

The Mindfulness & Acceptance Workbook for Social Anxiety & Shyness

Using Acceptance & Commitment Therapy to
Free Yourself from Fear & Reclaim Your Life



**With downloadable
guided mindfulness
meditations and
printable worksheets**

A POWERFUL STEP-BY-STEP PROGRAM TO HELP YOU:

- Understand social anxiety in a new way
- Stop avoiding social situations
- Speak in public — even with fear and doubt
- Start participating fully in the life you want

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Exercise 1.1 Top Three Feared Social Situations

Describe the three social situations that are most problematic for you in your life:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Exercise 2.1 The Costs of Outright Avoidance

Situations Avoided	Costs of Avoidance

Exercise 2.2 What Are You Giving Up for Safety?

List one or more of your safety behaviors (if any) for each of your top three feared social situations, along with any costs of using the behaviors.

Situation 1: _____

Situation 2: _____

Situation 3: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Exercise 3.2 Values and Goals Worksheet

Identify one or more values (qualities of actions), and one or more goals (outcomes of actions) for each life area that is important to you *and* involves at least one of your feared social situations.

Intimate Relationships

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Friendships and Other Social Relationships

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Family Relationships

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Career/Employment

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Education/Learning

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Leisure/Recreation

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Health/Physical Well-Being

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Community Participation

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Spirituality

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Other Life Areas

Values: _____

Goals: _____

Exercise 4.1 Mindful Eating

Start by placing a raisin in the palm of one hand.

Next, see if you can set your intention to bring a nonjudging attitude to your moment-to-moment awareness of the raisin. Whenever you lose sight of that intention during the exercise, see if you can recommit to paying mindful attention to the raisin.

Now, focus on seeing the raisin as if you've never seen one before, using your "beginner's mind"—noticing the shape, size, and color of the raisin—turning it around in your fingers, noticing the folds and where the surface reflects light, bringing an attitude of curiosity to seeing all aspects of the raisin. Whenever you notice thoughts about the raisin, such as *It's so wrinkly* or *I wish I had a bigger one*, or you notice yourself thinking about anything other than the raisin, gently redirect your attention to seeing the raisin, allowing your experience to be, exactly as it is, in this moment.

Next, focus on feeling the texture of the raisin between your fingers, noticing any softness, hardness, coarseness, smoothness, stickiness, or any other aspect of texture, simply being with your experience of feeling this raisin.

Now, holding the raisin below your nose, pay attention to smelling it, noticing the qualities of its aroma. Is it sweet, sour, musty? Is the aroma intense or faint, or is there no scent at all? If you notice your mind judging the smell, such as with thoughts like *The sweetness is lovely* or *This is too sour*, simply note the mind judging and return your focus to the pure sensation of smell.

Now, taking the raisin to one ear and rolling it between your fingers, notice any sound the raisin makes. Notice any thoughts about doing this: *This is crazy, raisins don't make sounds. Wow, I can hear the raisin.* Redirect your attention to simply hearing the raisin.

Now place the raisin in your mouth, perhaps noticing your mouth watering as you do so. Focus on the feel of the raisin in your mouth, exploring it with your tongue, noticing its shape, texture, and any initial taste. Bring your beginner's mind to the feel of the raisin in your mouth.

Now biting into the raisin, notice any flavors that are released, letting go of judgments, simply being with the taste of this raisin. As you slowly chew the raisin, pay attention to its changing consistency and the flow of saliva in your mouth.

When you first notice the urge to swallow the raisin, stay with the urge for a few moments, noticing the location and intensity of the urge, allowing it to be there as it is.

Now intentionally swallow the raisin, noticing any sensations as it passes down your throat and into your stomach.

You can repeat the exercise with another raisin or try contrasting the experience of mindful eating with how you would normally eat one or more raisins.

Exercise 4.2 The Observing Mountain

This exercise is best done while seated on a chair or mat, but can also be done lying down. Start by getting into a comfortable position and allowing your eyes to close gently. Then take a few moments to come into the present moment by connecting with your breathing, noticing each full in-breath and each full out-breath.

Now, bring to mind the image of a mountain, perhaps a mountain you have visited or seen in photographs, or one of your own imagination. Bring into focus as many details of this mountain as possible. Imagine its size and shape. Perhaps it's a snow-covered peak with trees and meadows on its lower slopes. Notice that your mountain, like all mountains, has a solid, unmoving base.

However the mountain appears, just sitting and breathing with the image of this mountain, observing it and noting its qualities. And when you feel ready, see if you can bring the mountain into your own body, so that your body and the mountain become one. Perhaps your head is the mountain's peak, your shoulders and arms are the sides of the mountain, and your bottom and legs are its solid base. With each breath you become a little more the mountain—solid, still, and centered.

And, as you connect with the solid core of your mountain, can you also observe its surface, noticing the multitude of changes that take place on it, from day to day, and season to season? As day turns to night, perhaps noticing how the temperature drops, and the light gradually fades. In spring, perhaps you can feel a gentle rain, or see dense fog obscuring the view. In summer, meadows may be filled with wildflowers, mountain goats graze in the warmth of the sun, or forest fires may ravage the surface. In winter, you may watch as snow falls softly on stately evergreens, or avalanches destroy everything in their paths. You may also notice people on your mountain voicing their differing opinions of it—it is the best or worst mountain they have seen, or it is too easy or too difficult to climb. And, as you observe all of these changes on the surface of your mountain, can you also realize that its solid base remains unchanged?

Perhaps at times, on your social-anxiety playing field, you can connect with your inner mountain, embodying its strength and stability, observing your inner experiences as you would the ever-changing surface of a mountain. And realize, as you notice your thoughts and feelings come and go, that your essential self—your core—remains unchanged.

Mindfulness Log

Day	Mindfulness Activity	Observations
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Exercise 5.1 Body Scan

The intention of this practice is to bring mindful awareness to sensations in the body as you focus your attention systematically on each part of the body in turn. It is to be aware of your experience as it is unfolding, however it is. Not to change the way you are feeling or to become more relaxed or calmer.

First, making yourself comfortable lying on your back, in a place where you will be warm and undisturbed. Lying on a mat, a rug, the floor, or a bed. Lying with palms open to the ceiling, feet falling apart from each other, and eyes gently closed. As best you can, keeping still during the exercise, but if you need to move or adjust your position, doing so mindfully, with complete awareness.

So to begin, just becoming aware of breathing. Taking the attention to the abdomen, noting it rise with the in-breath and fall with the out-breath. Not trying to manipulate the breath in any way, just experiencing it as it is, as it moves in and out of the body. Full attention in each moment to breathing.

And on the next out-breath, moving your awareness down your body to the toes of both the left foot and the right foot, and noticing whatever sensations are present in the toes. Perhaps noticing warmth, coolness, tingling, moisture, itching, whatever is arising from the toes, whether there are sensations or no sensations. Being aware of the big toes and the little toes and the toes in between.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of your toes in your mind's eye and moving your attention to the rest of the feet. To the tops of both feet. The soles of both feet, and the ankles. Just staying open to whatever sensations you find there. And if there are no sensations, that is just fine.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the awareness of the feet, and shifting the focus of attention to the lower legs. Becoming aware of the calves, perhaps noting where they touch the floor or the mat. Becoming aware of the shins, the skin over the legs, and just being attentive to this part of your body.

And on the next out-breath, allowing the lower legs to dissolve in your mind's eye as you move gently with your attention to the knees. Becoming aware of the part under the knee, and on top of the knee, perhaps being aware of what a complex joint the knee is, with tendons and ligaments and the kneecap. And just being here with your knees, letting them predominate in your field of awareness, in the moment. And now gently releasing the knees and moving your attention to the thighs. Noticing whatever sensations arise in the left thigh and the right thigh. And if your mind has wandered, just gently and kindly bringing your attention back to the thighs.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of awareness of the thighs as you bring your attention to the pelvic region. To the buttocks, the tailbone, the pelvic bone, the genitals. Staying open to whatever sensations you find, just being attentive to this part of your body.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the awareness of the pelvic region and moving your attention to the abdomen. Bringing a gentle curiosity and openness to whatever you find in this moment. Perhaps noticing a gentle rise of the abdomen with the in-breath and the fall of the abdomen with the out-breath.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the abdomen in your mind's eye and moving your attention to the chest area, the area that contains your heart and lungs. Perhaps noticing the beating of your heart or the expansion of the rib cage as you breathe in. Staying open to whatever sensations you find in the chest.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the chest in your mind's eye as you bring your attention to the lower back. A part of the body that often carries a lot of tension. Just noticing whatever sensations arise, whether there be tension or no tension and not trying to make it be any different, just accepting the sensations that are there. Letting go of the tendency we all have to want things to be different.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the awareness of the lower back and bringing your awareness to the upper back, the back ribs, and the shoulder blades. Another area where the body holds tension. And just being with the upper back, not going anywhere or doing anything but developing an openness to all that is arising from this part of the body. And as thoughts arise, just being present for thoughts and then returning to paying attention to the upper back.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the upper back in your mind's eye as you move gently with your attention to the hands. Becoming aware of the fingers, the palms, the backs of the hands, and the wrists. Becoming aware of any sensations arising in the hands. Perhaps warmth, or coolness, tingling or moisture. Just bringing a compassionate awareness to whatever arises in the hands.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of the hands in the mind's eye and moving your attention to the arms. To the lower arms, the elbows, and the upper arms. Bringing a gentle curiosity and openness to whatever you find in this moment. And now gently releasing the arms and shifting the focus of attention to the neck. Noticing whatever sensations arise in the neck. And if your mind has wandered, gently and kindly bringing your attention back to the neck.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of awareness of the neck, as you bring your awareness to the face and the rest of the head. Becoming aware of the jaw, the mouth, the nose, the cheeks, the ears, the eyes, the forehead, the scalp, and the back and top of the head. Noticing whatever sensations arise in the face and the head. Just noticing without judgment. There is no right way to feel when you are doing this. The way you feel is the way you feel.

And on the next out-breath, letting go of awareness of the face and the head. And now, taking a few deep breaths, breathing in through the nose, and allowing the breath to move through the body to the tips of your toes, and then allowing the breath to move up from your toes, through your body, as you exhale through the nose. And doing this a few times, breathing in all the way through the body to the toes and back out through the nose.

And now letting go of the awareness of breathing and getting a sense of the body as whole and complete. Resting in this state of openness to things as they are.

As we practice the body scan, we develop the capacity to just observe our sensations and work at letting them be as they are, without reacting. We come to see from our own experience that we don't have to struggle with our thoughts, physical sensations, and feelings or force them to be different. And now, perhaps, making the intention of taking this attitude of acceptance and openness with you through the rest of your day.

Exercise 5.2 Mindful Stretching

The intention of this exercise is to bring mindful awareness, as best you can, to physical sensations throughout the body as we proceed through a series of gentle stretches. With each stretch it is important to notice the limits of your body and, as best you can, try to let go of any tendency to push beyond your limits or to compete with yourself. If a particular stretch is too challenging for your body at any time, simply maintain the standing position or repeat an earlier stretch.

So to begin, standing in bare feet or socks on the floor, a mat, or a rug, with the feet about hip-width apart, knees unlocked and feet parallel to each other.

And becoming aware of the flow of the breath, paying complete attention to each full in-breath and each full out-breath, not controlling the breath in any way.

And then taking a few moments to feel the body as a whole, from head to toe, perhaps noticing the sensations in the feet as they make contact with the floor or mat or rug.

Now, on an in-breath, slowly and mindfully raising the arms out to the sides, parallel to the floor, now breathing out, and on the next in-breath, continuing to raise the arms until they meet above the head, feeling any tension in the muscles as they work to lift the arms and maintain them in the stretch. And as you hold the stretch, noticing any sensations, perhaps warmth or tingling, bringing a gentle curiosity to whatever you find. And when the mind wanders, as it surely will, just noting that and redirecting your attention to the body stretching in this position.

And then on an out-breath, very slowly bringing the arms down and letting them hang at the sides of the body. Then repeating that stretch, raising the arms out to the side, then meeting above the head, holding, then returning very slowly to the sides.

And allowing the eyes to close gently and noticing how it feels to have just done that stretch. And after a few breaths, opening the eyes again.

Now stretching just the right arm above the head, and letting the heel of the left foot lift off the floor, as the right arm reaches toward the ceiling. With full awareness of any sensations in the body. And then letting the right arm drop back to the side and the left heel touch the ground, and raising the left arm above the head, reaching up and stretching the fingers toward the ceiling, with the right heel raised off the floor, noticing whatever sensations arise with this stretch, perhaps becoming aware of any difference in sensations from when you did it with the right arm. Then letting the left arm drop back to the side and the right heel touch the ground, returning to standing with both feet flat on the ground, arms resting at the sides.

And then repeating the stretch, first the right arm lifting and stretching, left foot raised, holding, then lowering the right arm and left heel, then left arm raised and reaching up, right heel lifted, holding, then returning to standing with both feet flat on the ground, arms resting at the sides.

Now raising both arms above the head, knees slightly bent, and bending at the waist, all the way over until the head hangs down, fingers pointing toward the floor, allowing them to rest

wherever it's comfortable, not pushing the body in any way. And just noticing what sensations arise when the body is bending in this way. Then slowly uncurling the body, one vertebra at a time, with the head coming up last to a standing position. And now repeating that, arms above the head, knees slightly bent, bending at the waist, head hanging down, fingers pointing toward the floor, then slowly uncurling to a standing position.

Now moving the right ear toward the right shoulder as far as it will comfortably go, then taking it back up, and moving the left ear toward the left shoulder and then up. And repeating that.

Then bending the head forward, chin toward the chest and rolling the head to the left, to the back, to the right, and back to the front again. Then rolling it in the other direction, first toward the chest then to the right, to the back, left, back to the front, and up again. Then rolling the head in both directions again.

Now raising the arms to the side, parallel to the floor, and lifting the right leg out to the side, and holding it wherever it feels comfortable, just standing, perhaps noticing the focus required to stay balanced. And also noticing any thoughts, particularly about not doing this right, and letting go of thoughts as you keep the attention on this position. Now lowering the right leg and allowing the arms to fall to the side and standing for a moment with eyes closed. Now raising the arms to the side again, parallel to the floor, and lifting the left leg out to the side, and holding it wherever it feels comfortable, not pushing your limits. Perhaps noticing any wobbling or shaking, which are normal when balancing on one leg. And then lowering the left leg and allowing the arms to fall to the side and standing for a moment with eyes closed. And now repeating that stretch, first with the right leg and then the left.

Now, with the left foot turned out at a 45-degree angle, moving the right leg forward, and bending the right knee into a lunge, left leg stretched out straight behind, and reaching the arms above the head, holding this stretch, paying mindful attention to any sensations in the body, not needing them to be any different than they are, in this moment. Then pushing back up with the right foot and leg to a standing position. Then, with the right foot turned out at a 45-degree angle, stepping forward with the left leg into a lunge, bending the left knee, right leg stretched out straight behind, and raising the arms above the head, and holding in this position. Then pushing back up with the left foot and leg to a standing position. Now repeating this lunge on both sides. And then resting in a standing position, eyes gently closed, taking the attention to the breath, each full in-breath and each full out-breath. Full awareness of breathing. And perhaps noticing any differences in how the body feels now compared to the start of the exercise. Remembering that there is no right way or wrong way to feel. Just bringing an attitude of curiosity and compassion to whatever you find in this moment.

Exercise 5.3 Being with Your Anxiety

There are five basic steps to follow each time you go through this “Being with Your Anxiety” exercise. (Note: each time you try out a specific action, it is considered a separate “session” of the exercise.)

1. Choose relevant bodily sensations and suggested actions. Each time you go through this exercise, we recommend choosing bodily sensations that you tend to struggle with on your social-anxiety playing field. Once you have chosen a sensation to work with, you may need to experiment with the suggested actions from the previous table to see which one (if any) brings it on and how long you need to do the action to bring on the sensation. Often, increasing the duration of the suggested actions will increase the intensity of sensations. Note that some suggested actions may bring on more than one sensation (for example, deep breathing can bring on shortness of breath, palpitations, and dizziness).

2. Set your intention. Start by setting your intention to “flip on your willingness switch,” to stay fully present to your direct experience of bodily sensations during the exercise.

3. Pay mindful attention during the exercise. As you do the exercise, pay mindful attention: opening up and making room for all aspects of your experience, and letting go of thoughts about it and urges to change it and control it. Two suggestions for maintaining that stance of willingness are:

Be a friendly scientist. Pay attention to your experience as if you were a friendly scientist encountering a new phenomenon: observing it with curiosity and trying to learn as much about it as you can, such as where the sensations start and end, their quality, intensity, and duration. Explore any urges to control, escape, or avoid your experience; what do *they* feel like?

Make use of metaphors. If your willingness switch flips off during an exercise and you start to resist your experience, try “dropping the rope” in your struggle with uncomfortable feelings, or try welcoming your sensations in the same way that you would “welcome Uncle Leo to the wedding.” However, if your willingness switch flips off, that’s fine; it’s okay to stop the exercise. As mentioned in the previous chapter, you get to decide how long to keep your willingness switch flipped on. With repeated practice, your switch will gradually strengthen, and you will be able to keep it on for longer and longer periods.

4. End the exercise. As mentioned before, you can stop an exercise at any time if your willingness switch flips off. Otherwise, keep paying mindful attention to your experience until the

intensity of your bodily sensations has returned to baseline (the level where it was before you started the exercise).

5. Record the exercise. When you finish an exercise, record your observations on the following “Abs Recording Form,” including comments about what you might do differently the next time (for example, do it for less time, or more; try a different action to bring on sensations).

Now, take five to ten minutes to try out the “Being with Your Anxiety” exercise with one of the suggested actions on your own, noting your observations on the following recording form. (As mentioned earlier in the chapter, you can also use the recording form for the “Body Scan” and “Mindful Stretching” exercises. Whenever you do the “Being with Your Anxiety” exercise, be sure to note the sensations you targeted and how you brought them on. We recommend that you download the form at www.newharbinger.com/20801 and keep it handy.)

Acceptance of Bodily Sensations (Abs) Recording Form

Date	Abs Exercise *	Observations
	Example: “Being with your anxiety”- dizziness-spin in chair for 30 seconds	Example: dizziness wasn’t very intense; try 45 seconds next time.

* Abs Exercise: Body Scan, Mindful Stretching, Being with your Anxiety. Be sure to record sensation(s) targeted and action(s) used for “Being with your Anxiety” exercises.

Exercise 6.1 Your Anxious Thoughts

List some of the thoughts that typically show up in each of your top three feared social situations. Leave the “Types of Anxious Thinking” column blank for now.

Situation	Thoughts	Types of Anxious Thinking
1		
2		
3		

Exercise 6.2 Awareness of Thinking

The purpose of this exercise is to practice awareness of the process of thinking, to watch your mind generating thoughts without getting caught up in the contents of those thoughts.

Start by settling into a comfortable sitting position as you bring your attention to the breath, following it as it enters and leaves the body, coming and going of its own accord, allowing the breath to find its own rhythm, not needing to control it in any way.

If you would like to work with a specific social situation, bring it to mind now, getting a clear picture of where you are, who you are with, and what you are doing.

Whenever you are ready, gently shift your awareness to thinking—to paying attention to thoughts as events in the mind. As best you can, bring your awareness to thoughts as they arise in the mind, passing through the space of the mind, and eventually disappearing. There is no need to censor or encourage thinking in any direction, simply allowing thoughts to arise naturally, not holding on to thoughts, pushing them away, or analyzing their contents, simply observing thoughts as events in the field of awareness.

It may help to imagine that you are sitting in a movie theater in front of a large blank screen. As thoughts, memories, and mental images appear in your mind, seeing them projected onto the screen, watching each thought for as long as it remains on the screen.

Thoughts may move slowly or quickly across the screen, some dominating the screen more than others. At times, the screen may go blank; at other times it may be completely filled with thoughts. Whatever is on the screen, remaining curious about the process of thinking itself, noticing your ability to be an impartial observer.

At times you may lose touch with your awareness of thinking, fusing with your thoughts, getting caught up in one of the stories unfolding on the screen. When that happens, returning to the feeling of the breath, not as a way to get away from thoughts or make the mind blank, but as a way to anchor yourself in the present moment, as you escort your mind back to its seat, returning to watching your thoughts coming and going.

Summary of Defusion Strategies

I am having the thought that: For example, *I am having the thought that I'm making a fool of myself.*

Name what the mind is doing: Name the type of anxious thinking (fortune-telling, mind reading, “shoulding,” postmortem, spotlight effect, storytelling, and more basic types, such as worrying and judging).

Give real names to your thoughts: For example, *Mind-Reading Randy*.

Ditch the meanings of your thoughts: Use repetition or other voices, sing them, see them.

Thank the mind: For example, *Thanks for the memory.*

Defuse with Dr. Phil: *How's that thought working for you?*

Awareness of thinking: Listen to the audio download (at www.newharbinger.com/20801) or sit silently with your thoughts.

Observe your thoughts: Use the waterfall metaphor, leaves on a stream, or clouds in the sky.

Create your own defusion strategy:

[illegible]

Worksheet: Defusing from Your Anxious Thoughts

Thought	Defusion strategy	What did you notice?
Example: <i>I'm boring.</i>	Example: <i>I am having the thought that I'm boring.</i>	Example: <i>I had the thought and still contributed to a conversation.</i>

VITAL Action

As you take action on your social-anxiety playing field, you can use the following skills to guide you in each and every action:

- V* Identify your *values and goals*. (Hint: Values guide your actions and are never “finished”; goals are things you can check off and say you’re done with.)
- I* Remain *in the present moment*, first anchoring your attention to the breath and then shifting your focus to, and staying fully present with, what really matters in the situation; revisit your anchor as needed when your focus drifts from the present moment.
- T* Take *notice of* your experience from your observer perspective (perhaps embodying your inner mountain or another observer image), noticing feelings, thoughts, and urges to use safety behaviors (including avoidance).
- AL* Allow your experience to be exactly as it is, with the assistance of metaphors (flip on your willingness switch, drop the rope, welcome Uncle Leo, and so on) and defusion strategies (labeling, thank your mind, and so on). Try bringing attitudes of curiosity, openness, compassion, and acceptance to your experience.

Exercise 7.I Imagining VITAL Action

This exercise is meant to provide you with an opportunity to practice taking VITAL action in your imagination.

Start by getting into a comfortable position, in a chair or lying down, and allowing your eyes to close gently.

Now bring to mind a situation where you want to take action. Imagine where you are and who you are with, including as many details of the situation as necessary to bring it to life in your mind's eye.

Next, beginning with the “V” in VITAL, representing your “values and goals,” get in touch with the value or values that will guide those actions. Why do the actions matter to you? Why are they important? Also, what do you want to accomplish with your actions? Where will they take you? What is your goal?

Now, moving to the “I” in VITAL, “in the present moment,” take a few moments to connect with your breathing, coming into the present moment as you pay attention to each complete in-breath, and each complete out-breath, noticing the rising and falling of the breath in your chest and belly. There is no need to control your breathing in any way—simply letting the breath breathe itself, and doing this for several moments, until you are fully present with your breathing. Throughout the remainder of this exercise, whenever your mind wanders from the task at hand, try revisiting the breath as a way of reconnecting with the present moment, and with the exercise.

Now, imagine yourself taking action as you remain focused on your valued goals. And, as you do this, shifting to the final three letters of VITAL, “T,” for taking notice of your experience, and “A-L,” allowing it to be exactly as it is.

First, noticing any feelings that arise, perhaps observing them from your inner mountain, using another image, or simply watching them. Has fear shown up? Has tension arrived?

Has your heart quickened, or is it hard to catch your breath? Whichever feelings appear, simply observing them with acceptance and compassion, not struggling with them.

Next, noticing thoughts arising about the situation, perhaps worries, evaluations, or mind reading—whatever they are, simply watching your thoughts coming and going. There is no need to think of something else, make the thoughts go away, or resolve anything. Can you thank your mind for anxious thoughts, or defuse from them in another way?

Finally, observing any urges to use safety behaviors, such as hiding your feelings or escaping from the situation. Simply acknowledging any urges and letting go of the need to act on them.

And now, can you make room for the entirety of your experience? Is it something you *must* struggle with, or can you invite it in, saying to yourself with willingness, *Let me feel what there is to be felt because it is my experience right now?*

And, as you gently open up to your experience, watching yourself continue to take action in your imagined situation, focused on what really matters. And doing this for a bit longer.

And when you are ready, letting go of the imagined situation with its accompanying feelings, thoughts, and urges, and directing your focus back to your breath.

Then, gradually widening your attention to take in the sounds in the room. And taking a moment to make the intention to bring this sense of gentle allowing and self-acceptance into the present moment. And when you are ready, slowly opening your eyes.

[illegible]

Goal-Stepping Worksheet

My goal is: _____.
Step 1:
Step 2:
Step 3:
Step 4:
Step 5:
Step 6:
Step 7:
Step 8:
Step 9:
Step 10:

Weekly Schedule

Sunday	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	
Saturday	

VITAL-Action Worksheet

My Action/Step: _____

1. Preparing for VITAL Action

V: What are the values and goals underlying the action?

Value(s): _____ Goal(s): _____

I: How will you remain in the present moment during the action?

T: What internal experiences are you likely to take notice of during the action (using which observer image)? *and*

AL: What strategies can you use to allow your experience to be while taking action?

observer image: _____

feelings: _____

thoughts: _____

urges to use safety behaviors: _____

Other preparation: _____

2. Debriefing VITAL Action

What happened, including successes and barriers? _____

Actions to address barriers, if applicable: _____

Exercise 8.1 Loving-Kindness

Start by getting into a comfortable position and allowing your eyes to close gently. Now, take a few moments to get in touch with the physical sensations in your body, especially the sensations of touch or pressure where your body makes contact with the chair or floor. Notice the gentle rising and falling of the breath in your chest and belly. There is no need to control your breathing in any way—simply let the breath breathe itself.

Now, bringing to mind a picture of yourself, in your mind's eye, say quietly to yourself: *May I be safe. May I be free from suffering. May I be at peace.*

Next, bringing to mind someone you care about, a friend, family member, or other loved one, perhaps even a beloved pet. And with your loved one in mind, repeating to yourself: *May he/she be safe. May he/she be free from suffering. May he/she be at peace.*

Now bringing to mind someone who is going through a difficult time; is perhaps ill or struggling with another problem. Expanding the field of loving-kindness to this person by repeating to yourself: *May he/she be safe. May he/she be free from suffering. May he/she be at peace.*

Next, bringing to mind an acquaintance, someone you may know from work, or who lives in your neighborhood, someone you don't know very well and don't have strong feelings about, a neutral person. And offering loving-kindness to this person as you repeat to yourself: *May he/she be safe. May he/she be free from suffering. May he/she be at peace.*

Next, thinking of someone who you don't like, perhaps someone who has wronged you in some way, or a politician or other well-known person who you dislike for other reasons. Trying not to get caught up in the reasons for disliking the person you brought to mind, extending compassion to this person as well: *May he/she be safe. May he/she be free from suffering. May he/she be at peace.*

Now, bringing all of the above people under the umbrella of loving-kindness: yourself, the person you care about, the person who is struggling, the acquaintance, and the person you don't like. *May they be safe. May they be free from suffering. May they be at peace.*

Next, opening up to include everyone in your life, sending compassion and loving-kindness to them: *May they be safe. May they be free from suffering. May they be at peace.*

And finally, extending the field of loving-kindness to include all living beings. Repeating to yourself: *May they be safe. May they be free from suffering. May they be at peace.*

Now, gently letting go of specific thoughts of loving-kindness, bringing your attention back to the breath and to the sense of the body as a whole. And perhaps making the intention to take an attitude of compassion and loving-kindness toward yourself and others, throughout the rest of your day.

And whenever you are ready, gently opening your eyes.