### Two modes of mind1

We tend to process what comes to us in one of two modes of mind – the *approach mode* and the *avoidance mode*. We approach what we like, what makes us feel safe, what we unconsciously believe will enhance our survival. And we avoid the opposite.

When we are in the avoidance mode, it is not easy to switch to the approach mode and we tend to stay in avoidance mode, reacting to ourselves, others and the world from that stance. So we beat ourselves up, get irritable with others, and so on.

### Curiosity can act as a bridge from avoidance to approach modes

If, finding ourselves in avoidance mode, we can take an interest in our experience and treat it with acceptance and curiosity, then that switches us into the approach mode and some of the other feelings and responses that characterise approach mode are then available to us.

# Curiosity

As a bridge from avoidance to approach mode of mind

Roughness

Coldness

Hate

Self

-

centred

Disinterest

Rejection

Denial

Harshness

Gentleness

Compassion

Love

Empathy

Interest

Acceptance

Curiosity

K

indness

 Avoidance mode Approach mode

From Mindfulness Works course-book by Michael Chakalson

**The Guest House**

This being human is a guest house

Every morning a new arrival

A joy, a depression, a meanness,

Some momentary awareness comes

As an unexpected visitor

Welcome and entertain them all!

Even if they’re a crowd of sorrows,

Who violently sweep your house

Empty of its furniture

Still, treat each guest honourably. He may be clearing you out For some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice. Meet them at the door laughing, And invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent

As a guide from beyond. *Rumi*