



# *Become more present*

Mindfulness is about focusing our attention and increasing awareness of the present moment. Often we get trapped in our own thoughts and lose a sense of what is around us.

Find something to look at. What you choose is up to you, start with a single item. A chair, a table, a person, a wall, a glass.

Once you have chosen your object, look at it intently for a few minutes. Take several deep breaths as you focus on the object to help you relax and focus your attention.

Imagine you are going to paint it, now do a word painting.

Describe the object in great detail, observing aspects of it that you wouldn't normally see. The texture, the colour, the shape, the position, the density. Describe the feelings that arise in the present moment as you focus your attention on the object.

As you write, take a breath after each sentence to focused.

## **Debrief**

- What did you notice that perhaps you wouldn't normally?
- As you look back at the object now, does it appear any different?
- What relationship does it have with any feelings that arose during the exercise?



# Examine a difficult relationship

Take a moment to think of a current or past conflict that you've struggled to navigate. It could be a current issue or it could be something that is in the past.

In this exercise we will explore the situation from 3 positions:

1. **The "I" perspective** - This is the perspective we use on a daily basis.
2. **The "other" perspective** - This involves imagining how the other person perceives the situation. It requires us to let go of our own person projections about the situation. To explore how the other person may think or feel about it.
3. **The "outsider" perspective** - What would someone who you respect who is outside of the situation say?

Take a moment to write a few sentences from each position. Each time you change position, take a moment to really embody the other person. It may help to stand up and physically sit in a in a different position.

You can also try using your **non-dominant hand** when writing in one of the other positions.

<b>I</b>	
<b>Other</b>	
<b>Outsider</b>	

## Debrief

- What did you find when you viewed your situation from all three positions?
- Which position do you use most often? Which would be beneficial to include more often?
- What was the difference in the content of the writing?



# Explore your identity

This exercise explores the different parts of your identity that make up your whole self. Each of us has a cast of characters that show up at various points in your day. This is a creative exercise that enables you to explore these characters playfully.

Imagine you are on a bus. Everyone on the bus is a different part of your psyche, a sub-personality. Your task is to meet and speak with every one of these people, no matter how unsavoury they may appear to be.

As you take a journey on the bus, sit down next to each of the passengers individually. Ask them their name and which trait they represent. Notice how they are dressed, how they smell, their physical appearance. Really embrace the creative side of the exercise.

Ask these questions of each passenger:

- What is your gift to me?
- What do you need for me to integrate you into my life?
- What else do you need from me?

One character to explore here may be the inner critic that prevents you from fully embracing mindful writing.

## **Debrief:**

- What characters were you drawn to? What characters did you avoid?
- How might you fully integrate these characters into your life?
- What aspects of this exercise did you enjoy most?

## **Inspiration for this exercise:**

The Darkside of the Light Chasers - Debbie Ford



# Relax physical pain

We can go weeks, months, years with unacknowledged physical pain. Perhaps a painful hip, a creaky knee or an itchy elbow.

Being aware, present and acknowledging physical discomfort can often help us reframe the pain it may be causing.

Scan through your body and identify a part (internally or externally) that is a source of discomfort.

Think of a few words or phrases that describe that part of the body. Perhaps there is a metaphor that springs to mind (creaky knee is actually a good example)

Now explore that part of your body through writing a dialogue, a conversation between yourself and that part. It will look much like the script of a play:

**Me:** Why are you raising your ugly head again?

**Creaky Knee:** Because you pushed me hard

**Me:** I don't know why you cannot take the effort

**Creaky Knee:** I have done so many times but now I need rest

**Me:** .....

## Debrief:

- What new observations did you make?
- How might acknowledging this pain change your relationship to it?
- How do you feel now?

## Inspiration for this exercise:

The Wounded Storyteller - Arthur Frank



# *Increase emotional awareness*

Scan your body from head-to-toe and observe how your body feels. Is there a strong physical sensation or emotion present?

Identify an emotion or physical sensation you want to explore more deeply, for example Anger. Really embody that emotion and describe it as concretely as you can using a metaphor. In the example of Anger it might be like a <fire>.

Once you have identified the metaphor explore it further using these clean questions:

1. What kind of <fire> is that <fire>?
  - a. For example; Is it hot? glowing? soft? strong?
2. Is there anything else about that <fire>?

Continue using these questions to help build the metaphor and grow a deeper awareness of the present moment. As you ask the questions new metaphors may emerge. Use the same questions to explore any other metaphors that arise.

## **Debrief:**

- What drew you to that emotion or physical sensation?
- How did the metaphor change as you explored it?
- What aspects of this exercise did you enjoy most?

## **Inspiration for this exercise:**

Clean Language: Revealing Metaphors and Opening Minds: Wendy Sullivan and Judy Rees