

Monkey Mind Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



We have all experienced the monkey mind before – and chances are, we’ve experienced it more times than would be possible to count.

The ‘monkey mind’ is a term understood in Buddhism to be the chattering, restless, indecisive, and unsettled nature of the mind.

It is a mode of being we slip into quite subconsciously until we get better at noting this tendency.

Though we are all familiar with the monkey mind, our experience of it differs dependent upon who we are and what we are going through.

Sometimes and for some people, the monkey mind looks like persistent worrying about other people’s opinions while for others, it could be a tendency to ruminate about the past or worry about the future.

Regardless of the particular flavor and form our ruminations take, the underlying qualities are the same.

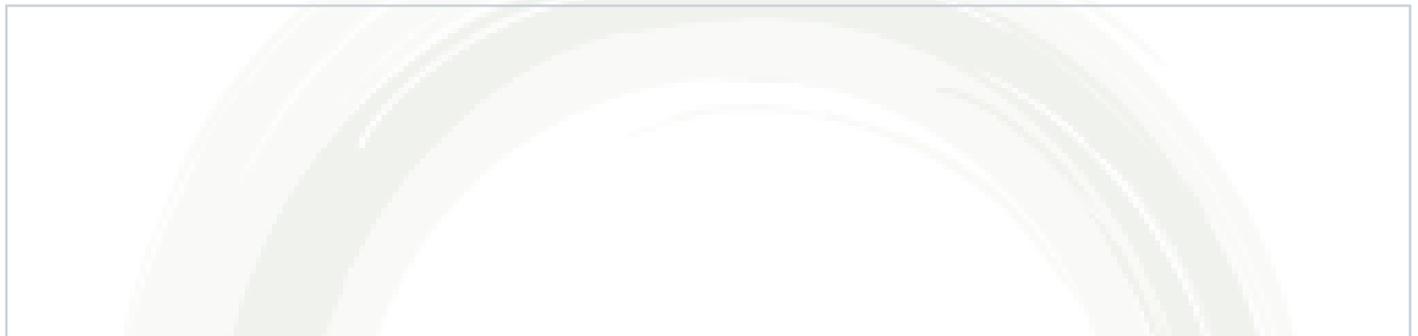
This exercise is an invitation to mindfully witness the monkey mind and to reflect upon where we tend to get stuck in it.

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PRACTICE:

1. Begin by taking a moment to consider the places where your mind tends to get trapped. Is it in a place of concern about school or work performance? Is it in anxiety about money, health, or the future in general? Is it in rumination about how other people perceive you? With compassion and non-judgment, note some of the places where you tend to ruminate or think excessively about a particular thought, idea, or belief.



2. Now take a moment to sit comfortably in preparation for meditation. Take a few deep breaths to ground your attention. Then, let it return to its natural rhythm as you watch its gentle inward and outward flow.

3. Let the breath be your anchor for this practice, focusing on it for as long as you can. When you notice the mind has wandered, take a step back to watch the play of thoughts, beliefs, and feelings. Consider:

- *What is the thought or belief here that is so captivating?*
- *How would I describe the energy of these 'monkeys' in my mind?*

Remain curious and compassionate towards your experience as if you were the witness of these thoughts and beliefs rather than the subject.

4. Keeping this subtle distance between your thoughts and yourself as the observer of them, take a moment to send an inner smile to the monkeys that are occupying your attention. On your next exhalation, imagine yourself releasing whatever ruminating thoughts or concerns are ready to be released. Come back to your breath in-between thoughts.

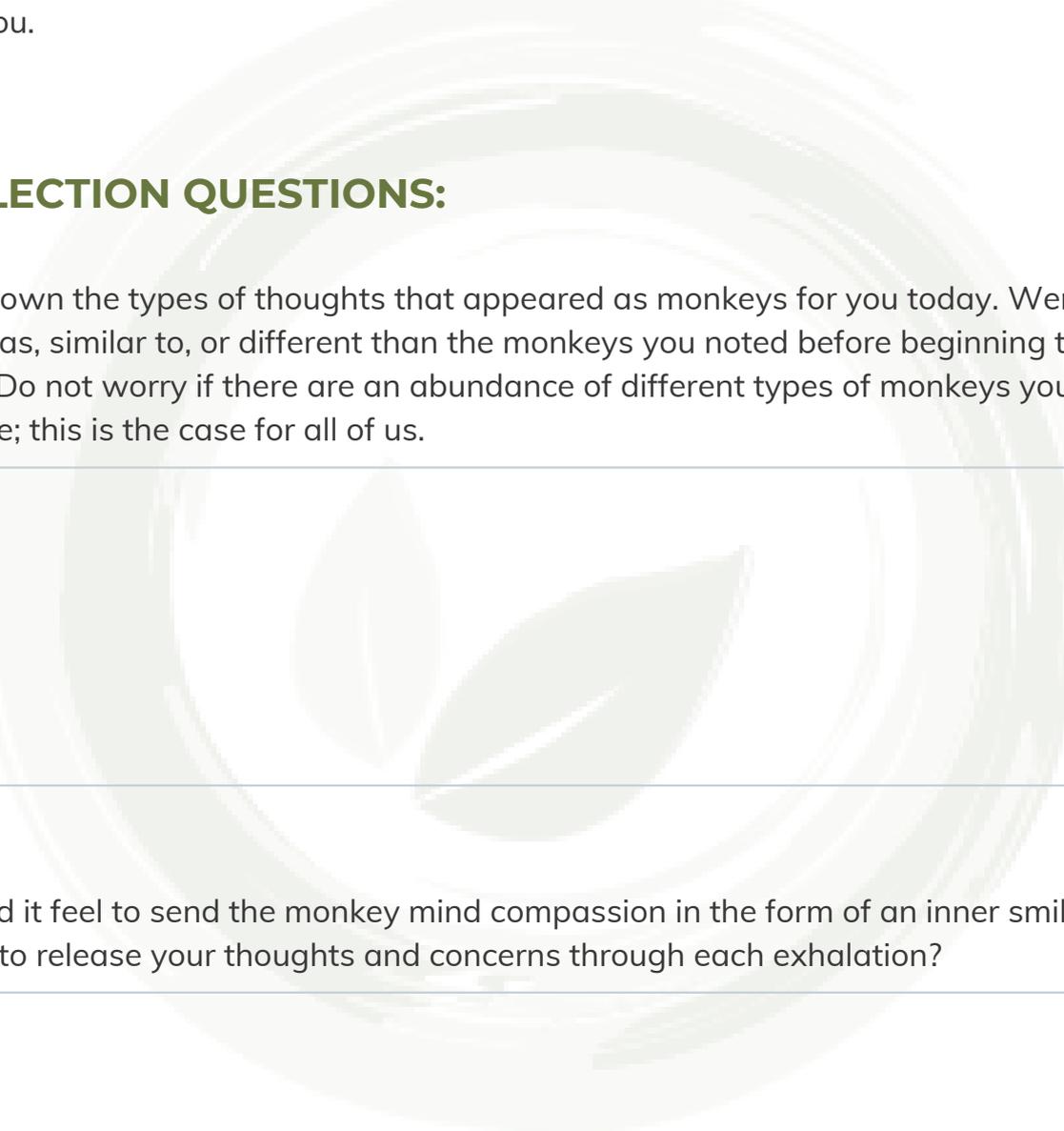
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5. Continue witnessing whatever restless thoughts arise before sending them your love through a subtle smile and releasing them with your exhalations.
6. Practice this for ten to fifteen minutes or as long as feels comfortable for you. When you are ready, take three full, deep breaths before slowly opening your eyes to the space around you.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. Write down the types of thoughts that appeared as monkeys for you today. Were they the same as, similar to, or different than the monkeys you noted before beginning the practice? Do not worry if there are an abundance of different types of monkeys you experience; this is the case for all of us.



2. How did it feel to send the monkey mind compassion in the form of an inner smile? How did it feel to release your thoughts and concerns through each exhalation?