

## Train Your Brain

# LETTING GO: *Key Skills*

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### Letting Go in the Body

- Ordinary breathing, focusing on exhalation, intending to let go
- Breathing with no "top-down" control of it, completely surrendered to the body
- Have a strong sense of the whole body, abiding as the whole body breathing
- Diaphragm breathing; breath of fire
- Heartmath: Equally long inhalation/exhalation through the heart with a positive emotion
- Scanning the body and releasing tension. Progressive relaxation
- Using imagery to relax

### Letting Go of Thoughts

- Two fundamental errors: Overestimating the bad and underestimating the good
- Systematically argue against errors of thought, on paper or in your mind.
- Identify "sub-personalities" generating errors of thought; thank them for sharing, ask if they have anything new to say, and then tell them to shut up.

### Letting Go of Emotions

- Have compassion for yourself.
- Name the feeling, own it, accept it, and if you can, choose it.
- Imagine/sense the emotion leaving on the exhalation, or draining out of the body, or being released to the universe or even to God/the mysterious Divine.
- Use imagery, like standing in a cool mountain stream washing pain away.
- Sense the underlying softer, deeper, younger feelings . . . and then let them go.
- Vent safely, like writing letters you don't send, yelling, or hitting something safe (e.g., pillow).
- Sense positive feelings replacing negative ones, like security replacing fear.

### Letting Go of Wants

- Use the same methods as with releasing emotions.
- Sense the underlying, positive wants, and respond to *them*.
- Do a rational analysis of the plusses and minuses of the desire, and choose what makes sense.
- Reflect on the suffering that is embedded in most desires.

### Letting Go of Self

- Perspectives: The more we "self" experience - personalize it, identify with it, cling to it - the more we suffer: "no self, no problem." The degree of self varies; it's not an omnipresent fact; it's continually constructed. When self is minimal or absent, notice that it's not needed to function in life.
- Observe the activity of self and experiment with reducing it.
- When others are upset, see the ways it's not about you: They're on automatic; you're a bit player in their drama; they are already punishing themselves; you are separate, with good boundaries.
- Each day, take time to sense the fact of your interconnectedness with everything.
- Regarding what you want to let go of, ask: "Am I that? Is that really me?"

### General Methods

- Say goodbye to what you want to let go of
- Notice that when you let go of everything, peaceful benign awareness remains.
- Accept, surrender to the facts that currently exist; give up about changing the past.
- Join with the wholesome and let that crowd out the unwholesome.
- Be the awareness of the experience, not the experience itself.
- Notice that all experiences change.

- Keep evoking positive feelings.