

FINDING BELLS OF MINDFULNESS

In a monastery, periodically through the day, a monk will ring a large, resonant bell. At the sound of the bell, people stop what they are doing, come back to their breathing, and then return to whatever they were doing. This reconnecting is what we are doing when we are doing a Breathing Space.

We are not living in a monastery and it's frightening how busy our days are and even with the best of intentions, another one has gone without us taking even a moment too to reconnect with ourselves.

We can intentionally decide to create our own 'Bell of Mindfulness'. You can find these everywhere – Thich Nhat Hahn recommends two in particular: red traffic lights and telephones.

This can be a fun way to practice and turns something potentially stressful into a source of peace and calm.

Red Lights

Whenever you come to a red light, see it as an opportunity to rest, acknowledge what's up for you in that moment, breath in and out a few times.

Phone Ringing

Likewise, when the phone rings, let it ring once or twice before answering and enjoy one or two slow breaths in that pause. Then slowly, calmly move towards the phone and answer it. Make a decision to never pick it up before the third ring.

The Practice

Find your own 'Bell(s) of Mindfulness' in your daily life. Be creative – from your alarm clock (a challenge perhaps) to ping of a microwave...waiting in a queue... the opportunities are endless.

Choosing things that slow you down – and might potentially be seen as an annoyance – gives you the opportunity to notice that annoyance and be with it in a more kindly and accepting way.

Deliberately and intentionally make a choice about what it or they are and then each time you encounter your 'Bell', take a moment or too to breathe... do a Breathing Space.

And remember a Breathing Space can simply be a quick reconnection and acknowledgement of what we thinking and feeling physically and emotionally. There is no need for anyone else to know you are doing anything differently.

When you forget – and you will forget – just reconnect with that intentionality without any criticism or blame.

Soon you will find opportunities to connect with your inner sense of peace time after time.