



4-3-2-1 Coming back to our senses

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An exercise developed by Karen Liebenguth about mindfulness in nature

This is an enjoyable mindfulness exercise that you can do on your own or with a friend(s) in nature, in your local park or green space. It can help us come back to our senses, slow down, ground us, connect us to nature and to ourselves.

It's called 4-3-2-1:
I see four things,
I hear three sounds,
I feel two things,
I touch or smell (or both) one thing.

It's about paying attention to each thing at a time and really seeing, really hearing, really feeling, really touching or smelling. So here is how it works:

Seeing 4 things:

I look at four things, one at a time, and really look at each one. For example, I look at the sky, and really see the clouds, the shades of blue and grey and give myself a little bit of time to really look. Then I say to myself with a little nod, "Ah, yes, the sky, clouds, some blue..."

Then, what else do I see? "Oh, that tree there in front of me", and I look. I really look. Then, I might see some geese. I love when they fly in a small flock, so I would say to myself: "Oh, there's some geese." Or I would discover some beautiful blossom or flowers that I would look at next. Four things I see.

Hearing 3 sounds:

Then I take a moment and start paying attention to hearing three different sounds.

That might be the cry of the geese, or it might be a plane in the air, or children playing, some birds in the trees. I would let each sound I hear come to me, one by one, and let it land in my ear and really hear it.

Feeling 2 things (emotionally and/or bodily):

Then I move on to two things I feel, and that might be internally how I feel in that moment, my mood, for example, calm or anxious or sad or happy or content or nervous... Or it could be what I feel physically, for example my feet on the earth, or I feel my clothes on my skin, or maybe if it's windy, I feel the wind on my face.

Touching and/or smelling 1 thing:

Then finally, I focus on one thing that I smell or touch. There may be a smell in the air. Usually there is some smell, which is a lovely thing to do because that's not often what we do or tune into. Or I find a leave on a tree that I want to touch or a chestnut or twig or stone on the earth that I want to pick up and touch and then notice what it's like when I do.

Enjoy and notice how you feel when you've done it!

Karen Liebenguth is a qualified coach, a Focusing practitioner and an accredited mindfulness teacher. She works with individuals and organisations to foster personal development and specialises in working with clients outdoors in London's parks and green space where she believes insight, change and creativity can happen most naturally. Karen regularly runs mindfulness courses, workshops and walks. Her joys in life are being in nature, Buddhist practice, living simply and communally and friendships. Karen is German and has lived in London for 15 years. <http://greenspacecoaching.com>

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