

## MINDFULNESS

“Power is good for one thing only: to increase our happiness and the happiness of others. Being peaceful and happy is the most important thing in our lives and yet most of the time we suffer, we run after our cravings, we look to the past or the future for our happiness.”

— Thich Nhat Hanh, *The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the*

A few words about mindfulness:

- Mindfulness has been defined as “deliberately paying full attention to what is happening around you and within you—in your body, heart, and mind. Mindfulness is awareness without criticism or judgment” (Chazen Bays, 2011).
- Mindfulness is about caring for ourselves and others.
- Mindfulness helps quiet the mind, which, as we know, is inherently busy.
- The mindfulness practices below give the mind something else to focus on (because its natural tendency is to be thinking, worrying, planning, organizing...)

### **Mindful Moment**

Stand in one spot and somewhat slowly (10-12 seconds) make a full turn. While you turn on the spot, let your eyes take in what they see. For the 10-12 seconds you are spinning to complete a full turn, try to maintain focus on the present.

### **Short Distance Mindful Walk (variations)**

1) Pick a spot where you can walk, without any obstacles, a distance of approximately 5-7 metres (we'll call your starting spot “A” and the destination “B”). As you walk from A to B, slow down your breath and focus on your breathing. Once you get to B, bring yourself back to the activity if you need to and go back to A doing the same slow breathing.

2) Starting from A, walk to B and listen closely to the sounds. If it helps you focus, make a list in your head as you go [e.g., “I hear my shoes crunch on gravel, a woodpecker, a car on the road, the rattle of leaves as a breeze lifts and drops them into each other, the swish of cloth against cloth, a woman’s voice” ....]. Once you get to B, refocus if necessary and then walk back to A while listening attentively to the sounds.

3) Starting at A, walk to B and focus on the sensation of your feet against the ground. Once you get to B, refocus if necessary and then walk back to A while focussing on the sensation of your feet against the ground.

4) As above, but focus on the movement of your legs.

5) As above, but focus on the breeze.

### **Longer Mindful Walk (as you walk back to Scarfe, try this)**

Walk back to Scarfe in silence. As you walk, choose to focus either on your breath, or on the breeze, or on the sensation of your feet against the ground, or on the movement of your body. When you notice that your attention has gone to other things, bring yourself back gently with something along the lines of “Ok, I’ve gotten off track, now I’ll refocus on x.” The point is to recognize that you’re not in the moment and then get back (versus aiming to have “perfect” focus). Just note your distraction and return to your chosen focus.