
3hr Day of Mindfulness Handout - Contacting Our Experience

Session: DOM Practice

Date: August 2025

Time: 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM (Online)

Theme: Contacting our Experience: Pleasant, Unpleasant, and Neutral

Welcome & Introduction (10 mins)

- **Theme:** Contacting our experience. Today we explore our 'first impressions'—the immediate pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral tone of each moment. We will practice pausing to greet these experiences with curiosity, beginner's mind, and compassion.
 - **Timetable:** We will move between guided practice, mindful movement, and periods of shared silence to connect deeply with ourselves and, at the end, safely with others.
 - **Intention:** To observe the automatic "hedonic tone" of our experience without trying to change it, bringing awareness to the traffic lights of our inner world.
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Session Timetable

Time	Practice	Details & Notes
5:30	Welcome & Introduction	Overview of the theme and the evening's structure.

Time	Practice	Details & Notes
5:40	3-Minute Breathing Space	To arrive fully in this space.
5:50	Theme Talk: The 'I' in SIFT	Exploring the automatic impulse of like/dislike. Noticing our "hedonic tone."
6:00	Moving into Silence	With the poem: "Enough. These few words are enough..." by David Whyte.
6:10	Mindful Movement: Yin Yoga (30 mins)	Inviting the body to find ease. Song: "Rooted." Guided by the poem "The Spirit Likes to Dress Up Like This" by Mary Oliver.
~6:40	Mindful Eating/Drinking (15 mins)	Grab a snack/drink. Reflect on its provenance, the sensory experience, and what it makes possible through you into the world.
~6:55	Total Body Relaxation (30 mins)	A guided body scan, inviting warmth and safety. Using the breath gatha: "In, Out, Deep, Slow. Calm, Ease, Smile, Release."
~7:25	Soft Gaze / Open Awareness (15 mins)	Eyes-open practice. Choose a neutral object as a focal point. Explore your field of vision, noticing shapes, colours, and space.
~7:40	Being with the Unpleasant (15 mins)	Using RAIN (Recognize, Allow, Investigate, Nurture) and other approaches (soften, soothe, allow) to make space for difficult experiences.
~7:55	A Handful of Quiet (15 mins)	A practice using five fingers and breath to connect with five conditions of happiness. Based on Thich Nhat Hanh's teachings.
~8:10	Compassion Practice	Wishing a "handful of quiet" to ourselves and others. Song: "May We Be Free."

Time	Practice	Details & Notes
~8:25	Coming Out of Silence: Sharing (15 mins)	Gently sharing our experiences of tracking the hedonic tone throughout the evening.
8:30	Session Close	

Poems & Quotes for Practice

To Enter Silence:

"Enough. These few words are enough.

If not these words, this breath.

If not this breath, this sitting here.

This opening to life

we have refused

again and again

until now.

Until now."

— David Whyte

For Movement & Relaxation:

The spirit

likes to dress up like this:

ten fingers,

ten toes,

shoulders, and all the rest

at night

in the black branches,

in the morning

in the blue branches

of the world.

It could float, of course,

but would rather

plumb rough matter.

Airy and shapeless thing,

it needs

the metaphor of the body,

lime and appetite,

the oceanic fluids;

it needs the body's world,

instinct

and imagination

and the dark hug of time,

sweetness

and tangibility,

to be understood,

to be more than pure light

that burns

where no one is –

so it enters us –

in the morning

shines from brute comfort

like a stitch of lightning;

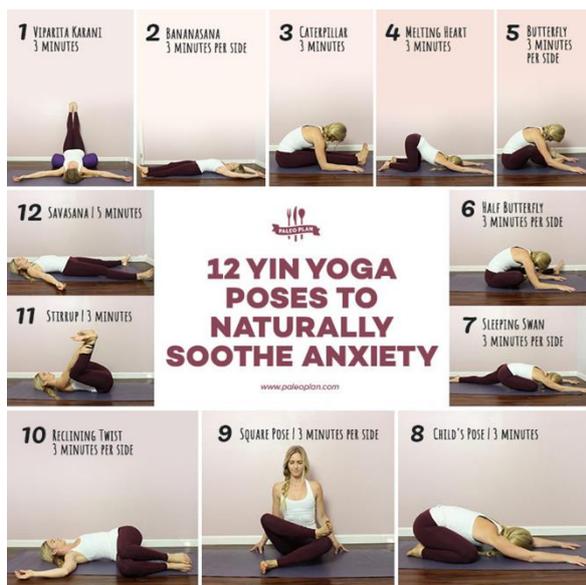
and at night

lights up the deep and wondrous

drownings of the body

like a star.”

— Mary Oliver, *Dream Work*





For Being with Difficulty:

WHEN THE HEART

*When the heart
Is cut or cracked or broken,
Do not clutch it;
Let the wound lie open.
Let the wind
From the good old sea blow in
To bathe the wound with salt,
And let it sting.
Let a stray dog lick it,
Let a bird lean in the hole and sing
A simple song like a tiny bell,
And let it ring.*

— Michael Leunig

Core Concepts

- **Hedonic Tone:** The automatic, immediate feeling of pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral that colours every experience. It is our body's rapid read on safety and danger.

- **SIFT:** A framework for exploring experience:
 - Sensation
 - Image
 - Feeling (Emotion)
 - Thought
 - Today we focus on the 'I' – the initial impulse and image that arises.
 - **RAIN:** A practice for working with difficulty:
 - Recognize what is happening.
 - Allow the experience to be there, just as it is.
 - Investigate with kindness.
 - Nurture or Non-Identification.
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A Handful of Quiet Practice Guide (Summary)

1. **Little Finger (Flower):** "Breathing in, I see myself as a flower. Breathing out, I feel fresh."
 2. **Thumb (Mountain):** "Breathing in, I see myself as a mountain. Breathing out, I feel solid."
 3. **Pointer Finger (Still Water):** "Breathing in, I see myself as still water. Breathing out, I reflect things as they are."
 4. **Tall Finger (Space):** "Breathing in, I see myself as space. Breathing out, I feel free."
 5. **Ring Finger (Love/Safety):** "Breathing in, I see myself as loved and loving. Breathing out, I feel safe."
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"Mindfulness is awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally." —

Jon Kabat-Zinn