

Mindfulness is about adjusting our perception to view difficult events differently; our emotions do not want to be ignored or suppressed, but acknowledged and understood. - Unknown

CLASS TWO: BODY SCAN

How you see things determines how you relate to them. In your practice of paying attention to the body and breath, you may have noticed how constant our internal narrative is. We're always thinking, creating stories and making meaning. The narratives in our mind influence our perception and reactions to the events of our daily lives. As you begin to practice meditation, you'll notice the mind tends to wander. This is a normal experience. Noticing where the mind has wandered to, and gently directing our attention back to the practice, requires commitment, patience and self-compassion.

A powerful influence that takes us away from being fully present in each moment is our automatic tendency to judge our experience as being not right. We often think an experience shouldn't be happening, isn't good enough or isn't what we expected or wanted. Judgments can start thoughts of blame, disappointment, regret, what needs to change or how things could/should be different. We might lose awareness of the present moment, and may limit our ability to be intentional about what we want to think and do.

We can regain our freedom if, as a first step, we acknowledge the reality of our situation, without the tendency to judge, avoid, fix or wish things were a certain way. Mindfulness is about training ourselves to view the present moment as it is, without adding layers of thoughts, emotions or judgments in the interpretation of an event.

The [Body Scan Exercise](#) provides an opportunity to practice bringing a curious and open awareness to the way things are each moment, without doing anything to change it. There is no goal, no special state of relaxation or calmness to be achieved. In not trying to change the present moment, we allow things to just be as they are.

The cycle of suffering happens when we continue to seek happiness in all the wrong places. What keeps us unhappy and stuck in a limited view of reality is our tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain, to seek security and avoid groundlessness, to seek comfort and avoid discomfort. - Pema Chödrön

Class Two Practice

1) For the next six days, practice [Body Scan meditation](#). Regardless of what happens, see if you can complete the entire meditation and record your experiences in the [Homework Log](#).

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-two-the-body-scan>

Notice the tendency to judge whether the body scan was a success or failure - try your best to observe these judgments without engaging with them.

As best as you can, be kind and gentle to yourself during the practice. Perhaps showing the same kindness and gentleness you would to a close friend, but direct it at yourself. Appreciate the effort you're putting into your practice.

2) Choose two routines in your day and make a deliberate effort to bring moment-to-moment awareness to that activity.

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-eight-the-three-minute-breathing-space>

3) In addition to keeping track of your daily practice, submit one entry per day into the [Pleasant Events Calendar](#). Use this as an opportunity to become aware of the thoughts, feelings and body sensations around one pleasant event each day. Notice and record, as soon as you can, in detail (using the actual words or images in which the thoughts came, and the precise nature and location of bodily sensations).

Reference

Williams M. & Penman D. (2011). *Mindfulness: An eight-week plan to finding peace in a frantic world*. New York: Rodale Books. Chapter 6.