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**MINDFULNESS PRACTICES. RAIN**

Remember, emotions can be considered “energy in motion”. They are valuable messengers, and we ignore them at our peril. Most of the time they are transient, but we often get stuck on them as we struggle to get rid of them. The idea is to explore how they affect both our mind and our body. For instance, the way emotions affect the mind by driving thoughts that perpetuate the emotion through rumination and worry. It is also hugely important to investigate how emotions appear in the body. Through that we can break the cycle of thinking, and by getting curious about the sensations in the body we get some space around the emotions. We also learn to offer ourselves what is needed to address the unmet needs that cause emotions to arise in the first place. We learn to have our own backs and are less dependent on others for our wellbeing when difficult emotions arise. All of these things give emotions less power, and we get to choose how we respond to them rather than be dragged around by them. The RAIN practice is a useful way to work with emotions, both when meditating and in daily life.

**RAIN:**

* Recognize: Become aware of the emotion you are having. Just this simple act of recognizing and validating it can be helpful. Give it a soft mental label like “fear”, “sadness”, “joy”, etc.
* Allow: Can you let this emotion be here without trying to push it away or fix it? See if you can bring some gentle acceptance to it--recognizing that all emotions are okay, it’s what we do about them that can lead to problems. Sometimes a word or phrase can help, like, “Yes”, or “I consent”. We may also be able to see deeper emotions that need to be attended to, like how we can hate a difficult emotion, or how an unmet need can lead to anger. Only by allowing the emotion to be here can we begin to fully explore it and tend to it.
* Investigate: Most importantly, get curious about your emotion. What does it feel like in your body? Can you feel it in your chest or belly or elsewhere? Does it move or stay the same? Are there accompanying thoughts? Is there an unhelpful belief about yourself or the situation that is perpetuating the emotion? Exploring the body sensations with interest and curiosity can help get us out of the story and have a little more ease with difficult emotions.
* Nurture: This encourages us to ask, “What does this emotion want? What is it trying to tell me?” It creates a stance where we can begin to bring self-compassion to what we are experiencing. We can see and address the deeper unmet needs that are causing the difficult emotion. We learn to offer what we need to ourselves and learn to call on our wiser self to respond more skillfully to difficult emotions and the situations that cause them. We are better able to set boundaries and express our needs. This can also help us become more sensitive to recognizing the needs of others—it creates more connectedness and more skill at expressing ourselves in a way that is more likely to be heard.
* After the RAIN. As we go through the above process, we will naturally begin to take the emotion less personally. We will find ourselves not feeling so tossed about by it and will be able to see it as it is, just an emotion passing through us. We get a sense of how our open and kind awareness is much larger than the storms caused by our emotions, and we can better listen to our higher self as we choose how we respond to the message that emotions carry.

Tara Brach has done a great deal of work developing the RAIN practice. Here is a link to her description of RAIN (text): <https://www.tarabrach.com/selfcompassion1/>

There are a ton of RAIN meditations at her site for all kinds of different emotions. They can be found here:

<https://www.tarabrach.com/rain/>