



Letting it be (The Beatles had it right!)

- The main aim of this programme is to become mindfully aware of whatever is dominant in our moment-by-moment experience.
- So if the mind is being constantly drawn to a particular place, whether they be thoughts, feelings, or body sensations, and we deliberately take a gentle and friendly awareness to that place.
- That is the first step.
- The second step is to notice, if we can, how we are relating to whatever crops up in that place. Often, our thoughts, feelings, or body sensations creep in, but in a negative, non-accepting and reactive way.
- We often become quite attached to these thoughts.
- If it is too painful or uncomfortable in some way, we tend to have a stress response which can include avoidance, irritation, anger or the inability to think about what we should do! These flight, fright or freeze responses are all the opposite of acceptance.
- First, stop trying to make things different. Through acceptance, we become aware of what is present.
- We 'let it be'—we notice and observe what is present.

Example: If you notice a pain in your back when practising mindfulness (e.g. the body scan meditation), become mindfully aware of this physical sensation.

1. Take a gentle and friendly awareness to that part of the body by "breathing into" that part as you breathe in, and "breathing out" from it on the outbreath.
2. Once your attention is focused on this sensation, remind yourself: "It's OK. Whatever it is, it's OK. Let me feel it."
3. Stay with the awareness of these sensations and your relationship to them, breathing with them, accepting them, letting them be.
4. It might be helpful to repeat, "It's OK. Whatever it is, it's OK. Let me feel it," using your breath to soften and open your awareness.
5. Acceptance is an important first step. It allows us to become fully aware of difficulties, and then, if appropriate, to respond in a wise and balanced way.