

WEEK SIX
The Way of Awareness
Developing Mindful Communication

Building on what we learned in week 4 and 5 - responding to stress instead of reacting.

We often realize that unpleasant events involve interactions with others, real or imaginative.

“ When we feel that our interest or our social status is threatened, we are capable of reacting unconsciously to protect or defend our position before we know what we are doing.

Usually this behavior compounds our problems by increasing the level of conflict, both inwardly and outwardly. Or alternatively, we might act submissively.

When we do, it is often at the expense of our own views, feelings, and self-respect.”

(FCL, Chapter 28)

The stress that we experience in interacting with others typically involves:

- Miscommunication
- Judging
- Different communication styles
- Different perceptions about meaning
- Feeling not heard/ listened too/ not respected
- Not standing up for yourself

Did you ever get an email from someone where you thought they were angry and upon checking with them it turned out that they weren't?

“So in the case of people who cause us stress, we need to take responsibility for our part in those relationships, for our own perceptions, thoughts, feelings and behaviors.” (FCL, Chapter 28)

Intonation, body language, tone, and words used are all part of how we perceive the interactions and can be strong triggers into familiar patterns and habits: reactions.

Let's see some examples.

Keep in mind that these videos are role-plays!

They might provoke emotions, thoughts, and the start of reactions.

While watching the videos, bring awareness to ...

- What feels familiar?
- How would it be to be in either of the actor's position?
- What shows up in body and mind? Thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations?

“When you are willing to be secure enough in yourself to listen to what other people want and how they see things without constantly reacting, objecting, arguing, fighting, resisting, making yourself right and them wrong, they will feel heard, welcomed, accepted, and met. This feels good to anybody. They will then be much more likely to hear what you have to say as well, maybe not right away but as soon as emotions recede a little”

-John Kabat-Zinn

If you could make guidelines of how you want to communicate with others, and how you want others to communicate with you, what would they be?

For example

- *Deep listening*
- *Labeling*
- *Interior Shift*
- *Owning our own emotions*
- *Relationship the entity of focus*

Intentional, nonjudgmental, awareness through attention, right here, right now, with curiosity and compassion.