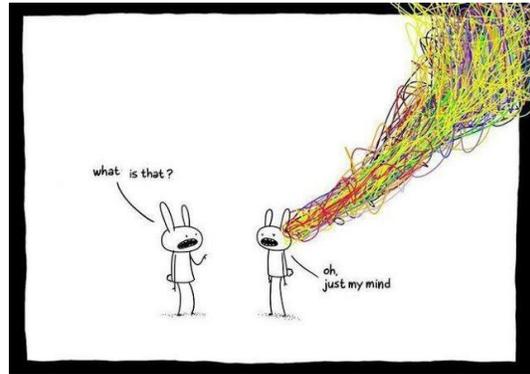


Session 3-Gathering The Scattered Mind

Try this brief experiment from Teasdale, Williams, Segal (The Mindful Way Workbook)

1. After you read the instructions, close your computer or put down the paper. Set a timer on your phone for one minute and then put your phone down as well.
2. Sit without doing anything for that minute.
3. At the end of the minute, continue reading.

So, where did your mind go in that minute? Were you fully engaged in the present moment of that minute as it passed? Or did your mind take you to future planning or worries, or to past memories, or did it just drift away? Most of us, when doing this experiment, experience Mental Time Travel. Sometimes, Mental Time Travel is really helpful. It allows us to both learn from the past and to plan for the future. But when our attention gets pulled away or drifts away without our consent; for example, when we engage in an “automatic pilot” response to a situation, we sometimes create problems for ourselves.



In Session 3-Gathering the Scattered Mind, we explore how we can disengage from unintended Mental Time Travel and “automatic pilot” responses and settle our scattered minds. We have already learned some approaches for this:

1. Through focusing on the breath as an anchor to the present moment and something you can return to, in the here-and-now, over and over again.
2. Through increased body awareness through the body scan or mindful walking or other mindful movement practices available to you. The body is a place where emotions are often expressed without our awareness. The intention of the body scan and mindful walking/movement is to provide a direct way to connect with awareness of the body. This might give us a place of new perspective from which to stand and look at our thoughts and emotions.
3. Through mindfully deconstructing our experiences (e.g. “walking down the street” exercise, pleasant experiences log) so that we can see the relationship between our thoughts, emotions, physical sensations and impulses to act, another way of creating a new perspective.

Today, we will also be adding a new practice, called the **Three Minute Breathing Space**, with instructions provided below:

1. **Awareness:** Bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting an upright and dignified posture. If possible, close your eyes. Then ask: “What is my experience right now...in thoughts...in emotions... and in bodily sensations?” Acknowledge and register your experience in full awareness, even if it is unwanted.
2. **Gathering:** Then, gently redirect full attention to breathing, to each in breath and to each outbreath as they follow, one after the other. Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.
3. **Expanding:** Expand the field of your awareness around your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body including the surfaces, internal sensations, your posture, and facial expression.

Home Practice for the Week Following Session 3

1. See if you can do the Breath, Body, Sounds, Thoughts practice (recording on course web site) or a shorter breathing meditation practice at least 2-3 days during the week.
2. See if you can do some form of short mindful movement most days during the week by incorporating mindfulness into an activity you are already doing. You can do this by paying attention mindfully as you walk from one room to another, by paying attention to the sensations of sitting or standing, or while you are already at the gym or just working around the house.
3. Notice one unpleasant event each day, at least three times over the next week, and write it down. Don't pick anything too difficult (think in terms of picking a 5 lb weight that you can hold in one hand, not a 50 lb weight!). Notice the experience in terms of body sensations, emotions and thoughts. The following questions and template on the next page can be used as a guide.
4. Do the three-minute breathing space twice/day at least four days and every day if possible. If it can work in your schedule, do this practice at the same times each day. This practice becomes more useful in managing stress once it becomes a habit. So, even if you can't get to all your home practice, try to prioritize the three-minute breathing space.

Unpleasant Events Calendar:

1. What was the unpleasant event?
2. Were you aware of it being unpleasant at the time?
3. Did you notice any body sensations? Where? Can you describe them.
4. What was your mood or feelings at the time of the event?
5. What thoughts were present at the time?
6. What thoughts and feelings are with you as you write about the event?

Unpleasant Experiences Calendar

Be aware of an unpleasant experience *at the time it is happening if possible*. Use these questions to focus your awareness on the details of it as it is happening. It's ok to write it down later.

Day	What was the experience?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods and feelings accompanied this event?	What thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are in your mind as you write this down?
	Example: Feeling upset after a difficult meeting	Tightness in shoulders	Frustration	"I don't want to be here today."	"I don't want to feel this way."