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## Changing the way you think and feel...

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### **MINDFULNESS OF BREATHING: INSTRUCTIONS**

- Sit in a comfortable posture, as upright as you can if possible: let your shoulders drop.
- Close your eyes if it feels comfortable to do this. If not then focus your sight on a spot in front of you.
- Bring your awareness inside you, to body sensations, by focusing your attention on the sensations of touch, contact and pressure in your body where it makes contact with the floor and whatever you are sitting on. Spend a few minutes just noticing these sensations. Try just to notice the sensations for what they are without judging them as good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant etc.
- Bring your attention gently to your breathing, feeling your breathing flowing into your body on the in-breath and out of your body on the out-breath. Don't try to change your breathing in any way, just pay attention to it. You can focus on the flow of the breath as it moves in and out. Or you might want instead to focus on one aspect of your breath – perhaps the feeling of the air as it moves through your nostrils, or on the feeling of your belly rising and falling.
- Keep the focus on your breathing, 'being with' each in-breath for its full duration and with each out-breath for its full duration, as if you were riding on the waves of your own breathing.

- It is completely normal for your mind to wander when you are meditating. This does **not** mean that you are not doing it properly! Every time that you notice that your mind has wandered off the breath, softly note what it was that took you away and then gently bring your attention back to your breath.
- If your mind wanders from the breath a thousand times, then your 'job' is simply to bring it back to the breath every time. It is just as valuable to become aware that your mind has wandered and to bring it back to the breath, as it is to remain aware of the breath.
- When you are first trying this just try it for 5 minutes and then build up the time you allow for this practice.
- Don't be surprised if you find this difficult at first. Try not to be too judgemental on yourself or the meditation, just go with it and practice regularly.

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*Jenny Wilks, Clinical Psychologist, Duncan Moss, Clinical Psychologist, Becky Chasey Clinical Psychologist*

*(adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living, p58)*