explorations in mindfullness

moving through emotions

# Moving Through Emotions

By: Danielle Palli (7 minutes)

Many of us are feeling a myriad of emotions right now, including grief, loss, sadness, anger, fear, anxiety, and frustration. We may not have even identified what and how we are feeling because our circumstances are dramatically different from what we are used to. This brief meditation serves four distinct purposes: First, it provides a space to check in and discover how and what we are feeling, and to observe these feelings without judgment. Second, it allows us to uncover how those feelings are manifesting in our body (for example, we may feel fear in the form of an upset stomach or anxiety as tension in our neck). Third, this meditation will give us the opportunity to breathe into those areas where we are feeling tension and hopefully resolve them, if only just a little. And finally, the fourth purpose is to take a few moments to shift our attention away from whatever emotion or emotions are surfacing as a moment of rest and restoration. When we give ourselves a few moments of peace, we can recharge and become better equipped to manage those feelings once again.

The Process:

1. Find a quiet space where you will be undisturbed for at least ten minutes. Sit comfortably, and rest one hand on your chest and the other hand on your belly. Your eyes can be open and gazing gently in front of you, or you may choose to close your eyes. Try to keep your jaw relaxed. If it is comfortable for you, you may want to bring the tip of your tongue behind your upper teeth. I find it helps deepen my breath, but if it is distracting to you, you can skip this part. Breathe normally, in and out, through your nose. I am less concerned about you adopting the “perfect” posture, and more concerned that you feel relaxed in your space. Throughout this practice, there will be moments of silence. If you find your mind wandering in those spaces, as soon as you recognize that your focus has shifted, simply return to your breath, and continue the practice. There is no judgement, no “right” or “wrong” in this process. It is your practice.

2. Begin by breathing as you would normally, not trying to control the breath in any way … As you do so, you may notice your chest as it rises and falls with the breath … You may feel your rib cage expanding on the inhale and contracting on the exhale … Some people even hear the sound of their breath or their heartbeat … Simply observe these things as you continue to breathe…

3. Feel yourself supported by the chair or the floor beneath you … Relax and settle your body in a little more, knowing that you are supported … You may even notice that your breath has softened, just a little … Feel your hands on your chest and belly. Allow them to be a source of comfort as you show yourself self-compassion … Very slowly, I would like you to ask yourself how you are doing today? How are you feeling? Ask yourself, “what am I feeling today?” You may have a mix of emotions surfacing. For right now, choose one area that you would like to focus on, one that makes you a little uncomfortable. If this is an extreme emotion for you, approach it very slowly. If it becomes too much, draw your attention back to the support beneath you, and return to your breath … As you slowly let this feeling in, notice what else you might be experiencing in the body … Some people have thoughts surface, or images … allow them to float by like clouds and observe them without judgment … I am going to be quiet for a few moments as you sit with whatever feeling you have chosen…

4. Next, take a moment to scan your body from head to toe. Notice any areas of tension you may be feeling. They are likely in some way associated with how and what emotions you are feeling … On your next inhale, imagine you are drawing fresh air into those areas, and on the exhale, let those areas relax … Do this for a few moments more …

5. Once again, return to your breath. You are once again noticing your chest rise and fall … noticing your inhalation and exhalation. If thoughts return, gently turn them into clouds and watch them float by. Return to your breath for a few moments more.

When you are ready, slowly open your eyes.