****Chocolate Meditation

Take a small piece of chocolate – good quality if possible (meditiation involves becoming more aware of your experiences, its nice if the experience you’re becoming aware of is positive!). Hold it gently or have it near at hand so it doesn’t melt.

Make sure you’re sitting comfortably, on cushions if need be, and allow your body to relax and feel supported by the earth. Notice the sounds in the room or outside the room, and gradually bring your attention inwards, to your breath. Take a few moments just breathing and being aware of how it feels to be here, now.

Now bring your attention to the chocolate in your hand. Notice the wieght of the chocolate, its texture. Is it warm, cool, soft, hard?…. Notice any urges to gobble it up, but try to gently bring your attention back to the sensation of the chocolate in your hand. If they are closed, open  your eyes now and gaze at the piece of chocolate in your hand. Notice its shape and colour, and how you feel about it. Do you like it?

It’s time to smell the chocolate. Slowly bring it up to your nose, noticing when the chocolatey scent first reaches your senses. When it does, just sit for a moment appreciating the aroma. It might be mixing in with other smells that you hadn’t previously noticed… It might have a stronger scent than you’ve noticed chocolate to have before… The urge to gobble it may be even greater. Notice these things and enjoy the feeling of sitting comfortably, taking in the smell of chocoalte.

Allowing your attention to soften now, so that you still have an awareness of the feel, and smell of the chocolate but widening your focus to take in other sensations, bring the chocolate to your mouth and take a small nibble. What is the first taste of the chocolate like? How does it feel on your tongue? Notice any flavours and sensations, however anticipated or unexpected they are.

Now, place the rest of the chocolate in your mouth, enjoying the tastes you are experiencing, the flavours subtle and strong. Hold the choclate in your mouth for as long as possible, letting it melt, letting your tongue explore its textures and tastes.

Finally, when the chocolate is gone, bring your attention back to your senses. Notice whether there is still a residual chocoaltey taste in your mouth, whether the smells in your awareness have changed. Bring your attention back to your breath and to the feelings going on inside you. Rest for a moment, just breathing, and being aware of how you feel – is it different in any way to how you felt at the start of the meditation?

Bring your attention back to the rest of the room, the sounds you can hear, the cushions or floor beneath you, and the weight of your body on the earth. When you’re ready, open your eyes.

Chocolate Mindfulness

What if – instead of just munching it away in seconds – we stop and use the opportunity to practice mindfulness whilst enjoying the little piece of chocolate. I think sometimes mindfulness meditation is looked upon by some as a solemn self-discipline, but it is important to remember that mindfulness is all about compassion towards ourselves and to others and whilst chocolate mindfulness may sound a little little-hearted and frivolous, it does have a deeper value. It helps us to re-connect with our senses, something which is very important in our busy lives.

So…back to our chocolate mindfulness. We should sit somewhere comfortable, allow our body to relax and feel supported. We should take note of the sounds around us – both in the room and beyond – and then gradually bring our attention to our breath.

I know…you want to get on and eat that chocolate! Well this is all about practising chocolate mindfulness, so patience please…it won’t be long now…

We are concentrating on our breathing – taking a few moments to be aware of how it feels to be here, in the present.

Now…open today’s little door on the calendar and remove our shape of the day. Hold the chocolate in our hand and notice the weight of it and the texture. Is it warm or cool, soft or hard? Notice the desire to munch it, but then gently bring our attention back to the feel of the chocolate in our hand. If our eyes are closed, open them, and look at the piece of chocolate, noticing its shape and colour and any responses you have.

Next, continue the chocolate mindfulness by bringing the chocolate to our nose and inhaling the aroma. Notice when we first smell the chocolatey scent and when we do, sit for a moment appreciating the aroma. It might be mixing with other smells we haven’t noticed before and it may have a stronger scent than we expect. Yes…I know…the urge to gobble it up is getting stronger…but just notice this and enjoy the feeling of sitting comfortably whilst taking in the smell of the chocolate.

The best bit of chocolate mindfulness is now…when we can finally eat it! Letting our attention soften, so that we still have an awareness of the feel and smell of the chocolate, we can now bring the chocolate to our mouth and take a small nibble. What does it first taste of? How does it feel on our tongue? Take note of any flavours and sensations, whether anticipated or unexpected.

Now we can put the rest of the chocolate piece in our mouth and enjoy the tastes and flavours, subtle and strong. See if we can hold the chocolate on our tongue as long as possible, letting it melt and allowing our tongue to explore its textures and tastes. Chocolate has over 300 different flavours – see how many we can sense.

So…the chocolate has gone – we must wait until tomorrow for the next piece! The chocolate may be gone, but we should still bring our attention to our senses. Notice whether there is still a residual taste in our mouth and whether the smells you notice have changed. Bring attention back to our breath and to our feelings. Rest for a moment longer, just breathing and being aware of how we are feeling. How much did we enjoy our chocolate mindfulness exercise? Do we feel any different in any way than how we felt at the start of the exercise? Is it different than normal – did the chocolate taste better than when we gobble it up in our normal way? Do we feel fuller than normal, or more satisfied?

Finally, we should bring our attention back to the rest of the room, the sounds we hear, the weight of your body on the chair ( no…just one chocolate shouldn’t have made a difference!), and our feet resting on the ground. When ready, we can slowly open our eyes and return to our day.