

A10. Three-Minute Breathing Space Exercise

Now we're going to practice a short breathing exercise that may allow you to step out of automatic mode and reconnect with the present moment.

Find a comfortable, upright position, and either close your eyes or focus on a spot in front of you. Now take a deep breath to bring yourself into the present moment [pause], just noticing whatever you are experiencing right now. Notice any sensations, be they of discomfort or tension. Notice your feet on the ground, or, if you're sitting, notice whatever you are sitting on; notice your clothes against your body and the air against the skin. [Pause five seconds.]

And now, notice whatever is in your mind. Whatever thoughts are here, and as best you can, just observe your thoughts as they are in your mind right now. [Pause.] Now notice whatever you are feeling emotionally. Don't try to change it, but just notice how you are feeling. [Pause five seconds.]

And now, bring your attention to your breath, just noticing the rise and fall of your stomach as you breathe in [pause], and as you breathe out. [Pause five seconds.] Notice the cool air flowing in through your nose as you inhale and the warm air as you exhale [pause], as you breathe in and out. [Pause.]

If you find your mind wandering away from your breath, simply bring it back to noticing each breath in, and out, as they follow, one after the other. [Pause five seconds.]

And now, allow your awareness to expand to encompass your breath moving in your body [pause], bringing your awareness to your thinking [pause], and whatever you are feeling emotionally right now. Gently broaden this awareness to notice the whole experience, holding everything in awareness. [Pause five seconds.]

Now bring your attention back to the room; open your eyes if they are closed. Notice what you can see; notice what you can hear. Push your feet into the ground and have a stretch; notice yourself stretching. Welcome back!