

WEEK 3: MINDFULNESS: ONE WORD LABELING THOUGHTS, EMOTIONS, SENSATIONS, AND URGES

Before we begin, remember:

- A *sensation* is a physical feeling in the body, such as aching or tingling.
- A *thought* is something that passes through the mind: a string of words, a mental image, or a memory.
- An *urge* is an impulse or desire to do something, such as scratch your nose.
- An *emotion* is a combination of sensations, thoughts, and urges. Emotions are complex, but they can be labeled with a single word, such as “anger,” “happiness,” or “sadness.”

Let’s use these labels in a meditation exercise. We’ll try it for five minutes the first time.

- Settle into a posture that’s relaxed yet alert. Close your eyes or gaze at a neutral spot. Allow your breath to flow at its own rhythm without trying to change it.
- When you’re ready, expand your attention to include whatever you notice within your mind and body. Label what you observe: “thought,” “emotion,” “sensation,” or “urge.” Say the word gently and silently to yourself. Don’t try to force anything, just label whatever appears.

The purpose of mindfully labeling thoughts and feelings is to recognize that they’re distinct from the person who’s having them. You are not your thoughts and feelings; they come and go while you remain yourself.