

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR MINDFUL COLOURING

BEGINNER'S MIND

Approach this drawing with the intention of increasing your capacity to see life with a fresh and open perspective

As you colour, pay gentle attention to each pencil stroke, consider each time you touch the page, the uniqueness of each new movement you make. Consider that this particular movement has never been made before, nor will exactly the same movement ever be made again. The value here is in quietly observing the subtle differences, notice when your work flows, when it halts, how it changes moment to moment i.e. the pressure, the speed, your proximity to the paper, your choice of colour, your mental state, your physical state etc. Not analysing or judging this, just noticing how you are in the moment. Developing the capacity to see each moment as subtly new and emergent develops Beginner's Mind and an increasingly open perspective.

NON JUDGING

Approach this drawing with the intention of enhancing your capacity to think with greater balance and breadth

This time, pay gentle attention to your reaction to the activity of colouring. Notice the way the mind may shift along the spectrum of liking, disliking, tuning out from the moment, engaging with the design, being clear without any mind activity. Notice the intensity of these thought patterns and their associated physical and emotional responses i.e. joy at finishing a particular part of the design, irritation if you make a 'mistake', lost in thought about the past or future and disengaged from the drawing, absorbed without thought. You are not analysing or judging the mind, you're just being with these constant changes in the moment. Developing the capacity to see these movements of the mind develops awareness and a capacity to be with rather than get caught up in judgements.

MINDFUL COLOURING ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to be done either individually with a journal, or with a facilitator, coach, colleague, friend or small group.

BEGINNER'S MIND

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BEFORE COLOURING

Open up the sheet and examine the whole design before doing any colouring. Take in the detail, appreciate it, be curious about it, become familiar with it. No need to judge or memorise anything, just be with the sheet and notice any thoughts or sensations that come up i.e. eagerness to begin, what looks familiar, what looks strange, concern about time, desire to do it well, relaxation etc Share what you notice with your colleague

Notice when you feel ready to begin colouring and then take one more look and see if you can notice anything more, i.e. a piece of detail, a thought or emotion you'd not had before. You may or may not notice anything. Explain to your colleague how you knew you were ready to begin colouring and anything new you noticed.

Make a few summary notes about what you notice. Whatever you notice is valid, there is no right or wrong.

WHILST COLOURING

Gently be aware of what thoughts / insights flow through your mind i.e. completely new thoughts, habitual thoughts, no thoughts.

Tune in to any shift in your physical state as you do the colouring. Does it subtly change? Can you explain how? How does this differ each time you do the colouring? i.e. less tension in the shoulders, jaw, brow, respiration slows down, heart rate gently increase when you've had enough, fluctuations in warmth, coolness, physical posture.

Try out different approaches to colouring the sheet i.e. turn the sheet upside down, sideways, fold it in different ways, colour with the eyes closed, colour with the non dominant hand, colour outside in nature, colour first thing in the morning, invite someone else to colour some of it with you etc See how many simple ways you can vary your approach. When you believe you have exhausted every way, leave the colouring for a day or two. When you begin again, gaze at the picture to see if any additional fresh ideas emerge.

Share with a colleague the state of your mind and body when you notice something you'd not see before? How present did you feel in those moments?

Make a few notes on your experience. What you notice, what is surprising?

WHEN THE COLOURING IS COMPLETE

Consider in what ways your colouring evolved over time? In what ways will it continue to change? What range of emotions have you had, which stage did you enjoy most, least? Are there any aspects of this colouring / experience are permanent? In what ways can you continue developing beginner's mind in other aspects of your work / life?

Make a few notes to summarise what is most noteworthy and helpful to you?

SUMMARY

These questions have been designed to enhance the quality of noticing and awareness. We live in a world of continual change whether it is in our external environment or our physical and mental states. Nothing remains exactly the same from our own physical state, to our external environment. Developing the capacity to notice these subtle changes as they happen, enables us to adapt and align to change with greater agility and creativity. As this capacity is developed it automatically happens in the rest of our lives. I.e. we become more present and aware of a client's reaction, a colleagues mood, a family member's health, our own energy level etc Thus by being open to seeing more, it leads us to greater creativity and breath of perspective.