

Body Scan Session

- Overview of orientation
 - Teamwork exercises (chance to meet/talk to each other)
 - Group discussion (pairs, or whole group together): How did practice go? What came up that you expected, and that you liked? Anything difficult come up? What did you do to cope with this? Any reflections for this week?
 - Review Class Guidelines
 - Any changes? Additions? Removals? Edits?
 - If new participants, then explain: “these are guidelines that participants from the first session set up. Would you like to make any changes to this?”
- **Overview of practice today (my quick words before we get started)**
 - Body Scan
 - Build on sitting meditation, but more about paying attention to the body with mindful awareness
 - Step by step: start with the feet, then ankles, lower legs/calves, knees, thighs, hips and lower back, waist/abdomen, stomach, chest, arms, wrists, hands, shoulders, neck, head and face
 - Great basic meditation practice, and works as a complement to other practices we will be learning in the future -- tunes in the mind with the body
 - Don't worry if you get distracted – you can always refocus your energy using your breath (maybe do demonstration)
 - Discussion of complexity of body awareness and how this is different from sitting meditation
 - Discomfort in the body, and how to deal with this**
 - Taking time – there is no need to rush, although you may feel you need to. Instead of feeling the need to do this, simply notice yourself feeling this need, and explore why this might be
 - I'll mark the end of practice with a bell
 - What are the expectations for this?
 - Gauge room and have discussion
- Potential preparations: stretches . **“Please only do stretches that feel comfortable to you, and do not feel pressure to do any stretches that cause you pain or discomfort, or that are against your doctor’s orders.”**
 - Shoulder rotations
 - Neck rotations
 - Hip rotations
 - Sun thrusts (reach towards sky)
 - Face stretches
 - Feet/Toe stretches

Class Content: Body Scan

- Preparation:
 - Position yourself comfortably: where you can sit still for a long period of time. Either in a chair or on the ground. (Cushions available?)
 - Start focusing attention on the breath
 - How we will be focusing attention on the body today (specific)
 - Perhaps use technique of breathing wellness into that part of the body
 - Goal of “softening”, removing tension from the body and having it sit calmly
 - Weird example: the goal I will sometimes have from this practice is to have your body sit like inanimate “meat” on the ground, but with a removed perspective of what is happening in and around it, kind of like sitting outside your body, but really more just sensing it exactly like it is
 - Working with imperfection: “it will not be perfect, but working with this imperfection is often the most valuable part”
 - Dealing with pain and discomfort – “In these practices, both emotional and physical discomfort can happen, and when it does, it is natural to want to try to get away from it -- to change position or thoughts, to distract yourself, or to try to keep yourself from feeling it. Although this may work in the short term, it can fall short and maybe cause problems in the long term, because it is not sustainable.” Instead what we are going to try to do is to use acceptance and awareness: goal is not to change this, but simply to be aware of it and acknowledge it, with a goal of non-judgment. If you are feeling pain of course, you should do what you can to lessen the pain, and of course if anything we do here causes any physical or emotional pain, please stop, and never feel forced to do anything that makes you uncomfortable.”
- Start with a simple sitting meditation (10-15 min)
- Point at which you reach a rhythm with the breathing, and get to a place of relaxation that involves directed attention to the breathing (goal of sitting meditation)
- Slowly, begin to direct this attention to the feet
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 - Now, move your attention to your **Feet**: This concentration can be done in many ways: with metaphors, or more literal
 - Attention like “spotlight”: Try to fill your mind only with focused attention on your feet
 - “sensations of your toes, the temperature, if they have any pain, any stress, or simply recognize with your mind how they are positioned in relation to the rest of your body. However you do this, the goal is to have your mind fully focused on your toes, almost as if you are living, seeing, experiencing life through them.”
 - “Please know that as you are doing this, if you have any discomfort at all, you can reposition yourself to make it more comfortable. The goal of this exercise is to increase your awareness of your body and to have your

body be as comfortable as possible, and so any adjustments can be made as I am speaking.”

- Breathe in relaxing energy, breathe out tension and tightness
- Reposition if needed
- **Legs:** ankles, calves, and the front of your lower legs, knees, thighs
 - Knees -- “connectors between the lower and upper legs”
 - Notice any tension or tightness or pain in knees, and make adjustments if needed
 - Breathe in relaxing energy, breathe out tension and tightness
 - Thighs – “most muscular parts of your body”, “sometimes can carry stress or pain from your lower back”
 - Try to loosen and have it just be sitting on its own
- **Midsection:** lower back and buttocks, hips, mid-back and abdomen,
 - Carries a lot of stress from the rest of your body, radiates to other parts of body
 - Notice any tension, aching, or pain, and you can stretch if you need to
 - Be gentle and slow with your stretching
 - Maybe address pain here: “pain happens, and if you notice it is happening, try your very best to accept it, even embrace it in your mind”
 - Breathe in relaxing energy, breathe out tension and tightness
- **Upper back, Chest and Shoulders**
 - Notice any tightness or tension, pain, radiation, and awareness and acceptance
 - Breath
- **Neck**
 - Pain, radiation, tension
 - Elongate and soften
 - Breathe in relaxing energy, breathe out tension and tightness
- **Head**
 - Tension in face; stretch
 - Try to imagine the stress like mist or energy, moving from your face and neck and slipping off the edge of your head
- Now please take a few moments, a few breaths and orient yourself back to the room. Feel the completion of the Body Scan, and take a moment to notice how your body feels. When you are ready, you may open your eyes
- Reflection
 - How did body scan go? Did you notice any positive benefits? Were there any challenges?
 - What was the body scan like for you? What did you notice?
 - Did you come across anything difficult? How did you deal with it? Is there anything you would have changed about how you went about this exercise?
 - What worked well?
 - Did you notice your mind wandering during the exercise? What strategies did you use to bring yourself back to the present or to the task at hand?
 - Do you notice any progress in your mindfulness practice? Has it gotten easier or harder? Do you notice any benefits? Has the experience changed in any way?

- How might mindfulness practice—noticing your emotions, thoughts, and environment around you— lead to better life practices?
 - Do you think you could use a mindfulness exercise outside of the classroom? In what situation might it be helpful?
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