

EXERCISE: Watching the Clouds in the Sky

We are going to ask you to do an exercise involving imagining that your experiences are clouds in the sky, and that you are just watching them. It is probably best to begin this exercise by reading the instructions so that you get some idea of what to do. Then close your eyes (or whatever helps you imagine) and start the exercise by practising awareness of your breathing.

First, take a couple of gentle breaths, and as you do so, connect with the experience of your breathing, in this moment. Notice the posture that your body is in, the way that it feels. Get present with whatever you are noticing right now, and if you are able, make room for your experiences.

Connect again with your breath. Notice the sound and feel of your own breathing.

Now, we invite you to imagine you are lying on a grassy hill on a warm spring day.

Imagine feeling the ground beneath you, the smell of the grass, and the sounds of nearby trees blowing in the wind.

Now, imagine you are looking up at the sky while lying on this hill, watching clouds pass across the sky. And as you do so, become aware of your thoughts and feelings.

Each time a thought pops into your mind, imagine that it is written on one of those clouds. If you think in images, place these on a cloud and let them float by.

Your task is to stay watching the sky and allow the clouds to keep moving by. Don't try to change what shows up on the clouds in any way. If the clouds disappear or you go somewhere else mentally, or you find that you are in a cloud, just stop and notice this happening and gently bring yourself back to lying on the grassy hill, watching the sky and clouds.

If you notice having any thoughts or feelings about doing this exercise, place these on clouds as well. If your thoughts stop, just watch the sky and the clouds. Sooner or later your thoughts will start up again.

Finally, bring your attention back to your breathing. Notice again the steady rhythm of your breathing that is with you all the time. Then, bring your awareness back to where you are. Gently open your eyes and notice what you can see. Just focus on the present moment, here and now.

You can write your reflections about the Clouds exercise here:

