

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE FOR COPING WITH CHANGE



Hello friends! We are at the end of summer and with that comes a period of significant change for many of us. Whether it be kids going back to school, those in the agriculture industry in the full-swing of harvest, or Alberta's shared experience of the province re-opening after Covid-19 restrictions. Whatever your situation, the reality is – change, even good change, is deeply uncomfortable for many of us.

There is an American mindfulness teacher and neuroscience research consultant named Shinzen Young who created a formula for this problem of change.

Pain (the discomfort that comes with change) x Resistance = Suffering.

In other words, it is oftentimes not the actual change itself that creates emotional or mental discomfort for us, but our long list of thoughts we create about the change such as wishing that the change was different, having unrealistically expectations for what the change might look like, or avoidance of thinking about the change at all.

Mindfulness practice encourages curiosity and involves training the mind to be aware of what's happening in the moment as opposed to the "autopilot of thoughts" (where many of us spend most of our days). From a place of curiosity, we can notice the actual emotions we experience with change such as Uneasiness/Worried/Discomfort. However, from the autopilot mode, we are at a higher risk to resist change, as well as thinking patterns that aggravate problems such as anxiety and depression.

A short mindfulness practice from one of my favourite teachers, Pema Chodron in her book *Living Beautifully with Uncertainty and Change* (2012):

"Acknowledge the feeling, give it your full, compassionate, and welcoming attention. This allows you to have a direct experience of it, free of interpretation. Don't fuel it with opinions about whether it's good or bad. Just be present with the sensation. Where is it located in your body? Does it remain the same for very long? Does it shift and change?" Begin to "breathe into" those sensations, and ask yourself, *how does this change the sensation?*

FCSS offers workshops as well as individual counselling to help you learn more.

For more information call 587-370-3728 or email counsellingservices@fcass.ca.

Visit www.fcass.ca for more information.

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