

Recharge: Mindful Awareness for the “Rest” of us

Introduction

A grandson visits his grandparents on the farm and notices something peculiar. Every day after lunch, his grandfather sits in a chair and closes his eyes. The grandson can't tell if his grandfather is sleeping or not. However, what he does know is that chores are not being finished, and that he is growing more restless.

The grandson takes things in his own hands. He “fakes” several coughs and then loudly clears his throat. To his satisfaction, the grandfather opens one eye and with a soft smile says to the grandson: “My dear grandson, this is one of the most important things I do during the day. I just rest. That’s it. Sometimes, a thought comes up about what needs to be done today. But, that is not why I sit here. I sit here simply to rest.”

Then, he leans toward the grandson and says with a warm grin, “Sometimes I get in a cat nap.”

This recharge practice is about letting your body and mind take a rest—even in moments with curious grandchildren. It is not about sleep—although if this happens, please, by all means, enjoy a little shuteye.

Practice

Let's begin this practice by finding a comfortable place to do this practice. This could be lying down, or it may be sitting in a chair. You pick.

(Pause)

After you pick a place, see if it is possible to find a comfortable posture.

If you're lying down, you might lie on your back. If you're in a chair, you might put your feet up. Go for comfort. Let that comfortable posture find you!

(Pause)

Allow for any final adjustments and then let your body start to settle.

(Pause)

Bring mindful awareness to the parts of the body that make contact with the surface you are resting on. Simply feel where the body makes contact. Just notice the sensation of where the body connects.

(Pause)

Next, if possible, allow the chair, couch, floor, or bed to take on the work of supporting your body—like the grandfather's chair. Can you let yourself be supported by the surface you are resting on?

(Pause)

Are you ready for the next part of this practice? Here it is. If you are sitting, just sit.

(Pause)

If you are lying down, just lie down. That's it.

(Pause)

Let me repeat this because it is so simple: If you are sitting, just sit; If you are lying down, just lie down.

(Pause)

Just do what the grandfather did. That's all.

(Pause)

Again, if you are sitting, just sit. If you are lying down, just lie down. If you want to close your eyes, close your eyes. That's it.

(Pause)

Consider this possibility:

(Pause)

Right now, there is nothing to do. This is it. No counting breaths. No thinking about work or what we have to do next. Nothing. We are just resting the body. That's it. We are setting aside this moment and seeing if it is possible to relax and just be. You may feel relaxed; you may not. Whatever your experience is right now, see if it is possible for you to be with that experience with kindness, friendliness, and non-judgment. We are not trying to fix anything or get anywhere. Like the grandfather, we are just resting. The key is simply to try this out as best as you can. Just resting.

(Pause)

Picture a young child resting in a crib. Or, picture a puppy laying on the floor or a cat curled up. This is what we are going for.

(Pause)

In this practice, being a couch potato is a virtue. Go ahead - be the best couch potato ever. You can do this!

(Pause)

If anyone wonders what you are doing, just tell them this is the most important thing you do every day, and then open one eye and give them a warm grin. If you want, say, "Sometimes I even get in a cat nap."

Happy resting.

Good job!!

Questions

While it can be helpful to go over questions at the end of mindful awareness practices, it may be, in the spirit of not having to “do” something, that you choose not to do that at this time. Decide whether or not it feels appropriate to discuss the following:

1. What do you feel in your body after the Recharge practice?
2. If you were to do this regularly, how might it impact your health, well-being and stress level?
3. What might be the best time of day to do the Recharge practice?