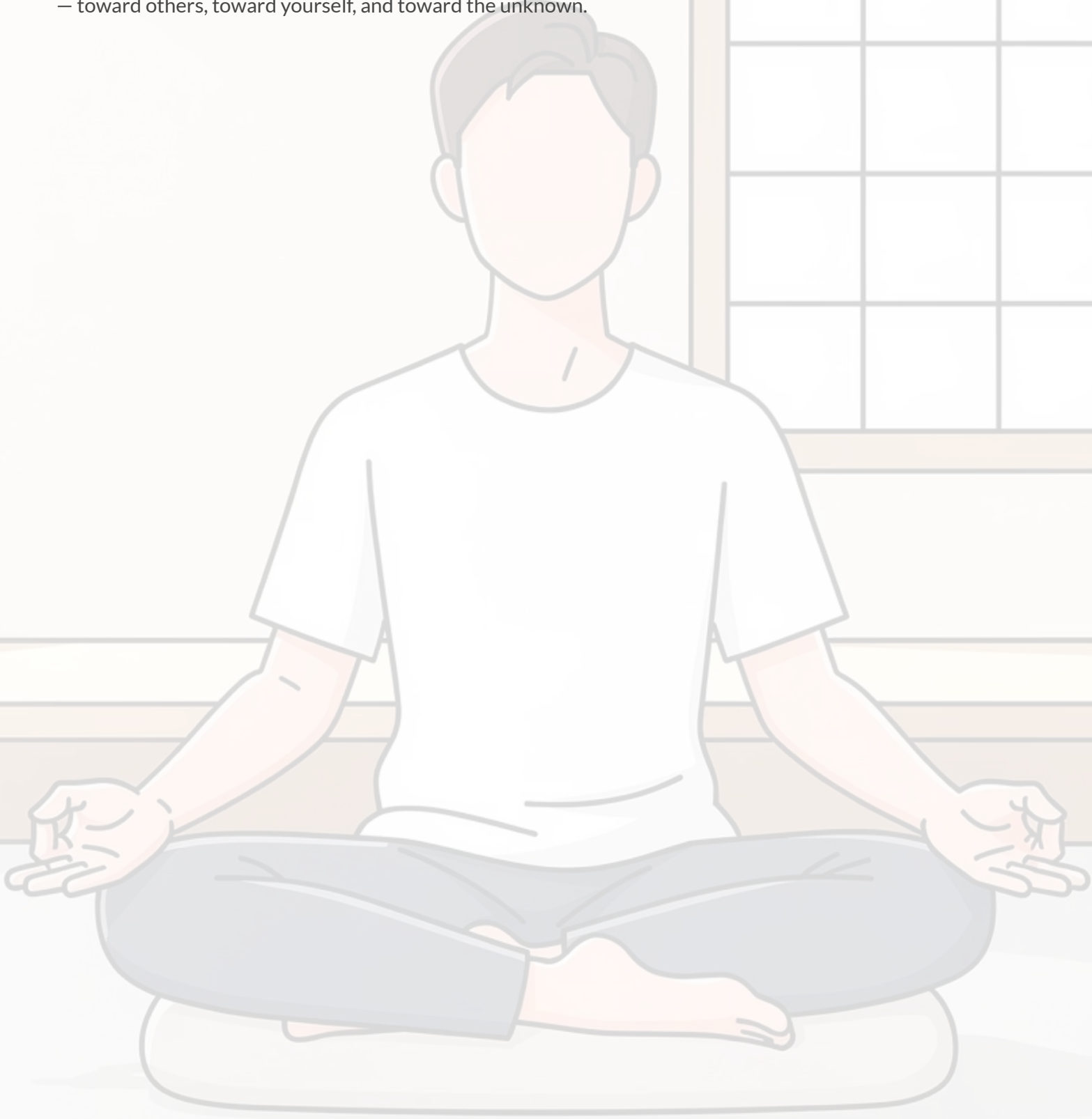


Mindfulness & Curiosity Exercises

A collection of guided experiments to help you cultivate curiosity, compassion, and present-moment awareness
— toward others, toward yourself, and toward the unknown.



Exercise: Curiosity Toward Others

I would like to invite you to bring up a time that you wanted someone to do something and they didn't do it. Maybe your partner disappointed you, your child didn't follow the rules, a co-worker didn't pull their weight, something recent but not too disturbing.

1

Step 1 – Notice Your Judgment

As you bring up that experience, I would like to invite you to notice your judgment toward the other person. Notice your thoughts that may sound something like this: "*She is so lazy.*" "*He is disrespectful.*" "*She is irresponsible.*" Whatever your actual judgment is, just notice that.

2

Step 2 – Notice Your Body

Now I would like to invite you to notice what you are experiencing in your body. Where are you feeling tension? If you would like, write down the description of the body sensation.

Exercise: Curiosity Toward Others

(continued)

3

Step 3 – Activate Curiosity

Now I would like to invite you to intentionally try to be curious about that person. It helps to start off with making a "hmm" sound.

- *"Hmm, I wonder if there is a really good reason for that person's behavior?"*
- *"Hmm, I wonder if I really understood what was going on for that person would I have a different reaction?"*

4

Step 4 – Check In With Your Body Again

Now, continue to make the "hmm" sound out loud and notice the area of your body where you previously felt tension. Has it changed?

- The "hmm" sound is a simple but powerful tool – it signals to your nervous system that you are in a state of open inquiry rather than threat or judgment.

Body Sensation Experiment

This experiment helps you tune into the physical experience of your emotions and notice how your body responds to different mental states.

01

Recall Mild Irritation

Bring to mind a recent time when you felt mildly irritated.

03

Recognize the Pattern

Does this tension feel familiar to you? Does it feel like a habitual pattern?

02

Scan for Tension

As you bring that to mind, notice any place you are feeling tension and tightness in your body. Notice your shoulders, abdominal muscles, jaw, neck, lower back or any other area you feel tension. (*Remember your head is a part of your body.*)

04

Shift to Something Good

Now shift to something good that happened lately. Maybe an encounter with a good friend, a fun time with family or a time that was really enjoyable. Notice what changes in your body. How did the sensation change?

Relational Mindfulness Experiment

It can be very helpful for you to practice being present and mindful with another person. In this exercise I would like to invite you to activate sincere curiosity about your experience. Try to let yourself be surprised by what you are noticing. If you find yourself trying to think of what to notice next as your partner is talking, report that. Try to be as honest as possible while remaining appropriate and kind.



Face Each Other

Two people sit or stand facing each other.



One Person Starts

One person starts and states anything they are noticing.



Take Turns

From then on you each take turns saying, "**Hearing that, I'm noticing...**"

Experiment of Noticing Breath

Your breath is a constant presence and a wonderful tool for helping you come to the present moment. If you are caught up in thoughts, emotions, memories or any other way the past manifests, your breath can help.

1 Set a Timer

Start by setting a timer for 5 minutes. You can gradually make it longer as you practice this skill.

2 Close Your Eyes

Close your eyes and begin to notice your breath without trying to change it.

3 Find Your Focus Point

Notice a spot under your nose and focus on your breath going in and coming out.

4 Notice Temperature

Notice how the breath is slightly cooler coming in and warmer coming out.

5 Gently Return

You may notice thoughts or other things and lose your awareness of your breath. Smile and gently bring your focus back to that spot below your nostrils. Notice the sensation of the breath coming in and going out.

Compassionate Assumption Exercise — Toward Others

This exercise invites you to explore how shifting your assumptions about a stranger's behavior can change what you feel in your body.

Step 1 — Recall the Experience

Bring up a recent, mildly upsetting experience you had with a stranger and notice what you feel in your body.

Step 2 — Identify Your Assumption

What was your assumption about that experience?

Step 3 — Imagine a Different Story

Now imagine a scenario that would explain that person's behavior that is not about you. Make a list of situations that would help you to feel compassion towards that person.

Step 4 — Go Deeper If Needed

If you have trouble making up a recent story that is helpful, imagine a painful childhood that person may have endured that may be influencing their behavior now.

Step 5 — Check In Again

Now bring up that recent experience again and notice if anything shifts for you.

Compassionate Assumption Exercise — Toward Yourself

This exercise turns the lens of compassion inward, helping you uncover the hidden helpfulness behind your own behavior.

The Practice

For each step, stay with the memory and keep asking the question. Let the answers arise naturally without forcing them.

The goal is not to excuse behavior, but to understand it with kindness.

1. Bring up a mildly upsetting, recent time you experienced blame, shame or guilt toward yourself.
2. Notice the negative automatic thoughts that come up with the memory.

Whatever comes up for you, ask yourself, "***How was that helpful?***"

Continue asking "***How was that helpful?***" until you've uncovered a compassionate assumption for your behavior.

Accessing the Unknown

First make a list of unexplained behaviors, fears or patterns that you find yourself experiencing. For example, fear of water, fear of being put in jail or any other fear you may have but it does not appear to have an origin. Or it may be a pattern like, trust issues, attraction to relationships that are unhealthy or other patterns that you cannot explain.

Unexplained Fears

Fears that seem to have no clear origin in your own life experience – such as fear of water, fear of confinement, or other persistent anxieties.

Unexplained Patterns

Recurring patterns you cannot explain – such as trust issues, attraction to relationships that are unhealthy, or other behaviors that feel outside your conscious control.

Create a Story

Then make up a story about what may have happened in previous generations that may have been passed down to you. Feel free to be as creative as you want to be in this exercise.

Bringing It All Together

Each of these exercises builds on a common thread: the power of awareness, curiosity, and compassion — toward others, toward yourself, and toward the mysteries carried across generations.



Curiosity Toward Others

Use the "hmm" sound to shift from judgment to genuine wondering about another person's experience.



Body Sensation Awareness

Your body holds the memory of your emotions. Scanning for tension and noticing how it shifts is a powerful practice.



Relational Mindfulness

Being present with another person — and reporting what you notice — deepens connection and honest communication.



Compassionate Assumption

Toward strangers and toward yourself, asking "*How was that helpful?*" opens the door to self-compassion and understanding.



Accessing the Unknown

Some patterns and fears may be inherited. Creative storytelling about previous generations can illuminate what logic cannot.