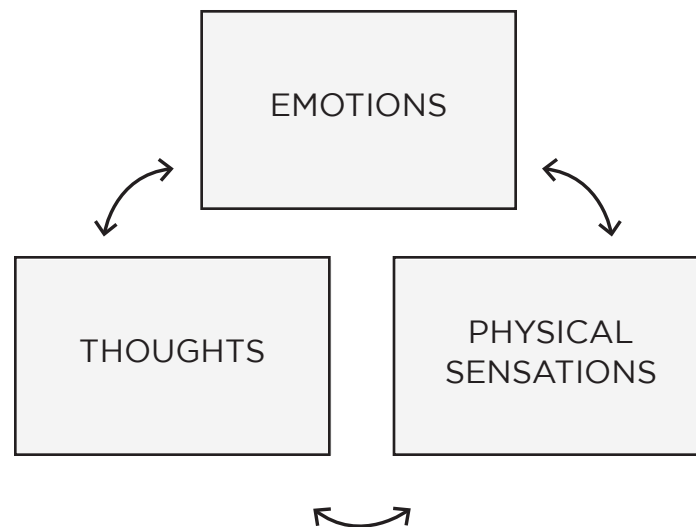


Mind-Body Connection Meditation

1. *Begin by closing your eyes (or gazing downward at a static object) and attending to your breath. Notice its qualities, and what it feels like. Breathe in, and breathe out, noticing how your abdomen rises with each inhale and falls with each exhale. Engage in this focused breathing for a moment.*
2. *Body Awareness: Now extend this awareness of the breath to your entire body, just being present with your whole body and noticing any sensations that arise. Do not judge these sensations; rather, just notice anything happening in your body. Maybe you feel some relaxation in some area, or some tension. Maybe there is some discomfort, or another distinct sensation. Just be with these experiences for a moment, allowing your focus to drift anywhere in the body that is calling your attention. As you complete this exercise it is okay to stop, or skip certain areas of the body, if a region does not feel safe or comfortable to connect with.*
3. *Emotional Awareness: Now, gently shift your attention away from the body, and onto your emotions. Notice any feelings you may be experiencing, no matter how subtle or strong. Again, do not judge these emotions, simply notice and accept their presence. As you connect with your emotions, you may notice the presence of multiple emotions, to varying degrees. Or, you may notice no emotions at all. Just stay here, with your emotions, for a moment.*
4. *Thought Awareness: Finally, shift your awareness to your thoughts.*
 - a. *Without becoming attached to any of your thoughts, or getting wrapped up in them, simply notice them. Notice them as they arrive, observe them as they play out, and allow them to leave without trying to push them away or cling to them. Stay with your thoughts for a moment.*
 - b. *As you continue to observe your thoughts, begin to visualize your thoughts as trains, where each train represents one thought. If possible, label or identify each thought train that passes by. Imagine that you are standing about 20 feet back from these trains, watching them. You are not the conductor of these trains, nor are you a passenger right now. You may notice one train of thought passing through your mind, or perhaps several. Some may move quickly, others more slowly, and some may stop for a while. This is okay. Your job is to watch these trains and allow them to enter, move through, and exit your mind at their own pace.*
 - c. *If you notice at some point that you have jumped onto one of these trains, and followed or fused with one of your thoughts, congratulate yourself on this awareness, acknowledge the thought you were just having, then jump off that train and resume your stance as an observer.*

5. Now, as you continue to watch the thought trains, start to open your awareness to include your emotions and body, so that you begin to notice any emotions or physical sensations that might be connected to your thoughts. These may be visualized as cargo attached to the thought trains. Simply notice the association between the thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations without judging or trying to alter them. You may notice, as you complete this exercise, that certain thoughts are associated with certain sensations and emotional experiences, and that these three domains (body, thoughts, emotions) can interact.



6. To end this exercise, gently shift your attention back to your breath, taking two deep, diaphragmatic breaths before opening your eyes and re-entering the room.