

Using RAIN

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart Mind Body Breath Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

RAIN is a mindfulness practice that can be used with any content of mind, but is typically applied to unpleasant, uncomfortable, or upsetting material (the focus here).

RAIN is an acronym that incorporates the core teachings of mindfulness, and instructs us to Recognize, Accept, Investigate, and Not-identify with difficult thoughts, feelings, desires, etc. (for simplicity, we'll refer only to emotions here).

Approaching painful emotions in this way can transform them into more workable, revealing experiences. Practicing RAIN can also prevent unhelpful responses, such as rumination or acting out.

METHOD:

Summary

When difficult emotions arise, practice working with them by recognizing, accepting, investigating, and not identifying with whatever is present.

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Long Version

Work with a difficult emotion when it arises by practicing these four steps of RAIN:

Recognize

- The first step to working with a difficult emotion is to recognize when it is present.
- Recognizing involves pausing and asking yourself, “What am I experiencing right now in my body, thoughts, emotions, and situation?”
- Recognizing prevents denial or avoidance because you are bringing what is unpleasant and perhaps unwholesome into your field of awareness so that it can be seen and dealt with.
- Brain imaging studies have demonstrated that recognizing and labeling emotions actually reduces activity in the emotionally reactive regions of our brain.

Accept

- The “A” in RAIN can stand for “accept,” “acknowledge,” and “allow.”
- Acceptance in this sense means to acknowledge what is present in this moment and to allow what is already here to be here.
- It is important to note that just because you accept or acknowledge something is present does not mean that you agree with or support it. You are simply acknowledging what is present right now.
- It is also important to be aware of any thoughts or emotions, such as resistance or aversion, that may arise when you recognize what you are experiencing.
- Notice any subtle or unconscious forms of resisting your emotions, such as trying to “accept” them so that they will go away. See if you can truly allow what is here to be here, and let the emotion(s) run its course and leave naturally.
- When practicing acceptance, it may be helpful to say to yourself phrases such as “Ah, this too,” or “allow,” or “let be.”

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Investigate

- After working with recognizing and accepting what is present for you, begin to investigate your internal experience.
- It is crucial to bring an attitude of kindness, curiosity and compassion to your investigation.
- Investigate three primary facets of your internal experience:

Physical sensations

- Notice what sensations are present in your body, including their textures, layers, changing nature, and anything else that occurs.

Emotions

- What is the basic feeling tone of your experience (positive, negative, neutral)?
- What emotions are present?
- There may be many different emotions present.
- Ask yourself, “What does this feeling want from me right now? What is it trying to tell me?”

Thoughts

- Notice what thoughts are passing through your mind.
- Perhaps ask yourself, “What stories am I believing right now?”

Non-identification

- Non-identification means not believing that your emotions “belong” to you, or labeling them as “me” or “mine.”
- It involves not taking emotions personally, and understanding that “your” emotions are not really yours. The emotions you experience are also not unique to you, but instead are shared and experienced by all humans.
- It can be helpful to label the emotion you are experiencing as something that is present in this moment but not enduring.

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Example:

- Instead of saying, “I am an angry person,” you could reframe it more accurately by saying “Anger is present right now,” or “I am experiencing anger right now.”

HISTORY:

RAIN is a mindfulness practice that was first introduced by Michele McDonald over a decade ago. It is a common practice taught by many Western mindfulness teachers including Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach.

CAUTIONS:

Opening to intense feelings can be difficult and painful. During the “accept” and “investigate” steps of RAIN, please go slowly and only participate to the degree that you feel comfortable. If you have experienced trauma in the past, or if the feelings you are experiencing are too intense, please discontinue the practice.