

**RAISIN EXERCISE**



**Time: Approx 5mins**

**Handout 1 or 2 raisins, a sweet or other dried fruit (have options for those who don’t like raisins).**

Before you begin, explain they are NOT to eat the raisin(s) but to wait for instruction. Acknowledge that it may seem silly at first but they will notice something different when the exercise has finished.

1. Take a raisin, piece of chocolate, sweet or strawberry in the palm of your hand. Imagine that you are a trusting alien just landed on the planet and you have been given an object that you do not know.

2. You now have it in the palm in your hand. Holding it in your palm begin to examine it. Look at the colour, feel the texture, weight, temperature and other characteristics of the object. Roll it around. Get to know it. Be curious… What went into making that raisin? Where did it come from?

(**Optional:**  Now compare it with the other raisin you have. Observe what differences there are).

3. Now, taking it to your nose, smell the object. Does it have a smell? Is it sweet smelling or sour? Take in the odour, whatever it is, if there is one.

4. Now, move the object over your lips, first the lower lip and then the upper. Feel the texture of the object as it moves over your lips.

5. When you are ready, gently place the object in your mouth, against the gums, slowly rolling it over the lower gums and then the upper gums as you feel its shape, texture, soft or hardness. And now, move the object over your teeth.

6 Finally, take the object into your tongue and push it against the upper palate and then the lower palate, feeling every aspect of the object. Move the object between your teeth and **slowly** bite into it. Feel the bursting of flavour and then begin to slowly chew, noticing whether or not saliva fills your mouth.

7. Work the object toward the back of the throat, getting ready to swallow the object and now, swallow it, observing it moving from the throat and finally into the stomach. See what it is to feel these sensations.

\* Adapted from the work of Jon Kabat Zinn, 1990 and Zindel Segal et al. 2002 NB This kind of exercise can be applied to daily mindful activities such as hearing or seeing in any situation (e.g. walking down the street or looking out a window). It can be applied to mindful walking, eating a meal or brushing one’s teeth. It can be used as a tool to bring us into the moment, allowing us to be more attentive and present with whatever is arising.

**Afterwards**

Discuss what they experienced. Describe what it was like for you when you first tried it. Maybe you felt a little silly at first.

What did it taste like?

Imagine how much pleasure you could get out food instead of just pushing it into our mouths. Eating slowly is healthier for our body too and can help us avoid becoming overweight. So practice being more focused and aware of your food.