

EMOTIONAL MINDFULNESS

Emotions – We tend to want to hold onto the good ones, and ignore or act out the “negative” emotions. But emotions are a normal part of life, and there are ways to work with them so they don’t increase stress and take such a toll on body and mind.

Why can emotions be so hard to manage?

- We’re taught to squelch them – often family patterns for emotions and learning to fit in (schools)
- With challenging emotions – (which ones?) – they trigger automatic negative thoughts – a cycle starts
- This can lead to bad behaviors, which can lead to more negative emotions, like shame or regret
- Primary emotion – the first one that arises. Anger. Secondary emotion – depression about being angry.

What helps?

RAIN – Recognize the emotion, Acept it, Incinvestigate it (the key step), and Not to identify with it.

R: Recognize. Notice it, label it – anxious vs. more general “stressed” or feeling tense.

A: Accept. Emotions are not right or wrong, don’t need to judge it. They are normal, and they do pass.

I: Investigate – Where is it in my body? How does it feel? Color, Texture? Is there a movement or sound it wants to make? Try that. Is there a message it has for you? Is there a past time it reminds you of?

N: Not identifying with it. I have (the emotion). Not, I am (the emotion). *I have anger. Not, I’m angry.*

Example: Anxiety over an upcoming MD appt. *I am feeling anxious, or I have anxiety (vs I am anxious). Are there steps to take? Maybe I need to do some extra prep, write down q’s. Keep breathing. But I am not anxiety. I have other ways to behave too.*

EXERCISE

Any stressful feeling lately? Try out the RAIN steps. Try it with happy emotions too, to learn RAIN.

Other points: The following steps decrease our vulnerability to emotional ups and downs

PL: Take care of health, treat pain/illness

E: Eat a balanced diet, avoid excess sugar, fat, caffeine

A: Avoid alcohol and drugs

S: Get regular and adequate sleep

E: Get regular exercise. WHAT ELSE HELPS? Talking to friends, prayer, distraction/movie

MASTER

Daily positive experiences to build confidence and self-care

plan one or more daily experience that you can look forward to and enjoy

Letting go vs avoiding, dwelling on, or fighting it. Take a breath, visualize the thought floating away in a soap bubble.

ALSO: Taking opposite action – anxious? If Sad? What are the opposite actions you’d take, and do them.