



Practice: Mountain Meditation

Adapted from Jon Kabat-Zinn, 'Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life'.

Key learning:

Stability, equanimity

Non-identification

Space

Resources:

Mats/ chairs, bolsters, blankets, cushions, clock, bells / singing bell, handout for client, recording for client to have for home practice.

Benefits:

Creating a sense of stability, balance and equanimity
Groundedness
Good, short coping strategy
Developing an understanding of thoughts and emotions as being separate to who we really are
Visualisation assists visual learners

Potential Difficulties Arising:

Unable to visualise
Feelings of "not doing it right" as unable to bring the mountain into the body
Discomfort as sitting still for so long

Guidance:

Bring your awareness to your breath – the rise and fall of your abdomen.

Once the mind has settled a little, bring to your mind a picture of the most beautiful mountain you know or can imagine. Notice its mass, its peak, its shape, the steepness of its sides, any trees, maybe snow and ice, streams and waterfalls. Sense the base of the mountain rooted into the earth's crust. Notice how massive, stable and unmoving the mountain appears.

Once you feel familiar with the image of the mountain, see if you can bring it into your own body – your head is the lofty peak, your shoulders and arms the sides of the mountain, your bottom, legs and feet become the lower slopes and solid base rooted to your cushion or chair. Invite yourself to fully become the breathing mountain – a centred, stable and unmoving presence. Don't worry if you find this difficult – a sense of your body as the mountain will be fine.

Now notice your emotions, thoughts and feelings – visualise them as the weather around your mountain. Is your weather right now sunny and calm, windy, wet and turbulent, foggy and murky, cold and harsh, or a mixture? Just allow your weather to be the way it is – there is no need to change it. Allow the weather to simply happen around your mountain.

Notice if it changes, intensifies or lessens through the meditation.....

Stay with yourself as the breathing mountain for as long as you feel able to.....as the weather changes, the light changes, the days change, the seasons change, the years change, the mountain just sits, simply being itself.

Storms may come, but still the mountain sits. Calmness abiding all change.

Inquiry

Ask about the participants' experience of the practice and acknowledge and explore any benefits and potential difficulties which come up.

Examples of useful questions to start the inquiry process with the client:

During or after the practice ask them to notice:

Their experience during the practice

How it felt physically, emotionally, psychologically

Whether there are times throughout the day that this could be introduced as a shorter practice or coping strategy

How did it feel to experience the emotions and thought simply as weather?

What was the experience of sitting with change?