**Introductory Mindfulness Practice Instruction:**

**The 3 R’s of Resting the Mind (Rest, Recognize, Return  ©)**

First, **Rest** your body: take a comfortable, upright sitting position. In general this position can be described as awake, aligned, and resilient. If sitting in a chair, sit upright with your feet flat on the floor. If you need to put something under your feet, to have them rest flat, please do so. If you are sitting on a cushion on the ground, sit with your legs loosely crossed and your knees below your hips. Sitting in a chair or on a cushion, you back is upright. If sitting in a chair, your back is upright, not resting against the chair back. Your hands are placed, relaxed and palm down on you legs, approximately half way between your knees and hips. Your shoulders and head are relaxed and aligned. You might pull your chin very slightly in to align your head over your shoulders. Your eyes are open to allow yourself to wake up in the world. You can practice with your eyes closed; however we suggest practicing with your eyes opened. Your jaw is relaxed. You might even have a slight smile.

Second: **Rest** your attention on the breath. Nothing special is happening with your breath. Continue to breathe comfortably and normally, in and out. Allow your attention to rest with the breath. You might notice the physical experiences of breathing like your chest and /or belly expanding or contracting while you breathe, or the sensation of breath going in / out of your nostrils or mouth. You might notice the feeling of satisfaction as you breathe in / out. The practice is to simply rest your attention on the breath.

Like everyone who has ever attempted this practice, your attention eventually wanders away from resting on the breath. This wandering away from the breath is a little like falling asleep or dreaming. With gentleness, **recognize** that you have wandered. In this meditation, recognition is the best news possible. You recognize that attention has wandered, recognize the possibility of returning to resting on the breath. You might consider, with friendliness towards yourself and your practice, that wandering away from mindfulness allows you to recognize the possibility of returning to mindfulness.

**Return**; simply and directly return to resting your attention on the breath. Know that the experience of **resting, recognizing, and returning** are the essence of mindfulness practice. Recognizing that wandering and returning are essential parts of meditating that allow you to be very gentle and friendly to yourself. You are resting, mindfully and gently, returning to the goodness of the present moment again and again.

2nd stage:

Rest, recognize, return.

Rest your attention on the breath.

Recognize when you attention has wandered away from the breath. Consider how, at the same time that you notice that attention has wandered you also notice what it feels like to be awake. Recognizing attention that has fallen asleep or fallen into a dream, your attention wakes up and is present.

Return to resting on the breath. Breathe in – breathe out.

Rest, recognize, return.