

## Way of Awareness—Home Practices –Week 4...Keep Practicing & Have FUN!\*\*\*

**Will arrive at 6:20 for Q&A-class starts at 6:30**

- 1) **Gratitude Practice:** Text your buddies 3 things you are grateful for each day.
- 2) **Sitting for a minimum of 15-30 minutes per day:** Do your best! For at least the first 10 minutes, keep your meditation simple — focus on the body & then your anchor-the touch points or sounds or breath. To the best of your ability, when some other experience gets in the way of being with the anchor, simply let it go & come back to the touch points or sounds or breath After 5-10-minutes, continue with the anchor until something else becomes more compelling. If physical sensations, emotions, moods, hindrances or thinking predominate, let go of the anchor Open to what is happening in the present moment. **Recognize, Allow, Observe.** When it is no longer compelling or if nothing else is compelling, open to & return to the experience in the body- the anchor. *(see thought info below)*
- 3) **Practice standing & walking meditation** as you move through the world.
- 4) **Continue to Engage in a daily activity with Mindfulness**-a simple, routine activity commit to integrating mindfulness into that activity every day. Such as: brushing one's teeth, taking a shower, riding your bicycle, or eating. This practice in addition to your daily formal sitting-standing-walking-gratitude practices is designed to bring mindfulness into your daily life.
- 5) **Continue to dedicate one snack or meal a day** to eating slowly & mindfully. Pay attention to the tastes, textures, and temperature of your food & to the experience of your body eating. Whenever your mind wanders, or you get caught up in reactions, pause & come back to simply eating.
- 6) **Pause Meditation:**
  - Simply Pause
  - Feel your feet on the floor
  - Shift into relaxation-Soften muscles where you feel tension- ex: shoulders, jaw, around the eyes, belly
  - Notice how the body feels, Pay attention as if listening to body-
  - Ask, What is happening right now? “ Listen for the answer and let it go.
  - Feel your feet on the floor.-Widen attention over the entire body — Inhabit the body-
- 7) **Thoughts:**
  - **Remember that the point of meditation is not to stop thinking!** With mindfulness, we are not stopping thoughts or pushing away the thoughts that do arise as much as not dwelling in them or being preoccupied with them.
  - **Do your best to pay attention to thoughts without getting lost in their content.** Instead, simply notice that thinking is happening. Often we get lost in thoughts about the past or future. Notice other aspects of the process of thinking, do you think in words or images? In color or black & white? Is your inner voice soft, gentle or harsh, critical, or accepting, easy?
  - **Bring an affectionate curiosity, interest and investigation into thinking-thoughts.** Notice if thoughts are connected with body sensations (pressure, tension in the body?), feelings-pleasant, unpleasant, neutral or emotions. Investigate-do you control thoughts? Or do they appear & disappear whether we like it or not?
  - **Once during the week, for 10 minutes, find some way to remind yourself every few minutes to notice what you are thinking.** Are the thoughts mainly self-referential or about others? Do they tend to be critical or judgmental? What is the frequency of thoughts of “I should”? Are the thoughts mostly directed to the future or the past? Do you tend more toward optimistic or pessimistic thoughts? Contented or dissatisfied thoughts? *This is not*

*an exercise in judging what you notice, but in simply noticing. This is an exercise in stepping outside of the thought-stream into an awareness that is bigger than the thinking mind.*

**\*\*\*8) Enjoy moments of your life! Have Fun, Laugh. Put the burden down, Lighten up.**