

Dropping Anchor (Developed by Dr. Russ Harris) helps us support and open up to the thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations we are experiencing while choosing to engage and connect with the present moment.

The Analogy

Imagine you are in the middle of a wild storm at sea, and your boat is thrown around. The storm represents the crisis around you that you cannot control or the inner emotional storm you may be experiencing. Rather than being tossed around by rough seas, you *Drop Anchor* to secure and steady the boat while the storm passes.

Anchors are the things that help us stay present and grounded and are not part of the storm. They can include what we hear, see, touch, taste, and smell in our environment. Our breathing, posture, or whatever we are doing with our body.

- Dropping Anchor is not a distraction technique - a way to escape painful thoughts and feelings. Instead, it is a mindfulness exercise. It helps us turn toward the present moment with openness and curiosity.
- It is normal to get distracted when learning how to be present. When it happens, be kind to yourself, don't judge; bring your attention back to 'here and now'.
- Practice this exercise regularly and when you are not distressed. This way, you will have the skills when needed.
- Adapt positioning and script for your own purpose/situation/participants.

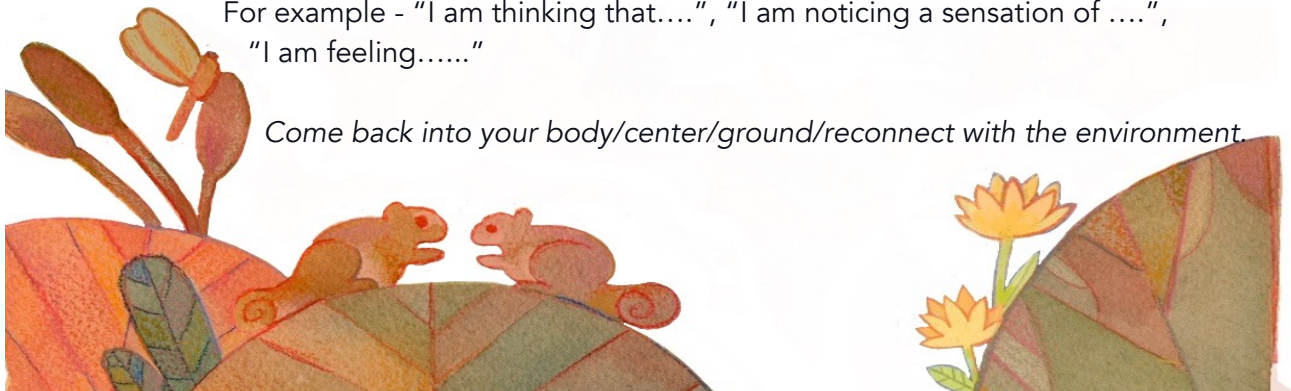
Exercise

Find a comfortable place to sit, lay or stand where you know you will not be disturbed. Uncross your legs and arms if you can, and rest your hands comfortably.

Begin by acknowledging your thoughts and feelings, and bodily sensations.

For example - "I am thinking that....", "I am noticing a sensation of",
"I am feeling....."

Come back into your body/center/ground/reconnect with the environment.



DROPPING ANCHOR

Start by just breathing comfortably - refreshing, even breaths. Close your eyes if you feel comfortable. If not, focus on something in the room.

- When you are ready, move on to more relaxing breaths – inhaling deeply and exhaling fully. Notice its effects on your body - your chest rising and falling, the sensation of air in your nose, and the temperature of the air.
- Focusing on this moment, notice how your senses are affected as you sit here. The sounds around you; a fan blowing, people breathing or shuffling in their seats, things happening in another room, birds singing, or cars driving by. Take your time.
- Be aware of any aromas in your environment; fresh air, something cooking, fruit in someone's lunch box, or perfume.
- Eat a small snack if you have one. Notice the flavors and textures in your mouth. If you don't, be aware of the taste of your mouth and the sensations as your tongue runs over your teeth.
- Think about where your hands and feet are. Squeeze, push, or brush them together or against whatever they come in contact with. Move or stretch them if you like. Feel the sensation of the furniture or cushion where it meets your body. Ground yourself with the room by feeling several objects and being aware of the texture and the energy in your hands and feet.
- Open your eyes if you had them closed. When you are ready, notice the objects, colors, shapes, and textures of things in your environment. Read written words and observe the contrasts of light and shade in the room.

When you are ready, bring your attention to where you are sitting/standing/lying.

Take a few long, slow, deep breaths, and then breathe comfortably.

Stretch if you like. Notice the room around you.

If you are with others, notice them too.

