



This document is an extract from the full chapter which is available for download in the table via this [link](#) and is intended for use by participants of meetings.

## 36 – The Third Anchor of Mindfulness: Monitoring Mindfulness

*“He knows a mind with lust as a mind with lust, and a mind without lust as a mind without lust.”* ~ Gotama (the Buddha)

*“When the mind is still, we see clearly; when the mind is clear, the heart is free.”* ~ Christina Feldman

### **Knowing the mind, freeing the mind**

In this third stage of our journey, having cultivated ‘Appreciative Joy’ (self-appreciation) as the appropriate response, we now deepen our mindfulness practice through the ‘Third Anchor of Mindfulness’ – Monitoring Mindfulness’. This anchor corresponds to Gotama (the Buddha’s) third Foundation of Mindfulness and is the practice of observing the mind’s inner weather with calm, discerning awareness.

In his well known talk on establishing mindfulness, Gotama taught that we should know the mind directly. Here, mindfulness shifts from observing *what* the mind is thinking to recognising *how* the mind is – its quality, tone, or mood. We become aware not of individual thoughts, but of the state in which thinking occurs.

### **What Monitoring Mindfulness**

Monitoring Mindfulness is the simple, descriptive awareness that notices what the mind is like right now. It does not analyse or fix; it simply sees. This foundation recognises the mind’s current weather –whether it is contracted or open, scattered or steady, coloured by desire, aversion, or delusion, or

momentarily free from them. It observes whether attention is bright or dull, restless or settled, distracted or collected. Its task is not to change the mind but to know it honestly. Like checking the weather, it names the conditions without judgment: “The mind is tight,” “The mind is restless,” “The mind is bright and steady.” In doing so, it trains us to see the mind as an object rather than be swept away by it.

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### **Self-Reflections**

1. What is the prevailing ‘weather’ of the mind right now?
2. Can I recognise the difference between mind states coloured by wanting or aversion and those free from them?
3. What does a clear, calm mind feel like and how do I know it?
4. How does observing the mind differ from identifying with it?
5. Which conditions nourish clarity and steadiness? Which obscure them?
6. How does awareness of mind states influence behaviour and speech?
7. Can I trust the luminous mind as a natural refuge?

### **Journaling prompts**

1. **Mind-weather journal:** Throughout the day, pause and note the predominant tone of the mind (calm, restless, bright, heavy). How often does it change?
2. **Freedom moments:** Recall a time when the mind felt free from craving or agitation. Describe the texture of that moment.
3. **Observing versus owning:** Reflect on a recent strong emotion. What changed when you saw it as ‘a mind state’ rather than ‘my feeling’?
4. **Trigger tracking:** Identify recurring moods and what conditions trigger them. How might mindfulness interrupt their momentum?
5. **Luminous mind reflection:** Write about moments when the mind felt naturally radiant, kind, or clear.
6. **The witness stance:** How does it feel to rest in awareness itself, without trying to fix or analyse anything?
7. **Learning from fog:** Describe a time when the mind felt clouded. What helped it clear?

## **Remember to Remember**

Monitoring Mindfulness is the art of knowing the mind as it is and letting that knowing set it free. When mindfulness turns toward itself, awareness recognises both turbulence and calm as passing weather – and glimpses the sky beyond them.

This practice reveals the living truth of Gotama's third realisation: that freedom is not something to achieve but something to recognise. Each moment the mind is seen clearly, it returns to its natural luminosity. Mindfulness of mind allows us, as the Captain, Navigator, and Crew of our raft, to sense when the vessel sails in clear water or drifts into fog. With this awareness, we steer not by compulsion but by clarity.

To 'remember to remember' is to meet each state – calm or restless, bright or clouded – with equanimity and curiosity. It is to trust that beneath the waves, the ocean of awareness remains still, deep, and vast. This is mindfulness that supports liberation, mindfulness that sets the heart free.

The practice of Monitoring Mindfulness is like a ship's Captain moving from constantly battling the external storm (Healing Mindfulness) to realising the true key to safety lies in maintaining perfect instruments and clear-eyed focus within the bridge itself (Monitoring Mindfulness). It is the difference between fighting the waves and aligning the internal navigation systems so skillfully that the ship rests naturally, even between swells.

*“When mindfulness sees clearly, the heart discovers it was never truly confined.”* ~ Christina Feldman

*“You are the sky. Everything else – it’s just the weather.”* ~ Pema Chödrön

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