Today, we're going to work with one of the most common obstacles in meditation, which is an overactive mind.

And we're going to go through how to actually be with thoughts, as opposed to trying to push thoughts away.

So, when you're ready, go ahead and find a comfortable position, and then just gently allow your eyes to close.

And we can start with a few deep breaths.

Breathing in and breathing out.

Breathing in and breathing out.

Allowing the shoulders to drop. Letting go of any tension or tightness in the body.

Allowing the muscles in your face to soften and relax, and just letting go of any unnecessary tension.

Setting up this good foundation for mindfulness practice.

We can also invite some equanimity, what we practiced yesterday.

And again, just set the intention to not react to anything with craving or aversion, to not push anything away, and also not try to grasp on to anything, but just to let things come and go as they are.

So, just setting that intention for this practice.

And then allow your attention to come on to the feeling of the breath.

Practicing your mindful breathing.

Just asking yourself with your eyes closed, “How do you know that you're breathing?”

“What movements or sensations in the body tell you that the body is breathing right now?”

And really bringing your attention to these physical sensations.

Seeing if you can stay with the movement of the breath.

Just following the rising and falling movement.

And today, we're going to practice mindfulness of thoughts as well.

So, when you notice yourself thinking, we can first acknowledge it, and then instead of bringing your attention back to the breath, just allow your attention to stay with the thoughts for a moment.

And you can visualize the thoughts as if they were clouds in the sky.

Understanding that your awareness is like the vast blue sky, this open expanse, and all the thoughts, and emotions, and feelings, are just clouds floating through.

So, each time you notice that you've gotten lost in thought, just take a step back and recognize, “Oh, another cloud, another thought.”

And then, of course, you can always bring your attention back to the breath whenever you are not sure what to do next.

Just feeling the rising and falling of the belly or the chest.

Again, noticing when thoughts are present, not judging yourself for being lost in thought, practicing that equanimity, non-reactive awareness.

And then just acknowledge thinking.

Just another cloud floating through.

“This thought will pass. This thought is temporary, impermanent.”

And bring your attention to the present moment.

Reminding yourself that the mind was made to think, and to wander.

So it's not doing anything wrong, it's not a sign that you're doing the meditation wrong, or that you're a bad meditator, it's just the mind doing what it does.

Just the mind thinking.

See if you can just notice it.

“Ah, right now, it's like this.”

When you notice a thought and you realize that it is like a cloud floating through, see if you can then turn around and ask, “What is awareness?”

“If the thought is a cloud, what is the blue sky behind it?”

Asking yourself, “What is this awareness onto which thoughts appear and arise?”

And just feeling that open space of awareness.

Again, returning your attention to the breath whenever you get too lost in thought.

And we can also send some gratitude to the thinking mind.

Knowing how important our mind is in terms of getting us through the day.

And so, sometimes, we get frustrated with the mind that doesn't shut off, but ultimately knowing that everything the mind does, it does because it's trying to help us.

The mind is trying to make us happy.

And so, just sending some appreciation, saying, “thank you” to the mind for doing what it does, even if sometimes it's a little misguided.

And then, to end this meditation, you can take a deep breath.

Breathing in deeply, and breathing out slowly.

In your own time, just gently allowing your eyes to open.

Reconnecting with the room, starting to bring some movement back into your body.

Now you know how to work with thoughts and emotions in meditation practice.

Tomorrow, we'll be working with how to deal with distractions in the environment.

I'll see you tomorrow.