



Pulling, Pushing and Positive Emotions

Buddhism teaches that the root cause of all suffering is the human tendency to want to cling to some people, places or things, and be averse or push away from others. We can use mindfulness to work with this tendency and reduce the amount of time we spend in uncomfortable mood states.

Try the following exercise:

Pulling

At the end of this day take note of a time when you found yourself “clinging” to a certain situation. (Example; “I *must* get this job done before the weekend.”, “I *have got to* convince my partner to agree with my plans for the weekend.”, “I *really* want that new car!”). How did this clinging affect your mood?

Pushing

At the end of this day take note of a time when you found yourself avoiding, or strongly disliking a certain situation. (Example; “She really bugs me!”, “I have got to get out of this job right away!”, “I hate my clothes!”). How did this aversion affect your mood?

Positive Emotion

Now take a few minutes to first center yourself with some mindful breathing. Next replace your pushing and pulling thoughts with more neutral statements. (example; “I can look through my closet when I get home and appreciate the items I like.” “I can come to some agreement with my partner so we both enjoy the weekend.”)

With practice this exercise will help neutralize the tendency to push and pull, and will help you dwell in a more neutral or positive mood state more often. Over time this will become a wholesome habit that will literally change the neuropathways in your brain.

We wish you twenty minutes of mindfulness every day!

