

Portland Institute
For Loss and Transition

Principle of Practice

Embrace the Constancy of Change

This is a unique time of change and disruption to life as we have known it. Current events surrounding the coronavirus pandemic have forced us into new ways of being in the world, with each other, and with our daily lives. In a very short period of time, we have essentially lost our lives as we once knew them, leaving us and those we serve reeling from feelings of helplessness and grieving the loss of our “normal.” People are wondering how they will get through this time, or how they will manage in the future under a “new normal.” What we often forget is that we have adjusted to loss, change, and upheaval through our entire lives. We are not the same as we were before—and we will be different in the future as well, and we already have many of the tools and skills that we need to come through this present time as well. Recognizing the reality of impermanence, and our innate ability to adapt, adjust, and accommodate to change and loss is an important foundation for resilient responses.

Practice

Find a quiet place to settle without distraction. Take time to be aware of your body position, how it is supported, and a sense of your physical presence in this moment. Notice your breath as it moves through your body. In this moment, you are HERE.

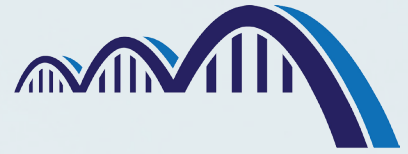
After you settle a bit, bring to mind your earliest memory. In your mind, try to picture yourself at this age as best as you can. Do you remem-

ber your surroundings? Maybe what you were wearing? Did you have a favorite object or toy? If your memory of this time is really fuzzy, just do your best to be present to your younger self. In your mind, wish love and kindness to your young self.

Next, picture yourself when you were in your teenage years. Try to recall what was important to you at that time. What relationships were significant to you then? Try to picture how you looked then. What were some of your predominant thoughts and feelings during this time? Think of some of the significant events during this time and how they affected you. Be fully present to your teenage self. In your mind, wish love, kindness, and understanding to your teenage self.

Now, picture yourself as a young adult, when your life as an independent person had begun. Try to recall what was important to you at that time. What relationships were significant to you then? Try to picture how you looked. What were some of your predominant thoughts and feelings during this time? Think of some of the significant events during this time and how they affected you. Be fully present to your young adult self. In your mind, wish love, kindness, and understanding to yourself at that time.

As you are sitting here in this time, think about what is important to you now. Are you the same person that you were when you were at these



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different points in time? How have you changed and grown through your life? Take a moment to appreciate your capacity to adapt, face adversity, and grow after you've experienced the many changes and difficulties in your lifetime. In your mind, wish love and kindness to yourself at this time.

Finally project your mind a bit into the future, perhaps in one, two, or five years. Tell your future self that you will show up and bring all of the years of experience and capacity with you to be present at that time. You have already grown and changed over your life, and you will continue to grow and change in the future, no matter what age. You already have what you need to meet challenges, adversity, and love in whatever way is presented to you. Wish your future self love and kindness.

Now, come back to this time and feel your body in the present moment. Feel your breath in your body, and the way that your body is supported in whatever position you are in. You are here now. You are enough.

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