LABELING EMOTIONS

Find a comfortable, quiet place and sit in a dignified posture, relaxed but upright. Close your eyes or leave them partially open. Take a few deep breaths to relax your body.

- Bringing your awareness to your body by noticing your posture and the world of sensation occurring within the body.
- Placing your hand on your heart and beginning mindful awareness of your breathing. Breathing through your heart. Whenever you wish, you can place your hand back in your lap.
- Now releasing the breath, keeping your attention in the heart region, and asking yourself, “What am I feeling?” Letting your attention be drawn to the *strongest* emotion in your body, even if it’s only a whisper of a feeling. Using your body like an antenna.
- Give your strongest feeling a name. If you sat down for this exercise without any strong emotions percolating, you might be feeling “contentment.” Perhaps you’re just “curious.” Eventually you’ll probably find another emotion, such as “longing,” “sadness,” “worry,” “urgency,” “loneliness,” “pride,” “joy,” “lust,” or “envy.”
- Repeating the label two or three times, *in a kind, gentle voice,* and then return to your breath.
- If you wish, finding where the emotion is located in your body, and practice “soften, soothe, and allow,” and then return to your breath.
- Going back and forth between your breath and your emotions in a relaxed way. Letting your attention be drawn from your breath by an emotion, labeling it, and then returning to your breath. There is no need to find an emotion if there isn’t one. Then just be open to the possibility of emotions as you breathe. If you feel overwhelmed by an emotion, stay with your breath until you feel better.
- Gently opening your eyes.