

RAIN - A Meditation for Working with Difficulties

The RAIN technique is a simple, yet highly, effective way of tuning into our inner world and creating a pause between the stimulus of the outside world and our reaction. This pause is the true purpose of meditation.

RAIN is an acronym that was created 25 years ago by Vipassana teacher Michele McDonald, for a practice specifically geared to **ease emotional confusion and suffering**. When a negative or agitated feeling arises, we pause, remember the four steps cued by the acronym, and begin to pay attention to what is happening for us.

R – Recognize What is happening: Acknowledging consciously, the thoughts, feelings and behaviors that are affecting us. Mindfulness of body sensations, emotions and thoughts can raise awareness that we are experiencing stress, dis-ease, suffering

A – Allow: Simply pause with the intention to relax our resistance to the experience. Letting our experience including thoughts, emotions and feelings be just what it is without pushing anything away. Between what happens and how we react to it there is a space, however small. Allowing is relaxing in the presence of what is difficult without reacting to it.

I – Investigate: Being curious yet compassionate for ourselves and simply noticing how we feel and react to a stimulus or trigger. Asking questions like what do I believe about this? How does it make me feel? What does it need?

N – Non-Identification or Natural Awareness, which comes from not identifying or getting “caught – up” in the experience. This step is the best one, we simply rest in our own natural loving awareness. To get here the other steps have to be intentionally completed.

When beginning to work with the RAIN meditation, choose a situation to work with. Be aware that to begin this practice you shouldn't choose something that is traumatic or will bring on a panic. Practice with something that doesn't feel overwhelming to you right now.

1. Sit down, close your eyes, and take a good seat.
2. Direct your attention to your breathing,
3. Be aware of every breathing in and breathing out.
4. **Recognize:** Now take a minute to scan and see what you are feeling and experiencing right now. Maybe fear or anxiety or something else. Recognize what you are feeling.
5. Visualize the circumstances surrounding this right now. What is the setting? Does it involve another person?
6. Noticing whatever is predominant, think about a word that describes this emotion or feeling in your mind. Is it worry, anger or stress? Do you feel muscle tightness somewhere, or butterflies?
7. **Allow:** Just pause and notice what is happening without judgement. Imagine that your inner wisdom says “this belongs here right now” or “just be with it like riding a wave in the ocean”.
8. If you can allow for just a moment, that gives you the time to investigate.

	RAIN Meditation
Kind of Meditation	Mindfulness and Compassion concentration/focus
Degree of difficulty	Advanced Beginners
Advised duration	5 to 45 minutes
Posture	Sitting
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It improves your inner awareness• It improves your self-compassion and compassion for others• It gives you a clear, calm mind.• It helps against stress.• It improves the quality of your life.
Remarks	It is an exercise for beginners that you can do for the rest of your life.

9. **Investigate:** You might notice where you feel this in your body. Maybe your chest, throat or belly. Or somewhere else?
10. You might ask yourself "What are my beliefs around this?" Are you judging yourself or someone else harshly?
11. What are you anticipating about the future? Are you worried that something bad will happen or something will be lost? How do you feel that in the body? Whatever comes up - this will help you see how your body experiences that. Maybe you clench your teeth or jaw, maybe you feel it in your shoulders.
12. You may find it helpful to place your hand over where you feel that emotion or feeling in the body.
13. So many of us are detached from these feelings in our bodies, we walk around all day in our heads never feeling our bodies. It can be a process to begin to notice this in our bodies. If it is only a vague feeling notice that. Start small and over time this will become more real for you.
14. Just invite the feelings in to be felt, and invite whatever vulnerability that you are experiencing in to be noticed.
15. Explore all of this with interest and compassion. How does it feel living in this body right now? As you investigate, just allow it to be there.
16. Can you just feel the edges of it? Or can you feel deep into the center of it? Surrender to it by just noticing and allowing without judgement.
17. Ask the vulnerable part of you "How can I be with you?" or "What do you most need right now?"
18. **Natural Loving Awareness:** Imagine that you can listen from that place in you that is the wise old sage. Or if it is easier to feel this from a relative or friend who you know loves you, or maybe a spiritual presence. Whatever works for you. What do you need? Is it love? Acceptance? Forgiveness? Connection? Truth?
19. Imagine that presence bathes that part of you in whatever it needs.....Love.....Compassion...
20. Imagine that love or acceptance pouring in and washing over you. Feel it as it happens.
21. Let your deepest intention be to let that vulnerable place in you to be washed in love, light and warmth.....whatever it needs.
22. Notice the quality of presence that you have right now. Relax into it. Take in this wonderful feeling of love and equanimity.
23. Notice your state of mind, and how you feel after this meditation.
24. Notice the difference between the agitated version of your self that you started with and the version of your self that now have more spaciousness, openness and loving presence.

Other resources:

<https://www.mindful.org/tara-brach-rain-mindfulness-practice/>

<https://www.lionsroar.com/shining-a-light-buddhist-psychotherapist-and-rain-champion-tara-brach/>

<http://www.oprah.com/own-super-soul-sunday/jack-kornfield-four-principles-for-mindful-transformation/all>