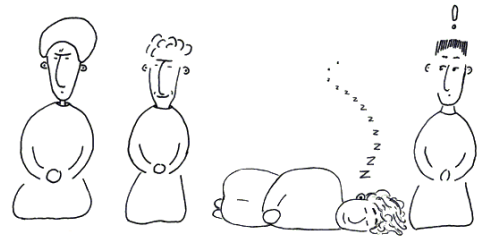


# Stage 1: Week 4 Resistance

Why we don't practice!

*"In meditation we discover our inherent restlessness. Sometimes we get up and leave. Sometimes we sit there but our bodies wiggle and squirm and our minds go far away. This can be so uncomfortable that we feel it's*



*impossible to stay. Yet this feeling can teach us not just about ourselves but what it is to be human...we really don't want to stay with the nakedness of our present experience. It goes against the grain to stay present. These are the times when only gentleness and a sense of humor can give us the strength to settle down...so whenever we wander off, we gently encourage ourselves to "stay" and settle down. Are we experiencing restlessness? Stay! Are fear and loathing out of control? Stay! Aching knees and throbbing back? Stay! What's for lunch? Stay! I can't stand this another minute! Stay!"*

Pema Chödrön, *The Places That Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*

Does this sound familiar? After a few weeks of practicing mindfulness, chances are you have had a variety of experiences, maybe you loved it or maybe:

- ✓ You were bored, restless, anxious, irritated etc
- ✓ You fell asleep!
- ✓ You got distracted.
- ✓ Your body started aching and paining.

Or

- ✓ You forgot
- ✓ You didn't prioritise it / couldn't find the time.

All of these experiences can be grouped into a word called Resistance.

*"The greatest difficulty is the mental resistance to things that arise, and the underlying assumption that they should not."*

Eckhart Tolle

This is a common myth of Meditation. People think that it's all fluffiness and roses. That every time we close our eyes to meditate it should be peaceful, serene and joyous and when it's not that we're getting it wrong.

More often than not our experience can be "uncomfortable" we can be met with feelings and thoughts of frustration, anxiety, boredom or simply plain "I don't want to do this" resistance.

What we do in this moment is very important. We can either get irritated by this resistance or we can accept that it's there and watch it, in so doing becoming the observer. And you know what generally happens? It passes.

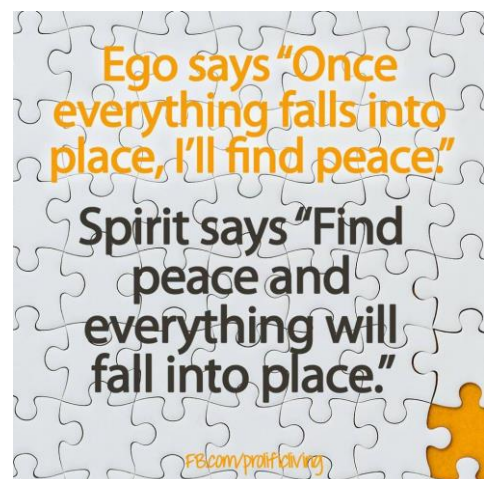
Why does it show up when I'm doing something that's good for me?!

Well that's exactly where it does show up! You may have experienced resistance in the past as self-sabotage while on a diet for example or finding it hard to find the motivation to exercise, or do anything else that you know is good for you like not-prioritising your practice or saying you're too busy to do a meditation.

Resistance is part of being human and its part of the ego mind.

What's my Ego?

Well it's a part of you that informs you about form, tells you your name, that's your human, that you're male or female. It informs you about the world and the form that it's taking shape. However, it's also fearful and it generally doesn't want you to change. It's the part of you that feels safety in things staying exactly the way they are. It does not want you to awaken and discover an easier way of being.



That is, it wants to keep you "safe", by not growing personally (as it sees danger in this - any sort of a change is not good!) But this kind of safety is smothering and its numbing as if you listened to it you'd never learn and grow and experience life.

It does not want you to be happier, live without judgement or limiting beliefs, free of depression, anxiety, fear. So it objects wildly to anything that will aid that process. Anything at all that will help you to move into alignment with who you are, it will object strongly to.

### Story time:

I went to Mexico on my own in 2014 to do a course. I knew absolutely nothing about the course, who would be on it, I barely knew the guy who was running it. I had been sent all the information but I'd chosen not to read it. I was going after seeing a friend of

mine being transformed and I knew I wanted to also experience an expansion, a heart opening process like that.

So off I toddled. I'm normally a very organised person. I love the plastic pockets and generally I've read a good bit about the country before I visit. However this time I couldn't bring myself to open the lonely planet and I even didn't book ANY accommodation for the second half of my stay!

I was excited getting on the plane. I was looking forward to the time off and a little bit of sunshine in November. I remember being on the flight and I started to get nervous about an hour away from landing. My nerves built as we approached the destination and before long my resistance made itself very known to me.

"I wonder if I hid in the toilets then the air hostesses would miss me and I could emerge in an hour or so and catch this flight back or maybe I could hide under the seats?"!

Never in my life had I thoughts like this. I love travelling and I thought I was excited about this!

"Why on earth did I book this? Sure I've no clue as to where I'm going or what this is about" on and on went the mental dialogue berating myself and regretting my decisions of the past few days.

I started to panic; my breathing quickening and small beads of sweat appeared on my brow. My neighbour started shifting in his seat, slightly concerned at to this sudden change of energy from the woman next to him.

It was only then, when I noticed this slight movement beside me and outside of myself, that I copped – this was resistance.

I laughed, I knew resistance, it turned up when I left my job in the bank, when I opened my own business, when I first told people I was into meditation. It knocked on my door when my first client arrived. Me and resistance were good friends, I knew that the more it turned up, the more afraid my ego was which meant the better this would be for me.

And I was right, that course changed my life and brought in so much more than I ever could have dreamed of.

So now when resistance shows up for me, I take it as a sign that I'm on the right track!  
☺

This is what happened for me on the airplane. My ego went nuts and for a while I went with it. A whole 2 hours or so I was in a state of panic...until I understood and embraced

it as resistance. I didn't need to do anything else other than recognise it and then say it's ok for me to feel this, it just means something big is coming. I am safe and everything is perfect exactly as it is.

### How can you deal with it?

You can't stop it, it's a part of life! So here is a strategy for you to use the next time it appears for you either in life or in your mindfulness practice:

1. Recognise it. Where do you hold it in your body? What words does it say to you? How big or small is it. & name it "Oh there's resistance"
2. Compartmentalise it "A part of me is resisting this" ie not all of me is resisting this.
3. Acceptance: "This is ok, it's natural and I recognise it"
4. Proceed with your practice