



Dropping an Anchor

We are going to the mindful STOP process (**Stop** what you are doing, **Take** a few deep breaths, **Observe** your inner experience, **Pause & Proceed** purposefully) in conjunction with some physical sensations to create a technique called “dropping an anchor.” There are very specific reasons to drop an anchor. If we are stressed and reacting to it, we are not in the moment. We are concerned about the past or the future, and our emotions are rising. Our bodies are getting primed by that sympathetic response. Your body is doing everything it needs to do when stressed by automating everything. We need to create space. Breathing is directly connected to our parasympathetic response; that’s why it is a part of nearly every relaxation and mindfulness strategy you will find. It is our built-in way to switch our brain and body out of that fight/flight mode. We will also use our pent-up physical energy against ourselves to create sensations to focus on. And we will also “ground” ourselves by checking in with our surrounding. This gets us out of our head and whatever has our attention and gets us back to the present moment.

To drop anchor, first think of maybe an embarrassing memory or something “light” that has bothered you recently.

What is it?: _____

Keep that in your mind for a minute or two. And then proceed through the anchoring steps below:

1. Push your feet hard into the floor, as if you were trying to push the ground away from you.
2. If you are sitting, also sit forward.
3. Push the palm of your hands firmly together.
4. *Take notice of your sensations as this light memory/though/feeling*—what do you feel in your feet, hands, back?
5. Now, look around and notice **5** things. Focus on them when you see them and try to identify a unique detail about them.
6. Notice **4** things you can hear.
7. And notice **3** things now that you can feel.
8. And notice that you are wherever you may be right now listening to this. There is a body in a room and a voice and a computer. Stay focused on that.

How did that feel? If you think you have the core steps memorized and practiced, try the next step below.

Now, think about something incredibly difficult for you. It can be a painful memory, or thought, or just an emotion that swells up inside of you. Something that you would normally avoid or try to push aside. Instead of distracting yourself or ignoring it like you might normally, drop anchor and sit with it in a moment without reacting.

What is the
thought/memory/emotion?: _____

Keep it in mind for a minute or two. And then proceed through the anchoring steps above.

How will getting better at and regularly dropping anchor when stressed or wandering through your life mindlessly help with your own well-being? How will it help with the work you specifically do? **Take time to answer these questions with your practice partner.**