

TRIED & TRUE



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AZ

THRIVE

A THERAPY COMMUNITY



GUIDED MEDITATION

Practice this mindfulness activity once a day this week and reflect on your experience with it each time.

We often don't notice every point in our bodies. Taking time allows us to connect with *ourselves*

Remember, mindfulness is a practice; it takes time to build up the skill.

Step 1: Become Aware of Your Lower Body

Spend about 5 minutes on the first step. As you sit in the chair, start to feel how your feet touch the ground. Be aware of the contact that they make with the floor beneath you. Notice how your feet feel. Start with the toes, then bring your attention to the soles, up through the ankles. Are your feet tired? Do your soles hurt from a busy day? Or are they perhaps rested and they feel just fine? At this point you might get distracted with different thoughts or emotions. Gently accept that maybe you're thinking about what you want later for dinner and go back to focusing on your feet. Where you feel tension, just breathe in and as you exhale slowly release part of the tension.

Next, bring your awareness above your feet, to the lower parts of your legs. Be aware of any sensations that you might experience there. Does this part feel energized? Or does it feel heavy? Slowly move your attention to your knees. Feel how the back of the knee touches the chair that you sit on. How do your knees feel? Keep on moving your focus upwards and feel your thighs. How do they feel? Do you feel like you need to present them with a well-deserved work out session? Feel the sensation of your thighs touching the surface of the chair. If your mind starts wandering around, acceptingly bring your attention back to doing the exercise.

Move your attention to your pelvic area and buttocks. Be aware of how your body makes contact with the chair.

Step 2: Become Aware of Your Upper Body

Spend 5 more minutes on this step. Start with your torso. Feel your stomach. How does it feel? Is it calm or is it nervous? Maybe you will realize that you feel slightly hungry. Notice any sensation that might be there, no matter how small. Then, move your attention to the lower back. Feel how it touches the back of the chair. The lower back is one of the body parts that may accumulate tension and tiredness. How does your lower back feel? Does it hurt? Is it relaxed? If you feel any tension or negative sensation just breathe in and breathe out. Accept whatever sensations your lower back might be experiencing at the moment and keep doing the exercise. If your mind starts to get distracted, gently shift your focus back to your body.

Continue upwards, scanning the front and the back of your chest. Feel how the upper back makes contact with the surface of the chair. Feel how your whole back supports your body on the chair. What sensations can you feel? If you start thinking about other things, just be aware of it and softly bring your attention back to the body. Now, bring the awareness to your hands. Start with the fingertips, through the fingers, through the palm of your hands. Be aware of any sensations that you may feel. Are your hands resting in your lap or on the chair? Feel the contact between your hands and forearms and your lap or the chair. Move your attention up towards your forearms, through your elbows and the upper part of the arms.

Step 3: Become Aware of Your Shoulders and Head

Spend 5 minutes on this step. The shoulders and the neck are parts of the body that often become tense because of stress. Bring your attention to the shoulders and the muscles of the neck. Be aware of how that region feels. Do you have tension in the muscles? Do you have neck pain because you were sitting in a chair throughout the whole day in your office or at school? Move your attention up to your head. Be aware of your chin, your mouth, your nose, eyes and then ears. Do you have any physical sensations or any type of tension? Be aware of how your head feels. Do you perhaps have a headache? Or does it feel relaxed and energized? Don't worry if your mind starts wandering, just gently redirect your focus back on the exercise.

SELF IDENTIFICATION

THIS ACTIVITY HELPS YOU TO SEE YOUR IDENTITY FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

In this activity you will need two pieces of paper, markers or colored pencils and scissors.

We will start with the first piece of paper.

On this paper you are going to write down as many "I am" statements that you can think of.

These can be facts about your personality, your physical appearance, what you like to do, what roles you play in your life - whatever makes up you.

Fill up the entire page with these "I Am" statements.

Write them as big or small as you'd like, they don't have to be uniform.

On the second sheet of paper you will create a visual representation of your identity.

Without using any words create an artistic representation of your identity
Now fold your second piece of paper in half and begin to cut one inch strips from the center to the outer edge, leaving some room on the outer edge so the paper stays intact.

Take your first paper and cut that paper into one inch strips. Take each strip and weave it over and under, alternating with each strip, into your second page creating a weave pattern.

Once this is finished spend some time noticing the integration of the two pages.
What comes through? What do you notice about your identity in this process?

WHO AM I?

GRIEVING VS GRIEVANCES

At risk of dating myself too much, there is a bit from the show *Seinfeld* about a made up holiday. One of the characters, Frank Costanza invents a holiday called Festivus, as he is tired of some of the traditions of other holidays in December. There is even a tag line. *Festivus for the rest of us!*

Out of the number of new traditions that Frank injects into Festivus, the most famous is "The Airing of Grievances." This is when each member of the family goes around the table to let others know the problems that they have with them. They might talk about the shortcomings of others or the ways they have felt disappointed by the people that surround them. It made for fantastic 90's situational comedy and an even worse idea.

We talk a lot in IOP about how to more effectively communicate with other people which might include airing a grievance. We want to claim a need that we had and how that need was not attended to. This is an important part of healing.

However, in order to be able to do grievance work we need to have a few factors set in place. This might include the situation that we are in, the context, or the setting. But more importantly it requires having two people who are properly resourced to be able to do the work. Both parties need to be able to self-reflect, effectively communicate, empathize, listen, stay out of judgment, and look at another's perspective. None of these are a walk in the park.

Now, I bet you can guess which person you have control over in terms of checking off those tasks. That's right, you. You are not going to be in control of whether or not the other person is able to successfully engage in this type of work.

*And when you cannot do grievance work, you
have to do grief work.*

Grief work looks like letting go of the idea of the relationship that we want to have with somebody. Allowing the other person to be who they are, or not take ownership of what we are wanting them to take ownership of. We may not be able to achieve the level of intimacy or reconciliation that we want with that person. In essence, we have to grieve the idea of what that could have been like. When we grieve the relationship that we want to have with someone we care about, we open ourselves up to the relationship that is available to us with that individual.



Exercise

Who have you had trouble accepting how they are?

What have you wanted differently from them?

Use the following space to write a short letter to them, accepting them the way that they are.

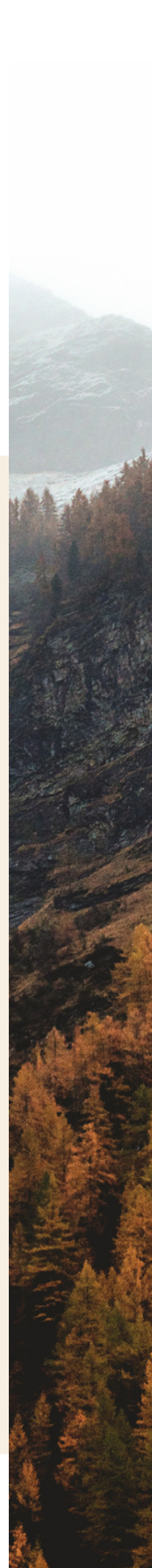
While writing this letter may not provide the type of reconciliation you are wanting, you might see the type of relationship that is available to you with that person.

A large area of lined paper for writing a letter. It features horizontal light blue lines and a vertical red margin line on the left side.

DRAW

Your Large, Powerful Monster

Take some intentional time to slow down, stay present, and allow yourself to come into contact with a painful situation in your life...one you may be actively fighting or resisting. What does this look like? Can you notice internal sensations and emotions while releasing judgment and practicing kindness to yourself?

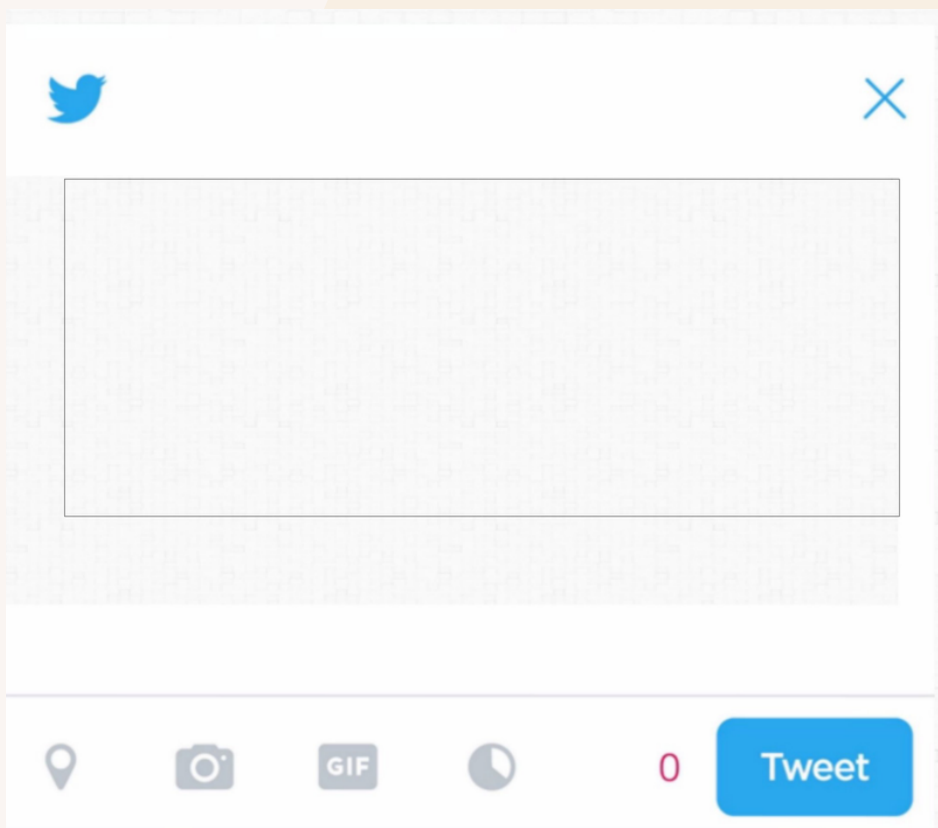


CHANGE IT UP

A fun defusion technique is to take a phrase that has been bothering you and put it in the voice of somebody else.

You can use a cartoon character like Homer Simpson, or put it in the twitter voice of a political figure that you don't align with.

Pay attention to how this interrupts the typical pattern of thought and response.



MOVE YOUR BODY

Wherever you are currently sitting, write or say out loud some of your typical automatic negative thoughts about yourself. Move to the other side of the room and change up the language to reflect a truth in a more compassionate way.

NEGATIVE judgements

Listen, you are probably pretty judgemental. *Stick with me for a second*, I can already feel the defensiveness. Who wants to be seen as judgemental? Perhaps that's even because of your judgment on the word judgemental. It's a bad thing, right? Well, what if we swap out the word judgemental for the word "evaluative." Let's try that one on and see how it feels.

Try saying "I have a very evaluative mind." That might even be a good thing! All judgements and evaluations are simply our mind's attempt to categorize things into good or bad.

It is actually important to be able to do this. Your mind needs to be able to keep track of what is potentially harmful, upsetting, disgusting, and unsafe and be able to differentiate between what is life giving, joyful, nourishing, and safe. Imagine how much of a mess you would be in if your mind didn't take on this task for you. Thanks, mind!

But this sort of evaluative process can begin to have outcomes that do not improve our life.

Let's say that our minds are more likely to grasp onto judgements that are negative. If there are two spots in the forest that have berries, one with poisonous berries and the other with nourishing berries, which do you think is more important to remember? While it's important to be nourished, *it is probably more important to not be poisoned*. Our mind knows this and thus places a greater emphasis on the poisonous berries. We'll try and remember the nourishing berries too, but we certainly don't want to forget about the ones that are poisonous so we can be sure to avoid them.

Now, this is great for berries but it doesn't always work as well for our thoughts and emotions. Our negative judgements can often be quite unmotivating and render us less effective at navigating the situation that we are in.

The following worksheet can help you with this!

Use the following page to bring a higher level of awareness to your negative judgements as well as how you want to respond to these situations.

<i>SITUATION</i>	→	<i>JUDGEMENT</i>	→	<i>EMOTIONS</i>	→	<i>OUTCOME</i>

<i>DATE</i>	<i>THE PROBLEM I WAS THINKING ABOUT</i>	<i>THE ANSWER FROM WISE MIND</i>	<i>HOW I FEEL AFTER</i>

VALUES RECAP

Write out a few accomplishments and scenarios you have engaged in in the last year. You can use your own categories if you like, this is just a starting point. As you do this, make sure to take note of the values that supported those goals and what actionable steps you took in order to make these happen.

examples

Accomplishment:
Graduated from college

Scenario:
Had friends over for a
game night

Values:
Learning, improvement,
challenge

Values:
Connection, community,
laughter

Action Steps:
Enrolled in university, attended
classes, studied for exams

Action steps:
Organized game night by
contacting people and setting
details for the party

CIRCLE OF CONTROL

Take some time to reflect on what you are in control of currently.
Write these reflections inside of the circle.



Next, reflect on what is not currently in your control. Place these reflections on the outside the circle.
What do you notice about your reflections?

When we focus on concerns outside of our control, we increase our stress and fall into accusations, worry, anger, and even victimization. We begin to struggle with a weight of responsibility that is not ours to carry.

T|B|P WORKSHEET

Here, you'll find a simple triggers, behavior, payoffs worksheet which lists all seven of the most common 'payoffs' for unworkable behavior. Throughout this week, identify what takes place for you in the following categories.

7 COMMON PAYOFFS TO CONSIDER:

avoid/escape an unpleasant situation/event
avoid/escape unpleasant thoughts/feelings
feel good
gain attention
get my needs met
feel like I am 'problem solving'
feel like I am 'making sense' of things

TRIGGERS

Situation, thoughts, and feelings that immediately precede the behavior

example

Feeling "missed" by family members at dinner table.

BEHAVIOR

What you do

Sulk alone in another room.

PAYOFF

Immediate outcomes of the behavior that keep it going

Gain attention

TRIGGERS

Situation, thoughts, and feelings that immediately precede the behavior

BEHAVIOR

What you do

PAYOFF

Immediate outcomes of the behavior that keep it going

WRITE ME A MOVIE

Every movie involving a hero has some point about 50 minutes in where the main character needs to make some significant changes. They need to get in better shape, make stronger decisions, and maybe cut their hair or something. Most movies like to show this happening through a montage. Cue up some 80's music and watch the main character sweat on an exercise bike, jog some stairs, and change their diet and you've got the ingredients for a great montage. You usually see the character struggle at the beginning but by the time we've gotten to the second chorus, they are breaking records and achieving their goals.

Now, you probably aren't gearing up to fight Apollo Creed, but you have things you want to change.

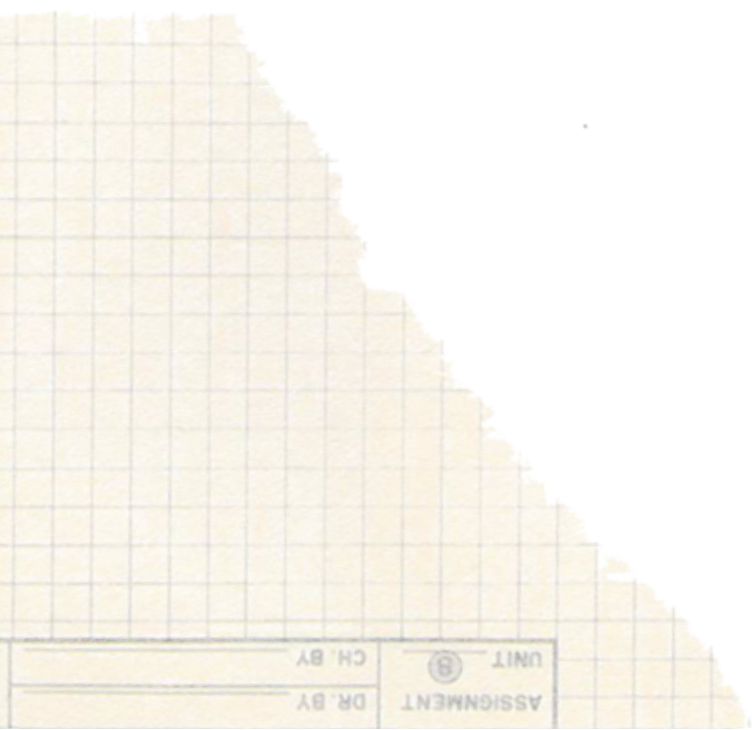
The question is, "what's in your montage?"

Use these pages to write out some of the things you would see yourself doing if your life was a movie on the way to making changes. Is it going back to school? Having hard conversations with family? Making other lifestyle changes? Getting out of bed at 6am?

Make sure to pick your music. It doesn't have to be an 80's song, but it probably should be.



A graphic of a notepad with a play button icon at the top center, indicating a space for writing a movie script. The notepad has a light beige background with a brown border. The play button is a green circle with a right-pointing triangle inside. Below the play button are seven horizontal lines for writing.



ASSIGNMENT	DR. BY	CH. BY
UNIT 8		

