

[00:00:02.510] - Jennifer Hicks, MMT, MT-BC, E-RYT

Thank you so much for making this time to nurture yourself today. My name is Jennifer Hicks. She/her/hers are my pronouns.

[00:00:11.480]

And I would like to start by acknowledging that I and my business are on the land of the Wahpekute and Očeti Šakówin People, and that I am a straight, white, able bodied, highly educated, middle class cis gender female with a history of trauma and a brain injury.

[00:00:28.400]

I'm also a board certified music therapist, a licensed music educator and an experienced registered yoga teacher with additional training focused on adapting mindfulness based principles for those of us with histories of trauma and with both visible and invisible disabilities.

[00:00:50.810]

Today, I'm going to share with you one of my favorite mindfulness based practices. This RAIN practice was initially taught by longtime Vipassana meditation teacher Michele McDonald and then further developed by Tara Brach. Ruth King has integrated this practice into her work in transforming racism through mindfulness. And I was introduced to this practice through her book, Mindful of Race. I would encourage you to check out that as a resource.

[00:01:18.500]

Personally, I will also just add that this practice is one that both my husband and I have found helpful, although we joke that our RAIN practice has a silent J at the beginning for the judging that we tend to do of ourselves first. This practice has really been instrumental for us in letting go of those judgments and in focusing on self compassion instead.

[00:01:40.490]

So the graphic on the screen shows the four components of the RAIN practice, recognize, allow, investigate and nurture. And we're going to take a little time to explore these together now.

[00:01:54.590]

And so I'm going to invite you to get comfortable. I'm going to take a drink of water. Wonder Woman water bottle - those little sips of self care are so important.

[00:02:07.720]

And I'm going to invite you to find a space that you can be comfortable today, whatever that looks like in your body. All right. So you are welcome if you want to lay down or sit back. Or move around and stretch. Whatever feels healthy and helpful for your body as you take just a moment here to focus in on you.

[00:02:53.890]

You're welcome if you want to close your eyes or soften your gaze. Or maybe just focus on a spot in front of you away from the screen. Whatever works for you to be able to focus on just being present in this moment.

[00:03:18.690]

To be able to focus in on this R of the RAIN practice, which stands for Recognize. And so I'll invite you to just take a moment here to recognize what is happening within you.

[00:03:44.580]

Maybe begin by focusing on your body. Recognizing if there are parts of you that are struggling today. And also recognizing the parts of you that feel healthy today. Maybe the parts of you that feel strong. As well as the parts of you that feel less strong today. Maybe noticing if there are parts of you that are feeling energized or motivated. Or recognizing if there are parts of you that feel anxious. Or places in your body where you're holding on to tension or stress or emotion.

[00:04:53.750]

Or maybe recognize parts of you that are tired today, whether that's physically tired. Mentally. Emotionally. Or as my friend Ami Kunimura says, maybe there's parts of you that are soul tired today. Just recognize. Or maybe there's parts of you that feel more relaxed. Or calm. Or content.

[00:05:33.830]

However your body is feeling, just take a moment here to recognize that.

[00:05:54.630]

And I'll also invite you to take a moment to recognize what's happening in your thoughts today.

[00:06:04.800]

Maybe noticing if your thoughts are stuck or focused on one thing. Or if your thoughts are feeling more scattered or distracted today.

[00:06:22.610]

Maybe noticing if your thoughts are going towards the past. Or looking towards the future. Or if your mind is pretty grounded here in the present. Just take a moment to recognize where your mind is today.

[00:06:48.410]

And know, that as your mind wanders, which it will, it is your choice if you want to follow those thoughts or not. Or even if you want to believe them. Or if you want to reframe or refocus your thoughts.

[00:07:28.460]

And I'll invite you to take a moment here to maybe refocus your thoughts onto your breath. And just to recognize what is happening within your breath today. Maybe noticing your inhales and exhales. Maybe recognizing if you tend to pause at the top or the bottom of your breath.

[00:08:19.590]

Maybe recognizing if you're experiencing your breath more in your belly or your ribcage. As you inhale, maybe noticing that belly or that ribcage expand. And as you exhale, maybe noticing that belly or that ribcage relax.

[00:08:44.650]

Just taking a moment here to recognize.

[00:09:11.910]

And the A stands for allow. As you recognize what is going on within you. To just allow yourself to pause and be present with whatever you are recognizing within yourself.

[00:09:34.690]

Without judgment. Or interpretation. Or resistance. And know that this is not the same as condoning. We're just allowing whatever is to be for this moment.

[00:09:59.520]

So just recognize your body's response. Your mind's response. Your breath's response. And see if you can just allow them to be whatever they are in this moment. And if your body or part of you is responding with a "no," just let that be too. Just notice, without trying to judge, push away or control what you are experiencing in this moment.

[00:11:22.470]

And the I stands for investigate. And so I will invite you to investigate what is happening within you. And how your perceptions, thoughts, emotions and beliefs are fueling this experience. And I will encourage you to do this with discernment and curiosity and kindness rather than with judgment.

[00:12:10.910]

And note that this is a somatic, not a cognitive process. And so I invite you and encourage you to stay present in your body as you do this rather than starting to intellectualize or rationalize your responses.

[00:12:31.560]

Simply bring a curious and compassionate attention to your experience as you investigate and notice what most wants your attention in this moment.

[00:12:52.100]

And maybe notice what emotions that might bring up for you.

[00:13:03.020]

And maybe notice what your most vulnerable part of yourself might be trying to express. And what does this part of you need from you right now?

[00:13:52.030]

And that leads us to the N, which stands for nurture. Finding whatever way you need to nurture yourself and care for yourself in the midst of this experience and then letting it go.

[00:14:21.950]

And so, again, I will invite you to check in with what you need. Maybe what that most vulnerable part of yourself is asking for right now. And call on the most wise and compassionate part of yourself to help provide for that need.

[00:14:55.980]

And as you explore what works for you in this moment. Just know that it might be different than what works for you in another moment. You are the best expert on you, so just notice and nurture the needs that you are experiencing in the midst of this moment.

[00:15:50.990]

And I'll invite you to maybe take a nice deep inhale. And sigh it out. And maybe do another falling out breath with me, a nice deep inhale and a big sigh out.

[00:16:24.770]

Blink your eyes a few times.

[00:16:28.580]

Maybe take a moment if you're seated to ground your feet or your sit bones, maybe grab on to a wrist and stretch to one side, if this is OK in your body and feels good in your body. And if it does, maybe switch wrists and switch sides. And we're going to take a nice big inhale and a big loud yawn out. Shake it out, give yourself some shoulder rolls or whatever your body needs to continue nurturing you.

[00:17:00.610]

And as we finish, I will invite you to choose one thing that you can do to continue to nurture yourself today.

[00:17:09.850]

And I will also invite you to apply this practice to your interactions with clients, students, colleagues, family members, friends. Just notice yourself when you are judging yourself, notice when you are judging others. And I would encourage you to then pause and to maybe just recognize. Recognize what they might be going through, recognize your own responses. To allow both their experience and your experience to simply be whatever they are. Again, remembering this isn't condoning that experience, just allowing and paying attention to being mindful of it so that you can investigate. To investigate their experience and your responses with curiosity and compassion instead of judgment and to find ways that you can nurture both yourself and the others in your life. And to also give the other human beings in your life the space and maybe the support that they need so that they can nurture themselves as well.

[00:18:19.370]

Thank you so much for sharing this practice and this time with me. I encourage you to continue exploring what you can do to nurture yourself as you continue to learn and grow. For me, it's a lifelong journey, and it's one of the ways that I stay healthy physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, and one of the ways that I continue to remain passionate about this work as well.

[00:18:46.280]

If you are looking for extra support in nurturing yourself, I would also encourage you all to check out my MT Mentor membership group, which has special pricing for students and interns, as well as for students, interns and professionals from historically minoritized communities. And my free MT Mentor podcast. You can access both the MT Mentor membership group information and the podcast links through my website at Joyful Noises LLC dot com. That's [www. J-O-Y-F-U-L-N-O-I-S-E-S-L-L-C .com](http://www.joyfulnoisesllc.com). Thank you again for making this time today to nurture yourself. And please take care.