**Come home to your hub**

When our thoughts and lives are spinning, and we feel out of sorts, stressed, and discordant, then it’s time to return to the hub or the core of our being. This is a part of us that’s always available. It doesn’t have to be installed like software into a computer.

**The wheel.** If you think of an old cart wheel or a bicycle wheel, there is a central hub to which the spokes are attached and fan out to the rim. When the wheel is spinning very fast, you can’t see the spokes; or any details on the rim. We can use the image of the hub to settle and ‘centre’ ourselves. The first step is to slow everything down, for as soon as you notice that you are going too fast, you can practice returning to your inner hub.

* Each day for about 5-10 minutes, find a place where interruptions will be minimal.
* Give yourself the gift of time, move away from what you are doing and slow yourself by putting both feet flat on the floor (if you are sitting), straighten your back and breathe steadily in through your nose for a count of 3, pause a second; breathe out gently through your mouth for a count of 5. Do this 3-4 times and sense how your breath comes into your body and leaves with the out breath. What changes do you notice?
* Stand tall, push up with the crown of your head and at the same time push down through your spine and feel your body’s weight being supported through your feet. Stand flexibly with small balancing movements. Notice how your body feels now.

**The Hub** is where awareness of all the body’s activities arrives right there at the core of our being. When the wheel spins uncomfortably fast or erratically, chemicals in our brain are poured into the blood in order to stabilise us, but these are the stress hormones that can leave us exhausted and vulnerable to illness when there is too much going on inside for too long. The breathing exercises help to calm the brain so that those stress hormones can be replaced with ‘feel good’ hormones.

**The Rim.** A moving wheel always has contact with the ground. That part takes the weight for a brief time and then becomes free of pressure again. We are the same - sometimes we feel the pressure, and put all our focus there, where in fact the majority of the wheel is un-pressured. We need to pay attention to *all* the parts, and this is where the image of the wheel is helpful. Remember too, that the outside of the wheel spins much faster than the hub in the middle.

 **Mindfulness or focussed awareness** is the practice of coming into the still centre within, while looking out to the rim, and *simply noticing* what is happening out there. For example, it can help to remember; when you notice ‘heavy thinking’ to remind yourself, “Those are just thoughts, necessary brain activities”. Then check how your body feels. Notice any emotions rising and falling, any bodily sensations, warm, cool, tingling, numb etc? Check your breathing and your body for tension. Notice any movements; is your body still and rigid? Simply notice what is happening on your rim from your hub. (No need to change anything). The diagram can remind you of what to look for.

Just as a musician or athlete practices over and over to sharpen their skills and strengthen their muscles, similarly, the daily practice of simply noticing with a kind acceptance, will deepen your ability to calm yourself, slow the spinning, and live comfortably and more healthily within yourself.