



### **Mindfulness Corner: Standing Behind the Waterfall**

I became interested in mindfulness about ten years ago. I, probably like most people, came to mindfulness at a time when I was overwhelmed with worries, fears, and uncertainty. I found an advertisement for a one-day mindfulness retreat pinned to a bulletin board. So I landed in “my seat” at that one day retreat. The facilitator shared this reading called “Standing Behind the Waterfall”. Time and again I pull it out coming back to the invitation.

Now, more than ever, it strikes me as important to pause and “Step behind the waterfall of our own minds...”

When we shift into a state of mindfulness, it is like stepping behind the waterfall of our own minds, gaining enough distance to be aware of the flow of our every changing experience. We begin to realize that the “I” that is experiencing these things is different from all of the changing experiences. We are not our thoughts. Our thoughts are events in our minds that come and go. We are not our stress, our anxiety, our sadness, our anger, or our happiness. These feelings are just events in our minds that come and go. We are not our physical sensations; our pain is not us, our fatigue is not us, our weakness is not us, and our illness is not us. These are just events in the body. We can step back and be a witness to all of these experiences without identifying with them. They can be observed in the theatre of the mind, giving us enough distance to gain some perspective on things.

One important insight is that our thoughts that make up our worry and ruminations are not facts. They simply reflect how things seem right now, or how we think things will be. They are events in the mind, nothing more. When we recognize this, then we begin to see that perhaps there are other ways to think about the situation, other alternatives, and other possibilities.

With mindfulness, we have a choice. We can choose to move our attention away from our fearful and pessimistic thoughts and back to what is actually happening right now. We can deal with what is, not what might or might not be. It is much easier to deal with what is happening right now. –unknown author

*Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won't).* – James Baraz

Warmly, Becky and Shelley