



Series Purpose and Overview

'Being for Beginners' is a series designed to encourage personal growth to improve wellbeing. The course integrates experiential learning, private reflection and insights from a range of disciplines and traditions, within a storytelling style. This uniquely blends powerful learning approaches creating a transformative experience.

Three dynamic themes run through the series:

Awareness: personal growth and wellbeing begin with awareness. This course explains how to develop a sense of detachment to observe thoughts and feelings without judgement, and extend awareness to others, nature and time.

Reflection: The course explores our experience of the mind and how our thoughts relate to our feelings. We see how to 'follow the story' of our thoughts and reactions to understand them better.

Change: Using a simple framework, we gain a practical approach to changing habits of thought, feeling and action, so that awareness and reflection can be translated into greater personal growth and wellbeing.

Throughout the series opportunities for private reflection are created. To support this, practices such as meditation are introduced. No previous familiarity or interest in these practices is presumed.

The six workshops are:

1. Being for Beginners
2. The Monkey Mind
3. Creating and Changing Habits
4. Habits of Thought and Feeling
5. Connections
6. Naming and Thriving

1. Being for Beginners

This opening workshop explores the 'why and how' of self-awareness, providing an experiential introduction to improved emotional intelligence through noticing body, mind and emotions and their inter-connection. The workshop introduces practices and concepts that enable deeper self-awareness.

Learning

- The essentials of awareness: focused attention with detachment
- Connection with the body, thoughts and feelings through noticing
- Introduction to meditation

2. The Monkey Mind

Many of us experience a persistent flow of thoughts, sometimes distracting or unwanted. This workshop reflects upon our experience of the mind and asks why thoughts arise. It enables participants to explore how awareness and reflection enable understanding of thought patterns.

Learning

- Using awareness to observe the mind and patterns of thought
- Contemplation as a means of enquiry
- A framework for examining and understanding our thoughts

3. Creating and Changing Habits

The formulation of habits is essential to create real change. This workshop introduces a practical framework to clearly understand and articulate intention and explores effective strategies for making change. Guided exercises provide participants with an opportunity to privately reflect upon their existing habits, to identify habits that would be beneficial, and to practice using the framework to articulate intention and strategy.

Learning

- A practical and effective framework for habit formation with broad application
- Opportunities to practice the step-by-step approach
- Effective strategies to successfully achieve change

4. Habits of Thought and Feeling

This workshop illustrates how we create mental associations and form patterns of thought – and how these affect our feelings, reactions and sense of happiness. The workshop provides an opportunity to privately reflect, and explores how, by extending the framework established in ‘creating and changing habits’, associations and patterns of thought and reaction can be identified and changed.

Learning

- The nature of ‘emotional memory’ and how associations underlie our reactions
- How to observe and reflect upon patterns of thought and feeling
- A practical framework for changing mental associations and reactions

5. Connecting

This workshop explores the importance of three vital ‘outer’ connections: our instinct for connection with others, the value of connecting with the natural world and connecting with the present. It explores why these are vitally important for our wellbeing. With reference to why we may struggle to make these connections the workshop considers practical ways to connect more consciously.

Learning

- Recognising fundamental human emotional needs
- Using habit formation for greater wellbeing
- Understanding the approach of ‘mindfulness’

6. Naming and Thriving

This final workshop includes an anonymous group exercise that shows the value of coming to terms with positive and negative feelings experienced during a particular period of time. Using the ‘pranayama’ approach to meditation the workshop continues with an opportunity to reflect and apply the major themes of the series. In the final section practical ideas are explored to sustain the practices of awareness, reflection and change in everyday life.

Learning

- Naming and reflecting upon feelings
- Practical application of the themes of awareness, reflection and change
- Ideas for how to ensure the practices of the series are retained