



Feeling and Softening Emotions

The following mindfulness exercise is one that I learned awhile back and am now sharing with you. I found it to be very helpful in working with emotions:

The **RAIN** method is a technique taken from mindfulness. It can be used to help people deal successfully with difficult emotions and states of mind, and its four simple steps are easy to remember.

The **RAIN** method takes its name from the initial letters of the four steps in the process:

R = Recognition of what you're experiencing

A = Acceptance of your emotions

I = Investigation of your thoughts and emotions

N = Non-Identification with your thoughts and emotions, allowing them to pass naturally

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Recognition of what you're experiencing

When you feel in the grip of a strong emotion, or trapped by patterns of thought, the first step in the RAIN method is to actually stop and think about what you're experiencing.

Describing what you're experiencing is at the root of recognizing and dealing with it. Instead of saying "I'm angry" say "I'm having those feelings of anger". Just changing the way that you express your feelings like this starts to create some space between yourself and your emotions.

Acceptance of your emotions

Acceptance doesn't require you to enjoy, or even understand why you're experiencing your emotion. Acceptance simply means accepting that for instance "I am having those feelings of anger" is your current state. Acceptance also means not trying to suppress, ignore, or change the emotion that you're experiencing.

One of the cornerstones of the RAIN method is that by not getting enmeshed with our thoughts and emotions that we actually reduce our suffering.

Investigation of your thoughts and emotions

Having recognized and accepted your current emotional state, the third step in the RAIN method is to look further into it. Once again it isn't to judge or change the emotion, but to simply look further into it.

Start with the here and now of your experience – are there any physical sensations? Where are they?

Next look at your thoughts – what thoughts are you having? What's influenced your thoughts? Why are you reacting to those thoughts in the way you are? And as always this is without judging your thoughts or yourself.

Look at what you can learn from what you've found out. Remember that this is based on acceptance, and so it's not about ways to avoid those feelings, but about how you might be more prepared or more resilient.

Non-Identification with your thoughts and emotions

The fourth step in the RAIN method, non-recognition is the natural result of

Recognition, and the space created by saying “I’m having those feelings of anger” instead of “I’m angry”

Acceptance, and not trying to suppress, ignore, or change the emotion that you’re experiencing

Investigation, and becoming more prepared and more resilient

When you think of “I’m having those feelings of anger” there is a separation between those feelings of anger, and the “I” that is able to recognize them. It’s this “I” that is you – **you aren’t your thoughts or your emotions.**

Think of passing objects reflected in a mirror – the objects are reflected in images in the mirror, but the mirror isn’t the objects, or even the images. The “I” in “I’m having those feelings” is the mirror that reflects, but never becomes, the things passing in front of it.

This is the meaning of non-identification, and it can be incredibly liberating. Keeping that distance between yourself and your emotions means that you don’t become enmeshed in them, and that you can always find yourself, the self that isn’t your thoughts or emotions.

So give this a try and see how it goes.

If you feel you are needing support around this, please reach out. I would welcome the opportunity to work with you.