

RAIN:

A mindfulness practice for difficult emotions



The description of this process is taken from Tara Brach's writings, *The RAIN of Self-Compassion* and *Finding True Refuge*.

R Recognize what's going on

You can awaken recognition simply by asking yourself: "What is happening inside me right now?" Call on your natural curiosity as you focus inward. Try to let go of any preconceived ideas and instead listen in a kind, receptive way to your body and heart, and bring awareness to whatever thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations are arising right here and now. Recognizing can be a simple mental whisper, noting what has come up.

A Allow the experience to be there, just as it is

Allowing means letting the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations we have recognized simply be there, without trying to fix or avoid anything. You may feel a natural sense of aversion, of wishing that unpleasant feelings would go away, but as you become more willing to be present with "what is," a different quality of attention will emerge. Allowing is not about making yourself happy with what you are noticing, it is a simple acknowledgment that things are the way they are in this moment.

I Investigate with interest and care

Once we have recognized and allowed what is arising, we can deepen our attention through investigation. To investigate, call on your natural curiosity—the desire to know truth—and direct a more focused attention to your present experience. You might ask yourself: What most wants attention? How am I experiencing this in my body? What am I believing? What does this vulnerable place want from me? What does it most need? Whatever the inquiry, your investigation will be most transformational if you step away from conceptualizing and bring your primary attention to the felt-sense in the body. When investigating, it is essential to approach experience in a nonjudgmental and kind way. This attitude of care helps create a sufficient sense of safety, making it possible to honestly connect with our hurts, fears and shame.

N Nourish with Self-Compassion

See if there is any expression of care that you would like to offer to yourself, to this vulnerable part of you: acknowledgement, forgiveness, love... You might try saying one of the following: *I'm listening and I care. I'm here. I'm sorry and I love you.* Or simply, *It's okay, it's okay.* Then sit and sense what it's like now. Who are you when you are no longer caught in the story of this emotion? For this final part, there is nothing to do – realization, if it happens, arises spontaneously, on its own. Simply rest in your natural awareness.