

## Mindfulness 4

### Leaves on a stream

In this exercise, we are going to imagine sitting by a stream, and as thoughts come to our head, we'll try to see if we can let them go using the stream to help us. Start by finding a comfortable position and remember that we're trying to become more aware of the here and now in this exercise, a bit like we're trying to 'fall awake'.

When you're ready, take a few deep breaths to help you settle into this exercise. Let the air fill your lungs, your tummy expanding to make room for this, and then letting the air empty from your body.

And now imagine that you are sitting beside a stream that is flowing gently by you. Take a look around you and let your imagination fill in the details of the scene. Notice the stream, and perhaps some trees around you. Bring your awareness to some leaves that are floating down the stream.

For the next few minutes, we're going to focus our attention on the stream. And whenever a thought comes into your head, whatever it's about, we're going to notice the thought, place it on the leaf and let it float away down the stream. We're going to do this for all of your thoughts – pleasant and unpleasant – whatever comes up is ok.

Just keep watching the stream, and noticing what comes into your mind. And when you notice something, place it on a leaf and let it float away. We're not trying to get rid of these thoughts, rather just let them float on by us at their own speed. Some people find it helpful to have a kind, smiling facial expression when they're placing their thoughts on a leaf. Perhaps try this and see how it works for you.

You might get thoughts about being bored, or not doing this right. Just try to notice these thoughts if they come up, gently and kindly place them on a leaf and let them float away.

Sometimes you might get hooked into your thoughts before noticing what's happened. Don't worry if this happens, it's normal and often happens. When you notice that it's happened, just notice your thoughts, and gently out them on a leaf and let them float away.

No matter how many thoughts come up, try to just notice them, place them on a leaf and let them float away.

If a feeling comes up, maybe frustration or tiredness, simply notice it, saying "here's a feeling of frustration" or "here's a feeling of tiredness", and then place those words on a leaf and let them float away.

Whenever thoughts come up for you, try to just notice them, gently and kindly place them on a leaf and let them float away.

And when you're ready, try to bring your attention away from the stream and back to the room around you – noticing the sounds, the feeling of contact with the floor and the chair – and then open your eyes.