

MBSR Week 1

“Attention acts as a lightning rod.” –Julio Cortazar

“Awareness means your mind should not get caught by any idea. It should remain open. Always remain conscious of what you are doing, of what is going on.” –Shunryu Suzuki Roshi

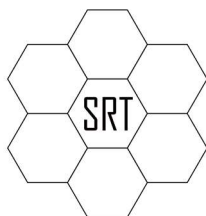
Theme: Reflecting on what brought us to this class, we note that MBSR aims to bring us into closer contact with ourselves, trusting our internal resources. We are invited to notice and accept experience just as it is. Rather than improving or fixing anything, the basic orientation is that we already have inside of us everything that is needed. And so we clear space and entrust our attention to ourselves.

Homework:

- Body scan: Download and listen to recording at least six (6) times over the next week.
- 9-dots puzzle: Print out, and notice thoughts and feelings as work with the puzzle.
- Mindful eating: Pick a meal this week, or the first bite of each meal, to experience mindfully a la the raisin.
- Optional: Momentary touch-ins. Setting watch or calendar alarms or other reminders to take a mindful breath or tune into sounds or emotions or body sensations for a moment. In this way, we can cultivate continual awareness.

A note on daily home practice: Imagine mindfulness like a seed and practice like water. Letting go of expectations, just practice. There is no need to poke and prod at the seed, to dig it up and check on it. We just need the right conditions – peace and quiet, regular and frequent practice. That is all. Remember: You don’t have to like practice... you just have to do it.





Body Scan Practice

The first and foundational home practice of MBSR is the body scan. There is no way to do the body scan wrong. We are working with our experience just as it is, not taking a vacation from it. If our mind is jumping around, we have the opportunity to work with our actual real live mind, not some idealized version of it that we hope to replace our actual mind with. As soon as we notice the mind has wandered, it is already back. If this happens again and again (as it often does), we can practice being gentle with ourselves. Just noting thoughts as passing events and bringing the attention back to the body scan again and again. We can also note frustration if it arises. It is impossible to do the body scan wrong.

If our bodies are in pain, or if we experience difficult emotions, our actual experience is presenting itself. This can be a tender moment. A challenging, perhaps unwelcome, aspect of our experience shows up, and we see if we can accept it as it is, trusting in ourselves and caring for ourselves as we do. Caring is primary and may include shifting the attention elsewhere if that is what is called for.

Whatever happens during the body scan, all that is needed is to listen to the recording and have the experience that we have. That's all. Noticing and accepting. Including noticing when it is hard to accept and accepting when it is hard to notice.

Falling asleep during the body scan: If this is your experience, try listening to the body scan during the day, standing up if necessary to stay awake. You can always listen again at bedtime. :)

Here are some common sensations, emotions, and thoughts that may arise during the body scan:

Physical Sensations

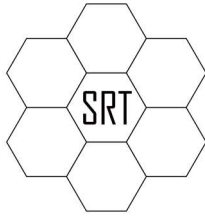
heavy/light	tingling	shaky	pulsing	cool/warm
tight/loose	burning	itchy	vibrating	dry/moist
soft/rough	shooting	achy	sinking	tense/relaxed
stiff/flexible	pulling	prickly	throbbing	dull/sharp
airy/dense	stinging	numb	pounding	static/changing

Emotions

impatience/wanting to stop	neutral	enjoyment/wanting to continue		
release	joy	sadness	fear	pride
disgust	surprise	anger	frustration	shame

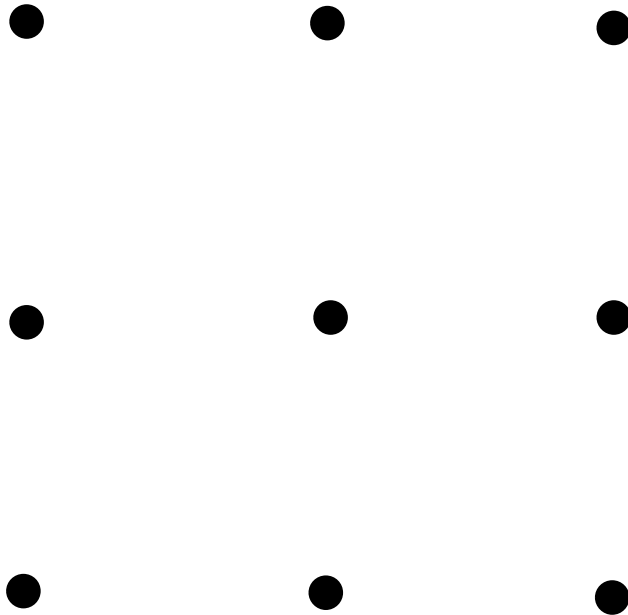
Thoughts

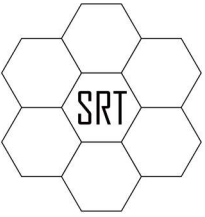
reviewing the past	imagining the future	thinking about others
planning	evaluating/analyzing	circular thinking
wishing/hoping/comparing	labeling/cataloguing	judging your experience



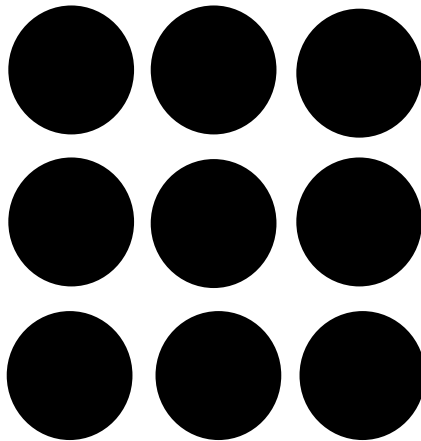
NINE DOTS EXERCISE

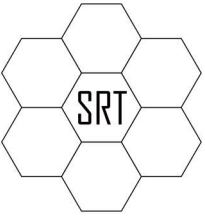
Print this page. Connect all nine dots with four straight lines without lifting the pencil off of the page and without retracing any of the lines. Notice thoughts (including judgements), emotions, and physical sensations. Outcome is irrelevant. Being present to the experience of sitting with this piece of paper is the exercise. Jot down a few notes about your experience, noting thoughts, sensations, and emotions.





NINE DOTS EXERCISE 2 (optional)





NINE DOTS EXERCISE 3 (also optional)

