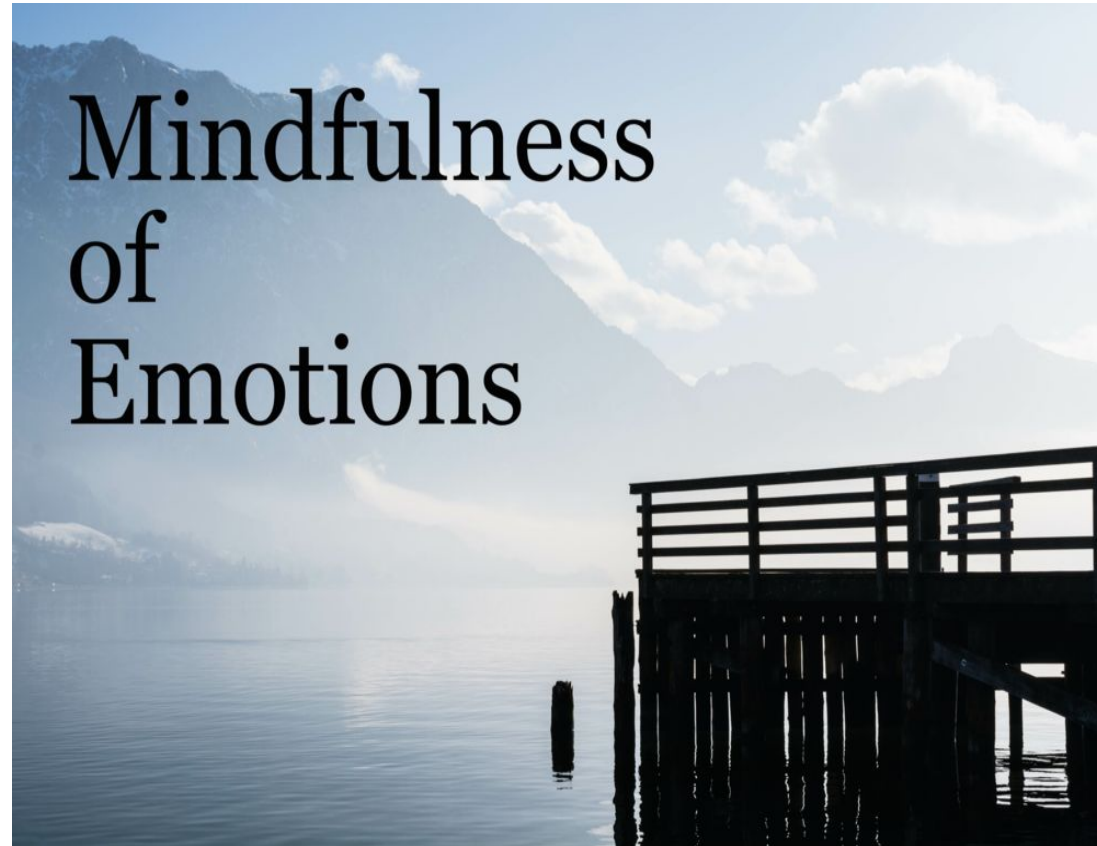


Mindfulness of Emotions



What is it? How do I do it? Why might I want to?



Mindfulness of Emotions

Source: Balanced Awakening, PC, "Mindfulness of Emotions Meditation"

A working definition:

Being in the present moment with whatever emotion arises and, instead of identification with it, attachment or aversion to it, or judgement of it, choosing curiosity, openness, and kindness toward the emotion and yourself.

How to Practice Mindfulness of Emotions

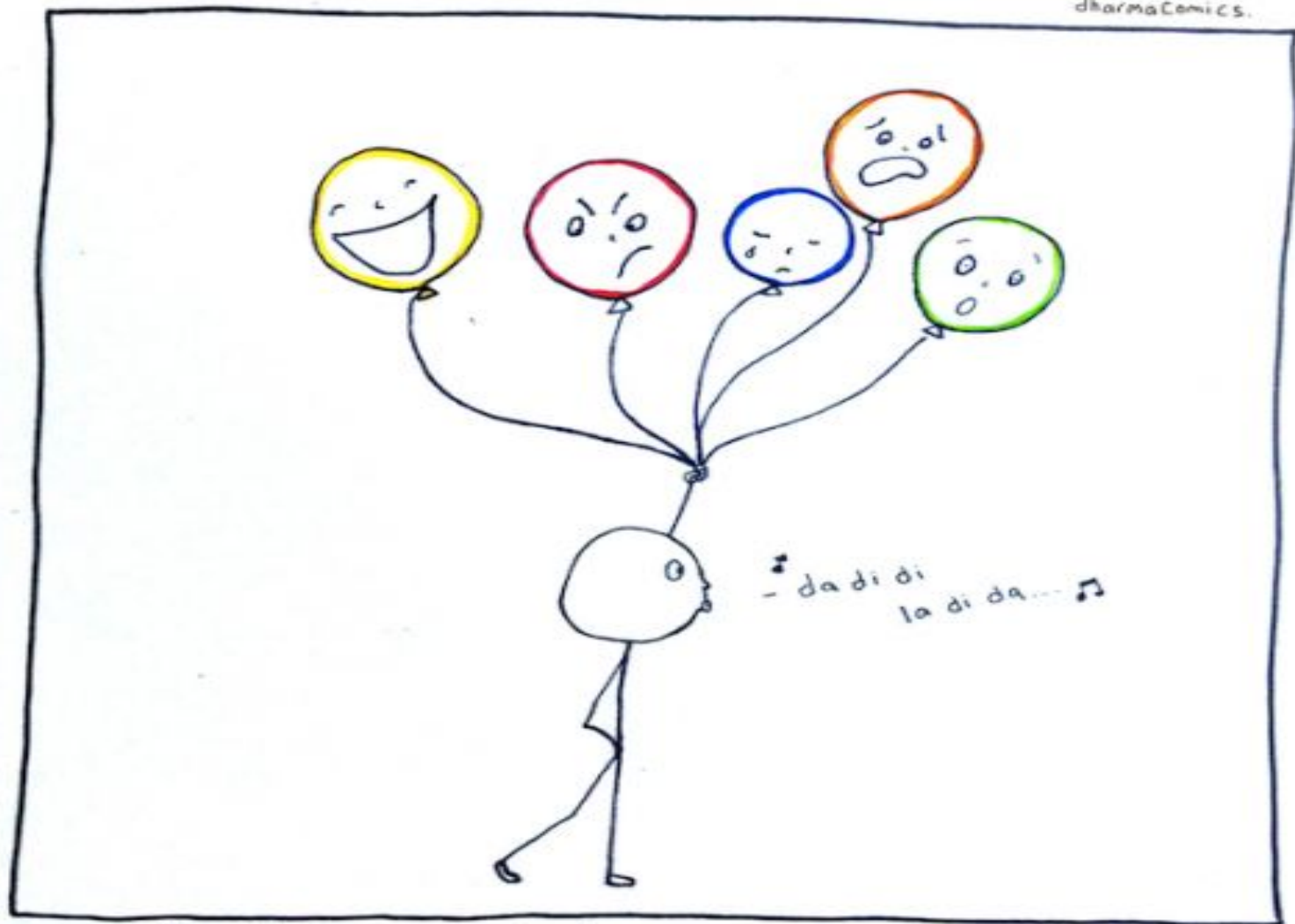
1. Choose to be mindfully present with whatever emotion comes up.
2. Mindfully observe any emotion as it arises, changes, and, eventually, goes away, experiencing that **emotions are not permanent**. Like watching a movie.
3. Soften your heart toward your own emotions, accepting them without judgment of self or others, **just as they are**.

Practicing Mindfulness of Emotions (continued)

4. When you become aware that your mind has gone off into the story through identification with it, gently guide yourself **back to the body and the breathing. . . .**
5. Repeat. . . .Repeat. . . .Repeat. . . ., etc.

If it arises, accept the insight that **you are not your emotions** and that **they need not determine your sense of self, your intentions, or your actions.**

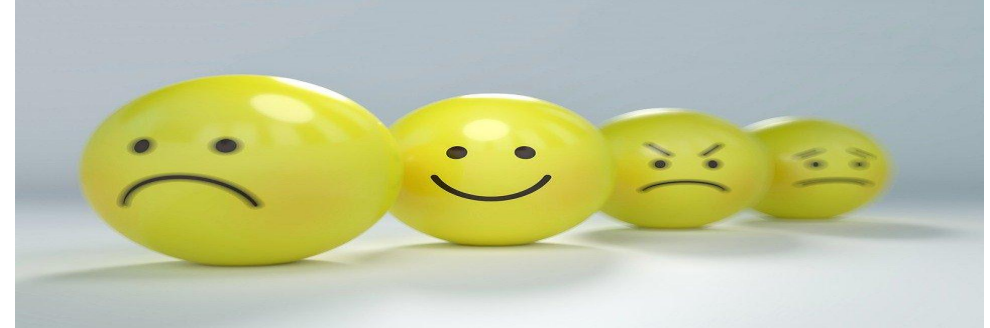
dharmaComics.



I'm learning to hold my emotions lightly.

Source: Dharma Comics, "Hold Emotions Lightly"

Why Is This So Difficult?



- We naturally **identify with our own emotions**, tend to believe without reflection that our emotions constitute reality.
- We are **attached to what feels “pleasant”** to us and naturally feel it is good and right that we should have it: “I want.”
- We have **aversion to what feels “unpleasant”** to us and strive to escape it, even if through denial or repression: “I don’t want.”
- We tend to experience and express these two impulses **reactively** and so develop **habitual patterns** beneath the radar of self-reflection.



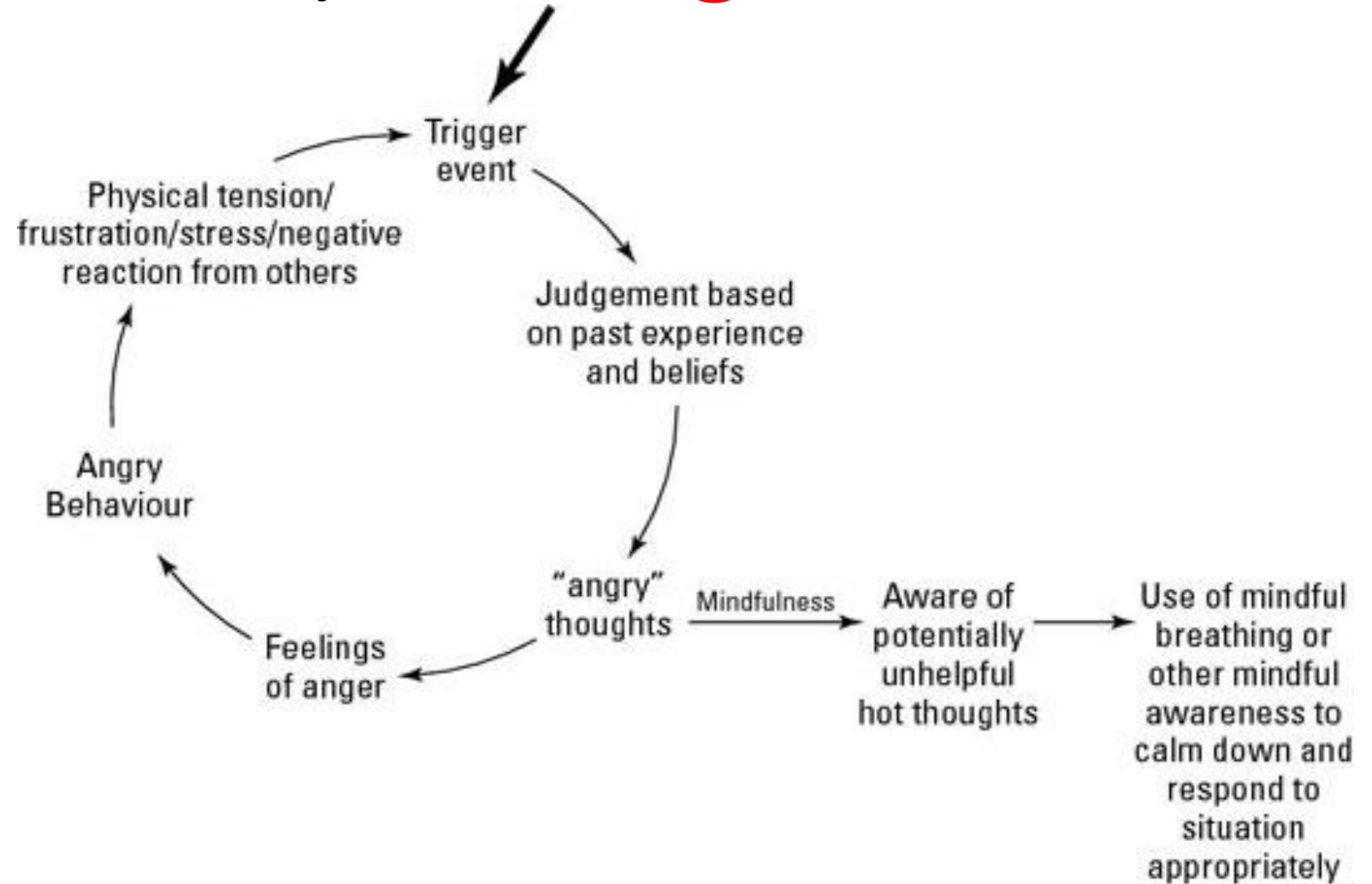
-Or-



Mindfulness of Emotions Can. . .

- Cultivate **non-identification with my emotions**, which
- Creates a **gap between “my emotion” and “me,”** such that I have spaciousness to see how
- I am subject to my **attachments** to what I find “pleasant”—my cravings and desires—and how
- I am subject to my **aversions** to what I find “unpleasant”—my fears and anxieties—and how
- I sometimes am **reactive rather than responsive**, and how
- these **habitual patterns produce suffering** in my life and in the lives of those around me.

Let's Take the Example of **Anger**—



Source: Dummies.com, “How to Use Mindfulness to Cope with Anger”

“The pivot of this intention comes when ‘I’ see the ‘I’ that is suffering, and know that the identification of that ‘I’ with the thought, pain, or emotion is not true.” – Donald McCown, Diane Reibel, Marc Micozzi, *Teaching Mindfulness*

“Is it possible to sow a seed of the realization that the object of aversion [or attachment] , and aversion [or attachment] itself, can also be the object of meditation?” – Rob Brandsma, *The Mindfulness Teaching Guide*

“**The RAIN Practice**: A Mindfulness Practice for Welcoming Your Emotions,” by Sharon Salzberg*

R — Recognize what is going on with yourself emotionally. Notice that the emotion is present. Name the emotion.

A — Allow/Accept/Acknowledge the emotion just as it is. See it realistically. Give yourself permission to feel it but with awareness.

I — Investigate it with curiosity, openness, and kindness rather than judgment. *Turn toward a difficult emotion* rather than avoiding it.

N — Non-identify with the emotion: it does not define you.

* Attributed variously to Michele McDonald, Tara Brach, and Sharon Salzberg.

