

Emotional Dexterity – Monkey Mind Week 4 meditation recording

Take your seat with a strong, straight back, feeling the dignity of that posture. If your back is straight you can afford to be open in your heart, so sit with a strong straight back while softening your shoulders, your belly, your jaw and your chest.

Begin to breathe in a slow, regulated way, gradually increasing the depth and length of your inhale and your exhale.

Long slow deep breaths in, long slow deep breaths out

As you sink into this rhythm, do a quick inventory of your body. Where is your body in contact with other surfaces? Feel how these points of contact ground you.

And now starting at your feet, scan through your entire body, feeling the sensation at each section.

Feel yourself well-grounded in your body with your senses fully open. Now that you have a sense of your physical presence as you are right now in this moment, continue to take long, slow breaths in and long, slow breaths out as you turn your attention to your mind and your emotions.

What emotional tones are you picking up on? Is the emotion just a whisper of a feeling or is it heavier than that? See if you can put a label on your feeling, whether it's one emotion or a blend of emotions you are experiencing.

Don't try to get rid of this emotion or do anything with it. If this is a difficult emotion, see if you can just be with it, be open to it. Notice where you feel this emotion in your body. Pay close attention to what that feels like. Is it sharp and stabbing? Clenching? Soft and melting?

Now try to get some distance from this emotion by putting it with its label out in front of you. See if you can separate it from yourself, looking at it outside of you while still being in touch with how it feels – but just how it feels a little bit away from you. Labeling helps create distance from the emotion and puts you in touch with your reasoning mind.

As you look at this emotion out in front away from you, notice if any thoughts arise around this emotion. If it grabs you away and pulls you in closer, gently come back to your breath, re-establishing your connection with your body and getting grounded right here physically in the present.

Once you are well-grounded, go back to that emotion and continue to see it and experience it from a distance.

Now that you've had a little practice with identifying an emotion and distancing yourself from it, we're going to deliberately choose a different emotion to work with. First come back to your body and breath to get grounded. Now intentionally pick a difficult emotion you have recently been experiencing.

Again, label that emotion get it out in front of your where you can see it while continuing to breathe. Begin to let yourself feel this emotion, calling to mind the circumstances around it.

Keep breathing while you sit with this emotion. Where do you feel it in your body? What is that feeling? If the emotion pulls you in, come back to your body, back to your breath.

As you sit with the experience of this emotion, see if you can move it a little further back, getting a little more detached.

Continue to breathe. Continue to be open to what you are feeling, allowing it to just be. From this safe distance, consider the circumstances of this emotion. What led to you feeling this way? Just let yourself sit with this experience. If you feel yourself getting pulled into the emotion, get grounded by coming back to your breath and your body. Then go back to the emotion.

Keep breathing, feeling yourself grounded in your body as you watch the emotion out in front of you, a safe distance away. Let your mind take a look at all the circumstances around this feeling you are having. Envision taking a walk around this emotion, this circumstance. Is there anything you need to see here that distance allows you to see?

Allow your mind to turn this over while you continue to breathe for a minute or two while I'm quiet. If you find your mind wandering away, just come back to your breath, back to your body to get yourself grounded then reconnect with the labeled emotion out there in front of you, some distance away.

Gradually start to shift your awareness to the world around you as we prepare to end this session. As we gently transition, reflect for a few moments on what the process of experiencing and being with your emotions was like for you – identifying them, locating where they rose up and how they feel in your body, putting them out there in the distance so they can be tolerated, then from that distance seeing if any insight came forward, perhaps something you needed to see.

Return to this emotional awareness sequence over and over again to develop greater ability to regulate your emotions and free yourself from the suffering that comes from reactivity and feelings that haven't been understood and processed.