

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.
A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.
Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.
The dark thought, the shame, the malice.
Meet them at the door laughing and invite them in.
Be grateful for whatever comes.
Because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

- Jellaludin Rumi

CLASS FIVE: MINDFUL ACCEPTANCE

Last week you cultivated a sense of kindness toward yourself by practicing relating differently to the sensations of pain and suffering. By allowing things to be, just as they are, without judging or trying to make it different, we gain a new way of relating to our difficulties. Acceptance is a major part of recognizing what, if anything, needs to change.

Once we recognize our habits of mind, emotion and behavior, we can begin to see how we get stuck. We get caught in a relentless cycle of either clinging or avoiding. However, what we resist often persists.

When we begin to notice the ways we cope through clinging or avoiding, we are not judging these coping patterns. In fact, they have supported our survival at many points in our life. Mindfulness helps us recognize how these habits may not be helpful in certain situations. Rather than react in auto-pilot to everyday challenges, practicing mindful responses allows us to respond wisely.

When we are faced with stress, emotional pain or difficulty, it is natural to try to avoid and push these emotional experiences away. We try to solve it, ignore it or suppress it with distractions. When difficulties come arise, the brain reacts by viewing them as the enemy. Thus, we initiate an automatic reaction to avoid, distract, fix or solve.

By cultivating acceptance of the suffering and pain in your life, we open up space for healing. Often emotions and thoughts cannot be fixed, avoiding them takes time and energy away from what really matters. Acceptance allows things to be as they are, and opens up new possibilities and wiser reactions.

Class Five Practice

- 1) Combine different meditations to prolong your practice, and practice every day. Create a playlist, and try listening to [Breath and Body](#), [Sounds and Thoughts](#) and [Befriending Meditation](#) and [Cultivating Self-Compassion](#) all in one sitting.
- 2) Please record your experiences, reactions, discoveries and challenges on the [homework log](#), as this will help with the inquiry process.
- 3) Choose two routines in your day and make a deliberate effort to bring moment-to-moment awareness to that activity. If you find yourself criticizing yourself during any activities, see if you can mindfully pause, then move onto incorporating Self-Compassion and Loving Kindness to yourself or others.
- 4) Complete [Acceptance Worksheet](#).

Reference

Williams M. & Penman D. (2011). *Mindfulness: An eight-week plan to finding peace in a frantic world*. New York: Rodale Books. Chapter 9.