Our Journey:

Deepening Our Understanding of 'Self'

Saturday 17th March 2018



9.30-10.00 Arrivals and coffee

10.00 **Session 1 Journeying and care of the traveller** (Prayer room)

11.15-11.45 Coffee break and reflective time

11.45 **Session 2 – Who is this 'Self' on the journey of life?** (Prayer room)

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.30 **Session 3 – Reflections on journeying** (Prayer room)

Reflective / free time (choice of locations):

3.15 **Ending and new beginnings** (prayer room)

3.40-4.00 Tea and cakes

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10.00 **Session 1 Journeying and care of the traveller** (Prayer room)

A warm welcome to fellow travellers – by Hazel Hickson (Facilitator) and Fiona Jenvey (Wisdom Centre Manager).

Hazel Hickson is a psychotherapist, with a scientific background, whose personal experience and training has involved a journey of exploration of 'self', in a holistic sense. As a Christian, with an interest in psychotherapy from Christian, Buddhist and other faith perspectives, her own spirituality is integral to her practice.

Fiona is an Anglican-Ordinand in Pioneer Ministry and is involved in the New Monastic movement. She is shortly completing an MA dissertation on Spirituality and Mindfulness.

Christine Pettet is also helping us today. Christine is very involved in pastoral support work in the parish of Wellow and also works in a support role for adult training courses.

Hazel, Fiona and Christine will be here throughout the day to support you if you need anything. We will be available in all the breaks, so please don't hesitate to come and have a word.

Keeping safe and comfortable today

Housekeeping: Toilets are at the end of the building to the left of reception. Wisdom Centre staff will show you fire escapes should an emergency arise. Refreshments will be available during the breaks and throughout the day. Lunch is at 12.30 in the dining room. If you have any allergies, you haven't mentioned on your booking form, please let us know.

Looking after yourself: When we take time to reflect, or when we hear each other's stories, we can sometimes find ourselves

in exciting new places and sometimes we can get in touch with difficult parts of our lives. Today is not a psychotherapy session, so whilst we want to be curious, we also want to travel gently and carefully, nurturing ourselves and taking good care of our wellbeing, individually and collectively. Do try to be in touch with your needs, and if you would like to take time out at any point that is fine, just let one of us know that you are doing so. Please share only what you feel comfortable sharing.

Introductions / hopes / fears /aims

- In pairs or threes, introduce yourself briefly and consider anything you were hoping for from today and anything that you might be anxious or concerned about.

Collective agreement for the day

- What do we all need in our group to feel safe and well today?



Suggested '**Five Cs'** for today: Curiosity; Care; Compassion; Confidentiality; Compass.

A Blessing: 'For the Traveller' by John O'Donohue

Every time you leave home, another road takes you into a world you were never in.

A new silence goes with you and if you listen, you will hear what your heart would love to say: A journey can become a sacred thing.

May you travel in an awakened way, gathered wisely into your inner ground; that you may not waste the invitations which wait along the way to transform you.

Make sure before you go, to take the time to bless your going forth, to free your heart of ballast, so that the compass of your soul, might direct you towards the territories of spirit

My you travel safely, arrive refreshed, and live your time to its fullest; return home, more enriched and free to balance the gift of days which call you.



What might a journey involve?

- In groups, take a little time to reflect upon this 'Blessing For the Traveller' and think about what a journey might involve:

  A start, middle and end point perhaps, or past, present and future? Companions or surroundings? Some means of finding the way, or choosing a direction? What is '*the compass of your soul*'?



Allow yourselves to be curious and to begin to relate this to your own journey of life.

- Sharing of group feedback.

Some suggested definitions:

Soul compass - Being in touch with our 'true self' or 'Wisdom', the gift of the Spirit, or 'Prajna' and finding direction there.

Psychotherapy: A supportive relationship with a trained person, to explore aspects of our life, including difficult

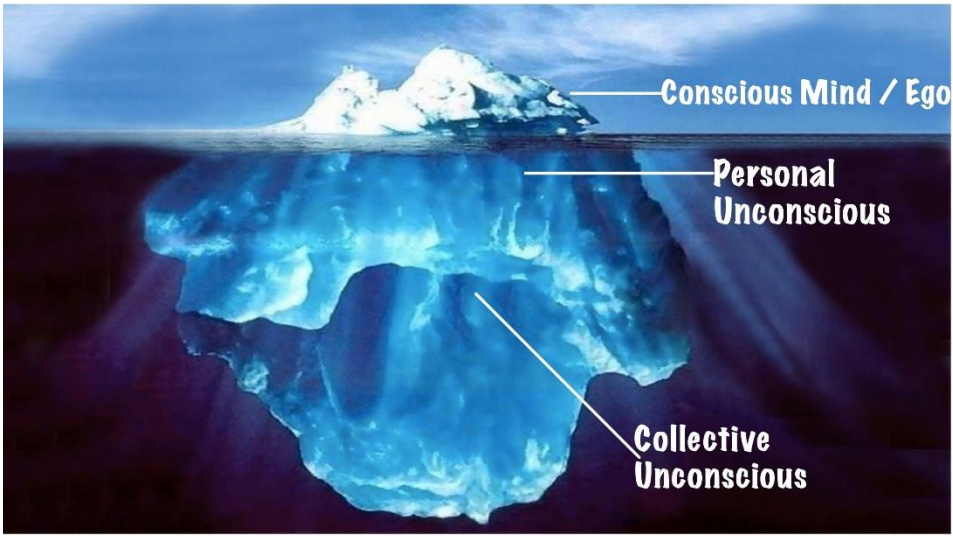
experiences. It is like counselling but we can choose to explore more deeply, especially the unconscious aspects of ourselves. This can be exciting, surprising and transforming.

Spirituality - There is no single agreed definition of spirituality, but we could say that it is concerned with the human spirit or soul, in connection with the universe. What would be your own definition?

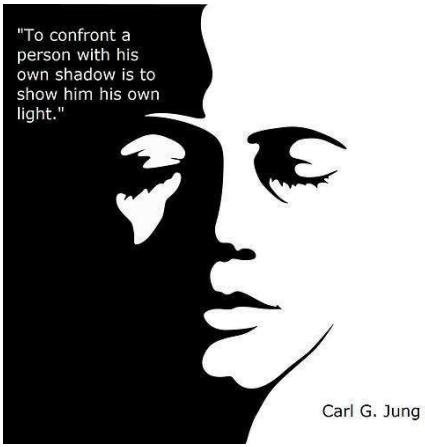
Mindfulness - Taking notice of your internal and external experiences as they unfold.

Meditation: Stilling or freeing our mind for a period of time, for spiritual purposes or for relaxation.

Unconscious - This picture of an iceberg reflects the conscious and unconscious parts of us according to Swiss psychoanalyst, Carl Jung. For most people, there is much more in their unconscious than they realise. The 'Collective Unconscious' relates to 'programming' in our genes and instincts in society and nature.



Carl Jung explained that there are hidden parts of us that we might not like, or don't recognise, but when we can see these and welcome them, they can really help us on our journey.



For example, we might feel that it is 'wrong' to be angry, but actually, our anger is a sign to us that something is wrong. James Finley a psychotherapist and formerly a Benedictine monk, said: 'Our anger is the angel with the sword of truth'. Those words are so similar aren't they?

ANGER^{age} and ANGEL^{ove}

Wellbeing (and spirituality?) on our journey

Let us look at what might support our wellbeing:

- Five steps to mental wellbeing (promoted by the NHS)

- **1. Connect** – Connecting with the people around you: your family, friends, colleagues and **neighbours**.
- **2. Be active** – Finding an activity that you enjoy and making it a part of your life.
- **3. Keep learning** – Learning new skills can give you a sense of achievement and a new confidence.
- **4. Give to others** – Even the smallest act can count, whether it's a smile, a thank you or a kind word.
- **5. Be mindful** – Being more aware of the present moment, including your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

- Four wellbeing practices common to all cultures (quote from Angeles Arrien)

- 'Where we have stopped dancing, singing, being enchanted by stories, or finding comfort in silence, is where we have experienced loss of soul.'
- **'Dancing, singing, storytelling and silence** are the four universal healing salves.'

- Which of the above do you find supports your wellbeing most, and which might you benefit from giving a little more attention to?
- Can you identify any aspects of spirituality in these?

11.15-11.45 Coffee break and reflective time

11.45 **Session 2 – Who is this 'Self' on the journey of life?** (Prayer room)

Past, present, future:

There are ways of viewing our lives in stages – such as 'Erikson's psychosocial stages', or 'Fowlers stages of faith'.

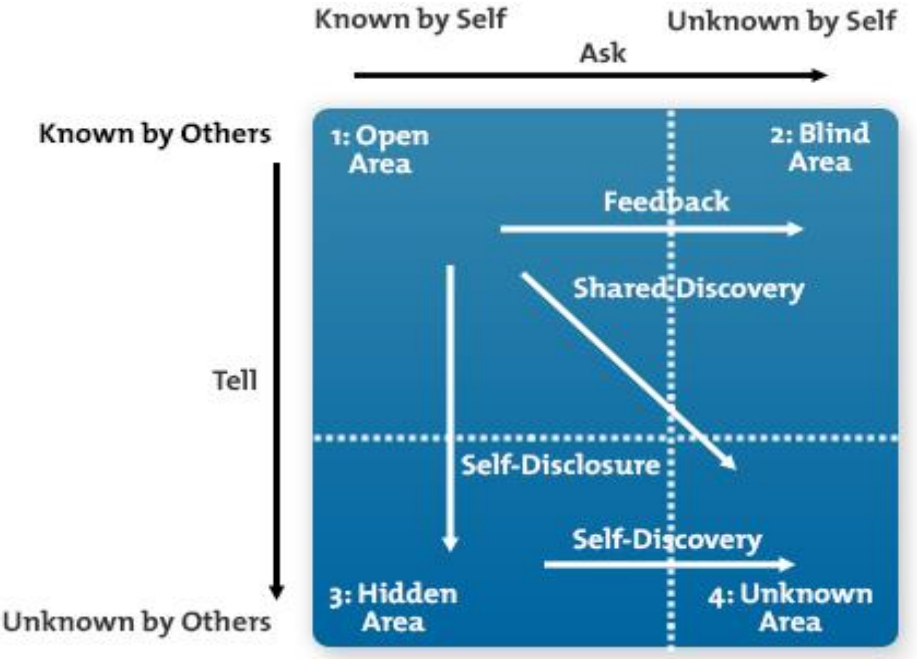
We could simply look back at the key events and people that shaped us, and we can look to the future – what might be next on our journey? This afternoon there will be an opportunity to explore our journey more creatively - past, present or future.

How much of our time and energy is spent looking back or looking forward?

How much are we present in our own lives in the very moment of the here and now?

The present moment - Inner awareness and outer awareness

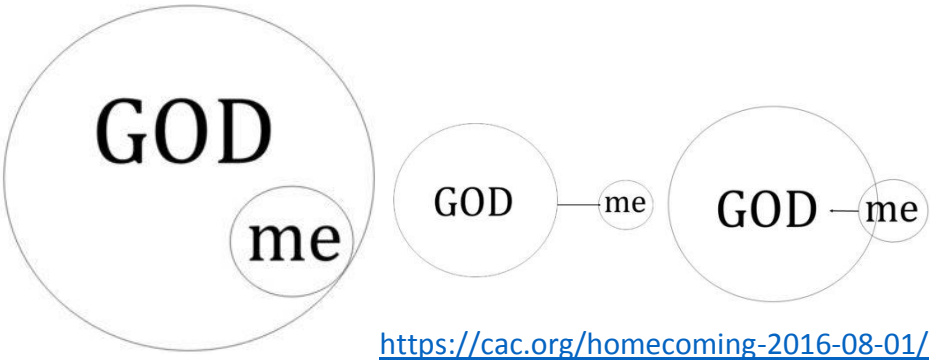
The **Johari Window** helps us to look at our awareness. Like the iceberg, the 'Unknown Area' is much bigger than is shown here.



- Optional exercises to notice outer and inner awareness

Who is this 'self' in relation to God? (Richard Rohr)

- Which diagram below do you most relate to?



https://cac.org/homecoming-2016-08-01/

Who is this self in our 'ego-consciousness'? (James Finley)

Ego-consciousness can be defined as our self-reflective bodily self in time and space and in relationship with others. That is:

- Our **thinking self** and all that it **thinks**
- Our **remembering self** and all that it **remembers**
- Our **feeling / emotional self** and all that it **feels**
- Our **bodily, sensing self** and all that it **senses** (Seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting, senses of temperature, pain, balance, gravity and inner body awareness)
- Our **behaving self** and all the way it **acts**
- Our **choosing self** and all that it **chooses**

➢ Optional exercises to notice these. (Feel free to just read or relax if any of them are not for you.)

After each exercise:

➢ How does it feel?– What is in your awareness?

➢ Can you experience anything spiritual in this exercise?

This is mindfulness – awareness

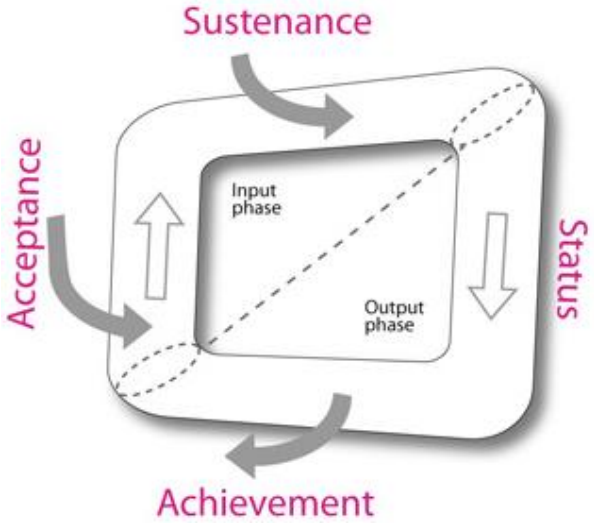
Spirituality (and wellbeing?) on our journey

Earlier we looked mainly at wellbeing. Let us now look at spirituality – and how this might relate to wellbeing.

- Four stages of the Dynamic Cycle (Frank Lake)

  This is based on the life of Christ as a 'model' human being. If we are first **ACCEPTED**, then we are open to receiving **SUSTENANCE** (relational, spiritual and bodily).

Then, we feel well enough and valued enough to have a sense of **STATUS**, and only then can we **ACHIEVE** our potential as human beings.



In the case of Christ:

- **1. Acceptance -** of Christ the Son by His Father: "This is my Son, whom I love" (Matthew 3:17)
- **2. Sustenance -** Christ abides in the Father and his well-being derives from this: 'The only begotten Son who is at the Father's side.' (John 1:18)
- **3. Status -** "I am from above" (John 8:23)
- **4. Achievement -** This is strictly limited to the Father's will: "The Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing." (John 5:19; see also verses 30 and 36)
- http://www.bridgepastoral.org.uk/dynamic-cycle.htm#sustenance

We tend to go round the cycle the wrong way, and only feel accepted if we achieve! This can be very damaging to our wellbeing.

- Seven steps to spiritual healing (James Finley)

Psychotherapist, James Finley has journeyed alongside many people seeking spiritual healing. Through his observations, he has identified these seven steps to spiritual healing:

- **1.** Be grounded in your experience of who you are as a human being, in relationship with others. Take responsibility for the healing that needs to occur there.
- **2.** Have faith in the subtle flashes of spiritual awakening that occur each day. Trust these moments reveal that although you are ego, you are not just ego. You are a spiritual being, created in the image and likeness of God who is spirit.
- **3.** Realize that the root of suffering is estrangement from spiritual experience. The root of happiness is spiritual experience.
- **4.** Follow the mystics on the path of prayer and meditation that heals the root of suffering in its origin.
- **5.** Follow the path of compassionate love that heals the roots of suffering that have found their way into our minds and hearts (facing and working through bodily and psychological suffering in a spiritually grounded way).
- **6.** Learn to live in the axial moment that transcends suffering in the midst of suffering.
- **7.** Devote yourself in prayer, meditation and compassionate love to the lifelong process of learning to be a healing presence in the midst of the world. Be resolved to continue living in this way until the last traces of suffering dissolve in love and only love is left.

It is only about our INTENTION to live this way. Our intention IS the path

➢ Is there anything about wellbeing in this?

In mindfulness and meditation, we become aware that although we are our ego, we are not just our ego. This in itself is freeing and healing. Mindfulness can positively change the way we feel about life and how we approach challenges.

Is there a paradox? In seeking to know ourselves and support our wellbeing, might we come to realise that we are not individual 'selves' but in an oceanic oneness with our creator? 'The sponge is in the ocean' AND 'the ocean is in the sponge.'

12.30-1.30 Lunch

1.30 **Session 3 – Reflections on journeying** (Prayer room)

Becoming free as travellers

The practices of mindfulness, meditation, prayer, and Lectio Divina, and the processes within psychotherapy, can help us to find peace in the midst of suffering, and free us to the flow of our Journey of life. Here are some quotes to reflect upon:

'I would love to live as a river flows, carried by the surprise of its own unfolding'. (John O'Donohue)



'No despair of ours can alter the reality of things; or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there. Indeed, we are in the midst of it, and it is

in the midst of us, for it beats in our very blood, whether we want it to or not. We are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance.' (Thomas Merton)

Meditations – examples of Buddhist and Christian approaches

You may wish to have a look at the examples of Meditation provided on the sheets here today. There will be an opportunity to do a meditation in our reflective time.

Caution: If you have not done meditation before, it may be better to start with a more structured practice such as reflective / contemplative reading or Lectio Divina. Sometimes, especially if people have experienced trauma in their lives, the silence and space of meditation can be difficult. Trust your soul compass to guide you to what practice is best for you.

Options for reflective / free time (choice of locations):

We hope you can feel free to choose one or more of the options listed below, to explore your journey of life. There are activity guidance sheets in the rooms to help you get started.

- Meditation practice - 20 minutes (Prayer room)
- Drawing your journey of life (Creative room)
- Painting stones – quote from today (Creative room)
- Creating a 'soul compass' (Creative room)
- Contemplative reading / Lectio Divina (Lounge or Quiet room)
- Connecting mindfully with nature (Garden and / or Labyrinth) Guidance sheet is in reception)
- Free time (any downstairs locations, or prayer room after meditation ends.)

- Listen to yourself / your soul compass and notice what it is that you feel drawn to.



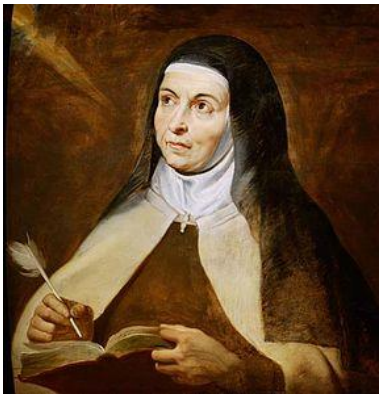
If you want to go off site, e.g. Romsey Abbey, just let one of us know.

3.15 **Ending and new beginnings** (prayer room)

Time to share if you wish

A quote from Teresa of Avila:

> 'May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be content knowing you are a child of God. Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love. It is there for each and every one of us.'



Painting: *Saint Teresa of Ávila* by Peter Paul Rubens

Any questions?

A Blessing: 'For a New Beginning' – by John O'Donohue

In out-of-the-way places of the heart,
Where your thoughts never think to wander,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.
It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the grey promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.
Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning
That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home in a new rhythm,
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

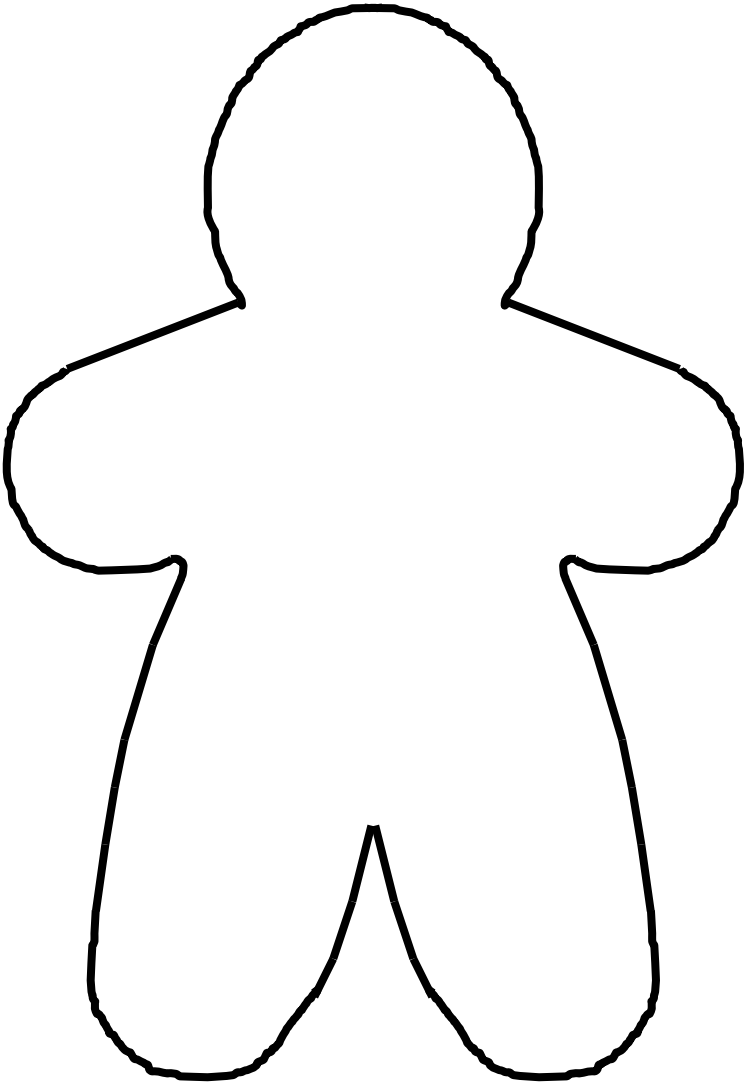
3.40-4.00 **Tea and cakes**

END – Journey well

Exercise 1 - Exploring Awareness

This is an opportunity to be curious. Over a period of time, make a note on the picture of anything in your awareness.

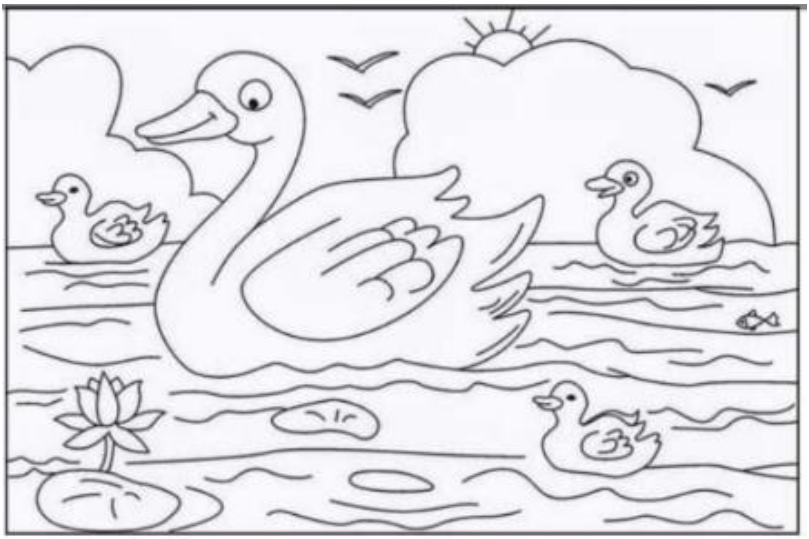
What do you notice within you and what is outside you. What is most prominent, and what is fleeting awareness?

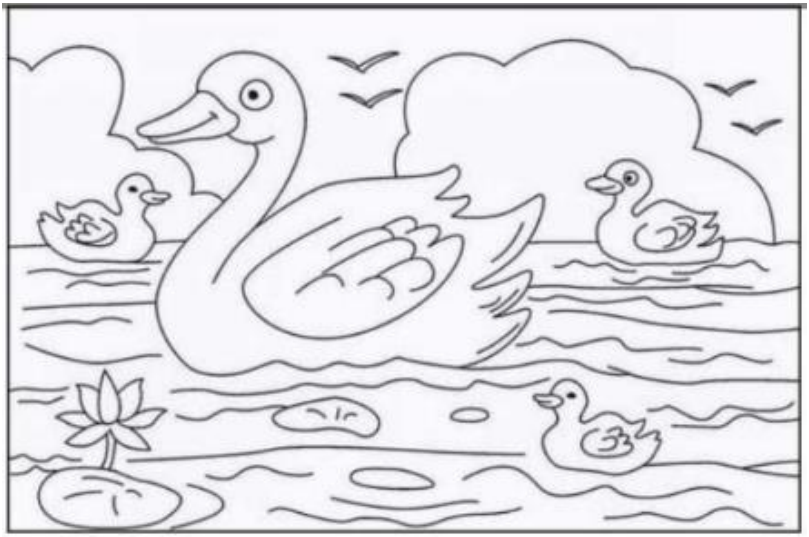


Exercise 2: Ego consciousness – awareness of thinking

Please note that this is not a test, just a chance to be curious.

Can you spot any differences? (There are ten in total)





Exercise 3: Ego consciousness – awareness of feelings / emotions in self and others

This is not a test, just a chance to be curious.



Six basic emotions:

Surprise; Happiness; Fear; Anger; Disgust; Sadness

Which would you link to each facial expression?
Write in the corresponding order in the table below

There are hundreds of different feeling words in English. What emotion or feeling, if any, are you aware of now?

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