

Mindfulness Course For Health & Well Being

Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

PRACTICE SESSION & WORKBOOK

SESSION THREE: *Gathering the Scattered Mind*

The attitude we might bring to practice this week:

We do it without striving and without forcing.

*We practice accepting our body as we find it,
in the present, from one moment to the next.*

While sitting, or stretching or balancing,

we learn to work at our limits,

maintaining moment-to-moment awareness.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

These hand-outs have been developed by Mindfulness Practitioners and Mindfulness Service User Volunteers, using a range of resources that include Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1991), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale (2013), The Mindful Way through Depression by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2007) and The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal (2014).

SESSION 3 MAIN PRACTICES AND DISCUSSIONS

- Gentle stretching & guided sitting.
- Three minute breathing space.
- Mindful walking.

Two monks wishing to visit another monastery sought permission to do so. They were told that this was possible, but only if they vowed not to speak with anyone or touch anything (or anyone) on their journey. Agreeing to this proviso they set off, travelling by foot to their destination.

They hadn't been travelling long when a violent storm blew up and shortly afterward they came across a foot bridge which had collapsed partially. They somehow managed to struggle across, but just before they reached the other side, they heard screaming and observed a woman in the river, shouting for "help". They looked at each other and suddenly one of the monks jumped in, dragged the woman out of the river and left her safely on the bank.

The other monk was so, so angry that his friend had broken his vow. On his way up to the monastery he could barely hide his anger and outrage. He thought of nothing else the whole way and was tormented and disturbed by these feelings and thoughts.

On arrival he confronted his friend about the broken vows, "How could you?" He shouted.

His friend replied,

"You my friend, have carried that woman on your shoulders all this way - I, my friend left her on the river bank.



Brought to a follow-up meeting by Anne Mort, previous group participant (27.03.10)

GUIDANCE ON HOME PRACTICE

SESSION THREE: *Gathering the Scattered Mind*

GUIDED PRACTICE:

- On Days 1, 3 & 5, do the *Guided Sitting* and on Days 2, 4 & 6, do the *Mindful Movement* practice. Record and reflect on your practice experiences using the diary on the next page
- Use the USB stick to download the practices

If you have back problems, heart problems or high blood pressure or other health difficulties that may cause problems, make your own decision as to which (if any) of these movements to do. If in doubt, err on the side of caution.

- Practice *The Three Minute Breathing Space* three times a day, at set times that you have decided in advance and record on the record sheet.
- Complete the *Unpleasant Experiences BLOB*, (one entry a day) as a way to become really aware of thoughts, feelings and body sensations associated with unpleasant experiences each day. Notice and record as soon as you can, **in detail**, the actual words or images you noticed and the precise nature and location of bodily sensations.
- Read and reflect upon the optional hand-out: *Befriending our Feelings*.

EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS:

- Choose a different routine activity in your daily life and make a deliberate effort to bring moment to moment awareness to that activity each time you do it.



Week 3 Daily Practice diary

Day 1 (Sitting Practice): What did you do when you noticed that your mind had wandered?

I've been thinking of a thousand and one other things. It's very difficult to keep myself from going into the future, thinking about things. I try to control it, and maybe it works for 2 minutes but then I go off again.

It's natural to feel we should do something to control or get rid of thoughts, so it's important to remember that we're not aiming to push thoughts away or squash them down - if we do that, we just give them more energy and they bounce back even more strongly.

We aren't aiming to put the brakes on the thinking mind - the aim is to recognise "here is thinking," and, as best we can, let go of the thinking and focus back on the breath.

Day 2 (Mindful Movement): How easy was it to be aware of body sensations in this practice, compared to the sitting meditation?

For me this was easier - the sensations from the body as I moved and stretched were much "louder" and easier to notice than when I was sitting - and because there was less silence, my mind didn't wander so far away. I enjoyed the practice.

Many people find the same- that's why mindfulness of the body in movement, wherever we are, can be such a helpful way to gather the scattered mind and return to the here and now.

Day 3 (Sitting Practice): During your practice, how kind or unkind were you to yourself when you noticed the mind wandering again and again?

I felt annoyed with myself - it's such a simple thing, I should be able to do it. I'm sure other people don't have this problem - I must try harder.

Most people at this stage of the program spend a good deal of time struggling to maintain the focus of their attention on the breath. As best you can, acknowledge the wandering of the mind as "just how it is right now" and respond with as much gentleness, kindness, and humour as you can - and if you can't be kind, be kind to that too!

Day 4 (Mindful Movement): How did you respond to any intense body sensations you experienced?

I didn't want to feel them! So I didn't really push or stretch myself as much as I should.

The skill of directly approaching and moving the awareness right into unpleasant body sensations is a central part of learning to work with difficult emotions in the body. Mindful stretching allows us to "work the edge" with intense body sensations - we gently move awareness closer and closer to intense sensations until we chose to go no further, backing off a little if we like, and then, when we are ready, we gradually approach the intensity once more, knowing we can choose to ease the stretch at any pint.

Day 5 (Sitting Practice): How much physical discomfort did you experience?
How did you respond?

My back was aching, my knees were painful - it took a real effort to stay focussed on the breath and not move - but I hung on in there until the end.

The idea isn't to feel that you have to endure physical pain indefinitely as a test of endurance or character! It's best not to move as soon as you feel any hint of discomfort (because that will strengthen the habit of automatic avoidance) but, once you've explored the intense sensations with wise and gentle awareness, it's fine to move mindfully as an act of kindness to yourself

By intentionally moving our awareness gently and gradually toward uncomfortable sensations we begin to undo the deeply rooted habit of needing to avoid unpleasant feelings - which is energy that keeps all difficult emotions going.

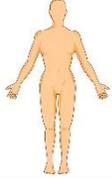
Day 6 (Mindful Movement): What bodily reactions to intense sensations did you notice? How did those reactions feel?

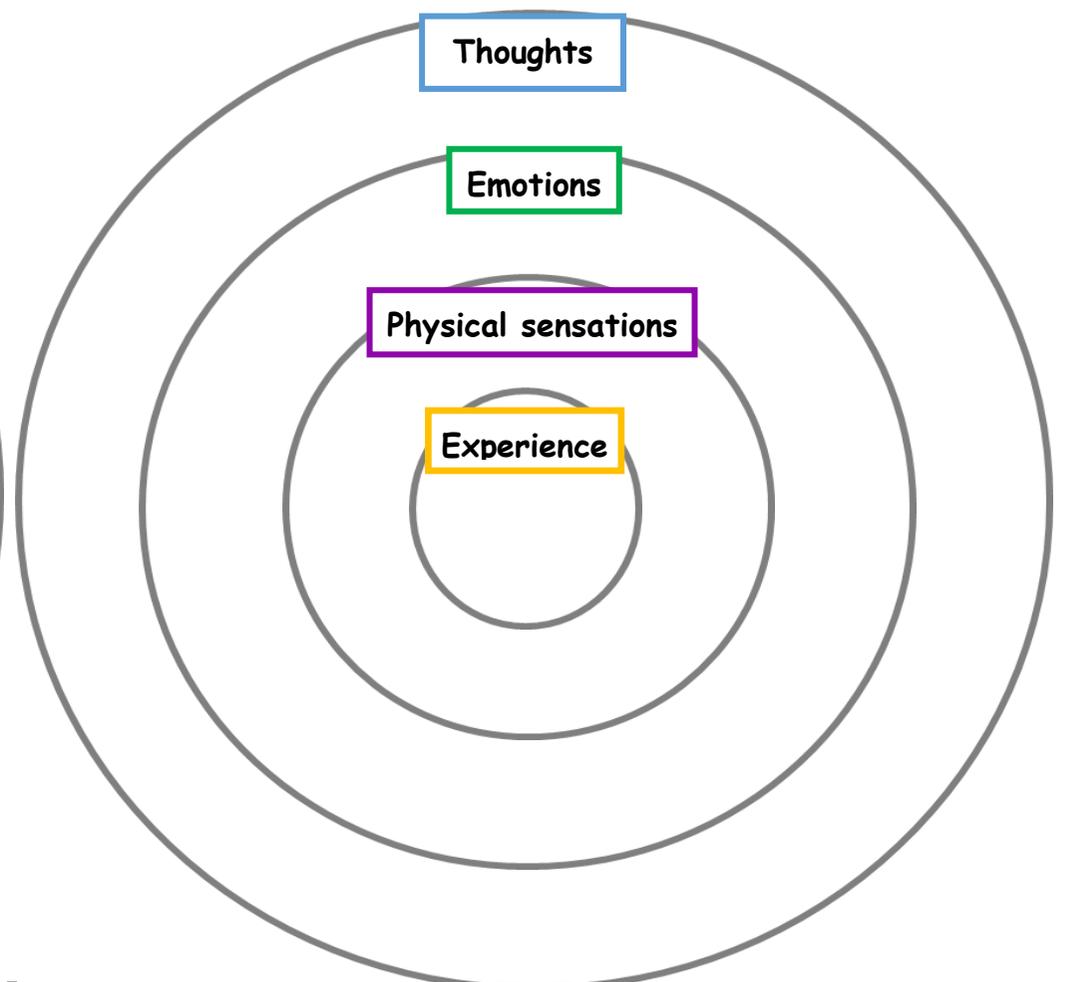
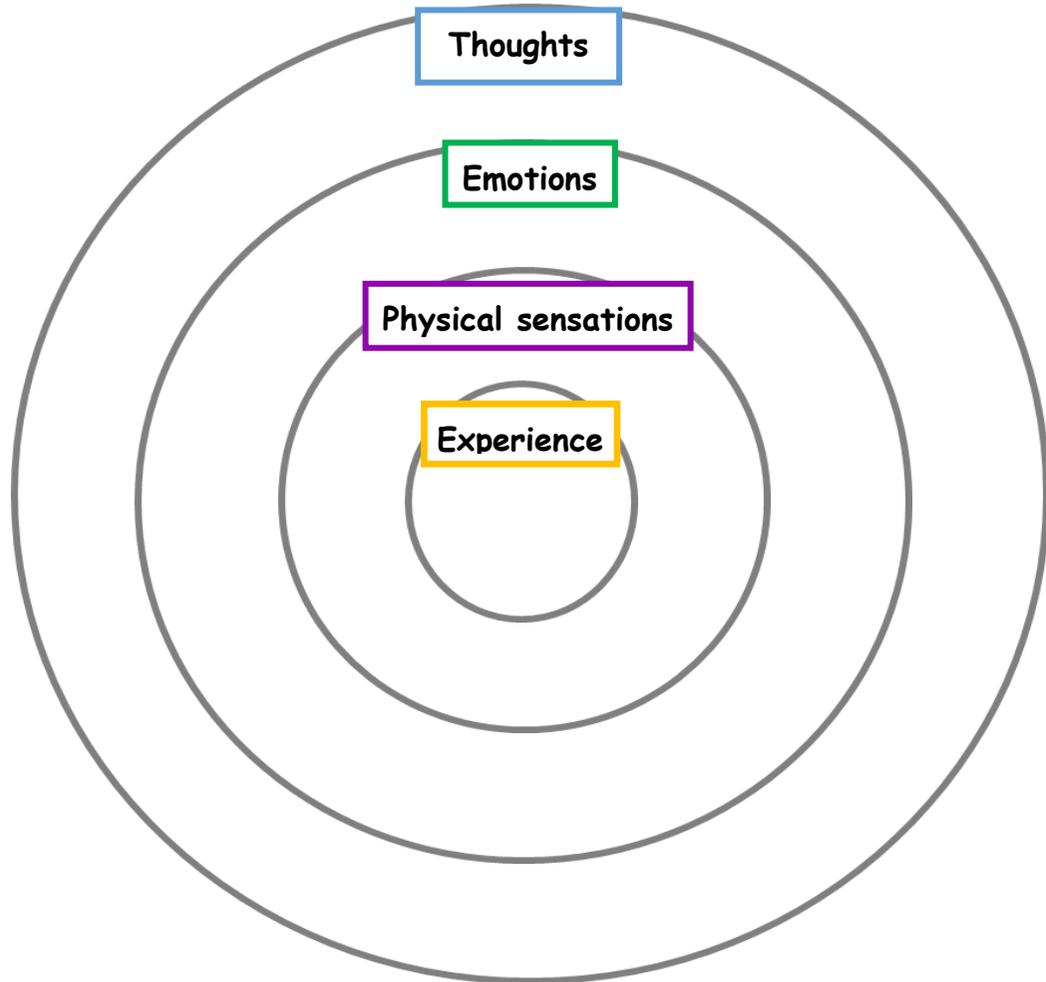
I noticed I was tensing and bracing against the stretches - and that, itself, felt uncomfortable

This practice can help us begin to see the way we often ADD EXTRA to unpleasant sensations or feelings - there is (a) the unavoidable discomfort from holding stretch longer than usual and (b) the avoidable discomfort from resisting those sensations or from striving and pushing ourselves to reach a standard that WE (not the instructions!) have set for how the practice should be done.

We'll have much more to say next week about how we habitually ADD EXTRA to unpleasant sensations or feelings.

The Blob (Unpleasant Experience)

<p>Experience</p> <p>What was the experience?</p> 	<p>Physical sensations</p> <p>What did you notice in your body?</p> 	<p>Emotions</p> <p>What feelings were you aware of?</p> 	<p>Thoughts and thinking</p> <p>What thoughts came up?</p> 
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THEME: *Gathering the Scattered Mind*

The mind is often scattered and lost in thought because it is working away in the background to complete unfinished tasks and strive for future goals. Instead we need to find a way to intentionally "come back" to the here and now. The breath and body offer an ever present focus on which we can reconnect with mindful presence, gather attention and settle the mind, and ease ourselves from doing into being.

THE BREATH

Breath is life. You could think of the breath as a thread or a chain that links and connects all the events of your life from birth - the beginning - to death - the end. The breath is always there every moment, moving by itself like a river.

Have you ever noticed how the breath changes with our moods - short and shallow when we're tense or angry, faster when we're excited, slow and full when we're happy, and almost disappearing when we're afraid? It's there with us all the time. It can be used as a tool, like an anchor, to bring stability to the body and mind when we deliberately choose to become aware of it. We can tune into it at any moment during everyday life.

Mostly, we're not in touch with our breathing - it's just there, forgotten. One of the first things we do in mindfulness-based cognitive therapy is to get in touch with it. We notice how the breath changes with our moods, our thoughts, our body movements. We don't have to control the breath. Just notice it and get to know it, like a friend. All that is necessary is to observe, watch and feel the breath with a sense of interest in a relaxed manner.

With practice, we become more aware of our breathing. We can use it to direct our awareness to different aspects of our lives. For example, to relax tense muscles, or focus on a situation that requires attention. Breath can also be used to help us stay aware of ourselves when dealing with pain, anger, relationships or the stress of daily life. During this program, we will explore this in detail.

Karen Ryder, Instructor, Stress Reduction Clinic.

Summary of Intentions for the Breath Meditation

- Brings you back to this very moment, the here and now.
- Is always available as an anchor and haven, no matter where you are.
- Can actually change your experience by connecting you with a wider space and broader perspective from which to view things.

MINDFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

TAKING A BREATHING SPACE

Most of us who have decided to commit to the 8-week mindfulness course will have done so in the hope that learning mindfulness skills will benefit us when facing difficult times in life. Unfortunately, many of these difficult situations do not allow us the time or space to carry out a longer mindfulness practice such as a 40-minute body scan or a mindful stretching exercise.

For this reason, the originators of the Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy devised a brief practice that was portable and could be used in everyday situations when we need it - The Breathing Space.

By Kieran Fleck

'Throughout the course I feel I have progressed significantly. Although I have not had time to do the practice every day, I have developed an awareness of my negative thought patterns, and reactions to situations. By using the 'breathing space' I have reacted in a different way to difficult situations - rather than trying to control or change, becoming aggressive, upset or angry, I have been able to recognise such situations, take a deep breath and accept that I can't change or improve the situation. I feel less aggressive than before and have an inner peace.'

Written by an MBCT Course Participant.

MBCT Participant quote from:

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/pdf/Paramabandhu%20Groves%20Spiritual>

The Breathing Space can be used as a first step responding to difficulty, allowing us to make contact with the present moment at the point where our minds are in danger of racing into the future, the past or to unhelpful judgements and conclusions.

The Breathing Space acts as an interrupter to the habitual patterns of brooding, worrying, catastrophising that we can find ourselves in as we encounter adverse events.

By Kieran Fleck

THE BREATHING SPACE: Basic Instructions

STEP 1. BECOMING AWARE

Become more aware of how things are in this moment by deliberately adopting an erect and dignified posture, whether sitting or standing. If possible, close your eyes. Then, bringing your awareness to your inner experience and acknowledging it, ask,

"What is my experience right now?"

- What **THOUGHTS** are going through the mind? As best you can, acknowledge thoughts as mental events, perhaps putting them into words.
- What **FEELINGS** are here? Turn toward any sense of discomfort or unpleasant feelings, acknowledging them.
- What **BODY SENSATIONS** are here right now? Perhaps quickly scan the body to pick up any sensations of tightness or bracing, acknowledging these sensations.

STEP 2. GATHERING

Then redirect your attention to focus on the physical sensations of the breathing itself.

Move in close to the sense of the breath in the abdomen....feeling the sensations of the abdomen wall expanding as the breath comes inand falling back as the breath goes out.

Follow the breath all the way in and all the way out, using the breathing to anchor yourself into the present.

STEP 3. EXPANDING

Now expand the field of your awareness around the breathing so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression.

If you become aware of any sensations of discomfort, tension, or resistance, take your awareness there by breathing into them on the in-breath. Then breathe out from those sensations, softening and opening with the out-breath.

As best you can, bring this expanded awareness to the next moments of your day.

Adapted from: Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale (2013).

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PRACTICE

As well as the sitting and lying practices, this course introduces us to a mindful awareness of movement. The mindful movement practices shown below and on the download site, guide us through movements where we have an opportunity to tune into what is happening with our bodies in the here and now.

These practices are based on hatha yoga, which is practiced as a form of meditation in its own right

The aim of these practices is not to increase our suppleness or physical strength, but to invite a moment-to-moment awareness of changes in body sensations, to really *be* in our bodies, right here, right now.

The attitude to bring to these practices is the same as all of the mindfulness practices, one of *openness, gentleness and curiosity*

Mindful yoga is a lifetime engagement--not to get somewhere else, but to be where and as we actually are in this very moment, with this very breath, whether the experience is pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Our body will change a lot as we practice, and so will our minds and our hearts and our views. Hopefully, whether a beginner or an old-timer, we are always reminding ourselves in our practice of the value of keeping this beginner's mind.

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Jon Kabat-Zinn quote from: <http://www.shareguide.com/Zinn.html>

Some of the stretches or postures may be pleasant or invigorating, some may have adverse elements that are more difficult. The important thing is the intention to *be with* what may be perceived as adverse, as much as what is perceived to be pleasant - *welcoming* all.

As with any physical activity, work within your limits and let your body guide you in stretching and moving safely.

The movements provide us with a direct way to connect with awareness of the body. The body is a place where emotions are expressed, sometimes just under the surface and out of our awareness. Becoming more aware of the body gives us an additional place to stand and observe how we are feeling.

Summary of Intentions for Mindful Movement

- Build on the foundation of the body scan in learning how we can bring awareness to and "inhabit" body experience/sensations.
- See old habitual patterns of the mind - especially those that emphasise striving.
- Work with physical boundaries and intensity and learn to accept our limits.
- Learn new ways of taking care of ourselves

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PRACTICE: STANDING OR SITTING

DON'T STRAIN, WORK SLOWLY & MINDFULLY. DON'T DO ANY STRETCH THAT IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU.

Sequence of Postures



1.



2.



3.



4.

Both sides



5.

Both sides



7.



8.

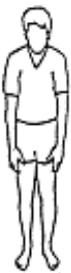


9.

NECK ROLLS

ADVICE: When doing neck rolls, only move gently and never roll your head back

6.



10.



11.



12.



13.

SHOULDER ROLLS

ADVICE: A slow gentle movement, forward then backward



14.

A GENTLE TWIST



15.



16.

DIP DOWN SLOWLY



17.

STANDING

MINDFUL MOVEMENT PRACTICE: LYING DOWN STRETCHING

DON'T STRAIN, WORK SLOWLY & MINDFULLY. DON'T DO ANY STRETCH THAT IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU.



1. Lying down on back



2. Full body stretch

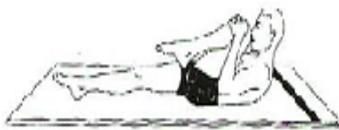
(left arm/leg, right arm/leg; opposite then both arms and legs).



3. Pelvic tilt



4. Spinal rock - side to side



5. Leg lock pose (both sides)



6. Cat stretch



7. Pose of a child (adapted pose of a child)



8. Seated Mountain (easy pose)



8. Half Bridge - Bring the soles of the feet flat on the floor, close to the bottom. Breathing out and pushing the lower back into the ground, then on the in-breath gently raising the hips. On the out breath bringing the spine back to the floor top to bottom.



9. Cobra



10. Repeat Cat



11. Abdominal stretch



11. Lying down

THE BLOB (UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES)

Last week we asked you to complete a Pleasant Experiences Blob. The purpose of this was to encourage you to "tune in" and notice when pleasant experiences occur and to become more familiar with what thoughts, feelings and body sensations accompany these pleasant experiences.

This week we would like you to repeat this practice for Unpleasant Experiences and to become really aware of thoughts, feelings and body sensations associated with an unpleasant experience, no matter how big or small. Notice and record as soon as you can, **in detail**, the actual words or images you noticed and the precise nature and location of bodily sensations.

One of the purposes of learning mindfulness techniques is to learn to connect or reconnect with our thoughts and feelings - those we like, those we don't like and those we don't know we have. Often when an unpleasant experience occurs we brush it off, push through our feelings, block out or distract from body sensations, feelings and thoughts about the event or triggered by the event. In habitually tuning out from unpleasant or painful experiences we learn to disconnect from negative or uncomfortable feelings and bodily sensations, sometimes muting our ability to feel anything, both positive and negative. We then handicap ourselves from dealing effectively with unhappiness.

Compare tuning out and disconnecting or distracting from unpleasant feelings to hearing a strange noise from your car engine whilst driving. Do you deal with it by turning the radio volume higher? It works well in temporarily masking the noise, but is not too effective in preventing the engine seizing up ten miles down the road. Lots of psychological evidence strongly suggests that anxiety, stress, depression or eating problems are often made worse as a result of efforts to escape and avoid emotions.

In the long run avoidance simply doesn't work as a way to deal with unwanted experiences or emotions.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE UNPLEASANT EXPERIENCES BLOB?

- Each of us has an internal monitor of experience that registers whether something is unpleasant, pleasant or neutral. It can act as an early warning system. When we learn to read it, we can free ourselves from knee-jerk aversion and in turn, worry or rumination.
- If the experience is here, present, in this moment, it has occurred. By becoming aware of what is happening in this moment, rather than tuning out, we can transform our cascade of reactions into a series of choice points.
- In transforming an unpleasant experience into its constituent parts, i.e. body sensations, feelings and emotions, thoughts, we then open up new possibilities in determining how we might respond.

If tuning into the unpleasant experience becomes difficult take your attention to noticing the breath. Perhaps count the breath as it moves into and out of the body. Begin to learn to use the breath as an anchor to the present moment. A place to dwell and steady the swell when the stormy seas of life threaten to overwhelm.

Sometimes it Rains

Sometimes it rains
When we were hoping for sunshine.
Try and escape the rain
And you will be wet, and tired.
Try and fight the rain
And you will be wet, and angry.
Be still, breathe, and accept the rain
And you will be wet, and calm.
In the calmness you might just remember that
The rain will pass.
Oh, and that you're carrying an umbrella.

By Peter Morgan

Emotional Tones

Oh the vibrant tones
These colours of the world.
The more we look
We may realise,
We see the colours
Painted on our eyes.
Imprisoned
By prisms,
Distorting before our eyes.
Not shades out there,
But shades we wear -
Imprints of times gone by.

By Peter Morgan