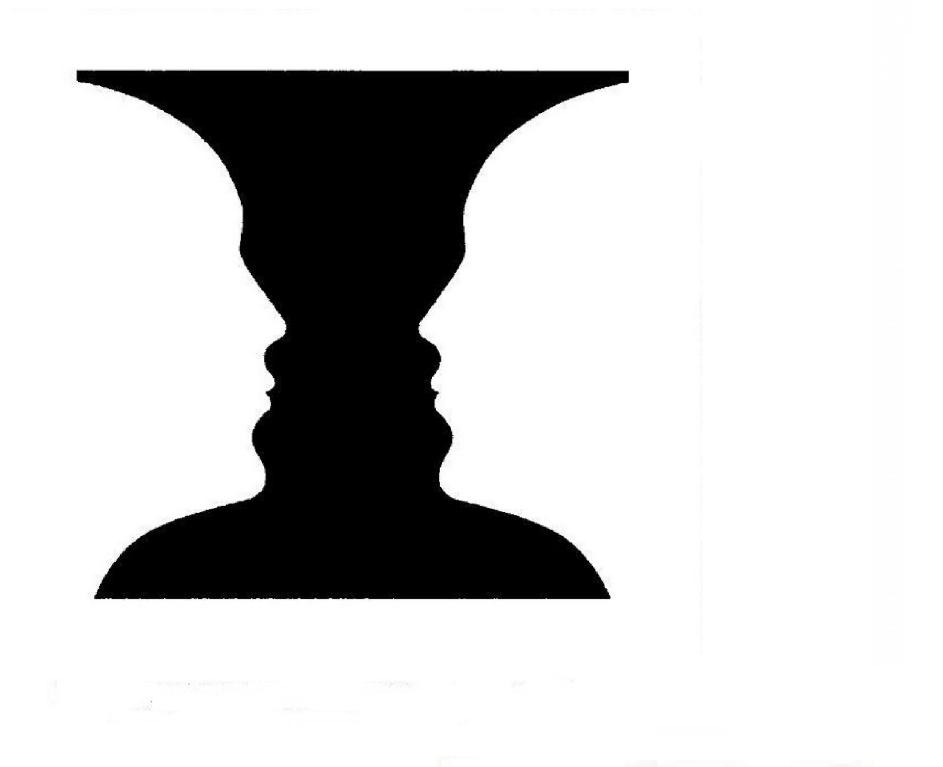




How Do I Work With My Wandering Mind?

Focus your attention on the black vase below for a few seconds...



... notice what happens: the white faces interrupt seeing the vase. However, notice that with an intentional redirection of your attention, you can bring the black vase back to the foreground as the faces temporarily recede to the background.

In the same way, during mindfulness practice, we set the intention to pay attention to the present moment (black vase) and notice every time our attention wanders into thoughts (white faces) and, without struggling, gently and intentionally return our attention to the present moment (black vase). Knowing that both the vase (present moment) and faces (thoughts) are both always going to be there, and the goal is not to get rid of the faces (thoughts), there is then no need to be disappointed or upset when our minds wander into thinking. The point is simply to know that there is both thoughts and the present moment, with the ability to *choose* where to place attention; in this case, back to the present moment. Like an elegant dance, we simply notice when thoughts are in the foreground and intentionally do another "rep" to return the present moment anchor to the foreground, as we strengthen our "mindfulness muscle".