

# How to tame your Bully Mind using Mindfulness (and other techniques)

## Home Activities

Identify a particular word that upsets you or that you find hurtful. Find a place where you won't be disturbed and where you won't be heard by anyone. Then time yourself for 30 – 40 seconds (it is very important to keep to this time) as you say your poisonous word out loud, clearly but as fast as you can.

### *Defusing Poisonous Words*

This activity involves separating a word from its meaning, so that a spoken word becomes just a sound. De-fusing a word and its meaning reduces the emotional impact of the word, and this can be helpful when applied to a word that that you find particularly distressing. As you get into your stride, the word will begin to 'feel' different and the different repetitions will blend into one another so that your speech becomes a stream of sound. As this sound pattern "takes over", the word itself will lose its meaning, so that it becomes

### *Defusion Techniques:*

The techniques here can be used with whole phrases or short sentences. The basic technique involves identifying a hurtful statement and then taking its power away.

The first thing to do is to identify a personal statement that you find particularly distressing. e.g. "I'm not good enough", "It's hopeless"

Then you can use one of these techniques, whatever you feel comfortable with:

- \* "Thanking your Mind" – "thank you, Mind, how very informative." NOT sarcastically. Be kind.
- \* "I'm having a thought that..." – place before your thought to get some distance from it.
- \* "Short phrases" – Saying with casual humorous openness 'Nice one' or 'Ouch ' or 'Very creative'
- \* "Musical Thoughts" – sing the thought to a tune of 'Happy Birthday', then 'Jingle Bells'
- \* "Naming your Thoughts" – name your old favourites – "I'm a loser" story, for example
- \* "Silly voices" – attach the voice of a comical cartoon character to your thought.

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### *The “Floating Leaves on the Moving Stream” Activity*

Get into a comfortable position, close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on the bank of a river, watching the water flowing slowly downstream. You notice how the water gently runs downstream and you notice that occasionally a large leaf drops from a tall tree onto the river and is then gently carried downstream. You watch as a leaf begins its journey, passes you by and is then carried further downstream until it disappears from view.

Notice your own mental activity and whenever a thought arises imagine gently placing that thought on a leaf and watching it float away. Do this for 10 minutes or so. Just stay beside the river, watching the leaves pass by, occasionally placing a thought gently on a leaf, and then watching as it travels slowly downstream and passes out of view.

*You can also listen to the guided recording that has been attached or find the link on ELE.*

**MINDFUL LISTENING – 1** – Listen to the ambient sounds in your present environment. Bring these “background” sounds to the forefront of your attention and listen – really listen! And when any thoughts and feelings arise, just let them come and go naturally. Focus gently on the ambient “soundscape” around you.

**MINDFUL LISTENING – 2** – Choose a piece of instrumental music and focus your attention on every instrument and every note. Listen – really listen – to every sound that the instruments make. When any thoughts arise (for example, about who is playing, or if the music triggers a particular memory) let these pass and bring your attention gently back to the pure sounds.

### **A SIMPLE WAY TO GET PRESENT:**

This is a simple exercise to center yourself and connect with your environment. Practice it throughout the day, especially any time you find yourself getting caught up in your thoughts and feelings.

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves.
2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they’re just passing cars, driving past outside your house.