

Exploring Fear – Partner Exercise

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



Fear is a universal experience, and yet what triggers fear within us is unique to who we are. For instance, in a partnership, one individual might be most fearful of physical pain while the other is most fearful of something different, such as rejection or public speaking.

Taking the time to get to know our partner's fears can help us to develop compassion and understanding. We might not be able to relate to the trigger, but we can likely understand and relate to the response.

This exercise is an exploration of fear and is designed to be worked through with someone we love and trust. This could be a life partner, a romantic partner, or a very close friend.

It does not matter who you explore this with so long as you feel safe within the hands and heart of one another. Note that this can stir some of our deepest human fears. If there is a history of trauma, consider exploring this with a trained professional.

PRACTICE:

- Take a seat in front of one another, either in chairs or on the floor. Ensure you are as comfortable as possible.

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- Close your eyes and take five breaths to settle in. As you breathe, feel yourself opening up to the person in front of you.
- Next, take turns sharing something you are afraid of.
 - When you are sharing, give enough background so that your partner can understand the fear. Talk openly about this fear for as long as you need.
 - When you are listening, respect your partner in their totality. Do not try to talk them out of the fear. Simply listen with curiosity and compassion, allowing whatever emotions rise to be there.
- Once the person sharing has finished, the listener can help the speaker to further explore this fear. For instance, you might lead with follow-up questions such as:
 - How can or do you manage this fear? What makes you feel safe and resilient in the face of fear?
 - How can I best support you when you are feeling afraid?
- After open sharing, if the speaker is interested in and ready to explore further, you can deepen the exploration of fear by asking, “And then what?” This can help to identify the root cause of our fear.

For example:

- “I am afraid of public speaking.” “And then what?”
 - “If I speak publicly, I will humiliate myself.” “And then what?”
 - “Nobody will want to work with me.” “And then what?”
 - “I will be rejected.” “And then what?”
 - “I will be alone.”
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- Sit lovingly and patiently with whatever arises. Have tissue paper on hand for any tears that come to the surface. Offer unconditional compassion to yourself and to your partner as you go through this.

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REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What did you learn about your own fear?

2. What did you learn about your partner's fear?

3. How can you best support yourself when you are feeling afraid?

4. How can you best support your partner when they are afraid?