

RAIN Partners Protocol 2025

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WHAT ARE RAIN PARTNERS?

RAIN, the process of bringing mindfulness and compassion to difficult emotions, can be practiced with another person in a way that is deeply healing. RAIN partners agree to practice together on a regular basis—weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or whatever arrangement works. A session takes 25-40 minutes and can be done in person, by phone or via the internet. Continuing as partners over time allows for a deepening of trust, safety and mutual support.

WHO MIGHT DO THIS?

The prerequisites for being a RAIN partner are an established mindfulness practice (Insight Meditation/ Vipassana) and some experience working with the Recognize-Allow-Investigate-Nurture version of RAIN.

Your RAIN partner might be a friend, family member, colleague or someone you don't know. Each partner should review these guidelines.

HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT FROM PRACTICING RAIN ON MY OWN?

Practicing RAIN with a partner can provide a safe, supportive relational space that keeps you focused and accountable to your own healing, deepens intimacy with another person, reveals that “it's not so personal...others experience this too,” and serves awakening together. In other words, it's juicy!

You and your partner might choose to use the provided audio-guided RAIN practice for your sessions. If not, you will need to be familiar with the RAIN meditation, agree on a length of time for practicing it, and guide yourselves.

THE PROTOCOL

Preparation

Both partners reflect in advance on a “stuck place” where they are getting caught in difficult emotions. It might be something triggered in a relationship, at work, by a health issue or an addictive behavior, or events in our larger society. Each partner comes to the session with a particular situation in mind that activates the reactive pattern.

Note: It is important not to select situations that might set off trauma or emotions that are intense and overwhelming. Listen carefully to your own intuition as to what can be healthy to process and well contained in this partnering meditation.

You might find it helpful to bring water, tissues and journaling materials to the session. In addition, you might bring a bell, gong, or some other pleasant way of signaling the end of a timed portion of protocol.

When you convene with your partner, decide on who will be the first Speaker and who be the first Listener for the periods of sharing that occur before and after the RAIN practice. Also decide on who is tracking time for the different portions of the process—the initial “arriving” meditation; the sharing periods and the full meditation (if you are not using the guided RAIN recording).

The Session

- 1. Begin with a period of quiet meditation to settle (3 minutes).**
- 2. Share what you are focusing on (2 minutes each).**

The first Speaker briefly describes the situation they brought and names the primary emotions that are activated. The Listener remains silent, offering an open, compassionate presence.

Take a brief pause after the Speaker finishes, then switch roles.

Note: It's easy to get caught in storytelling. Try to name just enough to connect with the emotional core of the experience. Keeping to the 2-minute limit supports

mindfulness and focus.

3. Do the RAIN practice—either with the auditory recording or each silently, on your own (15 min)

R - Recognizing: Let your mind review the challenging situation, and mentally name the primary emotions that are arising. You might inquire: “What is most asking for my attention?”

A - Allowing: Bring your attention to whatever feels most difficult in what you have Recognized with the intention of fully “letting be.” Allowing is the willingness to pause and stay present with the life that is here, just as it is.

Allowing difficult emotions to be present requires gentleness and tenderness. Saying to yourself phrases such as “This too” or “Yes” or “This belongs” can help. This is about opening to your experience, even when it’s painful.

I – Investigating: In RAIN, investigating is about inquiring into the felt sense of our experience rather than being a cognitive or analytic process. Bring an interested and kind attention to your experience.

Some of the following questions may be helpful in your investigation. Feel free to experiment with the sequence and content of your inquiry:

- *What is the worst part of this? What most wants my attention?*
- *What is the most difficult /painful thing I am believing?*
- *What emotions does this bring up (fear, anger, grief?)*
- *Where do I feel these emotions inside?*
- *What do I notice when I assume the facial expression and body posture that best reflect these feelings and emotions?*
- *What does the most vulnerable place in me long for? How does it want me to be with it? What does it most need from me or some larger source of love and wisdom?*

These final questions are a transition to *N-Nurturing*. Stay connected with the vulnerable experience inside, and also sense that you are asking and listening from compassionate presence.

N – Nurturing; Take some moments to breathe consciously and adjust your posture in a way that helps you fully contact your most awake experience of heart and mind (sometimes perceived as your high or future self). Call on this wise and compassionate self or call on another being (such as a friend, family member, pet, teacher or a spiritual figure) whose wisdom and love you trust.

Offer inwardly the love, acceptance, forgiveness, compassion, or protection that the vulnerable part of you most needs. You might extend your care through words, touch (such as a hand on your heart) and/or imagery (such as seeing your inner child embraced or surrounded by light.)

As you complete Nurturing, you might sense if there is a message from your most awake heart/mind (future self) that will be helpful to remember.

After the RAIN: This is the time to cease any “doing” and to take some moments to rest in the presence and heart-space that has emerged. Relax and let it fill you. Get familiar with it. If you are feeling some new or residual difficulty, offer this your acknowledgment and care. Before closing, pay attention to the quality of your presence and ask yourself:

- *In these moments, what is the sense of my Being, of who I am?*
- *How has this shifted from when I began the meditation?*

Take some moments to journal and record what feels most important about your experience.

3. Reflective Practice with Partner (3 minutes each)

Each partner takes a turn reflecting aloud while the other listens silently and attentively.

Reflection Questions:

- *What was challenging about this practice?*
- *What did I experience or learn that I want to remember?*

After the first person shares, switch roles.

4. **Unstructured Sharing:** Maintaining a safe, respectful space for sharing (see below), take a few minutes to express anything else about your experience that feels important. This might include what it was like to listen to and share with another person.

WHAT HELPS CREATE A SAFE AND HEALING SPACE?

This partnering practice rests on a shared commitment to a safe, caring, and conscious space for transformational work. The times of sharing are a form of meditation—an invitation to practice mindful speaking and listening, and to discover the depth of connection that arises through relational presence.

Confidentiality and respect are essential. Everything shared is to be held in strict confidence. Unless your partner specifically asks for feedback, refrain from commenting, advising, or offering counsel.

- Set up multiple dates, not just one. Whoever cancels a session is responsible for scheduling the next one.
- Determine with your partner if you will connect in person, by phone or online.
- Start on time. Remember that it's easy to get lost catching up and you may not have the needed time for your co-meditation.
- Commit yourself to honoring the confidentiality of all that is shared.
- Don't choose to work on issues that may trigger trauma or emotional intensity that you anticipate might be overwhelming.
- Discontinue the session if, due to physical or emotional discomfort, either partner feels the need to end.
- Remember that you are not doing therapy with each other: Stay away from guiding each other in the process, or in any way trying to "fix" by interrupting to comfort or advise.
- When your partner is sharing about their experience, remain silent and remind yourself you are offering the gift of an accepting presence. Consider yourself an interested and caring witness.
- If some judgment or other strong reactivity arises as your partner is sharing, regard that with mindfulness and self-compassion.

- Offer feedback or advice only if asked.

Resource: [RAIN Partners Co-meditation](#) (an audio guide for RAIN Partners)

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