



Awareness of Emotions

I invite you to sit upright in your chair with your back straight and your feet flat on the floor. Most people find they feel more alert and awake sitting this way, so check it out and see if this is the case for you. And either close your eyes or fix them on a spot, whichever you prefer. And take a few slow, deep breaths, and really notice the breath flowing in and out of your lungs.

Now quickly scan your body from head to toe, starting at your scalp and moving downward. And notice the sensations you can feel in your head ... throat ... neck ... shoulders ... chest ... abdomen ... arms ... hands ... legs ... and feet. Now zoom in on the part of your body where you're feeling this feeling most intensely. And observe the feeling closely, as if you're a curious scientist who has never encountered anything like this before.

Observe the sensation carefully ... Let your thoughts come and go like passing cars, and keep your attention on the feeling ... Notice where it starts and where it stops ... Learn as much about it as you can ... If you drew an outline around it, what shape would it have? ... Is it on the surface of the body or inside you, or both? ... How far inside you does it go? ... Where is it most intense? ... Where is it weakest?

If you drift off into your thoughts, as soon as you realize it, come back and focus on the sensation ... Observe it with curiosity ... How is it different in the center than around the edges? Is there any pulsation or vibration within it? ... Is it light or heavy? ... Moving or still? ... What is its temperature? ... Are there hot spots or cold spots? ... Notice the different elements within it ... Notice that it's not just one sensation—there are sensations within sensations ... Notice the different layers.

Breathe

As you're observing this feeling, breathe into it ... Imagine your breath flowing into and around this feeling ... Breathing into and around it ...

Expand

As you're breathing into it, it's as if, in some magical way, all this space opens up inside you ... You open up around this feeling ... Make space for it ... Expand around it ... However you make sense of that ... Breathing into it and opening up around it ...

Allow

See if you can just allow this feeling to be there. You don't have to like it or want it ... Just allow it ... Just let it be ... Observe it, breathe into it, open up around it, and allow it to be as it is. You may feel a strong urge to fight with it or push it away. If so, just acknowledge the urge is there without acting on it. And continue observing the

sensation. Don't try to get rid of it or alter it. If it changes by itself, that's okay. If it doesn't change, that's okay too. Changing or getting rid of it is not the goal. Your aim is simply to allow it ... to let it to be.

Objectify

Imagine this feeling is an object ... As an object, what shape does it have? ... Is it liquid, solid, or gaseous? ... Is it moving or still? ... What color is it? ... Transparent or opaque? ... If you could touch the surface, what would it feel like? ... Wet or dry? ... Rough or smooth? ... Hot or cold? ... Soft or hard? (Pause 10 seconds.) Observe this object curiously, breathe into it, and open up around it ... You don't have to like it or want it. Just allow it ... and notice that you are bigger than this object, ... no matter how big it gets, it can never get bigger than you. (Pause 10 seconds.)

Normalize

This feeling tells you some valuable information ... It tells you that you're a normal human being with a heart ... it tells you that you care ... that there are things in life that matter to you ... And this is what humans feel when there's a gap between what we want and what we've got ... The bigger the gap, the bigger the feeling.

Show Self-Compassion

Take one of your hands and place it on this part of your body ... imagine that this is a healing hand ... the hand of a loving friend or parent or nurse ... and feel the warmth flowing from your hand into your body ... not to get rid of the feeling but to make room for it ... to soften up and loosen up around it. (Pause 10 seconds.) Hold it gently, as if it's a crying baby or a frightened puppy. (Pause 10 seconds.) And letting your hand fall, once again breathe into the feeling and expand around it.

Expand Awareness

Life is like a stage show ... and on that stage are all your thoughts, and all your feelings, and everything that you can see, hear, touch, taste, and smell ... and for the last few minutes, we dimmed the lights on the stage, and we shined a spotlight on this feeling ... and now it's time to bring up the rest of the lights ... So bring up the lights on your body ... notice your arms and legs and head and neck ... and notice that you're in control of your arms and legs, regardless of what you're feeling ... Just move them around a little to check that out for yourself ... and now take a stretch, and notice yourself stretching ... and bring up the lights on the room around you ... Open your eyes, look around, and notice what you can see ... and notice what you can hear... and notice that there's not just a feeling here ... there's a feeling inside a body, inside a room, inside a world full of opportunity ... and welcome back!