

A mindfulness activity you might like:

Sushi Train

Sometimes we can get caught up by the thoughts our mind is telling us. We can sometimes even believe a thought is a fact simply because our mind keeps bringing it up. This can result in us trying to push the thought away, doing things to try and stop the thought, or spending a lot of time worrying about the thoughts. The analogy below can be a useful way to understand our unhelpful negative thinking patterns or ruminations.

Have you ever been to a sushi train or know what it is? So the food goes round and round and you pick which food you want. Is there anything that you wouldn't eat on a sushi train – perhaps raw eel?

Some thoughts are also a bit like this. Just because they are in our head, doesn't make them true and doesn't mean that we have to buy into them, just like you wouldn't buy the raw eel. You can simply observe the thoughts and allow them to continue on the sushi train.

What would happen at the end of the day if nobody bought the raw eel sushi? They may not make as much the next day. And what if nobody bought it the next day? They may make less again, because they know that people used to buy the raw eel, so they wouldn't take it straight off the menu.

What if nobody bought the raw eel by the end of the week? They'd probably take it off the menu. What would be the point of serving something up each day if nobody buys it?

Well unhelpful thoughts are a bit like that too. The less you buy into them, the less of them that float around in your head, and then eventually, if you gradually stop believing in them, stop buying them, they go away too.

But every once in a while, the owner of the sushi train may decide to try out the raw eel again. Perhaps he wonders whether it was seasonal, as he remembers that people used to buy it. So, just like that every once in a while these unhelpful thoughts might pop up again. This doesn't mean that you're back to square one, it's just your brain checking in to see if you will buy into the thoughts.

What to do. Set aside some time to observe your thoughts. When a thought comes up you don't want to buy – put it on the sushi train and watch it go by. You might try this activity regularly. Our mind can be so full of past regrets and future worries that we never enjoy the current moment. Allow those worries and regrets to pass by on the sushi train. A calm mind allows you to focus on what is important for you right now, today.



The Project Air Strategy acknowledges the major support of NSW Health. The Project works with mental health clinicians, consumers and carers to deliver effective treatments, implements research strategies supporting scientific discoveries, and offers high quality training and education. Contact us at info-projectair@uow.edu.au or visit <http://projectairstrategy.org>