

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

<http://www.dbtselfhelp.com/index.html>

The central concept of DBT is mindfulness. The concept of mindfulness comes from both Western and especially Eastern (Zen) meditation and spiritual practices.

Mindfulness means being in the present, being aware of what is happening and what you are doing, observing what is going on, participating fully in what is going on around you. It is a skill that is practiced and learned throughout DBT, little bit by little bit. By learning to live in the present, you can have a life that is more in tune with your feelings and your activities.

The three primary states of mind are:

- Reasonable Mind
- Emotion Mind
- Wise Mind

Reasonable Mind

A person is in Reasonable Mind: when they are approaching things intellectually, thinking logically, planning behavior, paying attention to empirical facts (facts that can be observed or measured or counted), focusing their attention, and when they are "cool," that is, not emotional in their approaches to solving problems.

Some examples of Reasonable Mind might be:

- calling the bus station to find out the bus schedule, instead of just walking over and hoping to find a bus
- planning for an outing several days before
- measuring the ingredients to bake a cake
- asking a saleswoman the details about something you want to buy
- studying for a test
- looking up information on the Internet

Consider:

Have you done any of these things?

What are some other examples of the way you use Reasonable Mind?

How can Reasonable Mind be helpful?

Can you think of any times when it is not helpful to be in Reasonable Mind?

Emotion Mind

A person is in Emotion Mind when their thinking and behavior are controlled mostly by their emotions. Logical thinking and planning are difficult, facts may be distorted or made larger or more important, thoughts and behaviors might be said to be "hot," and the energy of the behavior tends to match the intensity of the feelings.

Some examples of emotion mind might be:

- having a fight with someone you disagree with
- going on a trip on an impulse, without planning
- cuddling a puppy
- making love
- going out to fly a kite just for the fun of it
- snapping at a salesperson because they don't have the item you want
- putting an expensive item on your credit card just because you like it

Consider:

Have you done any of these things?

What do you do when you are in Emotion Mind?

In what ways can it be helpful or good to be in Emotion Mind?

What are ways that it might not be helpful to be in Emotion Mind?

Wise Mind

Wise Mind is the coming together, the overlap of Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind. But when they come together or overlap, they produce something bigger than either of them were separately. What is added is intuition, a feeling of "knowing" what's right, a felt sense, a sense that some people feel in their body (head, heart, stomach or somewhere else) that something is just right, the right thing to do or the right way for things to be. You can experience intuition about what's right or appropriate without thinking about it, without knowing it intellectually, just feeling it.

Consider:

- Do you ever have this intuition that something just "feels right?" The right thing to do or say or plan for? Could you give us an example?
- Do you have this sense of knowing somewhere in your body? Where? (I feel it in my midsection, around my belly. Something there tells me that I am doing what's good for me, what's effective, the best thing in the moment.)
- Do you have other ways of knowing this? This is what we mean by Wise Mind. It takes into account your logical thinking and planning and your emotions, but it's something more, a place of calmness and wisdom.

Practice:

Everyone has this Wise Mind. Some of you may not have found it yet. But it is important that you learn to find a place of calmness inside you, to let go of the intense emotions, so that you can sense the wisdom inside you.

Some of you will experience Wise Mind after a crisis. It is like the calm after the storm.

Sometimes you may suddenly see something in a new way that makes sense to you.

Sometimes you may "feel" the right choice in some dilemma, when the feeling comes from deep inside you.

Exercise:

Breathe in and out gently. Follow your breath as it comes in and goes out. After a while, let the focus of your attention settle down into your breathing, into the very bottom of your in-breath, into your physical center. This very centered point is Wise Mind. Practice this exercise daily, so that you can get a sense of what Wise Mind feels like.