



Royal Flying
Doctor Service

QUEENSLAND SECTION

A GUIDE TO Dropping anchor

FROM THE FLYING DOCTOR

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

HANDLE DIFFICULT THOUGHTS

feelings, emotions, memories, urges, sensations and more

DISRUPT RUMINATION
Obsessing and Worrying

FOCUS YOUR ATTENTION

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

SWITCH OFF AUTOPILOT
and engage in life; ground and steady yourself in difficult situations

WHAT IS INVOLVED?
DROPPING ANCHOR involves playing around with A-C-E

A
ACKNOWLEDGE your thoughts and feelings

C
COME BACK into your body

E
ENGAGE in what you are doing

Drop anchor in the middle of any kind of emotional 'storm':

- > Distressing thoughts and feelings
- > 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 and to bring your focus back to what's important to you right here and now.

Dropping anchor

A

ACKNOWLEDGE
your thoughts
and feelings

*Adopt the stance of a scientist,
curiously observing what's going on
in your inner world.*

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is
'showing up' inside you:

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

C

COME BACK
into your body

*You aren't trying to turn away
from, avoid, escape or distract
yourself from what is happening in
your inner world.*

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.

E

ENGAGE
in what you
are doing

*Try all or some of these
suggestions, or try your own. End
the exercise by giving your full
attention to the task at hand.*

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 be overwhelming.

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