

## **Mindfulness Meditation 4: Sending Thoughts Away On Leaves**

By: Wendy Wolfe, Ph.D.

*Introduction: Much of the emotional distress people experience is the result of thinking about upsetting things that have already happened or anticipating negative events that have yet to occur. Distressing emotions such as anger, anxiety, guilt, and sadness are much easier to bear if you only focus on the present – on each moment one at a time. This is an exercise to increase your mindfulness of the present moment so that you can clear away thoughts about past and future events.*

Start by observing your breathing.

Don't try to change anything about your breathing, just notice the sensations of breathing air into and out of your body.

Try to focus all of your attention on your breathing.

As you breathe, close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting beside a stream, with water gently flowing over rocks and rippling past you.

Let your mind become as clear as the water in the stream.

If any thoughts drift into your mind, imagine yourself breathing them out so that each thought flows downstream, like leaves on the current.

Allow your thoughts to drift away from you, like leaves floating downstream, until your mind becomes empty again – only filled by the image of crystal clear water.

Continue with this meditation until you hear the sound of the bell.

Adapted from:

Linehan, M.M. (1993). Skills Training Manual for Treating Borderline Personality Disorder. NY: The Guilford Press.