

THE ATTITUDINAL FOUNDATIONS OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

(Adapted from *Full Catastrophe Living* by Jon Kabat-Zinn)

1. Non-Judging

- Taking the stance of an impartial witness to your own experience.
- Noticing the stream of judging mind .. good / bad / neutral... not trying to stop it but just being aware of it.

2. Patience

- Letting things unfold in their own time
- A child may try to help a butterfly emerge by breaking open a chrysalis but chances are the butterfly won't benefit from this help.
- Practising patience with ourselves. "Why rush through some moments in order to get to other 'better' ones? Each one is your life in that moment."
- Being completely open to each moment, accepting its fullness, knowing that like the butterfly, things will emerge in their own time.

3. Beginner's Mind

- Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we 'know' stop us from seeing things as they really are.
- Cultivating a mind that is willing to see everything as if for the first time.
- Being receptive to new possibilities... not getting stuck in a rut of our own expertise.
- Each moment is unique and contains unique possibilities.
- Try it with someone you know – next time, ask yourself if you are seeing this person with fresh eyes, as he/she really is? Try it with problems... with the sky... with the dog... with the man in the corner shop.

4. Trust

- Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings.
- Trusting in your own authority and intuition, even if you make some 'mistakes' along the way.
- Honour your feelings. Taking responsibility for yourself and your own well-being.

5. Non-Striving

- Meditation has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony is you already are.
- Paying attention to how you are right now – however that it is. Just watch.
- The best way to achieve your own goals is to back off from striving and instead start to really focus on carefully seeing and accepting things as they are, moment by moment. With patience and regular practice, movement towards your goals will take place by itself.

6. Acceptance

- Seeing things as they actually are in the present. If you have a headache, accept you have a headache.

- We often waste a lot of time and energy denying what is fact. We are trying to force situations to how we would like them to be. This creates more tension and prevents positive change occurring.
- Now is the only time we have for anything. You have to accept yourself as you are before you can really change.
- Acceptance is not passive; it does not mean you have to like everything and abandon your principles and values. It does not mean you have to be resigned to tolerating things. It does not mean that you should stop trying to break free of your own self-destructive habits or give up your desire to change and grow.
- Acceptance is a willingness to see things as they are. You are much more likely to know what to do and have an inner conviction to act when you have a clear picture of what is actually happening.

7. Letting Go

- Letting go is a way of letting things be, of accepting things as they are.
- We let things go and we just watch...
- If we find it particularly difficult to let go of something because it has such a strong hold on our mind, we can direct our attention to what 'holding' feels like. Holding on is the opposite of letting go. Being willing to look at the ways we hold on shows a lot about its opposite.
- You already know how to let go... Every night when we go to sleep we let go.