



## Week 6 – WAVE: Ride the Emotion – Building your Resilience

**FACT:** Large population-based research studies have indicated that the practice of mindfulness is strongly correlated with wellbeing and perceived health. Studies have also shown that rumination and worry contribute to mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety, and that mindfulness-based interventions are effective in the reduction of both rumination and worry.

Mindfulness is the practice of cultivating conscious awareness of our thoughts, feelings and environment in every moment, without judging the experiences.

We gradually learn thoughts and behaviours that result in joy and those that trigger stressful reactions and suffering. Neuroscience is increasingly supporting the idea that mindfulness and meditation help to enhance perception, awareness and complex thinking. Resilience to stress is one of the key benefits of mindfulness.

Meditation is a practical tool with which one can observe inner and outer experiences with compassion, acceptance and neutrality. Consistent and regular meditation practices promote calmness, inner stability and reduce impulsive, reactive behaviours. We learn to disentangle ourselves from the daily ebb and flow of emotions, anxiety and stress and to connect with our lives and with others in a deeper and more profound manner.

### Stress Reduction – Awareness Exercises

#### Simple Observation

This is recommended as an effective way to adopt the 'witness' role in observing your thoughts, moods, emotions and feelings. Instead of judging them and following them, allot names to each of them and let them go. For

example, 'that is anger', 'that is excitement', 'that is hunger', 'that is sadness' and so on.

### **Bring conscious awareness to negative emotions, including fear, anger, worries and cravings**

Be aware of an emotion as it approaches; look out for warning signs. Imagine the emotion to be a wave that builds and then breaks. Ride out the emotion and expect other emotions to follow. Accept them.

## **R.A.I.N – How to Let Go**

When you next experience a situation which is causing, your thoughts, feelings and emotions to rise try this exercise and see what happens for you. You can take yourself to a quiet space if you feel more comfortable with that or you may just want to sit at your desk.

### **RECOGNISE:**

Take a moment to recognize that a strong emotion is present and gently turn towards what you're experiencing in an open and non-judgemental way.

Tune in to the direct present moment experience of what is happening in your body and mind... the emotions, the thoughts and sensations that are here.

It can be helpful to mentally name it, for example, "I am feeling stressed" or "I am feeling overwhelmed." This recognition of what your feeling, opens up inner space and brings you into full contact with yourself and the actuality of the present moment.

### **ALLOW:**

Allowing means to 'let it be as it is.' It is the acknowledgement and acceptance of your present moment reality. Allowing doesn't mean we have to like the situation. It means we aim to soften (or drop) our mental resistance to what is happening.

The reason this is so important is because we often have the unconscious impulse to push away, suppress or ignore difficult emotions. When we engage in an inner struggle in these ways, we unknowingly create more suffering and tension.

In this unconscious struggle we also tend to get 'caught up' in our thoughts and emotions, therefore we are more likely to react rather than being able to choose a conscious response.

By allowing, we're able to bring an inner 'yes' to our present moment experience. You may notice almost immediately a sense of softening and ease around the emotion.

### **INVESTIGATE:**

We look at our reactions to it with curiosity. What is happening in my body or mind right now? You may not always feel you need the "I" step as sometimes just the recognition and acceptance is enough. At other times you may feel naturally drawn to using this step.

### **NON-IDENTIFICATION:**

Letting go of the attachment without making it personal to us. In the "N" step of R.A.I.N, you turn your attention to the simple realisation that YOU are not your mind nor are you your emotions. You are the awareness that is always there underneath every thought, emotion and sense perception.

Non-identification means that your sense of who you are is not fused with or defined by your thoughts and emotions. This brings about a natural sense of freedom and ease. It gives a sense of having peace in the middle of it all. No matter how intense and painful the emotional storm, there is always a part of you which is still, silent and untouched.

You can use this R.A.I.N. method anytime you are feeling stressed, overwhelmed or out of touch. It's a powerful way of finding some peace in a challenging time.

## **The WAVE - How to Ride Out your Emotions**

**Step 1:** Perceive your negative emotions such as worries, anxieties and fears like a wave. This is based on the concept that all thoughts are bound by time and are like waves – they build and then break.

**Step 2:** Think of a recent occurrence or event that left you feeling worried or upset. Think of how you felt, what happened and what your reactions were. Now observe the feelings and emotions that arise within you. Let them arise until they increase in intensity.

Observe physical reactions and begin your observations with 'I notice that...'. You may notice a tightness in your chest or tension in your muscles. Keep beginning your observations with 'I notice that...'.

Allow the emotion to build to its peak and then begin to lose strength and diminish. The wave now begins to ebb away until the thought is released. Do

not attempt to force the wave to move beyond its natural speed and do not try to get in front of it. Allow it to carry you and keep observing it until it builds and then ebbs away.

This simple exercise helps us accept that thoughts are not part of our inner essence.