

Audio Track 13: STOP

[00:00:00]

Try this: S-T-O-P; stop.

You can begin by finding a comfortable position. And allowing your eyes to close if that's comfortable for you. Or just taking a soft gaze toward the floor. If it feels right, you might place a hand on your heart or anywhere else that feels supportive, as a way of reminding yourself of the intention to pay kind attention to yourself as you go through this exercise.

And now calling to mind some sort of difficulty that you're in the midst of right now. This could be a relational issue or it could be something else. It could be feeling stressed about something at work, or something with a family member, or maybe it's a health issue. Something that generates a little stress in your body but isn't overwhelming. A 3 to 4 on the distress scale of 1 to 10 where 1 is no stress and 10 is extremely stressful.

As you call to mind this difficult situation, let yourself visualize the situation, or if you're not particularly visual, as some of us are not, just open to the felt sense of the situation.

And now, as best you can, stop. S: stop. Let go of the storyline. Pause and open to this moment here.

T: Take a breath. Turn your attention toward your breathing, perhaps noticing where you feel the breath most easily in the body. Or perhaps noticing the rhythm of the breath. Or if the breath isn't the right anchor for you. Turn your attention to what does stabilize and center you. Maybe it's the soles of the feet. Maybe it's your hands. Give yourself some time to allow the physiology of your body to recover.

And then, O: Observe. See if you can expand your perspective of the situation with curiosity. Asking yourself, what's really going on here? What am I missing? Opening to more information about yourself and perhaps others in this situation. Freeing ourselves from our sometimes narrow and fixed view of things. As we open to a bigger perspective. And when you feel ready, you can ask yourself, Given all of this, what do I need right now? Perhaps a soothing or supportive touch? Maybe it's some kind words of understanding and reassurance? A self-compassion break? Some kind of behavioral self-compassion, like going for a walk or having a cup of tea?

And then P: proceed to practice. As best you can, give yourself whatever you need at this moment. You can stay here as long as you like. And whenever you feel ready to end the practice, please take a moment to notice any effects of this practice.

And also remember to thank yourself. For showing up, for practicing, for taking good care of yourself.

[00:05:35]