

# The RAIN Approach\*

RAIN is a mindfulness practice that is often taught by psychologists Jack Kornfield and Tara Brach. This practice can be very effective when strong emotions arise. The idea is to work with difficult emotions or unresolved issues by Recognizing, Accepting, Investigating, and Not identifying with our painful thoughts and feelings.

Work with a difficult emotion when it arises by practicing these four steps of RAIN:

## Recognize

- The first step to working with a difficult emotion is to recognize when it is present.
- Recognizing involves pausing and asking yourself, “What am I experiencing right now in my body, thoughts, emotions, and situation?”
- Recognizing prevents denial or avoidance, because you are bringing what is unpleasant or painful into your field of awareness so that it can be seen and dealt with.
- Brain imaging studies have demonstrated that recognizing and labeling emotions actually reduces activity in the emotionally reactive regions of our brain. Practice “name it to tame it” and see how labeling your emotions can have calming effects.

## Accept

- The “A” in RAIN can stand for “accept,” “acknowledge,” and “allow.”
- Acceptance in this sense means to acknowledge what is present in this moment and to allow what is already here to be here.
  - It is important to note that just because you accept or acknowledge something is present does not mean that you agree. You are simply acknowledging what is present right now.
  - It is also important to be aware of any thoughts or emotions, such as resistance or aversion, that may arise when you recognize what you are experiencing.
- When practicing acceptance, it may be helpful to say to yourself phrases such as “This too will pass.”

*\* Exercise Adapted from Your Skillful Means*

## Investigate

- After working with recognizing and accepting what is present for you, begin to investigate your internal experience.
- It is important to bring a COAL attitude to your investigation. Be Curious, Open, Accepting and Loving as you investigate.
- You can investigate by SIFTing through your experience. What bodily Sensations, Images, Feelings and Thoughts arise?

## Non-identification

- Non-identification involves not allowing these thoughts, feelings, or experiences to define you. Your sense of yourself as a person should not be limited to any set of thoughts, feelings, or experiences.
  - Example: Instead of saying, “I am an angry person,” you could reframe it more accurately by saying, “I am feeling anger right now.”
- When you are working through a traumatic memory from your past, it is important to acknowledge the emotions that the memory stirs up but also to recognize that this memory is not happening to you now. Furthermore, this memory does not define you.

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