

## MODULE 4 ACTIVITY

# Dropping an Anchor

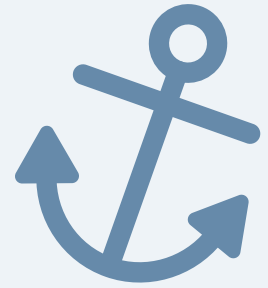
Let's use Mindful STOP (**Stop** what you are doing, **Take** a few deep breaths, **Observe** your inner experience, **Pause & Proceed** purposefully) in conjunction with some physical sensations to practice a technique called Dropping an Anchor.

There are many occasions during which you might need to “drop an anchor.” When you are feeling stressed and reacting to emotions such as frustration, exhaustion, or anxiety, you are disconnected from the present moment. You might be concerned about the past or the future, and your emotions are swelling. Your body is being primed by the parasympathetic response discussed in Module 1; in short, it is doing what it is programmed to do in times of stress, which is automating *everything*. To stop this, you need to create some space.

Breathing is directly connected to our parasympathetic response. Think of it like a built-in off-switch for pulling you out of fight, flight, or freeze mode. This is why it is central to so many relaxation and mindfulness techniques, including this one. In Dropping an Anchor, we will use some of our pent-up physical energy to create sensations that we can focus on. Finally, we will “ground” ourselves by checking in with our surroundings. This gets us out of our heads, away from whatever is dominating our attention, and returns us to the present moment.

To drop an anchor, first think of 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 you consider this memory, thought, or feeling. What do you feel in your feet, hands, and back?
5. Now, look around and notice 5 things. Focus on these 5 things and try to identify a unique detail about each of them.
6. Notice 4 things you can hear.
7. Notice 3 things you can feel.

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

Now, think about a difficult or painful memory, thought, or emotion that swells inside of you. This is likely something that you would typically avoid or attempt to push aside. Instead of distracting yourself or ignoring it, drop an anchor and sit with it for 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 an anchor when stressed or wandering through your life mindlessly help with your own well-being? How will it help with the professional work you do? **Take time to answer these questions with your practice partner.**