

Mindfulness practice to fill your empty cup

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In times of challenge we often feel drained of our energy and make choices we think will refuel us. Yet often the various choices of food, shopping or activities still leaves us more tired. This condition is connected to a concept of doing versus being a constant cycle of checking off that list of things I must do or be. To cultivate a practice of emptying, begin with a process of releasing and removing the do list. Image standing in front of a black board and you begin to erase the daily do and must list. Feel the process of erasing the words till the all is gone and there is just a blank board. Tell the mind you release your thoughts out into the universe and there is nothing you need to be or do at this moment. Creating this moment of being empty is the opportunity to begin a mindfulness practice of filling up your cup?

- To start place your attention on an empty cup or picture in your mind your favorite cup
- Begin slowly increasing the length of your breath comfortably, long breaths, feel the rise and fall in the chest as you focus on the empty cup. Keep breathing slowly allowing the sense of emptiness to create a calm, centered and peaceful awareness
- Now draw your attention to the inhale of your breath:
- Inhale a small breath pause Inhale second small breath and then a long exhale Repeat that cycle of breath 8 times- if any tension or pressure is felt come back to an easy breath
- As you are repeating the two part inhale breath, image you are pouring tea into your cup that contains happiness,
- As you exhale repeat the following phrase in your mind: **I fill my cup with happiness**
- Hold your cup and observe the feeling of your cup being filled with happiness.
- Return to slow even breaths and pay attention to the sensations and awareness that may arise with this moment of a full cup.
- Know that you can fill your cup with any positive thought such as
 - I fill my cup with healing for my body, mind and spirit
 - I fill my cup with peace and calm for my emotions
 - I fill my cup with love and kindness for myself

This state of awareness is a state of mindfulness. The simple definition of mindfulness is awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally (Quote from Jon Kabat-Zin's book; Mindfulness for Beginners)

Now mindfully image drinking this cup and noticed the continued benefit of this mindfulness practice of filling your empty cup. Also, if you like you can practice mindfulness while enjoying a real cup of tea or coffee by paying attention to the process of enjoying all the sensations as you drink your cup of tea or coffee!

Resources:

Book: Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Mindfulness for Beginners; reclaiming the present moment and your life*, Sounds True: Bolder Colorado, 2012.

CD: Tara Brach, Freeing the Heart, Foundations for emotional healing. www.soundstrue.com

I focus on this empty cup then I fill this cup with Happiness

