Dropping Anchor

Adapted from the work of Dr Russ Harris author of The Happiness Trap

HANDLE DIFFICULT THOUGHTS,

feelings, emotions, memories, urges, and sensations more

SWITCH OFF AUTOPILOT

and engage in life; ground and steady yourself in difficult situations.

Focus your attention

on the task or activity you are doing; develop more self-control

Dropping Anchor in the middle of any kind of emotional "storm":

• Flashbacks
• Panic attacks
• Chronic pain

To support and hold you steady, so you don’t get swept away, allowing time for the storm to pass.

To bring your focus back to what’s important to you right here and now.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

DROPPING ANCHOR involves playing around with A-C-E:

- ACKNOWLEDGE your thoughts and feelings
- COME BACK into your body
- ENGAGE in what you are doing

Put together by James Warren, North Bristol NHS Trust, UK.
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Dropping Anchor

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is ‘showing up’ inside you:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Emotions
- Memories
- Sensation
- Urges

Come back into and connect with your physical body.

- You could try some or all of these:
  - Slowly push your feet hard into the floor.
  - Slowly straighten up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair.
  - Slowly press your fingertips together
  - Slowly stretch your arms or neck, shrug your shoulders.
  - Slowly breathe.

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing.

In your surroundings, notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you are touching
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 taste in your mouth

Finally: notice what you are doing.

Ideally, run through the A»C»E cycle slowly 3 or 4 times, to turn it into a 2-3 minute exercise:

You can practice these kinds of exercises, any time, any place. It's a good idea to practice them often in less challenging situations, when your thoughts and feelings are less difficult, so you can build up your skill levels. Over time, the idea is to use this in more challenging situations, when your thoughts and feelings are more tricky and can more easily overwhelm us.