



Fresh Air Fridays

Welcome to Fresh Air Fridays 12 week programme. I am really excited to be sharing it with you. What we see is that the more you engage with the materials we share with you, the more you will get out of the ideas and tools that we explore.

Introduction

To understand how we are intending to support you over the coming weeks we use a tree as a model. This course will help:

- you build a really strong foundation (root structure) and
- support you with both your internal and external communication (trunk)
- you lead an even happier, healthier life - your outcomes (the crown of the tree).

Each part of us impacts the others; just like the parts of the tree.



A tree will grow to some degree even if its root structure is poor. In the same way, humans survive through tough times often despite themselves. However, when a tree has a strong root structure it can really flourish. Throughout this course, we will share with you ideas and skills that support your root structure.

Our belief is there are four aspects that make up your total wellbeing. These are your mental, emotional, physical and spiritual* aspects.

In our model, the trunk which transports nutrients up and down represents our communication. It is important that in order to lead happy healthy lives we have good communication both internally (with ourselves) and externally (with the people around us).

When we have a strong root structure and good communications skills we can flourish in our lives.

*By spiritual we are not inferring anything about religion, we mean a sense of being connected to something larger, perhaps what one can experience being part of a friendly football crowd.

Session 1: Being Present

This week's theme is 'being present' and is one of our three core themes and we believe it underpins all the others. It helps us tune into ourselves and become aware of what's really going on. The vast majority of our pain or discomfort is due to thoughts about the past or the future. Many of us we

spend a lot of time thinking about things that have happened and why we wish they were different, or thinking about the future and worrying about what may or may not happen. If we can take a break from those thoughts, even if it is just for a moment, we can give ourselves some peace. For most of us, most of the time, being in this exact moment is an alright place to be. This very moment is where you will experience the least pain and most happiness. The more time you can spend where you are, the happier you will be.

During the session, we used each of our senses in turn in order to attempt to notice what was happening in the exact moment we were in. For different people, different senses were more helpful than others. For many of us we found that we started with the exercise and then our minds wandered off - thinking about things, telling a story or being in judgement.

You are learning to pay attention in a particular way and on purpose;
to notice what you're experiencing, moment by moment.

Actions:

Find one or two things this week and practice being present as you do them. I quite often try doing it whilst I clean my teeth, or eating a snack. You may choose to do it whilst washing up or taking a shower. Watch the water flowing into the sink; look at the colour and texture of how it hits the sink. What noise does it make? What are the bubbles of the washing up liquid like? What does the soap and water feel like on your skin? It is possible that quite quickly your mind will disappear off somewhere else or you'll have judgements about something. When you notice that, just bring yourself back to the water or the dishes, noticing what it feels like, looks like, sounds like. Just try it for a few minutes. The more you practice, the longer you will be able to sustain concentration. There is no right or wrong; this is simply about your experience. If your mind wanders off and you notice, just gently bring yourself back.

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow a mystery, today is a gift;
that's why it's called the Present."