

Becoming Mindful of Painful Emotions

Desensitization, in this instance, is the process of removing the fear of the experiencing of your emotions. By engaging in the process described below, you can reduce your fear and, therefore, reduce the intensity of your emotional experiencing.

1. Feel the emotion.
2. Imagine that the emotion is like the wave of an ocean. It comes toward you, breaks, and recedes.
3. Imagine that you are on a warm beach; the sun is hitting your face and warming you. A cool breeze blows past your face, cooling you from the warmth of the sun.
4. Imagine that the emotion is a wave of the ocean; the cool breeze makes the emotion a little lighter and less intense.
5. Imagine that you are back on the beach, enjoying the sky and the water and noticing as the water turns crystal white with each wave approaching shore.
6. Imagine that the emotion is intense, but only if you look at it from a distance – much like the ocean. As you get close, your emotions become less intense – much like the waves decrease as they approach the shore. As you imagine your body being warmed by the sun and cooled by the breeze, see your emotions as becoming less intense and smaller.
7. Go back and forth between the images of the ocean, which allow relaxation, and the emotion itself, which creates tension and fear.
8. Feel the back and forth rhythm of your breathing. Feel the air as you inhale and exhale.
9. Imagine the similarity of the rhythm of the ocean and the rhythm of your breathing.
10. Pay attention to the emotion and your capacity to both increase and decrease the emotional experience. Note how the emotion goes both in and out, much like the ocean.
11. Pay attention to your own influence over your emotions as you simply pay attention and acknowledge the emotion.
12. Go back and forth between the imagery and your emotion until you're able to feel a noticeable difference between being mindful of the emotion and being mindful of a more comforting experience.

RIDE THE WAVE OF YOUR EMOTION.