

Mindfulness 3

Soothing breathing rhythm

Okay, now that you are sitting comfortably, place both feet flat on the floor about a shoulder's width apart and rest your hands in your lap. If you feel comfortable, close your eyes, or look down at the floor if you would prefer. Allow yourself to have a gentle facial expression, perhaps a slight smile.

What I would like you to do is to gently focus on your breathing. As you breathe, try to allow the air to come down into your diaphragm; feeling the area underneath your ribs move as you breathe in and out. I would like you to just notice your breathing, and to play an experiment with it. Breathe a little faster, or slower, until you find a breathing pattern that, for you, seems to be your own soothing, comforting rhythm. It's like you're checking in, linking up, with the rhythm within your body that is soothing and calming to you.

What you will usually find is that your breathing is slightly slower and deeper than normal. Try to ensure that the breaths in and out are smooth and even.

So, continuing to focus on your breathing, just noticing the breath coming in, down into the diaphragm and then moving back out. Sometimes it's useful to focus on the point just inside the nose or mouth, where the air enters and leaves. So in and out ,, ,, in and out.. Just focus on this for a little while.....

Now we can just 'ground' ourselves for a moment. So turn your attention to your body. Sense the weight of your body resting on the chair and the floor underneath you....Allowing yourself to feel held and supported...coming to rest....in the present moment.....

Remember, it is perfectly ok for your mind to wander, that's what our minds do. Just try to notice when your mind wanders off, with a curiosity about where your mind has gone, and then gently guide your attention back to an awareness of your body and breathing, as best as you can. So each time your mind wanders, try to notice it, and gently guide your focus of attention back to your body or your breathing.....Sense the flow of air coming in and out of your nose and mouth....gently observing...no need to change anything.....just allowing things to be as they are.

Before we bring this exercise to a close... when you are ready, you might like to wiggle your toes and fingers gently, slowly open your eyes if you have closed them and bring yourself back to the present moment, re-focusing on the room around you.