Sensation based Mindfulness Exercises

*Raisin Meditation*: Start with three raisins. Pick up the first and use all five senses in turn to examine the raisin. First, look at it carefully; second, roll it around in your fingers; third, smell it; fourth, place it in your mouth and roll it around on your tongue; fifth, slowly chew and taste it. Listen to the sounds your mouth makes while chewing. Completely chew and swallow the first raisin before moving on to the second. Follow the same process with the second (and then the third) raisin, noticing any differences between raisins. This can also be done with other dried fruits or foods; the advantage of raisins is that they vary!

*Look*: Find any object in your environment. Look at it and try to absorb sensations through your vision only. Try to clear your mind of any other input or distractions, focusing only on your sense of sight.

*Listen:* Notice any sound in your environment. Listen and try to absorb sensations only through sound. Try to clear your mind of any other input or distractions, focusing only on your sense of hearing. Variation: Listen to your favorite music (or any music) mindfully by focusing on each distinct sound that creates the whole piece.

*Feel:* Notice any physical sensation in your body. Try to clear your mind of any other input or distractions, focusing only on your sense of physical feeling. Just notice, without judging.

*The Betty*: Think of it this way: Look, Listen, Feel, 3, 2, 1. First, look at three objects in your environment. It doesn’t matter what they are, just focus on three separate things in succession. Next, listen to three sounds in your environment. Again, just switch from one, to the next, to the next. Then feel three things with your body. Just notice three separate sensations in succession. Now go back to looking, and look at two things. They can be the same things you looked at before or different, it doesn’t matter. Then two sounds, then two physical sensations. Now look at one thing, listen to one thing, and feel one thing. Breathe deeply and relax.

*Observe:* Just notice your environment. Pay attention to what is going on around you in this moment (and this one… and this one…). Use all your senses. When your thoughts wander to something from the past or the future, return your attention to the present. Do this again and again.

*Describe:* Focus on any object or sensation (sound, smell, taste, feeling) and put words on your experience. Imagine you are describing the object or sensation to an alien and include as much detail as you can. Be specific and exact. Notice details.