Addiction: Longings/Cravings

Imagery for Distress Tolerance and Self-Efficacy

Imagery designed to promote distress tolerance, self-empowerment and self-efficacy. Uses a graduated exposure approach -- starting with mild distress and building to stronger cravings.

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Script

Allow yourself to be comfortable...either lying down or sitting up -- with your back, neck and spine fully supported. Knowing that you will not be interrupted for the next little while, begin by gently closing your eyes.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

Now begin to bring your attention to your breath -- the direct experience of your breath -- however it is...and however it changes. Allow yourself to softly focus your awareness on the breath that is arising right now...the in-breath and the out-breath...the rising and the falling. If you can, try to follow one full cycle of the breath -- from the beginning of the in-breath, through its entirety...the beginning of the out-breath, through its entirety. Allowing yourself the time and space to be in direct contact with the breath throughout one entire cycle.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

As you continue to pay attention to the breath, you may notice distractions that arise. Just allow yourself to notice...those distractions...any bodily sensations...any thoughts that may arise. If possible, allow yourself to become aware of the separateness of those bodily sensations -- notice how those sensations are separate distinct -- from your thoughts, your ideas and your words.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

Now, as you continue with this focused awareness, you will notice how often you lose contact with the breath...maybe you become caught in a thought or an idea or plan or maybe some other bodily sensation has pulled your attention. ...When this happens, simply notice that you have lost connection with the breath, and gently, bring your awareness back to the breath.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

We'll begin now with a deep breath in through your nose...inhaling slowly and deeply. Exhale through pursed lips until all the air has been released.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

Gently bring your awareness to any sensations in the body....noticing any tension, pressure, tightness, warmth, coolness, pain or other recognizable sensations. You may also notice that the thinking part of your brain may want to label these sensations. Allow that to happen and then gently bring your awareness back to the direct experience of the sensations themselves. If you'd like, begin to notice sensations in various parts of your body. You might begin with

the feet, working your way up the body...noticing the ankles, shins, knees, thighs, buttocks, hips, lower back, upper back, shoulders, biceps, elbows, forearms, wrists, hands...now beginning again at the neck...jaw...behind and under the eyes, forehead, crown of the head and finally the back of the head. If you want, you may consciously relax any overly tight muscles -- noticing your choice to do so or not.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

Now gently allow your attention and awareness to rest on any sensations in the abdomen or belly area. Notice any sensations -- whether "comfortable" or "uncomfortable". Without any effort to distract yourself from them or to change them, allow the sensations to just be there. If you do try to get rid of them or distract yourself from them, simply notice that you have done so, and then gently return your awareness to the sensations.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

[Instruction] Round 1: Mild distress

Now, with a gentle breath, bring to mind a time when you felt mildly upset about not getting something that you wanted, maybe something that you felt you deserved. Bring to mind an image of that object of your desire or craving. Study it...What does it look like? . . . Sound like? . . . Feel like?...If it has an odor or fragrance, inhale its scent...Give yourself some time to be with this object of your desire.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

With the object in mind, gently allow yourself to notice any emotions...any sensations in your body...any feelings that come up around the desired object. Just for the moment, withholding any labels or judgements, just allow the sensations and feelings to remain in awareness. If they happen to slip from awareness, and you begin analyzing, labeling or judging, just notice that and gently bring yourself back to the feelings, sensations or emotions.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

Now, with a gentle breath, begin to notice any appraisals, assessments, judgments, opinions, beliefs, interpretations or any other ideas that occur as you continue to focus on your bodily sensations, feelings and/or emotions as they relate to what you have experienced during this meditation.

[Pause — 20 seconds]

Now refocus your attention on your breath. . . .the direct experience of the breath . . .

however it is...and however it changes. Allow yourself to softly focus your awareness on the breath that is arising right now...the in-breath and the out-breath...the rising and the falling. If you can, try to follow one full cycle of the breath -- from the beginning of the in-breath, through its entirety...the beginning of the out-breath, through its entirety. Allowing yourself the time and space to be in direct contact with the breath throughout one entire cycle.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

[Instruction] Round 2: Moderate distress

Now, with a gentle breath, bring to mind a time when you felt pretty upset -- but not overwhelmed -- about not getting something that you really wanted -- maybe something that you felt you deserved. Bring to mind an image of that object of your desire or craving. Study it...What does it look like? . . . Sound like? . . . Feel like?...If it has an odor or fragrance, inhale its scent...Give yourself some time to be with this object of your desire.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

With the object in mind, gently allow yourself to notice any emotions...any sensations in your body...any feelings that come up around the desired object. Just for the moment, withholding any labels or judgements, just allow the sensations and feelings to remain in awareness. If they happen to slip from awareness, and you begin analyzing, labeling or judging, just notice that and gently bring yourself back to the feelings, sensations or emotions.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

Now, with a gentle breath, begin to notice any appraisals, assessments, judgments, opinions, beliefs, interpretations or any other ideas that occur as you continue to focus on your bodily sensations, feelings and/or emotions as they relate to what you have experienced during this meditation.

[Pause — 20 seconds]

Now re-focus your attention on your breath. ...the direct experience of the breath . . . however it is...and however it changes. Allow yourself to softly focus your awareness on the breath that is arising right now...the in-breath and the out-breath...the rising and the falling. If you can, try to follow one full cycle of the breath -- from the beginning of the in-breath, through its entirety...the beginning of the out-breath, through its entirety. Allowing yourself the time and the space to be in direct contact with the breath throughout one entire cycle.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

[Instruction] Round 3: Moderate-high distress

Now, with a gentle breath, bring to mind a time when you felt pretty upset -- but not overwhelmed -- about not getting something that you really wanted -- maybe something that you felt you deserved. Bring to mind an image of that object of your desire or craving. Study it...What does it look like? . . . Sound like? . . . Feel like?...If it has an odor or fragrance, inhale its scent...Give yourself some time to be with this object of your desire.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

With the object in mind, gently allow yourself to notice any emotions...any sensations in your body...any feelings that come up around the desired object. Just for the moment, withholding any labels or judgements, just allow the sensations and feelings to remain in awareness. If they happen to slip from awareness, and you begin analyzing, labeling or judging, just notice that and gently bring yourself back to the feelings, sensations or emotions.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

Now, with a gentle breath, begin to notice any appraisals, assessments, judgments, opinions, beliefs, interpretations or any other ideas that occur as you continue to focus on your bodily sensations, feelings and/or emotions as they relate to what you have experienced during this meditation.

[Pause — 20 seconds]

Now re-focus your attention on your breath -- the direct experience of the breath -- however it is...and however it changes. Allow yourself to softly focus your awareness on the breath that is arising right now...the in-breath and the out-breath...the rising and the falling. If you can, try to follow one full cycle of the breath -- from the beginning of the in-breath, through its entirety...the beginning of the out-breath, through its entirety. Allowing yourself the time and the space to be in direct contact with the breath throughout one entire cycle.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

[Instruction] Round 4: High distress

Now, with a gentle breath, bring to mind a time when you felt very upset about not getting something that you wanted. Bring to mind an image of that object of your desire or craving. Study it...What does it look like? . . . Sound like? . . . Feel like?...If it has an odor or fragrance, inhale its scent...Give yourself some time to be with this object of your desire.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

With the object in mind, gently allow yourself to notice any emotions...any sensations in your body...any feelings that come up around the desired object. Just for a moment, withholding any labels or judgements, allow the sensations and feelings to remain in awareness. If they happen to slip from awareness, and you begin analyzing, labeling or judging, just notice that and gently bring yourself back to the feelings, sensations or emotions.

[Pause — 45 seconds]

Now, with a gentle breath, begin to notice any appraisals, assessments, judgments, opinions, beliefs, interpretations or any other ideas that occur as you continue to focus on your bodily sensations, feelings and/or emotions as they relate to what you have experienced during this meditation.

[Pause — 20 seconds]

Now re-focus your attention on your breath -- the direct experience of the breath -- however it is...and however it changes. Allow yourself to softly focus your awareness on the breath that is arising right now...the in-breath and the out-breath...the rising and the falling. If you can, try to follow one full cycle of the breath -- from the beginning of the in-breath, through its entirety...the beginning of the out-breath, through its entirety. Allowing yourself the time and the space to be in direct contact with the breath throughout one entire cycle.

[Instruction] Breathe audibly with the exhalation longer than the inhalation

And when you are ready, begin to notice the chair or bed beneath you. Paying attention to the sensations in your feet. Now your hands...gently make a fist, then release it -- stretching your fingers wide. Now bring yourself back to this room by slowly counting up from one to five. When you reach the number five, your eyes will gently open. You will be awake and alert, and feeling only peace. One....Two....Three. Take a deep breath....Four....And five.

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