

Nature as Metaphor: Embracing the Storm

Name _____ Date _____

Understanding the Storm

Emotions like stress, anxiety, and depression are not failures. They're natural responses, like storms in the weather. Storms are a natural part of the weather, and emotions are a natural part of being human. Everyone has feelings of anxiety, depression, or stress from time to time. Mindfulness-Based Ecotherapy teaches that instead of fighting difficult feelings, we can observe and accept them as part of being alive. This practice helps you relate to your emotions with less resistance and more understanding and mindful acceptance.

Reflection Questions

What storms are present in your life right now?

How do you usually respond to difficult emotions?

How do you resist or try to avoid your feelings (telling yourself not to think about it, etc.)?

How does a storm in nature remind you about your own emotional experiences?

Ecotherapy Exercise: “Sitting with the Storm”

Instructions

1. Go outside and notice the current weather (yes, even if it’s inconvenient. Just take an umbrella and wear a raincoat).
2. Find a place to sit or stand comfortably.
3. Take a few slow breaths and notice your body.
4. Observe the weather without judging it (wind, clouds, rain, temperature).
5. Imagine your emotions as this weather, shifting and changing.
6. Notice any urge to resist discomfort, in the weather or yourself.
7. Allow both the weather and your feelings to exist without trying to change them.

Stay with this for 3–5 minutes.

Prompted Reflection

What did you notice about your emotional state during this exercise?

Did anything shift when you allowed it to be there?

Did seeing your own emotions as a natural part of your emotional “weather” help you? How?

What felt hardest to accept about your emotions?

Integration: Calming Your Storms

Journaling Prompts

How might your life change if you could stop fighting your emotions?

What emotions do you resist most often?

What helps you stay present during difficult feelings?

What is one small way you can practice acceptance of your emotions this week?

Micro-Practice

Do this at least once every day: Pause, notice what you're feeling, and silently say: "This is here right now."

Optional Challenge

The next time a difficult emotion arises, spend 2 minutes noticing it without distraction, avoidance, or trying to "fix" it. It may help to picture it like a storm that will soon pass.

Emotions behave a lot like weather. The only real choice is whether you learn how to stand in the rain without falling apart. There is no such thing as a "wrong" feeling. What may or may not be helpful is how we choose to respond to our feelings. Embracing the storm allows us to respond in another way.