

read

# MINDFULNESS OF EMOTION

WHILE YOU READ, HIGHLIGHT IMPORTANT WORDS/PHRASES AND ANNOTATE THE TEXT USING COMMENTS.

Choose an emotion you don't experience often - or that you know you resist and don't like experiencing. Maybe it's boredom, anger, sadness or hopelessness. Or something else - maybe joy is the one for you! Sometimes we use 'negative emotions' and 'positive emotions' in quotes because it's how we judge them - but when we feel them directly we just experience sensations, heat/coolness, expansiveness or contraction. When the emotion arises, see if you can get to know it. We're not getting to know it through thinking about it - but we are noticing how it feels, where it might show up in the body and if there are any recurring thoughts that accompany the feeling. Notice also if you feel any resistance - pushing it away, bracing against it. Relax the body and take some deep breaths and feel what is to be felt.

## AWARENESS AND EMOTION

When we are unaware of our emotions due to busy schedules, caring for other people, or a scattered mind, it's easy to become out of touch with our emotional experience. Just as your alarm clock signals you when it's time to get up, using the body as a signal of your emotional well being throughout the day will keep you more connected to yourself. If, for instance, you're aware that stress often shows up in your shoulders, you can always check there to catch the mounting tightness signaling stress. Awareness of emotions in your body can also help you notice when more positive experiences are being felt. A relaxed, loose, energized body is something to tune in to. A smile or relaxed forehead can be a sign of contentment. To start inclining your mind towards these

moments, allow yourself time to really recognize them. Often, applying extra attentiveness to a negative emotion can weaken its potency, while in the case of a positive emotion it can allow it to become stronger.

## CREATING SPACE

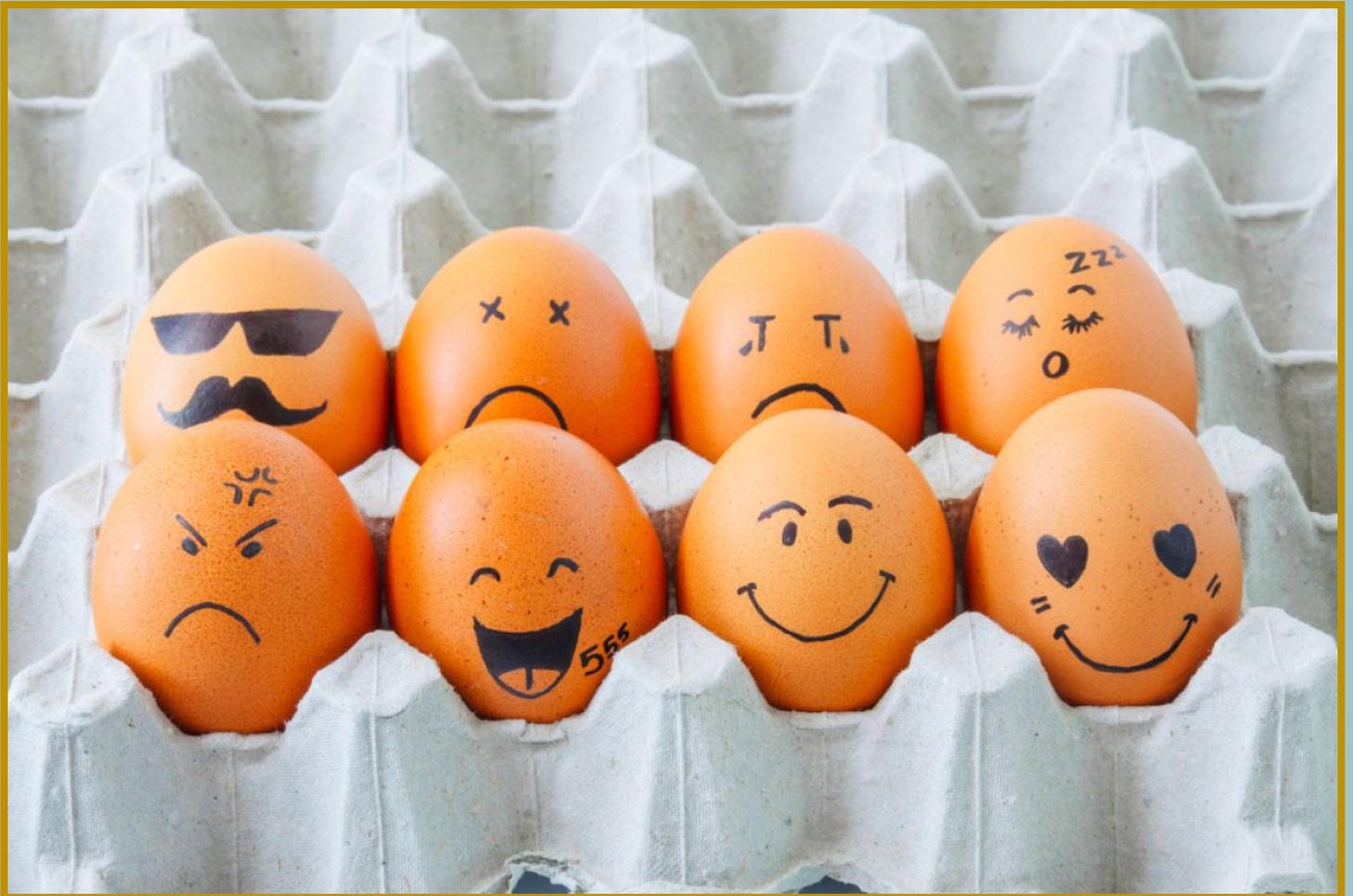
Strong emotions can be tricky to navigate. When we are experiencing something like anger we often fall into our personal patterns of reaction. These reactions might take the form of lashing out or retreating, of suppressing or overreacting. Often, we recognize these patterns as our own, but feel helpless to change them. In fact, it may be hard to differentiate between the emotion you feel and your reaction to it. The reactions can happen so quickly and so unconsciously that it might not be until after we have reacted that we might feel regret. As we begin to strengthen our mindfulness and start to apply it to these situations, we create space between the emotion and the reaction. This space might just be a couple of seconds or it might be a day of reflection. Either way, it gives us the choice to respond to the situation rather than just reacting. As we begin to strengthen this ability, we might first notice that we still react in our familiar old ways but are now more aware of ourselves as we react. Keep in mind that this is a learning process and it takes time to transform old habits. Most of your habits have been with you since childhood; imagine how long you've been perfecting them. Please be kind and patient with yourself.

## STRONG EMOTIONS

Strong or difficult emotions often get a bad rap. They easily get judged as wrong or bad or inappropriate because they are potent and might make others uncomfortable. In mindfulness practice it's important to understand that we are just observing these emotions without needing to add extra judgment. There is something to be said for and even celebrated about strong or difficult emotions. They can motivate us to do something when we see injustice. When mindful awareness is carefully coupled with these strong emotions, they can be a powerful guiding force towards effective resolution. It's when mindfulness is not part of the equation that we see strong emotions creating harm for ourselves or others. Strong positive emotions, such as exuberance, when coupled with mindfulness, can be incredibly contagious. For some, however, intense joy or happiness feels uncomfortable or is suppressed. For others still, intense positive emotions may come easily but overwhelm the people they are trying to connect with. If this rings true for you, you may want to concentrate your practice on this subject. Remember, there is internal experience and external expression. Mindfulness asks that we allow internal experience to flower, while using our wisdom to determine what is the skillful external expression. So, we can be mindful and passive, mindful and expressive... and we can be mindless and passive or mindless and expressive. Please explore. Recognizing our emotional state and creating the space to be present with it increases our capacity to be with strong and uncomfortable emotions. This capacity creates confidence to act appropriately during any emotional experience instead of letting the experience control us. This is one of the most precious gifts of having a mindfulness practice!



WATCH  
THIS!



CLICK [HERE](#) OR ON THE IMAGE ABOVE TO WATCH A VIDEO

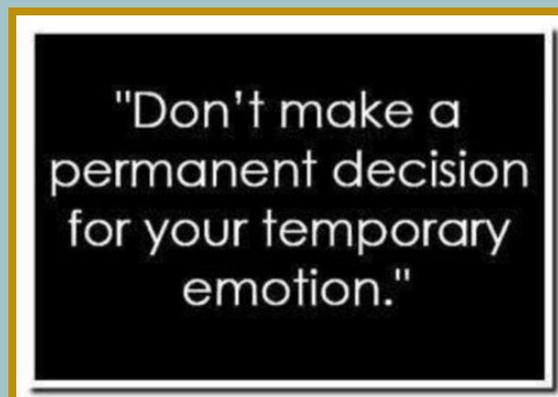
WHAT DO YOU THINK ?

WHAT INFORMATION FROM THE VIDEO IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTANDING THE SCIENCE OF MINDFULNESS?



GUIDED MEDITATION FOCUSING ON MINDFULNESS OF EMOTION

- Click [HERE](#) for Emotions in the Body (4 min)
- Click [HERE](#) for Emotions in the Body (15 min)



BONUS! CLICK [HERE](#) TO VIEW A STUDENT CREATED FILM. THIS SHORT FILM WAS FEATURED IN THE 2015 [PUSD SHORT FILM FESTIVAL](#).

**FOR TEACHERS:**

CHOOSE AN ACTIVITY FROM THIS [WEBSITE](#) FOR STUDENTS TO WORK COLLABORATIVELY AND REFLECT ON MINDFULNESS OF EMOTION.