COURSE LEADER MANUAL

8 WEEK MINDFULNESS-BASED STILLNESS MEDITATION TEACHER TRAINING
MODULE 1
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WEEK 1

Session Plan

1. Welcome the participants

   The Group Facilitator welcomes the group participants, acknowledging that you are conscious that this is a significant commitment for participants and that you are really hoping that you can help them very directly through the Program.

2. Facilitator Introduction

   The Group Facilitator and co-facilitator if applicable, then introduces him/herself, sharing professional and personal background relevant to the skills and commitment required in presenting this Program.

3. Expectations From The Program

Individual Introductions: Name, where from, what brought you here? What is your interest/motivation? Do you have a particular need from the program?

   The Group leader encourages participants to briefly introduce themselves using what follows as an introduction:

   “We invite you to introduce yourself and to share something more of yourself with the group. As we go randomly around the group, say your name and where you come from. Perhaps you can explain a little bit about what has brought you here and if there is anything in particular that you are hoping to get out of being in the Program. For those of you who are here with a partner or a support person, if one speaks, it is nice if the other person then follows.”

Note: Sometimes the group will choose to go from one person to the next around the circle of participants. Often this takes less time than a random order; and if there is a large group you may suggest this to the group to save time.

   “So, who would like to go first?

   Thank you … who would like to go next?”

Optional: If needed/appropriate the Group Leader can request confidentiality and also talk about commitment and active engagement in the program and the homework.
4. The Rapid Relaxation

To assist the group to relax and settle in, guide them through the Rapid Relaxation.

The Rapid Relaxation

This Rapid Relaxation exercise is best done with your body fairly upright, so just take a moment to adjust your position, ensuring your back is as upright as is comfortable.

Place your feet flat on the floor, a little apart, and then find where your hands are most comfortable—probably just resting on your thighs or cupped in your lap. Just notice what works best for you, and then, when you are ready, let your eyes gently close.

Now, take a deep breath in . . . and gently sigh the breath out . . . ahhhhhh . . . You will probably notice a wave of relaxation flowing down through the body . . . the muscles softening . . . loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . just simply letting go.

Do that once again . . . another, deeper breath in . . . gently sighing the breath out . . . ahhhhhh . . . and then just allowing the breath to take up whatever rhythm feels comfortable for you at the moment . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just feeling the ease of it all . . . Now notice the feeling of letting go a little more with each out breath . . . just simply letting go.

And now, move your back a little from side to side in a gentle swaying motion . . . just enough to feel your spine moving across its point of balance . . . And as you do that, feel the muscles along either side of the spine softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . and then the spine coming to rest in its point of balance . . . Another deeper breath in . . . gently sighing the breath out . . . ahhhhhh . . . just simply letting go.

Then move the head a little from side to side . . . again just a gentle swaying motion . . . just enough to feel the head moving across its point of balance . . . And as you do that, feel the muscles along either side of the neck softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . And the head coming to rest in its point of balance . . . Another deeper breath in . . .
gently sighing the breath out... ahhhhhh.
And now moving the head a little from front to back...
... Feel the ease of the movement... almost like the head is a helium balloon just floating there... and the neck, like a string, gently holding it in place... And then the head coming to rest in its point of balance... Simply resting now in that point of balance... quite effortlessly... just feeling the ease of it all... just going with it... simply letting go.

Again, sit quietly for as long as you choose... Then, when you are ready, just let your eyes gently open.

5. Flipchart 1: Styles of Meditation

- Show the flipchart and explain the three most common styles of meditation and their differences.
  Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 45-46.

- Optional: talk about Direct and Gradual approach to meditation (p.42-44)

FLIPCHART 1:

Styles of Meditation
- Using ATTENTION: Mindfulness
- Using INQUIRY: Contemplation, Who Am I?

6. Flipchart 2: Definition of Mindfulness

- Show the flipchart and briefly emphasise ‘present moment’ experience and ‘non-judgemental’ attention, and lead a brief discussion to clarify what this definition might mean. However, keep in mind that the exercise which follows aims to give a direct experience of what it means.
FLIPCHART 2:

Definition of Mindfulness

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally”
Jon Kabat Zinn

“Mindfulness meditation is choosing to be more fully present, noting any resistance, accepting it and continually choosing to be present with patience and perseverance” Paul Bedson

7. A Short Mindfulness Experiment

✓ Instruct the participants to assume an upright and open posture, close their eyes and pay attention to:
  • The field of darkness in front of their eyes, slightly up at the level of the eyebrows, then
  • The sounds outside the room, the sounds inside the room. Just listening, without judgement or attachment, let the sounds come and go,
  • The feeling of the natural, effortless breathing. “Notice the movement of the chest and belly, the sensation of the air touching the nostrils, the subtle sound of the breathing, the slight pause between inhalation and exhalation, and between exhalation and inhalation”.

✓ Instruction: “If thinking dominates your attention at any stage, simply shift your attention back to the sounds and the breathing. Do not fight the thoughts. No thought is a problem, no thought is important”.

Debrief the exercise:
How was it for you?

Were you able to shift your attention back to simple, present-moment experience when thinking dominated?
Explain and write on the whiteboard the process/mechanism of mindfulness:
Choosing to be more present by shifting attention from:
  • thinking→sensing
  • thinking→observing
  • knowing→flowing
  • narrow-focus of attention (dominated by thought) → open focus
  • notice when your attention gets drawn back into thoughts
  • begin again (with no self-judgement)
  • no goals, no struggle, not trying to change anything or get anywhere........no problems!

8. Definition of MBSM:
MBSM involves choosing to put our attention on our present moment experience, connecting deeply with oneself and finding the ever-present Stillness that is our true nature.
9. Flipchart 3: The Steps of MBSM

- Show the flipchart explaining the steps of MBSM.
  Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 47-56.

**FLIPCHART 3:**

**MINDFULNESS-BASED STILLNESS MEDITATION**

Step 1: PREPARATION (including RELAXATION, POSTURE and ATTITUDE)
Step 2: MINDFULNESS
Step 3: STILLNESS

10. The facilitator talks about benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

**Benefits of Mindfulness:**

N.B. You can adjust this list to make it relevant for your group

- To be fully present, here and now
- To be more connected to yourself, to others and to the natural world
- To increase self-awareness, self-acceptance and self-compassion.
- To become less judgemental of self and others
- To experience uncomfortable/vulnerable thoughts and feelings safely
- To develop kindness, compassion and courage
- To learn the distinction between you and your thoughts
- To have more direct contact with the world, rather than living through your thoughts.
- To learn that everything changes; that thoughts and feelings come and go.
- To experience more calm and peacefulness
- To develop resources for facing fear, sadness, anger and grief
- To become less disturbed by and less reactive to unpleasant experiences
- To have more balance, less emotional reactivity
- To develop the ability to listen deeply and speak your truth
- To lighten up and be less burdened by seriousness and over-responsibility
- To develop the ability to stay grounded, centred and composed even in the midst of craziness
- To improve mental clarity, concentration, relaxation and sleep
- To balance blood pressure and the immune system
- To improve energy levels and reduce fatigue

“We will cover more of this in Week 2 when we present the Healing Overview.”
11. MBSM Step 1: PREPARATION- Relaxation

- Talk about Relaxation.
  Relaxation is a useful preparation for mindfulness meditation; it is not essential to be relaxed to practise mindfulness.
  Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 77-105 (Relaxation).

- **STEP 1: PREPARATION- Posture and Attitude** will be explained over the next two weeks.

12. The Relaxing Body Scan

- Following on from the talk about Step 1: Preparation-Relaxation, guide the group through The Relaxing Body Scan.

**The Relaxing Body Scan**

*Take a few moments to adjust your position . . . get your body settled . . . and when you are ready, let your eyes close gently.*

*Begin by taking your attention down to the feet . . . really concentrating on the feet . . . perhaps moving them a little . . . really feeling what sensations there are in the feet right now . . . Remember that for this exercise there is no right or wrong . . . the exercise is simply one of noticing what sensations there might be in the feet right now . . . As you notice and hold your attention on the feet . . . feel the muscles softening a little . . . relaxing and releasing . . . softening . . . loosening . . . just simply letting go.*

*Remember there is nothing else you need to be doing right now . . . Having given yourself the time and space for this exercise, there is nothing else you need to be doing . . . nowhere else you need to be . . . no one else you need to be pleasing or satisfying . . . It is just a time for relaxing . . . releasing . . . letting go.*

*So now, moving your attention up to the calves . . . it is almost like you are moving your attention up through the calves . . . Feel what sensations might be there at the moment . . . perhaps some parts feel different to others . . . And again, even if some areas feel tight or tense or uncomfortable, just be interested to notice how they feel at this particular time . . . almost like an impartial observer . . . just noticing . . .*
being interested . . . It is a gentle curiosity . . . just notice how your calves are feeling at this particular time . . . And as you hold your awareness on the calves, feel the muscles softening and loosening . . . relaxing and releasing . . . just simply letting go.

Take your attention up to the thighs . . . and feel them relaxing and releasing . . . feel it deeply, completely . . . all down through the thighs and the calves and the feet . . . Sometimes it might feel almost like the muscles are melting down into the chair or the floor a little . . . just relaxing and releasing . . . perhaps feeling a little heavier . . . like they could be melting or merging . . . just feeling them letting go . . . deeply . . . completely . . . letting go.

And now feel it all through the buttocks, the hips and the pelvis . . . Sometimes it helps to imagine there is a belt or band around the hips that has just been loosened a little . . . the big muscles around the hips, softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it.

Bring your attention up into the tummy . . . you will probably notice it rising and falling a little with the breath . . . and then that feeling of letting go again . . . all through the tummy . . . calm and relaxed . . . just going with it . . . calm and relaxed.

Move your attention up to the chest . . . again, just being aware of the chest rising and falling with the breath . . . and feeling the ease of it all . . . just allowing the breath to take up whatever rhythm feels comfortable for you at the moment . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it . . . more and more . . . deeper and deeper . . . letting go.

Now feel a wave of relaxation flowing down through the arms . . . First the upper arms, softening and loosening . . . and down around through the elbows and into the forearms . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . letting go . . . and then down through the wrists . . . the hands and the fingers . . . Sometimes you might notice almost what feels like a tingling flowing into the hands and the fingers . . . a feeling of lightness . . . almost like they could be floating . . . just going with it . . . effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it.
Now feel it all through the shoulders . . . perhaps just raising and lowering the shoulders a little . . . Feel the head moving from side to side . . . and the muscles up either side of the neck . . . softening and loosening . . . just feeling it all through the shoulders . . . the neck and the throat . . . feeling the ease of it all . . . just going with it.

Bring your attention to your face . . . With your lips just lightly touching, feel the jaw drop a little . . . the tongue, soft and loose . . . Feel it all through the mouth . . . and feel it up over the nose and through the cheeks . . . Feel the eyelids smoothing out . . . feeling it deeply . . . all through the eyes . . . and the temples . . . soft and loose . . . And feel it around the ears . . . the back of the head . . . up over the top of the head. And now feel the forehead smoothing out . . . feel it deeply . . . completely . . . feel it all through the body . . . more and more . . . deeper and deeper . . . just letting go . . . going with it . . . feel it through the body, and the mind . . . going with it . . . going with it . . . more and more . . . deeper . . . deeper . . . just simply letting go . . . letting go.

Take as long as you choose to sit quietly . . . Then, when you are ready, you might like to take a deeper breath or two . . . perhaps move your feet a little . . . feel your hands move a little . . . And then, when you are ready, let your eyes gently open again.

13. Farewell Week One

- The facilitator bids the group farewell and recommends practising these relaxation techniques.
- CD: Ian Gawler, Relaxation for Everyone.
1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation

- Refer back to the Definition of Mindfulness from last week.
- Instruct the participants to assume an upright and open posture, close their eyes and pay attention to:
  - The field of darkness in front of their eyes, slightly up at the level of the eyebrows, then
  - The sounds outside the room, the sounds inside the room. Just listening, without judgement or attachment, let the sounds come and go,
  - The feeling of the natural, effortless breathing. “Notice the movement of the chest and belly, the sensation of the air touching the nostrils, the subtle sound of the breathing, the slight pause between inhalation and exhalation, and between exhalation and inhalation”.

Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Handout: Overview of Healing (Growth and Change)

- Distribute the handout and explain the two primary modes of being, the nature of the stress response (the red zone), the relaxation response (the green zone), the perceptions that initiate the two modes of being, neuroplasticity and the brain, how meditation can restore balance and provide ongoing access to the “green zone”.
  Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 124-128.

  Optional: Talk about acute stress, low-grade chronic stress and habits of perception and identity.
**Handout: A Healing Overview**

### Protection - the “red” zone
- Perceived threat/challenge/task
- ↓ Stress Response
- Sympathetic N.S. dominant
- Fight/Flight/Withdrawal/Please/Freeze
- Initiated by HPA axis & SNS
- More blood to limbs and hindbrain

**Physical:**
- ↑ muscular tension
- ↑ cortisol and noradrenaline
- ↑ heart rate, B.P.
- ↑ costal breathing
- ↓ digestive enzymes
- ↓ immune system deregulation
- ↓ tissue/cell repair and healing
- ↓ digestion/absorption/waste elimination
- ↑ acidity & toxicity ↓ oxygenation
- ↑ free radicals and inflammation
- ↑ sense of pain but general desensitisation
- ↑ cholesterol and fats in bloodstream
- ↑ tumour angiogenesis
- ↑ shortening of telomeres & genetic instability

**Emotional/Mental:**
- Hyper-arousal
- XS Busyness
- Hyper-vigilance (active threat detector)
- Excessive thinking (dominates attention)
- Narrow focus of attention
- Defensiveness/Reactivity/XS Control
- XS Goal-orientation/ problem saturation
- XS Judgement and over-reaction

**Contraction**

**Metaphors:**
- “Holding on”
- “Get Set” mode
- “Threat” or “Challenge” mode

### Growth - the “green” zone
- Perceived safety/freedom
- ↓ Relaxation Response
- Parasympathetic N.S.
- Rest/Digest
- Blood flows to digestive system & organs

**Physical:**
- ↓ muscular tension
- ↑ serotonin and melatonin
- ↓ heart rate, B.P.
- ↑ diaphragmatic breathing
- ↑ digestive enzymes
- ↑ immune system
- ↑ tissue/cell repair and healing
- ↑ digestion/absorption
- ↑ alkalinility and oxygenation
- ↓ experience of pain
- ↑ sensitisation & sensuality

**Emotional/Mental:**
- Rest/Fun/Enthusiasm
- Nurturing and Healing
- Digesting food/experience
- Open awareness/Presence
- Growth and Interaction
- Attention/memory
- Empathy/connection
- Vitality and creativity

**Flow**

**Metaphors:**
- “Digesting”
- “Chilling out”
- “Opening up”

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**Glossary**
- S.N.S. = Sympathetic Nervous System
- H.P.A. axis = Hypothalamus Pituitary Adrenals axis
- B.P. = Blood pressure
- ↑ = increase  ↓ = decrease
- → = leads to
3a. Flipchart 1: Challenge/Threat/Task Mode

- Show the flipchart relating it back to the stress and relaxation response and explain how the stress response affects the quality of attention and the ability to be present. Mindfulness is a potent antidote for attentional healing.

FLIPCHART 1:

CHALLENGE/THREAT/TASK MODE

- Hyperactive “threat detector”- the amygdala (↓ insula)
- Narrow focus of attention
- Dominated by excessive thinking
- Projected in time and space
- Constant doing
- More syndrome
- Problem saturation
- Emotional reactivity and defensiveness

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Take a shake break-----------------

3b. A Mindfulness Meditation- Lead the group in a mini meditation

- Talk the group into the upright and open posture, relax into it, bring attention to the space in front of the eyes, sounds and then to the breath. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

4. MBSM Step 1: Preparation- Posture

- Talk briefly about environment, attitude and in detail about posture. Have the group practise their posture as you explain it.

Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 59-73 (Preparation)

NOTES ON POSTURE:

“Sit like a mountain, flow like a river”

There is a definite connection between the position you meditate in (your posture) and attitude of mind. Posture in meditation can be too rigid or too collapsed. Often, as meditators relax in meditation their posture begins to collapse. Rigidity of posture is associated with trying too hard. A collapsed posture is often a sign of sleepiness or lack of attention. Posture which is upright, open and relaxed reflects core strength, courage, balance and equanimity. Poise, grace and solidity are embodied in correct posture for meditation. An upright posture also aligns and integrates the body segments of pelvis, torso and head, allowing smooth diaphragmatic breathing and relaxation of the belly.

A conducive posture for meditation involves:
Sitting
Sitting in a chair, cross-legged on the floor (in half or full lotus position), or using a kneeling stool. Sitting posture is preferable to lying down which can lead to drowsiness or sleepiness. Lying down can be used if sitting creates pain which is too distracting, or if you feel too weak to sit.

Upright spine
Keep the back straight by positioning your shoulders over your hip joints and your ears over shoulders. Do not lean too far forward, backward or to either side. Tuck your chin in slightly, lifting the top of your head and lengthening the back of your neck.

Open chest
Either place your hands palm down, flat on your knees or place your hands right back in your lap so that you are not leaning forward and your chest can be open. Palms may be facing up or down, whichever is most comfortable. Upright spine and open chest reflect the courage to face whatever comes into your awareness, without distraction or avoidance, and it opens the Heart.

Relax the face
Your nose needs to be in line with your navel, not tilting or turning the head; ears over the shoulders. Allow the top of the tongue to be in contact with the hard palate behind your top row of teeth, then soften the tongue and relax the jaw. Eyelids should be just gently touching, not squeezed shut. They may naturally open a little.
Once the back is straight, relax the shoulders and the larger back muscles (trapezius, latissimus dorsi). The upright posture should be maintained by postural muscles which are shorter and closer to the spine, not by the larger external muscles. By sitting upright and relaxing the external muscles, we train the core postural muscles to work whereas often they are weak. An aspect of the stress response is that we create a defensive shell around the body with tight external muscles. Once these muscles begin to relax, the core muscles being weak, the posture collapses. By correcting and maintaining this relaxed, upright posture, we develop more core strength and resilience. So, on the outside we let go of holding on, tightness and defensiveness but at the core, we remain solid and steadfast. Thus, we can become both relaxed and alert.
Whilst meditating, if you find that your posture has become too rigid or is collapsing, then gently and mindfully correct your posture. By maintaining a solid core, you “Sit Like a Mountain”. This means that the rest of your body, breath and mind can lighten up and “Flow like a River”.

5. A Mindfulness Meditation

- Talk the group into the upright and open posture, relax into it, bring attention to the space in front of the eyes, sounds and then to the breath. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

- **Homework:** encourage the group to practise the above meditation for at least 10 minutes each day. Emphasise the importance of home-practise (a discipline of kindness), normalise resistance to practise and explain that you will debrief the homework next session.
Recommend the book: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* by Ian Gawler and Paul Bedson and the CD: *The Meditation Sanctuary* by Paul and Maia Bedson
WEEK 3

Session Plan

1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation
   - Guide the group into their posture; relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds and the breath. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice
   - How did you go? Was there much resistance to practise? What form did the resistance take? Any questions, comments or reports. Speaking up helps everyone, and you are probably not alone with your question/experience.

3. Flipchart 1: Two Aspects of Mind
   - Show the flipchart and explain the active and passive aspects of the mind.

FLIPCHART 1:

TWO ASPECTS OF THE MIND
- ACTIVE: THINKING
  - NAMING/ COMMENTARY
  - WORDS/ PICTURES
  - MONKEY MIND
  - ACQUIRED
  - FOCUSSED
- PASSIVE: AWARENESS
  - SILENT/ STILL
  - DIRECT KNOWING
  - THE OBSERVING MIND
  - ORIGINAL
  - OPEN/SPACIOUS

4. Flipchart 2 and 3: The Thinking Mind
   - Show the flipcharts 2: The Thinking Mind and 3: The Nature of Thinking and explain the strengths and limitations of the thinking mind.
   - Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 128-133.
FLIPCHART 2:

THE THINKING MIND IS
A GOAL-ORIENTED,
PROBLEM-SOLVING MECHANISM.

“The intuitive mind is our sacred gift and the rational, thinking mind is a faithful servant. We have created a society that honours the servant and has forgotten the gift.”

(Einstein)

FLIPCHART 3:

THE NATURE OF THINKING

- MEMORY AND IMAGINATION
- VALUE: JUDGING/EVALUATING/COMPARING
- MEANING: ANALYSING/INTERPRETING
- NAMING: LABELLING/CATEGORISING
- LINEAR: LOGIC/REASON
- PROJECTION: RECALL/REHEARSE/SPECULATE/ANTICIPATE/EXPECT

5. Flipchart 4: Excessive Thinking

Show flipchart: 4 and explain how the habit of narrow-focus attention dominated by thinking leads to excessive thinking.

Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 133-139.

FLIPCHART 4:

EXCESSIVE THINKING CREATES:

- Blame/resentment
- Guilt/shame
- Intolerance
- Pride/Stubbornness
- Perfectionism
- Righteousness
- Inflexible expectations
- Defensiveness/Control
- Reactivity
- Despair
- Helplessness/Hopelessness
- Self-pity
6. **Flipchart 5: Antidotes for Excessive Thinking**

- Show flipchart 5 and explain other antidotes for excessive thinking.

*Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 140-141

**FLIPCHART 5:**

**ANTIDOTES FOR EXCESSIVE THINKING**

- Choosing to be present
- Diaphragmatic Breath (activates parasympathetic nervous system)
- Sensuality
- Feeling the feelings and needs
- Listening deeply
- Speaking the truth
- Contact with Nature
- Rest/relaxation/mindfulness meditation
- Fun/laughter
- Movement/exercise
- Constructive thinking
- Listening to music

7. **Mindfulness of Breath Meditation**

- Revise the 3 steps of MBSM. Step 2 is Mindfulness.

- Revise definition of Mindfulness and emphasise: choosing to be present with no goal, no expectations, no judgement and no measurement; just keeping it gentle and simple. Then guide the group through the *Mindfulness of Breath Meditation*.

**Mindfulness of Breath**  *(8-10 minutes)*

*Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.*
*Take a moment now to adjust your posture.*
*Sit with an upright and open posture.*
*Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body.*
*Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.*
*Relaxing, awake and alert.*
*Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now... to just breathe itself.*

*Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes... it’s like a field of darkness... perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours... just simply resting your attention there.*
*With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)*
Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause) . . . or inside the room . . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment . . . just listening.
(Pause)

Now open your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath . . . as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly . . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.
Notice the feeling of each breath (pause) . . . just your natural breathing (pause) . . . follow each breath.
(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought . . . simply bring your attention back to the next breath . . . being aware of the feeling of the breath again . . . and notice the sounds . . . as you rest your attention in the space in front of the eyes.
(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger . . . perhaps a deeper breath or two . . . start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes . . . have a stretch . . . and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.

8. Debrief the Meditation

❖ How was it? Did you choose to open the focus of attention when it narrowed into a thought stream? Every choice is meditation, the process . . . not an imagined outcome.

❖ Explain the value of being mindful of breath: breath is real, present, important, and effortless.

❖ Explain that the subtle but profound impact of mindfulness comes from shifting attention from thinking→observing and from thinking→sensing i.e. shifting attention from a conceptual reality to an experiential reality.

❖ Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 147-150.

9. MBSM Step 1. Preparation- Attitude

❖ Base the talk on the notes below (which can be given as a handout) and on Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 50-56, and 69-73.

❖ Also talk about the resistances to meditation: boredom, restlessness, impatience and sleepiness. These are actually the withdrawal symptoms from stimulation addiction and constant doing. Be gentle if these resistances arise.
Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 114-119.
NOTES ON ATTITUDE

Attitude in Meditation—passive, alert, receptive, non-judgemental.
As this is such an important aspect of meditation, a solid background is provided. In the group this is presented in a very essentialised form. However, the group leader needs to understand the detail and it will inform subsequent sessions.

It is essential to cultivate and maintain a right attitude to meditation. It not only fosters a tone conducive to getting the most from sitting, but also ensures commitment to long term, consistent practice. To describe attitude accurately, one must speak in paradoxes and of concepts often unfamiliar to a western mind.

“Practise as if your life depends on it and expect nothing”

Meditation is a non-goal oriented state, void of a desire to attain, yet passion, thirst and learning are vital to maintain momentum and commitment. It requires effort, yet there must be no forcing, struggle or striving. It has been described as ‘an effortless effort’ or activity. Intensity of desire must be there to move us on to the cushion and then it must be let go.

Come to meditation with a “neutral attitude, no sense of striving; with a purposeful, but gentle and positive anticipation” (Ian Gawler in Peace of Mind).

7 Key Elements of Attitude

1. A genuine interest that can absorb us. Passion, curiosity and yearning fuel our commitment.

2. Simplicity and non-attachment. A passive, acceptance of whatever is happening in any moment. This sense of letting go without expectation of experience or outcome sets the tone for approaching meditation with lightness and interest. We can relax with a ‘positive expectancy’. No sense of trying, simply being present with no desire to control and no sense of ‘I want’.

“Develop a mind that clings to nothing”
Diamond Sutra

3. Discipline. We need to begin with effort in order to develop concentration and pay attention so that we become effortlessly still and silent. Application is essential. Non-doing is not doing nothing; it is paying attention.

“We have to learn to pay attention steadily and continuously to the reality of our being in the here and now” (John Main)
4. **No judgement.** There is no need for a “self-conscious eye on our progress” (John Main). Being an impartial observer will develop a discriminating awareness or mindfulness, will help to counteract the normal function of the mind to evaluate and assess and enable the meditator to watch with uninvested interest. Become the witness.

5. **Alert and relaxed; simultaneously.** Usually we are one or the other in the west! We need the ‘stillness in mind and heart of totally awakened concentration.’

6. **Patience and perseverance.** We can’t speed up the natural process. It must unfold, but we must be tenacious in our regularity of practice.

   ‘Steady practice with no hurry or worry’
   Muktananda

7. **Open-hearted receptivity.** Dedication and trust are important qualities, as vulnerability is required to let go and surrender to the process. Feelings of playfulness, gratitude, gentleness and generosity will also enhance this openness. Reading, researching and personal experience help to cultivate these qualities.

10. **Mindfulness of Breath Meditation (repeated)**

    **Mindfulness of Breath**  (8-10 minutes)
    Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.
    Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .
    Sit with an upright and open posture.
    Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .
    Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.
    Relaxed, awake and alert.
    Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . .to just breathe itself.

    Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . .
    perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.
    With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

    Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside
    the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)
    Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.
    (Pause)

    Now open your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath ...as you
    breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the
    slight movement of your chest and your belly. . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the
    out-breath.
    Notice the feeling of each breath (pause). . . just your natural breathing(pause)...follow
    each breath.
    (Long Pause)
Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought... simply bring your attention back to the next breath... being aware of the feeling of the breath again... and notice the sounds... as you rest your attention in the space in front of the eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger... perhaps a deeper breath or two... start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes... have a stretch... and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.

11. Dealing With Thoughts

- No thought is a problem, no thought is important. Demonstrate visual metaphor of open hand in front of face... changing focus.
  Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 144-145.

- Talk about dealing with Resistance/Withdrawal symptoms: boredom, restlessness, impatience, sleepiness. Emphasise that resistance is normal, expect it, meditation is patiently dealing with resistance: that’s where the change and the healing are created.

  Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 114-115

- Homework: encourage the group to practise the above meditation for at least 10 minutes each day. Emphasise the importance of the home practice.
WEEK 4

Session Plan

1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation
   - Guide the group into their posture, relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds and the breath. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice
   - How did you go? Resistance?
     Any questions, comments or reports? Speaking up helps everyone, and you are probably not alone.

3. Revision: Attitude, Dealing With Thoughts, Accepting Resistance.

4. Body Awareness/ Body Sense
   - Introduce Body Awareness/Body Sense. The Group Leader explains that ‘paying attention’ to our present moment experience, includes Body Awareness i.e. observing sensations in the body.

   The student can develop Body Awareness to shift the mind’s focus from dominant thoughts (without fighting them) back to a more open, or inclusive awareness of present moment experience. Body awareness is also referred to as body sensing.
   Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 161-172.

5. A Practical Exercise of Body Awareness
   - The facilitator instructs the students to assume an upright and open posture, close the eyes and pay attention to:
     - The screen of darkness in front of their eyes, slightly up at the level of the eyebrows
     - The sounds outside the room, then the sounds inside the room. Just listening without judgement or attachment
     - “Now take the attention down to the feet, feel the sensations of pressure where your feet touch the floor, then feel the subtle sense of aliveness in the feet, a subtle tingling, pressure or light pulsing sensation. Explore the sensation with a non-judgemental curiosity.”
     - Repeat the sensing process with the hands and face.
Debrief the Body Awareness exercise:

- The Group Leader develops a discussion starting with the following questions:
  - Could you feel the subtle sensations in the feet, hands, face?
  - What did it feel like?
  - Was the sensation stronger in one place than another?

6. Exercise to distinguish Thinking from Awareness

- Now that the group has been practising awareness of the breath and awareness of body sense, the facilitator suggests that it is useful to understand the difference between awareness and thinking. When we practise awareness of the feeling of breathing in the body we are not thinking about the breath or trying to change it in any way but just aware of it. The following exercise may help to clarify the difference.
  Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 143-144.

- The facilitator instructs the students to assume an upright and open posture, to close their eyes and to pay attention to:
  - The sounds, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the sounds and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness of sounds)
  - The breathing, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the breathing and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness of breath)
  - Any thoughts that come, without censoring any thoughts. Notice the difference between the thoughts and the awareness of them.

Debrief the exercise:

- What is the difference between thoughts and awareness?
- What are some of the qualities of thoughts and awareness?

After debriefing, the facilitator summarises the differences between Thinking and Awareness. This may be made into a flipchart:

**THINKING**
- Active
- Commentary: words and/or pictures
- Busy
- Judgemental
- Goal-oriented
- Past/Future
- “The Judge or Critic”

**AWARENESS**
- Passive
- Silent
- Spacious
- Accepting
- Patient
- Present – NOW
- “The Compassionate Observer”

- Optional: The facilitator may also distinguish, using a diagram, between the contents of awareness (i.e. the things we are aware of e.g. sensations, breath, thoughts and feelings) and the awareness itself (the field in which the contents appear).
7. **Mindfulness of Body: The Four Access Points**

Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.

Take a moment now to adjust your posture...

Sit with an upright and open posture.

Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body...

Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.

Relaxing, awake and alert.

Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now...to just breathe itself.

Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes...it's like a field of darkness...

Perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours...just simply resting your attention there.

With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause)...or inside the room...just simply listening...with a gentle curiosity... (pause)

Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.

Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath...as you breathe in...and as you breathe out...Feel the air moving over your nostrils...Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly...rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.

Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing...just your natural breathing...follow each breath. (Pause)

Now, take your awareness down to your feet...Feel into your feet...feel the contact between your feet and the floor...

Move your awareness through your feet...noticing any sensations in your feet...again, just that gentle curiosity...

Perhaps you notice feelings of pressure...tingling...softness or hardness...warmth or coolness...Whatever sensations are there...comfortable or uncomfortable...that subtle sense of aliveness in your feet...this is how you know your feet are there...you feel them...just feel them...your toes...your heels...the surface of your feet...all through the feet...And as you feel into your feet, feel the flow of your breath...just simply coming and going. (Pause)

Now bring your awareness up to your hands...rest your attention on your hands.....feel the touch of your hands against your thighs

........your fingers touching each other........notice the temperature through your hands and fingers....notice that subtle sense of aliveness through your hands.....explore all the small sensations around and through your hands.(Pause)

Take your awareness to your shoulders...Notice the feeling in the muscles across the top of your shoulders...and around the base of your neck...perhaps a softness or hardness here or there...
a pressure or a tingling . . . Just notice any sensations there, even if the feeling is very slight . . . stay with it . . . just simply noticing . . . And as you feel into the muscles of your shoulders, feel the flow of your breath in the background. If you notice that your shoulders have come forward, make any gentle corrections to your posture. (Pause)

*Bring your awareness to the space before your eyes* . . . Become aware of any sensations in and around your eyes . . . Move your attention through your eyebrows . . . and across your forehead . . . Notice whatever sensations are there . . . As you feel through the eyes . . . and across the forehead . . . feel the flow of your breath. (Pause)

Now open your awareness to your whole body . . . the feet . . . the hands . . . the shoulders . . . a little of each of these areas. Notice whatever sensations are coming into your awareness now . . . Perhaps the awareness of the space in front of your eyes . . . perhaps the feeling of your breath . . . Notice the movement in the body as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Notice the slight pause between the in-breath and the out-breath . . . the aware mind just noticing.

(Long Pause)

**Reminder:** If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought . . . simply bring your attention back to the next breath . . . feel your feet on the floor . . . feel into your hands . . . your shoulders . . . and the flow of your breathing . . . as you are aware of the space in front of your eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger . . . perhaps a deeper breath or two . . . start to reanimate your body by moving your fingers and toes . . . have a stretch . . . and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.

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**8. Dealing With Thoughts**

- No thought is a problem, no thought is important. Worrying about thoughts is making them heavy and important . . . it is having thoughts about your thoughts. Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 144-145.

- Homework: encourage the group to practise the above meditation for at least 4 times during the week. The CD: *The Meditation Sanctuary*, by Paul and Maia Bedson- Track 1 (available from the Gawler Foundation Resource Centre) guides the student through this meditation.
WEEK 5

Session Plan

1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation

   - Guide the group into their posture; relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds, the breath and sensing the feet. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice

   - How did you go? Any questions, comments or reports. Speaking up helps everyone and you are probably not alone.

3. Brief Revision: Mindfulness= Choosing to be Present= Facing Reality

4. Choosing To Be Present: Mindfulness of Emotions (The Feeling Tone)

   - Talk about the ACE factor, repressive coping, the myth of negative emotions and healthy emotions. A flipchart may be used.
   - Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 181-206.

5. Mindfulness of Emotions Exercise (Centering)

   - Explain that another aspect of mindfulness practice is mindfulness of emotions and can be included along with mindfulness of sounds, sensations and thoughts.
   - The facilitator asks “If I ask you how you feel right now?” .... Where would you look to be able to answer?
   - Then talk about the feeling line in the centre......our sensitivity, vulnerability, emotions, needs and instinct. By paying attention to the feeling line we attend and connect (the ACE factor).
   - Optional: use the young deer visualization (vulnerability) or the loved one visualization (expansive) in order to generate some feelings and then invite the participants to notice where they feel ‘something’ and what it feels like. You might also generate some feelings by guiding them into calling forward some background feelings about the challenges and/or blessings in their life. Imagine them and then notice where the feeling is and what it feels like.
Now guide the group into the Centering Practise, reminding them that they are only bringing their attention to feeling sensations or tones (physical or energetic?)...not labels, insights and without trying to fix or change anything.

**Centering Practise**

*Assume an upright and open posture, close the eyes*

*Pay attention to the screen of darkness in front of your eyes, slightly up at the level of the eyebrows*

*Pay attention to the sounds outside the room, then the sounds inside the room. Just listening without judgement or attachment*

*Now take the attention down to the feet, feel the sensations of pressure where your feet touch the floor, then feel the subtle sense of aliveness in the feet, a subtle tingling, pressure of light pulsing.*

*Allow your breathing to flow naturally. Now with the intention to check-in with how you are feeling, bring awareness to your throat, feel into it, explore the sensations – subtle or stronger. If thoughts or memories come to mind, allow them to come but bring your attention back to the sensations in the throat. (Pause)*

*Let your breathing flow. Now bring attention to the centre of your chest, feeling for any sensations, a slight pressure, ache, hardness or resistance to your breathing, or perhaps it feels soft or comfortable. Explore the feeling sensations with a non-judgemental curiosity. (Pause)*

*Now bring awareness to your solar plexus. Explore the sensations, tightness, a contraction, shakiness, numbness, softness......whatever sensations you find. Just accept them with a non-judgemental curiosity. (Pause)*

*Now bring your awareness down to the belly, around the navel and behind the navel. No need to analyse whether the sensations come from a physical cause or an emotional cause. They affect each other. Explore all the sensations. (Pause)*

*Now broaden the awareness to include the whole feeling line of your being: the throat, the chest, the solar plexus and belly. Keep the feelings company with curiosity and compassion, just sitting with whatever feelings are there.*

*Now open your awareness to include your breathing, the sensation in your feet, the sounds and, of course, the awareness of the ‘silent observer’, the ‘still presence’ which notices sounds, sensations, thoughts and feelings.*
The Group Facilitator debriefs this practice and refers to this practise as being the direct practise of Compassion, MYOB, Self-soothing, Savouring and Ownership of emotions.

6. Flipchart 1: Emotion-Cognitive and Affective

Show flipchart 1 and briefly talk about the two aspects of emotions. Excessive thinking indulges the ‘story’ and creates repressive coping. Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 185-186.

**FLIPCHART 1:**

```
Emotion

Cognitive
Thinking Mind
Interpretation
Analysis
Judgements
“Shoulds/have tos/
ought tos”
Moods/Attitudes

Affective
Feeling
Sensation
Energy
Vulnerability/sensitivity
Needs
Gut feeling

“The Story”

“The Experience”
```
7. The Centering Meditation

**Centering – Mindfulness of Emotions**

Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.

*Take a moment now to adjust your posture.*

Sit with an upright and open *posture*.

Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body.

*Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.*

Relaxing, awake and alert.

*Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . .to just breathe itself.*

*Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes* . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . . perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.*

With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze *(pause)*

*Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)*

*Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment…..just listening.*

*Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath …as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly. . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.*

*Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing . . . just your natural breathing…follow each breath.* (Pause)

*And now bring your awareness to your centre . . . the feeling line of your body . . . With the intention to check in with how you are feeling and with a willingness to notice body sensations, gently ask yourself, ‘How am I feeling?’ . . . Bring your awareness to your throat . . . feel into it . . . With a gentle curiosity, explore the sensations in your throat . . . subtle or strong . . . . . any sensations . . . just rest your attention in the throat and allow any feeling sensations to come into focus…*and, as you feel into your throat, feel the flow of your breathing.*(Pause)

*Now bring your attention to the centre of your chest,*

*feeling for any sensations . . . a slight pressure, an ache, a tightness . . . a hardness or resistance to the breath . . . or perhaps it feels soft and comfortable . . . Explore the body sensations free of any judgement . . . And, as you feel into your chest, feel the flow of your breathing.*(Pause)

*And now bring your awareness to your upper-belly, your solar plexus,* and again ask yourself, ‘How am I feeling?’ . . .

*Notice any sensations in the upper belly . . . a softness, a tightness . . . a shakiness, a numbness . . . whatever sensations you find there . . . As you feel into your upper-belly, feel the flow of your breathing.*(Pause)
Now bring your awareness down to your lower-belly... around and behind the navel... notice any sensations there...
a tightness, a softness, hardness, a shakiness........
There’s no need to analyse whether the sensations come from
a physical cause or an emotional cause... Explore all the
sensations in the lower belly... and feel the flow of your breathing.(Pause)

Now open your awareness to include the whole feeling
line of your being... your throat, chest, solar plexus and lower
belly... Keep the feelings company... with curiosity and compassion... and
if there is an area that feels more intense or vulnerable, just sitting with
whatever feelings are there... And as you notice the feelings in your centre, feel the flow of
your breathing.

(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream
of thought... simply bring your attention back to the next breath... feel your feet on
the floor... feel into your throat... your chest... your belly... and the flow of your
breathing... as you are aware of the space in front of your eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a
little stronger... perhaps a deeper breath or two... start to reanimate your body by moving
your fingers and toes... have a stretch... and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.

- The facilitator debriefs the meditation reassuring those who couldn’t feel much to gently
  persevere... or simply feel the breath moving along the centre line.
- Optional: use the young deer visualization (vulnerability), or the loved person visualization or
  ask them to bring to mind a challenge in their life.

8. Home Practice and Farewell

- Encourage the group to practice the above meditation at least four times during the week
  and remind them to be patient, compassionate and gently persevere.
WEEK 6

Session Plan

1. Welcomes and Mini-Meditation

- Guide the group into their posture; relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds, the breath, sensing the feet and centering. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice

- Ask: Any questions, comments or reports? Is there anything that you would like clarified from everything we have covered?

3. Revise: The Distinction Between Awareness and Thinking/Contents of Awareness and Awareness Itself

- Repeat this exercise from Week 4 (see page 20) The facilitator instructs the students to:

  Assume an upright and open posture, to close your eyes and to pay attention to
  - The sounds, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the sounds and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness of the sounds)
  - The breathing, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the breathing and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness of the breathing)
  - Any thoughts that come, without censoring any thoughts. Notice the difference between the thoughts and the awareness of them.

- Debrief the Exercise
  - What is the difference between thoughts and awareness?
  - What are some of the qualities of thoughts and awareness?

- After debriefing, the facilitator summarises the differences between Thinking and Awareness. Mindfulness is all about familiarising ourselves with the subtle, ever-present “container” which is the observing mind.

- The group leader refers back to Week Four’s session (page 20) and distinguishes between awareness and the contents of awareness. Thoughts, sounds, breathing, feelings and emotions are the contents of awareness. By bringing more attention to the contents of awareness, we become more present and less dominated by thinking. Then, the meditator can also become aware of the awareness itself i.e. the witness or observer. In his/her practice, the meditator becomes aware of the stillness, spaciousness, silence of the
observing self which pays attention to the contents of awareness without judgement or attachment.

Teaching metaphors are used to clarify this distinction:
a) The blue sky and the clouds
b) The waves and the ocean
c) The white page and the writing. Demonstrate this metaphor.

4. Flipchart 1: The Qualities Of Awareness
   • Show the flipchart and describe the qualities of awareness

FLIPCHART 1:

Qualities of Awareness
• Patience
• Presence – Now
• Acceptance
• Appreciation
• Silence
• Non-judgemental
• Openness
• Trust
• Spaciousness
• Stillness

These qualities are subtle qualities of mind and Heart which are important cornerstones of healing and spirituality. They are cultivated simply and effortlessly through the practice of Mindfulness. Actually these words to describe awareness are like ‘fingers pointing to the moon’… awareness is too vast and subtle to be described in words but as pointers they are useful.

--------- Take a stretch break---------

5. The Experiments to notice Movement of Thoughts and Stillness
   • Present the 4 experiments and debrief each one.

The facilitator reminds participants of the ‘Direct Approach’ to learning meditation. Let go, be still. There is nothing you need to do.

Although the ‘Direct Approach’ is accurate enough, often it is of little use in a practical sense. It does not tell you how to let go. So here are a series of simple yet effective exercises which can give you the ‘how to’ of letting go, the ‘how to’ of being with the stillness, through observing thoughts. These exercises will give you the ‘mechanics’ of how to do it.
Where we begin is with mindfulness of thought. We actually give our full attention to our thoughts and then use a series of exercises that lead in a logical and experiential series into a direct experience of the stillness of the observing mind.

The way to proceed is to do each of these short experiments in turn and then go on to the next one. Each exercise only takes a few minutes and the sequence builds upon itself.

The group leader instructs participants to do the exercises as experiments, with that open beginner’s mind, free of expectations, just interested to notice what happens. You are bound to enjoy it and it will be interesting to be sure!

Reading: Meditation An In-Depth Guide pages 209-242.

The 4 Experiments to Notice Movement and Stillness

**Experiment 1**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Allow thoughts to come into your mind and watch the form that they take. (Pause)
Do you hear words, like a commentary or do you see pictures, images, colours?
Just be curious and willing to watch whatever thoughts appear.
Let them come, run their course and go.
Just watching with a gentle curiosity. (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.
(Debrief this experiment)

**Experiment 2**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Allow thoughts to come into your mind and watch the way they appear. (Pause)
Is there a constant stream of thoughts?
Or is there a segment of thought and then a break or a pause before the next thought appears? (Pause)
Do you notice a constant stream of thoughts or segments? (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.
(Debrief this experiment)
**Experiment 3**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Notice that thoughts are appearing, are seen, and move through the field of awareness.......it’s like a background or an observing space in which thoughts appear. (Pause)
Notice that thoughts appear in the observing space, and move through as they change and complete themselves. (Pause)
Just notice the coming and going of thoughts as they move through the stillness and silence of the observing space. Thoughts are moving, the observing space is still and silent. (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.

(Debrief this experiment)

**Experiment 4**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Notice as you watch the thoughts that the stillness and silence of the observing space are not disturbed by the movement of thoughts. (Pause)
Thoughts moving through, sounds moving through, breath moving through.
The background of stillness is always there even as thoughts move through.
Rest some awareness in the stillness of the observing space. (Pause)
Just resting in that still, silent presence for a few moments now.
(Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.

(Debrief this experiment)

- The facilitator debriefs this series of experiments and reassures the participants that if they don’t yet “get it”, not to worry it will become clearer in time with practice.
- Stillness is not a state to be attained, it is the ever-present nature of your Being.
6. Stillness and Movement Using the Metaphor of The Ocean and The Two Directions

- Draw a diagram on whiteboard or flipchart to demonstrate the metaphor of the Ocean and the Two Directions.
  Reading: *Meditation An In-Depth Guide* pages 350-364.

- Read the following passage to the group:

  “The mind is like the ocean. And deep in the ocean, beneath the surface, it’s calm and clear. And no matter what the surface conditions are, whether it’s flat or choppy or even a full gale storm, deep in the ocean it’s tranquil and serene. From the depth of the ocean you can look toward the surface and just notice the activity there, as in the mind, where from the depth of the mind you can look upward toward the waves, the brainwaves at the surface of your mind, where all that activity of mind, thoughts, feelings, sensations, and memories exist. You have the incredible opportunity to just observe those activities at the surface of your mind.”

  Daniel Siegel, *The Mindful Brain*

7. A Short Meditation to Notice the Still and Silent Background of Awareness

- The facilitator instructs the students to assume an upright and open posture, to close their eyes and to pay attention to:
  - The sounds, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the sounds and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness)
  - The breathing, noticing when the thinking mind comments on, or judges, the breathing and when it doesn’t (when there is just awareness)
  - Any thoughts that come, without censoring any thoughts. Notice the difference between the thoughts and the awareness of them.
  - The body sense and the feeling tone.
  - Notice the still and silent awareness in which thoughts, breath, sensations and feelings appear, rest in that stillness.

- Encourage the group to practice Mindfulness of breath, body sense, feeling tone, thoughts and Stillness ......at least 4 times during the week.
  The CD: *The Meditation Sanctuary* - by Paul and Maia Bedson- Track 2 (available from the Gawler Foundation Resource Centre) guides the student through this meditation.
WEEK 7

Session Plan

1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation

- Guide the group into their posture; relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds, and the breath, watching the thoughts and resting in the awareness (stillness). Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice

- “Any questions, comments or reports? Anything that you would like clarified from everything we have covered so far or from your home practise?”

3. Integrating Mindfulness Into Every Day Life By Living Mindfully

- The following discussion is sequential and structured but suggestions and feedback are welcome from the participants. The following areas of mindfulness are explained and encouraged:
  - **Mindfulness of Breathing**: “Remember to breathe”. Stop regularly and take 5 slow, full, conscious breaths and then allow the breath to flow naturally and mindfully. Savour the breath. Notice the first breath that you take each day when you step outside in fresh air. *(Facilitator guides a short practise in breath awareness.)*
  - **Mindfulness of Body**: Remember to bring your awareness to your posture, your muscle tone, and your feet touching the Earth…..open, breathe, let go! *(Facilitator guides a short practise in body awareness.)*
  - **Mindfulness of Eating**: notice the colour and texture of your food. Eat slowly, mindfully. Smell, taste, chew, savour, give thanks. *(Facilitator guides raisin or almond or chocolate experiment in mindful eating).*
  - **Mindfulness of Grooming/Hygiene**: cleanliness, clothes, hair, teeth. Time in the bathroom can be an opportunity for mindfulness. Feel the water on your hands and body, smell the soap, massage the scalp mindfully with shampoo. Make time for the Four Exhilarations (the causes of joy and vitality): Eating, Sleeping, Meditating, Self-care/Exercising. Do one thing at a time.
• **Mindfulness at Home:** cleanliness, housework, tidiness, harmony, beauty, flow (feng shui), listening to music.

(Facilitator guides a short discussion about de-cluttering the home and letting go.)

• **Mindfulness of Standing, Walking, Waiting.**
When walking, notice the physical sensations of taking steps.
Whenever possible, take the stairs and walk up or down mindfully.
Practise MBSM whenever waiting.

(Facilitator guides a short standing and walking meditation. Circle around the room with slow stepping if unable to go outside. Focussed slow walk-inside or open focus-outside.)

• **Mindfulness in Communication:** when listening, be aware of the tendency to be distracted or formulating a reply. Give the speaker the gift of your full attention.
Try closing your eyes when speaking on the telephone to be more mindful of what is being said.

• **Mindful Listening:** facilitator plays some beautiful, rich music and invites the participants to close their eyes and give their attention to the music.

4. **Mini-Meditations and The Centering Exercise**

✓ The facilitator reminds the participants of the importance of “pushing the pause button” and taking “time out!” for a mini-meditation which can include the centering exercise (mindfulness of emotions/feeling tone). Then guides the participants through the steps:
1. Pause.
2. Take five slow, full, conscious breaths and then allow the breath to flow naturally and mindfully. The breath brings life and movement to the feeling center.
3. Connect with the sensations in the feet (grounding) and hands.
4. Connect with the feeling line of throat, chest, solar plexus and stomach with gentle care like an inner embrace.
5. When appropriate, sit with an open awareness of the feeling line and the stillness of the awareness that surrounds and embraces it.

✓ The facilitator debriefs the practise.

The centering mini-meditation can be used to create self-compassion for vulnerable feelings, to bring a gentle curiosity to neutral feelings and to savour pleasant feelings. It can be practised in a difficult situation.......or for savouring a pleasant situation.

**Optional:** Centering creates contact with your Heart Space; this contact can be developed and expanded through the practise of the Gratitude Meditation.
Gratitude Meditation

Prepare yourself for this meditation by practising MBSM for five to ten minutes.

Now bring to mind all of the material things in your life that sustain and comfort you... the food you eat, the clothes you wear, your home... Bring to mind the material things that entertain and inspire you... your books, garden, television, furnishings, artworks... In your mind, begin to recall and name all those material things. As you dwell on these things, say to yourself:

Thank you. Thank you for all these things that support and comfort me, that amuse and inspire me. Thank you very much.

Breathe consciously... Direct the breath towards your heart... As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your teachers... all those who have encouraged, inspired or otherwise helped you to grow... Some of your teachers may have been kind, some more ruthless... In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name all of your teachers. Then say to yourself:

Thank you. Thank you to all of my teachers.

Thank you for the lessons you have given me. Thank you very much.

Breathe consciously... Direct the breath towards your heart... As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your friends... all of the people who have shared fun, challenges and love with you... all of the people who have supported you... It may be a small select group or a larger group... In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name all of your friends. Then say to yourself:

Thank you. Thank you to all of my friends.

Thank you for your love and support. Thank you very much.

Breathe consciously... Direct the breath towards your heart... As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your family members... your parents, grandparents and ancestors who stand behind you... your brothers and sisters who stand beside you... perhaps your children who stand in front of you... All of your family members... In your mind, begin to recall, picture and bring to mind all of your family members. Then say to yourself:

Thank you. Thank you to all of my family members.

Thank you for all the fun, challenges and love that
we have shared. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you very much. Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind the **people with whom you have shared intimate love** . . . your lovers, partners, spouse . . . all of the people who have touched your heart as you have touched theirs . . . It may be a small select group or just one person . . . In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name your beloved ones. Then say to yourself: 

*Thank you. Thank you to my loved ones. Thank you for the love that we have shared. Thank you very much.* Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now bring to mind **your own unique and precious self** . . . In your mind, begin to recall times in your life, see your face at various ages, and say your own name. Then say to yourself: *Thank you. Thank you to my own true self. Thank you for this precious life. Thank you very much.* Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Let the feeling of gratitude spread to every part of your body. Let every cell of your body say: 

*Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for this unique, precious life.* If it feels appropriate, place your palms together in front of your chest in a prayer position. You may even like to bow your head a little as you continue to say to yourself and to all of Life: *Thank you. Thank you very much.*

### 5. Mindfulness in Daily Life as Homework

- The facilitator encourages the participants to practise mindfulness in daily life as homework

- The facilitator tells the group that they will be ‘tested’ next week on bringing mindfulness into everyday life and they should bring back to the group some reports to share of their efforts.

The facilitator recommends re-reading Chapter 9-Mindfulness of Emotions and Chapter 10-Connecting with Feelings from *Meditation an In-Depth Guide.*
WEEK 8

Session Plan

1. Welcome and Mini-Meditation

   ❖ Guide the group into their posture; relax into it, aware of the space in front of eyes, sounds, the breath, thoughts and aware of stillness. Give reminders about coming back to an open, present awareness when the narrow-focus of thoughts takes their attention.

2. Debrief: The Home Practice

   ❖ Any questions, comments or reports. Anything that you would like clarified from everything we have covered.

3. Brief Revision: The Three Steps of MBSM

   FLIPCHART 1:

   MINDFULNESS-BASED STILLNESS MEDITATION

   Step 1: PREPARATION (including Relaxation, Posture, and Attitude)
   Step 2: MINDFULNESS (sounds, breath, body sense, feeling tone, thoughts)
   Step 3: STILLNESS

   ❖ Briefly revise and then ask for any questions or comments.
   ❖ Suggest a stretch and shake break before the next meditation.

4. The Complete MBSM Meditation

   Mindfulness Based Stillness Meditation-The complete practice

   Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.
   Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .
   Sit with an upright and open posture.
   Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .
   Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.
   Relaxing, awake and alert.
Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now...to just breathe itself.

Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes...it's like a field of darkness...perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours...just simply resting your attention there. With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause)...or inside the room...just simply listening...with a gentle curiosity... (pause)
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.

Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath...as you breathe in...and as you breathe out...Feel the air moving over your nostrils...Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly...rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.
Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing...just your natural breathing... simply following each breath. (Pause)

Next, bring your awareness down to your feet...Move your awareness through your feet...Notice any sensations in your feet...Just feel them...feeling into your toes...your heels...the surface of your feet...all through the feet...And as you feel into your feet, feel the flow of your breath...simply coming and going...just watching... quite effortlessly. (Pause)

Now bring your awareness up to your hands......rest your attention on your hands......feel the touch of your hands against your thighs......your fingers touching each other......notice that subtle sense of aliveness through your hands......explore all the small sensations around and through your hands. (Pause)

Now bring your awareness to your shoulders...Notice the feeling in the muscles of your shoulders...the base of your neck...a pressure or a tingling...Just feel it...simply noticing...And as you feel into the muscles of your shoulders...feel the flow of your breath...simply being aware of the breath. (Pause)

Now, as you are aware of the space before your eyes, become aware of any sensations in and around your eyes...Move your attention through your eyebrows...and across your forehead...Notice whatever sensations are there...As you feel through the eyes and across the forehead, feel the flow of your breath...just resting in the awareness.

Now, with a willingness to get in touch with how you are feeling inside, bring your awareness to your centre...the feeling line of the body...Feeling into the throat...feeling
into the centre of the chest . . . feeling into the solar plexus . . . and feeling into the belly . . . resting your attention along the whole feeling line of your being . . . Keep the feelings company, with curiosity and compassion . . . just simply being aware . . . And as you notice the feelings in your centre, feel the flow of your breathing.

Open your awareness to the whole body . . . Notice whatever sensations are coming into your awareness at this particular moment . . . Perhaps the awareness of the space in front of your eyes . . . Perhaps the feeling of the breath . . . If any thoughts come to your awareness, just let them come and go . . . Watch the thoughts coming and going. And notice the background of stillness . . . the background across which the thoughts travel . . . Just noticing whatever comes and goes . . . just noticing . . . Being aware of that still and silent presence . . . simply resting in that stillness.

(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought . . . simply bring your attention back to the next breath . . . being aware of the feeling of the breath again . . . and notice the sounds, your feet resting on the floor, the feeling line through your centre . . . as you rest your attention in the space in front of the eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger . . . perhaps a deeper breath or two . . . start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes . . . have a stretch . . . and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.

❖ Debrief the meditation for questions, comments and reports.

5. The Key Insights, Learning and Changes From the Course

❖ Invite the group to reflect on the key insights, learning and changes from the course

❖ Invite the participants to turn to a partner and take turns in discussing the key insights, learning and changes coming from the course.

❖ After this discussion invite any open sharing from the discussion with the whole group.

6. Evaluation Forms (see appendix)
7. **Ongoing Programs/Courses**

- Talk about any of your own ongoing courses or classes or support and the ongoing support of the Gawler Foundation’s:
  - Residential Weekend Meditation retreats
  - Resource Centre for books and CDs
  - Website: www.gawler.org
  - Foundation Membership

8. **A Group Meditation**

*Invite the participants to bring their chairs close together so they can hold hands.*

*They turn their left hand so the palm is facing upwards, their right hand so the palm is facing downwards then move their right hand to take the left hand of the person next to them.*

*As they breathe in, they bring their attention to the touch of the person’s hand in their left hand.*

*As they breathe out, they bring their attention to the touch of the person’s hand in their right hand.*

*As they breathe in, they imagine that they are receiving thanks and well wishes from the group.*

*As they breathe out, they imagine that they are giving thanks and well wishes to the group.*

*Give the hand a little “thank you” squeeze before releasing them.*

9. **The Facilitator Wishes the Group Well and Bids Them Farewell**
Meditation Scripts

The Rapid Relaxation

This Rapid Relaxation exercise is best done with your body fairly upright, so just take a moment to adjust your position, ensuring your back is as upright as is comfortable.

Place your feet flat on the floor, a little apart, and then find where your hands are most comfortable—probably just resting on your thighs or cupped in your lap. Just notice what works best for you, and then, when you are ready, let your eyes gently close.

Now, take a deep breath in . . . and gently sigh the breath out . . . ahhhhhh . . . You will probably notice a wave of relaxation flowing down through the body . . . the muscles softening . . . loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . just simply letting go.

Do that once again . . . another, deeper breath in . . . gently sighing the breath out . . . ahhhhhhh . . . and then just allowing the breath to take up whatever rhythm feels comfortable for you at the moment . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just feeling the ease of it all . . . Now notice the feeling of letting go a little more with each out breath . . . just simply letting go.

And now, move your back a little from side to side in a gentle swaying motion . . . just enough to feel your spine moving across its point of balance . . . And as you do that, feel the muscles along either side of the spine softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . and then the spine coming to rest in its point of balance . . . Another deeper breath in . . . gently sighing the breath out . . . ahhhhhhh . . . just simply letting go.

Then move the head a little from side to side . . . again just a gentle swaying motion . . . just enough to feel the head moving across its point of balance . . . And as you do that, feel the muscles along either side of the neck softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . And the head coming to rest in its point of balance . . . Another deeper breath in . . . gently sighing the breath out . . . ahhhhhhh.
And now moving the head a little from front to back . . .

. . . Feel the ease of the movement . . . almost like the head is a helium balloon just floating there . . . and the neck, like a string, gently holding it in place . . . And then the head coming to rest in its point of balance . . . Simply resting now in that point of balance . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just feeling the ease of it all . . . . . . . . . going with it . . . simply letting go.

Again, sit quietly for as long as you choose . . . Then, when you are ready, just let your eyes gently open.
The Relaxing Body Scan

Take a few moments to adjust your position . . . get your body settled . . . and when you are ready, let your eyes close gently.

Begin by taking your attention down to the feet . . . really concentrating on the feet . . . perhaps moving them a little . . . really feeling what sensations there are in the feet right now . . . Remember that for this exercise there is no right or wrong . . . the exercise is simply one of noticing what sensations there might be in the feet right now . . . As you notice and hold your attention on the feet . . . feel the muscles softening a little . . . relaxing and releasing . . . softening . . . loosening . . . just simply letting go.

Remember there is nothing else you need to be doing right now . . . Having given yourself the time and space for this exercise, there is nothing else you need to be doing . . . nowhere else you need to be . . . no one else you need to be pleasing or satisfying . . . It is just a time for relaxing . . . releasing . . . letting go.

So now, moving your attention up to the calves . . . it is almost like you are moving your attention up through the calves . . . Feel what sensations might be there at the moment . . . perhaps some parts feel different to others . . . And again, even if some areas feel tight or tense or uncomfortable, just be interested to notice how they feel at this particular time . . . almost like an impartial observer . . . just noticing . . . being interested . . . It is a gentle curiosity . . . just notice how your calves are feeling at this particular time . . . And as you hold your awareness on the calves, feel the muscles softening and loosening . . . relaxing and releasing . . . just simply letting go.

Take your attention up to the thighs . . . and feel them relaxing and releasing . . . feel it deeply, completely . . . all down through the thighs and the calves and the feet . . . Sometimes it might feel almost like the muscles are melting down into the chair or the floor a little . . . just relaxing and releasing . . . perhaps feeling a little heavier . . . like they could be melting or merging . . . just feeling them letting go . . . deeply . . . completely . . . letting go.

And now feel it all through the buttocks, the hips and
the pelvis . . . Sometimes it helps to imagine there is a belt or band around the hips that has just been loosened a little . . . the big muscles around the hips, softening and loosening . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it.

Bring your attention up into the tummy . . . you will probably notice it rising and falling a little with the breath . . . and then that feeling of letting go again . . . all through the tummy . . . calm and relaxed . . . just going with it . . . calm and relaxed.

Move your attention up to the chest . . . again, just being aware of the chest rising and falling with the breath . . . and feeling the ease of it all . . . just allowing the breath to take up whatever rhythm feels comfortable for you at the moment . . . quite effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it . . . more and more . . . deeper and deeper . . . letting go.

Now feel a wave of relaxation flowing down through the arms . . . First the upper arms, softening and loosening . . . and down around through the elbows and into the forearms . . . relaxing . . . releasing . . . letting go . . . and then down through the wrists . . . the hands and the fingers . . . Sometimes you might notice almost what feels like a tingling flowing into the hands and the fingers . . . a feeling of lightness . . . almost like they could be floating . . . just going with it . . . effortlessly . . . effortlessly . . . just going with it.

Now feel it all through the shoulders . . . perhaps just raising and lowering the shoulders a little . . . Feel the head moving from side to side . . . and the muscles up either side of the neck . . . softening and loosening . . . just feeling it all through the shoulders . . . the neck and the throat . . . feeling the ease of it all . . . just going with it.

Bring your attention to your face . . . With your lips just lightly touching, feel the jaw drop a little . . . the tongue, soft and loose . . . Feel it all through the mouth . . . and feel it up over the nose and through the cheeks . . . Feel the eyelids smoothing out . . . feeling it deeply . . . all through the eyes . . . and the temples . . . soft and loose . . . And feel it around the ears . . . the back of the head . . . up over the top of the head.
And now feel the forehead smoothing out . . . feel it deeply . . . completely . . . feel it all through the body . . . more and more . . . deeper and deeper . . . just letting go . . . going with it . . . feel it through the body, and the mind . . . going with it . . . going with it . . . more and more . . . deeper . . . deeper . . . just simply letting go . . . letting go.

Take as long as you choose to sit quietly . . . Then, when you are ready, you might like to take a deeper breath or two . . . perhaps move your feet a little . . . feel your hands move a little . . . And then, when you are ready, let your eyes gently open again.
Mindfulness of Breath  (8-10 minutes)
Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.
Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .
Sit with an upright and open posture.
Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .
Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.
Relaxing, awake and alert.
Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . . to just breathe itself.

Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . .
perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.
With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside
the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment . . . just listening.
(Pause)

Now open your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath . . . as you
breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly. . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.
Notice the feeling of each breath. . . just your natural breathing . . . follow each breath.
(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought . . . simply bring your attention back to the next breath . . . being aware of the feeling of the breath again . . . and notice the sounds . . . as you rest your attention in the space in front of the eyes.
(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger . . . perhaps a deeper breath or two . . . start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes . . . have a stretch . . . and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.
**Mindfulness of Body: The Four Access Points**

Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.  
Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .  
Sit with an upright and open posture.  
Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .  
Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.  
Relaxing, awake and alert.  
Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . .to just breathe itself.  

Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . . perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.  
With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)  

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)  
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.  

Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath . . .as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly. . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.  
Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing . . . just your natural breathing...follow each breath. (Pause)  

Now, take your awareness down to your feet . . . Feel into your feet . . . feel the contact between your feet and the floor . . .  
Move your awareness through your feet . . . noticing any sensations in your feet . . . again, just that gentle curiosity . . .  
Perhaps you notice feelings of pressure . . . tingling . . . softness or hardness . . . warmth or coolness . . . Whatever sensations are there . . . comfortable or uncomfortable . . . that subtle sense of aliveness in your feet . . . this is how you know your feet are there . . . you feel them . . . just feel them . . . your toes . . . your heels . . . the surface of your feet . . . all through the feet . . . And as you feel into your feet, feel the flow of your breath . . . just simply coming and going. (Pause)  

Now bring your awareness up to your hands . . . rest your attention on your hands......feel the touch of your hands against your thighs . . . .your fingers touching each other.........notice the temperature through your hands and fingers.....notice that subtle sense of aliveness through your hands.....explore all the small sensations around and through your hands. (Pause)  

Take your awareness to your shoulders . . . Notice the feeling in the muscles across the top of your shoulders . . .and around the base of your neck . . . perhaps a softness or hardness here or there . . .
a pressure or a tingling . . . Just notice any sensations there, even if the feeling is very slight . . . stay with it . . . just simply noticing . . . And as you feel into the muscles of your shoulders, feel the flow of your breath in the background.
If you notice that your shoulders have come forward, make any gentle corrections to your posture. (Pause)

Bring your awareness to the space before your eyes . . . Become aware of any sensations in and around your eyes . . . Move your attention through your eyebrows . . . and across your forehead . . . Notice whatever sensations are there . . . As you feel through the eyes . . . and across the forehead . . . feel the flow of your breath. (Pause)

Now open your awareness to your whole body . . . the feet... the hands... the shoulders...a little of each of these areas. Notice whatever sensations are coming into your awareness now . . . Perhaps the awareness of the space in front of your eyes . . . perhaps the feeling of your breath . . . Notice the movement in the body as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Notice the slight pause between the in-breath and the out-breath . . . the aware mind just noticing.
(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought . . . simply bring your attention back to the next breath... feel your feet on the floor . . . feel into your hands... your shoulders ... and the flow of your breathing . . . as you are aware of the space in front of your eyes.
(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger...perhaps a deeper breath or two...start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes...have a stretch...and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.
Centering – Mindfulness of Emotions

Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.
Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .
Sit with an upright and open posture.
Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .
Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out feel your muscles softening and loosening.
Relaxing, awake and alert.
Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . .to just breathe itself.

Now became aware of the space before your closed eyes . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . .
perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.
With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.

Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath ...as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . . Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly . . . rising with the in-breath, sinking with the out-breath.
Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing . . . just your natural breathing...follow each breath. (Pause)

And now bring your awareness to your centre . . . the feeling line of your body . . .
With the intention to check in with how you are feeling and with a willingness to notice body sensations, gently ask yourself, ‘How am I feeling?’ . . . Bring your awareness to your throat . . . feel into it . . . With a gentle curiosity, explore the sensations in your throat . . . subtle or strong . . . . . . any sensations . . . just rest your attention in the throat and allow any feeling sensations to come into focus...and, as you feel into your throat, feel the flow of your breathing.(Pause)

Now bring your attention to the centre of your chest,
feeling for any sensations . . . a slight pressure, an ache, a tightness . . . a hardness or resistance to the breath . . . or perhaps it feels soft and comfortable . . . Explore the body sensations free of any judgement . . . And, as you feel into your chest, feel the flow of your breathing.(Pause)

And now bring your awareness to your upper-belly, your solar plexus, and again ask yourself, ‘How am I feeling?’ . . .
Notice any sensations in the upper belly . . . a softness, a tightness . . . a shakiness, a numbness . . . whatever sensations you find there . . . As you feel into your upper-belly, feel the flow of your breathing.(Pause)
Now bring your awareness down to your lower-belly... around and behind the navel... notice any sensations there... a tightness, a softness, hardness, a shakiness... There's no need to analyse whether the sensations come from a physical cause or an emotional cause... Explore all the sensations in the lower belly... and feel the flow of your breathing. (Pause)

Now open your awareness to include the whole feeling line of your being... your throat, chest, solar plexus and lower belly... Keep the feelings company... with curiosity and compassion... and if there is an area that feels more intense or vulnerable, just sitting with whatever feelings are there... And as you notice the feelings in your centre, feel the flow of your breathing.

(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought... simply bring your attention back to the next breath... feel your feet on the floor... feel into your throat... your chest... your belly... and the flow of your breathing... as you are aware of the space in front of your eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger... perhaps a deeper breath or two... start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes... have a stretch... and when you are ready slowly open your eyes.
The 4 Experiments to Notice Movement and Stillness

**Experiment 1**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Allow thoughts to come into your mind and watch the form that they take. (Pause)
Do you hear words, like a commentary or do you see pictures, images, colours?
Just be curious and willing to watch whatever thoughts appear.
Let them come, run their course and go.
Just watching with a gentle curiosity (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.
(Debrief this experiment)

**Experiment 2**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Allow thoughts to come into your mind and watch the way they appear. (Pause)
Is there a constant stream of thoughts?
Or is there a segment of thought and then a break or a pause before the next thought appears? (Pause)
Do you notice a constant stream of thoughts or segments? (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.

(Debrief this experiment)

**Experiment 3**
Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Notice that thoughts are appearing, are seen, and move through the field of awareness........it’s like a background or an observing space in which thoughts appear. (Pause)
Notice that thoughts appear in the observing space, and move through as they change and complete themselves. (Pause)
Just notice the coming and going of thoughts as they move through the stillness and silence of the observing space. Thoughts are moving, the observing space is still and silent. (Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.

(Debrief this experiment)
**Experiment 4**

Take up your meditative posture.
Become aware of the space in front of your closed eyes and your breathing.
Just watching your breath (Pause)
Now, in the same way, just watch your thoughts.
Notice as you watch the thoughts that the stillness and silence of the observing space are not disturbed by the movement of thoughts. (Pause)
The background of stillness is always there even as thoughts move through.
Rest some awareness in the stillness of the observing space. (Pause)
Just resting in that **still, silent presence** for a few moments now.
( Longer pause)
When you are ready just open your eyes.

(Debrief this experiment)
**Gratitude Meditation**

Prepare yourself for this meditation by practising MBSM for five to ten minutes.

Now bring to mind all of the **material things** in your life that sustain and comfort you . . . the food you eat, the clothes you wear, your home . . . Bring to mind the material things that entertain and inspire you . . . your books, garden, television, furnishings, artworks . . . In your mind, begin to recall and name all those material things.

As you dwell on these things, say to yourself:

*Thank you. Thank you for all these things that support and comfort me, that amuse and inspire me. Thank you very much.*

Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your **teachers** . . . all those who have encouraged, inspired or otherwise helped you to grow . . . Some of your teachers may have been kind, some more ruthless . . . In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name all of your teachers.

Then say to yourself:

*Thank you. Thank you to all of my teachers.*

*Thank you for the lessons you have given me. Thank you very much.*

Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your **friends** . . . all of the people who have shared fun, challenges and love with you . . . all of the people who have supported you . . . It may be a small select group or a larger group . . . In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name all of your friends.

Then say to yourself:

*Thank you. Thank you to all of my friends.*

*Thank you for your love and support. Thank you very much.*

Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind all of your **family members** . . . your parents, grandparents and ancestors who stand behind you . . . your brothers and sisters who stand beside you . . . perhaps your children who stand in front of you . . . All of your family members . . . In your mind, begin to recall, picture and bring to mind all of your family members.

Then say to yourself:

*Thank you. Thank you to all of my family members.*

*Thank you for all the fun, challenges and love that we have shared. Thank you for your love and support. Thank you very much.*
Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now allow to come to mind the **people with whom you have shared intimate love** . . . your lovers, partners, spouse . . . all of the people who have touched your heart as you have touched theirs . . . It may be a small select group or just one person . . . In your mind, begin to recall, picture and name your beloved ones. Then say to yourself:

*Thank you. Thank you to my loved ones.*
*Thank you for the love that we have shared. Thank you very much.*
Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Now bring to mind **your own unique and precious self** . . .
In your mind, begin to recall times in your life, see your face at various ages, and say your own name.
Then say to yourself: *Thank you. Thank you to my own unique self. Thank you for this precious life. Thank you very much.*
Breathe consciously . . . Direct the breath towards your heart . . . As you breathe out, let your heart be touched with the feeling of gratitude.

Let the feeling of gratitude spread to every part of your body. Let every cell of your body say:
*Thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you for this unique, precious life.*
If it feels appropriate, place your palms together in front of your chest in a prayer position. You may even like to bow your head a little as you continue to say to yourself and to all of Life: *Thank you. Thank you very much.*
Mindfulness Based Stillness Meditation-The complete practice

Gently close your eyes and settle into your body.
Take a moment now to adjust your posture . . .
Sit with an upright and open posture.
Now, in your own way, take a few moments to relax your body . . .
Take three slow, deep conscious breaths and as you breathe out
feel your muscles softening and loosening.
Relaxing, awake and alert.
Allow your breath to find its own depth and rhythm now. . .to just breathe itself.

Now become aware of the space before your closed eyes . . . it’s like a field of darkness . . .
perhaps there are some muted shapes or colours . . . just simply resting your attention there.
With relaxed eyes and a soft gaze (pause)

Now bring your attention to any sounds coming to you from outside (pause). . . or inside
the room. . . just simply listening . . . with a gentle curiosity . . . (pause)
Allow the sounds to call your attention into the present moment.....just listening.

Now as you bring your awareness to your breath, notice the feeling of the breath ...
as you breathe in . . . and as you breathe out . . . Feel the air moving over your nostrils . . .
Feel the slight movement of your chest and your belly. . . rising with the in-breath, sinking
with the out-breath.
Perhaps there is even a gentle sound with your breathing . . . just your natural
breathing...follow each breath. (Pause)

Next, bring your awareness down to your feet . . . Move
your awareness through your feet . . . Notice any sensations in
your feet . . . Just feel them . . . feeling into your toes . . . your
heels . . . the surface of your feet . . . all through the feet . . . And
as you feel into your feet, feel the flow of your breath . . . simply
coming and going . . . just watching . . . quite effortlessly. (Pause)

Now bring your awareness up to your hands..........rest your attention
on your hands.......feel the touch of your hands against your thighs.....
your fingers touching each other.......notice that subtle sense of aliveness
through your hands...........explore all the small sensations around and
through your hands. (Pause)

Now bring your awareness to your shoulders . . . Notice
the feeling in the muscles of your shoulders . . . the base
of your neck . . . a pressure or a tingling . . . Just feel it . . .
simply noticing . . . And as you feel into the muscles of your
shoulders . . . feel the flow of your breath . . . simply being
aware of the breath. (Pause)
Now, as you are aware of the space before your eyes, become aware of any sensations in and around your eyes. Move your attention through your eyebrows and across your forehead. Notice whatever sensations are there. As you feel through the eyes and across the forehead, feel the flow of your breath. Just resting in the awareness.

Now, with a willingness to get in touch with how you are feeling inside, bring your awareness to your centre. The feeling line of the body. Feeling into the throat, feeling into the centre of the chest, feeling into the solar plexus, and feeling into the belly. Resting your attention along the whole feeling line of your being. Keep the feelings company, with curiosity and compassion. Just simply being aware. And as you notice the feelings in your centre, feel the flow of your breathing.

Open your awareness to the whole body. Notice whatever sensations are coming into your awareness at this particular moment. Perhaps the awareness of the space in front of your eyes. Perhaps the feeling of the breath. If any thoughts come to your awareness, just let them come and go. Watch the thoughts coming and going. And notice the background of stillness. The background across which the thoughts travel. Just noticing whatever comes and goes. Being aware of that still and silent presence. Simply resting in that stillness.

(Long Pause)

Reminder: If you notice your attention wandering or becoming caught up in a stream of thought, simply bring your attention back to the next breath. Being aware of the feeling of the breath again. And notice the sounds, your feet resting on the floor, the feeling line through your centre. As you rest your attention in the space in front of the eyes.

(Long Pause)

Now as we come towards the end of this meditation, allow your breathing to become a little stronger. Perhaps a deeper breath or two. Start to reactivate your body by moving your fingers and toes. Have a stretch. And when you are ready, slowly open your eyes.
MBSM 8 week course feedback form

Name: .................................................................(Optional)

1. What, for you, was most useful about the program?
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2. How was the balance between theory/explanation and practise?
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3. List 3 benefits you were hoping to gain from attending the program.

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4. How well have these been met?
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5. Do you have any suggestions for how the program could be improved?
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6. Were there any unexpected benefits from the program, or do you have any other comments?
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