

clearing the mind 21

When we are overstressed and overbooked like so many people these days, it becomes hard to see which thoughts and signals are important and worth paying attention to, and which ones are false alarms. The more we have going on, the harder it is to separate our anxious thoughts from our important ones, with the result that we become overwhelmed.

It can help to imagine that your mind is a snow globe, with thoughts and feelings and sensations as the glitter that is swirling all around. Every time you do anything, the snow globe gets shaken. An argument with a friend will make the glitter swirl, and so will something exciting, like winning a game or getting asked out. As the glitter starts to swirl, it's much harder to clearly see the scene in front of you.

How can you get the glitter in the snow globe—or the thoughts and emotions in your mind—to settle so that you can see clearly? You need some stillness, which is exactly what mindfulness provides. Remember also that when the glitter settles, it doesn't go away; it just no longer distorts the clear view of what is in front of you.

Mindfulness Practice: The Snow Globe

- Find a snow globe, a glitter ball, or even just a jar with some water and sand or glitter, and shake it. Imagine what is floating around as your thoughts, and take a few moments to just watch as they settle. Experiment with shaking it up a lot or a little; either way, just watch and wait for it to settle.
- Now close your eyes and bring your attention to your mind. Try to imagine all of your thoughts settling with each breath. They never go away, but they can move aside and allow more clarity and calm in your own head.

You can even make your own snow globe from a kit and put your favorite inspirational images or quotes into it.