

# MINDFULNESS FOR SCHOOLS

## A training course for teachers and teenagers

### Before and After



**Carol Cattley & Jini Lavelle**

**GOODWILL TEACHING GUIDE**

# Mindfulness for Schools

## A training course for teachers and teenagers

*This is a PSHE resource for the secondary curriculum. In line with the National Healthy Schools Programme, it is aimed at Key Stages 3-4; however, primary KS2 teachers can find it equally useful. The syllabus stands on its own; it also has obvious cross-curricular links with Science, PE, RE, Philosophy, Psychology, English and Citizenship.*

## WHY BE MINDFUL?

Today mind scientists understand that Mindfulness — the practice of making ourselves more aware of our thoughts, feelings and behaviour — will clarify life experience. Modern neuroscience and psychology, supported by ancient wisdom, has turned training in Mindfulness into a highly rewarding educational subject — for adolescents and adults alike. Traditional schooling encourages cognitive ability; instilling knowledge and emphasising intellectual prowess. However, 21st century education aims to cultivate other mental faculties. Educationists realise that teaching teenagers how to understand themselves — what can be called their inner life — will advance their emotional literacy, the obvious

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...We didn't invent mindfulness. We don't own it or hold a patent. We do know something about working with this simple, provocative way of relating to self, others and the world that transports meditation and mindfulness from the familiar territory of the monastery and meditation hall into the clinic, laboratory, and nitty-gritty diversity of everyday human affairs.

**Saki Santorelli**

*Director, Stress Reduction Clinic, UMass Medical Center, US*

life-skill for fostering happiness and wellbeing. Part 1 traces the long history of Mindfulness through philosophy, religion and its use in modern medicine.

The lessons in Part 2 [Module 1](#) introduce well-tried techniques for learning to concentrate on thoughts and feelings. First

focusing intently on tasting a raisin, students then learn how to notice the rhythm of their breathing, followed by body sensations, movements, sounds and thoughts.

In [Module 2](#) the lessons cover relevant mind science — including the 'Fight or Flight' cycle and stress. They also look into the deep-rooted link between Mindfulness and the Arts. Each 45-minute session allows time for teaching, practice, poetry reading and sharing of thoughts and ideas.

Part 3 contains the poems for reading aloud, selected from various times and cultures.

Part 4 encourages debate on Mindfulness in society, and introduces Presence — a new learning theory that aims to bring about profound change to solve global problems.

## WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the practice of being consciously aware of the present moment. This method of paying attention — noticing we are noticing our thoughts and feelings — enables us to respond to a situation rather than react to it from habit, out of unconscious conditioning and automatic patterns of behaviour.

Mindfulness is cultivated by focusing deliberately, without judging; concentrating on things as they actually are, rather than as we would like them to be. On this course, students learn to hold and observe their thoughts/sensations/emotions — self-awareness.

Thinking is a biological, electro-chemical activity. The brain interacts with the physical world through the senses, making connections (neural pathways), recording experiences (memories). Memory is essential for imagining. Imagination is needed to think ahead. Memory is malleable, allowing us to integrate past and future, abstract and plan.

One recent unexpected discovery concerns the neuroplasticity of the brain — its ability to make structural changes throughout our lives; for this reason

practicing Mindfulness can alter or construct new patterns of thinking and behaviour. This has obvious relevance for teenagers, not least because the frontal cortex (the brain part that deals with boundaries, risk-taking, empathy, etc.) is still developing.

### Doing and Being

Mindfulness teachers often tell us that we operate in two mental gears — aptly known as Doing and Being. Most of our life is spent in the Doing mode, also known as ‘living in the head’. Whilst Doing we operate more or less automatically, forever analysing and problem-solving to achieve aims.

In this digital age Doing makes increasing demands on us, and over-Doing can accelerate stress. Mindfulness practice will help to balance Doing with Being. This is the space we allow for slowing down and reflecting, being aware of ‘this moment in time’. In the Being mode we can observe our thoughts and feelings without engaging with them (see box [page 7](#)).

### Children and emotional literacy

Until the late C20th it appeared impossible to study the emotions, although steady progress was being made in the behaviour sciences — a far easier proposition. Today, of

My mind is troubled, like a fountain stirred and  
I myself see not the bottom of it.

***Troilus and Cressida III.3***

A turn or two I'll walk,  
To still my beating mind.

***The Tempest IV.1***

There is nothing either good or bad  
but thinking makes it so.

***Hamlet I1.2***

**William Shakespeare**

The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgement, character and will...An education which should improve this faculty, would be the education *par excellence*.

**William James**

*Principles of Psychology, 1890.*

1842-1910, American philosopher at Harvard, today seen as the ‘father of psychology’, who coined the phrase ‘stream of consciousness’. He was the brother of Henry James.

By watching yourself in your daily life with alert interest, with the intention to understand rather than to judge... you encourage the deep to come to the surface... This is the great work of awareness; it removes obstacles and releases energies by understanding the nature of life and mind.

**Maharaj Nisargadatta**

1897-1981, Hindu spiritual teacher

How might new understanding about learning inform a curriculum that better addresses the changing social and emotional worlds of young people?

**Colleen McLaughlin**, University of Cambridge Faculty of Education, in the on-going QCA Futures debate.

## Part I

course, imaging technology allows scientists to look at the activity of the brain itself, therefore a growing light is being shed on the mysteries of the mind.

This educational course is gleaned from several burgeoning fields of brain science, psychology and philosophy. In the 1990s Daniel Goleman pioneered work on emotional intelligence and children — suggesting that schools should offer teaching in how to bring intelligence to the emotions. This he thought could be achieved through ‘self-control, zeal, persistence and ability to motivate oneself’ (see *right*).

### An evolutionary anomaly

Before practicing Mindfulness one neurobiological fact should be understood: human beings have a ‘divided self’ (William Blake). This helps to explain the often conflicting relationship between our rational thoughts and irrational emotions.

Evolutionary psychology accounts for the anomaly through the shape of the brain. The neo-cortex (new cover) is used for thinking; but it grew many millions of years after the limbic system — the centre of the emotions, containing the amygdala and hippocampus — housed above the spinal cord.

This older so-called reptilian brain still works autonomically, more or less involuntarily controlled through the nervous system. Originally it governed everything that would have been necessary for prehistoric man’s survival — movement, bodily functions, emotions and memory.

### The elephant and the rider

So we all have two centres of intelligence, and the emotional brain tends to dominate; therefore it is true to say that ‘the heart rules the head’. One social psychologist\* puts it this way: he imagines a rider (the reasoning, thinking mind) on an elephant (the emotional mind) pulling the reins to get it to turn, stop or go. But he can only direct things when the animal has no desires of its own. When it really wants to do something else, the rider is no match for the elephant.

### Where mindfulness comes from

In modern times the Buddha (Awakened One) — a historical figure from the 5th BCE — has made a mark on medical science. This early thinker likened himself to a doctor with a cure for dukkha (Sanskrit for ‘dis-ease’, translated as suffering) — meaning both the craving for material things and the

*\*Jonathan Haidt The Happiness Hypothesis*

Mind is the mysterious something which feels and thinks.

**John Stuart Mill**

*1806-73, philosopher and political economist*

A view of human nature that ignores the power of emotions is sadly shortsighted. The very name homo sapiens, the thinking species, is misleading in the light of the new appreciation and vision of the place of emotions in our lives that science now offers. As we all know from experience, when it comes to shaping our decisions and our actions feeling counts every bit as much — and often more — than thought. We have gone too far in emphasising the value and import of the purely rational — of what IQ measures — in human life. Intelligence can come to nothing when emotions hold sway.

**Daniel Goleman**

*Psychologist and author of*

***Emotional Intelligence, why it can matter more than IQ, 1995***

Anyone can become angry — that is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, in the right way — this is not easy.

**Aristotle**

*383-322BCE, Greek philosopher,  
from **The Nicomachean Ethics***

I want to grow up, but it’s a distant dream.

**Zak in *The Unteachables***

*TV Channel 4, 2005*



## Part I

sense of life's impermanence. He thought that to live life to the full people should understand themselves, i.e. be more Self-Conscious.

Among the world religions, Buddhism has clear-sighted practices for contemplating the self. Its philosophical texts — originally printed on palm leaves — contain psychological insights, and its bodhisattvas (like some Hindu gods) often represent familiar mind states, especially of love, anger and peace. Mindfulness appears to be the essence of Buddhism.\*

### Western interest in eastern thought

Like other C19-20th thinkers, the psychoanalyst Carl Jung studied eastern religions — recognising the significance of what is seen today as secular meditation. Describing the Buddha as 'a model for men to emulate', he deplored what he thought of as a western bias against 'self-knowledge', partly blaming it on Protestant ethics. Like the C18th philosopher Emmanuel Kant, who believed that 'Man should be an end in himself — not God', Jung regretted that 'man's own happiness was not considered to be the aim of life'.

\* See Goodwill's *Buddhism and Hinduism through Art*.

### Meditation and neuroscience

The present Dalai Lama remarks on a lack of 'self-love' in western culture. Describing himself as an accidental scientist, he has for decades debated the link between mind science and Buddhist practices. In the 1960s, aspiring young scientists would visit him in India. He has since helped to establish and presides over the Mind and Life Institute. In the US in 2003 the first public dialogues took place between the Dalai Lama, other Buddhist monks and scholars, and scores of psychologists and neuroscientists.

Although neurobiology is beginning to map the brain in wholly new ways, and its activity can be observed through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), it is not possible to research the mind entirely through such imaging. Therefore the practice of meditation has been recruited in the interests of mind science.

In the US substantial funding goes into finding out what happens in the brain when people meditate. Already accepted as a useful tool, scientific research now confirms that meditation is good for people and can improve their mental health: so Buddhist monks are not born smiling — they have to work at it!

◆ The words meditation, medicine and measure are from the same Sanskrit root meaning restoring right inward balance.

All major religions emphasise the value of developing the qualities that science now seems to be showing are good for your health.

**Redford Williams**

***The Trusting Heart.** Random House, 1989*

I show you on the one hand suffering and on the other hand the way out of suffering.

**The Buddha**

Know thyself

**Delphic Oracle**

*C5 BCE **Socrates**, Greek philosopher*

Be ye lamps unto yourselves...

To be whole is full time.

**Carl Jung**

*1875-1961, Swiss psychologist*

The coming of Buddhism to the west was the most important development of the 20th century.

**Arnold Toynbee**

*1889-1975, historian*

### **Stress and Wellbeing**

The term Mindfulness was coined in medicine in the 1970s by Jon Kabat-Zinn — a molecular biologist at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Interested in Zen, he used meditation to pioneer a successful Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Programme (MBSR) for people with a chronic illness. Through continuing research and his best-selling books, he has been introducing Mindfulness practice internationally — in medicine, organisational management and increasingly in education.

In the 1990s MBSR branched into Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), researched in the UK at Bangor and the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry, led by Mark Williams. This Mindfulness syllabus for schools has grown out of both these research programmes.

END OF PART I

Surely school is a place where one learns about the totality, the wholeness of life. Academic excellence is absolutely necessary, but a school includes much more than that. It is a place where the teacher and the taught explore not only the outer world, the world of knowledge, but also their own thinking, their behaviour.

**J. Krishnamurti**

*1895-1986, British philosopher and spiritual teacher*

Through Mindfulness practice our way of seeing ourselves — mind, body, character — alters through a process of becoming increasingly sensitive and aware.

**Jini Lavelle**

## TEACHING AWARENESS

Teachers are likely to enjoy delivering this course. Here is a practical and theoretical guide which will instil confidence to teach Mindfulness. Of course, enthusiasm and understanding the material are essential. But lack of experience should not be a barrier to acquiring this discipline: we all possess creative ability waiting to be drawn upon.

Teach from what you know and your personal experience. It is not difficult to focus on the breath. If you are unfamiliar with meditating you will need to develop a personal practice; like students, you should build up to practice for 20 minutes a day.

### Benefits for young people

Practicing Mindfulness is a modern life skill, as important as any curriculum subject. Learning to live in the 'now' will help students to recognise emotions and impulses, identify the difference between feelings and actions. Mindfulness enables more skillful decision-making. Students will empathise more, learn from each other, know how to make the most of relationships. Poetry illuminates life experience; so poetry reading and lively discussion are key elements in each lesson.

### Overview of the course

Module 1 covers awareness exercises, teaching how to focus on the present by noticing an object, breathing, body sensations, feelings

and thoughts. Observing the flow of mental events enables thoughts to be recognised as brain activity. Physical stretching is another concentration exercise.

Module 2 studies the automatic Fight-Flight Cycle and stress, conditioned thinking, how thoughts are interpreted, neuroplasticity and the function of neural pathways. Lesson 12 explores Mindfulness and poetry. Finally, students assess the course and discuss Mindfulness as a way of life. Ideas for wider debate are outlined in Part 4.

### Teaching tips

Class layout should be informal. Have a clock, and maybe a bell to end exercises. Journals are needed for homework and Lesson 1 requires a bag of raisins. Use the audio tracks until you have learnt to speak an exercise yourself. Experience moments of silence as positive teaching — time for Being rather than Doing. Each class begins with a two-minute silence — an opportunity to switch-in to the subject. The poems are either with the teaching notes or signposted to Part 3. Lessons 10 and 11 have comprehension exercises. The syllabus is designed to be taught in 12 consecutive lessons of 45 minutes, plus a final session of celebration. Alternatively, it could be spread over several terms, with more time for exercises, teaching and talk.

Meditation is Not what you Think  
**T-shirt slogan**

Knowledge does not mean mastering a great quantity of information but understanding the nature of mind. This knowledge can penetrate...our thoughts and illuminate each one of our perceptions.

**Matthieu Ricard**

French scientist and Buddhist monk, author of *Happiness*.

Daily Life ...Awareness can be practised anywhere — you can meditate as you work, communicate, rest, travel and love. Bring a meditative attitude to everything you do.

**Martine Batchelor**

*Buddhist nun, teacher and writer.*

### ◆ Exit Gradgrind

Today the Gradgrind tradition — the task of the Victorian schoolmaster in Dickens' *Hard Times* to turn pupils into a fact-filled and obedient labour force — is giving way to producing creative young people. C21st employers expect their employees to show initiative and an ability to solve problems in fresh ways.

## THE MINDFULNESS TRAINING SYLLABUS

*For convenience the course is laid out in a lesson-plan format. However, each session is likely to take more than one teaching period. It is recommended that if necessary the classes and exercises are frequently repeated.*

*Practice is essential for this programme. As well as class discussion of homework, students must use their journals. This develops the art of reflection, practical and theoretical understanding of Mindfulness and, when shared, enables everyone to learn from each other.*

### MODULE 1 — Teaching and practicing Mindfulness

- Lesson 1 Learning to Live in the Present
- 2 The Breath
  - 3 Being present in the Body
  - 4 Walking Mindfully
  - 5 Sitting practice 1 — Breath and Sensation
  - 6 Sitting practice 2 — adding Sounds and Thoughts
  - 7 Wellbeing and Mindful movement

### MODULE 2 — Mind science and Mindfulness

- 8 The Mind-Body connection and Stress
- 9 The Mindful Response and the 3-minute Breathing Space
- 10 Thinking and Interpreting
- 11 Mood and Emotion — alerting to thoughts and moods
- 12 Poetry can bring us into Awareness

### FINALE — Mindfulness and Wellbeing

#### The Being Mode

Learning how to stop all you're doing and shift over to a 'being' mode, learning how to make time for yourself, how to slow down and nurture calmness and self-acceptance in yourself, learning to observe what your own mind is up to from moment to moment, how to watch your thoughts and how to let go of them without getting so caught up and driven by them, how to make room for new ways of seeing old problems and for perceiving the inter-connectedness of things, these are some of the lessons of mindfulness. This kind of learning involves settling into moments of being and cultivating awareness. The more systematically and regularly you practice, the more the power of mindfulness will grow and the more it will work for you.

**Jon Kabat-Zinn**



## LESSON 1

### Learning to live in the present

DON'T FORGET THE RAISINS

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

#### Exercise 1

Q. What did you notice?

A. Continuous thoughts? Discomfort?

**Discuss** distraction, e.g. When is this going to end? Why are we doing this? I'm bored. Did I finish my maths homework?

This is what the mind does. It is always thinking thoughts, just as the heart pumps blood.

#### Exercise 2 The Raisin Exercise — the first exercise in paying close attention.

Hand round a bowl of raisins and ask each person to take one and hold it in the palm of their hand. Play the audio track, or follow the raisin exercise (see *next page*) and use it as the basis for speaking the instructions slowly.

#### Discuss

Q. What did you notice? Wandering mind? Difficulty concentrating? Rich taste? We don't usually really taste food. We are thinking about something else. **This is Mindfulness in action: Being in the present moment.**

#### DEFINITION OF MINDFULNESS

- ◆ **Intentional**
- ◆ **Focused attention**
- ◆ **In the present moment**
- ◆ **Without judging**

### Awareness v. automatic pilot

- ◆ Much of the time we are unconscious of our thoughts and the mind seems to run on automatic pilot.
- ◆ Concentration needs practice. The word relates to 'arrow-head' — implying intense power. Focused attention often comes naturally: watching a film, using the computer, reading a book, for instance. However, to develop mindful awareness paying close attention needs to be cultivated.
- ◆ Being mindfully aware enables us to observe our patterns of thought — those which can be helpful or harmful to our daily life, and the choices we make.
- ◆ For certain activities, such as driving a car, riding a bike it is essential that our brain functions automatically. However, unless we intentionally focus on a task, we tend to react through a mask of conditioning and habit, e.g. instantly judging whether we like or dislike a person by their appearance.
- ◆ Sitting silently allows us to realise how active our mind is. How it is constantly full of Doing thoughts.
- ◆ The raisin exercise demonstrates the way to get the most out of any experience. How often do we put a handful of raisins into our mouth and hardly taste them?

#### Exercise 3 What is Mindfulness?

Go through and expand the definition in the box below:

**Intentionally v. autopilot.** Knowing you are doing something as you are doing it.

**Focused attention.** The mind is usually scattered and wanders from where it was intended to be.

**In the present moment.** Now. Not caught up in the past/memory or future expectation/anticipation. Knowing that we are remembering or planning.

**Without judging,** i.e. criticising. We tend to have black or white opinions about everything, 'I like this, I don't like that.' 'This is good, this is bad' — the mind evaluating and analysing. Always thinking instead of experiencing this living moment, just as it is.

**Exercise 4** Read aloud the poem **How to cut a pomegranate** (p40).

**Practice for this week.** Students to practise being mindful when they eat, once a day, even if it is only sucking a sweet. Record what they notice in their homework journals.

## **RAISIN EXERCISE**

*Add a 10-second pause between phrases and deliver instructions in a matter-of-fact way, at a slow but deliberate pace, asking the class to do the following:*

### **SEEING AND TOUCHING**

Take the raisin and hold it in the palm of your hand, or between finger and thumb... Paying attention to seeing it, looking carefully as if you have never seen such an object before... Turning it over in your fingers... Feeling the texture between your fingers... Examine the highlights where the light catches the surface, the darker hollows and folds and the colour. Letting your eyes explore every part of it.

### **SMELLING**

Now holding it beneath your nose, carefully noticing any smell... Taking another look at it... Putting it to your ear... Does it make a sound?

And now taking it to your lips, maybe noticing how your hand and arm know where to put it... Perhaps noticing your mouth watering...and gently placing it in your mouth without biting it, just explore the sensation of having it in your mouth, its texture and flavour...

### **TASTING AND SWALLOWING**

When you are ready, taking a bite with curiosity, noticing the taste it releases... slowly chewing it, noticing the saliva in the mouth, the change in consistency... Then, when you feel the desire to swallow seeing if you can first detect the intention so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow... Finally, see if you can follow the sensation of swallowing, feeling it moving down your throat... to your stomach, realising that you are now one raisin heavier.

END OF LESSON 1

## **MINDFULNESS IS —**

Paying attention, here and now, with kindness and curiosity.

**Amy Saltzman, MD**

*US Mindfulness teacher*

## **WATCHING THE MIND**

Our bodies cannot wander off into the past or the future, but our minds seem to do it a lot of the time. Practising some simple exercises in awareness on a regular basis can help us be present, have moment-to-moment awareness of what is happening in and around us. This helps to calm the mind, stop habitual responses and bring us into Being. Watching our mind at work, learning not to automatically react to what presents itself, we can mindfully hold and stay with our experiences. With practice this leads to enduring shifts in behaviour.

**Elizabeth Eeley**

*nutritionist, JR hospital, Oxford*

## LESSON 2

### The Breath

THE BREATH LINKS LIFE FROM BIRTH TO DEATH, IN EVERY MOMENT, FLOWING BY ITSELF LIKE A RIVER.

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed, focusing on breathing.**

#### Exercise 1

Q.What did you notice?

**Exercise 2** This is a Listening Skills exercise, learning to listen to each other while discussing the homework practice.

Read the poem **Listen** (right).

What is the poem about?

Why is listening important?

**Exercise 3** Homework review of Class 1.

Q. What difference did being present/mindful make? What did you notice when eating?

#### Exercise 4 What is Mindfulness?

Go over the definitions from Class 1 (p.8).

### Focusing on the breath

- ♦Mindfulness practice builds on skills of concentration, using the breath as a vehicle. Focusing on the breath easily connects the mind with the body.
- ♦Awareness of breathing brings us into the present moment.
- ♦Focusing on the breath takes up the space used by thinking.
- ♦When we notice our mind has wandered, we are being mindful.
- ♦The way we breathe can be an indicator of our mood or emotional state.

#### Exercise 5 The Breathing practice.

The class is going to concentrate on their breathing, just as it is, to see what they notice. Learn the transcript (see *next page*) or use audio track 1.

End with reading the poem **Enough** (p.40).

Q.What did they notice in this exercise? Wandering mind? Thoughts, thoughts, thoughts. Body discomfort?

**This week's practice.** Students to notice their breath: sit for a few minutes each day. Undertake one activity mindfully, e.g. brushing their teeth, and record their observations daily.

#### LISTEN

When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice  
you have not done what I asked.

When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way  
you are trampling on my feelings.

When I ask you to listen to me and you feel you have to do something to solve my problems  
you have failed me,  
strange as that may seem.

When you do something for me that I can and need to do for myself,  
you contribute to my fear and weakness.

So, please listen and just hear me, and, if you want to talk, wait a minute for your turn: and I will listen to you.

*Anonymous, contemporary*

## BREATHING PRACTICE

### AWARENESS OF THE BODY

Sit upright with your back unsupported, close your eyes and feel your feet on the floor, your bottom in contact with the seat and your hands on your thighs or in your lap...

Now you are mindful and in the present moment.

### FOCUSING ON THE BREATH

Bring your attention to breathing, just as it is... feeling your breath... notice where you feel it... at the nose... in the chest... in your tummy?

Feel the whole of the in breath...the whole of the out breath and the pause before the next breath comes in... don't force your breathing or try to change it... feel the natural rhythm, just the way it is.

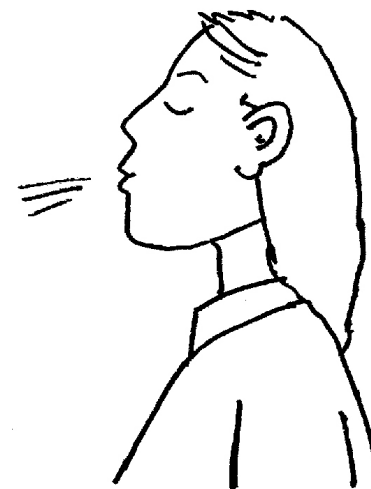
### THE WANDERING MIND

When your mind wanders away (it will) and you become aware of this, it means you are being mindful again...

Notice with curiosity what the thoughts were, e.g. planning, worrying, fantasising, judging, etc.

Then gently bring your attention back to the breath, the rising and falling... feeling the whole of the in breath and the pause... the whole of the out breath and the pause... before the next breath... notice the expansion and contraction of the rib cage... the inflation and deflation of the abdomen.

Continue to feel your breathing and when the mind wanders bring it back to the breath without criticising yourself. That is what the mind does, it thinks, just as the lungs inhale and exhale. It is important to be aware that the mind has wandered, as this is how we learn to pay attention, in this new way, intentionally, in each moment.



Breath is the bridge which connects life to consciousness, which unites your body to your thoughts. Whenever your mind becomes scattered use your breath as the means to take hold of your mind again.

**Thich Nhat Hahn**

*Vietnamese Zen master  
(see p. 39 for more about him)*

◆ You can use every moment of the class to practise mindful awareness, e.g. note the transition from one practice to another, from standing to sitting, to leaving the room, touching the desk, moving to another position.

END OF LESSON 2

## LESSON 3

### Being present in the body

SENSING YOUR BODY IS ALWAYS A WAY INTO AWARENESS

#### Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.

##### **Exercise 1** Homework review.

Re-read the poem **Listen** (p.10) and emphasise the importance of listening to each other. Encourage students to be open about their experience, without judging. What did they notice about their breath practice, or mindful daily activity? What have they discovered? Do they notice being mindful at other times?

##### **Exercise 2 Hand exercise**

With the group sitting on chairs, this is a simple initial practice. Learn the transcript (*right*) and go through the exercise.

**Exercise 3** If you decide to do the Short Body Scan learn the transcript over page or use the first part of the full Body Scan on audio track 2. Emphasise that this is not a relaxation exercise.

### Mindful body exercises

◆ First we ate a raisin, then we used the breath. Now the body helps to focus on **Being** (p.7). Simultaneously breathing and sensing parts of the body helps to concentrate on the present moment.

#### MINDFUL AWARENESS OF THE HANDS

*Add a 10-second pause between phrases, speak in a matter-of-fact way at a slow but deliberate pace.*

Sitting comfortably with hands on thighs, close your eyes. Feel the contact of your hands with your legs. Are they heavy or light? Are the fingers close together or apart?

Now feel into your hands. Are they warm or cool, dry or moist? Feel the air around the fingers. Feel the length of your fingers, the width of your hands, the fingertips, the thumbs, the wrists, palms and the backs of the hands. Be aware of the skin, muscles, bones and joints. Notice any sensations, tingling, throbbing, the feel of the fabric your hands are resting on, any and all sensations.

Wiggle your fingers and feel the muscle movement in the fingers, hands, wrists and lower arms. Now move your hands to the arms or seat of the chair. Notice the tactile quality of the wood, metal or fabric through the fingertips. Gripping the chair slightly, become aware of the sensation in the fingers and hands, the tightness and pressure.

Remove your hands from the chair and place them back on your lap. Pause a moment and notice any difference in sensation. Open your eyes. (A similar exercise can be used with any part of the body.)

After either practice discuss. What did they notice? Could they keep their mind on the part of the body? Did they feel any sensations?

Read the poem **Wild Geese** (p.40).

**This week's homework.** Invite students to practise the hand exercise at home or the 10-minute **breathing exercise** (p.11). Choose another activity, such as showering or washing-up, to do mindfully each day, and record their observations in their journals.



## SHORT BODY SCAN

*This can be done sitting in a chair, with shoes off.*

1. Close your eyes and feel the contact of your body with surfaces, feet flat on the floor, thighs, bottom and back against the chair, hands on thighs, mind alert, body relaxed.

2. Bring full attention to your breathing... the whole in breath, the pause... the whole out breath and the pause... Now sense the movement of the breath in your abdomen...

3. Then follow the focus down to the toes of the left foot — awareness of the big toe, little toe, toes in between... Feel the sensations, perhaps noticing the contact between the toes, tingling, warmth, or no sensation at all.

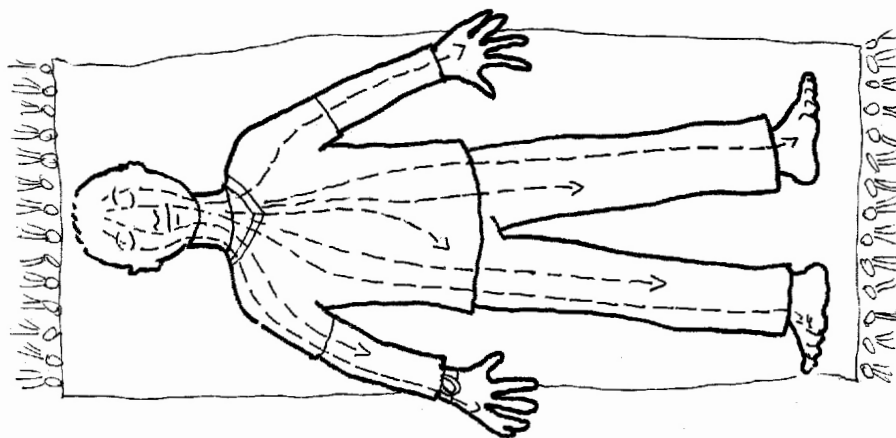
4. On an out breath, let go of the toes and bring your awareness to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot, the sole, instep and heel — noticing contact with the floor and any or no sensations. Now move to the top of the foot and ankle, right into the bones, blood vessels and joint...

5. Let go of the left foot and move the focus to the lower left leg, calf, shinbone, flesh and muscles, noticing any throbbing, tension or discomfort...

6. Continue slowly in this way through the knee joint... then the thigh, noting any sensation or none at all...

7. Compare the difference in feeling in the left and right leg (is there any?) before moving to the toes of the right foot, slowly repeating the scan of the right foot and leg...

Any parts of the body can be scanned like this for mindful concentration practice. For example, you can start at the crown of the head.



◆ **The full Body Scan may take up to 45 minutes and could be done in a double period, preferably lying on mats, using the transcript on [p.50](#) or listening to audio track 2.**

## LESSON 4

### Walking Mindfully

MEDITATION CAN BE PRACTICED SITTING, STANDING, LYING DOWN OR WALKING

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

#### Exercise 1

Homework review.

#### Exercise 2 Mindful Walking

This is your first experience of meditating in motion. Remove shoes and walk for 10 minutes.

#### Exercise 3

**SEEING PRACTICE — developing visual awareness.**

Ask students to observe an object — a picture, chair, tree — and look at its colour, tones, light/dark areas, size, shape, foreground, background. How light and shade plays...

Then focus on a small part of it — a leaf, line or curve. Scent? Feel — prickly, soft? Shapes around, spaces in between — diagonals, verticals, horizontals, angles, serrations...

- ◆ Mindful walking can be done indoors or outside, in a circle or in line.
- ◆ It is best for the teacher to lead this exercise in order to set and maintain the pace.
- ◆ First learn the transcript (see next page).
- ◆ The purpose of this exercise is to maintain focused attention while in motion.

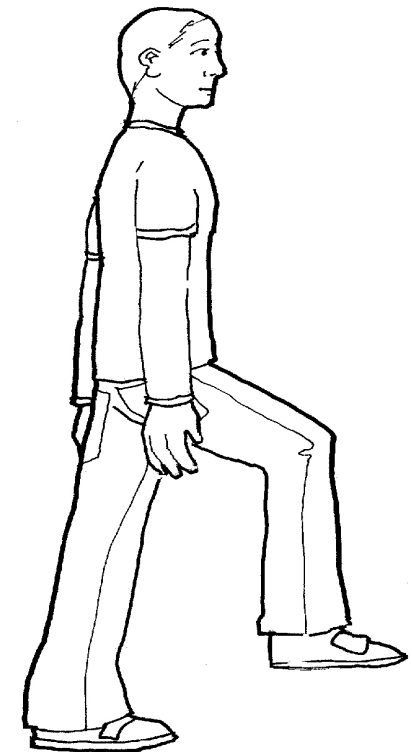
Notice how you make judgements: I like this, I don't like that. Return to the whole object, look at it in relation to its context; its proportion, shape and size.

As much as you can, bring the same kind of observation and awareness that you cultivate in this visual exercise to everyday life.

#### Exercise 4

End with reading **Peace in Every Step** (p.41). What did they observe about walking?

**Homework.** Daily 5-minute focusing on the breath. Once a day practise mindful walking for 5 minutes. How far could you go without losing concentration? Keep a record.



## **MINDFUL WALKING**

1. To begin with walk as slowly as physically possible observing the movements and coordination of the foot and leg muscles as they perform this everyday task; the bending and lifting of the leg and the placing of the foot and the balance required.
2. Then focusing on the sole of the foot and the contact with the floor and holding an awareness of the breath walk slowly up and down or around.
3. When the mind wanders, returning the focus of your attention to the soles of the feet.
4. Just observing whatever sensations you are experiencing. Noticing that you are noticing yourself walking and what this feels like.
5. After a few minutes increase the speed (saying 'one and two and') to a gentle slow meditative pace maintaining your focused attention.
6. Walking slower than usual allows you to be fully aware of the sensations.
7. Once you feel comfortable walking with awareness, you can experiment walking faster up to and beyond normal walking speed. Can you maintain focused attention at a faster pace?
8. Instruct the class to walk, criss-crossing and zig-zagging across the room at speed, and spontaneously changing direction. How hard it is to stay concentrated on the feet.
9. Slow down again to a meditative pace before finishing the practice.

END OF LESSON 4

Walking is the great adventure, the first meditation, a practice of heartiness and soul primary to humankind. Walking is the exact balance of spirit and humility.

**Gary Snyder**

*b.1930, American Pulitzer prize winning poet, essayist, environmental activist, ecologist.*

## **CULTIVATING AWARENESS**

◆ Cultivate distracting yourself from unwanted thoughts. Move from autopilot to the present. Feel whatever you touch — the mug in your hand, book you are reading, cat you are stroking. Feel your feet on the ground, footsteps on the pavement, bottom on the chair, hands in your lap. Notice the warmth of the sun, cool breeze on your skin, the shower on your face. Taste the food in your mouth — sweet, salty, crunchy, spiced. Smell the coffee, scent the lavender or the perfume of your shampoo. Hear the rain on the roof, dog snoring, traffic noise, song of that bird, sound of footsteps. See the rain drops on a petal, watch the sunset. Observe a leaf on a tree and look into your friend's eyes. Use all your senses to practise and become mindful.

## LESSON 5

### Sitting Practice I — Breath and Sensation

KEEPING STILL IN SILENCE IS TRAINING  
FOR MOMENT TO MOMENT AWARENESS,  
BEING PRESENT AND SELF-AWARE

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

**Exercise 1** Homework Review. What did you notice about your practice this week?

### **Exercise 2** Sitting with the breath and body sensations

Learn the transcript opposite or use audio track 3. Get the class to sit with the breath and then observe sensation in the body, however fleeting. Allow 15 minutes.

End with the poem **Cultivating the Moment** (p.41). NB The poem is an acrostic — the first letter of each line spells Mindfulness.

**Discuss** What did you observe when you were sitting? What's the point of this exercise?

### **This week's practice**

Invite students to sit mindfully for 15 (or 10, or 5) minutes a day with breathing and

◆ **POSTURE.** Sit erect with a straight, unsupported back for maximum blood and breath flow through the body. This position embodies wakefulness, presence and awareness. Place the hands on the thighs. If sitting on a chair put your feet firmly on the floor. When sitting on the floor, use a cushion if needed. Stretch the spine and tip the head slightly forward.

◆ Notice what Buddhists call the Monkey Mind, jumping from thought to thought.

### **SITTING PRACTICE I**

*Having paid attention to posture, then do a 5-minute Breathing exercise (see lesson 2).*

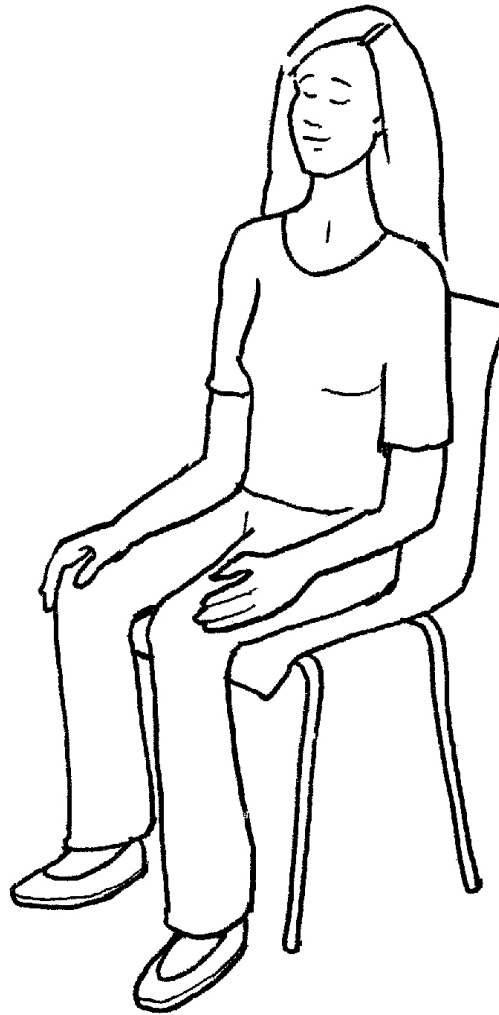
1. If you notice your mind has wandered it means you are being mindful again. Gently bring yourself back to breathing. Don't worry. This is what the mind does.
2. Having settled on the breath, expand awareness to physical sensations anywhere in your body. Movements of the breath, changing patterns of sensations: the whole body breathing.
3. When you feel the breath and body as a whole, then you can pinpoint local sensations; physical contact with the chair and floor, touch and pressure. Sensation in any part of the body — itching, tingling, throbbing, warmth, tension.
4. If you notice your mind has wandered congratulate yourself on being mindful. Attend to breathing and sensations, from moment to moment.
5. If you feel discomfort, you either change your position mindfully, or focus on this area. What precisely does it feel like? Where exactly is it? Does it vary in intensity? Does it move? Feel and breathe into it. On an out breath, relax the muscles around the tension.
6. When you become distracted, refocus on the movement of the breath, or expand awareness to the body as a whole.

sensation... They should choose a regular time and place, e.g. when getting up in the morning. Choose another familiar activity

to practise mindfully. Ask them to notice when being mindful and record observations in their journals.

## MINDFULNESS TRAINING FOR TEENAGERS — AIMS

- ◆ Training the brain at the crucial and developing adolescent stage of life.
- ◆ Coping with hormonal turmoil.
- ◆ Broadening mental, social and cultural horizons, opening to a wider view of the world.
- ◆ Understanding stress reduction methods (Classes 9/10).
- ◆ Learning a technique to deal with fear, anxiety and stress.
- ◆ Responding skilfully, rather than simply reacting, to life events.
- ◆ Retraining and creating new neural pathways (Classes 10/11)
- ◆ Observing choices, rather than being driven by emotions and conditioning.
- ◆ Developing non-judgemental compassion and discrimination.



END OF LESSON 5

## STAYING PRESENT

...Be in your body as you move, as you reach for something, as you turn. It is as simple as that ... Do not underestimate the power that comes to you from feeling the simple movements of your body throughout the day.

**Segal, Williams and Teasdale**

*MBCT for Depression, Guilford, 2002*

## PRACTISING SITTING

- ◆ Choose a regular time — when you will not be disturbed. Find a place — as secluded as possible. Choose a comfortable posture. Set a minimum time for sitting. Feel your body contact with the chair/floor. Take a few deep breaths. Begin, focusing on the breath.



## LESSON 6

### Sitting Practice 2 — Adding Sounds and Thoughts AND HOW TO STAY WITH AN EXPERIENCE

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

#### Exercise 1

Read the poem **We can Make** (*opposite*).

**Exercise 2** Homework Review. What did you notice this week?

#### Exercise 3 Sitting practice

Learn the transcript opposite or use audio track 4. Begin with the focus on breath and sensation and move to sounds then thoughts, for 20 minutes. End with the poem **Stars** (p.41). It is about thoughts arising and observing them. Talk about doing the exercise and points that come up.

#### Exercise 4

Using mindfulness for a difficult experience: Ask students to think of a difficult experience or interaction they had recently, which they handled badly. eg. A row with a parent or friend. Ask: How did your body feel, tense, sick? What were you thinking? How could being mindful have helped? Go round the class.

◆ Observing sound is another way of helping the mind to remain focused. And paying attention to thoughts helps us stand back and notice what we are thinking — in Being mode. We recognise that thoughts are passing events in the mind: planning, imagining, remembering, conversing in the head, fantasising.

◆ With mindfulness we learn to stay with what is happening right now, moment to moment. We may feel tense or irritated, ‘what am I doing this for, the mind wandering, boredom. Sustained awareness helps us to ‘be in’ our everyday life: more focused, less distracted, able to respond skillfully to whatever is taking place.

### DIFFICULT EXPERIENCES

◆ We tend to run away from an unpleasant experience — physically or in our minds. Finding ourselves in the drama of a situation we ‘catastrophise’ — blaming, threatening, using emotional blackmail, aggressive behaviour, seeking sympathy, because we are afraid.

◆ Emotions evolved over millions of years and were not intended to last long. The Fight or Flight cycle ([Lesson 8](#)) was meant to confront an immediate predator. However, when dealing with a school bully, abusive adult or angry parent, it is difficult to run away or fight. But fear-producing cortisol still floods through us. Mind, hormones, nervous system go into overdrive ([p.27](#)).

◆ Negative thought is like an internal bully; feelings overwhelm us, causing us to use damaging words and behaviour, or leading us to suppress what we truly feel. Standing back, in awareness (Being), reduces fear. We are able to acknowledge a situation and bring it to full consciousness.

### Homework

Students to practise the sitting exercise for 10-15 minutes a day. And record any difficult experiences this week, (at least two) and how they handled them with awareness.

### WE CAN MAKE...

We can make our minds so like still water that beings gather around us to see their own images,  
and so for a moment live a clearer, perhaps even fiercer life because of our quiet.

**W. B. Yeats**

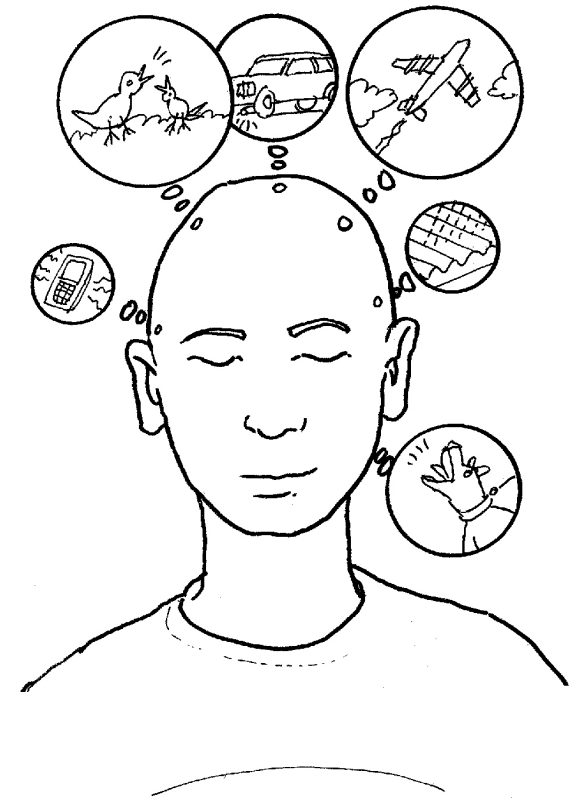
*1865-1939, Irish poet and dramatist*

## SITTING PRACTICE 2

Repeat breath and sensation practice in [Sitting Exercise 1](#) (p.16) until the class is settled..

1. Shift awareness from the body to hearing. Opening to sounds. 'Hear' them as close to the ear as possible.
2. Make your mind receptive to sounds from all directions, as they arise — close, far away, in front, behind, to the side, above or below, in and outside the room. Opening to a whole space of sounds around you, obvious or subtle.
3. As best you can, be aware of sounds simply as sensations. When you think about the sound ('Ah, that's a fire engine, I wonder where it's going), reconnect to its sensory quality (patterns of pitch, timbre, loudness, duration) rather than meaning.
4. If you notice your awareness is no longer on sounds re-tune back to them.
5. When you are ready, let go of sounds and focus your awareness on thoughts as events in the mind. In just the same way — notice when they arise, focus on them as they pass through the mind and eventually disappear. You may only catch the tail end of a thought.
6. Some people bring awareness to thoughts as if they were projected on a cinema screen. You sit, watching the screen, waiting for a thought or image to appear. When it does you pay attention then let it go as it passes away.  
Now return your attention to the breath.

◆ **MINDFULNESS OF SOUNDS** can be a valuable practice on its own, as a way of expanding awareness, giving it a more open, spacious quality.



END OF LESSON 6

## LESSON 7

### Well-being and Mindful Movement

#### THE HAPPY EXPERIENCE AND MINDFULNESS IN MOTION

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

#### Exercise 1

Read **Autobiography** (next page). It is about learning to be aware. Discuss.

#### Exercise 2

##### Homework review

Describe their 'difficult experience' examples and discuss. How is mindfulness affecting their life?

#### Exercise 3

Discuss a happy experience you had this week.

#### Exercise 4 Body Stretches

Use the standing stretches illustrated overpage, or audio track 5, for 10 minutes. Ask students to concentrate on staying with sensations in the body, to be careful and to avoid being competitive with themselves or others.

**They should notice:** What am I experiencing right now? How does this feel? How does my body feel now, when I

◆ Well-being is more than the state of physical and mental health and prosperity. Well-being is living with the good and the bad and the ability to recover from stress.

◆ These simple stretches can be done in the classroom, or, if more room is available, practised in an extended version including floor exercises ([appendix p.50-51](#)). Follow the notes and drawings opposite and overpage.

◆ The aim is always the same; mindful focus on sensation and constant awareness of what we are experiencing in the body, just in this moment. It is not about how well we can do it. The exercises should be done gently, without competing and with caution. The stretches must be practised before teaching them.

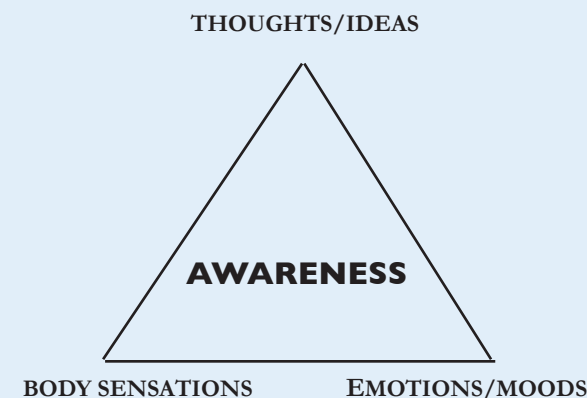
rest? Repeat the exercises if there is time. Or alternate the full programme of Standing and Floor exercises.

**Discuss:** There is no 'right' or 'wrong', or 'good' or 'bad' way to do these stretches. As an example, read **The Farmer's Story** (p.42) and ask students for their own experience of something in their lives that could be viewed as either good or bad, e.g. school dinners, taking exams, playing games, etc.

#### **This week's practice**

10-minute mindful body stretches or 20 minute sitting practice daily. Or both. Ask them to each day record being aware of a happy experience in their journal. The thought, emotion, sensations in the body.

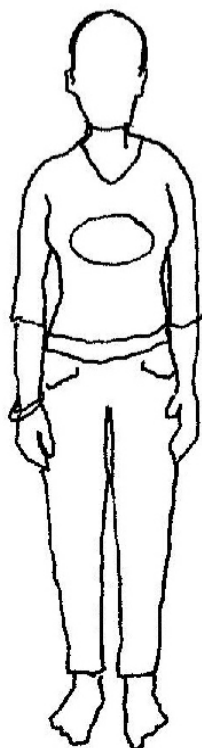
Awareness is developed by paying attention to:



## THE BODY STRETCHES

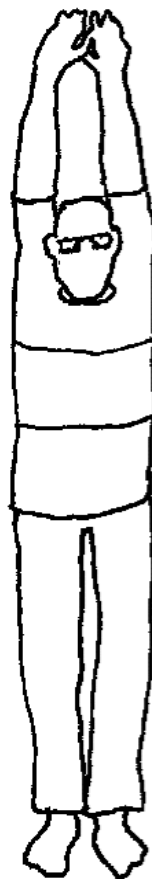
### MOUNTAIN

Stand with enough room to extend the arms sideways, with the feet hip width apart and your arms by your sides. Unlock (soften) the knees and tip the pelvis forward by tucking in the bottom. This is the relaxation standing posture.



### SKY

Raising your arms in front of you and straight above the head, pointing to the ceiling and stretching the hands away from the body, pushing the feet into the floor...Feel the stretch... VERY SLOWLY lower the arms down in front of you and notice the pull of gravity. Rest with the arms by your sides. Repeat the exercise.



## AUTOBIOGRAPHY IN FIVE SHORT CHAPTERS

### Chapter 1

I walk down the street  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I fall in  
I am lost... I am helpless  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

### Chapter 2

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I pretend I don't see it  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in the same place  
But it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

### Chapter 3

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in...it's a habit.  
My eyes are open.  
I know where I am  
It is my fault  
I get out immediately.

### Chapter 4

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk  
I walk around it.

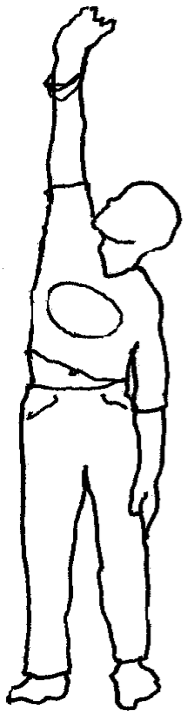
### Chapter 5

I walk down another street.

*Portia Nelson*

### **PICKING GRAPES**

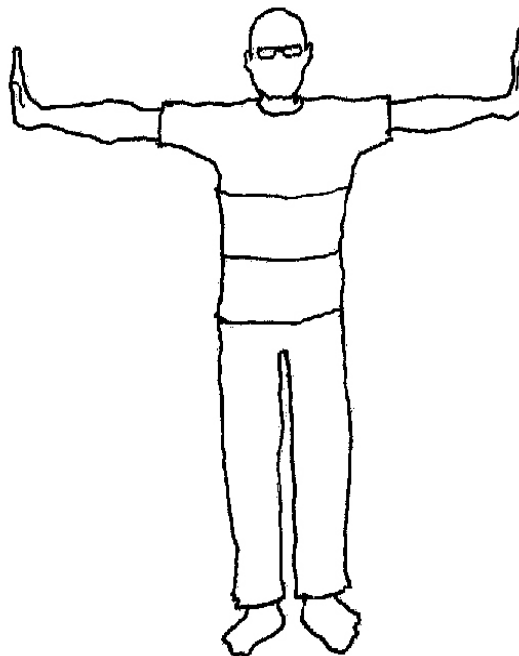
Raising the right arm straight above the head and slightly to the side and raising the left heel off the ground. Stretching up as if picking grapes from a high branch — almost out of reach... Lowering the arm to your side...Do the same with the left arm...Rest.



How does your body feel? What did you notice?

### **SCARECROW**

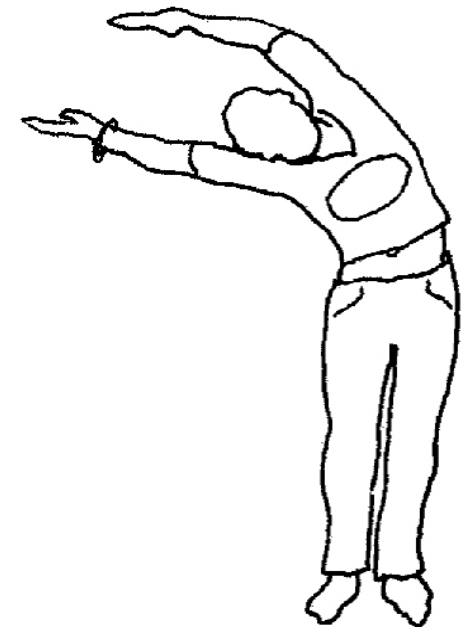
Raising both arms to the sides at shoulder height, parallel to the floor and stretching the hands away from the body. Hold, feeling the sensation in the body...Lowering the arms to the sides.



Keep your awareness on sensation in the body and notice if your mind drifts. Bring it back to breath and body.

### **HALF-MOON**

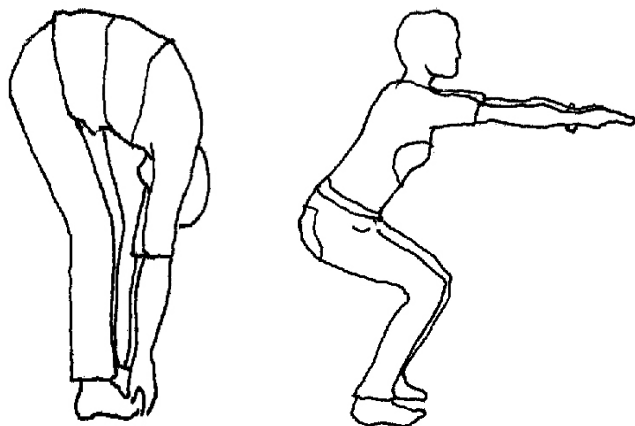
Raising the arms straight above the head, now bending the body and the arms to the right side as far as they will comfortably go....do not compete with yourself...feeling the stretch... on the out breath see if you can bend a little lower and again, on an out breath, a little lower. Slowly raising the arms above the head and repeating the exercise to the left...lowering the arms and rest in the standing position. Feeling the sensation in the body...





### **RAG DOLL**

Stretching the arms above the head and slightly bending the knees. Bending forward with the arms and head hanging down towards the floor. The hands may reach the floor in front of you if you are very flexible. Keep breathing! ...and on the out breaths see if you can bend a little closer to the floor. Hold... then the Chair



### **CHAIR**

Now bending your knees, dropping your bottom towards the floor and stretching your arms out in front of you at shoulder height, assuming a 'sitting' position without a chair. Looking forward and straightening the back... and hold... Straightening the knees, lowering the arms and coming into a standing position. Resting in the standing position. Noticing the sensations in your body.

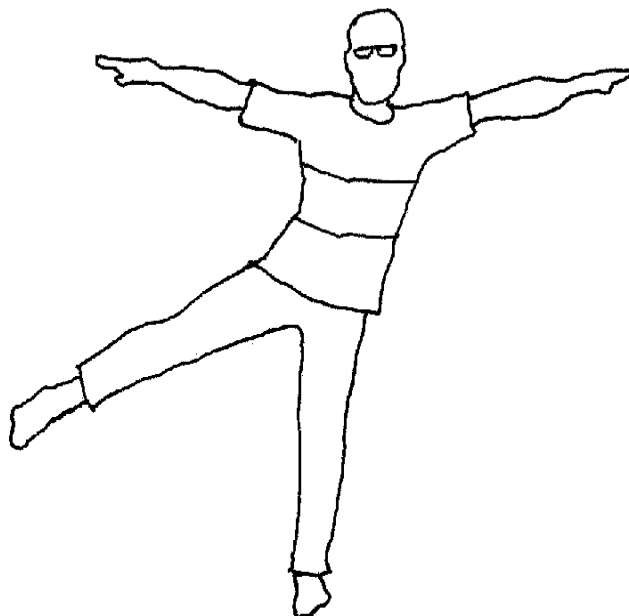
Repeat the forward bend and hold... breathing! This time leaving your bent head to last, uncurl from the bottom of the spine to stand up and

then raise the head. Rest...

Repeat the chair position from standing, bending knees, lowering the bottom towards the floor. Hold...stand. Rest.

### **STORK**

With feet shoulder-width apart, raising the arms to the side to shoulder height and transferring weight to right leg, lifting the left leg off the floor to the side and balancing. Hold...lowering the left leg to the floor, transferring the weight to the left leg and raising the right leg off the floor. Hold...lowering the right leg and the arms. Rest. It helps to focus the eyes on a spot on the floor a metre in front of you for balance.



### **PEG-LEG**

Bending the right leg with the knee pointing towards the floor and with both hands gently pulling the lower leg towards the buttocks. Hold... lowering the leg and repeating with the left leg. Resting in the standing position before ending the exercises.



## LESSON 8

### The Mind-Body connection and Stress

THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT CYCLE —  
see box over page

### Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.

**Exercise 1** Homework Review.

**Exercise 2** Discuss. We all experience stress in our lives. It is caused by any threat to our mental or physical balance. Stressors — the things that stress you out — can be External or Internal and Acute or Chronic (see *right*).

Encourage students to think of examples of stressors (*right*) and write these on the board. Don't forget that stressors can be Good or Bad. Q.What stresses you? What stresses me? What stresses children? What stresses adults? Go through the common stressors (*right*).

**Begin teaching the Fight/Flight Cycle using the first diagram, with a whiteboard or photocopies.**

**Exercise 3 The 3-minute Breathing Space: this exercise is a tool for life.**

Learn the transcript on [p.29](#) or audio track 6. Emphasise the importance of practising

THE DIAGRAMS OVER THE PAGE ARE FOR TEACHING CLASSES 8 AND 9, WHICH MAY RUN INTO EACH OTHER.

◆ In the modern world we have to learn how to handle sensory overload. Some stress is healthy and necessary for motivation; however, too much can damage the nervous system, which leads to the body being on constant red alert. Responding mindfully enables greater awareness of this stress.

◆ This class includes the Three-Minute Breathing Space — perhaps the most useful Mindfulness practice.

#### EXAMPLES OF STRESSORS

##### External

Environmental (housing), physical (illness), social (parental divorce, loss of a loved one), economic (poverty), biological (toxins), political, etc.

##### Internal

Reactive thoughts and feelings, anxiety, fear.

##### Acute (short-term)

Exams, interviews, money, argument, being chased by a tiger, car crash, etc.

##### Chronic (long-term)

Illness, impairment (hearing/sight) sensory overload, hyperactivity, disability (yours or others), etc.

##### Good/Bad

Marriage, relationships, children, school, exams, re-locating, divorce, holidays, Christmas, leaving home, etc

#### STRESS INDICATORS

Anxiety, nervousness, sleep disruption, changes in eating habits, lack of concentration, headaches, back pain, muscle tension, over reacting, irritability, obsessive thinking, decreasing social participation, not going out, not wanting to see friends, getting exhausted easily, giving up exercise, postponing deadlines, eg homework, ignoring personal hygiene, not dealing with daily 'business', eg texting, e-mails.

this until it becomes a habit which can be used in any stressful situation.

End with the poem **The Swan** (p.42). Note Mrs William Blake is complaining that

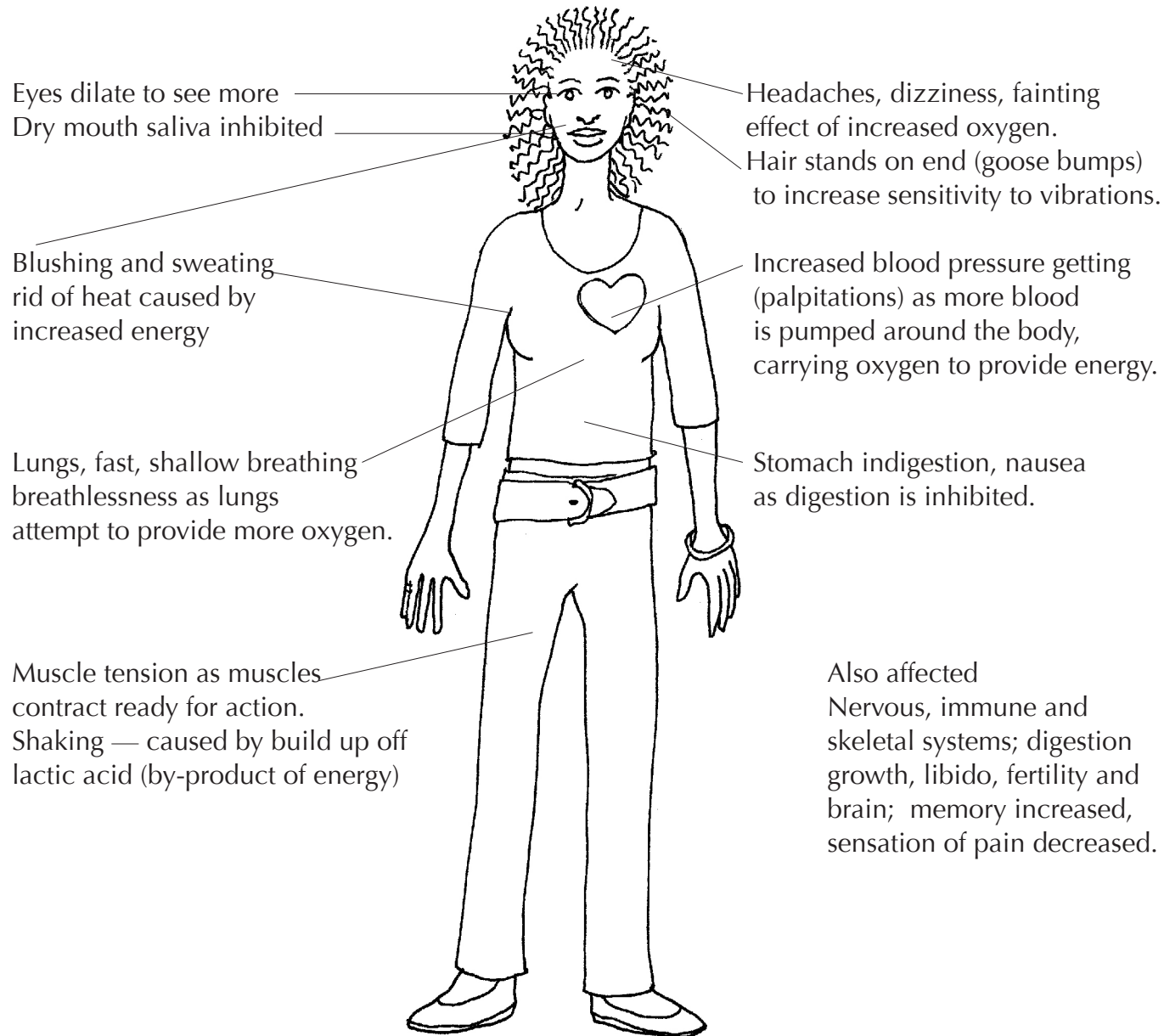
her husband is not in the present moment. Discuss.

**Homework.** As for [Lesson 9](#) (p. 28).

## FIGHT or FLIGHT CYCLE

### THE PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (Body on Red Alert)

#### PERCEPTION OF THREAT



#### The Fight or Flight Syndrome

In the 1920s American physiologist Walter B. Cannon applied the phrase 'fight or flight reaction' to the response of cats confronted by barking dogs. The human nervous system behaves exactly the same way under stress. He also first used the term homeostasis to describe the normal internal balance of our physiology.

Also affected  
Nervous, immune and  
skeletal systems; digestion  
growth, libido, fertility and  
brain; memory increased,  
sensation of pain decreased.

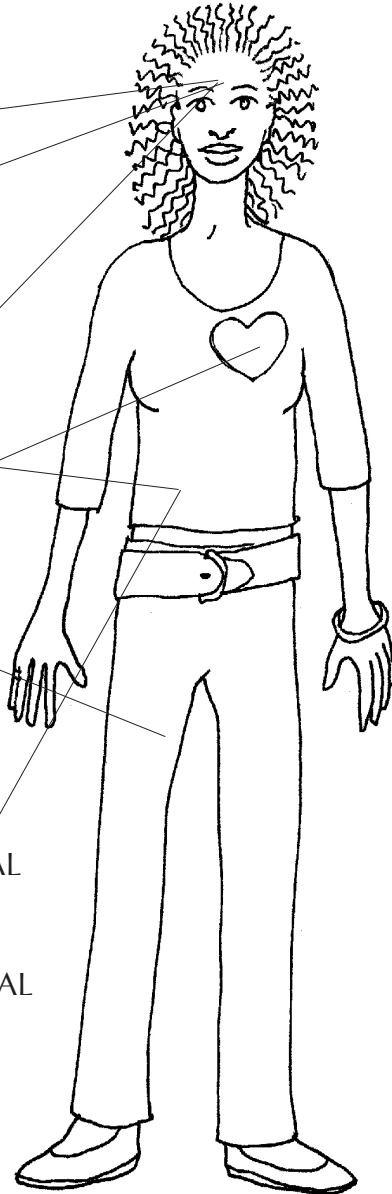
## FIGHT or FLIGHT CYCLE

### THE NEUROBIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY AND A MINDFUL AWARENESS

#### PERCEPTION OF THREAT

##### AUTOMATIC REACTION

1. HYPOTHALAMUS
2. AMYGDALA
3. ADRENAL GLANDS  
Cortisol produced  
behind the kidneys
4. ACUTE HYPERAROUSAL  
Affecting heart, lungs,  
brain, muscles, immune  
system, etc., leading to
5. SUPPRESSION, DENIAL  
AND CONTINUED AROUSAL
6. CHRONIC HYPERAROUSAL
7. MALADAPTIVE COPING
8. BREAKDOWN



##### MINDFUL RESPONSE

AROUSAL THE SAME  
AS 1-4 LEFT.

MINDFULNESS, AWARENESS OF BODY  
MUSCLE TENSION, BREATH  
AND THOUGHT

RELAXATION AND APPRAISAL OF  
THOUGHTS, FACTS, EMOTIONS,  
SENSATIONS, THREAT?  
AWARENESS OF THE FULL CONTEXT.

OVERVIEW —  
NEW STRATEGIES,  
NEW OPTIONS, CHOICE

HOMEOSTASIS  
BALANCE OF MIND,  
RECOVERY

## EXPLAINING THE AUTOMATIC REACTION AND MINDFUL RESPONSE DIAGRAM OPPOSITE

First go through the diagram on [p.25](#) again, studying the body's physiological changes. Now look at [p.26](#). Starting with the **perception** of a situation and whether it poses a threat to our ability to cope. **Stress** is the interaction of an experience (or environment, eg. poor housing) and the person's interpretation of it. **Response is formed by past experience, conditioning and habit. If we do not recognise a threat we will not experience stress.** If we feel threatened the **fight/flight**, automatic alarm reaction is triggered: strong emotions, eg. terror, anxiety, rage. We become alert and attentive.

### ◆ AUTOMATIC REACTION

1. The perception of a threat signal stimulates the sympathetic nervous system via the **hypothalamus** in the centre of the brain.
2. Automatically signalling to the **amygdala** which activates a physical response, triggering the release of hormones.

3. **Cortisol**, which regulates almost every system in the body, is released by the **adrenal glands** to prepare the body for action. It is essential to prepare for fight or flight in a threatening situation.

4. Prolonged **reaction** to stress leads to **acute** physical and psychological **hyperarousal**, which affects the heart, muscles, skeletal, digestive, nervous, respiratory, immune and other systems.

5. When we cannot run away and still feel threatened we **suppress** (internalise) our feelings and **deny** our fear. Without resolution we are continuously aroused. Stress hormones keep circulating, damaging our systems and causing agitated thoughts and feelings.

6. This can lead to **chronic hyperarousal** resulting in problems with e.g. high blood pressure, diabetes, muscle tension, heart disease, sleep, digestive disorders, backache, headaches, anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder.

7. Chronic stress leads to **maladaptive coping**: self-destructive, addictive, excessive, compulsive and anti-social behaviour. You should elicit examples.

8. This may result in physical and psychological **breakdown**; loss of drive, motivation and enthusiasm, depression and mental illness. Together with genetic pre-disposition and environment this may lead to cancer, heart disease/attack, chronic fatigue syndrome, etc.

#### ◆ MINDFUL RESPONSE

9. The stressors are the same and the automatic **Fight or Flight** still kicks in — see 1-4 previous page — **however there will also be awareness** of the body-muscle tension, breath etc.

10. We have an **overview** of thoughts, emotions and sensations, facts and threat — stand back and see the full context, enabling us to develop problem-solving strategies and see new options and choices. **Cortisol** is reduced to normal levels. Balance of mind and body is restored (**homeostasis**).

END OF LESSON 8



## LESSON 9

### Continuing the Fight or Flight Cycle — the Mindful response

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

**Exercise 1** Homework review.

**Exercise 2** Continue the Fight/Flight Cycle.

**Exercise 3** Do another 3-minute Breathing Space (*next page*).

Then read the poem **No Time to Stand and Stare** (p.43).

#### Twelve 'A'S of Mindfulness

##### PRACTISE —

Awareness  
Attention  
Approaching  
Allowing  
Acknowledgement

##### WATCH OUT FOR —

Autopilot  
Avoiding  
Aversion  
Attachment  
Anticipation  
Attitude  
Analysis

- ◆ The Fight-or-Flight response to stress evolved as an essential reaction for human survival. When a man is hunting on the savannah and bumps into a lioness with cubs to feed — he needs to run away fast and hope he is down wind. If the lioness is distracted by a tastier, more attractive, antelope, the man can stop and lie down in the grass. At rest, his nervous system returns to **homeostasis**, i.e. balance. Mind you, he still has to face the wife and kids empty-handed. More stress. She's only gathered a few berries and insects for dinner!
- ◆ The Fight-or-Flight cycle prepares for Attack or Escape. Adrenalin is also produced when we Freeze — submit, hide, suppress feelings (or party all night).
- ◆ Tend and Befriend is another survival process — instinctive to women (dependent young precludes flight). The love hormone oxytocin (for onset of labour, milk stimulation, maternal bonding) is released in stressed females.
- ◆ During prolonged stress some functions are put on hold: digesting, growing and libido are not required for running away from a lioness. Perception of pain decreases. Sensation and memory become sharper. However, if stress continues too long, high levels of cortisol can make us ill: the response becomes more damaging than the stressor itself.
- ◆ Our ancestral mind cannot distinguish between real and imagined threat. We have evolved thought, memory, imagination and analysing, all wonderful tools for living, but this can present our ancestral mind with memories and worries, as if they were a present danger (a lioness in the head).

#### The Mindful Response

- ◆ Mindfulness lets us act more skillfully. Being mindful at a point of alarm or threat brings us into awareness. This does not prevent the body's stress response from activating (rapid heart rate, muscle tension) but it enables us to see which of our thoughts and feelings are accurate and which are false alarms. Such an overview — allowing for choice of strategies and options — can lead to calmness and quicker recovery of mental and physical equilibrium (**homeostasis**).

**Homework for Classes 8 and 9** Take a 3-minute breathing space three times a day, e.g.

before breakfast, lunch-time. Do a 15-minute sitting practice. Record observations.

## THE THREE MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

*This is a way to step out of automatic pilot mode and connect with the present moment — with AWARENESS. With practice this can be done anywhere, anytime. If you learn nothing more from the course, LEARN THIS so that it becomes a habit. The key skill is to maintain awareness in the moment, nothing else.*

### AWARENESS

Bring yourself into the present by deliberately adopting an erect posture SITTING or STANDING. Feel the physical context, feet on floor, bottom on chair. Where are my hands? Close your eyes. What is my experience right now — of thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations? For example, 'I've got this exam coming' (thought)... 'I'm terrified of failing' (emotion) 'I feel sick' (body sensation). You may notice the body sensation first (butterflies in the stomach, i.e. adrenalin — the stress reaction kicking in). Do not push these away. Acknowledge them, simply noting 'OK that's how it is right now'. Not analysing. Simply noticing.

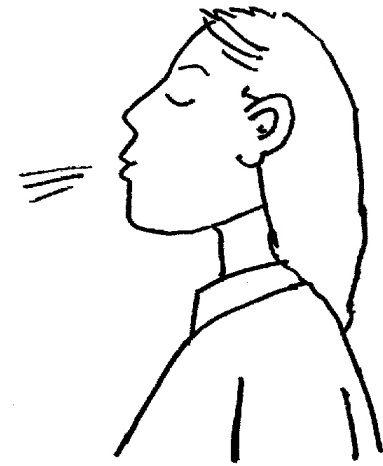
Acknowledge your experience, even if it is unwanted. This is awareness: 'of course I'm going to feel like this, I'm about to take an exam, it's not the end of the world!'

### GATHERING

Gently redirect your full attention to breathing, the whole of the in-breath and whole of the out-breath, one after another. This immediately reverses the stress (adrenalin) cycle and brings you back into the present moment where you can make skillful choices. Your breath functions as an anchor and helps you to tune into awareness and stillness.

### EXPANDING

While breathing, make yourself aware of your whole body, muscle tension, tightness, aching, nausea, posture, facial expression, imagining that your whole body is breathing. When you are ready, open your eyes.



◆ When feeling anxious take a breathing space — even if it is afterwards.

#### ◆ Reaction v. Response

Reaction: Re-Action — acting again out of old habits and conditioning, often unconsciously.

Response: Respons-ability — the ability to respond consciously, with awareness.

END OF LESSON 9

## LESSON 10

### Thinking and Interpreting

THOUGHTS ARE MENTAL PHENOMENA

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing.**

**Exercise 1** Homework review.

#### **Exercise 2**

Read the poem (*below right*), which explains the thought process. Discuss.

#### **Exercise 3**

Go through the neurobiology opposite.

#### **Exercise 4**

Here are two examples of how the mind interprets events and situations, which lead to how we conduct ourselves.

**Read:** 'John was on his way to school... He was worried about the maths lesson... He was not sure he could control the class again today... It was not part of a caretaker's duties.'

Q. Who did you think John was?

A. Possible answers —

Line 1. A boy?

Line 2. Still a boy?

Line 3. A teacher?

Line 4. Whoops!

◆ Classes 8/9 taught that reacting automatically may lead to unskillful behaviour. In lessons 10-11 students learn that **thoughts are events in the mind. They may not be facts; but rather combinations of conditioning (experience, environment, memory) and genetic disposition.**

◆ The teaching notes opposite and overpage outline some knowledge of how the mind works; however, understanding consciousness remains the holy grail of mind science.

The mind's running commentary races ahead and interprets, often incorrectly. Go round class.

**Read:** 'Two people are sitting in the kitchen. One reading the newspaper. A asks B 'Would you like fish or soup for dinner?' 'I don't mind' says B.'

Q. Who did you see in the kitchen? (married couple, partners, friends, same sex, black, white?). Who is reading the newspaper?

Who is offering the choice of food?  
(could be the same person as the newspaper reader?) Which person doesn't mind?

We will interpret according to our conditioning and experience. There is only the **FACT** of what has been read. Everything else is what our mind does. We may even have noticed a sense of distaste at the word 'maths' in the first example. Or 'fish' if we don't like eating it.

#### **Exercise 5**

**The 3-minute Breathing Space** (*previous page*).

End with poem **We are What we Think** (p.43).

**This week's practice.** Sitting exercise for 15-minutes a day and keep doing the 3-minute Breathing Space.

The thought manifests as the word  
The word becomes the deed  
The deed develops into the habit  
And the habit hardens into character.  
So watch the thought and its ways with care,  
And let it spring from love  
Born out of concern for all beings.  
*Words of wisdom attributed to the Buddha*

## NEUROBIOLOGY — WE INTERPRET THOUGHTS ACCORDING TO OUR NEURAL PATHWAYS

◆ The mind has unlimited potential for change. The brain uses **neurotransmitters** (chemical messengers, e.g. serotonin, dopamine) to send nerve impulses across a **synapse** (junction across which impulses pass, of which there are 100 trillion in a human brain) which alter the neuron cell's behaviour.

◆ Neural pathways (series of synapses) form networks creating **neural patterns**, continuously building the foundations for mental understandings based on prior experience; eg if a hunter meets a lioness, his particular neural pathway (a memory) will inform him to take another route next time. Emotional arousal enhances memories, even when the memories are not frightening.

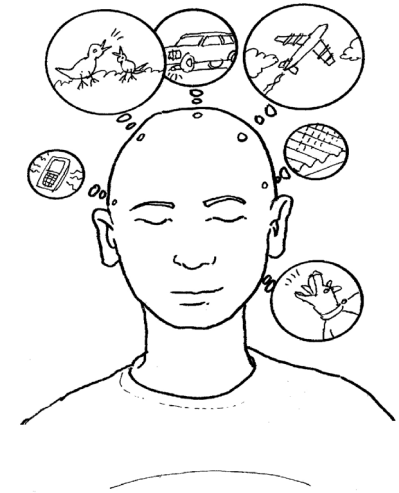
◆ Throughout life the electrical activity of brain cells in combination with each other creates new **neural pathways**, or loses them when redundant. New patterns of thinking can replace unhelpful old patterns of thinking and behaviour. However, first we must identify these as either positive, negative, constructive or dysfunctional.

In this context, Mindfulness helps with concentration, self-control, choice-making and stress management — not just for exams but for life.

◆ Our personality is shaped by our genes and our environment (nature and nurture). Neural pathways develop rapidly after birth. There is dense growth in infancy and again at puberty. We have unique **neural patterns**. This has implications for learning and ability, problem-solving, how each individual perceives the world.

◆ The mind itself depends entirely on brain functions — witnessing, observing, interpreting. Mindfulness trains the brain to be meta-aware — being aware of thoughts, moods and actions. This allows for thoughtful response rather than automatic reaction, which develops self-esteem, harmony in relationships, skillful choices.

◆ In the adolescent brain the neo-cortex is still developing. Coinciding with hormonal changes, it is in a vulnerable and receptive state, easily able to adapt and absorb. Equally it is prone to risk-taking and anti-social conduct because this part of the brain governs control, empathy and decision-making. As with all of us, emotion tends to work faster than intellect.



If you believe that feeling bad or worrying long enough will change a past or future event, then you are living on another planet with a different reality system.

**William James**

*Principles of Psychology, 1890 (ibid p.2)*

## BRAIN DEVELOPMENT AND THE EVOLUTION OF EMOTION

◆ The emotional area of the brain developed out of the brainstem at the top of the spinal cord, which regulates physical function such as breathing and metabolism. From the emotional centre — called the **limbic system**, containing the thalamus, hypothalamus and amygdala — the **neo-cortex** or thinking brain evolved. This rational brain emerged millions of years after the emotional brain.

◆ The emotional root of life is the olfactory lobe at the base of the brainstem, the neuron cells that detect and analyse smell. A sense of smell was paramount for primitive survival: it distinguished what was edible, toxic, sexually available or hostile. Over time, the limbic system developed learning and memory and refined its natural automatic reaction response.

◆ The neo-cortex, or centre of thought, comprehends what the senses perceive, allowing us to think about what we feel; to strategise and plan, have ideas, imagine and create, all of which lead to culture and civilization.

◆ The limbic system generates pleasure and desire, the neo-cortex adds subtlety and complexity — allowing for having feelings about feelings. Coming from the limbic system, emotion has an immense influence on the brain.

◆ Emotions are vital messengers. Fear, disgust, happiness, sadness and anger — the primary emotions — inform and enable us to thrive and survive. Originally emotional reactions were temporary signals, to alert to possible threat or pleasure, to act to resolve a situation, i.e. jump out of the way of a speeding car nowadays. They were not designed to last because this would prevent reaction to the next alarm.

◆ In modern humans certain emotional situations remain with us, such as sadness following loss or bereavement; however, time heals and we move on. An event that persists as unhappiness can produce emotional reactions to emotion, perpetuating a cycle: 'I love her but she isn't interested in me' may trigger thoughts of 'Why doesn't she love me? I'm not good enough. I'm no good with girls, nobody will ever want me'. The problem is not the situation that led to sadness, but how the mind reacts to it.

### Thalamus

Registers the fear signal via auditory, somatic (physical) and visual signals.

### Hypothalamus

Regulates body function. Translates signals from the thalamus.

### Amygdala

Sends signals to the adrenal glands which trigger release of hormones eg. cortisol.

### Pre-frontal cortex

Helps to control mood, planning, setting goals and judging priorities. Restrains emotions and may provide a reasoned response, overriding the amygdala's response.



Critical thinking and analysing in the **Doing** mode cannot solve the problem.

◆ Mindfulness trains us to notice the **thought** we are thinking, the **emotion** we are feeling, the sensation we are experiencing. Without this awareness the mismatch described above may lead to on-going feelings of worthlessness, low self-esteem and depression, or anxiety and negative anticipation of future events (rumination). In young people this may be expressed as withdrawal, disconnectedness and/or emotional and behavioural problems. Abuse of drugs and alcohol can also lead to depression.

◆ Most of life is spent in a semi-automatic response to problem-solving to achieve ends. For example, to get to school, students must get up, brush their teeth to preserve them for future chewing, wash their body to be clean and prevent infection, respond to hunger by eating breakfast, pack a bag with necessary items for the day and walk to the stop in time to catch the bus.

◆ This **Doing** mode enables adults to work and earn in order to provide the food and shelter necessary for their own and the family's survival. Using our critical,

analytical skills we achieve everyday goals and can solve technical/work problems. But if our present desire does not match our aspirations we become distressed. 'I want to be fulfilled in my career but I hate my job'.

◆ If much of our time is spent wanting things to be different from the way they are, we experience stress and suffering. This affects us mentally and physically and can lead to chronic illness. Some stress is necessary for motivation and some is inevitable; however some can be avoided — if we face the fact or issue 'in the present', just as it is. Such awareness is the **Being** mode. Allowing the mind to be still and silently cultivating focused attention requires practice.

◆ In her book Barbara Strauch\* explains that teenagers are still developing their ability to see the consequences of their actions — the link between cause and effect. They are also learning to take healthy risks, to think abstractedly and creating neural pathways for a life-time; apparently the brain may not reach an adult level of maturity until the age of 25.

END OF LESSON 10



(artist unknown)

### PERCEPTION — We all interpret differently

This image could be of a young woman in profile with a large white fluffy hat and black ribbon round her neck, or an old woman with a beak nose, slit mouth and white hat.

The neo-cortex 'is the part that tells you to stop, and not do that stupid thing. I think part of risk-taking behaviour in adolescence is because that part of the brain is unfinished...'.  
\*Barbara Strauch, *Why are They so Weird? What's really going on in a teenager's brain.* Health & Medical Science Editor, NYTimes.

◆ This is why misuse of drink and drugs can have long-term damaging effects.



## LESSON 11

### Mood and Emotion — being aware of thoughts and moods

AWARENESS — OBSERVING  
THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS ENABLES  
INTENTIONAL BEHAVIOUR

### Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing

**Exercise 1** Homework review.

### **Exercise 2**

Re-read the [Buddha poem](#) on p.30 (box) and discuss, using the three exercises in thought process and behaviour outlined opposite. Then students should give their own examples.

### **Exercise 3**

Read: '**You are walking down the street. On the other side of the street you see someone you know. You smile and wave. The person doesn't seem to notice and walks by.**'

Q. What did you think/feel? He is ignoring me. She just didn't see me. Go round the class. Notice how you will interpret according to your temperament or mood; what you think about that person at

◆ In lesson 10 we saw how our interpretation of an experience plays a large part in determining mood. Mood is influenced by thought and emotion. Now we examine the consequences of thinking and behaviour.

◆ Do we believe our thoughts rather than checking them?

◆ Can we see that a thought can be the beginning of a habit; therefore, where is the choice point?

◆ An experience leads to thought/feeling and mood. So focus on thoughts and question them. Negative thinking can lead to low mood and distortion (see opposite).

◆ Bring awareness to thoughts and feelings (Being).

the time, etc. Emotions are a consequence of a situation plus an interpretation.

### **Exercise 4**

**You are feeling down** because your teacher has told you off for poor homework. You see a friend in the corridor and they rush off quickly.

Q. What do you think? She's ignoring me. Go round the class.

**You are feeling happy** because you have been praised for good work. You see a friend in the corridor and they say they can't stop.

Q. What would you think? They're in a hurry to catch the bus. That's OK. Go round the class.

Thoughts can influence how we feel. Mood can determine thought. Negative thinking can lead to distortion. Discuss. Remember that thoughts are programmed events in the mind, not necessarily true. Look at the facts. Bring awareness, attention to experience. Notice negative, self-critical, reactive, thoughts.

### **Exercise 5**

**The 3-minute Breathing Space** (p.29).

End with reading **The Buddha Taught** (P43)

**This week's practice.** Sitting 15-30 minutes a day. Practise the 3-minute Breathing Space.

## THOUGHT PROCESS AND BEHAVIOUR

*Three exercises explaining how thought leads to behaviour. First, using the poem.*

### 1. THE POEM

The **thought** *She's pretty, I hate her*  
manifests as the **word** *I hate you*

The word becomes the **deed**

*I'll scratch her face and steal her mobile*

The deed develops into the **habit**

*Hurting, stealing, bullying*

And the habit hardens into **character**

*I'm hard, I'm tough, don't mess with me*

So watch the **thought** (awareness) and its  
ways with **care**.

*The thought 'I hate her' is just a mental event,  
and feeling self-critical, spiteful, judgemental,  
vengeful right now is just a thought.*

*There are consequences of thinking and  
behaviour.*

*Taking our thoughts seriously,  
believing rather than checking them.*

*Can you see here the beginning of a habit?*

*This is a CHOICE POINT.*

*Check whether I am angry with myself for  
wanting to be hurtful to her because*

*I am upset or afraid, out of sorts*

And let it spring from **love** born out of  
concern for all beings.

INCLUDING YOURSELF

*Response — awareness, mindfulness*

*As opposed to reaction — unhelpful habits.*

*Examples of interpreting thoughts  
positively and negatively, following the  
form of the poem*

### 2. POSITIVE THINKING

I can't get this maths homework right.

**Thought**

What am I going to do?

I never was any good at maths.

**Word**

I don't have to be good at everything.

I'm not stupid.

I'll get some help.

**Deed**

I'll text Ann, she's good at maths.

I understand now and I can finish my  
homework myself.

**Character**

I know who to ask for help next time

and I've made a friend **Consequence**

### 3. NEGATIVE THINKING

I really fancy that girl, but she's not interested  
in me.

**Thought**

She thinks I'm ugly and stupid.

**Word**

My brother says I'm stupid and I've got spots.

I'll never have a girlfriend

because I'm ugly and stupid.

I'll never get invited to any parties.

I'll never have a girlfriend.

**Habit**

I feel so miserable.

I hate myself.

**Consequence**

END OF LESSON 11

### A NEUROSCIENTIST'S VIEW OF EMOTIONS

I view emotions as biological functions of the nervous system. I believe that figuring out how emotions are represented in the brain can help us to understand them. This approach contrasts sharply with the more typical one in which emotions are studied as psychological states, independent of the underlying brain mechanisms.

Psychological research has been extremely valuable, but an approach where emotions are studied as brain functions is far more powerful.

**Joseph LeDoux,**  
*The Emotional Brain, 1998*

◆ Mood is affected by hormones, thoughts, weather, temperature, light, food, alcohol, mind-altering substances (drugs, medication) sleep patterns, exercise, laughter, smiling, pain and mindfulness.

## LESSON 12

### Poetry will bring us into awareness

#### SYMBOLS, MYTH AND THE EMOTIONAL RESPONSE TO THE ARTS

### Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on breathing

#### Exercise 1

Homework review.

#### Exercise 2

Discuss some of the points about the arts and mindfulness covered above.

#### Exercise 3

Do the 3-minute Breathing Space (p.29).

#### Exercise 4

Read the poem **The Guest House** (next page).

**Then analyse it using the mindful comprehension exercise alongside.**

**As a last task, invite students to write a poem, or prose, or draw or paint something to indicate what Mindfulness means to them. One sentence will do.**

◆ The mind associates symbols with reality: Freud called this the ‘primary process’ of thought. That is why the metaphor and imagery found in all the arts lend such meaning to human experience: *Romeo and Juliet* or *West Side Story* resonate with teenage star-crossed love and parental disapproval. ‘My love is like a red red rose’ speaks the language of the heart. Objects in Dutch still-life painting can represent the course of human life.

◆ Poetry pre-dates the written word — the ancients used it to memorise their history and myths. Poetry engages the heart, mind and imagination — although every poem is interpreted differently, whether listened to or read. Above all poetic images and associations access universal truths — offering a clearer sense of understanding the world.

◆ All may not be revealed on the surface of a poem. Ideas illustrated through metaphor and symbolism can be hidden and elusive. Understanding a reference may require research, extended knowledge, experience or familiarity. Some people will skim the surface of a poem, others will find a deeper meaning.

◆ As the musician Daniel Barenboim says: ‘Sound... has a permanent, constant and unavoidable relation with Silence.’\* When poetry is recited the sounds of the words resonate. Rhythm, metre, pauses and silences echo and reverberate. The feel in the mouth, or taste on the tongue can bring significant meaning to words. Imtiaz Dharker (see p.40) feels that ‘even one letter can lead you to ecstasy.’ Similarly, when listening to world music, or poetry in a foreign language, we can distil the essence of other cultures. \*Reith Lecture 2006

◆ As you see, the 13th poet Rumi speaks metaphorically. The **Guest House** is himself; he cannot entertain guests (moods, negative thoughts) unless he is mindfully aware.

## An exercise in poetry comprehension

### THE GUEST HOUSE

*This being human is a guest-house  
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,  
some momentary awareness comes  
as an unexpected visitor.*

*Welcome and entertain them all!  
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,  
who violently sweep your house  
empty of its furniture,*

*still, treat each guest honourably.  
He may be clearing you out  
for some new delight*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,  
meet them at the door laughing,  
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,  
because each has been sent  
as a guide from beyond.*

**Rumi**

- ◆ The house in the poem is a metaphor for the self, 'being human'.
- ◆ Every morning a new arrival of thoughts, moods, feelings and emotions. We may welcome a joy but would we welcome depression or recognise our meanness?
- ◆ Why is the poet recommending us to entertain such thoughts? This is a guest house, emphasising the hospitality available to visitors. When we are awake, we can deal with unwanted guests.
- ◆ With mindfulness we can recognise our thoughts as thoughts (meta-awareness) and stand back — 'here is anger' — without being immersed in them.
- ◆ We can respond skillfully — with presence and compassion — to a crowd of sorrows (bereavement/ illness, for example) even when they challenge our beliefs and certainties. When sweeping our house empty of its furniture we can welcome these with awareness — rather than unconsciously react and behave inappropriately.
- ◆ We can only treat each guest honourably when we can have a conscious, non-judging overview, knowing that (by clearing out) we can replace old habits and concepts with rich values and experiences, some new delight.
- ◆ Once we are self-aware we can see our traits and habits for what they are, changing our behaviour accordingly. Be grateful that this unconscious teacher (guide) has become conscious.

**NB. FOR THE NEXT AND FINAL SESSION EVERYONE SHOULD BRING A PERSONAL OBJECT** — SIGNIFICANT TO THEM — to help talk about their experience of Mindfulness. For example, a seashell, a picture of someone special, a football or a lucky charm...

- ◆ Remember to bring your own object too. You could set up the room with a table, cloth, vase of flowers, fruit, nuts, to make it a celebratory occasion.
- ◆ After the last session you could make a display of the students' poems, reflections, illustrations of Mindfulness and excerpts from their journals.

## FINALE —

### Mindfulness and Wellbeing

WHAT HAS THE COURSE TAUGHT US ABOUT OURSELF AND OTHERS?

**Two minutes silence with eyes closed focusing on the breath.**

#### Exercise 1

Read poem **The Summer Day** (p.44).

What are *each of you* going to do with your 'one wild precious life'?

#### Exercise 2

**Present your own object to the class and explain what it means to you and what it says about you.**

Then ask each student to explain why they have chosen their object and what it means to them.

**Encourage them to read or show their homework from Class 12.**

#### Exercise 3

What have you learnt from practising Mindfulness? What is Mindfulness? Can you see your thoughts as events in the mind? Can you bring yourself into mindful awareness?

Are you using the Breathing Space for stress?

◆ Wellbeing is more than physical and mental health and prosperity. Well-being is living a balanced and harmonious life. We all have the capacity to appreciate happiness and the richness of life, with its problems and vicissitudes, and to deal with and recover from stress. Wellbeing requires Mindfulness to recognise personal stress, be able to deal with it, and to know when we are happy and content.

### DYAD — a traditional exercise in awareness for older students

This is an exchange between two people to elicit answers to a repeated question. Demonstrate with a volunteer sitting on facing chairs.

A. 'How does mindfulness help you (in your life)?'

B. Brief answer, eg. 'Mindfulness helps me to concentrate better'.

A. 'Thank you.'

A 'How does mindfulness help you?'

B. 'Mindfulness makes me see my thoughts when I am angry, control myself, and think before I reply' etc.

A. 'Thank you'.

Continue in this way for 2-3 minutes, then change roles and continue as above. Saying 'thank you' develops uncritical respect for the other person's experience. Answers can be serious and lighthearted and the second person can repeat a similar thought.

**End** with a short meditation on loving-kindness, read **Keeping Quiet** (p.44).

#### Morning

Morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me...We must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake, not by mechanical aids, but by an infinite expectation of the dawn, which does not forsake us in our sounder sleep. I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavour. It is something to be able to paint a particular picture, or to carve a statue, and so to make a few objects beautiful; but it is far more glorious to carve and paint the very atmosphere and medium through which we look... To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.

**Henry David Thoreau,**

*from Walden or Life in the Woods (Everyman, 1908).*

END OF PART 2



# MINDFUL POETRY FOR READING ALOUD

Lesson 1	How to cut a pomegranate	by Imtiaz Dharker
Lesson 2	Listen	Anonymous
	Enough	David Whyte
Lesson 3	Wild Geese	Mary Oliver
Lesson 4	Peace is Every Step	Thich Naht Hahn
Lesson 5	Cultivating the Moment	Sarah Hayes
Lesson 6	We can make	W.B. Yeats
	Stars	Mary Oliver
Lesson 7	Autobiography in	
	Five Short Chapters	Portia Nelson
	The Farmer's Story	Traditional
Lesson 8	The Swan	Mary Oliver
Lesson 9	No Time to Stand and Stare	W.H. Davies
Lesson 10	The Thought manifests...	The Buddha
	We are what we Think...	tr. T. Byram
Lesson 11	The Buddha Taught...	tr. T.N. Hahn
Lesson 12	The Guest House	Rumi, tr. Coleman Bark/John Moyne
Finale	The Summer Day	Mary Oliver
	Keeping Quiet	Pablo Neruda
Plus	Morning	Henry Thoreau
	Moments of Being	Virginia Woolf
	Loving Kindness	Jini Lavelle
	Two kinds of intelligence	Rumi, tr. Coleman Bark/John Moyne

## Moments of Being

...Every day includes much more non-being than being. Yesterday for example, Tuesday the 18th of April, was (as) it happened a good day; above the average in 'being'. It was fine;...I walked... along the river; and save that the tide was out, the country, which I notice very closely always, was coloured and shaded as I like — there were the willows, I remember, all plummy and soft green and purple against the blue. I also read Chaucer with pleasure;... These separate moments of being were however embedded in many more moments of non-being. I have already forgotten what Leonard and I talked about at lunch; and at tea; although it was a good day the goodness was embedded in a kind of nondescript cotton wool. This is always so. A great part of every day is not lived consciously...

**Virginia Woolf**, *from Moments of Being, autobiographical writings (Pimlico, 2002).*

W.H. Davies (1871-1940) Welsh poet who tramped through America.

Imtiaz Dharker (b.1954) describes herself as a Scottish, Muslim, Calvinist poet and artist.

Thich Nhat Hahn (b. 1926) Vietnamese Buddhist monk, Zen master, teacher, writer, activist, nominated by Martin Luther King in 1966 for the Nobel Peace Prize. Founded Plum Village in France and in 2006 re-visited Vietnam.

Sarah Hayes (b.1945) English children's author.

Portia Nelson (1920-2001) American poet, singer, composer and painter.

Pablo Neruda (1904-73) Chilean poet and writer, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1971.

Mary Oliver (b.1935) Pulitzer Prize winning American poet.

Jalaluddin Rumi (1207-73) medieval Turkish Sufi poet and mystic, whose writings have captured the contemporary imagination.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-62) American writer, naturalist, philosopher.

David Whyte (b.1955) Yorkshire poet, zoologist, traveller, teacher.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) English writer in the Bloomsbury Group.

W.B. Yeats (1865-1939) Irish poet, dramatist and mystic.



Reading for Lessons 1 and 2

**HOW TO CUT A POMEGRANATE**

‘Never’ said my father,  
‘Never cut a pomegranate  
through the heart. It will weep blood.  
Treat it delicately, with respect.

Just slit the upper skin across four quarters.

This is a magic fruit,  
so when you split it open, be prepared  
for the jewels of the world to tumble out,  
more precious than garnets,  
more lustrous than rubies,  
lit as if from inside.

Each jewel contains a living seed.

Separate one crystal.

Hold it up to catch the light.

Inside is a whole universe.

No common jewel can give you this.’

Afterwards, I tried to make necklaces  
of pomegranate seeds.

The juice spurted out, bright crimson,  
and stained my fingers, then my mouth.

I didn’t mind. The juice tasted of gardens  
I had never seen, voluptuous  
with myrtle, lemon, jasmine,  
and alive with parrots’ wings.

The pomegranate reminded me  
that somewhere I had another home.

*Imtiaz Dharker*

Reading for Lesson 2

**ENOUGH**

Enough. These few words are enough  
If not these words, this breath.  
If not this breath, this sitting here.

This opening to the life  
we have refused  
again and again  
until now.    Until now.

*David Whyte, Where Many Rivers Meet*

Reading for Lesson 3

**WILD GEESE**

You do not have to be good.

You do not have to walk, on your knees for a  
hundred miles through the desert, repenting.

You only have to let the soft animal of your  
body love what it loves.

Tell me about despair, yours, and I will tell  
you mine.

Meanwhile the world goes on.

Meanwhile the sun and the clear pebbles of  
the rain are moving across the landscapes,  
over the prairies and  
the deep trees,  
the mountains and  
the rivers.

Meanwhile the wild geese, high in the clean  
blue air, are heading home again.

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely,  
the world offers itself to your imagination,  
calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and  
exciting – over and over announcing your  
place  
in the family of things.

*Mary Oliver*

Reading for Lesson 4

**PEACE IS EVERY STEP**

Peace is every step.  
The shining red sun is my heart.  
Each flower smiles with me.  
How green, how fresh all that grows.  
How cool the wind blows.  
Peace is every step.  
It turns the endless path to joy.

*Thich Nhat Hanh*

Reading for Lesson 5

**CULTIVATING THE MOMENT**

**M**et me in the garden of awareness:  
**I** will take you to a place I know,  
**N**ot strange or unfamiliar, merely  
**D**ifferently discovered,  
**F**eelings and sensations flower there,  
**U**ndisturbed. We'll tend this ground together:  
**L**earn to plant out anger in a useful place, and  
**N**urture the rising — falling — breath of life  
**E**xhaling thoughts that grow and fade like  
**S**hadows in the evening sun, we'll scatter  
**S**eeds of stillness. In this moment.

*Sarah Hayes*

Reading for Lesson 6

**STARS**

Here in my head, language  
keeps making its tiny noises.  
How can I hope to be friends  
with the hard white stars  
whose flaring and hissing are not speech but  
pure radiance?  
How can I hope to be friends  
with the yawning spaces between them  
where nothing ever, is spoken?  
Tonight, at the edge of the field,  
I stood very still, and looked up,  
and tried to be empty of words  
What joy was it, that almost  
found me?  
What amiable peace.  
Then it was over, the wind  
roused up in the oak trees  
behind me  
and it fell back, easily.  
Earth has a hundred thousand pure  
contraltos —  
even the distant night bird  
as it talks threat, as it talks love  
over the cold, black fields.  
Once, deep in the woods,  
I found the white skull of a bear

and it was utterly silent —  
and once a river otter,  
in a steel trap,  
and it too was utterly silent —  
What can we do  
but keep on breathing in and out,  
modest and willing, and in our places?  
Listen, listen I'm forever saying  
Listen to the river, to the hawk, to  
the hoof, to the mockingbird, to the  
jack-in-the-pulpit  
then I come up with a few  
words, like a gift.  
Even as now.  
Even as the darkness has remained the pure,  
deep darkness.  
Even as the stars have twirled a little, while  
I stood here,  
looking up,  
one hot sentence after another

*Mary Oliver*

Reading for Lesson 7

**THE FARMER'S STORY**

There was once a farmer who had a single son. One day the son returns to the farm having caught a beautiful wild horse.

The farmer's neighbour, having seen the horse corralled on the farm, says to him, 'How fortunate you are. How lucky you are to have captured such a beautiful and valuable horse.'

The farmer replies, 'May be.'

The next day the farmer's son attempts to break-in the wild horse but he is thrown and breaks his leg. The neighbour commiserates with the farmer. 'How unfortunate, how dreadful that your son has broken his leg.

The farmer replies, 'May be.'

The Kingdom is at war and the ruler sends out a decree that all men of fighting age will be conscripted into the army. The neighbour commiserates with the farmer, 'How unfortunate it is that your son will have to go and fight and might be killed. The farmer replies, 'May be.'

The soldiers come to round up the young men in the village but when they find that the farmer's son is injured they do not

take him.' The neighbour says to the farmer 'How lucky you are that your son's leg is broken at this time.'

The farmer replies, 'May be.'

*Traditional*

Reading for Lesson 8

**THE SWAN**

Across the wide waters  
something comes  
floating – a slim  
and delicate  
ship filled  
With white flowers —  
and it moves  
on it's miraculous muscles  
  
as though time didn't exist,  
as though bringing such gifts  
to the dry shore  
was a happiness  
  
almost beyond bearing.  
And now it turns its dark eyes,  
it rearranges  
the clouds of its wings,  
  
it trails  
an elaborate webbed foot,  
the colour of charcoal.

Soon it will be here.

Oh, what shall I do  
when that poppy-coloured beak  
rests in my hand?

Said Mrs. Blake of the poet:

I miss my husband's company —  
he is so often  
in paradise.

Of course! The path to heaven

doesn't lie down in flat miles.  
It's in the imagination  
with which you perceive  
this world,

and the gestures  
with which you honour it.  
Oh, what will I do, what will I say  
when those  
White wings  
touch the shore?

*Mary Oliver*

Reading for Lesson 9

**NO TIME TO STAND AND STARE**

What is this life, if full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.  
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.  
No time to see, when woods we pass,  
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass.  
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.  
No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.  
No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.  
A poor life this if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

*W.H. Davies*

Reading for Lesson 10

**WE ARE WHAT WE THINK**

We are what we think.  
All that we are arises  
with our thoughts.  
With our thoughts  
we make the world,  
Speak or act with  
an impure mind

And trouble will follow you.  
As the wheel follows the  
ox that draws the cart.  
We are what we think.  
All that we are arises  
with our thoughts.  
With our thoughts  
we make the world.  
Speak or act with pure mind  
And happiness will follow you  
As your shadow, unshakeable.  
How can a troubled mind  
Understand the way?  
Your worst enemy  
cannot harm you  
As much as your own  
thoughts, unguarded.  
But once mastered,  
No one can help you as much,  
Not even your father  
or your mother.

*Dhammapada, Buddhist teaching  
translated by Thomas Byrom*

Reading for Lesson 11

**THE BUDDHA TAUGHT**

Do not pursue the past.  
Do not lose yourself in the future.  
The past no longer is.  
The future has yet to come.  
Looking deeply at life as it is  
in the very here and now,  
the practitioner dwells  
in stability and freedom.  
We must be diligent today.  
To wait until tomorrow is too late.  
Death comes unexpectedly.  
How can we bargain with it?  
The sage calls a person who knows  
how to dwell in mindfulness night and day  
'one who knows  
the better way to live alone'.

*Translated by Thich Nhat Hanh*

Readings for the Finale

**THE SUMMER DAY**

Who made the world?  
Who made the swan, and the black bear?  
Who made the grasshopper?  
This grasshopper, I mean – the one who has  
flung herself out of the grass,  
the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,  
who is moving her jaws back and forth  
instead of up and down –  
who is gazing around with her enormous  
and complicated eyes.  
Now she lifts her pale forearms and  
thoroughly washes her face.  
Now she snaps her wings open, and floats  
away.  
I don't know exactly what a prayer is.  
I do know how to pay attention, how to  
fall down  
into the grass, how to kneel down in the  
grass,  
how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll  
through the fields,  
which is what I have been doing all day.  
Tell me, what else should I have done?  
Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon?  
Tell me, what is it you plan to do  
with your one wild and precious life?

*Mary Oliver*

**KEEPING QUIET**

Now we will count to twelve  
And we will all keep still.

For once on the face of the earth,  
Let's not speak in any language;  
Let's stop for one second,  
And not move our arms so much.

It would be an exotic moment  
Without rush, without engines;  
We would all be together  
in a sudden strangeness.

Fishermen in a calm sea  
would not harm whales  
and the man gathering salt  
would look at his hurt hands.

Those who prepare green wars,  
Wars with gas, wars with fire,  
Victories with no survivors,  
Would put on clean clothes  
And walk about with their brothers  
In the shade, doing nothing.

What I want should not be confused  
with total inactivity.  
Life is what it is about;  
I want no truck with death.

If we were not so single minded  
About keeping our lives moving,  
And for once could do nothing,  
Perhaps a huge silence

Might interrupt this sadness  
Of never understanding ourselves  
And of threatening ourselves with death.  
Perhaps the earth can teach us  
As when everything seems dead  
And later proves to be alive.

Now I'll count up to twelve  
and you keep quiet and I will go.

*Pablo Neruda*

**Plus**

**LOVING KINDNESS**

You do not need to kneel and pray  
Achieve the lotus position  
Fast all day;  
Espouse a new religion  
Punish the body  
Flagellate the mind,  
You only need to be  
Kind to yourself,  
Loving and Kind.

You have this One life  
No rehearsal or encores  
Don't waste it with hate  
Participate  
In your own unfolding.  
Meditate. Inquire within  
Be kind to yourself  
Forgiving, Loving  
And mindful.

Enjoy responsibility!  
Self-creativity.  
Expel negativity  
Evict the victim  
Expose the judge.  
You are what you think (you are)  
Why you choose

How you act,  
A master of invention. Be skillful  
With intention.  
Get out of your way.  
Be kind to yourself  
Compassionate and kind  
And mindful.

Just in this moment  
Present. With intent,  
In the space between  
Be  
Who you really are  
Authentic.  
Free  
Heart and mind  
Loving and kind,  
Mindful.

*Jini Lavelle*

**TWO KINDS OF INTELLIGENCE**

There are two kinds of intelligence:  
One acquired as a child in school memorizes  
facts and concepts from books and from  
what the teacher says,  
collecting information from the traditional  
sciences  
as well as from the new sciences.

With such intelligence you rise in the world.  
You get ranked ahead or behind others  
in regard to your competence in retaining  
information. You stroll with this intelligence  
in and out of fields of knowledge, getting  
always more marks on your preserving  
tablets.

There is another kind of tablet, one  
already completed and preserved inside you.  
A spring overflowing its springbox.  
A freshness in the centre of the chest.  
This other intelligence does not turn yellow  
or stagnate. It's fluid  
And it doesn't move from outside to inside  
through the conduits of plumbing-learning.

This second knowing is a fountainhead  
from within you, moving out.

*Rumi*

END OF PART 3



## COLLECTIVE MINDFULNESS

**One shining example of Mindfulness put to good use is practised in the Indian kingdom of Bhutan, where Gross Domestic Happiness has priority over Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the workforce has fortnightly annual meditation holidays.**

**Teachers wishing to follow-up the practical course with discussion about the wider aspects of Mindfulness may like to consider the following topics — relating to ethics, values and global wellbeing.**

### ◆ TALKING POINT

#### **Loving-kindness and religion — shared values and the ethical Golden Rule**

Evolutionary psychology indicates that *homo sapiens* is instinctively good-natured and sociable. Empathy and loving-kindness seem to be built into the human psyche.

The fact that altruism makes people feel good — also borne out by neuroscience— is the bedrock of world religions. Before any belief systems, their founders all promoted similar ethical values and the same Golden Rule (see right).

Three of these thinkers, all from the C6-5th BCE, were the Buddha in India, Confucius in China and the Jewish prophet Jeremiah — followed later in the Middle East by Jesus and the prophet Mohammed. In

ancient Greece Socrates also saw ‘knowing thyself’ as a mark of good citizenship.\*

#### **Question: Is the modern world managing to follow the ethical Golden Rule?**

### ◆ TALKING POINT

#### **Learning can change the world?**

Alarming green issues are compelling global organisations to consider their long-term aims. To this end, the Society for Organisational Learning (SOL) has been ‘Exploring Profound Change in People, Organizations and Society’.

Calling their ideas ‘Presence’ (Present and Sense), they are re-evaluating the learning process itself. The diagrams illustrate their U-theory on how to approach problems mindfully and responsively — rather than

\*The Great Transformation by **Karen Armstrong**

The Greatest Happiness Principle derives from Utilitarianism, the English philosophy expounded by

**Jeremy Bentham** (1748-1831) and  
**John Stuart Mill** (*ibid* p.3)

### GOLDEN RULES

◆ Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. **Buddhism**

◆ Surely it is a maxim of loving-kindness: do not unto others what you would not have them do unto you. **Confucianism**

◆ What is hateful to yourself, do not to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it.

*Talmudic story summing up the Golden Rule.* **Judaism**

◆ All things whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets. **Christianity**

◆ No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself. **Islam**

Unless we love each  
other we die.

**W.H. Auden**

1907-73, English poet

RE in schools will show the way

**Dr. William Bloom**

University of Liverpool

Discussion on the opening up of eastern traditions  
BBC Radio 4 Sunday, 2005

## Part 4

falling back on reactionary group-think — to come to the right decisions.

Nelson Mandela is SOL's example of a person who transformed a public mindset — when his compassionate style of leadership and Truth and Reconciliation Commission helped to abolish apartheid in South Africa.

**Question: Has Barack Obama's presidency heralded an era of change?**

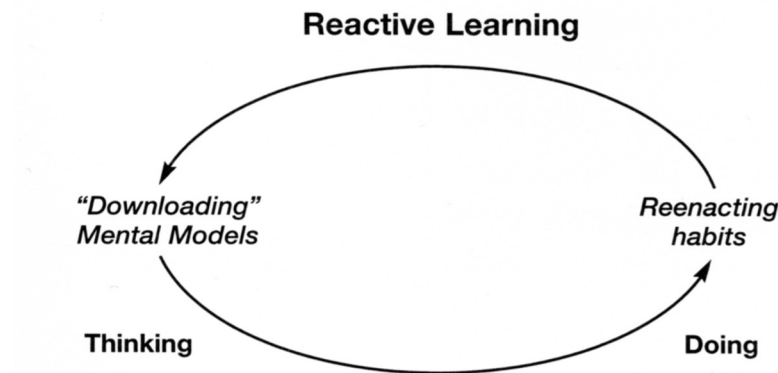
◆ In western philosophy the C17th mathematician René Descartes separated the body from the mind, which has made it difficult for westerners to accept holistic thinking.

MindLESSness is an entrapment in old categories, by automatic behaviour that precludes attending to signals, and by action that operates from a single perspective.

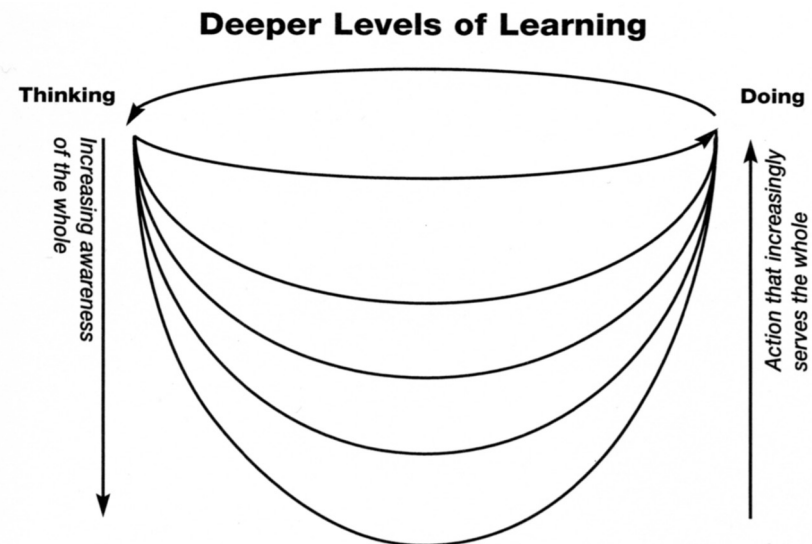
**Ellen Langer**  
psychologist

Diagrams taken from Peter Senge et al, *Presence*, 2005  
(see [www.presence.net](http://www.presence.net))

## SOL's U-THEORY FOR DEEPER LEARNING



1. In reactive learning, thinking is governed by established mental models and doing is governed by established habits of action. In this way, regardless of outcome, things end up being 'right'.



2. It is possible not to be governed by habit (such as the assumption that faster is better) if the notion that 'wholes' are made of 'parts' gives way to the concept that the world is made up of living systems (e.g. a tree or human being) which continuously change.

This diagram illustrates how deeper levels of learning create increasing awareness of larger 'wholes'. Using this way of thinking individuals and organisations can act *responsively* and be part of initiating profound change.

## ◆ TALKING POINT

### Young movers and shakers

Teenagers like to act for themselves. One striking example was seen in *Children on the Front Line* — a DVD made by Plan, the children's charity, which filmed a group of schoolfriends in the Philippines determined to make life safer for themselves and their local communities. They successfully persuaded their government to move several schools out of the paths of the mudslides caused by deforestation, regularly produced by typhoons.

Another documentary shows young people determined to personally investigate the natural world. In 2007 *Linnae* — a prize-winning Swedish film commemorating Carl Linnaeus, the great classifier of nature — followed three university science students researching biodiversity. They visited all seven of the continents studied by the scientist's 18th century researchers, returning home with first-hand data enabling them to monitor the life-chances of *flora* and *fauna* over three hundred years.

**Question:** How can the young generation help to save the world from ecological disaster?

## ◆ TALKING POINT

### Tolerance

Tolerance has been defined as having 'a fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions, practices, race, religion, nationality, or the like, differ from one's own; freedom from bigotry.' (*Random House College Dictionary*.)

For this emotive subject, the group might like to listen to — or sing — John Lennon's protest song (*right*), followed by discussion about loving-kindness and compassion.

On the subject of current affairs, they could recall instances in their lifetime when intolerance has led to war, discuss the relationship between tolerance and world peace. They could collect cuttings and blogs illustrating acts of tolerance and intolerance, making a collage, or locating countries on a map.\*

**Question:** Does Mindfulness encourage tolerance?

It needs only an almost imperceptible disturbance of equilibrium in our leaders' heads to plunge the world into blood, fire and radioactivity ...

Jung (*ibid* p.2)

\*Diane Tillman *Living values activities for young adults*. (Health Communications Inc., 2000)

## IMAGINE

*Imagine there's no Heaven  
It's easy if you try  
No hell below us  
Above us only sky  
Imagine all the people  
Living for today*

*Imagine there's no countries  
It isn't hard to do  
Nothing to kill or die for  
And no religion too  
Imagine all the people  
Living life in peace*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will be as one*

*Imagine no possessions  
I wonder if you can  
No need for greed or hunger  
A brotherhood of man  
Imagine all the people  
Sharing all the world*

*You may say that I'm a dreamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope someday you'll join us  
And the world will live as one*

**John Lennon**

1940-1980, British songwriter and Beatle.

## **Making space for Mindfulness**

◆ Teenagers tend to find happiness in physical and mental activity — in Doing mode. Mindfulness suggests that Doing should balance with Being.

◆ Being centres on silence and stillness — time to notice thoughts and moods and review mental habits, i.e. learn to avoid ruminating and yearning.

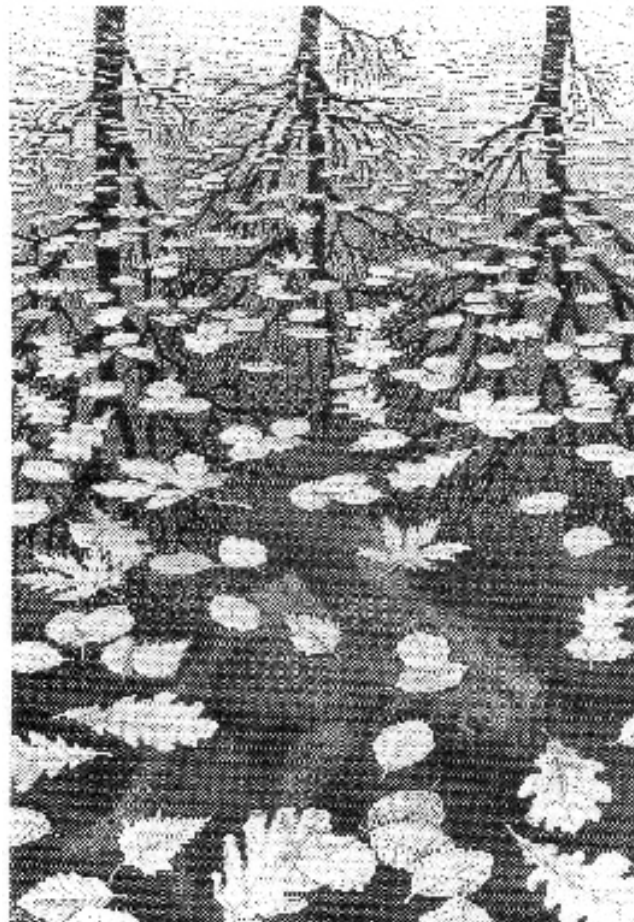
◆ Focus on breathing and the body leads to Being ‘in the present’. Practising mindful meditation exercises attends gently to emotional wellbeing.

◆ Would more Mindfulness lead to profound change in society? Instead of relying on reactive group-think, people could be mindfully responsive when making collective decisions.

You don't need to leave your room. Remain sitting at your table and listen. Don't even listen, simply wait. Don't even wait, be quite still and solitary. The world will freely offer itself to you to be unmasked.

**Franz Kafka**

*1883-1924, German-Jewish novelist*



**M.C. Escher** Dutch, 1898-1972. *Three Worlds*

...there is an alternative to doing everything faster. And though it sounds like a paradox, the Slow movement is growing quickly.

**Carl Honoré**

*In praise of Slow (Orion 2004)*

We go to the gym to keep physically fit. Mindfulness practice is weight training for a healthy mind.

**Mindfulness student**

**ROSHI**

I never really understood  
What he said  
but every now and then  
I find myself  
barking with the dog  
or bending with the irises  
or helping out in other little ways

**Leonard Cohen**

*(b.1934) Canadian songwriter, singer and poet.*

...Negative Capability, that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason...

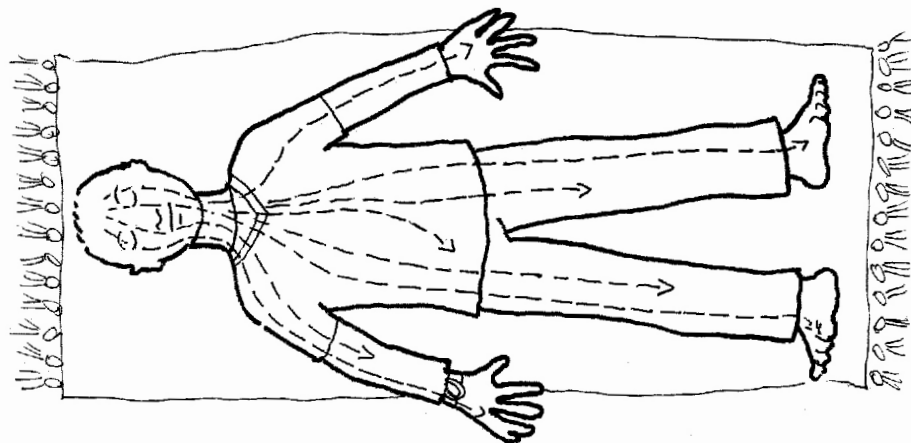
**John Keats**

*1795-1821, English poet. Letter to his brothers, 1817.*



## THE FULL BODY SCAN

This is on audio track 2. For the Short Body Scan listen as far as instruction 9.



1. Lie down, making yourself comfortable, on your back on a mat or a rug on the floor. Allow your eyes to close gently.

2. Now notice your physical contact with the floor, your heels, calves, thighs, buttocks, back, head, arms touching the floor. Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and sensations in the body. Notice any 'holding' or tension in the body, let the feet fall apart. Allow yourself to let go, sink a little deeper into the floor.

3. The aim of this practice is not to feel any different, relaxed, or calm; this may happen as a side effect. Instead, the intention is, as best you can, to bring awareness to any sensations you detect, as you focus attention on each part of the body in turn. To be fully aware and in the present moment, just as it is.

4. Now bring your awareness to the physical sensations in the lower abdomen, become aware of the changing patterns of sensation in the abdominal wall as you breathe in, and as you breathe out.

5. Having connected with sensation in the abdomen, take the focus of awareness to the toes of your left foot. Focus on each in turn, the big toe, the little toe and the toes in between. Bringing a gentle curiosity to investigate the quality of the sensations you find, perhaps noticing the sense of contact between the toes, tingling, warmth or no particular sensation. You may like to imagine you are breathing in and out of the toes of the left foot.

6. Now, on an out breath, let go of awareness of the toes, and bring your attention to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot — bringing a gentle, investigative awareness to the sole of the foot, the instep, the heel (e.g. noticing the sensations where the heel makes contact with the floor), being aware of the breath and any or no sensations in the lower foot.

7. Now move the focus to rest of the foot — the top of the foot, ankle and right into the bones and joints. On an out breath, let go of the left foot completely, allowing the focus of awareness and the breath to move into the lower left leg — the shin, the calf in contact with the floor, the

muscles and flesh, bones and skin, noticing any sensation, warmth, coolness, tingling, throbbing or no sensation.

8. Now move to the knee and then the thigh. Before moving to the toes of the right foot, pause and compare the feeling in the left and the right leg. Now, starting with the toes, continue the body scan of the right leg in the same way as you did for the left.

9. When you become aware of tension, or other intense sensations in a particular part of the body, you can ‘breathe in’ to them — using the in breath gently to bring awareness right into the sensations, and releasing the tension with the out breath.

10. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity, to the physical sensations in each part of the rest of the body in turn — the pelvic area, buttocks, abdomen, lower back, the pancreas and kidneys, the stomach and liver, rib cage, the lungs and heart, upper back, chest, sternum and the shoulders and shoulder blades in contact with the floor. Then do the arms together, starting with the fingers of both hands, then the palms, backs of the hands and wrists, the forearms, elbows, upper arms and armpits. Move to the neck and throat, then the head and face, including the jaw, mouth, nose, cheeks, eyes, ears, forehead, skull and hair. In each area, bring the same detailed level of awareness and curiosity to the bodily sensations present.

11. Inevitably the mind will wander away from the breath and the body from time to time. This is what the mind does. When you notice, acknowledge it, ‘Ah, I’m mindful again’, then return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.

12. After you have scanned the whole body in this way, spend a few minutes being aware of a sense of the body as a whole, and the breath flowing freely in and out through the body. Then return awareness to the breath in the abdomen, opening the eyes and sitting up carefully.

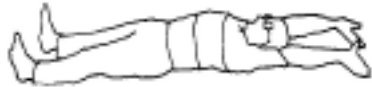
**If you find yourself falling asleep, prop your head up with a pillow, or bend your knees, or open your eyes, or do the practice sitting up rather than lying down.**



## MORE STRETCHES —

**Remember to be mindful and feel the body**

### 1. WAKE-UP



Stretch back and feet away from the torso, relax and repeat.

### 2. REST



Resting position

### 3. PELVIC ROCK



Raise and lower the pelvis, keeping the bottom on the floor. Rest.

### 4. KNEES BEND



Raise knee to chest and head to knee. Repeat with the other leg and rest.

### 5. SCISSORS



Bring head to leg. If possible, stretch out the bent leg. Repeat with the other leg.

### 6. TWIST



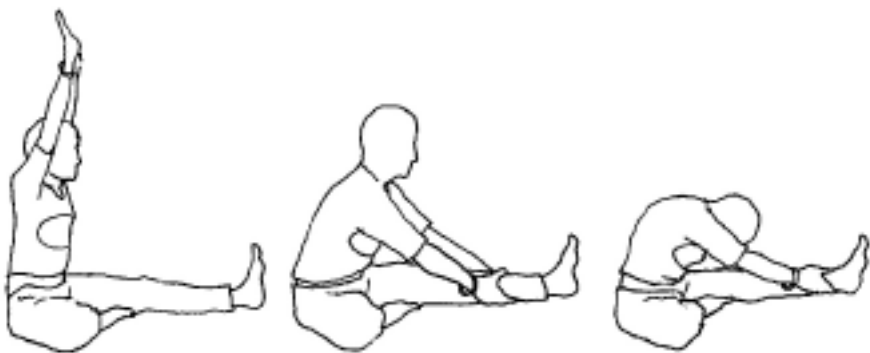
Bend the knees and shift to right, turn head and chest to the left. Repeat on the other side.

**7. FROG**



Pull the feet towards the body, let the knees relax towards the floor on an out breath. Hold and repeat.

**8. OYSTER**



Raise the arms on an in breath, lower head over the outstretched leg on an out breath. Relax. Repeat on the other leg.

**9. ROCK & ROLL**



Massage the back, side to side, round and round, back and forth.

**10. CAT**



Arch the back and look down, drop the belly and look up. Repeat a number of times.

**11. TREE**



Can be done in a pair or individually. Clasp each other around the waist, hold hands above head. Bend outside leg and place the foot on the thigh.

**12. THANK YOU**



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by Tony Wilkinson (Findhorn 2007)

*The Mindful Way through Depression*

by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal, and Jon Kabat-Zinn (Guilford, 2007)

### **Poetry**

*Wild Geese*, selected poems by Mary Oliver (Bloodaxe, 2004)

*The terrorist at my table* by Imtiaz Dharker (Bloodaxe, 2006)

And grateful thanks to all whose poems we chose for reading. Other acknowledgements on p 39.

**There is useful information about Mindfulness on the internet. For details about Teachers' Intensive Training courses at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, University Department of Psychiatry please see [www.oxfordmindfulness.org](http://www.oxfordmindfulness.org)**

**With special thanks to Professor Mark Williams for his support and advice.**

**CAROL CATTLEY** (BA Hons, OU) was a journalist on *The Observer* and in Africa in the 1960-70s and since then has been an educational publisher. Her company Goodwill Art produces award-winning teaching resources on all kinds of art subjects, including a series on World Religions through Art. She came across Mindfulness when she participated in the MBCT course at the Oxford University Department of Psychiatry.

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tel: 01235 850811

email: [carol@goodwillart.co.uk](mailto:carol@goodwillart.co.uk)

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**JINI LAVELLE** studied fine art at the Ruskin School of Drawing, Oxford university. She is a psychologist and Mindfulness teacher and has studied and practised yoga and meditation since 1970. She founded Oxford Mindfulness in 1999, the first public programme of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction and Cognitive Therapy in Britain. She also led the Teachers Intensive course for this syllabus at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre.

Dedicated to James, Henry and Aidan, who taught me to be mindful.

Drawings by **BRYAN GANDER**.

*This resource is also available as an A4 spiral bound book with CD*

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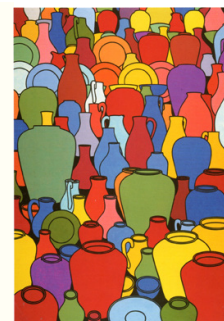
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Editor: Carol Cattley

Old School, Upton, Didcot, OX11 9JB

tel: 01235 850811

e-mail: [carol@goodwillart.co.uk](mailto:carol@goodwillart.co.uk)

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