoughts before they get out of control.



Bringing bare attention to the senses is also very useful to short circuit being entangled in stinking thinking.



Anchoring your self in the reality of what you are doing and remembering to remember to be here now is possibly the most powerful way to find some peace with disturbing thoughts.



---

## Mindfulness of hearing

Sound, like any experience, can be an object of mindfulness. Further more it is possible to make sound a primary object of mindfulness meditation. Sound meditation can be practised during formal meditation times or during one's day-to-day activities, as part of one's general mindfulness repertoire. Making sound the object of meditation is very helpful when there is restlessness, as it can be pleasant and gives a sense of spaciousness.

As with any object of mindfulness you notice the WHAT and HOW of sound and hearing. You notice how the sounds change and what factors were related to the change. When you practice mindfulness of sound, allow sounds come and go. Try not to judge sounds as good or bad but

try to hear sounds as vibrations coming to you, and simply “be” with them. Hear sounds as if they are music, being attentive to the nuances of the sounds. Pictures or concepts related to the sounds may come into your mind. Allow these ideas to be, but direct your attention to sounds. Be attentive to the changing nature of sounds and how one sound leads into another. Some sounds may be unpleasant and some sounds may be pleasant. With unpleasant sounds it is helpful to direct attention as if it is going inside the sound (Martine Batchelor, 2004) and notice the insubstantial nature of the sound. With pleasant sounds it is useful to notice how they arise and pass away.

## **Listening to thoughts with mindfulness**

At times it seems as if our mind is overwhelmed with unwanted thoughts. Even though our mind may be flooded, we try, as much as possible, not to follow or get “caught up” in, or involved with these thoughts. As with all objects of mindfulness we notice the WHAT and HOW of thoughts. As much as possible we try to step back from the thoughts and develop what Linehan (1993) calls a “teflon” mind, or a mind that can let the thoughts go and change according to their natural conditions. It is helpful to notice the changing nature of thoughts. As with other objects of mindfulness it is also helpful to develop an objective and non-condemning stance about thoughts. In this way we begin to study and know thoughts and understand how they can lead to other thoughts, emotions, feelings, or bodily experiences.

In the same way you that you hear sounds with a passive and open-minded manner, allow your attention to shift to thoughts. Allow thoughts to come into the spaciousness of your mind. See thoughts as clouds in the sky, leaves in a river, waves on the ocean, placards in a parade. Sometimes people see thoughts as if they are like buses coming down the road. Each bus has its destination clearly displayed and stops to allow you to get on board. If the destination says “road to misery” you can choose not to board. If on the other hand the sign says “road to happiness” you can choose to board and figuratively engage in those thoughts.

After a formal meditation period you can spend some time reflecting on the thoughts that came up during that time. Remember to be reflective and objective and not get entangled thinking processes. Yet, notice the types of thoughts you had, perhaps also noting what you were thinking about and what the underlying feeling tones were in relation to the thought. In this way

you build up a form of understanding about thought and their relationship to deeper states of mind and the things that are happening in your life.

## **Mindfully watching thoughts**

For some people the comparison to listening to thoughts may not be as appropriate as the idea of watching or observing thoughts. With this perspective, it is as if you passively observe the movie of your mind. There may be all sorts of mental constructs, stories, memories, fantasies and imaginings passing through your mind. The challenge with this exercise is to watch the movie without getting lost and caught up in the story. Sometimes it may seem as if the stories are never ending, one thought after another. The thoughts may come and go very rapidly without you being fully aware of their content. Sometimes the thoughts may have a high emotional charge. Other times they are just random memories, images, pictures, ideas, and more. Sometimes the thought may be frightening other times they may be amusing or boring. What ever the content of thoughts may be, it is important to remember that they are just thoughts and are not necessarily facts to be believed. With this exercise it is helpful to leave your eyes slightly open, Of course you don't look around, but you let your focus be diffuse, not really looking at anything, except the contents of your mind. When your eyes are left open it helps you to realise that thoughts are just thoughts.

## **Activities to do between sessions**

- Continue with a regular routine of meditation. Utilise mindfulness of body practices as your foundation (e.g., mindfulness of breath, mindful walking, or body scan). If thoughts arise, note them accordingly.
- Experiment with your repertoire by listening to the “mindfulness of sounds and thoughts” recording.
- Practice disengaging from thoughts by purposely focusing attention on what you are doing or experiencing.
- If you are feeling concentrated and calm, experiment objectively with examining thoughts for very short periods (only a few minutes). Pay particular awareness to how they change and how they relate to other experiences.

- At the end of the day, recollect the days events. Use a diary to record some experiences throughout the day and notice thoughts. Begin to notice thoughts or thinking styles that may lead to suffering, and thoughts or thinking styles that may lead away from distress (do not get too analytical).
- Notice particular patterns of thought, such as “catastrophising” “overgeneralisation” “minimising”, and note them as they arise.
- Try not to be afraid of thoughts, and try stepping back and being accepting of thoughts. Let thoughts come and go without unwarranted reaction.
- Try, on occasions, to listen to the babble of judging, evaluating, comparing etc., without getting caught up in the stories. Step back and listen to thoughts just as if you were listening to a babbling stream.
- If you are comfortable, begin to increase the length of time you do formal mindfulness exercises to longer than 30 minutes.
- It is recommended that after a formal meditation period you spend a few minutes recollecting the meditation and the things that occurred during this period. In particular pay attention to the types of thoughts and thinking patterns you may have experienced. Remember to be objective, honest and curious about what happened and not get entangled in being over critical or condemning about your experienced. If you find it useful you could start to keep a journal about your meditation experience.

## Mindfulness of sounds and thoughts

- Make yourself comfortable, sitting upright and relaxed.
- Scan your body and release what ever tension you may feel.
- Make the determination that for the period of this exercise, you will not to follow concerns about things other than being here and now and what you are doing. Remember that for 20-30 minutes you don't have to do anything other than practising mindfulness of sound and thoughts.
- Also make the intention to maintain a stance of willingness, receptivity and openness to experience as it comes to you, arising and passing away.
- Now turn your mind to sound.
- Be attentive to sound as sound or vibration.
- Be alert but relaxed and receive sound as it comes to you. There may be sounds of birds, cars, traffic, air conditioning, wind, rain or just the hum of silence.
- Notice how you may create images and labels around the sound such as: dog barking, traffic, birds or whatever. Don't struggle with the labelling and the pictures but distinguish the sound from the label. Let the labelling or pictures be on the periphery of your awareness and direct you attention to sound as vibration.
- Notice also how some sounds are pleasant, some sounds are unpleasant and some sounds are neither pleasant nor unpleasant. Notice and note the judgements and without struggle let them go by bringing attention back to sound as sound.
- Now arising .....now changing...now passing away. Notice, if you can, the beginning, middle and end of each sound. Listen closely, attentive to every nuance, every subtle shift and change. Notice how vibration may itself also be made up of other vibrations.
- Let your mind be as if it is the sky, open, expansive and clear, and let sounds arise and pass through.
- With the same open and spacious perspective, now shift your awareness to thoughts.
- Notice thoughts as if they are clouds passing across an expansive sky, arising, changing, passing and disappearing from view.
- Or, observe thoughts like birds flying across the sky, sometimes flitting around then moving on, sometimes just gliding through space. They leave no trace.
- Thoughts are just changing objects against the backdrop of spaciousness.

- Use noting to help you be aware of the changing nature of thoughts.
- Note commenting, evaluating, appraising, judging, planning, calculating, day-dreaming, remembering, catastrophising, overgeneralising, personalising or what ever type of thinking you may experience.
- Sometimes there are too many thoughts to note. Sometimes it is as if thoughts babble on like a never-ending stream. Step back from the stream and notice the stream pass by. Notice the thoughts but resist the temptation to dive in and follow the thought.
- Sometimes, thoughts are like placards in a parade. Each having a message, each inviting you in to join the parade. Resist the urge to join the parade and notice messages as thoughts just passing by. There is no need to get caught up in the drama.
- Let the thoughts come and go. Step back to a place of witnessing and watching the show.
- Notice how some thoughts are pleasant and some thoughts are unpleasant. Notice how some thoughts have a charge and others don't. Notice thoughts about the past or the future. Notice thoughts seem to come back again and again and again. Notice how thoughts may tell a story, like a drama, and how we are always in a leading role.
- Notice how we may desire to think because not thinking may be unfamiliar and frightening.
- Notice how some thoughts lead to emotions and some emotions lead to thoughts. Notice and be receptive even to those thoughts that may lead to fear.
- Try not to struggle with thoughts, no matter how frightening they may be. They are only thoughts. Thoughts only have the power of action if we choose to give them this power.
- Try as best you can to be open to thoughts without preference or condemnation. Develop a curious interest about the passing parade.
- They are not you. You are not your thoughts. Thoughts are thoughts. And they change. Let painful thoughts change without getting caught up in the struggle.
- Step back into awareness. Step back from being caught up and entangled.
- At the end of the formal cultivation of mindfulness, go about your daily activities using thinking as a helpful tool but remembering not to be deceived by the sometimes illusive nature of thoughts and harmful thinking patterns.

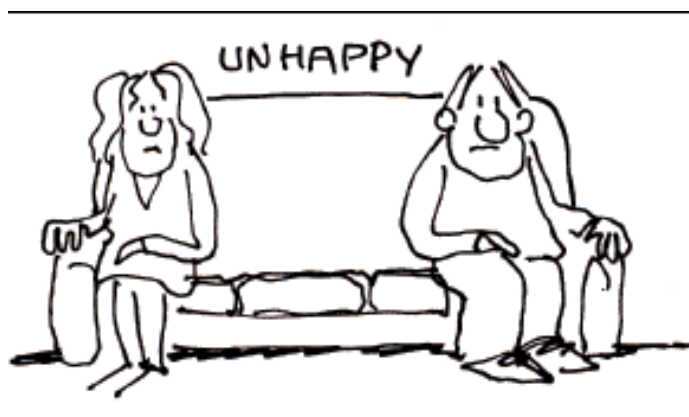
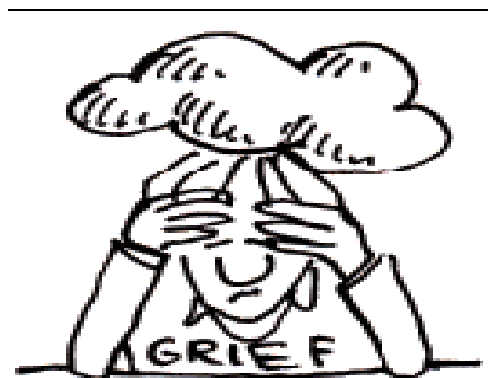


## SESSION FIVE: MINDFULNESS OF HEART-MIND AND HEALING PAINFUL EMOTIONS

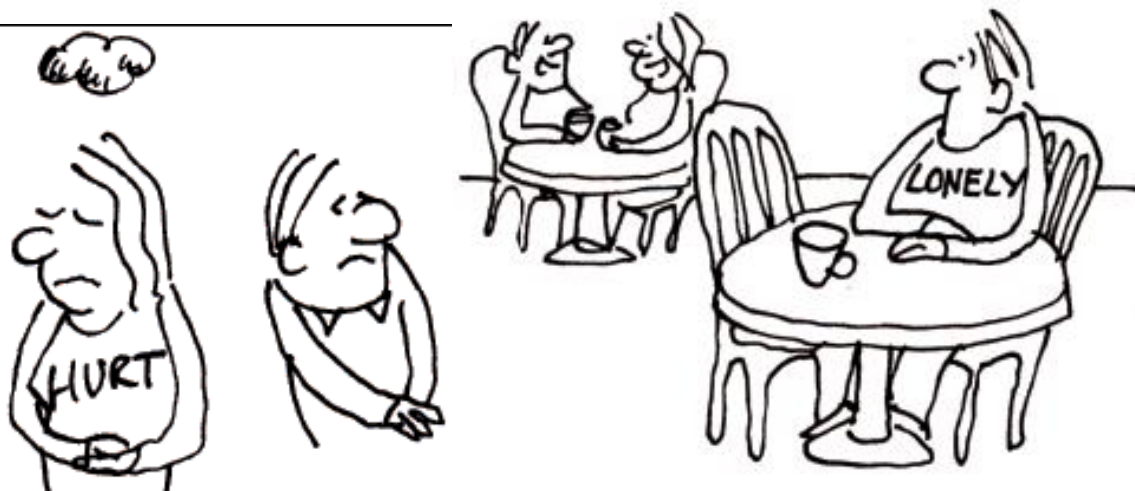
The focus of this session is about being able to process and let go of destructive emotions using mindfulness. To begin with, I will clarify what feelings, emotions, moods, and states of mind are. Then, I will explain how to work with these experiences when they are destructive using the strategies such as urge surfing. In later sessions the focus will be on how to cultivate healing emotions and states of heart mind such as acceptance, generosity, loving kindness, joy, peace and tranquillity.

### Emotions

People experience all sorts of emotional reactions that can be overwhelming.



The word emotion originates from the Latin "*emovere*", which means to disturb. The first part of the word, "*e*" means "out", and "*movere*" translates as "to move". So emotions could be considered as complex processes involving our bodies and our minds that influence us to act in some way or other. Emotions involve an appraisal of a situation so that we can act quickly. They involve messages sent from your brain to activate the nervous system which then affects your muscles and organs. They cause changes in our body and behaviour. With humans, emotions have been essential in evolution and survival of the fittest. Thus they are hard wired into our system. If we didn't have them we would not have evolved and survived. An emotional response can give you information about a situation so that you act quickly. Emotions help you to act in a way that is important our welfare. We humans are social creatures and our well being is very much influenced by others. Sometimes it is important to us to know about what is happening with another being because we care about them. Other times we need to be careful about what other beings are doing, because what they are doing may risk the welfare of our selves or those we care about.



Emotions are involved in communication. We can communicate emotions via postures, facial expressions and tone of voice. So even if you don't know another language you can communicate something very important by the facial expression you make. Paul Ekman, a famous scientist, has studied emotions and facial expressions and discovered that there are

seven emotions that have universal expressions. These emotions are: sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, contempt and happiness. Contempt is the emotion that occurs when someone feels superior and also negative towards someone else. The facial expression of contempt involves a sneer where one side of the mouth is raised. The facial expression of anger involves a tightening of the face muscles, narrowing of the eyes and frowning, with sadness the sides of the mouth come down. A genuine smile is where there is some wrinkling around the side of the eyes and a genuine smile represents happiness, of course.



Most of us know the facial expressions and tones of voice that represent emotions. Otherwise we would not be able to communicate very well. Imagine talking to someone who sounded monotone like a robot and you couldn't see their face. It is difficult.

## Feelings

Though “feelings” are often thought of as the same as emotions, the way I would like to use this term, however, is in relation to whether an experience feels good, bad or neither. In other words, the quality of pleasantness, unpleasantness or neither that arises when we come into contact with experience. Sometimes things feel comfortable and we like them and want more of them. Sometimes things are not comfortable and we want to move away from them and get rid of them and sometimes things are neither comfortable or uncomfortable but somehow in the middle. When we are there is neither a pleasant or unpleasant feeling we may be confused or uncertain about what to do...whether to go after it or push it away. Feelings can arise from physical things or mental things. If we trip and graze a hand, for example, and it hurts it may give rise to unpleasant feelings. In this case the unpleasant feelings arise from a physical object. If on the other hand, someone we like smiles at us, this could feel good and the good feeling would arise from the mental impression of someone smiling. In some rare cases, painful

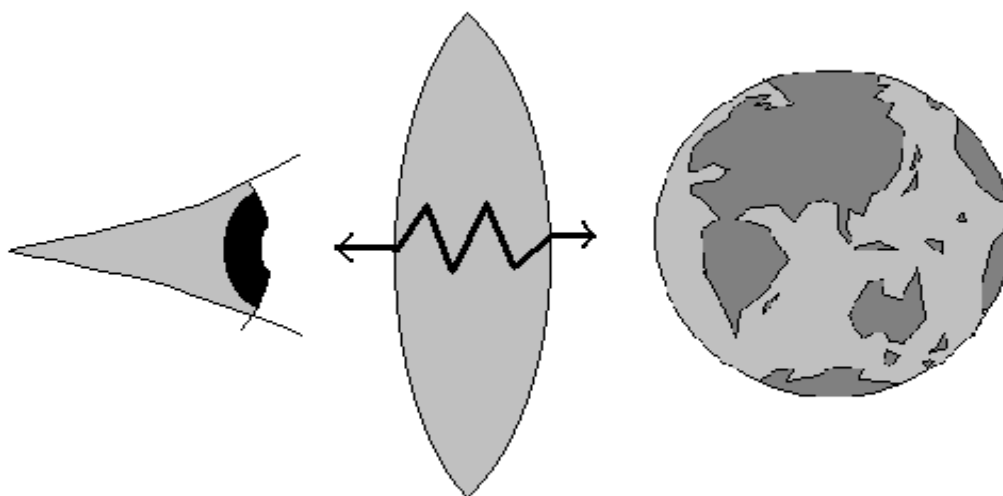
physical sensations may actually give rise to pleasant feeling. Such as, for example, when we get a massage and the masseuse digs into a tight muscle. It may hurt but “feels” good.

Feeling and emotions are sometimes thought of as if they are the same because feelings move us to act. Our feelings about something can move us to act in ways that are very helpful on our path of happiness. The good feelings that come from helping a friend, for example, can influence us to do it again and this is helpful for everyone involved. Sometimes situations do not feel comfortable and we should pay heed to our feelings because they are giving us good information. For example, being at a party where there is a lot of drunk people and there is risk of violence we may have unpleasant feelings. In this case the uncomfortable feelings move us to get out of this situation. On the other hand, sometimes feelings can influence us to act in ways that we later regret. Like for example when we get caught up in reactive cycles that lead to being stuck in patterns of anxiety. A person with anxiety might have very uncomfortable feelings of fear about something that they need not be fearful about. Unfortunately, with anxiety the uncomfortable feeling lead to avoidance, and the person does not learn from experience that there is no need to feel anxious. We may not be able to control our feelings about experiences because they may have been conditioned from the past. We can choose, however, how we respond. It is very helpful for us to become familiar with our feelings about something. The second area of mindfulness, (as mentioned in the first session) involves being aware of feelings so that we have more space to choose what we do with the urges to act. The term “urge surfing” was coined by a psychologist who works with people who are addicted to drugs or alcohol. I will describe urge surfing later, but it essentially means that we don’t get dumped by destructive urge waves and we choose to surf them instead. Usually a feeling about something comes before an urge wave to move towards or move away from that thing. If it is pleasant we go after it. If it is unpleasant we move away and avoid it. If we can be mindful of our feelings it can provide us with more ability to choose the directions we want to go in our lives. Being mindful of feelings improves our ability to surf unhelpful urges.

## **Moods**

Emotions come and go (like waves in the sea) and they can lead to many thoughts and other emotions. When an emotion seems to continue for a while, it is called a mood. Scientists do not

consider moods as genuine emotions, but as extensions of them. We can feel a mood for hours or even days. The moods we experience can influence the way we appraise things, like a filter. There is a saying that some people see the world through rose coloured glasses. This means that the way they perceive, interpret and project onto things is in some way tinged with a positive view. Alternatively one could say that some people see things through muddy coloured glasses meaning that their perception and the way they project onto the world of people, places and things is negatively coloured.



If you are in a happy mood, everything looks great, but if you are in a grumpy mood the way you see the world, your friends and your self is not very good. A grumpy or angry mood is like wearing a distorting lens to see the world through.



Our moods influence the way we see things, and if you want to see things clearly it would be very helpful to become familiar with moods or states of mind so that you have more ability to cultivate helpful ones and let go of or clean up unhelpful ones.



## States of mind

Sometimes a term that is used for moods and emotions is a “state of mind”. The state of one’s mind could describe not only emotions such as sadness and anger, but also more subtle experiences such as a mild annoyance, or a subtle happiness such as peacefulness. In Western cultures the “mind” is often thought of as that part of us which thinks and works things out. Emotions, on the other hand, are those parts of our selves, which are more feeling based and they make us want to act. In most Asian languages, the word for mind is usually something more like heart-mind, which feels and thinks. The heart-mind could be thought of as the aware or knowing centre of ourselves. If anyone asks “How are you?” we usually look to our heart mind and say, something like, “I am” happy, sad, confused, frustrated, motivated, calm, angry,

peaceful, irritable, wanting, chilled out, or whatever as if these states of mind are who and what we are. But moods, emotions and states of mind are more like things that pass through our heart-mind. Even though it might seem like we are our emotions, moods or states of mind, they are always changing. If we can be mindful of these changing parts of ourselves, it is possible to not be deceived and driven by destructive and often painful states of mind. It is also possible that we can encourage and develop those moods, emotions or states of mind that are helpful, healing and feel good. The third area of mindfulness, as described in session one, is often called mindfulness of heart-mind. It refers to being able to track and watch the changes in this domain of ourselves. Though all the areas of mindfulness are very helpful to work with emotions, the second (mindfulness of feelings) and the third (mindfulness of heart mind) are especially beneficial. When we strengthen mindfulness of feelings, emotions, moods or states of mind we are more able to choose responses that lead to wellbeing and happiness for ourselves and others.

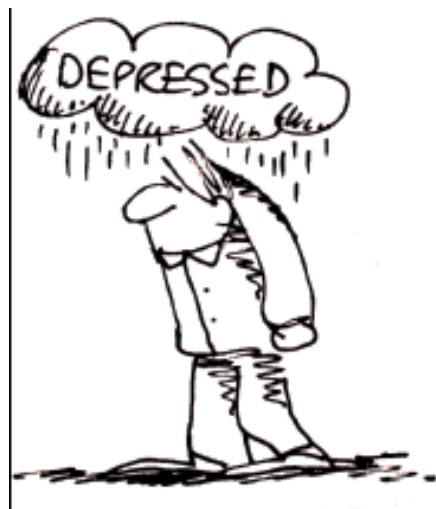
## **Being mindful of emotions, moods or states of heart-mind**

Emotions are there so that we can survive. If we didn't have fear, for example, we would not avoid things that are dangerous. Sadness, as another emotion, helps us to sort out ourselves when we lose something. Emotions are natural and very useful to survive as well as communicate. Imagine how it would be if you talked to a friend who had no emotions at all! Our emotions help us convey very important information to those around us. Emotions and moods are there for a reason and they have a natural time frame. That is, they serve their purpose then they fade away and change to something else. Unfortunately, some emotions, moods and states of mind, outstay their welcome and they begin to control us in ways we don't like or that are not in our best interest. Some states of heart mind are problematic and destructive. The way we relate to and use emotions becomes crucial in whether they lead to happiness and wellbeing, calm and insight or whether they are destructive and painful. It is possible that destructive emotions take over and block the path of happiness. It is also possible to cultivate and develop healing emotions.

When an emotion arises, there is a complex interaction between body and mind, so much so that we can often feel them in our bodies. For some people fear is felt in the body with all the natural fight, flight or freeze responses to danger. Sometime worry is felt like a knot in the

stomach or tension throughout the body. Anger also has physical reactions, like feeling tight in your chest and having tense muscles ready to spring into action as if one might punch someone or something. Everyone is different in how they feel emotions. How do you feel emotions the different emotions in your body?

Because emotions have a survival role, they can be learnt very quickly. It doesn't take long for a baby to be afraid of something that hurts it. We probably learnt to avoid boiling water from a very early age, for example. Sometimes, however, learnt emotions reactions may be not helpful and they no longer serve our needs. All the anxiety disorders involve learnt responses to the perception of danger. Fear of something dangerous helps to us survive. However, when we no longer need to avoid something and the fear continues it becomes anxiety. If some emotional reactions are learnt or conditioned, then it is possible to unlearn and de-condition them. One way to de-condition unnecessary emotional reactions is to not react to them and let them fade away.



Sometimes we can feel a victim of emotions. Not only are they difficult to bear, they can also hijack us or move us to act in a way that could harm ourselves or others. The types of emotions that are harmful and painful vary from individual to individual and from the circumstance in which they arise. When emotions are painful and/or driving us to act in ways that are against important life directions, we need to be able to regulate them so that they stop causing harm.





Regulating something is like taming it and steering it in a helpful direction. Just like a wild horse can be tamed to become our friend and work with us rather than against us, so too can emotions be regulated so they serve the path of happiness and not take us in the opposite direction.

## Emotional regulation

There are many ways to begin to regulate painful and destructive emotions. Some of these ways include:

- Being clear and identifying what emotion is present. “Noting” and naming emotions can help to provide space and choice (with them).
- Reducing the opportunity for destructive emotions to run rampant. Avoiding going to dangerous places, doing unwise things or mixing with abusive people, are some ways to discourage destructive emotions.
- Try not to take emotions too personally. Not taking emotions too personally is like riding a powerful horse. In order to ride a horse well we need to be able to be separate from it so that we can direct it. At the same time, however, we need to be connected with the horse so that riding happens. It is good to not cut off from emotions. It is also good not to get lost in them.
- Increasing the likelihood of positive emotions arising by doing things such as going to pleasant places, or mixing with kind and supportive people.
- Being able to let go of painful emotions.

## Coping with painful emotions

During formal meditation practices or during daily activities some ways to cope with painful and possibly destructive emotions include:

- Honour emotions. They arise for a reason and they may indicate that we need to act in a particular way. Act on emotions if this is needed and don't force your self to investigate emotions when they are too overwhelming. Remember always be kind to yourself.
- Note and name the emotions. Say to your self something like: "(the name of the emotion) .....has arisen". Name the emotion with a tone of voice that is not the same as the emotion you are noting. For example, if anger is there, name it in with a tone of voice that is not angry. Naming an emotion helps to create space with it. There are lists of words referring to some basic emotions at the end of this chapter. These lists can help find words to describe the emotions you experience.
- Give emotions space. As much as possible we let them be without rejecting or suppressing them. If it is painful do not suppress the experience. Let it be. Giving space to emotions is like accepting them and embracing them with kindness.
- Step back from falling into and becoming entangled with the emotion. Step back from them into a space of awareness. Step back and get unstuck by being aware.
- See emotions like waves coming and going. In this way try not to block them or amplify them. Rather we let them roll on by. Surfing powerful emotions is like staying balanced with them and not being dumped by them. Sometimes, it means being able to dive through them before they pound you in the seabed.
- Practice emotional aikido. Aikido is a defensive martial art. Aikido experts are very good at getting out of the road of destructive energy, neutralising destructive energy and even transforming it to something beneficial.
- Remember that we are not our emotions but rather they are changing events passing through like visitors. Remember you don't need take emotions personally.
- Practice openness, willingness, allowance and acceptance. (remember that acceptance does not mean that you don't take action when you need to).
- See the emotions as an opportunity to develop understanding or insight.
- Remember that all experiences change and emotions have a natural time frame.

- Be aware of the thoughts related to the emotion but try not to get caught up in them. Relax into how the emotion feels in the body rather than trying to work it out by thinking.
- Enquire into the emotion. Look directly at emotions and see them for what they are rather than what we construct them to be. Being afraid to look at and investigate destructive emotions can sometimes make them stronger. When we look at them, we might notice that they are nothing to be afraid of, and all the scary parts of them fade away.
- Cultivate the opposites of the painful and destructive emotions such as such as peacefulness, kindness, compassion, wisdom acceptance etc.
- Unlearn unhelpful responses by not reinforcing old reactive habits. This means that we don't let destructive emotions become the boss of our lives and we make some choices to stand up to and say no to what they are trying to make us do.
- Use helpful self-talk such as: "It's OK, this will change", "I am not my emotions" or "This will pass" or "It is understandable that this emotion has arisen, and I don't need to take it personally".
- If the emotion is too overwhelming to deal with, use healthy distraction such as watching a movie, or listening to music. These types of distractions can help the destructive and painful emotion pass by without it causing any damage.
- Remember to remember to be here now.

The poem by a medieval Sufi mystic and poet, Jalaluddin Rumi called "The guest house" provides a view for seeing how emotions are not permanent.

### ***THE GUESTHOUSE***

*This being human is a guesthouse.  
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture, still,  
treat each guest honourably.  
He may be cleaning you out*

*for some new delight!*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing  
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from the beyond.*

*Always check your inner state  
with the lord of your heart.*

*Copper doesn't know it's copper  
Until it's changing to gold*

*Your loving doesn't know majesty,  
until it knows its helplessness.*

*(From: Colman Barks (2003) "Rumi the Book of Love"  
pages 179-180 New York: Harper Collins).*

## Activities to do between sessions

- Continue to practice sitting, walking, moving postures or lying down mindfulness practices. Try to have a regular routine using one meditation technique or a combination of techniques. Be attentive to a primary object of the practice (i.e., the breath, physical sensations etc.). If emotions or mind states arise note them and be mindful of them accordingly.
- Look at the checklist sheet, do not be overwhelmed by the number of the items but consider the items as a way to think how the mindfulness may be incorporated into your life. Some items on the sheets may not initially make sense. If an item does not seem relevant do not be concerned. As the course progresses the items should become more and more meaningful.
- Do not judge yourself harshly if you feel you cannot commit yourself to formal meditation periods. Rather, feel content that you may be able to bring some mindfulness and wisdom to your life as a way of being in the world.
- Experiment listening to the “letting go of painful emotions recording” if you find that this is helpful. This recording contains instructions for how to manage difficult emotions should they arise.
- Be attentive to emotions throughout the day with daily activities. As you interact with other people be attentive to what you are doing but be particularly mindful of emotions as they come up. Be inclined to allow and generate the quality of acceptance and kindness to arise towards yourself and other individuals.
- After formal meditation periods recollect with kind objectivity, how the meditation unfolded. In particular pay attention to the types of heart mind states that arose and how they changed including what factors led to what. If it feels appropriate you could record your recollections in a journal.

## Mindfulness-based stress management – checklist

These sheets are used to help remind participants of skills learnt throughout the stress management course. Record practising the following skills or activities on a daily basis. If you are unsure of the meaning of an item question don't mark that response. Please tick other boxes accordingly.

Skill or activity	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Focused attention (doing one thing at a time)							
Having a non-judgmental and open stance							
Patience							
Kindness to self							
Letting go of troubling thoughts or emotions							
Enjoying the present moment with contentment and in a non-attached manner							
Being able to just notice mental and/or physical events.							
Being able to label/note or describe mental or physical events.							
Being able to be aware of the changing and/or interconnected nature of							

experience.							
Today I purposely sat or lay quietly developing mindfulness							
Today I purposely practiced mindful walking							
Today I purposely practiced a general activity with mindfulness							
Today I purposely practiced mindful physical exercise							

Comments:.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## Words to help identify emotions.

Being able to name and label emotions helps with awareness of them and the ability to choose whether to act on them or not. The following are lists are provided in order for you to have some options to name or label.

(Adapted from Linehan, 1993)

### LOVE WORDS

Love	Compassion	Longing
Adoration	Desire	Lust
Affection	Enchantment	Passion
Arousal	Fondness	Sentimentality
Attraction	Infatuation	Sympathy
Caring	Kindness	Tenderness
Charmed	Liking	Warm

### ANGER WORDS

Anger	Disgust	Grumpiness	Rage
Aggravation	Dislike	Hate	Resentment
Agitation	Disturbed	Hostility	Revulsion
Annoyance	Distressed	Irritation	Scorn
Blustery	Distraught	Jealousy	Spite
Burned up	Envy	Loathing	Torment
Bitterness	Exasperation	Mean-	Vengefulness
Contempt	Ferocity	spiritedness	Wrath
Cruelty	Frustration	Outrage	
Destructiveness	Fury		
	Frenzied		
	Fierce		
	Fed up		
	Grouchiness		

### SADNESS WORDS

Sadness	Despair	Grief	Misery
Agony	Disappointment	Homesickness	Neglect
Alienation	Discontentment	Hopelessness	Pity
Anguish	Dismay	Hurt	Rejection
Crushed	Displeasure	Insecurity	Sorrow
Defeat	Distraught	Isolation	Suffering
Dejection	Gloom	Loneliness	Unhappiness
Depression	Glumness	Melancholy	Woe

### FEAR WORDS

Fear	Fright	Panic
Apprehension	Horror	Shock
Anxiety	Hysteria	Tenseness
Distress	Jumpiness	Terror
Dread	Nervousness	Uneasiness



Edginess

Overwhelmed

Worry

SHAME WORDS

Shame

Discomposure

Humiliation

Mortification

Contrition

Embarrassment

Insult

Regret

Culpability

Guilt

Invalidation

Remorse

HAPPY JOY WORDS

Aglow

Eagerness

Glee

Pride

Alive

Ecstasy

Happiness

Rapture

Joy

Elation

Hope

Relief

Amusement

Enjoyment

Light hearted

Satisfaction

Bliss

Enthrallment

Merriment

Thrill

Bubbly

Enthusiasm

Peaceful

Triumph

Buoyant

Euphoria

Pleasant

Tranquil

Cheerfulness

Excitement

Jolliness

Uplifted

Contentment

Exhilaration

Joviality

Wonderful

Delight

Gaiety

Jubilation

Zest

Ecstatic

Gladness

Thrilled

Zeal

Exuberant

Great

Optimism

Pleasure

WORDS FOR CONFUSION

Addled

Dazed

Foggy

Muddled

Baffled

Deranged

Frustrated

Perplexed

Befuddled

Disordered

Helpless

Jumbled

Bewildered

Disconcerted

Mazed

Obscure

Bothered

Disturbed

Mixed up

Puzzled

Confounded

Flabbergasted

Helter skelter

Scatterbrained

Lost

Uncertain

WORDS FOR PEACE AND CALM

Peace

Stillness

Unruffled

Concord

Quietude

Equanimity

Harmony

Quiescence

Balanced

Freedom from strife

Cool

Centred

Serenity

Composed

Chilled out

Tranquillity

Soothed

## **SESSION SIX: REACTIVE CYCLES AND URGE SURFING**

### **Overview**

This session is about considering that which blocks us on the path of happiness and freedom. We will also looking at cycles or psychological patterns that that we may find ourselves caught up in. There will be discussion about reactive cycles and how not to fall into these destructive patterns.

### **Cultivating the helpful and letting go of the unhelpful**

There are common obstacles to meditation and following valued life directions. Mindfulness of the barriers is a very powerful way to overcome that which blocks a healthy pathway. During this session we will discuss the obstacles and useful strategies to help manage these obstacles. We will also discuss tendencies. Some tendencies involving behaviours, thoughts and emotional responses are very helpful to prevent stress anxiety or depression. Others, however, are not helpful. Tendencies influence each other. Driven by unrealistic thoughts and beliefs, for example we may act in ways that we later regret. Acting in ways that are unhelpful complicates situations and influences the arising of negative states of mind such as sadness, irritability, frustration, aggression and worry. When we get on a negative roll, it can bring about all sorts of complicated reactions and situations. Helpful mental, emotional and behavioural tendencies, on the other hand, are those that incline and lead away from complication and lead to balance. Like unhelpful tendencies, the helpful ones influence each other, so that cultivating one helps to cultivate another. If we can cultivate mindfulness this can short circuit stress and lead to other helpful tendencies such as concentration, joy and calm. Joy and calm can further influence the cultivation of mindfulness and so on. Each tendency often has an opposite.

## Examples of helpful and unhelpful tendencies

Unhelpful	Helpful
Ignorance	Insight (wisdom)
Confusion and mental dullness	Mindfulness, awareness
No regrets about actions that harm	Wise restraint from acting harmfully
Impulsive destructive behaviours	Acting with wise discretion
Agitation	Composure and calm
Greed	Being able to let go
Aggression	Kindness and goodwill
Envy and jealousy	Sympathetic joy
Worry and restlessness	Peacefulness
Anxious fear	Calm acceptance
Sadness	Joy
Cruelty	Compassion
Hopelessness	Confidence in our paths of action or trust
Guilt	Acting responsibly
Narrow mindedness	Emotional flexibility
The five obstacles to meditation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unnecessary craving</li> <li>2. Hatefulness or strong aversion</li> <li>3. Mental dullness</li> <li>4. Restlessness, worry and agitation</li> <li>5. Paralysing doubt or indecisiveness</li> </ol>	Healing factors such as mindfulness, enquiry, patience, calm, peacefulness, gratitude, kindness, compassion, wisdom etc.

## Unhelpful tendencies as obstacles to meditation

The five obstacles for meditation, which are a distillation of unhelpful patterns or inclinations, were mentioned earlier in the session about meditation. Working with the obstacles helps to find

freedom from the anguish of stress, anxiety and depression. Gently and kindly knowing and courageously exploring these patterns of heart mind are powerful ways to negotiate with these difficulties. Mindfulness is the main way to deal with the obstacles or obstacles. Being able to identify an obstacle with mindfulness, and note or name it, is one powerful way to overcome and reign in its obstructive power. It also helps to not take the obstacles personally or see them as enemies to be crushed. Rather it is best to see these obstacles as honoured guests that will not stay long. As mentioned in session three, working through the obstacles is, in fact, the business of meditation. To repeat for the third time the obstacles are:

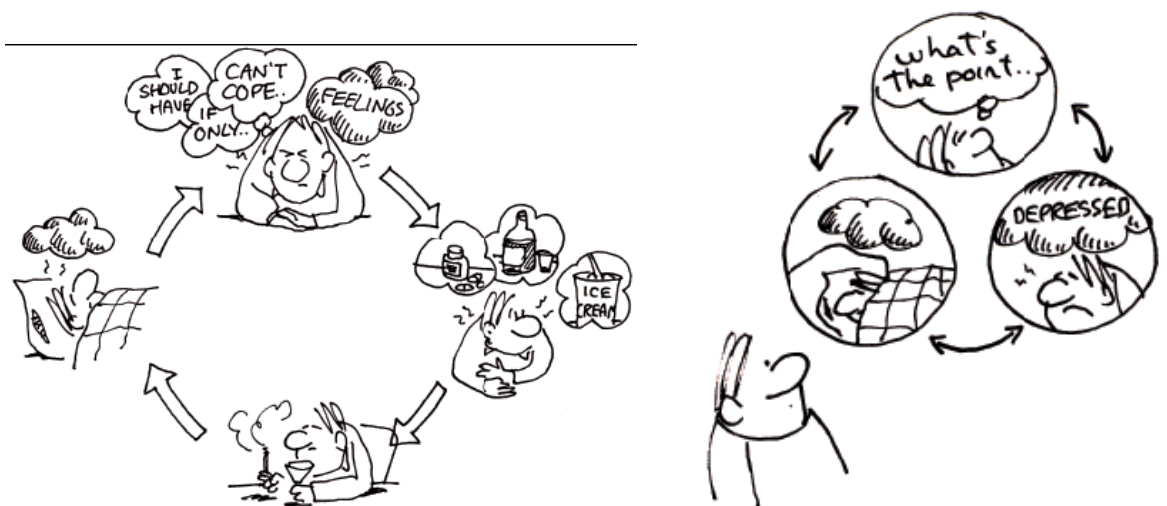
These obstacles are:

- Unnecessary craving
- Ill will or strong aversion
- Lethargy or mental dullness
- Restlessness, worry and agitation
- Paralytic doubt or indecisiveness

Meditation has been compared to looking at one's own reflection in a bowl of water and the obstacles to meditation prevent a clear reflection in some way or other. With the first obstacle it is like the reflection is not accurate because the water is coloured with a strong dye. Our cravings often colour a clear perception of something. With the second obstacle, it is like the water is boiling and so clear reflection is disturbed. With the third obstacle, it is like the water is covered with algae and a reflection is covered. With the fourth obstacle it is like the smooth surface of the water is agitated by the wind, thus preventing a clear reflection. Finally, with the fifth obstacle, it is like the water is muddy and hard to move through and thus there is no opportunity to see clearly.

## Reactive and cyclic patterns as a cause and continuation of stress

Everyone has emotional, thinking and acting patterns that often repeat themselves. Thus, these types of patterns often seem to occur in cycles. The cycles can often result in anguish and despair, yet we repeat them nonetheless. Sometimes the cyclic patterns seem to occur internally within our own minds.

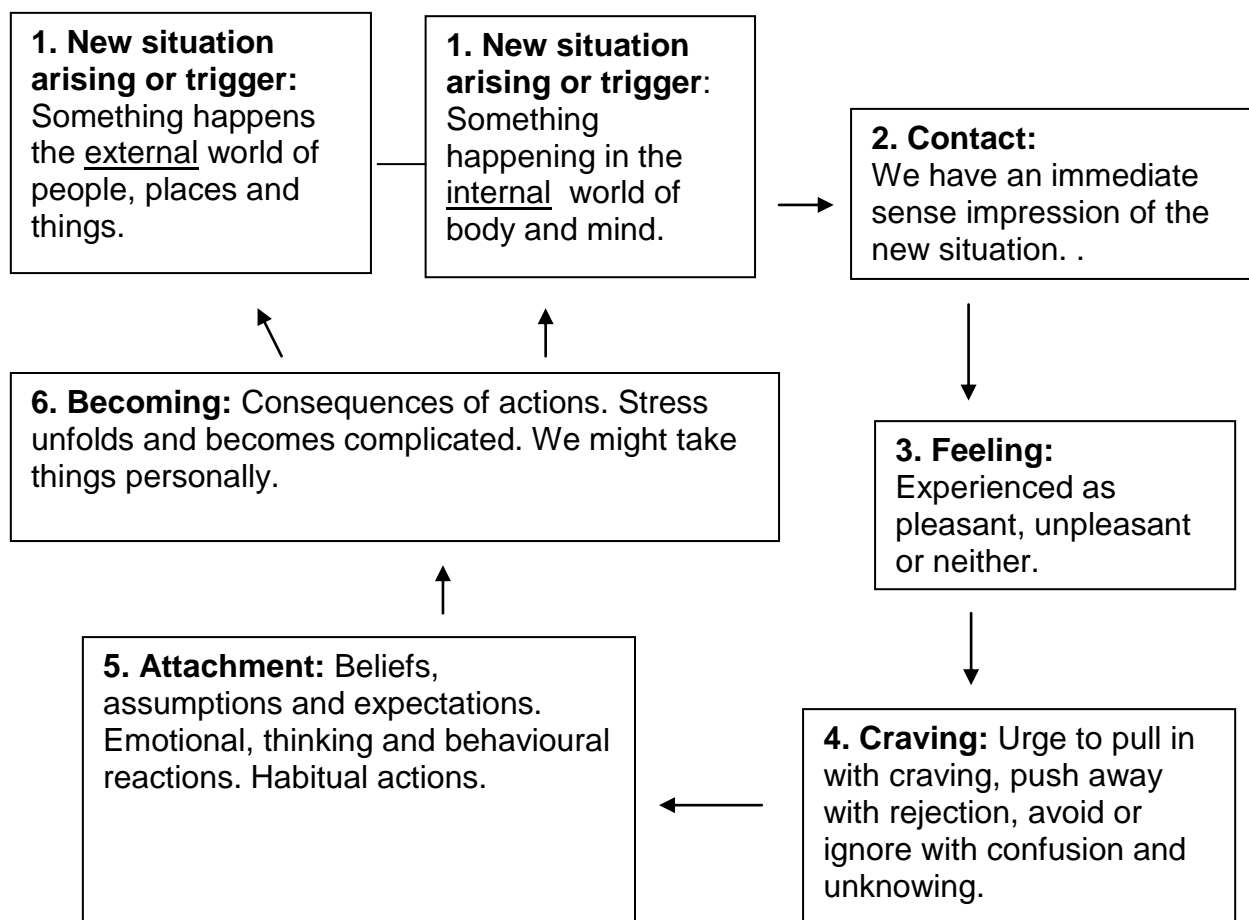


Other times the cycles may they may involve and include the external world of people, places and things. People, events or situations around us may be triggers for reactions within us. Or, our own reactions may affect the people and the world around us. Sometimes, the patterns are conscious and we repeat them because they are more comfortable than risking doing something that is unfamiliar or uncertain. Other times the patterns are unconscious and automatic and we repeat them because of addictions, fears or simply not realising what we are doing.

Reactive cyclic patterns can cause us to sink down into the mires and swamps of depression or trigger us to fly off in wired up stress and anxiety.

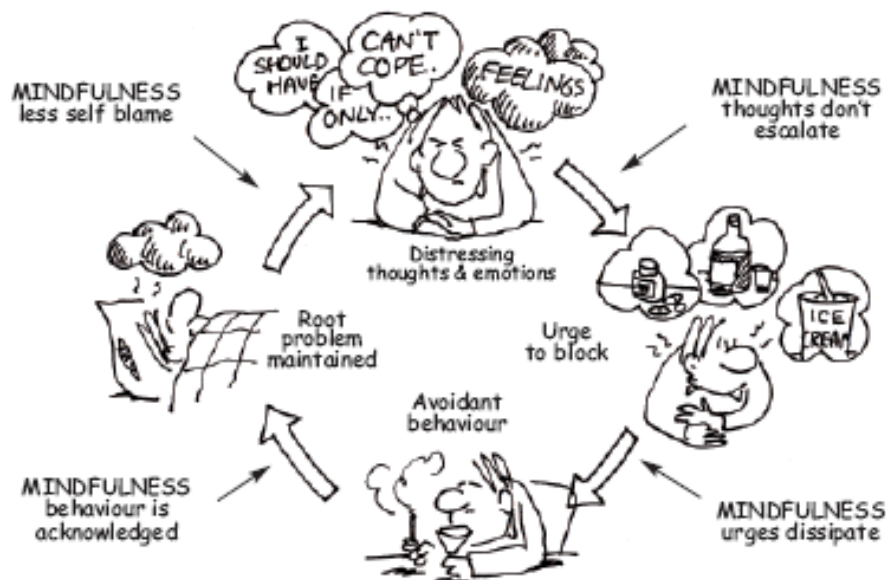
If we can be aware of the reactions as they arise we have a greater opportunity to stop their complication. We may not always be aware of every part of the negative cycles. Nonetheless,

knowing some specific parts can help us to choose how to respond in helpful ways. In this way we no longer get caught up in old reactive patterns.



There are ways to exit the cycles. For example, being aware of negative and destructive urges and choosing to surf them instead of being dumped by them and hurting ourselves and others, is one way to short circuit negative cyclic patterns.

With mindfulness you learn to develop a different way of relating to and coping with sensations, emotions, thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness can help short circuit stressful cyclic reactions.



Reactive cycles can occur over a wide range of time frames. Cyclic and reactive patterns may occur over split seconds and moments or they may take minutes, days, months, years, or be evident the whole of one's lifetime. It is often difficult to break down reactive patterns, especially if they seem to be automatic and sometimes occur as reactive outbursts. Nonetheless, it is possible to use skilful intentions, mindfulness, wisdom and other helpful tendencies to short-circuit these patterns. Being mindful of urges and surfing destructive ones is one way to exit the reactive.

## Urge surfing

Intentions can be impulses for action. Sometimes intentions may be experienced as quick pictures or words in the form of thought. Sometimes an intention may be experienced physically as an impulse. Intentions can be extremely subtle. We may have thousands of intentions daily, many of which are not acted on. An urge is another way of describing an intention. An urge, however, may have more intensity than subtle intentions. An urge may involve strong craving to avoid unpleasant feelings or have pleasant feelings. If an urge leads us to being entangled in reactive and destructive cycles then we can choose the surf the urge.

Urge surfing refers to not acting on urges or impulses that fuel reactive cycles. In most cases it refers to maintaining awareness and balance while experiencing the wave of desire to pull something towards oneself, or the wave of rejection, experienced as an impulse to push something away or even be aggressive. The term surfing is used because it is the same as staying balanced with and either riding an urge wave, or moving through it gracefully in some way or other. Staying balanced or moving skilfully on a wave is usually better than struggling with it or being dumped and drowned by its force. Urge surfing becomes a way for us to not get caught up in unhelpful habits so that they are not reinforced. This may mean that we do something other than the unhelpful habit to avoid reinforcing it. It can also refer to simply doing nothing other than being mindful of how the urge comes and goes.

“Urge surfing” is an expression coined by psychology Professor called Alan Marlatt who uses mindfulness to help people with drug addictions.

### **Urge surfing-practice**

- Try to be mindful during all your waking hours.
- When an urge arises be mindful of it and note it with a suitable word(s).
- It could be noted as “wanting....wanting”, “craving...craving” or “rejection.....rejection”, “urge...urge”, or “pushing away .....aversion” etc., .
- Make a decision about whether or not the urge needs to be acted on.
- If acting on the urge is not necessary, or is not in line with what is wise, try “surfing the urge”. Just like a passing wave let the urge arise and pass on by.
- Like holding onto something firm in the ocean when buffeted by waves, maintain awareness as an urge wave comes towards you, builds in energy, tries to pull you along and then passes you by. Do not follow the urge, and let it pass by.
- If you need to “ride the wave”, use noting to help you not be “dumped by the wave”. Use mindfulness to stay gracefully balanced on the urge wave. Let it come, do not struggle with it and ride it out. Stay balanced and do not be swept away out of control.



## **Activities to do between sessions :**

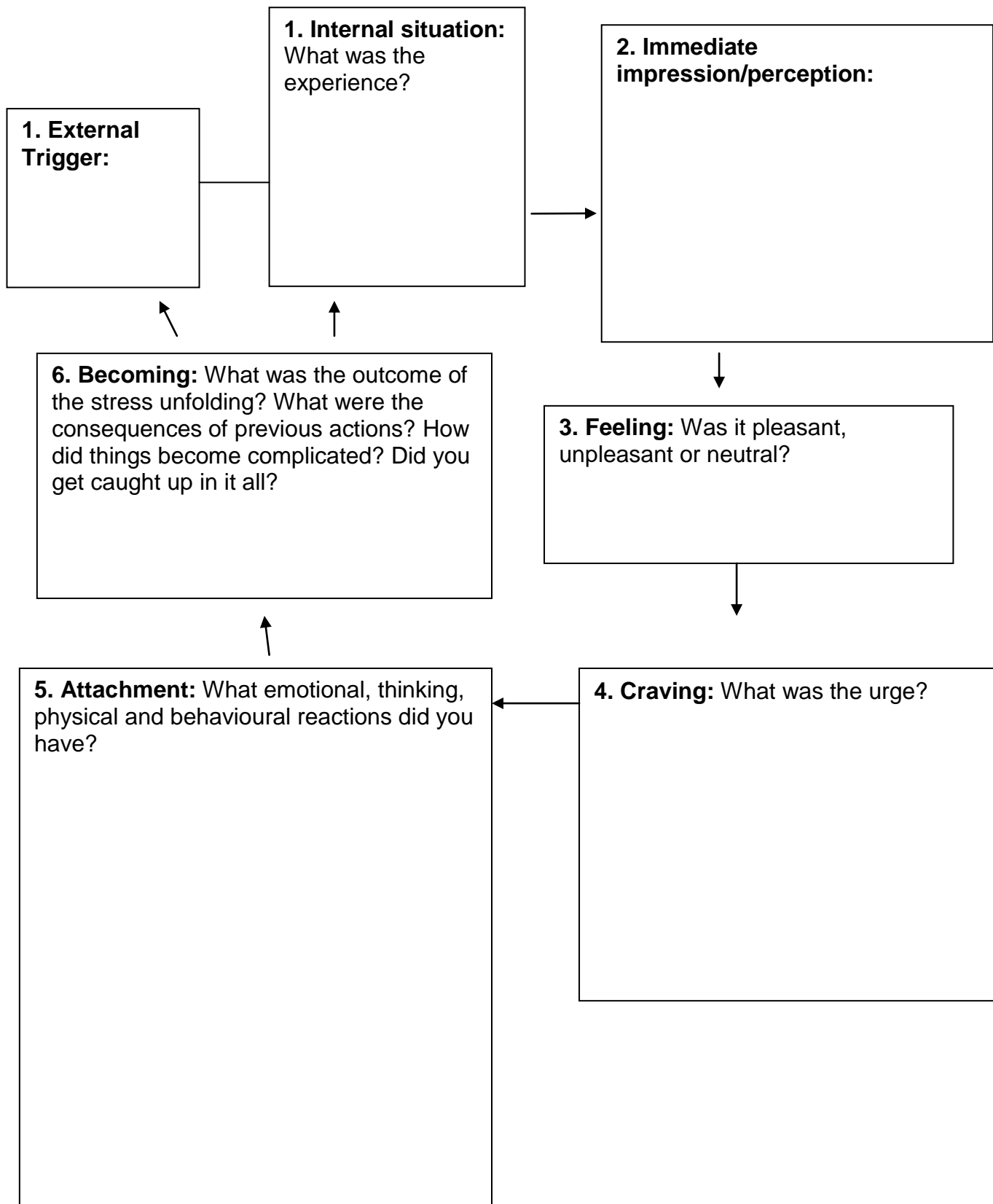
- Throughout your daily life and busy activities, practise moments of just stopping for a few seconds and asking yourself “What is happening right now? .....What are my thoughts?.....What is my heart-mind-state (mood) ?...What is my bodily experience? .....Is this experience pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?”
- Remember to become aware of obstacles to meditation. Be objective about these obstacles and consider being aware of them as opportunities to move beyond them.
- Continue with a routine of putting aside time to engage in formal meditation practice. This can be either mindfulness of breath, body scan, tranquilizing the body with the breath or mindful walking. As secondary objects come to the fore, utilise the four domains of mindfulness as required. For example, combine other practices such as mindfulness of sound or mindfulness of thoughts, if and when these may be useful or necessary.
- Continue to be mindful of actions in daily life, such as sweeping the floor or brushing one’s teeth and note accordingly.
- Remember to try to do one thing at a time and focus attention on that thing. If the situation requires you to multi-task, be aware that you are “multi-tasking” and be 100% present with that experience. Do that which is necessary and do it in the best way you can.
- Notice reactive cyclic emotional thinking and behaving patterns. Try to be aware of the different components of the reactive cycles especially the urge to either avoid or approach. If you feel that it may help your awareness, complete the “Stress reactions cycle breakdown exercise” and the “Alternative response possibilities to stress reaction cycles” forms at the end of this chapter.

## Urge diary

What was the urge? What did you want to do or avoid? (be specific)	How did you know the urge was present? What were its features? How was it noticeable? Were there any thoughts and emotions just prior to it? If so what were they?	Did you follow the urge or did you restrain? How did you manage, manoeuvre or surf this urge? Did it change? If so how? What happened?
e.g., the urge to go to the bottle shop and buy, and drink a bottle of Bourbon. I wanted to avoid the feeling of loneliness.	e.g., I was feeling down and thinking about my relationship break-up. I kept thinking about how I needed some relief immediately and that bourbon would do the job. I kept justifying how I wasn't ready to stop using alcohol just at this moment and I would do it another time.	e.g., I reminded myself of my resolve and I noted "wanting" then "sadness" then "wanting ... wanting" again. I hung in there with my feelings and used the noting to help me "hang in there". I eventually, went swimming and away from any temptations and my painful feelings passed. I felt good about myself because it felt like I was making progress towards my goals.

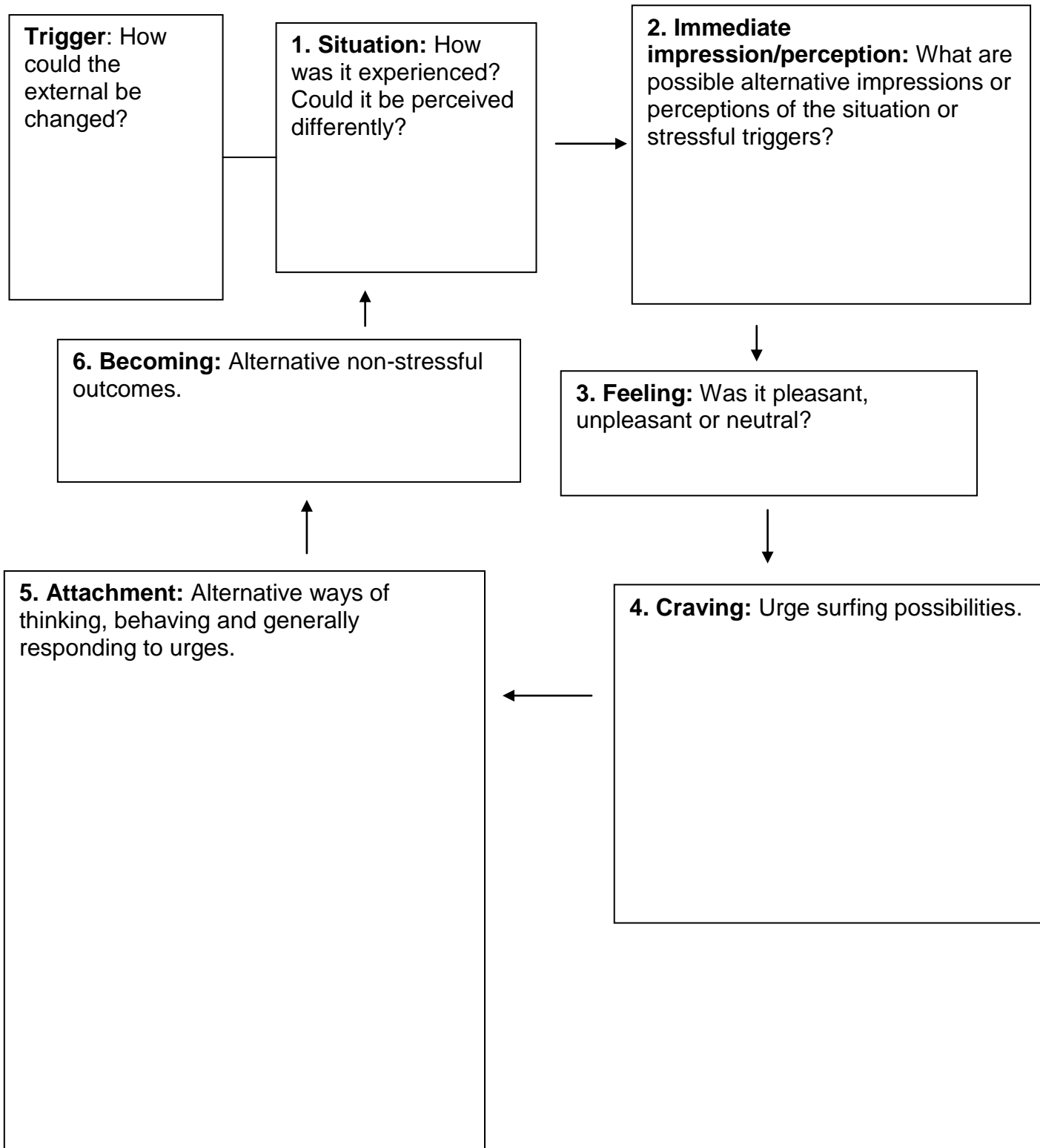
## Stress reactions cycle breakdown exercise

Consider a stressful situation and break down the chain reaction that led to the stressful situation. Try to be aware, as best you can, of every component in the reactive cycle.



## Alternative response possibilities to stress reaction cycles

Consider the reactive stress cycle on the previous page and then think and write down exit possibilities or alternative responses to automatic reactions driven by clinging, craving and unknowing.



## SESSION SEVEN: CARING FOR SELF, CARING FOR ALL BEINGS

In this session we will discuss what it means to care for oneself. Another way to say this is how to love oneself. When we are able to love ourselves we also able to love other beings and love can be healing all around. There are ways to cultivate kindness and care and these ways will be discussed.

### Love



Love is a word that most people use, but its meaning varies. Some people see that love is characterised by non-attachment or letting go and it consists of: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. When we start to find mental and emotional balance these qualities of mind can emerge as natural ways of being and relating. These states often arise spontaneously as we interact with other beings and the world around us. These states can also be consciously cultivated as a Calm meditation practice.

Loving-kindness can resolve both inner and outer conflict. It can heal emotional pain and also resolve conflicts we may experience with other beings. Being able to care for yourself is an essential beginning to care for your relationships with other beings. Caring for your self starts with intentions based on kindness and is actualised by actions. It is important to cultivate

intentions of kindness and care, know the types of actions that are indications of care and kindness and then DO them. Much of the following is about cultivating intentions or thoughts of kindness and care as a meditation practice. It is important however, that these thoughts are followed up by actions. It is extremely important to be kind to other beings. Remember however, that sometimes this kindness means that you need to be firm and assertive about your own needs. Kindness ultimately starts at home, with you. So it is very important that you do the things that you need to do in order to maintain physical, emotional and mental balance and health.

## **Sublime relationships**

Relating with other people can at times be very complicated. Further to this, resolving difficult and conflicting relationships cannot be minimised to simplistic solutions. Nonetheless, inclining towards personal relationships characterised by presence, positive regard and empathy are likely to have positive outcomes. Being able to let go of hatred and resentment, being compassionate, having joy at others successes and being unshaken by the changing vicissitudes of life are helpful ways to relate to others. Relating to oneself and others from a stance of the four sublime states is an unavoidable progression of mindfulness practice.

The four sublime states have near and far enemies. Far enemies are those states of mind that are distinctly opposite to non-possessive love, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. Near enemies are those tendencies that may, on a superficial level, resemble or appear like these qualities but are, in fact, distorted forms.

## **The four sublime states and their near and far enemies**

Non-possessive love or loving kindness is characterised by warm friendliness and it is the opposite to all forms of bitter resentment, aggression, hate and ill will. The near enemies of this type of love are conditional and dependent attachment, and include possessive adoration or subservience.

Compassion is a resonance of heart with others' suffering. It is the wish for oneself and others to be free from suffering. Compassion is opposite to sadism, masochism, vengefulness and cruelty. Some of the near enemies of compassion include superficial, sentimental and unnecessary rescuing, and patronising pity. Another near enemy of compassion is reactive rejection and condemnation of emotional pain.

Sympathetic joy is happiness with, and appreciation and celebration of others' successes and virtues. At another level sympathetic joy is a "joy that is filled with peace and contentment" (Thich Nhat Hahn, 1999, p.174). Sympathetic or empathetic joy is opposite to competitiveness, envy and jealousy. The near enemies of sympathetic joy include: superficial over enthusiasm and reckless celebration.

Equanimity is an uplifted sense of being centred, stable, emotionally balanced and unshaken in the midst of the eight worldly winds such as flattery or threats. Its opposites include being emotionally over reactive to changing life events, feeling responsible for other peoples' actions, taking things personally, and having poor relationship boundaries. Its near enemies include disinterested indifference, emotional dissociation or flatness and distant impartiality.

## **Cultivating the four sublime qualities**

There are many ways to cultivate and nurture the four sublime states, and in some traditions there are specific instructions. Specific instructions usually recommend the recitation of phrases, the use of visualisation or focusing on physical sensations, and ultimately, bring attention to and focusing on these positive mind states in order to sustain their outflow.

Other ways to generate these qualities are by increasing the probability of them arising spontaneously. For example, being in circumstances that are naturally beautiful or awe-inspiring can awaken loving kindness. Working with, and helping those who are suffering, can also naturally awaken compassion. Avoiding the company of the unwise, rude, abusive, and unkind, and keeping company with those who are wise, kind, supportive, compassionate and joyous, can naturally resonate with, and awaken these helpful qualities within oneself.

As well as ways of being in the world and relating to others, the four limitless qualities can be cultivated as the objects of Calm meditation practices. Generally a practitioner uses whatever strategy is found to be helpful to awaken a particular quality. When it has arisen, attention is drawn to that state and it is nurtured by sustained attention, or by remembering to bring attention back to its expression. Grief, worry and concern about other things are put aside and one inclines towards being absorbed with the quality. The meditation is practised in a very relaxed and non-grasping manner and it is never forced.

## **Risks with attempting to cultivate the sublime states**

Sometimes, despite our best intentions, these four qualities are simply not present. Instead our minds are filled with resentments, frustrations, agitation, jealousy, vengefulness, and so on. At these times it is very important not to make matters worse with self-condemnation. At these times it is helpful to see these tendencies as teachers or as temporary guests that will not stay. At these times it helps to be willing to accept and embrace the lessons we are learning and utilise all the strategies that we know that will help our progress along the path to freedom.

Cultivating one or more of the four sublime states is often utilised enthusiastically and successfully by people finding balance with stress, anxiety and depression. At times, however, self-dislike and other destructive tendencies are so ingrained that attempts to purposefully cultivate these qualities backfire. Unfortunately, these unsuccessful attempts become yet another opportunity for the obstacles and other destructive habits to arise, resulting in comparison with others, and belief in self-devaluing thoughts such as: “I am not good enough.”; “I must be really be a failure because I only have bad feelings for others.”; “There is no way that I could possibly feel good in any way.”, and so on.

If purposeful attempts to generate these states are not successful, it is extremely important to practise mindfulness and attempt to maintain an attitude of acceptance and gentle kindness with oneself. It is also helpful to remember that awakening these states of mind cannot be forced, and that they emerge in due time.



## Using recitation to cultivate the four sublime states

Make yourself comfortable, and have the resolve that, for an allocated period of time, you will aim to develop one, or all four of the qualities. Some of the following phrases are traditional phrases used with Buddhist meditation practices. Some of the phrases are adapted. You can add words or phrases that may have personal or special meaning for you. Say the phrases to yourself, and concentrate on the words and their meaning.

### Loving Kindness

*May I be free from enmity and safe from inner or outer harm*

*May I be happy and peaceful*

*May I be healthy and strong in body and mind*

*May I be able to protect my happiness and care for myself joyfully*

Think of someone else or a group of other beings and say the same phrases replacing “I “ with “you”. Then radiate loving kindness in all directions and replace “I “ with “all beings”.

*May I be free from the burden of ill-will and hatred*

*May my heart be filled with loving kindness for myself and all beings*

### Compassion

*May I be free from suffering*

*May I be free from stress*

*May I be free from worry and fear.....*

It is possible to replace “worry and fear” with particular tendencies or habits that cause oneself to suffer. It is important, however, to focus or dwell on the quality of “freedom”, and not the tendencies that one would like to be free from.

Later, or if it is more suitable, replace “I” with “you” and finally “all beings”

*May my heart be filled with compassion for myself and all beings*

### Sympathetic Joy

*May I have joy at others’ successes.*

*May I celebrate in others’ achievements.*

*May I (or they) never cease from enjoying happiness and freedom.*

### Equanimity

*I am the owner of my actions;*

*Heir to my actions;*

*Born of my actions;*

*Related to my actions;*

*Abide supported by my actions;  
Whatever actions I shall do, of those actions I shall be the heir.*

*All beings are the owners of their actions;  
Heirs to their actions;  
Born of their actions;  
Related to their actions;  
Abide supported by their actions;  
Whatever actions they shall do, of those actions they shall be the heirs.*

*Other beings' joys and sorrows are related to their actions and do not depend on my wishes.  
May I openly accept things as they are.  
Things are just the way they are.  
May I find peace and equanimity.  
May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by praise or blame, loss or gain, pleasure or pain, fame or obscurity.*

## **Loving kindness**

Loving-kindness refers to heart felt care, friendliness, concern or kindness for oneself and other beings. It is not sentimental good will, or sensual personal love. It is not the type of love related to clinging and neediness. Rather, it is the cultivation of unconditional care, good will and warm friendliness. The unconditional nature of loving-kindness has been compared to a mother's love for her child. Loving-kindness is an acknowledgement of the interconnection of all living things. Loving-kindness has the power to melt feelings of separateness or divisions, both within ourselves and toward the world around us. Rather than being cynical, judgmental and finding fault with people and things, loving-kindness helps us to see the positive. Loving-kindness especially helps us to see the good and wholesome in people especially ourselves.

## **Letting go of ill-will**

Mindfulness is generally directed at developing insight into the nature of mind and body. The more we practice the more we understand ourselves. The attitudes that support mindfulness are those of non-attachment, acceptance, non-judgment, sensitivity, openness, tolerance and peacefulness. Mindfulness helps us to let go of those emotions that lead to suffering and cultivate those that lead to a stress free life.

Anger is sometimes a natural response to injustice, being let down or being blocked at doing something that we feel is important to do. Emotions have a function and one function of anger can be to rouse the energy and motivation that is needed to change something. Clinging to anger when it is not needed can, however, become problematic. When we cling to anger it can shift to ruminative resentment and bitterness. Further to this, it can change to aggression and even violence.

Loving kindness results from letting go of hatred in all its variant forms. If it arises during formal mindfulness meditation practice, it can be noted and acknowledged as such. Often meditation practitioners consciously cultivate loving-kindness because, as a sublime state, being in love is an extremely pleasant and wholesome place to be.

Loving-kindness can promote health, beauty, restful sleep, the ability to fall asleep easily, pleasant dreams, peacefulness, concentration, interpersonal harmony and can greatly undermine the meditation obstacle of ill will.

## **Practicing loving kindness meditation**

When loving-kindness is practised as a meditation object, practitioners utilize whatever seems to work best to generate and cultivate feelings of care and kindness for themselves and others. As love is the opposite of fear and hatred, practitioners will often initially reflect on the suffering associated with hatred and ill will, and resolve to let go of this affliction. Traditionally, another practice that comes before formal loving kindness meditation is, in ones mind, extending and requesting forgiveness for intentionally harmful actions. Forgiveness is often a difficult idea to accept, especially when people may have been cruel and abusive. Hayes et al (1999, p.257) described the usefulness and healing force of forgiveness by referring to its Latin roots:

“Worse, it may appear to be equivalent to emotional avoidance: excusing, denying, or forgetting old angers and hurts. But the word *forgive* itself suggests a more positive way to approach this difficult topic: we can take it to mean, “give that which came before” – literally, *fore-giving*. It means repairing what was lost. *Gift* comes from the Latin *gratis*, or free. In that sense, fore giving is not earned it is free. “

To forgive is not to condone or excuse the wrong doer but a gift of being able to let go of the hurt of being harmed from the person who suffered.

Extending forgiveness, first is not an essential component of formal loving kindness practice but it helps. Traditionally, loving-kindness is firstly directed towards oneself, and then extended it to other beings. When depressed, however, low self worth and self-hatred is common, and it is difficult to feel ok about directing love to oneself. If this is the case, practitioners may begin by cultivating loving-kindness to other people and, when that is possible, eventually direct it to themselves. You can use visualizations, imagination, the repetition of phrases, and/or focusing on physical sensations in the body (usually around the heart or chest area).

It may be helpful to remember a time you have felt happy and fill your heart-mind with that memory. As the mind tunes into happy memories, happy states of heart mind and correlating physical sensations may arise.

When these feelings arise you can label them with notes such as “peace” “joy” “happiness” or other terms that may seem appropriate and let the feelings grow. When the feelings are established, you can let the memory go and keep the mind state going by engaging with it.

If you can't remember a happy time, you can substitute memories of being kind to someone, or of someone being kind to you. In a similar manner to the one described above the feeling can be generated, supported and maintained with notes such as “kindness” “love” “friendliness” etc.,

When you practice loving-kindness meditation, it is important to be as comfortable as possible. So, if discomfort arises, simply shift your posture as needed.

Loving-kindness practice has its own natural unfolding and timing. Loving-kindness is often used as an adjunct to mindfulness, but if you feel it does not work for you, let it go. Letting go of loving-kindness practice is particularly important if, instead of radiating loving kindness, you begin to think about other people in a negative way or radiate ill will.

If you find that, when you think of other people, you feel distressed, do not attempt to generate loving-kindness for other people and just remain generating loving-kindness to yourself. Over time you may find friendliness for others arises slowly and naturally. If you can practise loving-kindness for yourself and some others, but find that the thought of some particular people tends to generate feelings of irritability, distress or ill will, do not try to generate loving-kindness to those people. Instead, cultivate loving-kindness towards yourself and those people you like. Slowly and with practice you may find that you can eventually develop a feeling of friendliness, even for those people with who there may be difficulty or conflict. If you cannot cultivate any feelings of loving-kindness towards yourself, think of someone who, at some time in your life, has been kind to you and imagine they are radiating loving-kindness to you.

If it seems that you cannot generate loving-kindness in any way, just remain mindful and do not judge yourself in a negative manner. If you find the practice of loving-kindness distressing in any way, abandon it and return to the practice of mindfulness as instructed.

## **Loving kindness meditation**

- Make yourself very comfortable and relaxed.
- Gently become aware of the sensations around your chest area. As you focus, allow the sensations to be as they are, with an attitude of acceptance.
- You can repeat traditional phrases to yourself or use phrases that have more personal meaning to you.
- Sometimes you can awaken loving kindness by remembering or imagining happy events or acts of kindness, then focusing on your heart's response to these events.
- Sometimes just thinking of a special person such as a compassionate friend or teacher or a family member or an awe-inspiring place, is enough to awaken the quality of loving-kindness.
- Remember that loving-kindness is potentially within the hearts of all beings including your self.
- Sometimes, just being gently present and aware of the physical sensations around the area of your emotional heart is enough to connect with loving-kindness.
- As you say the phrases, it is important to feel meaning behind the words. As you say the phrases, begin radiating feelings of tenderness and warmth to every cell of your body, and throughout your mind, allowing and accepting all aspects of yourself.

*May I be happy...May I be peaceful...May I be free from fear...May I be free from anxiety...May I be free from troubles of mind and body...May I be able to protect my own happiness...May I be free.*

- When you feel it is appropriate, bring the image or memory of someone for whom you have utmost respect, or of someone who has treated you very kindly, to mind. Holding that image or thought in your consciousness, radiate loving-kindness to that person.

*May you be happy...May you be peaceful...May you be free from all suffering...etc.*

- When you feel it is appropriate, bring to mind someone who is a good friend or someone (such as a child) for whom you have a strong sense of care, and radiate to and fill that person with loving-kindness.

*May you be happy...May you be free from anxiety ...*

- When you feel it appropriate, bring a person with whom you have a sense of neutrality to mind.

*May you be happy... peaceful...etc.*

Another approach you may use is to radiate loving-kindness in a concentric or directional manner. Firstly, radiate loving-kindness to yourself as above, then, allow it to spread beyond your own body to those people and beings around you (such as in the room or building you may be in). As you imagine spreading loving-kindness, you may feel the loving-kindness extending beyond your own being to those around you. At the same time you may visualise them happy, peaceful, etc...as you say: *May all beings in this room be happy...be peaceful...be free from ill will and suffering.*

Gradually you can extend loving-kindness to all beings in the town, state, nation and world or all beings above, to the sides, all being below and behind, as you say to yourself: *May all beings be happy, May all beings be free from hatred, May all beings be at peace, May all beings be free etc.,*

At the end of the meditation bring attention back to yourself and remember that loving kindness can be accessed when and as you need.

(When and only when you feel strong with loving kindness you can bring to mind someone with whom you may be having some difficulty or conflict, and radiate loving-kindness to them. *May you be happy...May you be free from all suffering...etc).*

What are some thoughts about my self which may indicate self kindness and care?

What are some specific things that I can do that will demonstrate self care?

What are some ways that I will meet my needs to maintain mental, emotional and physical health and balance?

How could I speak to myself in a way that may indicate self love and care?

How could I speak and act towards others that may indicate qualities of loving kindness to my self and others? (Note that this could include being assertive about rights and needs).



**support tree:  
people, places and  
things that help you  
care for your self**



## **Activities to do between sessions**

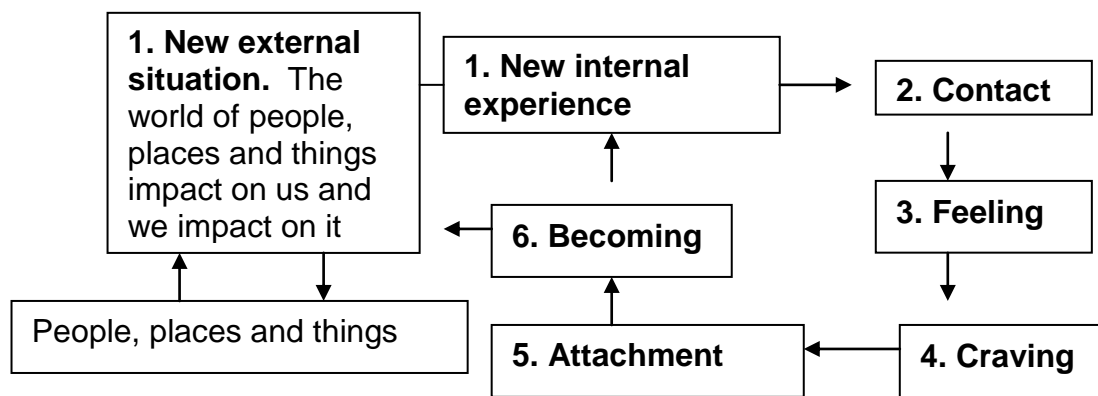
- Look back over points for “Activities to do between sessions ” made in previous sessions. Choose those points that seem useful and integrate them into your daily routine.
- Purposely practise periods of loving-kindness. If it seems to arise, stay with it and cultivate this experience for 5-10 minutes or longer. If it does not seem to arise, abandon the intention and practice a formal mindfulness activity.
- Try listening to one or both of the “loving kindness” tracks if this is helpful.
- Endeavour to make mindfulness and loving kindness a way of living in the world.
- Ensure that you remember to be kind to your self by giving your self all the things you need to maintain psychological balance.
- Follow through with actions of body mind and speech that may indicate you are caring for yourself.

## SESSION EIGHT: PROGRESS AND RELAPSE PREVENTION. EQUANIMITY: FINDING THE STILL POINT IN THE EYE OF THE STORM

Like the last session this session will address relationships and how to cultivate loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity in relationships with both ourselves and others. There will however, be an emphasis on equanimity. Then there will be practice in a guided meditation based on equanimity or compassion. As this session is the final session for this course, it is important that issues about ongoing practice are also addressed. Therefore, another aim of this session is to discuss the importance of continuing practice. During this session we will consider how to make the practice of everything that has been learned into an ongoing process to work with stress, anxiety and depression. During this session we will also discuss relapse prevention and the meaning of progress

### Relationships

Mindfulness includes being aware of the relationship between actions and consequences. Further to relationships within ourselves, mindfulness also involves our relationships to the outside world of people, places and things. The reactive cycle explained in an earlier session can be considered with our relationship to the outside world.



When the reactive cycle of becoming includes others, it involves not only our own internal reactions or responses but also complex interactions with other peoples' responses or reactive cycles and tendencies. People, places and things are external events that can initiate internal

chain reactions. Other people, by the way they relate to us can “press our buttons” both in helpful and unhelpful ways. We perceive the actions of others dependent on our mental filters and this leads on to a sequence of responses or reactions. A harsh word or a frown from someone can initiate a harmful reactive emotional spiral. Similarly a warm smile and a kind word from another could lead to a chain of events which results in emotional wellbeing.

---



Carl Rogers's (1961) (a famous psychologist) said that healing and helpful relationships need three qualities. These qualities are 1/genuineness, congruence, or authenticity, 2/unconditional positive regard and 3/accurate empathic understanding, or the ability to see the world from another person's perspective. Rogers also emphasised the importance of listening. Listening to oneself is like to mindfulness. Listening to another refers to putting aside negative judgements and truly hearing that which another person expresses. Being truly heard is similar to being compassionate and empathetic. Listening, both to our self and others with genuineness, positive regard and empathy can be powerfully healing. When we are able to be mindful of, and manage our own mental, emotional and behavioural reactions we are in a much better position to be able to perceive clearly and be sensitive to other peoples' inner experience. With empathy we are more likely to relate to other people in harmonious and stress reducing ways.

Being able to let go of hatred and resentment, being compassionate, having joy at others successes and being unshaken by the changing vicissitudes of life are helpful ways to relate to others.

The four sublime states of mind are inherent potentials of all human beings. As mentioned elsewhere four sublime states are: loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. When stress and its causes diminish, these qualities of mind can emerge as natural ways of being and relating. These states often arise spontaneously as we interact with other beings and the world around us. These states can also be consciously cultivated as a Calm meditation practice. Equanimity, in particular however, is a result of mindfulness and the cultivation of wisdom. Equanimity often arises as we understand the nature of change and how everything is connected in some way or other.

## Equanimity clarified



Equanimity is an uplifted sense of being centred, stable, emotionally balanced and unshaken in the midst of the eight worldly winds: praise and blame, loss and gain, pain and pleasure and fame and disrepute or social insignificance. Its opposites include being emotionally over reactive to changing life events, feeling responsible for other peoples' actions, taking things personally, and having poor relationship boundaries. Its near enemies include disinterested indifference, emotional dissociation or flatness and distant impartiality.

In previous sessions we learnt that beliefs influence the way we see the world, the self and the future. This in turn impacts the way we cope with stressful events including difficult interpersonal interactions. When we can't cope, we may slip into automatic thought processes with negative content. When depressed or anxious, our mental filter may be distorted, which influences the way events and interactions are appraised and interpreted.

Equanimity is an aspect of wisdom, which includes understanding that actions have effects. With equanimity, one can realise that situations are often the result of previous choices and that each and every different individual must be responsible for their own actions. How each and every individual experiences the results of their actions is largely dependent on their intentions. Actions driven by kind intent, for example, are likely to have more wholesome outcomes than actions based on cruel intent. Equanimity also helps one to cope with and manage difficult interpersonal interactions because it is also the ability to see all things equally and be able to see both sides to a conflict.

With wisdom, we also understand that the way events are interpreted is dependent on each and every different individual's perception, world-view and beliefs. An innocent action may be praised by some and criticised negatively by others. It is simply unhelpful to believe that everyone should like us, and that all actions with positive intent will be perceived in a positive manner. Throughout history, even courageous and blameless saints have had their critics and, further to this, been harmed because of others' negative misjudgements.

Equanimity provides the emotional stability to not be affected unnecessarily or blown around by "the eight worldly winds". Equanimity can counter distorted thinking patterns, negative self-concepts and taking personally negative life events. Ultimately equanimity results in peacefulness of mind and a deep acceptance of our selves.

It is difficult to simply practise equanimity meditation because equanimity arises from the maturity of insight. Nonetheless, it is possible to think about it and also aspire to be centred and unshaken as a way to develop equanimity.

For example, if we can reflect on how everything changes and how everything is in some way or other connected it can have an emotionally balancing effect. In addition, reminding ourselves about the cause and effect nature of our actions is also helpful to engender equanimity.

## Thoughts on equanimity

I am what I have done  
I will be what I do

I am the owner of my action  
Heir to my action  
Born of my action  
Related to my action  
Abide supported by my action  
What ever action I shall do, of that action I shall be the heir

Other beings are the owners of their actions  
Heirs to their actions  
Related to their actions  
Abide supported by their actions  
What ever actions they shall do, they will inherit the results.

## Phrases to use with equanimity meditation

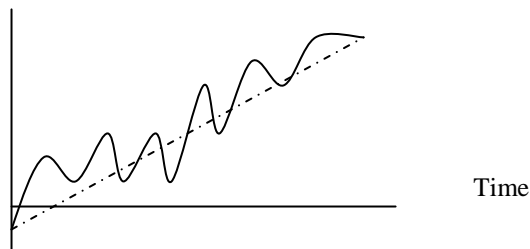
*May I openly accept things as they are.*  
*Other beings' joys and sorrows are related to their actions and do not depend on my wishes.*  
*Things are just the way they are.*  
*May I be at peace and accepting with the way things are.*  
*May the peace and stillness of my heart be unshaken by the inevitable ups and downs of life.*  
*My actions are my only true belongings.*  
*My actions are the ground on which I stand.*  
*May I have the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.....*  
*May the peace of acceptance fill my being .....*  
*May I be peaceful.....*  
*May I bring the spacious stillness of my heart to all things....*  
*May I be at peace connecting with the spacious stillness of my heart.....*

## Progress

Mindfulness is a means to an end where the end is the means. In other words, the aim of “being here now” is to “be here now”. Mindfulness and the path of practice are best considered as a life long affair where the valued direction is towards peace, contentment and freedom from being lost in the highs and lows and but being unshaken by life’s ups and downs. “Progress” along this path is difficult to judge. If we monitor ourselves over short periods of time it may seem that there has been little progress or that we are sliding backwards because we can’t see

much change in old patterns. If, however, we can step aside and see the big picture, we may be able to see a more realistic perspective and realise that significant change usually takes time. It is helpful to regard mindfulness and related practices as a process similar to travelling up a steep mountain or going along a path in difficult terrain. It has ups and downs and some very challenging obstacles but these obstacles are not impassable.

The road of progress is not always a smooth track.



Recovery takes time, and if you wish to monitor progress, it may be better to assess progress in terms of change over months and years rather than days or weeks. Progress along a path of progress may mean finding a bit more balance with the inevitable ups and downs that life and this disorder presents. It would simply be unrealistic to imagine that life flows along without ups and downs. It is possible however, to use all the strategies that we have discussed in the course so that one is less hijacked by the extreme highs and dragged away by the extreme lows. Mindfulness, CBT, and the wise use of medication can help to reduce the depth of the trough and the height of the peaks so that there is a tolerable balance and a sense of peacefulness with life. Equanimity in the midst of the highs and lows, and acting wisely so that we reduce any tendency to cause harm or distress for ourselves and others could be considered as progress along the path of managing stress, anxiety and depression.

## Relapse prevention

A lapse is like a slip or a step back on the path of our progress. Lapses are to be expected and are a realistic part of our progress along our healing pathways. Lapses can provide us with the opportunity to learn how we can eventually let go of unhelpful patterns or tendencies. A relapse, on the other hand, is when we fall back into old unhelpful patterns of thinking, emotions

and behaviour. If you feel that you falling back into a previous state, or negative symptoms that you felt you had learnt to manage begin to reappear, this could be called a “relapse”. If you feel that a relapse is occurring, it is important not to feel despair, but implement the action plans you created and apply all the strategies learnt in this course. It is a matter of starting again. Starting again should not be considered a failure. Starting again is a reality of the path and a reflection of “beginner’s mind”.

Relapse prevention is best managed by considering how you can integrate the skills and recommendations learnt from this course into your daily life, in an ongoing and consistent manner. If possible, choose a time once a day when you can put aside an allotted period to commit to a formal exercise such as sitting quietly with awareness or mindful walking or moving postures (such as yoga). After particularly stressful days, be kind to yourself and devote special time to recovery and recuperation. If you can’t find time to devote to formal practice, remember to be present with the experience of life as it unfolds. In other words, put an emphasis on being mindful with your day-to- day experiences.

Throughout the day, find a few moments to be mindful of simple events such as a few breaths. You could also practise general mindfulness whilst you do physical activities or whilst you communicate with someone. Choose some specific activities that you could use as a “touchstone” to remind yourself to be mindful. Such grounding activities could be, for example, washing up, washing your face, opening doors, brushing your teeth, combing your hair, having a cup of tea, eating a snack, checking the mail, putting the garbage out and so on.

Reading inspiring books and mixing with good (wise and kind) friends is also very helpful. It is helpful to find appropriate books to read on a regular basis. Joining a group of people who may regularly practise and discuss the practice are other helpful activities. It is also helpful to regularly review your bag of tricks or all those things that help you find and maintain your sense of balance.

Remember the information provided in the foreword to these notes stating that if the over abundance of information is overwhelming do not put your self down, or judge your self badly. Remember that everyone is different and progresses through information and exercises at the



pace that is appropriate for them. Know that you can pick out the information that may be useful for you, and put the other information aside for another time, as the time is right for you.

Finally, it is very important to develop a healthy sense of humour about life and to be very kind to your self.

## Ongoing practice

- Continue being mindful throughout your life in as many situations as you can.
- Continue with a regular routine that includes putting aside time to meditate. If it seems appropriate, experiment with saying the phrases related to the four sublime states to your self in a concentrated and sincere manner. These phrases can either start off or finish a formal meditation period.
- As you interact with other people, be attentive to what you are doing, but be particularly mindful of mind states as these arise. Be inclined to allow acceptance, compassion, joy, loving kindness and equanimity to arise towards yourself and other individuals.
- Practise all the skills discussed throughout this course. Be consistent and regular. Keep in contact with experienced practitioners if possible. Find fellow practitioners and practise together or come to follow-up group sessions when and if they are available. Use recordings of guided meditations as you need and when you feel they may be helpful.
- Remember to create and review action plans as circumstances change and while you are relatively balanced.
- As an exercise, write in the bag or tricks diagram on the next page the people, places, things, activities and strategies that help you find and maintain balance. Regularly remind yourself of your bag of tricks.

**Bag of Tricks:**

