The part of you that notices

An exercise in noticing the part of you that observes thoughts and feelings.

Thoughts, feelings, sensations and roles change all the time. There is one part of you that does not change: the part that notices them. It has been there all your life.

The sky and the weather

Your thoughts and feelings are like the weather: sunshine, drizzle, storms. The noticing part of you is like the sky. The sky has room for any weather. However fierce the storm, it cannot harm the sky. And sooner or later the weather changes.

A short exercise

1. Sit comfortably and take a few slow breaths.
2. Notice your breathing. And notice that you are noticing it. There is the breath, and there is you, aware of it.
3. Notice what you can hear. There are the sounds, and there is you, hearing them.
4. Notice what is in your body. There are sensations, and there is you, aware of them.
5. Notice what you are thinking. There go thoughts, and there is you, watching them.
6. Notice any feeling. There is the feeling, and there is you, noticing it.
7. Your breath, body, thoughts and feelings keep changing. The you that notices is the same you who was there last year, and when you were a child.

Why it helps

- If you can notice a thought, you are not the thought.
- However painful a feeling, there is a part of you that is not damaged by it.
- From this place, it is easier to let things come and go, and to choose what you do.

What was that like?

When could a reminder of "I am the sky, not the weather" help me?

The sky and weather metaphor is widely used in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy.

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