

Dear Mindfulness Group Member:

Here is the summary for week five titled Willingness to Be With Things as They Are.

We all have the habit of avoiding things that are unpleasant and trying to hold on to things that are pleasant. Mindfulness invites us to 'see things as they really are.' The very habit of wanting and aversion itself is a major cause of distress and suffering in our lives. Our willingness to be with that which is unpleasant lowers our resistance to how things are. And this brings more ease into our lives.

In class five we introduced the concept of *feeling tone*, this is the sense of whether we find something pleasant, neutral or unpleasant. We explored how our willingness to be with the unpleasant lowers our resistance to what is actually happening in our lives. We introduced the equation $\text{Suffering} = \text{Pain} \times \text{Resistance}$. So when we lower resistance, our physical pain may remain the same but our suffering decreases. We introduced Loving Kindness Walking meditation and lead another Loving Kindness practice.

Our mindfulness tip for the week is to try to use the river metaphor in your daily practice. Life can be a bit like watching all the boats moving slowly down the river. You may see beautiful yachts (or pleasant experiences), nondescript boats (neutral experiences), and garbage barges (unpleasant experiences). It doesn't work to try to "hold on" to the beautiful yachts and try to make the barges with the swarm of flies go away faster. Everything just floats down the river on the current. Our lives are just like this; it is a lesson in impermanence (nothing last forever) and non-attachment (don't try to "hold on" to experiences). Be with each boat, or each moment, just as it is.

The homework is a daily practice for up to 20 minutes of Mindfulness of Breathing, Mindfulness of Sounds or Loving Kindness. Continue to use the Anchor Phrase practice and try a Loving Kindness Walking practice.

Keep at it! We look forward to seeing you in the next class.

Warmly,