Handout: Session 9 Theme – Social Support and Continuing Practice

Using the mindfulness skills we've learned over the past 9 weeks can help us face our experiences differently; we can accept the experience instead of fighting it, and from there make choices that are coming from a wiser, more spacious place. This moment by moment journey of recovery and mindfulness practice can feel, at times, like swimming upstream. It is not an easy voyage. Thus far, we have learned about the factors that put us at risk, some skills to help navigate through high-risk situations, and the importance of maintaining lifestyle balance.

Participating in this group has also hopefully provided a sense of support and community. Having a support network is crucial to continuing along the path of practice and recovery. Having a recovery support system can help us recognize signs of relapse and provide encouragement when we feel we are at risk. Having support around our meditation practice can help us maintain our practice and choose to show up for our lives.

There are many things we do not have control over and many things that may not go "our way." We do have a choice, however, in how we respond and how we experience our lives. Practicing mindfulness on a regularly basis helps us be less automatic and reactive and more aware in our choices, ultimately giving us greater freedom. Taking care of ourselves and engaging in activities that nourish us is part of maintaining balance in our lives and helping protect against relapse. Maintaining a practice is not easy. Difficulties and barriers will arise. Be gentle with yourself. Remember that any practice is good practice; you can always begin again from right where you are.