

The Mindful Path



Through Shyness

Workbook

Edited by: *Steve Flowers, MFT*

This workbook and program has been adapted from the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program and workbook created by Jon Kabat-Zinn for the stress Reduction Clinic at the Medical School of the University of Massachusetts in Worcester.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Mindful Path through Shyness Program (MPTS)! By participating in this eight week program as you read your Mindful Path through Shyness book, you can take major steps to free your self from shyness, social anxiety and avoidance. Know that each step you take on this path is a gift of love.

This workbook is designed to support your learning and practice of mindfulness and to help you bring mindfulness into each moment of your life, particularly in interpersonal relationships. In here you will find homework assignments for each week of your program and a variety of different exercises and worksheets to help you along the way. The most important element of this program is the daily formal meditation practices that you are assigned each week. If you would like to record your own audio guidance for each of these practices you may use the instructions in your book, The Mindful Path Through Shyness, or, if you prefer, guided meditation practices are provided for you at a nominal cost at www.mindfullivingprograms.com in the store. Each week there are formal mindfulness practices (which involve doing the guided meditations on the audio files or disc's); informal practices which assist you in integrating mindfulness into the days and moments of your life; reading assignments, and in some weeks, written exercises and worksheets. Home practice work-sheets for each week are designed to help you develop and grow in your meditation practice. You will find a sample of a completed home practice work-sheet for week one. In the last few weeks of the MPTS program and in the months following your program you will have an opportunity to practice interpersonal mindfulness with others at www.mindfullivingprograms.com. Practicing with others in this way could significantly contribute to your healing path. Finally, additional readings in the workbook will help you better understand mindfulness and how to make it the warp and weave of your life.

Please do the daily practices! Like any exercise, these practices can only benefit you on this journey if you create a discipline to do them. If you make this practice a priority in your life it will become a way of life for you. Be patient but persevere.

Remember the important teaching of “puppy training.” You will need to begin again and again and do your best to practice non-judging and non-striving. Even though you may fail many times, don't beat up your puppy mind. It will learn to be present if you treat it with compassion and patience.

Find a time and a place you can do this practice each day. If at all possible, doing these practices at the same time and place will contribute to the persistence of your effort.

You will find that the MPTS program is different than most other approaches to working with shyness. That is because this program is based on mindfulness and experiential learning rather than learned techniques. The intention of this program is to grow in mindfulness and to bring your moment to moment awareness to bear in facing and working through the places and circumstances that scare you. This is a little like bringing light into dark places – give yourself a little time to get your light shining brightly.

WEEK ONE

HOMWORK SESSION #1

Formal Mindfulness Practice:

1. Practice the Body Scan meditation at least 6 days this week.
2. Do 5-10 minutes daily of mindful breathing or mindfulness of hearing practice on your own.
3. Please use the daily practice worksheet to record your daily practice. Simply follow the instructions on the worksheet.

Informal Mindfulness Practice:

1. Tune into your breathing at least 6 times every day, and be present for one or two full cycles of the breath.
2. Before going to sleep at night and just after awakening in the morning, practice Mindfulness of the Body for 5 minutes from chapter 3 in The Mindful Path through Shyness.
3. Eat a meal mindfully this week.

Exercises:

1. Complete the "nine dot exercise" worksheet in the workbook.
2. Practice the Mindful Raisin Exercise in chapter 3 of The Mindful Path through Shyness.

Reading

In The Mindful Path through Shyness, read chapters 1 and 4 (The nature of Shyness and Embracing the Nonverbal World).

This brief piece by Dr. Rachel Naomi Remen is a wonderful exploration of the power and promise of non-judgmental awareness and acceptance.

THOSE WHO DON'T love themselves as they are rarely love life as it is either. Most people have come to prefer certain of life's experiences and deny and reject others, unaware of the value of the hidden things that may come wrapped in plain or even ugly paper. In avoiding all pain and seeking comfort at all cost, we may be left without intimacy or compassion; in rejecting change and risk we often cheat ourselves of the quest; in denying our suffering we may never know our strength or our greatness. Or even that the love we have been given can be trusted.

It is natural, even instinctive to prefer comfort to pain, the familiar to the unknown. But sometimes our instincts are not wise. Life usually offers us far more than our biases and preferences will allow us to have. Beyond comfort lie grace, mystery, and adventure. We may need to let go of our beliefs and ideas about life in order to have life.

The loss of an emotional or spiritual integrity may be at the source of our suffering. In a very paradoxical way, pain may point the way toward a greater wholeness and become a potent force in the healing of this suffering.

A woman with heart disease and chronic angina once told me of the downside of the surgery which had relieved her symptoms. Before this surgery, she had suffered frequent chest pain from her disease. Over the years she had modified her diet, learned to meditate, and had been successful in controlling most of her pain. Yet some of her pain had been resistant to her efforts. Paying very careful attention to this, she had been shocked to notice that she experienced pain when she was about to do or say something that lacked integrity, that really wasn't true to her values. These were usually small things like not telling her husband something that he did not seem to want to hear, or stretching her values a bit in order to go along with others. Times when she allowed who she really was to become invisible. Even more surprising, sometimes she would know this was happening but sometimes the chest pain would come first, and then, examining the circumstances which provoked it, she would realize for the first time that she had been betraying her integrity and know what it was that she really believed. She had learned a great deal about who she was in this way, and though she was physically more comfortable now, she missed her "inner adviser."

This is not actually so surprising. It is known that stress can affect us at the weakest link in our physical makeup. It raises the blood sugar in people who have diabetes, precipitates headaches in those with migraine, and stomach pain in people with ulcers. It causes people with asthma to wheeze and people with arthritis to ache. What is new in this story and so many others that I have heard is that stress may be as much a question of a compromise of values as it is a matter of external time pressure and fear of failure.

Unexplained pain may sometimes direct our attention to something unacknowledged, something we are afraid to know or feel. Then it holds us to our integrity, claiming the attention we withhold. The thing which calls our attention may be a repressed experience or some unexpressed and important part of who we are. Whatever we have denied may stop us and dam the creative flow of our lives. Avoiding pain, we may linger in the vicinity of our wounds, sometimes for many years, gathering the courage to experience them.

Without reclaiming that which we have denied, we cannot know our wholeness or have our healing. As St. Luke wrote in Acts of Apostles 4: 11, the stone rejected by the builders may prove in time to be the cornerstone of the building.

What we believe about ourselves can hold us hostage. Over the years I have come to respect the power of people's beliefs. The thing that has amazed me is that a belief is more than just an

idea-it seems to shift the way in which we actually experience ourselves and our lives. According to the Talmudic teaching, "We do not see things as they are. We see them as we are." A belief is like a pair of sunglasses. When we wear a belief and look at life through it, it is difficult to convince ourselves that what we see is not what is real. With our sunglasses on, life looks green to us. Knowing what is real requires that we remember that we are wearing glasses, and take them off. One of the great moments in life is the moment we recognize we have them on in the first place. Freedom is very close to us then. It is a moment of great power. Sometimes because of our beliefs we may have never seen ourselves or life whole before. No matter. We can recognize life anyway. Our life force may not require us to strengthen it. We often just need to free it where it has gotten trapped in beliefs, attitudes, judgment and shame.

Remen, Rachel Naomi. Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories That Heal. New York: Riverhead Books, 1996.

Love After Love

The time will come, when with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you.
all your life, whom you have ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

Dereck Walcott

Interbeing

If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist if the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper *inter-are*. "Interbeing" is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix "inter-" with the verb "to be," we have a new verb, interbe.

If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. Without sunshine, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow without sunshine. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are. And if we continue to look, we can see the logger who cut the tree and brought it to the mill to be transformed into paper. And we see wheat. We know that the logger cannot exist without his daily bread, and therefore the wheat that became his bread is also in this sheet of paper. The logger's father and mother are in it too. When we look in this way, we see that without all of these things, this sheet of paper cannot exist.

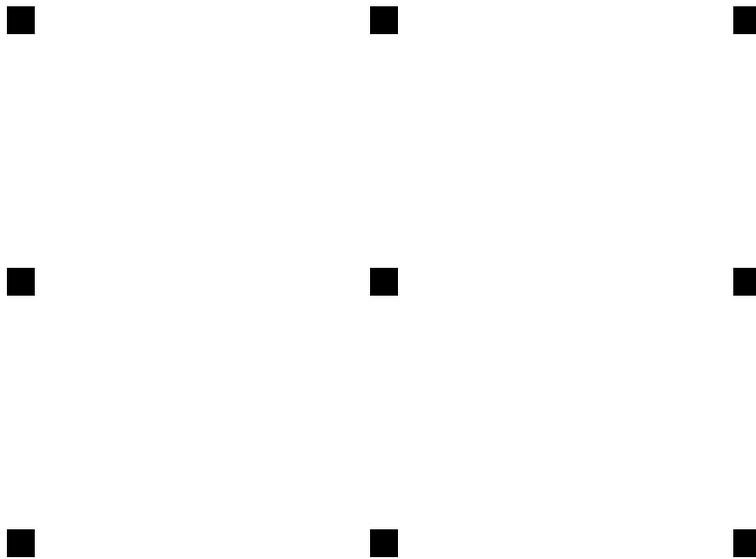
Looking even more deeply, we can see ourselves in this sheet of paper too. This is not difficult to see, because when we look at a sheet of paper, it is part of our perception. Your mind is in here and mine is also. So we can say that everything is in here with this sheet of paper. We cannot point out one thing that is not here-time, space, the earth, the rain, the minerals in the soil, the sunshine, the cloud, the river, the heat. Everything co-exists with this sheet of paper. That is why I think the word inter-be should be in the dictionary. "To be" is to inter-be. We cannot just be ourselves alone. We have to inter-be with every other thing. This sheet of paper is, because everything else is.

Suppose we try to return one of the elements to its source. Suppose we return the sunshine to the sun. Do you think that this sheet of paper will be possible? No, without sunshine nothing can be. And if we return the logger to his mother, then we have no sheet of paper either. The fact is that this sheet of paper is made up only of "non-paper" elements. And if we return these non-paper elements to their sources, then there can be no paper at all. Without non-paper elements, like mind, logger, sunshine and so on, there will be no paper. As thin as this sheet of paper is, it contains everything in the universe in it.

Hanh, Thich Nhat, *Peace is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*. New York: Bantam Books, 1991.

Thomas Merton once said that "The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another."

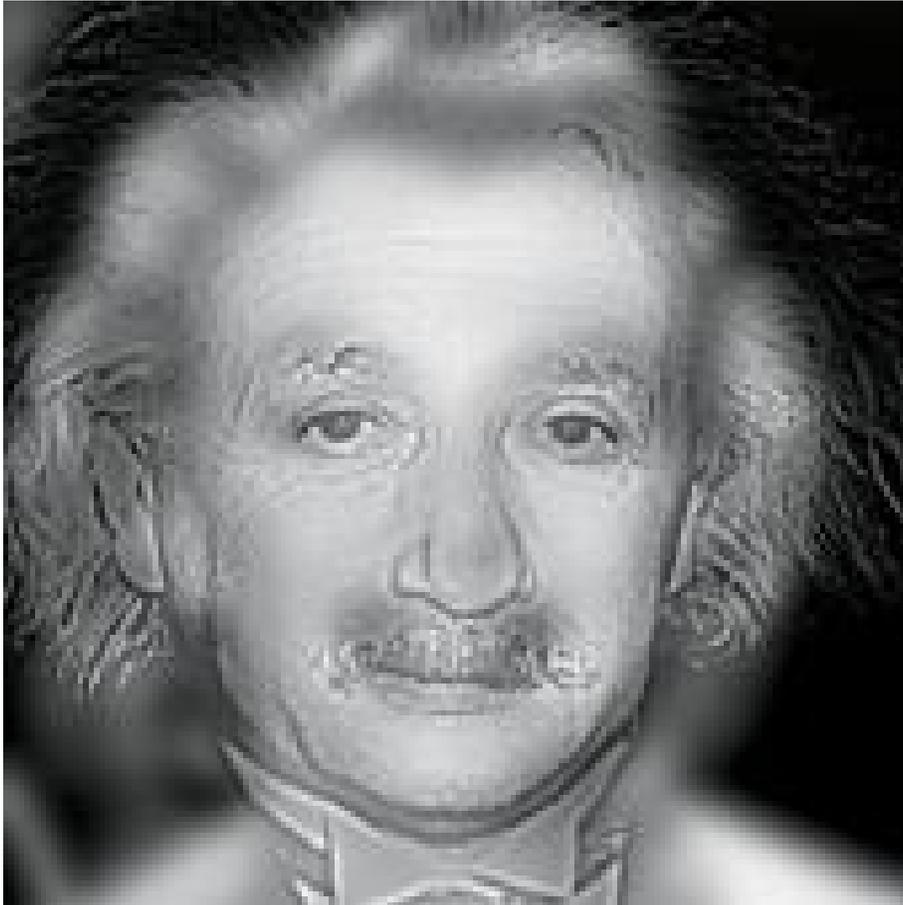
The Nine Dots Exercise



Above is an arrangement of nine dots.

Connect all the dots by making four straight lines without lifting your pencil and without retracing along any line. (The correct answer is at the back of this workbook – see if you can do this on your own before checking it).

WAYS OF PERCIEVING



Please look at this picture up close. Who do you see?
Now, place this picture about eight feet from your eyes.
Now, who do you see?

*The real journey of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes. -- Marcel Proust*



Wild Geese

You do not have to be good.
You do not have to walk on your knees
for a hundred miles through the desert repenting.
You only have to let the soft animal of your body
love what it loves.
Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell you mine.
Meanwhile the world goes on.
Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of the rain
are moving across the landscapes,
over the prairies and the deep trees,
the mountains and the rivers.
Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean blue air,
are heading home again.
Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,
the world offers itself to your imagination,
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting —
over and over announcing your place
in the family of things.

Mary Oliver

WEEK TWO

HOMWORK SESSION #2

Formal Mindfulness Practice:

1. Alternate the Body Scan Meditation and walking meditation (Chapter 4, Mindful Path through Shyness) or use the walking practices provided at end of this workbook) at least six days this week.
2. Do the sitting meditation (mindful breathing) practice on your own 10-15 minutes every day.
3. Please complete the daily practice worksheet each day.

Informal Practice:

1. Tune into your breathing at least 6 times every day, and be present for one or two full cycles of the breath.
2. Choose a "routine" activity usually done on automatic pilot - brushing teeth, showering, washing the dishes, taking out the trash, etc. - and do it mindfully this week.
3. Before going to sleep at night and just after awakening in the morning, practice Mindfulness of the Body for 5 minutes as described in chapter 3 of The Mindful Path Through Shyness.

Exercise:

Complete the Pleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar.

Readings:

In The Mindful Path through Shyness read Chapter 2 (Mindfulness and Healing).

PLEASANT INTERPERSONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Instructions: Be aware of one *pleasant* interpersonal encounter each day *while it is happening*. At a later time record your experience of it on the worksheet below.

	What was the experience? (Please summarize as briefly as possible)	What were the pleasant emotions you noticed <i>during</i> the event?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience? Describe the sensations you felt.	What were the thoughts that you noticed during the event?
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Feeling into the Connections between Us

As you review your Pleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar, please investigate a little about why these events were pleasant, for example, while in the event did you feel a sense of me and them or a sense of we? Did you notice if you were wanting or not wanting something from the people you were with? Can you characterize the kinds of thoughts you were having during the event? There are many different kinds of pleasant thoughts and sometimes it is helpful to label them in some way such as gratitude, or appreciation, or admiration. It may be enough to simply acknowledge “pleasant thoughts” and let them come and go as you return to the breath. Seeing thoughts as just thoughts can be enough to *acknowledge* your mental states and disidentify with them. It can be useful to see how we can create suffering in our lives by pursuing or clinging to pleasant thoughts. Recognize “pleasant thought” – back to the breath.

OBSERVATION

Over repeated observation we begin to build a very powerful continuity of attention to see more precisely what makes up our sense perceptions, what makes up our world, and to be able to dissolve long-held conditioning and concepts. When we start to practice, the moments of awareness are quite far apart; then gradually they get a little closer together, and we are here more frequently.

As we continue to make gentle effort and carefully bring the mind back again and again, we begin to observe what at first seemed solid is a composite of component parts. We begin to see that our whole being and all of our physical and mental universe is made up of moments, of six sense perceptions, sights and sound, smells, tastes, physical sensations, and mental events. It takes practice to note the moments of physical senses such as seeing and hearing so as not to get lost in the story. Even more practice is needed to be able to observe our subtle sensations, moods, feelings, and thoughts. Our habit is either to cut them off and evaluate or to be lost in the plot. This happens particularly as we observe the movement of certain patterns, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and sensations repeating over and over like the top-ten hits of the week. Here it is difficult. There may be fantasies about relationships, about food, thoughts about one's health or some artistic endeavor. They all seem very important. Yet, as a matter of fact, most of the tunes are the same old ones for each of us. In this flow of phenomena there are some patterns that we like and hold on to, and some that we dislike and try to get rid of. "Oh no. Not that tune again. Anything but that." In such cases we even try to use the practice to serve the judging mind. For instance, when something we dislike arises, the observing mind becomes like a baseball bat, beating away the unwanted object. This is not what is meant by observing.

With mindfulness, we are learning to observe in a new way, with balance and a powerful disidentification. We can begin to sense and observe the changing mind, body, and heart the way a meteorologist observes changes in the weather: "It's cloudy, the barometer is high, the temperature is 80 degrees, and the wind is from the southwest"--not "Oh, I hope it doesn't rain today. I wish it were sunny like yesterday. It's too warm, and the humidity is awful." We simply notice what is occurring.

We must learn that an essential characteristic of observing is acceptance. As we practice and watch, we begin to see that the mind can accommodate everything and that there is no need to struggle against ourselves. Thoughts come, feelings come, sensations in the body come--we simply watch, without judgment, without clinging or fear, but rather with a feeling of accommodating warmth and friendship with ourselves.

[Seeking the Heart of Wisdom: the Path of Insight, Meditation, Goldstein & Kornfield]

FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

The practice of mindfulness is like cultivating a garden. A garden flourishes when certain conditions are present. Holding the following 7 qualities in mind, reflecting upon them, cultivating them according to our best understanding--this effort will nourish, support and strengthen our practice.

Keeping these attitudes in mind is part of the training, a way of channeling our energies in the process of healing and growth. Remember too that they are interdependent. Each influences the others; and working on one, enhances them all.

1. Non-judging

2. Patience

3. Beginner's Mind

4. Trust as Self Reliance

5. Non-striving

6. Acknowledgement

7. Letting Be

Dealing With Distractions

So there you are, meditating beautifully. Your body is totally immobile, and your mind is totally still. You just glide right along following the flow of the breath, in, out, in, out...calm, serene, and concentrated. Everything is perfect. And then, all of a sudden, something totally different pops into your mind: "I sure wish I had an ice cream cone." That's a distraction, obviously that's not what you are supposed to be doing. You notice that, and you drag yourself back to the breath, back to the smooth flow, in, out, in... And then: "Did I ever pay that gas bill?" Another distraction. You notice that one, and you haul yourself back to the breath. In, out, in, out, in... "That new science fiction movie is out. Maybe I can go see it Tuesday night. No, not Tuesday, got too much to do on Wednesday. Thursday's better..." Another distraction. You pull yourself out of that one, and back you go to the breath, except that you never quite get there, because before you do, that little voice in your head says, "My back is killing me." And on and on" it goes, distraction after distraction, seemingly without end.

What a bother. But this is what it is all about. These distractions are actually the whole point. The key is to learn to deal with these things. Learning to notice them without being trapped in them. That's what we are here for. This mental wandering is unpleasant, to be sure. . But it is the normal mode of operation of your mind. Don't think of it as the enemy. It is just the simple reality. And if you want to change something, the first thing you have to do is to see it the way it is.

When you first sit down to concentrate on the breath, you will be struck by how incredibly busy the mind actually is. It jumps and jibbers. It veers and bucks. It chases itself around in constant circles. It chatters. It thinks. It fantasizes and daydreams. Don't be upset about that. It's natural. When your mind wanders from the subject of meditation, just observe the distraction mindfully.

When we speak of a distraction in *mindfulness* meditation, we are speaking of any preoccupation that pulls the attention off the breath. This brings up a new, major rule for your meditation: When any mental states arises strongly enough to distract you from the object of meditation, switch your attention to the distraction briefly. Make the distraction a temporary object of meditation. Please note the word "temporary." It's quite important.

We are not advising that you switch horses in midstream. We do not expect you to adopt a whole new object of meditation every three seconds. The breath will always remain your primary focus. You switch your attention to the distraction only long enough to notice certain specific things about it. What is it? How strong is it? And, how long does it last?

As soon as you have wordlessly answered these questions, you are through with your examination of that distraction, and you return your attention to the breath. Here again, please note the operant term, "wordlessly." These questions are not an invitation to more mental chatter: That would be moving you in the wrong direction, toward more thinking. We want you to move away from thinking, back to a direct, wordless, and non-conceptual experience of the breath. These questions are designed to free you from the distraction and give you insight into its nature, not to get you more thoroughly stuck in it. They will tune you in to what is distracting you and help you get rid of it-all in one step.

When you first begin to practice this technique, you will probably have to do it with words. You will ask your questions in words, and get answers in words. It won't be long, however, before

you can dispense "with the formality of words altogether. Once the mental habits are in place, you simply note the distraction, note the qualities of the distraction, and return to the breath. It's a totally non-conceptual process, and it's very quick. The distraction itself can be anything: a sound, a sensation, an emotion, a fantasy, anything at all. Whatever it is, don't try to repress it. Don't try to force it out of your mind. There's no need for that. Just observe it mindfully with bare attention. Examine the distraction wordlessly and it will pass away by itself.

Watch the sequence of events: Breathing, Breathing, Distracting thought arises. Frustration arising over the distracting thought. You condemn yourself for being distracted. You notice the self-condemnation. You return to the breathing. Breathing. Breathing. It's really a very natural smooth-flowing cycle, if you do it correctly. The trick, of course, is patience. If you can learn to observe these distractions without getting involved, it's all very easy. You just glide through the distraction and your attention returns to the breath quite easily. Of course, the very same distraction may pop up a moment later. If it does, just observe that mindfully. If you are dealing with an old, established thought pattern, this can go on happening for quite a while, sometimes years. Don't get upset. This too is natural. Just observe the distraction and return to the breath. Don't fight with these distracting thoughts. Don't strain or struggle. It's a waste. Every bit of energy that you apply to that resistance goes into the thought complex and makes it all the stronger. So don't try to force such thoughts out of your mind. It's a battle you can never win. Just observe the distraction mindfully and it will eventually go away. It's very strange, but the more bare attention you pay to such disturbances, the weaker they get.

Observe them long enough and often enough with bare attention and they fade away forever. Fight with them and they gain strength. Watch them with detachment and they wither.

Mindfulness is a function that disarms distraction... Weak distractions are disarmed by a single-glance. Shine the light of awareness on them and they evaporate instantly, never to return. Deep-seated, habitual thought patterns require constant mindfulness repeatedly applied over whatever time period it takes to break their hold. Distractions are really paper tigers. They" have no power of their own. -They need to be fed constantly, or else they die. If you refuse to feed them by your own fear, anger, and greed, they fade. The purpose of meditation is not to concentrate on the breath, without interruption, forever. That by itself would be a useless goal. The purpose of meditation is not to achieve a perfectly still and serene mind. Although a lovely state, it doesn't lead to liberation by itself. The purpose of meditation is to achieve uninterrupted mindfulness.

From Mindfulness In Plain English.
by Venerable Henepola Gunaratana.
Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1993.

WEEK THREE

HOMEWORK SESSION #3

Formal Practice:

1. Alternate the body scan practice with mindful yoga at least 6 days this week.
2. Do 10 - 15 minutes daily of sitting meditation practice, with awareness of the breath or hearing as primary focus

Informal Practice:

1. Make an effort to "capture" your moments during the day.
2. Be mindful of going on "automatic pilot" and under what circumstances this occurs.

Exercise:

1. Complete the Unpleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar.

Readings:

In The Mindful Path through Shyness read Chapter 3 (The Practice of Mindfulness).

UNPLEASANT INTERPERSONAL EVENTS CALENDAR

Be aware of an experience of social aversion *while it is happening*. Sometime later in the day, please record your experiences here.

	What was the experience? (Please summarize as briefly as possible)	Were you aware of unpleasant emotions during the event?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience? Describe the sensations you felt.	What were the thoughts that you noticed during this event?	Wh mir dov
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Feeling into the Suffering between Us

As you review your Unpleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar, please investigate a little about why these events were unpleasant. For example, while in the event did you feel a sense of me and them or a sense of we? During the event were you trying to distance yourself from others in some way? If you were – how did you try to create this distance? If you would like to characterize the kinds of thoughts you were having during the event (there’s many kinds of troublemaking thoughts called cognitive distortions by psychologists) you can review a collection of these on the next page. It’s not necessary to get too involved with these “tar babies” though. Thinking and struggling too much about our scary thoughts can just create more anxiety – particularly if you try to avoid or escape them. It may be enough to simply identify “unpleasant thought” and let it be – it will pass on its own if you don’t get too involved with it. Mindfulness gives you a place to witness these passing and impermanent events without getting stuck in them. Observing thoughts as they come and go. Letting them go. “Pleasant thought” or “Unpleasant thought” – back to the breath.

Cognitive Distortions

1. **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** You see things in black and white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **Overgeneralization:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern.
3. **Mental Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.
4. **Disqualifying the Positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they “don’t count” for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
5. **Jumping to Conclusions:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
 - a. **Mind Reading:** You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don’t bother to check this out.
 - b. **Fortune Telling:** You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already established fact.
6. **Catastrophizing:** If you think you have committed some social error, you expect extreme and horrible consequences for yourself. A turndown for a date is evidence for a lifetime of isolation. Making a mistake at work means that you will be fired and will never get another job.
7. **Magnification or Minimization:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else’s achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow’s imperfections). This is also called the “binocular trick.”
8. **Emotional Reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: “I feel it, therefore it must be true.”
9. **“Should” Statements:** You try to motivate yourself with “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts,” as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. “Musts” and “oughts” are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct “should” statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.
10. **Labeling and Mislabeled:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself, such as, “I’m a loser.” When someone else’s behavior rubs you the wrong way, you attach a negative label onto him: “He’s a stupid louse.” Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
11. **Personalization:** You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event for which, in fact, were not primarily responsible.
12. **Maladaptive Thoughts:** Any thoughts that are not useful to you in a given situation and do not help you reach your goal.
13. **Compensatory Misconception:** You believe that you need to inflate your achievements or impress others to be socially successful. You may think only the most aggressive and the most dominant succeed. This may be a compensation for a belief in your own inadequacy and may promote suspicion and hostility toward others.

Social Fitness Training Manual. page 68. Lynne Henderson, PhD

A NOTE ON NOTING

Noting is a silent acknowledgement in the heart of what is occurring in the mind. Noting simply states what is without the least intention to interfere. It encourages an openness to healing. It cultivates qualities of honesty, nonjudgment, awareness of the contents of consciousness, and an ongoing sense of presence in the present. It brings the practice from the meditation pillow into the world. It aids in generating a continuity of awareness. It keeps the mind in touch with the body. It is a direct recognition of the moment.

When thinking draws awareness to itself, one notes silently "thinking, thinking." In the beginning of this practice the grossest evident state of mind and body will be easily labeled as "thinking" or "feeling" or "pain" or "resistance." Later, as the process of noting becomes refined and takes on a quality of subtler recognition, one might find it natural--without thinking a label, to just note spontaneously the qualities therein--instead of noting "thinking," one might notice "planning" or "doubting" or loving" or fearing."

The degree of a thought's "power of attraction" to awareness is called "attachment." Tens of thousands of mind-moments flash through awareness from instant to instant but only a few have the density and magnetic attraction to arise fully into consciousness as a thought. That magnetic propensity that originates from one's personal, and inherited, history is a degree to which we have positive and negative attachments. A grasping or resistance that reacts to any object of awareness passing through. Noting attachment--noting "liking" and "disliking" from object to object--keeps us aware of "the chain of events." Indeed there is a method of mindfulness that deals not only with watching sensations, and feelings against the silent backdrop of physical sensation, but is primarily focused on noting the liking and disliking that arises in the mind from moment to moment.

Noting keeps awareness on the track. It is a recognition of the weather of the mind. It senses when there is an 80 percent chance of rain today or when the clouds are parting. It feels the first rays of the sun. As well as the first drop of rain. It is present in the present. It receives a snowflake in an open palm, not in a fist jammed deep within a lint-lined pocket.

Noting is a process of identifying a state of mind before we identify with that state. Recognizing a swamp before we are sunk up to our hips in the ooze. Though it may take a while to integrate noting into our daily experience, it eventually becomes a lighthearted recognition of occasional heavy-heartedness. We begin to meet the world with a new healing~. Nothing~ takes us by surprise. We have explored our hindrances and we meet them with the light-hearted ease of "Big surprise, fear again, anger again, resistance again."

Noting becomes a gentle acknowledgment of the passing show. It recognizes and notes change as it occurs. It allows content to be seen within the larger context of process. And eventually process in the enormous context of being, the sacred emptiness of our essential nature, the boundary less hear Notes on Noting

Noting means nothing added. It means "just this much," the moment as it is. The millisecond in which truth is to be found. Noting is not even a sub vocalization. It arises at the moment of perception, before interpretation changes experience to a personal memory. As one longtime meditator said, "It is the meditator's world companion. When you know where you are, you are always at home."

Noting takes meditation "off the cushion" and into and into our everyday lives. It is with us throughout our daily changes. It recognizes when we are moving toward or pulling away from the moment. It is with us when we drive, when we eat, when we work. It is like an old friend

reminding us to pay attention.

Eventually noting becomes a spontaneous response to changing states. Noting with a simple easiness the flow of consciousness. Not thinking about or analyzing this state in order to label it--not creating more thinking.

Acknowledging the flow of consciousness: "planning," "doubting," "hoping," "wondering," "fearing," "enjoying," "liking," "disliking," "envying," "loving," "hating," "longing," "pride," "jealousy," "enthralment," "joy."

If noting gets in the way, discard it. It is only a technique. When the mind is of itself on track and clear, noting may be "something extra" and leave a trace that it is not useful. If noting at times feels to be more a hindrance than an ally, encouraging the analytical tendency rather than simple presence--more work than clear play--drop it.

As the practice of noting enters deeply and becomes one's own, the words tend to fall away and just recognition of changing content maintains itself. The effort to become effortless has once again paid off. Then perhaps noting will only be employed for the heavy, more afflicting, states we recognize we sometimes become lost in. Noting perhaps "fear" or "doubt" or "distrust" or "joy" so as not to be swept away by these more intense unfoldings. But generally just a mindfulness notes what is, wordlessly, no longer a "labeler" or even a "watcher" but instead, having entered directly the process, the watching itself.

Stephen Levine Guided Meditations

Notice

**thoughts come and go,
emotions come and go,
sensations come and go,
and some part of you that is aware
of these passing events
is something other
than these events.
Thoughts,
emotions
and sensations
are not
you.**

*Just by having a perspective apart from thoughts
can help you disidentify from thoughts
and defuse their power to define or control you.*

*Just by shifting your primary attention to the body and the present moment
can derail the thoughts and emotions that could carry you away.*

*When you "stare back" at a thought it can gradually dissolve
back into it's origin – empty of form.*

Ideas in the Yoga instruction relevant to the exploration of difficult thoughts and feelings

Listen to your body telling you its limits.

Experiment with staying at your limits longer than you might otherwise. This will develop an ability to explore limits and will eventually expand ones that are not beneficial.

After doing a pose (or anything else), momentarily bring the attention back to the breath as a means of letting go of distractions and being present in moment.

Look at the connection between flexibility, strength and balance in the physical sense and those qualities in the psychological. Explore the connection between your mind and your body.

Lie still after each pose to tune into the consequences of having done the stretch. This reinforces your ability to connect cause and effect in regards to stress. Take time to see what you've done and what affect it has on your mind and body.

Rest precise attention on the sensations of the yoga during each pose-non-judgmentally, without commentary. This is useful for strengthening your ability to observe internal and external events clearly, aware of judgments, filters and distractions that color the experience of the events. This will help you be a more impartial observer of your life. It may be easier to see events from a slight distance than it is when you're swamped by them or running from them.

Notice that even when you're intending to focus on the yoga you are distracted. Watch the distracting thoughts and their contents, without indulging in following them. Make an effort to let go of the distractions and bring the mind back to the experience of the pose-to the moment. This is a way of becoming familiar with the activity and habits of the mind, which may be useful for seeing your stress in a bigger context.

Observe the experience of determining *your own limits* in contrast, possibly, to the instructors' directives. Practice setting your own limits of how long to stretch, how far to extend the stretch. What kinds of questions do you find yourself asking? What kinds of comments run through your mind around setting your own limits? Does wanting to or deciding to do something different than the instruction cause judgmental thoughts?

Practice dropping down into a state of relaxation. This is not a *doing-but rather a non--doing*. A cessation of activity. A letting go. One of the sensations may be feeling how gravity pulls the body down.

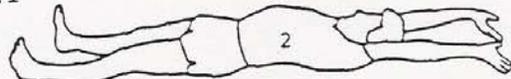
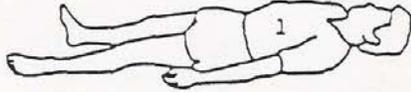
Remember that wherever you hit your limit is OK. It's where you are right now. Practice acceptance of *where/how/who* you are in this moment. Let go of striving to get somewhere, or of wanting to be something in particular-even relaxed.

Bring awareness to fatigue of your muscles during poses. Outside of yoga, this same awareness will help you see when you're fatigued and may help you see (in the moment) what's causing the fatigue. Practice tuning to subtle messages from the body.

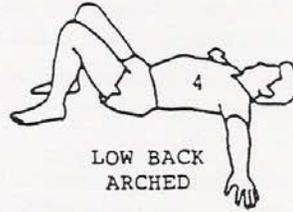
Notice your initial sense of your limitations. Ask yourself if they are actually your limitations or if they are reactions of some sort. See if you can stay with discomfort that is not too extreme. Are there things in the yoga that "rub you wrong?" What are they? What's to be learned? Use frustration, anxiety and fear to instruct yourself about yourself. Any sense of aversion (or attraction, for that matter) can be used as a learning experience if you're willing to linger in it and look.

SEQUENCE OF POSTURES

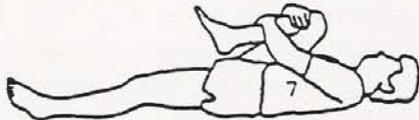
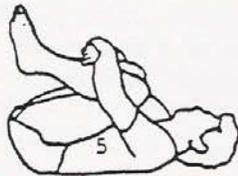
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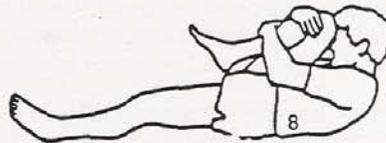
LOW BACK
PRESSED AGAINST
FLOOR



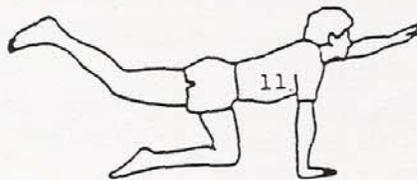
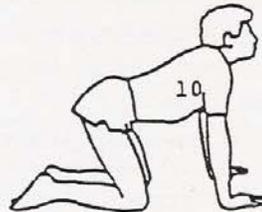
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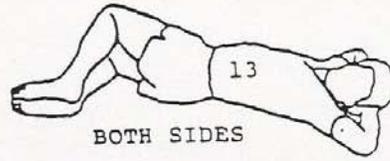
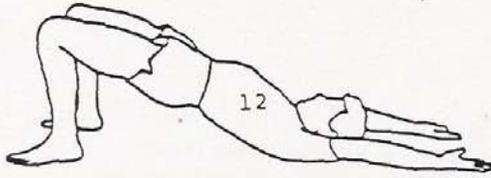
BOTH SIDES



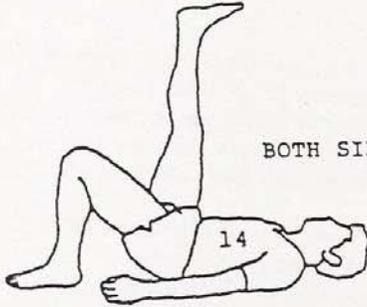
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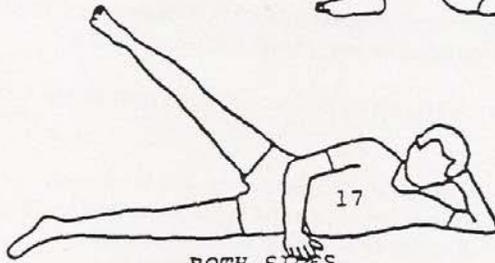
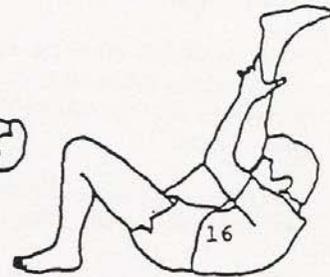
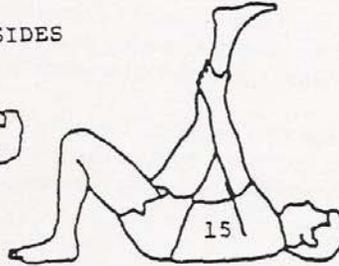
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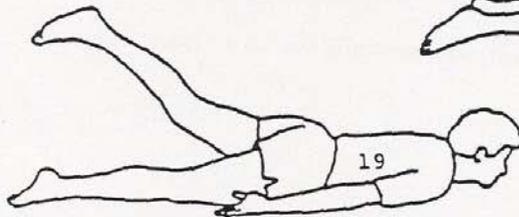
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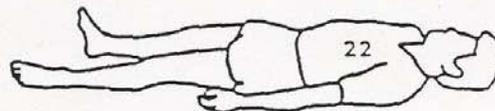
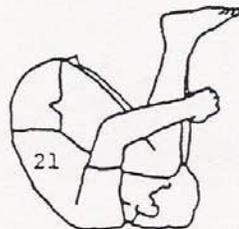
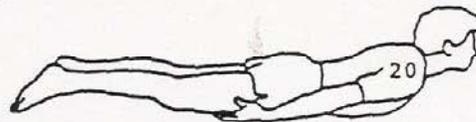
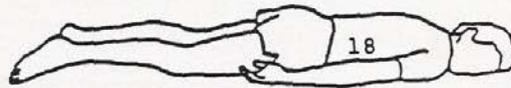
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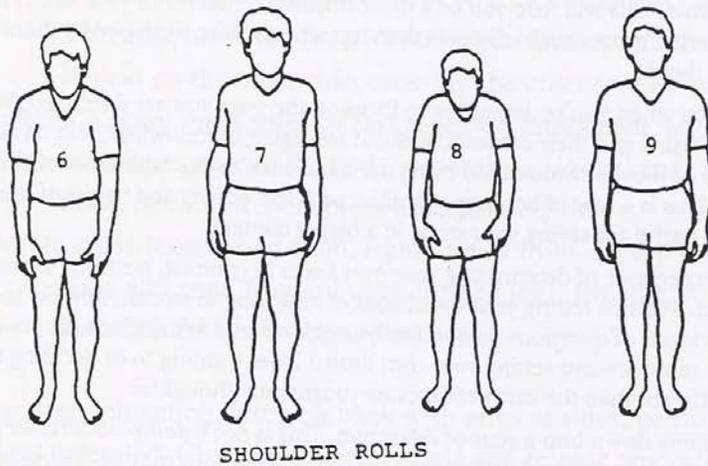
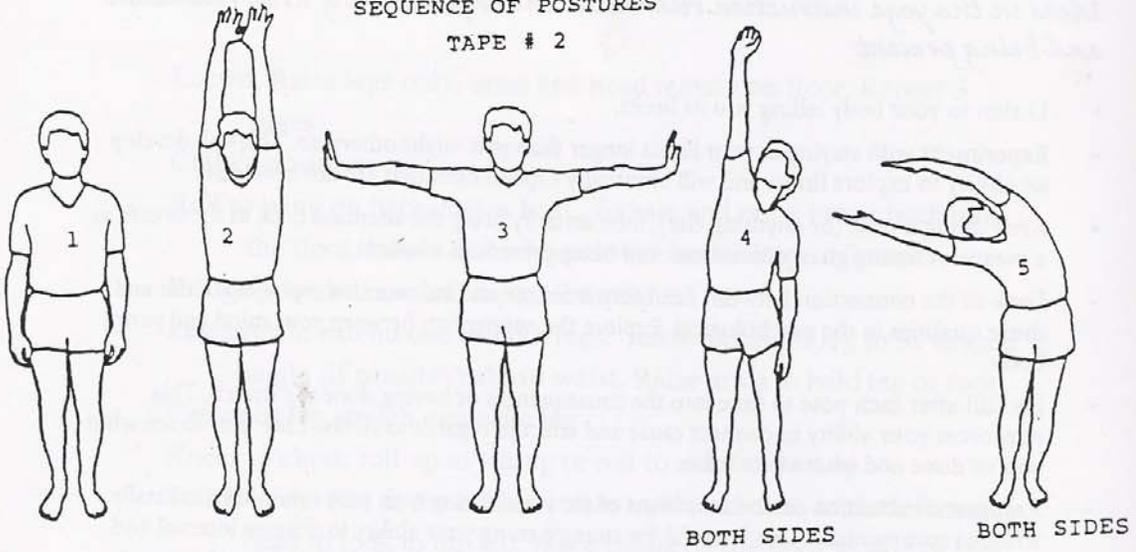
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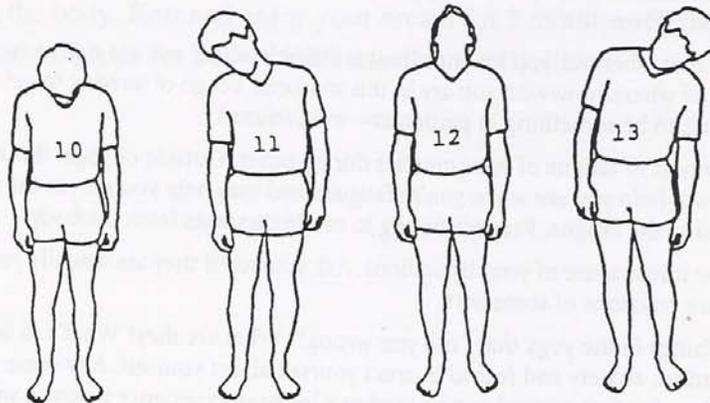
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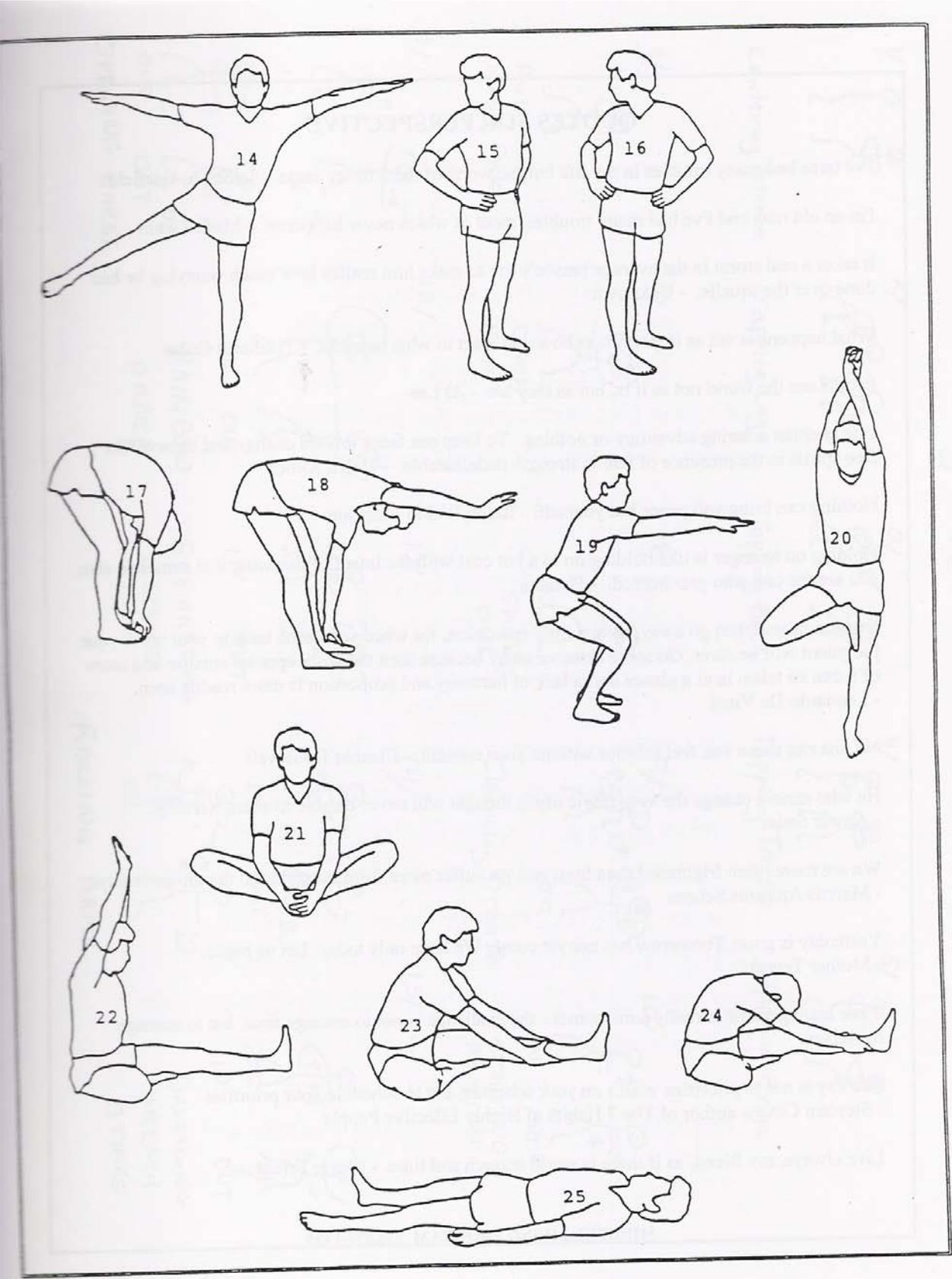
SEQUENCE OF POSTURES
TAPE # 2



SHOULDER ROLLS



NECK ROLLS



What Do I Resist?

Resistance, in the context of mindfulness practice, is a wakeup call. In bringing awareness to those aspects of our daily life that we habitually resist, we begin the work of transforming them.

So now take a couple of moments to consider your own habitual resistances. Is there some situation, or task, some person, or event you commonly find yourself faced with, but which you really don't like? It can be as mundane as taking out the trash... The main things we're looking for is that quality of aversion, of "don't like", and the repetition, that is, it's something that you find yourself faced with again and again.

Now take a few moments and let's consider it mindfully. Begin with the body. As you hold the image of your resistance, explore the feeling in the body. Try to describe it to yourself as precisely as possible (heaviness, shallow breathing, contraction...)

Next, consider any collateral effects in the mind: negative thoughts, imaginings, fears: watch these and the train of emotions that arise as you explore this resistance.

What is your usual reaction? (Do it grudgingly, try to distract myself, shut down as I do it.) Now as you hold your awareness within this personal resistance, see if you can allow that awareness to equalize your aversion, or soften the resistance. Don't strain, but just enter into whatever it is you find yourself resisting in this moment. If judgments or additional resistances come up, notice them. If nothing shifts or changes that's all right too. Just notice whatever happens.

Finally, before abandoning this exploration, mentally bow to whatever resistance you've been exploring.

Return to the breath.

**Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed
by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do.
So throw off the bowlines.
Sail away from the safe harbor.
Catch the trade winds in your sails.
Explore. Dream. Discover.
Mark Twain**

WEEK FOUR

HOMWORK SESSION #4

Formal Practice:

1. Alternate the Mental Noting Practice (Chapter 5 in the Mindful Path through Shyness) with Chi Gong practice at least 6 days this week.
2. Do the sitting meditation 10-15 minutes per day with focus on awareness of breathing, physical sensations, and body as a whole.

Informal Practice:

1. Be aware of stressful interactions with others during the week, with attention to being in doing mode or being mode. Don't try to change things in any way.
2. Notice what's happening in your mind and body if and when you feel "stuck" (caught up in stress reactivity and unable to free yourself).

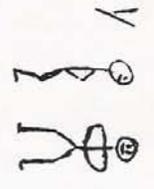
Exercises:

1. Practice "Challenging Thoughts" (Chapter 5 MPTS) with a few of your most troubling thoughts from last weeks exercise (Unpleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar).
2. Review "Doing Mode and Being Mode" in your personal and interpersonal practice and note what you discover on the worksheet. Make space for further entries as needed.

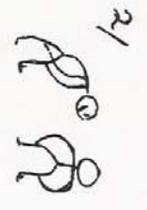
Readings:

The Mindful Path Through Shyness Chapter 5 (You Are Not Your Thoughts)

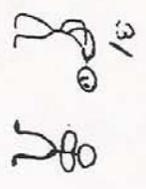
5 MOVEMENT CHI KUNG



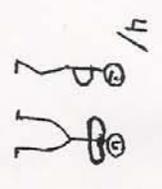
Centering Stance



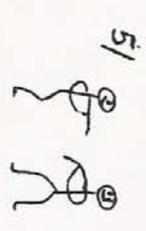
Tapping Legs



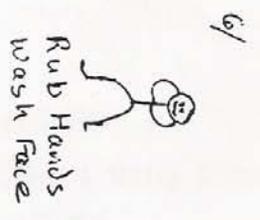
Tapping Back



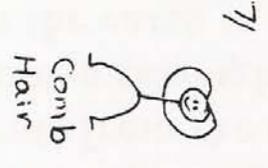
Tapping Torso



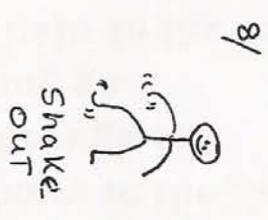
Tapping Arms



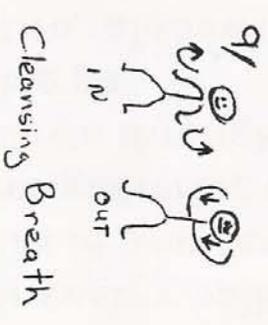
Rub Hands
Wash Face



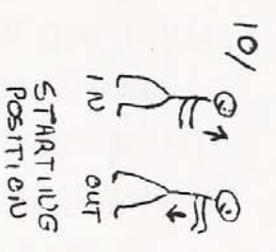
Comb
Hair



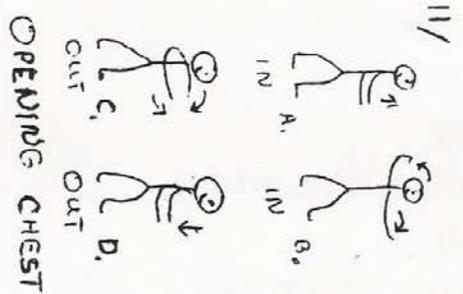
Shake
OUT



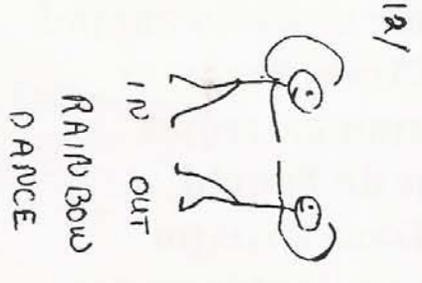
Cleansing
Breath



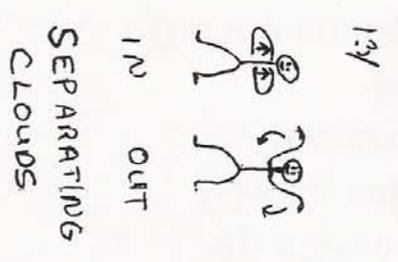
STARTING
POSITION



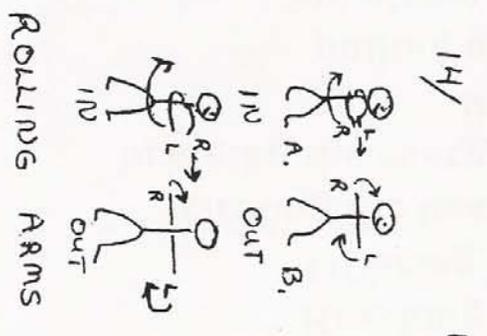
OPENING CHEST



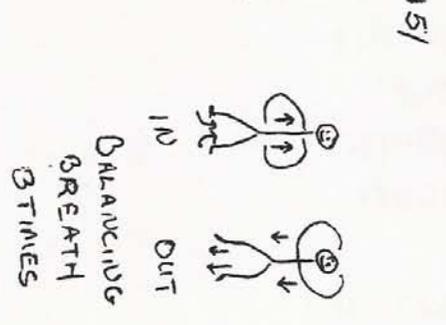
RAINBOW
DANCE



SEPARATING
CLOUDS



ROLLING
ARMS



BALANCING
BREATH
3 TIMES

Challenging Thoughts

We have pleasant thoughts, unpleasant thoughts and neutral thoughts. Particularly when working with unpleasant thoughts it can be helpful to have a few tools to help us disengage from them. We can often identify unpleasant thoughts because of the sensations they create in our bodies, for example, scary thoughts can make us feel tight in places like our belly or in our jaws or shoulders. Feeling the tightness can give us the cue that that an anxious thought has arisen and we may gradually become more skillful at detecting these thoughts just as they begin. Early recognition can help us disidentify from the thought before it carries us away.

We often get entrapped by thoughts by identifying with them and pursuing them or by trying to avoid them. It's not necessary to judge thoughts as good or bad, in fact, judging them can just get us more stuck in them. We don't try to resist them or fight them or block them – we just let them be. Mindfulness gives us a perspective from which to witness our thoughts and defuse the compelling power they have in our lives.

Byron Katie's thought challenging exercise can be helpful if we have become stuck with a particularly troublesome thought. Using your "Unpleasant Interpersonal Events Calendar", select a few of the most difficult thoughts that accompanied an unpleasant event and use the following format to work with each one.

What is the thought? _____

Now, consider the following four questions:

1. Is it true? _____
2. Can you absolutely know that it's true? _____
3. How do you react when you believe that thought? _____

4. Who would you be without that thought? _____

Since scary thoughts are a primary cause of anxiety, disempowering thoughts can help free you from anxiety. Just finding ways to step outside of your thoughts and investigate them like this rather dispassionately enables you to get enough distance from them to break their spell. When you look at thoughts like this they can lose their power to overwhelm you. Awareness is non-discursive and can witness thoughts and let them be. Thoughts are just thoughts. Impermanent. They come and they go. Being centered in awareness and grounded in the body, you can watch these events pass like so many clouds in the sky. Letting them be. Letting everything be.

Don't take thoughts too seriously. They're insubstantial and impermanent. If you can regard them as events rather than get too involved in their content, you can learn to let them come and go with indifference. In working with thoughts it may be helpful to have a few ways recognize doing mode from being mode as you are working with thoughts individually or with other people. It may be helpful to review this topic in Chapter 2 before you explore the following exercise.

Doing Mode and Being Mode

You can investigate where you are caught in the states of mind we have called doing mode and then use what you discover to cultivate “being mode” with yourself and with others.

As we explored in The Mindful Path through Shyness, we spend most of our lives in doing mode in our intrapersonal worlds and in our interpersonal worlds. There’s many ways to recognize when you are in one mode or the other and it may be helpful for you to have some tools to acknowledge where you are and what you are doing in any given moment. These lists can provide you with reference points to recognize what mode you are operating in. Pay attention every day this week to see if you can add a few more entries to each list.

Personal Practice

Doing Mode

Discursive reasoning

Judging

Striving

Critical thinking

Avoiding

Criticizing

Escaping

End-gaining

Separate

Worrying

Wanting

Being Mode

Mindfulness

Non-judging

Non-striving

Awareness

Turning towards

Accepting

Staying

Being present

Connected

Allowing

Not wanting

Just as you may recognize when you are in doing mode or being mode independent of other people by paying attention to what you think and feel and do, you may also recognize when you are in doing mode or being mode when you are with other people. Many of the ideas we've listed above may also be brought into interpersonal relationships with some variations, for example, striving with other people might take shape in how you want to be seen or how you don't want to be seen and include all the efforts you invest to make such appearances. Judging will include not only the critical and blaming thoughts you have about yourself but also those you have about others and imagine they are having about you. As you consider the attitudes and intentions you bring into interpersonal relationships you'll see that just as doing mode could not do the job of controlling and overcoming mental and emotional problems, it has also failed to help you with interpersonal problems. In the world of relationships you will find that being mode will open an entirely new way to literally *be with* others.

Here's a list of ways to help you recognize when you are in doing mode or being mode with other people. Please add some of your own:

Interpersonal Practice

Doing Mode	Being Mode
Separate	Connected
Avoidant	Present
Closed	Open
Judging me/you	Not judging me/you
Pursuing an agenda	Agenda-free attention
What's next	What's happening now
Being impressive	Being real
Full of myself	Empty of self
Wanting something	Not wanting anything
Proving something	Nothing I need to prove
Concealing something	Nothing to hide
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I and Thou

One of the best explanations of doing mode and being mode in interpersonal relationship was written by Martin Buber and published in 1923 as an essay entitled I and Thou. In what is now published as a book (Buber, Martin 2004) he presents these two distinctly different ways of regarding of ourselves in the world in relation to all other people, places and things, both immanent and transcendent. He presents one way of relating to others as I-It and the second way as I-Thou. Everything and everyone we relate to belongs in one of these two categories – related to as “it” or as “thou”.

I-IT RELATIONSHIPS

When we place a label on someone and relate to them as that label they become an ‘It’ - like my wife, my teacher, my kid, my doctor, my patient. In *I-It* relationship an individual treats other things, people, etc., as objects to be used and experienced. Those we relate to as an ‘It’ are extensions of ourselves, captured and limited by our own concepts and expectations. We never truly meet or know that person we relate to as ‘It’ but we do things for and to them and they do things for and to us – our relationships are measured and defined by that which we do and they do. I-It is relationship conducted in doing mode.

I-THOU RELATIONSHIPS

When we relate to another as ‘Thou’ we are not trying to be seen in some way or not be seen in some way. There is no performing, impressing or pleasing – no hiding, concealing or avoiding. The relation to Thou is direct. There’s no effort to do something to or for them or trying to get them to do something to or for us. We don’t try to fix or rescue or help or change the one we relate to as Thou.

More contemporary words used to describe I-Thou relationship include mutuality, resonance, attunement, entrainment and intimacy. In I-Thou relationship we are ‘being with’ rather than ‘doing to’. The moment we try to get or give or make something happen in I-thou relationship it is replaced by I-it relationship. Every effort becomes an obstacle, every resistance a barrier to true meeting and being with each other. It’s only when we let go of our desires and judgments with another person that we may then step into I-Thou relationship. I-Thou is relationship conducted from being mode and we can not enter it from doing mode.

Finding moments of I-Thou relationship are quite remarkable and unfortunately quite rare. Many of us can not remember ever feeling this kind of connection it at all. Even if you’ve never felt this, it’s always accessible and available when you are. A good place to begin cultivating it is with nature. You can even have an I-thou relationship with a tree when you show up without words and concepts or any of the other things you might do to separate yourself from the simple presence of a tree. A tree after all has no trouble at all just being a tree and resting in its own simple being – they can be good teachers for all of us.

You have the choice to relate to other people or anything else in your life from doing mode or being mode. You can tell when you are in doing mode because you feel a host of desires that drive much of what you do. These are the great sources suffering in our personal and interpersonal lives because you can’t always get what you want and even if you do there’s no way you can be sure of hanging on to it.

Being mode isn’t driven by desire or aversion. In being mode you are simply being who you are and allowing others to be who they are. There is nothing to do, nothing to want and nothing to avoid. This kind of being in the world can be called not-doing and not-wanting. It’s a kind of an all-inclusiveness and basic allowance towards life and letting everything be and being with everything as it is. This is the essential nature of mindfulness.

Recognizing when you are in doing mode or being mode will help you a great deal on your mindful path through shyness! From doing mode you don’t find your way out of the shy and SAD traps but generally get more stuck in them. In being mode there is no longer anything to change or escape from and even the experience of anxiety can be acceptable as part of your

life experience. From being mode anxiety seems far more small and unobtrusive than it ever appeared in doing mode.

Cultivating I-thou relationships can have huge effect on shyness and social anxiety. When we can relate to another person as thou they are no longer scary or separate from us. Compassion arises and it melts shy feelings away. When we can relate to others and ourselves from being mode, judgments and fears and wants and aversions no longer define our lives, frighten us or drive us to perform in strategic ways. From being mode, shyness and social anxiety will still arise from time to time but are no longer enemies to be defeated and may then take their place with other parts of ourselves that we've learned to accept and let be.



THE WOOD-OF-NO-NAMES

JUST BEFORE she meets with Tweedledum and Tweedledee, Alice enters the wood-of-no-names and encounters a fawn. Neither the fawn nor Alice can remember their names. No matter. They walk a ways together, "Alice with her arms clasped lovingly around the soft neck of the fawn," until they come to the edge of the wood. Once there, the fawn suddenly remembers its name and looks at Alice with horror. "I'm a Fawn!" it cries out, "and, dear me! you're a human child!" Terrified, it ~ runs away.

As a child I spent many summers alone on a deserted beach on Long Island, gathering shells, digging for little clams, leading a far different life than the city life I led the rest of the year. Day after day I watched everything, developing an eye (or change in all its subtlety: The rest of the year in New York City, I did not look directly at anyone I did not know and did not talk to strangers.

There was a great peace in those summers and a new ability to be without people and yet not alone. I have many good memories of that time. Every morning the sea would wash up new treasures--pieces of wood from sunken boats, bits of glass worn smooth as silk, the occasional jellyfish. Once I even found a pair of glasses with only one lens left in them. Some of the most vivid of these memories concerned the beautiful white birds that flew constantly overhead. I remember how their wings would become transparent when they passed between me and the sun. Angel wings. I remember how my heart followed them and how much I too wanted to fly.

Many years later I had the opportunity to walk this same beach. It was a great disappointment. Bits of seaweed and garbage littered the shoreline, and there were sea gulls everywhere, screaming raucously, fighting over the garbage and the occasional dead creature the sea had given up.

Disheartened, I drove home and was halfway there before I realized that the gulls were the white birds of my childhood. The beach had not changed. The sacred lives beyond labels and judgment, in the wood-of-no-names.

Remen, Rachel Naomi. Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal.

WEEK FIVE

HOMEWORK SESSION #5

Formal Practice:

1. Alternate Sitting Meditation with Yoga or Chi Gong practice at least 6 days this week.
2. Do at least one loving kindness meditation practice from chapter 7 of The Mindful Path through Shyness. Notice that loving kindness always begins with yourself.

Informal Practice:

1. Bring awareness to moments of reactivity and explore options for responding with greater mindfulness and creativity. Do this in the formal meditation practice as well (for example, in moments of pain, boredom, agitation, etc.). Practice "opening up space" for responding in the present moment. Using the breath to slow things down, imagine and experience a more "spacious" awareness within which reactivity can be noticed and observed, without it driving behavior.

Exercise:

1. Complete the Unpleasant Emotions Calendar.
2. Complete the Caring for Unpleasant Emotions Exercise.

Reading:

In The Mindful Path Through Shyness read Chapter 6 (Welcoming Emotions)

Responding to our Feelings with Kindness

We love to watch movies and read books that enable us to join deeply into the feelings of other people but we often turn away from our own feelings. We can dive with excitement into the anxious thrills of TV sitcoms but treat our own anxiety as a loathsome disease. In the one-step removed comfort of watching the dramas and disasters of other peoples lives we can experience our most difficult feelings vicariously and at least touch for a moment those parts of ourselves we try to avoid much of the time. Perhaps this is why the crime and hospital dramas are so popular as they give us a chance to feel what at some level we know we need to feel and learn to somehow better manage – our own fear and anxiety.

Of course, *you do* feel your feelings - it's just that when you are shy you often don't want to and certainly don't like it when other people you see you being emotional. Feelings can feel like some kind of amorphous enemy when you are unable to manage them and they betray you and seem to "make you look like a fool" in your interpersonal relationships. What if managing them could mean something other than "controlling them" or "avoiding them"? What if it's possible to manage your feelings by just letting them be and by bringing as much kind awareness into them as possible? To turn towards them and be with them as you might turn to be with and care for your own child that was frightened or hurt or embarrassed? What if even your most difficult feelings could be less overwhelming if you could just be with them with acceptance and compassion rather than judgment and control?

In the best of circumstances, those of us that are shy can learn how to self-regulate difficult feelings like anxiety, and fear very early in childhood. But this ability to self-regulate anxious feelings generally takes a great deal of kind and patient guidance from at least one of our parents or care-givers. Even if we have two parents in the home, it is common that both of them need to work just to make ends meet and there just isn't time to help us with all of our anxious encounters in the world. And even if someone really tried to help you with your timid and shy personality, it may very well be that they just didn't know how to help you any better than you know how to help yourself. There's some ways that our parents try to help that just make things worse! If this is how it's been for us then we will need to provide for ourselves now what we unable to receive then. We will need to learn how to be compassionate and patient with ourselves. We will need to give ourselves kind and loving and patient support to inquire deeply into our feelings and learn how to honor them and to follow the guidance they give us in our lives.

"You can hold yourself back from the sufferings of the world,
that is something you are free to do and it accords with your nature,
but perhaps this very holding back
is the one suffering you could avoid".

Franz Kafka

Exploring Your Unpleasant Emotions

Just as with kayaking a white-water river, it's important to know as much as you can about your most challenging emotions before you launch into working with them directly. You can do this by creating a list of unpleasant emotions you experience over the next week. Please record your unpleasant emotions for the next week on this calendar.

First, record the emotion itself then record the event that caused it, keeping in mind that an event can be external, such as a social situation, or internal, such as a thought about some past or future situation. Use as few words as possible to note the event that triggered the emotion, then record the sensations you experienced as a result, and the ways you reacted, such as avoiding, escaping, rationalizing, and so on.

Unpleasant Emotions Calendar

	Emotion	Event	Sensations	Reactions
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Caring for Unpleasant Emotions Exercise

You can face and work with unpleasant emotions like fear, shame, or grief, using the practice “Releasing Fear Meditation,” from chapter 6 of The Mindful Path through Shyness, or from “Softening Pain” from the back of this workbook. Drawing from your list of unpleasant emotions, give yourself at least thirty minutes for the following exercise.

1. Choose the least challenging unpleasant emotion and event from your list of unpleasant emotions to work with first.
2. Use the practice “Releasing Fear Meditation” in chapter 6 of the Mindful Path through Shyness to feel into that emotion and work with it. If possible, stay with the emotion until it decreases in intensity a little, then recenter in your breath and body.
3. After a rest, return to the emotion again and again, as many times as necessary, until the emotion no longer has the same charge or intensity when you return to it.
4. If you’re up for it, go ahead and choose a more challenging emotion and begin to work with it. Alternatively, you can take up a more challenging emotion the next time you’re ready to do this practice.
5. In the days and weeks to come, continue working on the emotions on your list, from least to most challenging, in the same way. At the end of each practice, congratulate and thank yourself for your efforts, regardless of the outcome.

**Life is a process of becoming,
a combination of states we have to go through.
Where people fail is that
they wish to elect a state and remain in it.
This is a kind of death.
Anais Nin**

"This is Where the Light Comes Through."

- Rachel Naomi Remen –

-

One thing that comes out in myths is that at the bottom of the abyss comes the voice of salvation. The black moment is the moment when the real message of transformation is going to come. At the darkest moment comes the light. - Joseph Campbell –

One of the angriest people I have ever worked with was a young man with osteogenic sarcoma of the right leg. He had been a high school and college athlete and, until the time of his diagnosis, his life had been good. Beautiful women, fast cars, personal recognition. Two weeks after his diagnosis, they had removed his right leg above the knee. This surgery, which saved his life, also ended his life. Playing ball was a thing of the past.

These days there are many sorts of self-destructive behaviors open to an angry young man like this. He refused to return to school. He began to drink heavily, to use drugs, to alienate his former admirers and friends, and to have one automobile accident after the other. After the second of these, his former coach called and referred him to me.

He was a powerfully built and handsome young man, profoundly self-oriented and isolated. At the beginning, he had the sort of rage that felt very familiar to me. Filled with a sense of injustice and self-pity, he hated all the well people. In our second meeting, hoping to encourage him to show his feelings about himself, I gave him a drawing pad and asked him to draw a picture of his body. He drew a crude sketch of a vase, just an outline. Running through the center of it he drew a deep crack. He went over and over the crack with a black crayon, gritting his teeth and ripping the paper. He had tears in his eyes. They were tears of rage. It seemed to me that the drawing was a powerful statement of his pain and the finality of his loss. It was clear that this broken vase could never hold water, could never function as a vase again. It hurt to watch. After he left, I folded the picture up and saved it. It seemed too important to throw away.

In time, his anger began to change in subtle ways. He began one session by handing me an item torn from our local newspaper. It was an article about a motorcycle accident in which a young man had lost his leg. His doctors were quoted at length. I finished reading and looked up. "Those idiots don't know the first thing about it," he said furiously. Over the next month he brought in more of these articles, some from the paper and some from magazines: a girl who had been severely burned in a house fire, a boy whose hand had been partly destroyed in the explosion of his chemistry set. His reactions were always the same, a harsh judgment of the well-meaning efforts of doctors and parents. His anger about these other young people began to occupy more and more of our session time. No one understood them, no one was there for them, no one really knew how to help them. He was still enraged, but it seemed to me that underneath this anger a concern for others was growing. Encouraged, I asked him if he wanted to do anything about it. Caught by surprise, at first he said no. But, just before he left he asked me if I thought he could meet some of these others who suffered injuries like his.

People came to our teaching hospital from all over the world, and the chances were good that there were some with the sorts of injuries that mattered to him. I said that I thought it was quite possible and I would look into it. It turned out to be easy. Within a few weeks, he had begun to visit young people on the surgical wards whose problems were similar to his own. He came back from these visits full of stories, delighted to find that he could reach young people. He was often able to be of help when no one else could. After a while he felt able to speak to parents and families, helping them to better understand and to know what was needed. The surgeons, delighted with the results of these visits, referred more and more people to him. Some of these doctors had seen him play ball and they began to spend a little time with him. As he got to know them, his respect for them grew. Gradually his anger faded and he developed a sort of ministry. I just watched and listened and appreciated.

My favorite of all his stories concerned a visit to a young woman who had a tragic family history: breast cancer had claimed the lives of her mother, her sister, and her cousin. Another sister was in chemotherapy. This last event had driven her into action. At twenty-one she took one of the only options open at that time, she had both her breasts removed surgically. He visited her on a hot midsummer day, wearing shorts, his artificial leg in full view. Deeply depressed, she lay in bed with her eyes closed, refusing to look at him. He tried everything he knew to reach her, but without success. He said things to her that only another person with an altered body would dare to say. He made jokes. He even got angry. She did not respond. All the while a radio was softly playing rock music. Frustrated, he finally stood, and in a last effort to get her attention, he unstrapped the harness of his artificial leg and let it drop to the floor with a loud thump. Startled, she opened her eyes and saw him for the first time. Encouraged, he began to hop around the room snapping his fingers in time to the music and laughing out loud. After a moment she burst out laughing too. "Fella," she said, "if you can dance, maybe I can sing."

This young woman became his friend and began to visit people in the hospital with him. She was in school and she encouraged him to return to school to study psychology and dream of carrying his work further. Eventually she became his wife, a very different sort of person from the models and cheerleaders he had dated in the past.

Dancing the crippled dance, he challenged her imagination, "if you can dance, maybe I can sing." I've experienced her hopelessness lying in a hospital bed looking ahead to a dark future painted in drab colors by my overactive imagination. I could never, ever have imagined at 13, as I lay ill, the direction my life has taken. Where does the courage to live in the presence of suffering come from? While it isn't a guarantee, I know love improves the odds.

But long before this, we ended our sessions together. In our final meeting, we were reviewing the way he had come, the sticking points and the turning points. I opened his chart and found the picture of the broken vase that he had drawn two years before. Unfolding it, I asked him if he remembered the drawing he had made of his body. He took it in his hands and looked at it for some time. "You know," he said, "It's really not finished." Surprised, I extended my basket of crayons toward him. Taking a yellow crayon, he began to draw lines radiating from the crack in the vase to the very edges of the paper. Thick yellow lines. I watched, puzzled. He was smiling. Finally he put his finger on the crack, looked at me, and said softly, "This is where the light comes through."

Suffering is intimately connected to wholeness. The power in suffering to promote integrity is not only a Christian belief, it has been a part of almost every religious tradition. Yet twenty years of working with people with cancer in the setting of unimaginable loss and pain suggests that this may not be a teaching or a religious belief at all but rather some sort of natural law. That is, we might learn it not by divine revelation but simply through a careful and patient observation of the nature of the world. Suffering shapes the life force, sometimes into anger, sometimes into blame and self-pity. Eventually our suffering may show us the freedom of loving and serving life.



We have no reason to harbor any mistrust against our world, for it is not against us. If it has terrors, they are our terrors. If it has abysses, these abysses belong to us. If there are dangers, we must try to love them, and only if we could arrange our lives in accordance with the principle that tells us that we must always trust in the difficult, then what now appears to us to be alien will become our most intimate and trusted experience.

How could we forget those ancient myths that stand at the beginning of all races—the myths about dragons that at the last moment are transformed into princesses. Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are only princesses waiting for us to act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.

So you must not be frightened if a sadness rises before you larger than any you've ever seen, if an anxiety like light and cloud shadows moves over your hands and everything that you do. You must realize that something has happened to you. Life has not forgotten you, that it holds you in its hands and will not let you fall. Why do you want to shut out of your life any uneasiness, any miseries, or any depressions? For after all, you do not know what work these conditions are doing inside you.

Rainer Maria Rilke

WEEK SIX

HOMework SESSION #6

Formal Practice:

1. Alternate Sitting Meditation with Yoga or Chi Gong practice at least 6 days this week

Informal Practice:

1. Pay attention to your emotional states this week and how they are related to your thoughts and behaviors.
2. Notice what happens in your body during times of strong emotions.
3. Think of yourself as a verb, rather than a noun. (Practice experiencing yourself as a process, rather than as a subject or object.)

Exercise:

1. Complete the Hierarchy of Ten Social Aversion Situations
2. Participate in Exposure Practices 1 – 3 and record your experiences on the provided forms.
3. As in many the practices and exercises you have endeavored so far, these are exercises you will continue for long after this 8-week program.

Reading:

In the Mindful Path through Shyness read Chapter 7 (The Wisdom of turning Towards)

Instances of Social Aversion

	Thoughts	Emotions	Sensations	Reactions
Monday				
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				

Hierarchy of Ten Social Aversion Situations

Rate the degree to which you avoid the situations listed below because of the fear you would experience in them. Also, rate your level of anxiety (anticipation) in each situation.

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Do not avoid situation; no anxiety	Hesitate to enter situation but rarely avoid it; slightly/somewhat anxious		Sometimes avoid situation; definitely anxious		Usually avoid situation; markedly or very often anxious		Invariably avoid situation; very severe/continuous anxiety; near panic			

#	Situation	Description	Avoidance (0-100)	Anxiety (0-100)	Fear (0-100)
1.	1st worst				
2..	2nd worst				
3.	3rd worst				
4.	4th worst				
5.	5th worst				
6,	6th worst				
7.	7th worst				
8.	8th worst				
9.	9th worst				
10.	10th worst				

Adapted from "Social Fitness Manual" (Henderson, Lynne)

Sample Hierarchy

Rate the degree to which you avoid the situations listed below because of the fear you would experience in them. Also, rate your level of anxiety (anticipation) in each situation.

0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Do not avoid situation; no anxiety	Hesitate to enter situation but rarely avoid it; slightly/somewhat anxious		Sometimes avoid situation; definitely anxious		Usually avoid situation; markedly or very often anxious		Invariably avoid situation; very severe/continuous anxiety; near panic			

#	Situation	Description	Avoidance (0-100)	Anxiety (0-100)	Fear (0-100)
1.	1st worst	Giving a presentation in front of 30 or more people	100	95	90
2..	2nd worst	Asking someone I'm attracted to for a date			
3.	3rd worst	Agreeing to a date with someone I'm attracted to			
4.	4th worst	Opening a conversation with a stranger of the opposite sex			
5.	5th worst	Asking some colleagues from work out for lunch	60	50	55
6.	6th worst	Joining a group of others in conversation at work			
7.	7th worst	Opening a conversation with a stranger of the same sex			
8.	8th worst	Opening a conversation with a potential friend at work			
9.	9th worst	Saying no to a request to help a colleague			
10.	10th worst	Calling a friend from work to have a conversation	30	20	25

Adapted from "Social Fitness Manual" (Henderson, Lynne)

Exposure Practice Step 1

Exposure Practice Record *(please duplicate this page for successive practices)*

Make each one of these practices a meditation and remember the words of Jennifer Paine Welwood, "Turning to face my fear I meet the warrior who lives within."

1. Date of Practice _____

Select an item from your Social Aversion Hierarchy with a rating between 20 and 30.

What is the item for exposure #1 _____

What is its rating? _____

2. Close your eyes and imagine actually entering into this situation. Use the skills of distress tolerance you've practiced in mindful yoga practice. When you feel the discomfort of anxiety, you back slightly away from the situation and reorient to your body, with your breath or hearing for example – resting at the edge of the anxiety. If you want, use the approach in "Releasing Fear Meditation," in chapter 6, to help lower your anxiety level. Return to and retreat from the edge of the anxiety until you feel it reduces in some way. Try to stay in the imaginary situation until your anxiety level diminishes by at least 10 points. When the anxiety level does diminish, assign it a rating using that same scale of 0 to 100.

3. What is the new rating for this item?

Exposure #1 _____

4. What thoughts and feelings did you struggle with the most in doing this practice?

5. Congratulate yourself for making this effort – no matter how it turned out!

6. Repeat the same practice frequently until your anxiety level decreases even more. It's probably a good idea to repeat the same practice or a variation on it every day until you experience less anxiety even as you enter the situation.

Comments: _____

Exposure Practice Step 2

When you have significantly reduced the anxiety of the situation in Exposure Practice 1, ask a friend or family member to role-play the situation with you and once again stay with it until your anxiety decreases.

1. Date of practice _____
2. What is the item? _____
3. What is its rating as you begin this exposure practice? _____
4. When you feel an anxiety reduction of at least 10, thank your friend for their help and congratulate yourself again for undertaking this practice.
5. What is the new anxiety rating? _____

Exposure Practice Step 3

The next step is to practice actually being in that situation in real life and apply the skills you've learned from the previous practices. If you did engage in role-playing, it might be helpful to bring that person along as a kind and supportive presence. Stay in touch with your breath and to use your breath as an anchor to the present moment as often as possible in this practice.

1. Date of practice _____
2. What is the item? _____
3. What is its rating as you begin this exposure practice? _____
4. What is the rating at the end of this practice? _____
5. Once again, acknowledge and reward yourself in some way for undertaking these difficult practices.
6. Once you've overcome this first challenging situation, move up to the next item on your hierarchy and use the proceeding pages to keep a record of your practice.

Comments: _____

A PAINFUL AND LOVELY DAY

Steve Flowers

....everything that happens is again and again a beginning.....Rilke

We all celebrated the “great pregnancy”. It was, after all, long the subject and source of many years of dreams. And, it was clearly the right time. No two souls could be better friends or more prepared to parent children. They were living their dreams in many ways – a wonderful house of their own in just the place they wanted to be, good jobs as grade school teachers. The child was indeed blessed. Her swelling was not yet evident other than in unfettered joy.

It was cause for everyone’s joy, for a coming together in song and in praise of the miracle of new life. We celebrated with a big party and many new baby gifts were given.

The miscarriage stripped us of joy and we fell like Icarus into a cold, dark, numbing sea.

Time passed. We hugged and cried and made all of the other inadequate gestures of compassion. It felt strangely wrong for her to enjoy any of our gifts of kindness. She felt that she had somehow failed and grief hung on their lives and all of our lives like a damp fog.

In time the progress of months did dispel much of the clinging fog. We met her, one sunny morning by chance, on the road as we walked by her house. She was planting tulip bulbs by the mailbox. As we were leaving she blurted out; “Wait, I want to tell you something! I’m pregnant! I haven’t told anyone for months because I’ve been so afraid.”

Fear hovers in shadows of the mind and preys on our hopes and dreams. To hope is risk the grief of another loss and a dream can feel like daring fate to crush us once again.

She showed us her swollen belly, speaking more rapidly now, “But then I realized, *I’m missing it!*” This is my dream - to be pregnant and have this swelling in my belly, to become a mother. I can’t let fear steal this too! I’m pregnant!” she said again. “We’re pregnant!” echoed her husband walking up, “and we’re having the time of our lives.”

I felt my own courage falter as I embraced their joy and marveled at theirs. It takes such courage to dream and really live life as it is.

“What keeps you fromliving your life as a painful and lovely day in the history of a great pregnancy?” Ranier Maria Rilke

Dr. Adams story

At 68 years old and a retired college professor, he had taught thousands of students over a distinguished career even though he had never been able to overcome his social anxiety. “I’ve felt extremely anxious speaking in front of others my entire life”, he told me, “and I know why – I feel like nothing I ever do is good enough. I’ve learned that doesn’t matter how hard I try or how much I accomplish, it’s never enough! It’s led me to be overly solicitous with everyone, even with my students, for fear of being judged harshly and this has compelled me to work twice as hard in everything I’ve done. I’ve done all I could to avoid criticism – I’ve even learned to walk quickly wherever I go - trying to appear as if I’m in a big hurry so I won’t have to stop and talk with anybody and risk a complaint. I also know how I got this terrible curse – it comes from my relationship with my father.

I asked him how long his father had been dead and he responded with a comment that was even more illuminating: “Oh, he’s not dead. I still live with him in my home and he’s still just as critical of me as he’s always been. But worse than his actual voice which I hear every day, he’s become the critical voice in my head that accompanies me wherever I go and tells me no matter what I do, I’m inadequate.”

As we progressed in our work together we discussed the wisdom of turning towards the critic in his head with an intention to investigate and better understand it rather than falling into the long ingrained habit of trying to dispel it with another stellar performance. In the months that followed Dr. Adams worked hard to bring a new awareness to this old nemesis. He found himself softening around and opening to old feelings of inadequacy and fear of censure. He found that he could turn towards this painful sense of unworthiness with kindness and tenderness that was accepting and open. He cried acres of tears for the boy in him that longed for his father’s love and never could have it and even more tears for the years he’d spent pursuing something that he never would have. The more he felt into this pain, the more his old anxieties seem to melt and we ended therapy with him beginning upon a new path.

Mark’s Story

Mark came to the MBSR program seeking help with social anxiety that was so severe that it was interfering significantly with both his personal and professional life. As he developed a mindfulness practice he gradually built the strength and courage to feel into his anxiety and found that one of its most painful components was a sense of shame that he maintained mostly with his own self criticism. With some prompting he made shame itself the object of his practice and soon found that it arose from what he felt were flaws in his character that he needed to hide from everyone.

I asked him to dive deeper and make these flaws his new practice. He winced but took this on too and as he could he explored his sense of self blame and more of its sources began appear to him. One day he came to talk and burst into tears. Bringing this light into his darkest places revealed something that was much larger than he had imagined. He discovered that he not only carried regret and self-blame for some of his own actions but to his surprise a large part of his shame was for his father who was an alcoholic who lived in squalor suffering for brutal actions as a soldier at war. He recounted some of the horror’s his father lived with and cried for the catastrophe of his father’s losses and for his own losses in never really having a dad that he even wanted anyone else to know about. Time went on and the more he felt into shame the more it blossomed out to a much larger shame for all the evil of man’s inhumanity to man. Mark’s heart still ached, perhaps more now than it did before, but he was no longer afraid of being with it or letting others see it.

Just as the Nettle provides an antidote for its own sting, anxiety provides the antidote for its own sting. We only need to turn towards our anxiety with curiosity and bring the light of awareness into the things we do to create and feed anxiety – they too in time reveal their own solutions.

WEEK SEVEN

HOMWORK SESSION #7

Formal Practice:

1. Practice sitting meditation with an emphasis on choiceless awareness (Chapter 7 MPTS) on your own at least 45 minutes a sitting for at least 6 days this week, as best you can without using tapes.
2. If you are participating in this program with a teacher online, practice insight dialogue with your class participants this week. If you are creating your own MPTS program individually, you might enlist a friend or family member to practice insight dialogue or you might arrange to practice with someone else that is participating in this program though the links for interpersonal mindfulness practice at www.mindfullivingprograms.com. Please practice Insight Dialogue at least 2 times this week and continue this practice with others on a weekly basis if possible as long as you continue to grow in interpersonal mindfulness.

Informal Practice:

1. Practice being present informally on your own. Be aware of moments when you are alone and when you are with others throughout the day. How much can you be fully present for your own life?
2. Tune in mindfully to the breath on a regular basis throughout the day.

Reading:

1. The Mindful Path Through Shyness, Chapter 8 (Cultivating Mindfulness in Interpersonal Relationship) and Chapter 9 (The Healing Power of Compassion)

Attunement and Resonance

Insight dialogue can enable us to experience *attunement* and *resonance* with another person. Attunement is a word that refers to being tuned in to ourselves *or* others. Resonance is the experience of mutually attuning and “feeling felt” with another person.

“Poo?” “Yes Piglet.” “Oh nothing, I just wanted to be sure of you.”

Feeling felt is comforting and deeply healing. It is a core element of love and intimacy. Feeling alienated from others is deeply disconcerting. It’s a core element of shame and social anxiety.

"We do not believe in ourselves until someone reveals that deep inside us something is valuable, worth listening to, worthy of our trust, sacred to our touch. Once we believe in ourselves we can risk curiosity, wonder, spontaneous delight or any experience that reveals the human spirit." e. e. cummings

What e.e. cummings calls the human spirit may also be called **“deep being”**. When we can be attuned to our own deep being we may also attune to the deep being of others. Once, in a conversation with Coleman Barks (the renowned translator of the poet Rumi) I asked him “Why does Rumi’s poetry resonate so deeply with so many people?” Coleman responded, “I think these poems speak to a deeper level of our consciousness that everyone can relate to. We are one person in this awake state of consciousness, like we are talking in right now; we are another in the dreaming state and another still in what is called dreamless sleep. And then there what they call the forth stage, which is underneath all of them, and included within the other three – it is called **“deep being”**, which is the one I think Rumi gained access to when he met his spiritual friend and teacher, a mysterious holy man named Shams. All of his poems come from there and when you hear them, even when translated from another language, you can have some access to this place. It’s like being reminded of your own deep being, that this is who you really are. And, I think that this is who we all really are, this place of deep being that their friendship was in. It’s the bedrock beneath all the stages of consciousness; the awake state, the dream state, the dreamless state, all arise from our deep being and it is through deep being that we are all united.”

**Deep Being
Deep Being lives in solitude
with no sign denoting what it is.**

**The entire universe sleeps
inside that selflessness.**

**Deep being has no I, no You,
no pull to anything, no meaning.**

Rumi: translated by Coleman Barks

Meeting in the place of deep being with another person is authentic encounter. It is the place where two hearts meet. Mindful intimacy is being real with oneself and others.

“The heart is in direct communion with the human soul, and when the heart speaks, even with the resistance of the head, something inside you changes; your heart opens another heart, and true love is possible.” -- Don Miguel Ruiz

WEEK 8

The rest of your life



There is an amazing transformation that happens in the life of a dragonfly.

After years of hiding under rocks and underwater as an aquatic insect, it one day braves all and climbs out of the water to latch onto a rock in the full light of day, exposing itself completely in the sun for the very first time. It stays there until something marvelous happens: its body cracks open and a new, winged version of itself climbs out of itself and spreads its wings in the sun. It then flies away, leaving the shell of its old body behind, and never hides underwater again. At this point in its life, the dragonfly is no longer hidden and isolated but is now a creature of the sky that joins in an ecstatic dance of flight with many other's that have also found their wings.

This is what it was like for me to emerge from the frightened and avoidant world of shyness and social anxiety. The day finally came when I felt it was time to risk being seen in the full light of relationships with others and I would from there on no longer live in old habits of self-blaming and fear and avoidance. It's not that there was any more safety in this new territory – there were many risks and I did get hurt in my clumsy and fearful first efforts to fly. But not taking the risks became too painful - I simply could not bear to be lonely and isolated any more. I only launched off into this fearful new territory because it offered me something I'd never known before and may never have found in my hiding place – deep and loving connections with others.

Like a dragonfly, you too may one day choose to take flight and begin to see others as friends and kindred spirits to be known and joined with. You too may someday risk knowing and being known in ways that are impossible when you live cloaked and hidden in fear. When you finally take the risk of revealing yourself as you are without restraint or pretense an almost magical transformation happens - you can finally see and be seen and therefore truly meet others. You become real.

A GUIDED MEDITATION ON SOFTENING PAIN

(To be read slowly to a friend or silently to oneself.)

Try to find a comfortable position and settle into it.

Slowly allow your attention to move toward the area of discomfort.

Watch what feelings, arise as you let your awareness approach that place.

Let the pain just be there.

Is the mind and body at war? Much resistance? Is the mind cursing the body?

Is there any fear accumulated in the area of discomfort?

Notice if any old mind fears cling there, turning pain to suffering. Resistance to hellishness.

Notice whatever feelings arise in that area.

Begin to soften all about physical and mental discomfort.

Let the skin, the flesh, the muscles, begin to soften all around the pain.

Let the fist of resistance and fear which closes down around the unpleasant slowly begin to open.

Releasing tension around discomfort. Letting go of the rigidity holding unwanted sensations.

Let go. This holding, this old resistance and dread turns the moment sour.

Let go. It is so painful to hold to the pain with anger and fear and helplessness. Let it go. Let it begin to float in awareness instead of being trapped hard in the body.

Moment to moment sensation arises. Moment to moment opening. Softening to each particle of sensation.

Let the muscles soften.

Let the flesh open to receive the moment as it is in mercy and loving kindness.

The fear, the anger, the sense of failure dissolving into the softness.

Each moment new.

Softening from sensation to sensation.

Notice how the least thought or subtlest holding reestablishes tension. Soften.

Moment to moment letting go.

Remembering the mercy that pain cries out for--soften again and again and once again. Let the discomfort just be there, not holding to it, not even pushing it away. Softening to the very center of each instant of sensation and feeling.

Meeting the heart of our pain in mercy and forgiveness.

Moving gently into it to heal, to release so much frustration, so much helplessness. Allowing at last the moment simply to be as it is with such mercy for ourselves and these sensations arising in soft flesh.

Soften the ligaments.

Soften the tissue all around each sensation. Let each sensation float free in this softness. Letting it be in the heart of mercy and kindness toward oneself, toward this moment, toward these sensations constantly changing.

Open all around sensation gently.

Push nothing away.

Let resistance melt from the body with a sigh. Let go of long-held fear and doubt.

And in the mind that holds to this pain, that prays to it and wars with it, that beseeches it, a deeper softening begins to permeate. The mental fist opens.

Feel the release of tension in the mind as it softens to the unpleasant in the body. Have mercy. A moment of fear, a moment of distrust, a moment of anger--each arising and dissolving, one after the other. Each mind-moment dissolving into the next. The spaciousness increasing.

Hard reactions melting to soft responses in the mind. The body softening to receive the moment as is.

Moment-to-moment softening all about sensations arising. Softening the tissue. Softening the muscles. Softening around each moment of experience arising in the body.

Softening to the center of each cell. Sending mercy and loving kindness into each moment of sensation arising and dissolving in space.

Each instant of sensation received in an awareness that gently embraces.
Letting go of discomfort.
Letting it float in a merciful awareness.
Letting the mind float in the heart.
Receiving this moment in the opening heart of mercy.
Receiving this softness in all the far-flung galaxies of the body.
In the vast body, such mercy, such kindness, receives each moment.
Softening. Opening with a merciful awareness we continue the path of the healing we took birth for.

--Stephen Levine Guided Meditation



“The way we define and delimit the self is arbitrary. We can place it between our ears and have it looking out from our eyes, or we can widen it to include the air we breathe, or at other moments we can cast its boundaries farther to include the oxygen-giving trees and plankton, our external lungs, and beyond them the web of life in which they are sustained.” --Joanna Macy, World As Lover, World As Self

Walking Meditation

The walking meditation is done by noticing the lifting, forward and placing movement of the foot in each step. It is helpful to finish one step completely before lifting the other foot. "Lifting, moving, placing, lifting, moving, placing." It is very simple. Again it is not an exercise in movement. It is an exercise in mindfulness. Use the movement to develop a careful awareness. In the course of the day, you can expect many changes. Sometimes you may feel like walking more quickly, sometimes very slowly. You can take the steps as a single unit, "stepping, stepping." Or you may start out walking quickly and, in that same walking meditation, slow down until you are dividing it again into the three parts. Experiment. The essential thing is to be mindful, to be aware of what's happening.

In walking, the hands should remain stationary either behind the back, at the sides, or in front. It's better to look a little ahead, and not at your feet, in order to avoid being involved in the concept of "foot" arising from the visual contact. All of the attention should be on experiencing the movement, feeling the sensations of the lifting, forward, placing motions. From The Experience of Insight

by Joseph Goldstein.

Mindful Walking

Select a quiet place where you can walk comfortably back and forth, indoors or out, about ten to thirty paces in length. Begin by standing at one end of this "walking path," with your feet firmly planted on the ground. Let your hands rest easily, wherever they are comfortable. Close your eyes for a moment, center yourself, and feel your body standing on the earth. Feel the pressure on the bottoms of your feet and the other natural sensations of standing. Then open your eyes and let yourself be present and alert.

Begin to walk slowly. Let yourself walk with a sense of ease and dignity. Pay attention to your body. With each step feel the sensations of lifting your foot and leg off of the earth. Be aware as you place each foot on the earth. Relax and let your walking be easy and natural. Feel each step mindfully as you walk. When you reach the end of your path, pause for a moment. Center yourself, carefully turn around, pause again so that you can be aware of the first step as you walk back. You can experiment with the speed, walking at whatever pace keeps you most present.

Continue to walk back and forth for ten or twenty minutes or longer. As 'with the breath in sitting, your mind will wander away many, many times. As soon as you notice this, acknowledge where it went softly: "wandering," "thinking," "hearing," "planning." Then return to feel the next step. Like training the puppy, you will need to come back a thousand times. Whether you have been away for one second or for ten minutes, simply acknowledge where you have been and then come back to being alive here and now with the next step you take.

After some practice with walking meditation, you will learn to use it to calm and collect yourself and to live more wakefully in your body. You can then extend your walking practice in an informal way when you go shopping, whenever you walk down the street or walk to or from your car. You can learn to enjoy walking for its own sake instead of the usually planning and thinking and, in this simple way, begin to be truly present, to bring your body, heart, and mind together as you move through your life.

From A Path With Heart; Jack Kornfield

The Mountain Meditation

When it comes to meditation, mountains have a lot to teach, having archetypal significance in all cultures. Mountains are sacred places. People have always sought spiritual guidance and renewal in and among them. The mountain is the symbol of the prime axis of the world (Mt. Meru), the dwelling place of the gods (Mt. Olympus), the spiritual leader encounters God and receives his (her) commandments and covenant (Mt. Sinai). Mountains are held sacred, embodying dread and harmony, harshness and majesty. Rising above all else on our planet, they beckon and overwhelm with their presence. Their nature is elemental, rock. Rock-hard. Rock-solid. Mountains are the place of visions, where 'one can touch the panoramic scale of the natural world and its intersection with life's fragile but tenacious rootings. Mountains have played key roles in our history and prehistory. The traditional peoples, mountains were and still are mother, father, guardian, protector, ally.

In meditation practice, it can be helpful sometimes to "borrow" these wonderful archetypal qualities of mountains and use them to bolster our intentionality and resolve to hold the moment with an elemental purity and simplicity. The mountain image help in the mind's eye and in the body can freshen our memory of why we are sitting in the first place, and of what it truly means, each time we take our seat, to dwell in the realm of non-doing. Mountains are quintessentially emblematic of abiding presence and stillness.

The mountain meditation can be practiced in the following way, or modified to resonate with your personal vision of the mountain and its meaning. It can be done in any posture, but I find it most powerful when I am sitting cross-legged on the floor, so that my body looks and feels most mountainlike, inside and out. Being in the mountains at night or in sight of a mountain is helpful but not at all necessary. It is the inner image which is the source of power here.

Picture the most beautiful mountain you know or know of or can imagine, one whose form speaks personally to you. As you focus on the image or the feeling of the mountain in your mind's eye, notice its overall shape, the lofty peak, the base rooted in the rock of the earth's crust, the steep or gently sloping sides. Note as well how massive it is, how unmoving, how beautiful whether seen from afar or up close--a beauty emanating from its unique signature of shape and form, and at the same time embodying universal qualities of "mountainness" transcending particular shape and form.

Perhaps your mountain has snow at the top and trees on the lower slopes. Perhaps it has one prominent peak, perhaps a series of peaks or a high plateau. However it appears, just sit and breathe with the image of this mountain, observing it, noting its qualities. When you feel ready, see if you can bring the mountain into your own body so that your body sitting here and the mountain of the mind's eye become one. Your head becomes the lofty peak; your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain; your buttocks and legs the solid base rooted to your cushion on the floor or to your chair. Experience in your body the sense of uplift, the axial, elevated quality of the mountain deep in your own spine. Invite yourself to become a breathing mountain, unwavering in your stillness, completely what you are--beyond words and thought, a centered, rooted, unmoving presence.

Now, as well you know, throughout the day as the sun travels the sky, the mountain just sits. Light and shadow and colors are changing virtually moment to moment in the mountain's adamant stillness. Even the untrained eye can see changes by the hour. These evoke those masterpieces of Claude Monet, who had the genius to set up many easels and paint the life of his inanimate subjects hour by hour, moving from canvas to canvas as the play of light, shadow, and

color transformed cathedral, river, or mountain, and thereby wake up the viewer's eye. As the light changes, as night follows day and day night, the mountain just sits, simply being itself. It remains still as the seasons flow into one another and as the weather changes moment by moment and day by day. Calmness abiding all change.

In summer, there is no snow on the mountain, except perhaps for the very top or in crags shielded from direct sunlight. In the fall, the mountain may display a coat of brilliant fire colors; in winter, a blanket of snow and ice. In any season, it may at times find itself enshrouded in clouds or fog, or pelted by freezing rain. The tourists who come to visit may be disappointed if they can't see the mountain clearly, but it's all the same to the mountain-seen or unseen, in sun or clouds, broiling or frigid, it just sits, being itself. At times visited by violent storms, buffeted by snow and rain and winds of unthinkable magnitude, through it all the mountain sits. Spring comes, the birds sing in the trees once again, leaves return to the trees which them, flowers bloom in the high meadows and on the slopes, streams overflow with waters of melting snow. Through it all, the mountain continues to sit, unmoved by the weather, by what happens on the surface, by the world of appearances.

As we sit holding this image in our mind, we can embody the same unwavering stillness and rootedness in the face of everything that changes in our own lives over seconds, hours, and years. In our lives and in our meditation practice, we experience constantly the changing nature of mind and body and of the outer world. We experience periods of light and dark, vivid color and drab dullness. We experience storms of varying intensity and violence, in the outer world and in our own lives and minds. Buffeted by high winds, by cold and rain, we endure periods of darkness and pain as well as savoring moments of joy and uplift. Even our appearance changes constantly, just like the mountain's experiencing a weather and a weathering of its own.

By becoming the mountain in our meditation, we can link up with its strength and stability: and adopt them for our own. We can use its energies to support our efforts to encounter each moment with mindfulness, equanimity, and clarity. It may help us to see that our thoughts and feelings, our preoccupations, our emotional storms and crises, even the things that happen to us are much like the weather on the mountain. We tend to take it personally, but its strongest characteristic is impersonal. The weather of our own lives is not to be ignored or denied. It is to be encountered, honored, felt, known for what it is, and help in high awareness since it can kill us. In holding it in this way, we come to know a deeper silence and stillness and wisdom than we may have thought possible, right within the storms. Mountains have this to teach us, and more, if we can come to listen.

Yet, when all is said and done, the mountain meditation is only a device, a finger pointing us toward somewhere. We still have to look, then go. While the mountain image can help us become more stable, human beings are far more interesting and complex than mountains. We are breathing, moving, dancing mountains. We can be simultaneously hard like rock, firm, unmoving, and at the same time soft and gentle and flowing. We have a vast range of potential at our disposal. We can see and feel. We can know and understand. We can learn; we can grow; we can heal; especially if we learn to listen to the inner harmony of things and hold the central mountain axis through thick and thin.

Kabat-Zinn, Jon. Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. New York: Hyperion Books, 1994.

The Lake Meditation

The mountain image is only one of many that you may find supports your practice and makes it more vivid and elemental. Images of trees, rivers, clouds, sky can be useful allies as well. The image itself is not fundamental, but it can deepen and expand your view of practice.

Some people find the image of a lake particularly helpful. Because a lake is an expanse of water, the image lends itself to the lying down posture, although it can be practiced sitting up as well. We know that the water principle is every bit as elemental as rock, and that its nature is stronger than rock in the sense that water wears down rock. Water also has the enchanting quality of receptivity. It parts to allow anything in, then resumes itself. If you hit a mountain or a rock with a hammer, in spite of its hardness, or actually because of it, the rock chips, fragments, breaks apart. But if you hit the ocean or a pond with a hammer, all you get is a rusty hammer. A key virtue of water power reveals itself in this.

To practice using the lake image in your meditation, picture in your mind's eye a lake, a body of water held in a receptive basin by the earth itself. Note in the mind's eye and in your own heart that water likes to pool in low places. It seeks its own level, asks to be contained. The lake you invoke may be deep or shallow, blue or green, muddy or clear. With no wind, the surface of the lake is flat. Mirrorlike, it reflects trees, rocks, sky, and clouds, holds everything in itself momentarily. Wind stirs up waves on the lake, from ripples to chop. Clear reflections disappear. But sunlight may still sparkle in the ripples and dance on the waves in a play of shimmering diamonds. When night comes, it's the moon's turn to dance on the lake, or if the surface is still, to be reflected in it along with the outline of trees and shadows. In winter, the lake may freeze over, yet teem with movement and life below.

When you have established a picture of the lake in your mind's eye, allow yourself to become one with the lake as you lie down on your back or sit in meditation, so that your energies are held by your awareness and by your openness and compassion for yourself in the same way as the lake's waters are held by the receptive and accepting basin of the earth herself. Breathing with the lake image moment by moment, feeling its body as your body, allow your mind and your heart to be open and receptive, to reflect whatever comes near. Experience the moments of complete stillness when both reflection and water are completely clear, and other moments when the surface is disturbed, choppy, stirred up, reflections and depth lost for a time. Through it all, as you dwell in meditation, simply noting the play of the various energies of your own mind and heart, the fleeting thoughts and feelings, impulses and reactions which come and go as ripples and waves, noting their effects just as you observe the various changing energies at play on the lake: the wind, the waves, the light and shadow and reflections, the colors, the smells.

Do your thought and feelings disturb the surface? Is that okay with you? Can you see a rippled or wavy surface as an intimate, essential aspect of being a lake, of having a surface? Can you identify not only with the surface but with the entire body of the water, so that you become the stillness below the surface as well, which at most experiences only gentle undulations, even when the surface is whipped to frothing?

In the same way, in your meditation practice and in your daily life, can you identify not only with the content of your thoughts and feelings but also with the vast unwavering reservoir of awareness itself residing below the surface of the mind? In the lake meditation, we sit with the intention to hold in awareness and acceptance all the qualities of mind and body, just as the lake sits held, cradled, contained by the earth, reflecting sun, moon, stars, trees, rocks, clouds, sky, birds, light, caressed by the air and wind, which bring out and highlight its sparkle, its vitality, its essence.

Coming To Terms With Anger

Adapted from Debbie Fords Newsletters

Living within each one of us is the full range of human emotions. Like a newborn child, one moment we can feel angry, the next moment we can feel sad and the very next moment we can feel overjoyed. And just like every other human emotion, our anger longs to be acknowledged and embraced. Just as we need to acknowledge our fear when we feel afraid, our sadness when we feel sad and our excitement when we feel excited, we must acknowledge our anger when we feel angry. But most often we do not grant this powerful emotion the right to exist. Instead we try our best to repress it, deny it or hope that it will go away. Most of us have spent a lot of energy and gone to great lengths in order to keep from feeling our anger. Smoking, drinking, overeating, overspending, daydreaming, gossiping, blaming others or pretending everything is okay are some of the behaviors we use to mask our rage. Our unacknowledged anger keeps us living in scarcity and puts up huge barriers between ourselves and those we love. And most importantly, it keeps us from receiving the abundance we so rightfully deserve.

Anger is at the root of our self-sabotaging behaviors and often it comes wearing many disguises. We are expressing anger when we compare ourselves to others, when we crave to be more than what we are or have more than we have. It's our anger we're hiding when we work too much or deprive ourselves of rest, love, success or self-care. Our anger manifests itself in our bodies as fatigue, tension and disease. Our anger shows up in our righteous opinions about what others should or should not be doing, and in our belief that we are more evolved than others. Until we give our anger a healthy expression, it will continue to express itself in covert ways. And just for the record, when we direct our anger at others - whether in the form of silent judgment or overt hostility - it only feeds our rage and perpetuates the cycle of self-sabotage.

The first step in the process of embracing our anger is for us to unconceal and be with all the ways that our anger expresses itself. We need to explore these two important questions: Number 1, if you really gave yourself permission to be angry, what would you be angry about? And number 2, how does your anger express itself in your life?

Our anger is a powerful force. It can be used to drive us forward to create great things in the world, it can give us the motivation and inspiration to make positive changes in our lives, or it can be the destroyer of our dreams. For now, give yourself permission to feel your anger and to see where in your life it shows itself.

Healing Action Steps

1. This month, give yourself permission to become aware of how your anger expresses itself. Each time you catch yourself feeling annoyed, frustrated or judgmental of someone else, ask yourself, "What am I really mad at?"
2. Make a list of all the ways you make your anger wrong and identify all the things you do to hide, suppress or deny it. How do you keep yourself from feeling your anger?
3. Notice if you tell yourself that you're not angry, or think you've already made peace with your anger, then look deeper.

Repressed anger is the culprit that robs us of ease, flow, happiness, abundance, joy, and the experience of loving all of who we are. Anyplace in our lives where we are blocked or can't seem to manifest our desires - whether it's in the area of money, career, relationships or health - we can be certain that we are using our anger against ourselves. Misdirected anger prevents us from being all we that can be and having all that we desire. What I'd like to remind you of this month is that we all have the power to choose whether we will allow our anger to eat us up inside or whether we will use it to fuel our ambition and propel us closer to our dreams.

Anger is a powerful and vital human emotion, and when integrated, is one of our greatest allies along our spiritual journey. Anger drives us to action. It breaks through our inertia and motivates us to make changes. It urges us to stand up for ourselves, speak our truth and create healthy boundaries. Our anger allows us to say, "This doesn't work for me." "It's not okay for you to violate me." or "I deserve a better job and more money." Often it is anger - not love - that gives us the strength and the courage to confront and transform unhealthy situations in our lives.

I, for one, deeply value and respect my anger. The fact that children are not taught at an early age how to love themselves angers me very much and drives me to teach self-love and self-acceptance to others. It's my anger that most of us don't realize the magnitude of our own Divinity that inspires me to train and teach thousands of people each year. My anger continues to motivate me to speak my truth, to push the envelope, to risk rejection, and to be intolerant of people hating themselves. Thank God I'm so angry or you would not be reading this right now.

I want to be clear that this conversation is not about unleashing our anger on others, but about learning how to channel it in healthy ways. Misdirected anger can hurt people. All you need to do is look into the outer world to see evidence of that. But when it is embraced, honored, understood and respected for its gifts, our anger provides a powerful call to action. It is the source of our passion, drive, energy and motivation. Anger is the fire in our bellies that allows us to get clear about what we want and what we don't want. It gives us the strength to ask for what we need. When we allow it, our anger can support us in reaching for and attaining everything we want in life. My invitation to you this month is to get angry - and to use its powerful force to transform your reality and bring fuel to your dreams.

Healing Action Steps

1. Take an honest look at yourself and your life and notice what you are angry about. What are you fed up with? What are you no longer willing to tolerate? This could be something within yourself - like your own critical inner dialog - or it could be something external you've been putting up with - like a relationship that no longer serves you or a job that you've outgrown.
2. Rather than suppressing your anger when it arises, allow yourself to feel it move and stir within you. Close your eyes and breathe into the feeling, noticing where it lives in your body. Now ask yourself, "What is my anger trying to show me or guide me toward right now? How can I use this powerful energy to bring me more of what I want in my life?"
3. Take whatever action steps your anger communicates to you, and watch as things start to move forward in your life!

Forgiveness

**I forgive myself for the injuries I have caused myself
Both knowingly and unknowingly,
Through my ignorance, my greed and my fear and anger.
May I be free from mental and physical suffering.
May I be at peace with myself and have ease of being.
May I be happy.**

Try This: Six Steps to Forgiveness

1. Think of a person or situation about which you feel anger or anguish or bitterness or regret. Hold that image like a prism to the light, examining it from every angle.
2. Focus on your role in the painful relationship or situation: where were you wrong or thoughtless or mistaken?
3. Imagine how you would feel if you were no longer angry or upset at the person or situation.
4. Explore the possibility of making amends, whether that means an apology, repayment of a debt, or some other form of restitution-or simply being willing to let go of your resentment.
5. Make the amend - unless it would harm someone.
6. Make a commitment not to harbor resentments in the future

Mindful Living

Congratulations upon completing The Mindful Path Through Shyness Program. You may realize now that the ending is really the beginning of a way of life. The additional meditations that have been provided here may assist you in cultivating mindfulness in the months and years to come.

Priming the Pump

A working definition of Mindfulness is: *non-judgmental awareness*. Mindfulness begins by paying close attention to the here and now. There is no special starting place other than where you are. We have learned these past eight weeks of the importance of paying attention to the present moment in day to day life. The sooner we can identify and be mindful of a stressful situation, the sooner we can develop strategies in dealing with it.

There is a saying to take one day at a time. We can even fine tune this good advice by saying to *take each moment one at a time*. Please try to maintain the mindfulness practice both formally and informally as much as possible. It is actually not far away, all it takes is awareness to remember to pay attention to the present moment.

Suggestions

Try to sit every day, even a short period (20 minutes), will be beneficial. If the day is extremely challenging even one minute of mindfulness can bring you greater stillness. Please also practice compassion: for yourself, all living beings, and the universe.

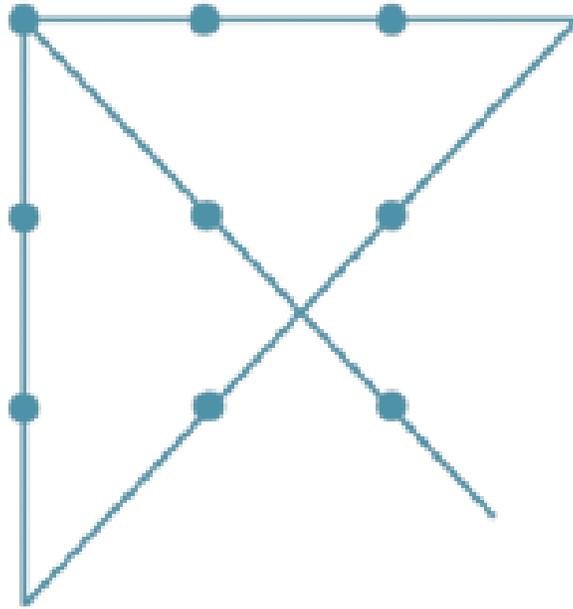
Find others to practice with – sitting with a group or practicing Insight Dialogue with others that are invested in mindfulness, will help you a great deal. Refer to the appendix or the mindful Path through Shyness for resources in your area.

Do the practice that seems the most appropriate. It may be breathing in and out, the body meditation, sitting with awareness, or loving-kindness. The main point is to develop a sense of balance and make the practice your own. Try to apply mindfulness as a way of life in daily activities. *Knowing* when you are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, feeling physical sensations, eating, bathing, toileting, sitting, standing, walking, lying, driving, talking, and the various mental or emotional states as they ebb and flow.

Every moment can be an opportunity for cultivating mindfulness & compassion.

May you be at peace. May the world be at peace. May all beings be at peace.

Answer to 9-dots exercise



Notice how the only way to connect all nine dots, with just four lines, is to go beyond the boundaries of the dots. To accomplish this involves “thinking outside of the box”.

The greatest discovery of our generation is that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can change the outer aspects of their lives. – William James