

## MBSR: Seven Attitudinal Factors

### **1.) Non-judging**

-Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming the stance of an impartial witness to your own experience. To do this requires that you become aware of the constant stream of judging and reacting to inner and outer experiences that we are all normally caught up in, and learn to step back from it. When we begin practicing paying attention to the activity of our own mind, it is common to discover and to be surprised by the fact that we are constantly generating judgments about our experience. Things, people, events are either good, bad, or neutral, depending on how they make us feel. When practicing mindfulness, it is important to recognize this judging mind and simply observe it without indulging in the judgment.

### **2.) Patience**

-Patience is a form of wisdom. It's the understanding that sometimes things must unfold in their own time. We intentionally remind ourselves that there is no need to be impatient with ourselves when we find the mind judging, or because we are tense, agitated, or frightened. Why? Because we are having these experience anyway! When they come up, they are our reality; they are part of our life unfolding in this moment. There is no other way for us to be at this moment in time than exactly as we are. Why rush through some moment to get to other, "better" ones? After all, each one is your life in that moment.

### **3.) Beginner's Mind**

-The richness of present-moment experience is the richness of life itself. Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we "know" prevent us from seeing things as they really are. We tend to take the ordinary for granted and fail to grasp the extraordinariness of the ordinary. To see the richness of the present moment, we need to cultivate what has been called "beginner's mind," a mind that is willing to see everything as if for the first time.

### **4.) Trust**

-Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings is an integral part of meditation training. It is far better to trust your intuition and your own authority, even if you make some "mistakes" along the way, than always to look outside of yourself for guidance. If at any time something doesn't feel right to you, why not honor your feelings? Why should you discount them or write them off as invalid because some authority or some group of people think or say differently? This attitude of trusting yourself and your own basic wisdom is very important in all aspects of the meditation practice.

### **5.) Non-Striving**

-Almost everything we do we do for a purpose, to get something or somewhere. But in meditation, this attitude can be a real obstacle. That is because meditation is different from all other human activities. Although it takes a lot of work and energy of a certain kind, ultimately meditation is non-doing. It has no goal other than for you to be yourself. The irony is that you already are. To see this, and to come full-circle with the totality of who you are, you must cultivate an attitude of non-striving.

### **6.) Acceptance**

-Acceptance means seeing things as they are actually are in the present. Sooner or later we have to come to terms with things as they are and accept them, whether it is a diagnosis of cancer or learning of someone's death. Often acceptance is only reached after we have gone through very emotion-filled periods of denial and then anger. These stages are a natural progression in the process of coming to terms with what is. They are all part of the healing process.

### **7.) Letting Go/Non-Attachment**

-When we start paying attention to our inner experiences, we rapidly discover that there are certain thoughts, feelings, and situations that the mind seems to want to hold on to. If they are pleasant, we try to prolong them, stretch them out, and conjure them up again and again. If they are unpleasant, we try to get rid of them or run away from them. In meditation, we intentionally put aside the tendency to elevate some aspects of our experience and to reject others. Instead we just let our experience be what it is and practice observing it from moment to moment.