

Inside Out at Work

Tapping into the Power of Emotional Awareness

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Imagine if your emotions could predict your organization's success. Research supports the radical idea that since emotions inform our thoughts, decisions and actions, we can actually benefit from paying attention to them.* Instead of emotions being a problem to eliminate, we can learn to view exhaustion, fear, anger and impatience as informants. The R.A.I.N. Tool is an easy-to-remember guide for tapping into the power of emotional awareness. With practice, you will gain a new appreciation for the full range of emotions and a new leadership tool for compassion and flexibility.

Objective – This tool supports your aspirations for positive leadership by increasing your flexibility in how you respond to challenging situations.

Instructions – Like any new skill, frequent and consistent practice will yield the desired outcomes from the RAIN tool. Consider these options:

- Use the guided practices below from YouTube and Tara Brach's website.
- Carry the RAIN cue card with you; take a photo with your phone.
- Practice with a RAIN partner.
- Practice on purpose, drawing on a previous situation that has lingering emotional charge OR practice on-the fly as situations arise.
- Start today with any emotionally charged challenging situation that arises in your life. Caution: don't start with the biggest charge. Note: you can also practice emotional awareness with pleasant experiences which also increases your resilience capacity.

If we investigate how anger, resentment, blaming and/or painful *thoughts* arise in us, we notice that, generally speaking, they arise when we *feel* hurt, fearful, or threatened.

As we practice RAIN to carefully investigate the way anger and other difficult emotions arise, there is an understanding that it comes as a protector, as a friend that would help battle a current threat or get revenge against the person who has inflicted harm...to somehow reduce our suffering. We can sense that the anger or hateful thought that arises may *appear* to come as a shield or a protector.

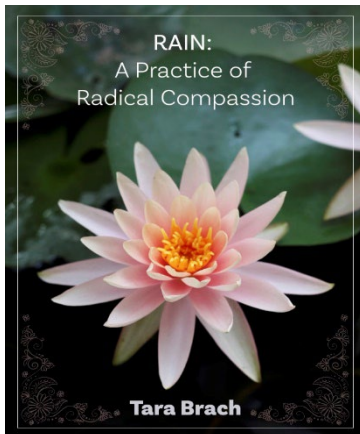
The RAIN practice guides us to experience how this reactivity often results in misunderstanding, conflict, and confusion that are felt in the body. Rather than pushing feelings way or reacting impulsively, we are guided to acknowledge our challenging emotions and see that we do have other response options. In other words, we tap into the virtue of flexibility in how we think, feel and behave.

<https://www.tarabrach.com/rain-practice-radical-compassion/>

RAIN: A Practice of Radical Compassion

Used with Permission from Tara Brach.

The acronym RAIN is an easy-to-remember tool for bringing mindfulness and compassion to emotional difficulty.



- R**ecognize what is going on;
- A**llow the experience to be there, just as it is;
- I**nvestigate with interest and care;
- N**urture with self-compassion.

You can take your time and explore RAIN as a stand-alone meditation or move through the steps whenever challenging feelings arise.

R—Recognize What’s Going On

Recognizing means consciously acknowledging, in any given moment, the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that are affecting you. This can be done with a simple mental whisper, noting what you are most aware of.

A—Allow the Experience to be There, Just as It Is

Allowing means letting the thoughts, emotions, feelings, or sensations you have recognized simply be there, without trying to fix or avoid anything. You might recognize fear and allow by mentally whispering “it’s ok” or “this belongs” or “yes.” Allowing creates a pause that makes it possible to deepen attention.

I—Investigate with Interest and Care

To investigate, call on your natural curiosity—the desire to know truth—and direct a more focused attention to your present experience. You might ask yourself: *How am I experiencing this in my body? What am I believing? What does this vulnerable place want from me? What does it most need?*

Whatever the inquiry, your investigation will be most transformational if you step away from conceptualizing and bring your primary attention to the felt-sense in the body.

N—Nurture with Self-Compassion

Self-compassion begins to naturally arise in the moments that you recognize you are suffering. It comes into fullness as you intentionally nurture your inner life with self-care.

To do this, try to sense what the wounded, frightened or hurting place inside you most needs, and then offer some gesture of active care that might address this need. Does it need a message of reassurance? Of forgiveness? Of companionship? Of love?

Experiment and see which intentional gesture of kindness most helps to comfort, soften or open your heart. It might be the mental whisper, *I'm here with you. I'm sorry, and I love you. I love you, and I'm listening. It's not your fault. Trust in your goodness. May I meet this, too, with kindness.*

In addition to a whispered message of care, many people find healing by gently placing a hand on the heart or cheek; or by envisioning being bathed in or embraced by warm, radiant light. If it feels difficult to offer yourself love, bring to mind a loving being—spiritual figure, family member, friend or pet—and imagine that being's love and wisdom flowing into you.

After the RAIN

When you've completed the active steps of RAIN, it's important to notice the quality of your own presence and rest in that wakeful, tender space of awareness.

The fruit of RAIN is realizing that you are no longer imprisoned in or identified with any limiting sense of self. Give yourself the gift of becoming familiar with the truth and natural freedom of your being; it is mysterious and precious!

Resource: [Guided Meditation – A Practice of RAIN](#)

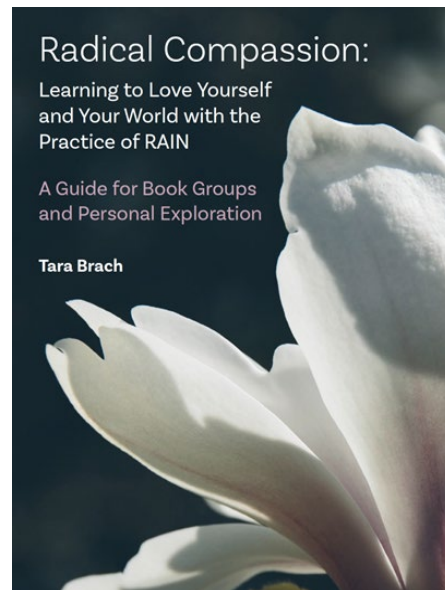
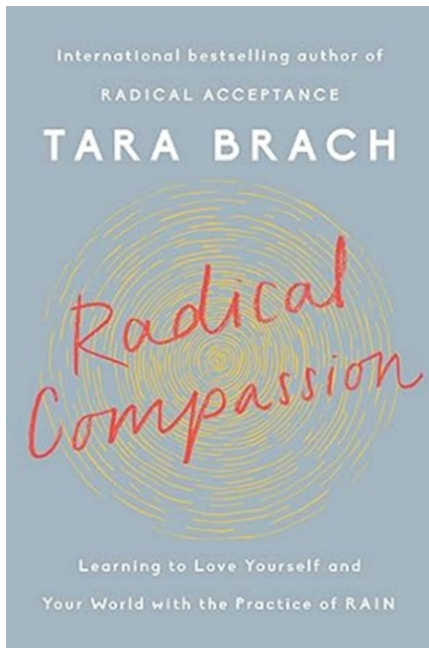
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RESOURCES To Support Your Practice & Integration of RAIN into Your Real Life

❖ **RAIN Practice Guided by Tara Brach:**

20 minutes <https://www.tarabrach.com/meditation-practice-rain/>

9 minutes YouTube *Light RAIN in Difficult Times*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hL6hEC4w6Ng>



<https://tarabrach.ac-page.com/rcstudyguide>

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Historical perspective from 2001: <https://hbr.org/2001/12/primal-leadership-the-hidden-driver-of-great-performance>

Books by Marc Lesser, CEO and executive coach. He founded and was CEO of three companies and has an MBA degree from New York University. *Finding Clarity: How Compassionate Accountability Builds Vibrant Relationships, Thriving Workplaces, and Meaningful Lives*, is his fifth book. His other books include *Seven Practices of a Mindful Leader: Lessons from Google and a Zen Monastery Kitchen* and *Less: Accomplishing More By Doing Less*.

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