

# Witnessing Your Thoughts

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



How often do we stop to curiously witness the nature of our thoughts as if we were an outside observer of them? When caught in a less-than mindful state, our thoughts tend to take over our identity, defining who we believe ourselves to be and directing our perception of the world.

However, as we practice witnessing our thoughts from a place of slight separation, we get to know them in a different way. We start to uncover patterns and habits in our thinking, which naturally helps us to learn, grow, and evolve in nourishing ways.

### **PRACTICE:**

1. Begin by coming into a seated position. Whether on the floor or in a chair, ensure that the spine is straight and the shoulders are relaxed. Set a timer for five to ten minutes.
2. Take five full breaths to ground yourself. Notice the sensations associated with each inhalation and each exhalation.
3. After those five breaths, continue to breathe naturally but see if you might broaden your awareness. Pay particular attention to what rises in the mind.

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4. As thoughts come up, notice them without becoming involved in the direction they are heading it. Without judging, suppressing, denying, or becoming enamoured by your thoughts, watch what moves through you as if you were an elder watching the movements of the community. Notice what rises and subsides in your awareness.
5. As you watch your thoughts pass by, embracing compassion and curiosity as you get to know your experience in a new way. Observe the emotions and beliefs your inner dialogue triggers, as well as what the imagery looks like. If emotions are present, notice where they present themselves in the physical body.
6. It is quite likely that the mind will entrance you with its images and/or its words. When this happens – even if you realize you have been ‘lost in thought’ for a couple of minutes – compassionately come back to the silence within. Make note of what arises next.
7. Continue until the alarm rings. Come back to your breath and when you are ready, open your eyes.

### NOTES:

Be patient with yourself as you practice this. This is a form of silent meditation, which can take quite a bit of time to sink into. Even if during your first, second, or hundredth session has you lost in thought, harness patience, compassion, and curiosity for your experience.

You might liken the quiet space within yourself to be the clear blue sky – and your thoughts to be the clouds that pass by. This metaphor might help you to remain unattached to the mental movements that arise. Watch from the point of view of the open sky.

You might also use a grounding phrase like ‘coming back’ to denote the return to presence. Any other mantras that are helpful for you can be used in conjunction with this practice.