

Instructions for mindfulness of emotions

As life can be hard at times, we are all prone to experiencing difficult and painful emotions. Often, our daily events come to influence how we feel. If we have a good day and things tend to go right for us, then we are likely to experience positive and happy emotions. However, if we have had a stressful day where things may not go so smoothly, we are more likely to experience negative, or strong and overwhelming emotions. This is perfectly normal.

Our automatic response is to generally have difficulty with strong emotions that we experience as unpleasant. Naturally, we want to get rid of these feelings, to avoid them, or we struggle to deal with them.

This mindfulness of emotions meditation is useful for you to develop skills to allow your emotions to come and go, without getting caught up and struggling with them.

Through practise you will learn to become accepting of both unpleasant and pleasant emotions, as we learn that all emotions are harmless and fleeting.

This meditation will simply ask you to observe your emotions, to breathe and make some space in the body for your emotions to sit and be, not attempting to change your emotional experience in anyway but rather allowing it to exist.

Mindfulness of emotions exercise

Ensure that you are sitting in a comfortable and upright position. Settle yourself into the space, allowing yourself to let go of any worries or concerns you may have about tasks that need to be completed.

Give yourself the opportunity to sit quietly and relaxed for the next few moments. Gently allow your eyes to close or focus on a spot in front of you.

Become aware of your internal environment. Allow yourself to turn your attention inward. Connect to your current feelings. Notice how you are feeling at this moment.

Are you feeling positive and calm in this moment? Or are you perhaps feeling agitated or sad.

Ensure you take some time to notice and observe how you are currently feeling.

As you connect with your feelings, I encourage you to observe how your emotions make you feel.

There is no need to try to change how you are currently feeling. Simply be aware and accepting of whatever emotions are currently arising for you, in this moment.

After taking some time to pay attention and observe your emotions, I encourage you to pay particular attention to labelling your current emotions. Perhaps you can notice sadness, agitation, worry, anxiety. Take the time to label whatever is arising for you at this time.

Next, take some time to notice the impact this emotion is having on your body. Notice where in your body you experience this emotion. Do you feel it in your shoulders? In your stomach?

Notice if there are any physical sensations attached to your emotion, feelings that you can experience in your body. You may notice unpleasant sensations attached to your emotion. Take some time to notice what you currently feel.

You may feel tingling sensations, you may feel tightness or heaviness. Or perhaps you may feel warmth spreading throughout your body.

Try to avoid judging your emotions, rather simply observe your emotions in a nonjudgmental way, becoming more and more accepting of all emotions.

Be accepting of your emotions, even those that are perhaps unpleasant at this time. I encourage you to allow yourself to connect to any painful or unpleasant emotions.

Try not to avoid these emotions but rather to be more present and aware of these emotions. Mindfully observing and accepting of these emotions.

Simply observe if your mind creates interpretations of any of the emotions it can feel. Notice if you have a preference for one emotion over another. Notice the connection between your emotions and physical sensations in your body. Be curious and accepting of your experience.

Be mindful of your current experience. Begin to recognise that from moment to moment you may experience different emotions, as new emotions begin to arise and others begin to fade away.

Learn about the fleeting nature of your emotions. Notice that you can allow yourself to experience painful or uncomfortable emotions, in a mindful and accepting way. Be aware that emotions are not to be feared.

Shortly we will be finishing our practise. Continue to be mindful in daily life of your emotions. Continue to allow your emotions to exist, to come and to go, just as they have done in this practise. Allow yourself to be non-judgmental and accepting of all of your emotional experiences. If you have had your eyes closed I now invite you to gently open your eyes and to take some of this mindful awareness with you.

In daily life we all have the ability to get consumed by our activities, our many to do lists and tasks, or to engage in mind wandering and worrying.

Mindfulness of sounds is a useful exercise to use throughout the day if you notice that this is happening to you. By simply focusing your attention on the sounds that you can hear in your environment, you can learn to be more mindful, increasing your ability to live in the present moment.