

Appendix A

Guided Mindfulness Scripts

Sitting Meditation with Awareness of Sounds

Sitting in an erect and dignified posture; lowering the eyes or closing them; whatever is comfortable for you at this moment—allow your hands to rest on your legs or on your lap. Bringing your awareness to sounds. Notice sounds in this room, sounds outside the room, sounds near and far. Not making any efforts to listen to sounds, simply allow the sounds to come to you. This is pure hearing.

Noticing when the mind gets distracted with a story, planning, memories, thoughts of anticipation, regrets, blaming...and, gently and firmly, with kindness for yourself, redirect your mind to sounds. Notice if the mind has moved to judgments like *I like this sound* or *I don't like that sound*, and see if you can allow yourself to continue hearing regardless of your present likes or dislikes.

Bringing awareness to the silence between the sounds; just listening to whatever is coming to you in the form of sound.

And in the last few moments of this meditation, see if you can allow yourself to rest and nourish yourself by being right here, present to whatever is unfolding...accepting yourself exactly as you are and accepting everyone around you, including those difficult people in your life, exactly as they are...extending, with your thoughts, kindness and compassion to them.

And when you are ready, bring your attention back to the room, and allow your body to stretch—breathing deeply, releasing with the out-breath whatever you don't need right now, and with the in-breath, bringing new energy into your body.

[Bells]

Sitting Meditation with Awareness of Breath

Sitting in an erect and dignified posture: head, neck, and back straight, if that is possible for you; hands resting on your lap or on your legs, feet flat on the floor. Closing or lowering your eyes, whichever is most comfortable for you. Alert and relaxed, allowing your body to become still...fully present to yourself. Be aware of your thoughts: thoughts of anticipation, thoughts about feelings, thoughts about the past... Noticing your emotions, perhaps asking yourself: *How am I feeling right now? Am I peaceful, worried, frustrated...?*

And paying attention to your body, sort of “dropping” into your body for a few moments, and noticing how the body feels at this moment... Not wanting to fix or change anything. Choosing to respond instead of react to any impulses to stop, leave the room, or engage the attention of others. Allowing whatever you have noticed to move into the background...and now, placing your focus of attention on the direct sensations of the breath...

Not thinking about the breath, but feeling it. Feeling the direct sensation of the breath as it comes into the body and leaves the body. Without the need to change it, hold it, or control it. If you notice your mind attempting to shape the breath, or to control it, even in the smallest way, just noticing this tendency, and allowing the breath to flow freely.

Noticing that, with every inhalation, the abdomen and the chest expand, and with every exhalation the abdomen and the chest contract. Noticing the full cycle of the breath. You are not trying to do anything or to get anywhere.

And if your mind has wandered off the breath, notice where it went...and, without criticism, bring it back, gently and firmly, to this moment, to this breath. Be aware of any feelings and thoughts, and bring the mind back to the breath. If the mind leaves a hundred times in a few minutes, bring it back a hundred times, with kindness and lots of patience for yourself. Know that you and everyone else are all very imperfect beings, living in an imperfect world. That is okay.

In a few moments you will hear the bells. Allow the sounds of the bells to completely disappear before you move.

[Bells]

Sitting Meditation with Awareness of Thoughts and Feelings

Sitting in a dignified and erect posture: head, neck, and back aligned, if that is possible for you. Feet flat on the floor. Closing or lowering the eyes, whatever feels comfortable for you at this moment. Hands resting on your legs or on your lap, bringing your body to stillness.

And feeling the breath wherever it is most vivid in your body. You can choose to sustain your attention in the nostrils, noticing how the breath enters the nostrils, and perhaps perceiving the change in temperature when the breath enters and leaves the body. You can choose to feel the breath in the chest, noticing how the chest rises and falls with the breath. The easiest place for most people to feel the breath and to notice the rhythmic movement of the breath is in the belly, in the abdomen. If you like, bringing your attention to the belly right now...and noticing how the abdomen expands with the in-breath and deflates with the out-breath, allowing the breath to flow freely.

You may notice as you sit here, breathing, that there are thoughts present in your awareness.

Noticing thoughts is the focus of concentration now—observing the process of thinking itself. Allowing your thoughts to move to the foreground, taking center stage in your awareness... Noticing how the mind may want to follow the thoughts, and gets trapped in the content of the thoughts, wanting to expand upon them and construct stories. Whatever the content may be, whether the thoughts are about the past or the future, whether they are judgments, opinions, fantasies, dreams—just being aware of how the mind is attracted to or repelled by certain thoughts. Noticing how some thoughts are pursued by the mind and some are rejected... Then practice letting the thoughts be. Simply witnessing each thought, as it comes up in the mind, as an observable event—a unit in the field of awareness, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Observing the coming and going... how thoughts arise, linger briefly or for an extended period, and then pass away...the thoughts fading and dissolving, “just like clouds.”

If you find yourself being drawn into the current of thinking, realize that you are no longer observing the thoughts but that you are lost inside them...and when you become aware of this, just coming back to the observation of thoughts as separate elements...as clouds in the sky, drifting through the spacious vast sky of the mind.

Sometimes the thoughts may become disturbing, too charged for you to simply observe them. If this happens, know that it is always possible to return to the breath. Use the breath to anchor you, to stabilize you in the present moment.

You may notice that there are also emotions that are arising in the body and in the mind. Allowing yourself to feel any emotion that is present at this moment with the intention to make room for whatever is arising moment-to-moment. Maybe there is a feeling of boredom, impatience, or restlessness. You may be experiencing peaceful feelings, like contentment, happiness, or joy...or less peaceful ones, like sadness, anxiety, or frustration, anger, or fear. Being aware of what you are experiencing as emotions, in this moment.

Observing how some emotional states, like happiness and contentment, are welcomed or held on to, or how you may be running away from or blocking or fighting emotions like anxiety, fear, anger, or sadness. Observing whatever emotion is present with a sense of exploration and welcoming the emotion, if that is possible for you. Allowing whatever emotions are present to come and go without “doing” anything about them... Noticing how they arise, how they occupy the mind for a while and then fade away...

Knowing that if, at any time, emotions or feelings become too strong or too intense, it is always possible to return to paying attention to the feeling of breathing, feeling the breath as it enters the body and leaves the body...

And now allowing, if you like, the breath to nourish you and nurture you for a few moments... Knowing that the breath could become your home base and your ally to help you navigate moments of distress or difficulty, and to help bring you back to your balance at any moment... And allowing the benefits of this practice to flow into the entire experience of your life...

[Bells]

Loving-Kindness and Forgiveness Meditation

Sitting or lying down, whatever is most comfortable for you at this moment. Being aware of the breath and sensations throughout the body. Being fully present to the sensations of contact with the chair or floor, feeling its support. Noticing the rhythmic movement of the breath, coming and passing away... And as you're sitting or lying down, allowing the region of the chest to become the primary focus of attention. Noticing if the middle of the chest feels tight and contracted, or if it feels warm, open, and expansive... There is no need to change anything. If it's possible, bringing an accepting, open, and accommodating awareness to whatever is present in the middle of the chest...

Being attentive as well to the underlying vastness inside you, present at all times, in all of us. Notice what is “underneath”—connecting to the center of your being.

And, remembering the ways in which you have harmed yourself by judging yourself harshly and lacking kindness for yourself...with the intention to forgive yourself, knowing that at this moment, you can start a fresh new life. Knowing also that we don't forgive for the sake of others; we forgive for our own sake, so we can have more freedom and peace in our lives...

The term *loving-kindness* encompasses the qualities of *benevolence*, *patience*, *compassion*, *gentleness*, *forgiveness*, and *unconditional love*. Seeing if you can connect with any of these qualities, even only some... You may choose to continue paying attention to the breath or sounds, and that is perfectly fine. Also, if at any point you feel anxious, frightened, or restless, know that at any point you can always go back to paying attention to the breath or sounds.

And if you like, connecting to that boundless source of peace, kindness, and forgiveness already inside of you... Seeing if you can allow yourself to be bathed in this positive and nourishing energy... And if you like, use any phrases that you find appropriate to shower yourself with love and kindness. You could use the following sentences:

May I learn to forgive and accept myself.

May I be safe and protected from inner and outer harm.

May I be as healthy and strong as is possible for me.

May I learn to care for myself with joy and ease.

And having established this radiant center of love and kindness, if you like, you could think of someone who is dear to you, even if that person is no longer alive: a parent, a sister, a brother, a teacher, or a friend. And holding that person in *your mind's eye and in your heart*, wish that person *happiness*. Asking that person for forgiveness for the suffering that you may have caused.

And if you like, saying to that person:

I forgive myself and ask for your forgiveness.

And if you find that you are having a difficult time forgiving yourself, being with that part that is resisting forgiveness and extending love and compassion to your loved one and to yourself, say:

May you be happy.

May you be free of suffering.

May you be peaceful.

And use any other wishes that you would like to give to that dear person in your life.

And return to the breath, allowing the breath to flow freely, nourishing yourself with the breath. And, when you are ready, bringing to your mind's eye and your heart all the people that you love dearly, and sending them boundless loving-kindness...

And now, continue to experience loving-kindness, bringing to your mind's eye and your heart a neutral person, a person you have *no relationship with*. Someone you see sometimes—a shopkeeper, someone you see often in hallways, and sending kind thoughts to that person.

And if you like, saying to that person:

May you be happy.

May you be free from suffering.

May you be peaceful.

And if you like, ask for forgiveness for all those times when you were unkind to strangers or people you did not know very well.

And now, think of all the strangers who have been extremely kind and helpful to you, and send them boundless loving-kindness.

And thinking now of someone *whom you have had difficulties with*, someone who has been or is right now challenging in your life. Notice what arises just by thinking of that person, what happens in your body, what your thoughts are...and notice any feelings and emotions that arise. There is no need to “force” yourself to be kind and compassionate to that person. Forgiveness is a process. Be gentle and kind with yourself.

Only if you feel that you have the resources to extend kindness, you may want to say to that person:

May you be happy.

May you be free from suffering.

May you be peaceful.

And now, see if it is possible to send kindness and compassion to all beings in the entire world...

May all be happy.

May all be free from suffering.

May all be peaceful.

And going back to the breath for a few moments before we end this meditation. Allowing the breath to replenish you and ground you in the present moment.

[Bells]

Seated Body Scan

Sitting with your eyes open and lowered, or choosing to close your eyes if that is more comfortable for you right now. Bringing your attention to your breath, feeling the direct sensations of the breath, the movement of the breath, wherever the breath is most vivid for you at this moment. You might feel the breath in the nostrils, or in the chest... Notice how the chest rises with the in-breath and contracts with the out-breath... Or you might feel the breath in the abdomen or your belly... Notice how it rises with the inhalation and deflates with the exhalation... And with each exhalation softening the body and allowing the body to rest deeper into the support provided by the chair. If you like, you can place your hands on the abdomen or your belly for a few moments to feel the rhythmic movement of the breath.

And now, expanding your attention to your whole body, notice how your body feels at this moment. Is there any tension in the body, any tiredness? Allowing yourself to feel any emotion or sensation, making room for whatever you are feeling at this moment; not wanting anything to happen, not even relaxation.

Bring the mind back to the body with gentleness and firmness whenever you notice that it has wandered off.

And notice the contact that the feet are making with the floor. Do you feel the support of the floor, or any sensations in your feet right now? Silently noting what you are feeling... Notice any sensations in your feet. Are you feeling sensations of warmth or coolness, tingling, throbbing in your feet? Do you notice the contact that the feet are making with the floor? Can you detect any other sensations in your feet?... Maybe you are not aware of any sensations, and that is totally fine. Just noticing that you are not feeling anything is what's important... Move your attention up through the legs. Do you feel the contact of your sitting bones with the chair? Are you experiencing a sense of warmth, pulsing, pressure, tingling, or anything else? It's totally fine if you don't feel anything. Just notice if you feel or don't feel sensations...

And when you are ready, move your awareness to the back, the lower back. We tend to accumulate a lot of tension in the lower back. Notice if there is discomfort in the lower back at this moment. If you like, exhale, imagining that the discomfort leaves with the out-breath, and that with the in-breath you are bringing freshness and new energy to the body... Aware of sensations in the middle back, notice the movement of the rib cage with the breath. Pay attention to sensations in the shoulder blades, the upper back—notice how the shoulders feel. Expand your awareness to explore sensations in your entire back...

If your attention has wandered away or has been hijacked by a story, planning, regrets, memories, and so on—which happens to all of us whenever we practice focusing on something—realize where your mind went and gently, firmly, and with curiosity, with a lot of kindness and patience for yourself, and without criticizing or blaming yourself, escort your attention back to exploring sensations in the shoulder area...

And now notice sensations on the sides of the body. Maybe become aware of the movement of the rib cage. And when you are ready, bring your attention to the front of the torso, and become aware of the physical sensations in the pelvic area. Move your awareness up to your abdomen... Perhaps you will notice how the abdomen and belly contract and expand with the breath. Notice sensations in the stomach, maybe sensations related to digestion...

Move attention up to the chest. Does the middle of the chest feel expanded or contracted? No need to do anything, just notice. Notice any sensations in the area around the heart, perhaps detecting the beating of the heart at this moment... And move your awareness down through the arms to the hands and fingers. Notice if the fingers are tense, and whether any other sensations are present in the fingers: any sweat, tingling, throbbing? Be aware of the sensations in the palms; are the palms hot or cold? What are you experiencing deep inside the hands? Feel the changing sensations in your arms, the skin, and the touch of the clothes that you are wearing, the muscles and bones. Just notice anything that is present, being with what is present right here, right now.

And now, allowing your attention to move to the shoulders and to the back of the neck and the throat area. Becoming aware of sensations in the back of the head, in the scalp area, the skull, the top of the head, deep inside the head; sensations in the forehead...the ears...deep inside the ears and the outside of the ears...the area around the eyes...the eyes...eyebrows...eyelashes...the nose and nostrils...the lips and inside the mouth...the cheeks and jaw area... Aware of sensations in the whole face, notice if you are holding tension in the face.

And when you are ready, hold the entire body in your awareness, from the top of the head to your feet. Be aware of the breath flowing freely in and out of the body. Know that at any moment during the day or night you can experience a relaxed and awake state by connecting with the direct sensations of your breath in your body. Allowing yourself to feel that rhythmic movement of the breath...

And when you are ready, opening the eyes if they were closed, and bring awareness to the room where you are, stretching for a few moments if you need to stretch.

[Bells]

Seated Body Scan Interspersed with Mindful Movement

While doing this exercise it is important to be gentle with yourself. If you try too hard to be relaxed, you can create discomfort in your body, and in your mind. Simply observe what is happening, with a sense of exploration and curiosity. Remembering that there is no right way to feel... Giving yourself permission to feel what you're feeling... Notice the desire to judge your feelings, to want things to be different than they are right now. Just allowing yourself to be exactly the way you are...

We are going to do this body scan from a sitting posture interspersed with movement. And so now, sitting in a comfortable chair, feet flat on the floor, hands resting on your knees or thighs... The eyelids lowered, or closed, whatever you prefer. In a relaxed and aware position, bring awareness to your breath. Feeling the direct sensations of your breath, with no need to modify it or change it in any way... Maybe you'd like to place your hands on your abdomen for a few moments... Notice the abdomen rising with the in-breath, and falling or contracting with the out-breath. Just follow this for a few moments, getting a sense of this rhythmic movement...

If you like, you can imagine bringing new energy, freshness, and vitality into your body when you breathe in; and cleansing, releasing toxins, every time you breathe out. With the body scan we are training our minds to be in the present, to live in the "here and now." So, whenever you notice that your mind has wandered away from the breath or the scanning, bring it back gently and firmly, with no judgment. Being very kind and gentle with yourself...

Also remember that if, at any moment, you feel a lot of anxiety due to body memories, flashbacks, or any other negativity or discomfort experienced either in your body or in your mind, you can always use the breath or sounds as a place of refuge to bring you back to your center, to yourself, to the present moment.

And now, if you like, removing your hands from the abdomen and placing them again on your thighs or knees...

And now, moving your awareness from the abdomen all the way down, through the legs, down the legs, until you reach your feet... If you like, you can move the toes however you want to move them, exploring with great curiosity the sensations present in your toes... Perhaps you may notice warmth or coolness, moisture or dryness, a tingling sensation... And now penetrating with your attention inside the feet... Just notice what is present. You may not feel anything, and that is perfectly fine.

And now, bringing awareness to the rest of the legs. Scanning for sensations in your legs. Perhaps noticing the contact that the legs are making with the chair. Aware of bones, ligaments; aware of any uncomfortable, even painful, sensations... If you like, using the breath to soften and open to all that is present, with the intention of accepting things exactly as they are and accepting yourself exactly as you are.

And now, let's do some movements for the legs and feet. Lifting the right first, flexing the right foot up and down, circling the right foot to the right, and to the left; moving your toes; placing your right leg down. And now, lifting the left leg, flexing the left foot, circling the left foot first to the left and then to the right; moving your toes; aware of sensations. Placing your left leg down.

When you are ready, bringing awareness to the torso. Moving awareness to the pelvic area, aware of any sensations present in this area. And paying attention to sensations in the lower back... We tend to accumulate a lot of tension in the lower back. If you are noticing that there is discomfort in the lower back, you can choose to imagine that you are allowing this area to fill with freshness and energy while you breathe in and when you breathe out, imagining that all the tension, discomfort, pain leaves the body with the out-breath. Aware now of sensations in the midback, perhaps noticing the rib cage moving with the breath... Paying attention to sensations in the upper back, the shoulder area. If you like, releasing and softening any tension that you notice with the out-breath, and bringing new life and freshness with the in-breath... And now, let's do some movement for the shoulders. On an

in-breath, bringing the shoulders close to your ears, and dropping them on the out-breath. Rotate your shoulders backwards. Rotate your shoulders forward. Aware of all sensations.

And now, moving your awareness to the front of the torso, carefully exploring any sensations in the abdomen. Maybe notice the abdomen rising when you breathe in, and deflating when you breathe out... Paying attention to sensations in your belly. Maybe aware of digestion. Allowing things to be just the way they are right now... And moving awareness up through the body to the chest. Does the chest feel contracted or expanded right now? No need to do or change anything. Just notice...

And moving attention down through the arms to the hands and fingers. Aware of any sensations present in your fingers, in the palm and top of your hands, the wrists, the lower arms, the elbows, upper arms, and shoulders. Totally aware of all sensations present in these parts of your body... And when you are ready, lifting both arms in front of you, and circling the hands to the right, and to the left. Flexing your hands up and down. Opening and closing the hands while you spread the fingers wide, feeling all sensations. Aware of the in-breath and out-breath.

And moving your awareness up to your head and neck. Detecting sensations in the back of the neck and the throat area... Just notice whatever is present. No need to “do” anything or change, suppress, or try to “conquer” any feeling or thought that may be present. Paying attention to sensations in the back of the head, deep inside the head, and the top of the head... Moving attention to the face, experiencing the entire face... Scanning for sensations, paying attention to your breath. Allowing your face to relax...

And now experiencing the entire body, aware of non-doing; just existing in this quiet, in this silence and stillness, letting the breath flow freely and easily. Feeling complete, with the ability to tap into your immense inner resources. Experiencing your capacity to be connected to the world...

And return to an awareness of the place where you are right now—maybe opening your eyes, if you had them closed...and moving in whatever way feels right to you, allowing the calmness and the centeredness that you may be feeling right now to remain with you.

[Bells]

Walking Meditation

Standing in the mountain pose*, aware of your breathing, bring your awareness to the soles of your feet. Notice the support and connection with the floor at this moment. Shift the weight of the body to the right leg and, on an inhalation, lift the left foot...and, exhaling, place it in front of you, heel first. And shift the weight of the body to the left leg, and inhaling, lifting the right foot...and exhaling, placing it in front, heel first. And continue to do this, inhaling—lifting; exhaling—placing.

Next expand your awareness to include sensations in the legs for a few moments, and lastly, expand the field of awareness even wider to include the whole body. Notice sensations in your entire body with every step. And if you notice that your mind has been caught in a story, that it is in a blaming, judging mode, notice that, and gently direct your attention back to feeling sensations of movement in your entire body...

Now coming to an ending... Lower your eyes and notice how your body feels. What are the thoughts and emotions present at this moment?

[Bells]

* If you are unfamiliar with this pose, see “Mindful Standing Stretching Practice,” later in this section.

Eating Meditation (with Raisin)

Pretend that you have just arrived from another planet and that you have to report what you just received. You have never seen these objects before. So, taking one of these objects in your hand, observe it with curiosity. Please tell me what you see—color, shape, texture, size... Now hold it between your fingers, and see what you notice (*it's sticky, rough; has edges, is malleable, and so on*). With exquisite attention, bring the object to your nose and tell me what you notice now... Now bring the object to your ear and move it around close to the ear. Is there anything that you can hear?... Dispose of that object.

Now, with great awareness to how your arm and hand move, bring another object to your lips. Notice sensations on the lips, the air touching the object, and anything else that you can detect. Place the object in your mouth, but don't bite it. Notice if there is an impulse to swallow. Just move it around in your mouth... What are you noticing now? And, when you are ready, begin to chew the object. Chew, and chew, and chew. Notice if you are in a hurry. Just notice whatever comes up in relation to this tiny object... If your attention wandered away from the sensations of chewing, notice that, and bring your attention back to what you are doing. Concentrate... Chew slowly, carefully, paying total attention to what you are doing... If you notice that your mind goes into a thought, a story, a like or dislike, notice that and bring the mind back to what you are doing—chewing. Chew and pay attention with full awareness... And when you are ready, swallow the object with full attention to all the sensations present. Bring your awareness to the breath for a few moments; notice the breath coming into the body and moving out of the body.

[Bells]

Riding the Roller Coaster of Emotions Meditation

This meditation is adapted with permission from the “Urge Surfing” exercise in Bowen, Chawla, and Marlatt (2011).

Often times our emotions and lives can be like riding a roller coaster. One moment we are happy; the next moment we are feeling angry or anxious about something, triggered by the things that are happening around us. Have you ever been on a roller coaster ride? A roller coaster is a fast-paced ride, with slow moments as the car rides up an incline with us inside, waiting in anticipation for the next fall. There can be a euphoria (an emotional high) as the car falls forward down the roller coaster track, but there can be fear there, too. Our emotions can run like a roller coaster too; even if we are not aware, we are pulled into the feelings and reactions of those twists and turns, rising and dips. What if you could learn to be aware of those turns, slow things down a bit when you want to and ride the roller coaster with attention and responsiveness?

You can do this meditation when you are feeling out of center, reactive, euphoric, in danger of relapsing, or simply to get to know your emotions more intimately. If you have the opportunity and space, before you begin this meditation it might help to do some slow mindful stretches, or walking meditation.

In order to begin this meditation—**Pause**, or **Stop**—disconnect from whatever you are doing. At times, due to the circumstances at that moment, it might be hard to physically stop. Regardless of whether you can stop externally, in order to do this mindfulness meditation, it is important that you stop internally, with the intention to pay attention, with affectionate curiosity, to whatever is arising in your body and mind at that moment. Start by silently saying a few loving-kindness phrases such as, *May I accept myself exactly as I am in this moment and make room for whatever is arising in this moment. May I learn to be kind and compassionate to myself. May I be peaceful, clear, and well.*

Begin by sitting comfortably or lying down, with your eyes closed or open. **Bring your attention to sounds or the feeling of the breath** in your body wherever you feel the breath most vividly. If you choose to pay attention to sounds, just allow sounds near and far to come to you, without making any effort. If you choose to pay attention to the breath, there is no need to manipulate the breath, allow the breath to flow freely and normally. If the breath is shallow and burdened, allow it to be that way; if it is long and deep, just notice that it is that way.

In paying attention to the breath, you may choose to place one hand on your belly and another hand on your chest, allowing yourself to feel the expansion of the belly and the chest with the inhalation, and the flattening or deflation with the exhalation. If you find that your mind is very agitated, you can label the movement. Inhaling—*rising, expanding*. Exhaling—*falling, contracting*. Choose a word that is easy for you to label the movement of the breath.

Formulate the intention to remain free of judgment and be openhearted throughout the meditation, allowing kindness and compassion for yourself to be present. It might happen that you begin to feel a slight kindness for yourself or not. It is possible that you continue to feel defective and unworthy. It does not matter whether the feeling is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Noticing the way you feel and allowing yourself to feel the way that you are feeling is what matters. Note that it takes courage and determination to do this work.

After feeling the direct sensations of sound or the breath for a few minutes, **bring your attention to the sensations present in your body**: discomfort, pain, heaviness, contraction, hot or cold in the extremities or the face, dry mouth, sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, a lump in the throat, or anything else that is present. Do a one-minute scanning of your body, moving your fingers or toes, legs and shoulders if necessary to heightened sensation. Go back to paying attention to the breath whenever you feel a strong urge, a craving, or an impulse to act

in a destructive way to yourself or to another. Ride the roller coaster of sensations using the breath as an anchor to help you be with the reactivity and the desire to “do” something. Choose “non-doing.” Put the brake on instead of pressing the accelerator.

Shift your attention to notice any feelings or emotions that might be present, with the intention to befriend and make room for all emotions. Notice clearly the feelings and emotions that are present: where do you feel them in your body? What is their texture, color, taste, or smell? There might be feelings of sadness, euphoria, happiness, shame, fear, confusion, or anger. There is usually more than one feeling or emotion present. See if it is possible for you to select one emotion as the object of your exploration, with the intention to perceive, as clearly as possible, the signature of that feeling or emotion in your body. Are there any changes in the emotion? How? What is your relationship to that emotion: are you pushing it away or are you noticing attachment to it? Notice that in the middle of an unpleasant or disturbing emotion might be a pleasant feeling and vice versa. If it becomes too difficult and overwhelming, choose to go back to the refuge of resting with the awareness of sounds or the breath.

Shift your attention to the thoughts that are present in your mind. There may be thoughts of anticipation, memories, stories about similar situations. Allow the thoughts to flow in and out of your mind, being careful not to get entangled in the content of the thought. Become aware that if you can witness your thoughts, you are much larger than your thoughts. Realize that your thoughts are events in the field of your awareness; that, like emotions and bodily sensations, they arise, stay for a while, and quickly disappear if you don't do anything to hold them. Go back to the awareness of sounds or the breath every time that you feel out of balance or disturbed.

Finish the exercise by **narrowing your awareness to the feeling of the breath** in your body: paying attention to the entire duration of the in-breath, the entire duration of the out-breath, and perhaps noticing the gap in between the in-breath and the out-breath. Allow the breath to nourish you for a few moments before you end the meditation.

[Bells]

Mindful Standing Stretching Practice

Let's begin this mindful stretching practice with some standing postures. Allow yourself to explore with curiosity and without judgment all the sensations that arise moment-to-moment. Remember throughout to coordinate breath and movement and to let this practice be a time of mindful care for you.

Mountain: So now, let's begin by standing with your feet directly under your hips, feeling as much of the soles of the feet as possible...aware of your toes, the heels and the solid support of the floor. And moving awareness up through the body, bringing a gentle lift through the arches, the ankles, and the lower legs, knees, upper legs, and up through the spine, shoulders at ease, the chest is open...head, neck, and back aligned, if that is possible for you...the head balanced on the neck and shoulders, arms alongside the body... Experiencing a sense of presence and elevation just like a mountain.

Arm Stretch: Lift the arms toward the ceiling and stretch, as if trying to touch the ceiling. Feeling the sensations present in your body, the sides of the body, in the arms, hands and fingers, in the lower back, and legs. And with the left hand holding the right wrist, stretch the right arm as much as possible...feel the sensations in the arm and the right side of the body. And with the right hand, hold the left wrist, and stretch the left arm... Notice all that is happening, aware of the breath. And on an exhalation, allow the arms to float down.

Horizontal Arm Stretch: Now, inhaling and allowing the arms to flow up to shoulder level, elbows straight, flexing your wrists so that your palms face the sides of the room. Aware of the air and sensations in the arms, the wrists, the armpits, and all the muscles that are engaged. Exhaling, and slowly and mindfully, allowing the arms to flow down.

Picking Grapes: And now we will do what we call picking grapes. Taking a deep breath in...and lift just the right arm. Stretch, feeling the stretch all along the right side of the body, the rib cage, the arm and the hand. Stretch, and reach toward the ceiling, in the direction of something that you really want, some juicy grapes that are just out of your reach.

Continue to let the breath flow freely, and if you like, increase the stretch by lifting up the left heel, at the same time, reaching, stretching... Lower the left heel, and slowly let the right arm float back down to the side. Stand once again in the mountain pose. Notice how the right arm and the right part of the body feels. Notice how the left side feels. Inhale, lifting the left arm, stretching, reaching toward those grapes that are just out of reach; and if you wish, let the right heel come up, increasing the stretch... Exhale and lower the right heel and allow the arm to flow down to the side of the body.

And standing once again in the mountain pose, fully present, experiencing whatever physical sensations come into your awareness. Be aware of your breathing, the breath flowing in and out of the body.

Crescent Moon: Inhaling and bringing the arms up overhead, pressing the palms together. Exhaling and bending to the left and allowing the hips to move to the right, exploring if you can continue to extend through your fingers. Allowing the breath to flow freely, noticing the quality of the breath, where you feel it most vividly, and aware of the sensations on the right side of your body. Inhaling, bringing the arms back to center. Stretching up, trying to touch the ceiling, feeling the stretch throughout your body. Inhaling and on the exhale, bending to the right and allowing your hips to move to the left. Aware of sensations on the left side of your body and anything else that is here right now. Noticing any thoughts, emotions, your mood. Feeling this stretch through the elbows and the armpits...through the rib cage...right out of the pelvis, and anywhere else that you feel it along your

body... from head to toe. And inhaling and on the exhale bringing the body and arms back to center. Closing the eyes, aware of the rhythmic movement of the breath, moving in and out of the body.

Shoulder Rolls: And now we are going to do some shoulder rolls. Inhaling, bringing the shoulders up to the ears, holding the breath, and exhaling through the mouth, allowing the arms to drop down. Then rolling the shoulders back—aware of the shoulder blades, squeezing toward each other, and the chest expanding—and letting the shoulders drop down. And rolling forward, squeezing the shoulders toward each other, and continuing to roll through these four places, up and back, down and forward, in your own time. And when you're ready, roll back in the opposite direction, up and forward, down and back...

Bringing the body to stillness, standing, feeling the effects of what we just have done...feeling all the sensations present in the neck and shoulder region.

Neck Stretch: And now we will do some stretches for the neck. Inhale and exhale, allowing the right ear to move toward the right shoulder, keeping the right shoulder relaxed. Aware of any sensations present in the left side of the neck, breathing into the tender places... And inhaling, bring the head back to center. Repeat on the other side. And when you are ready, inhale and exhale, bringing the chin to the chest, aware of sensations in the throat and back of the neck. Inhale and look up, keeping the back of the neck long. Bring the head back to center. Return to mountain. Let the body be completely relaxed, but at the same time alert, poised, balanced, as you continue to be aware of your breathing.

Tree: And now let's do the tree...from the mountain pose, allowing the entire weight of your body to shift to the right leg and placing the sole of your left foot into the right inner thigh, lower leg, or even allowing the toes to touch the floor, careful not to place your foot directly on the knee. Place the palms together in the middle of the chest in a clapping posture. And picking out a spot either on the wall, or on the floor three or four feet in front of you, focus your gaze on that spot.

And when you're ready, inhaling and stretching the arms up over your head as far as they'll go. And clasping your fingers together—pressing the upper arms against your ears. And breathing deeply down into your abdomen. And just balancing here, if possible keeping the left knee straight.

When you're ready, inhaling and on the exhalation slowly unclasping your hands and letting the arms come down to the side. And when they are about horizontal, lifting the knee up, and bringing the right foot down alongside the left foot. And taking a deep breath in and out here. And then allowing the weight to shift to the left leg as you shift the right foot and place it inside the left leg...wherever it will go... Place the palms together in the middle of the chest in a clapping posture. And when you feel balanced, inhaling and stretching your arms up over the head, and clasping the hands again. Pressing the upper arms against your ears as you breathe and balance. Stretching a little bit higher... And then unclasping the hands, and slowly letting the arms come down until they're horizontal...when you'll lift the right knee up and slowly come down with the arms and the foot... And then you're standing again on both feet. Allowing your eyes to close... And centering your awareness in your abdomen...and your body as a whole, as you stand here allowing the breath to flow freely.

Balancing Pose: And now we will do a balancing pose. Begin by centering yourself in the mountain pose. Focus the eyes on a place on the floor three to four feet in front of you. Slowly, let the weight shift over onto the left leg, and then extend the arms to the sides so that they are parallel to the floor, and on an inhalation lift the right leg to the side, and balance on the left foot, breathing. Your left leg is firmly planted, rooted, and you are maintaining your balance as best as you can. Be sure you are breathing. The breath continues to flow freely...

And when you are ready, slowly let the leg and arms come down. You are standing once again in the mountain pose...

On an inhalation, lift the arms and extend them to the side, gazing three to four feet in front of you. And when feeling balanced, lift the left leg, aware of what you have to do to maintain the balance. Breathe and be aware of sensations. Exhale and bringing the arms down, the leg down, and back into the mountain pose, aware of sensations throughout the body, aware of your breath.

Standing Twist: And now placing your hands on your hips, inhale and exhaling, turn the head as far to the right as possible, maintaining the shoulders where they are. Seeing if you can look behind as you turn your head to the right. Feeling the stretch in this position, breathing into it. And on an inhale allowing the head to come back to center. Repeat on the other side. And now, inhaling and exhaling while gently twisting and turning from the waist, allowing the head and neck to follow. The hips are facing forward, only the head and the upper torso are turning. Inhaling and coming back to center. Repeat on the other side.

And now, keeping your hands on your hips, inhale and exhaling, turning from the ankles so that you are turning your whole body as far as you can to the right, except the feet. Tracking with the eyes, going as far as you can to the right, breathing, stretching. Inhaling and coming back to center. Repeat on the other side. Return to mountain.

Forward Bend: When you're ready, doing a forward bend... Bending the knees slightly, and taking a deep breath in, stretching the arms up over the head, reaching up toward the ceiling, and then exhaling, pulling in at the abdominal muscles, and letting the body bend forward from the waist, the arms reaching toward the floor, knees are soft, slightly bent. Releasing the neck. And feeling the in-breath expanding the rib cage and then on the out-breath allowing the muscles to lengthen and relax. Letting the head sink down toward the knees and the floor, surrendering to the gravitational pull. And if you'd like to, inhaling and extending the right arm out, in front of you, parallel to the floor. The left arm and shoulder remain relaxed. Allowing the spine to lengthen. And then, exhaling and letting the arm come back down. Repeat on the other side. And when you're ready, beginning to come up slowly. Starting at the hips, the lower part of the spine, unwinding vertebra by vertebra. Becoming aware of how much of the spine you can experience as you do this. Return to mountain. Closing or lowering your eyes and sensing whatever is here, aware of the breath and everything else that is present in your internal and external landscape.

Chair Pose: And now we'll do the chair pose—inhalation and exhaling, stretching both arms out in front of you, feet a hip-width apart. Imagining that you're sitting down on a chair that is behind you, bending the knees, keeping the feet flat on the floor, heels down, keeping the head and back as straight as possible. And once you have come to rest in this position, breathing and balancing. Noticing the sensations present. And when you are ready, inhaling and slowly coming to a standing position, letting the arms drop and shaking the arms, shaking the legs, one at a time, taking a long deep breath, releasing all tension and discomfort on the out-breath, and allowing freshness and new life to come into the body with the in-breath.

[Bells]