




Eye of the Hurricane Meditation

 Mindfulness

 Meditation

 10 min

 Client

 Yes

Mindfulness practice offers a way for clients to disengage from the hectic world around them by focusing attention inward. In mindfulness practice, clients learn to use their breath as a vehicle to create more inner peace. By connecting to their breath, clients can disconnect from upsetting thoughts, emotions, and other stressors that disrupt inner peace. However, like many abstract concepts, the concept of inner peace may be difficult for clients to understand.

In this meditation, the concept of inner peace is clarified by using a hurricane as a metaphor. Within the strong, turbulent winds of a hurricane is the eye, a calm, quiet, centered space. The goal is to help clients explore their inner peace by using their breath as the eye of the hurricane, the silent part of themselves that can notice difficult or challenging experiences without getting caught up and carried away by them.

A large body of research supports the use of mindfulness meditation for alleviating psychological distress and improving emotional wellbeing (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004).



Author

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Goal

The goal of this tool is for clients to connect to a place of inner peace and calm. This tool uses the metaphor of a hurricane to guide clients to a state in which they become an observer who can notice what is happening from moment to moment with a sense of calm and clarity.



Advice

- The concept of inner peace is reasonably abstract; thus, clients may need to try this exercise more than once to fully grasp the metaphor. Clients will likely be very familiar with the thinking self - the part of them that generates thoughts, beliefs, memories, judgments, dreams, plans, and so on - and less aware of and unfamiliar with the silent, observing self - the aspect of them that is aware of whatever they are thinking, feeling, sensing, or doing at any moment.
- If this meditation causes the client's mind to feel unsettled, the client may return to the breath as an anchor.
- It is advisable to incorporate real-time stimuli from the surrounding environment into the flow of meditation guidance. For example, sirens or jackhammers, hallway happenings, or the sound of heating and air conditioning can be incorporated into the hurricane metaphor. Comments like, "Notice the sound of the siren and see it become swept into the winds of the hurricane" and "Can you notice the stillness within you as the sound of the ambulance surrounds you?" can strengthen the observing mode of the client.
- In this meditation, the client allows the mind to observe whatever surfaces during the meditation. This may cause issues that have been deeply repressed to begin to rise to the surface. It provides clients with the opportunity to address them consciously. Allow the client to discuss any issues that have arisen after the meditation during the reflection.



References

- Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits: A meta-analysis. *Journal of psychosomatic research, 57*(1), 35-43.
- Harris & Russ (2009). The sky and the weather. In R. Harris (Ed.), *From ACT made simple* (p. 175). New Harbinger Publications.
- Safran, J.D., & Segal, Z.V. (1990). *Interpersonal process in cognitive therapy*. Basic Books. Softcover edition, 1996, Jason Aronson, Inc.
- Shapiro, S. L., Carlson, L. E., Astin, J. A., & Freedman, B. (2006). Mechanisms of mindfulness. *Journal of clinical psychology, 62*(3), 373-386.



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Instructions

Part 1: Read mindfulness script (Eye of the hurricane)

- Find a comfortable meditation position, either sitting on a cushion on the floor or a chair. Sit tall with your back straight but shoulders relaxed. Let your hands rest in your lap, and gently close your eyes.
- Let's take three deep, slow breaths to begin.
- Become aware of your body, sitting here. Notice the sense of contact between your body and the seat beneath you... notice your feet on the floor... notice your clothes against your skin.
- Now let's consider a metaphor. Within the strong, turbulent winds of a hurricane, the eye, the center of the hurricane, is quiet. There is no wind and no movement there. For a moment, picture this idea in your mind. Can you visualize the strong, turbulent winds of a hurricane and the inner core that is peaceful and quiet?
- Let's see if you can become like the center of the hurricane. Your current circumstances, your thoughts, your feelings, and the sensations throughout your body can be compared to the winds of a hurricane. Try to let go of all these things for a moment so that you are no longer taking part in them... like the center of the hurricane is not taking part in the turbulent surrounding winds.
- To do this, start by focusing on your breath. Simply breathe in and breathe out. Focus inward.
- Just like the eye is deep within the hurricane, your eye is deep within you. Use your breath to connect to this part of you. Simply breathe in and breathe out.
- Stay connected to your breath. If anything stressful happens at this moment, such as negative thoughts, unpleasant feelings, annoying sounds, stressful life events, memories... try to look at them as if they are the turbulent wind of the hurricane, whirling around, continually changing, unpredictable...
- Notice that you are not them. You are the silent center of the hurricane, the peaceful part, despite what is happening around you.
- You are the silent center of the hurricane, peaceful and at ease.
- You are not reacting; you are merely observing. Like the wind of the hurricane, these experiences are continually moving and changing. You, on the other hand, are stable. You are not moving or being carried away by them.
- As you are breathing, notice how you move increasingly more towards the center of the hurricane towards the eye. Just like the turbulent wind of the hurricane, your thoughts, your feelings, and whatever is happening outside yourself is still going on, but you are no longer part of it. You are in a safe, peaceful place... Breathing in, breathing out.
- As you sit here, connected to your eye, notice whatever arises. Notice the wind of the hurricane but do not participate. Stay in the eye. Notice thoughts... notice feelings... notice sensations... continue to watch the ever-changing nature of the world inside and outside you. Watch from a distance with curiosity and without judgment... without reacting to what you see.



- No matter how intense or harmful the hurricane gets, the eye is always centered, calm, and at ease. Even the most destructive hurricane cannot hurt or harm the eye; the eye is safe. Whenever you feel you need to restore your inner peace, use your breath to connect to this silent part of yourself. Just breathe in and breathe out. It may help to visualize the hurricane with yourself in the center.
- It can be challenging to see the eye of the hurricane at times, and sometimes we forget the eye is there; however, it is always there. If we examine carefully enough—even the strongest, darkest hurricane—sooner or later, we'll see the eye, centered and constant.
- Now, when you feel ready, slowly open your eyes.

Part 2: Reflection

- What was it like to connect to the observing self?
- How do you feel now?
- Did you resonate with the metaphor of the eye of the hurricane? If not, can you think of another metaphor that would resonate with you more?
- Sometimes during meditation, issues that have been suppressed for some time begin to rise to the surface. Were there things that you noticed that you might have repressed in the past? If so, what kind of experiences did you notice? What was it like to notice them? How did you deal with them?