

Eight Steps to Everyday Mindfulness

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A Mindfulness and Compassion Workbook



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Foreword

This workbook has been inspired by the countless conversations I've had with participants on the MBCT courses I have been privileged to teach. My hope is that these pages offer both a gentle call to take care of yourself and an invitation to begin or deepen a meaningful journey into greater awareness, kindness, and possibility.

Throughout the workbook, you'll find quotes, stories, and reflections from real participants, shared with permission, to support your learning and to remind you that you are not alone. Their experiences offer companionship on the path and illustrate the many ways mindfulness can become woven into everyday life.



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A gentle path in 8 steps

This workbook offers an eight-step journey into everyday mindfulness, a simple, compassionate path to feeling more present, steady, and connected in your life. Each step opens a door: to noticing yourself, waking up from autopilot, finding an anchor in the body, pausing in the middle of daily life, gaining new perspective, meeting difficulty with care, rediscovering joy, and shaping the habits that will carry you forward.

Take your time. Move gently. Let each step meet you where you are. These eight steps are not a programme to complete but a way of living that you can grow into - one moment at a time.

You **1** **Prioritising You and Self-Compassion**



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- How Are You?
- Ready to Change?
- Introducing Compassion

Wake Up **2** **Waking Up from Autopilot**



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- Managing the Inner Critic
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- Gratitude
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The Rest of your Life **8** **The First Day of the Rest of Your Life**



- Making New Habits
- Resources

Step One. Prioritising You





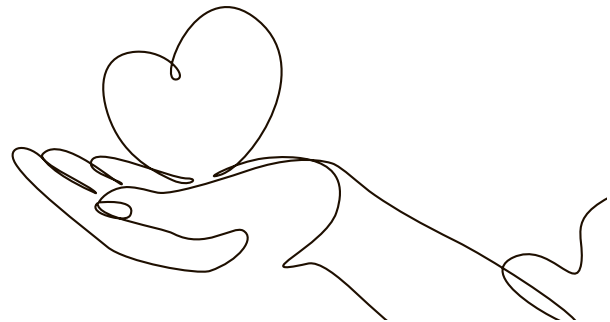
Step One. Prioritising You

Firstly, congratulations for opening this workbook. This is already a meaningful step toward taking care of yourself and prioritising your own needs and wellbeing. It is written for everyone - patients, staff, and anyone who feels they could benefit from a steadier, kinder way of relating to life. This workbook is for anyone feeling overwhelmed or stuck, and looking for a roadmap toward greater peace, perspective, and possibility. If you are experiencing more serious difficulties with your mental health, please seek additional support. This workbook is not intended to replace professional treatment.

Our aim is to help you gently renegotiate habitual patterns, get unstuck, and re-engage with your life. We thought carefully about calling this a “workbook,” as it might imply that you are here to “fix” yourself or your life. But here lies the paradox: mindfulness invites us to do the opposite. Instead of trying to think your way out of difficulty - a habit we all fall into, we invite you to pause, to turn toward your experience, and to embrace not knowing.

Ruminating about why things aren't going the way you want can leave you feeling even more trapped. Unlike many self-help guides that promise quick, linear solutions, this workbook offers something more radical and more compassionate: an invitation to notice your unhelpful habits of mind, reconnect with what supports you, and gently explore new ways of being that serve you better.

It's not about perfection or striving. It's about awareness, kindness, and choice - one step at a time.



Evidence based approach

All the approaches in this Workbook come from practices that have been around for thousands of years. Mindfulness has its roots in Buddhist philosophy, going back over 2,500 years, but what we use today has been carefully adapted for modern life.

Psychologists have taken these ancient ideas and blended them with research from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Compassion-Focused Therapy (CFT), and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT). The result is a practical, secular approach that anyone can use, regardless of background or belief.

Importantly, these methods aren't just “nice to have” - they are backed by a strong scientific evidence base. NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) recommends the approach for depression and suggests that employers offer ongoing access to mindfulness, yoga, or meditation.



Step One. Prioritising You

How to use the Workbook

This workbook is organised into eight steps. It's recommended that you take one step at a time and practise the exercises for at least a week before moving on. You are very welcome to read ahead, but it's important to emphasise that change comes from practice, not from reading alone. If you can find someone to practise with, you may find the journey easier and more enjoyable.

Each step includes an associated audio recording to support your practice. Either use the spaces made available in the workbook to write your reflections or have a journal for your notes. Practice the exercises for a week and then come back to the next chapter. If you can find someone to practise alongside you, this will help but is not essential. Read each Chapter and then listen to the relevant recording once through and then find a time and place to listen again and practise.

Many chapters have exercises and recommendations for how many times you could do these each day. The more you put into this programme the more you will get out but equally, please don't beat yourself up, if you miss a few days. After all, this Workbook is meant to make you feel better!

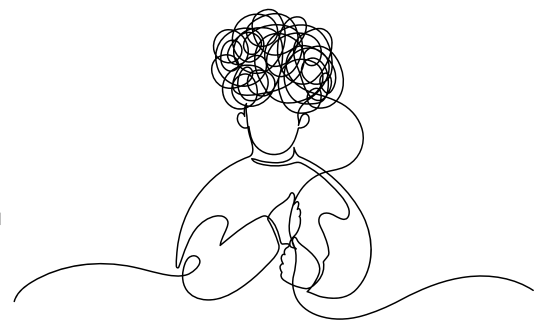
How Are You?

These live Questionnaires can help you determine how you are right now, in terms of anxiety and mood, and suggest what level of support you might need. It may help to download the pdf version to keep a record and maybe to repeat repeating at the end of the 8 weeks.

[Link to PHQ-9 and GAD 7](#)

If you need more support these questionnaires can also give you access to a referral to local Talking Therapies Services Talking Therapies & Glos Health & Care NHS Foundation Trust or speak to your GP.

Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ9)
General Anxiety Disorder Questionnaire (GAD7)
[Click here](#)



“When I did the questionnaires I was surprised that I was that anxious-it really helped me be more determined to make some changes in my life... mindfulness has really helped me learn to spot my early warning signs and take better care of myself,”

Mindfulness Course Participant, 2024



Are you ready to change?



What this Workbook offers you are simple yet profound ways to change your life. However, it can be difficult to maintain motivation to do the practices consistently. Your motivation for change is probably the most potent predictor to the outcome of this programme for you. Here are some questions for you:

How do you think this approach can help you in your work and life?

How might you practising CBT, mindfulness and compassion improve the lives of those around you? (e.g. family, partners, children, colleagues, patients)

How important is it to you that you fully participate in this approach? (10 is extremely important and zero is not at all important? Why did you select that number and not a lower number? e.g. "Why did you select a 6 and not a 2?")

Suppose you don't make any changes, but just continue as you have been. What problems do you foresee a year from now?



What are the worst things that might happen if you don't make use of this approach?

What are the best things that might happen if you incorporate these new approaches into your life?

What do you value most in your life?

In what way might this programme impact upon what you most value?

What might get in the way of your following this programme?



Some tips...

Decide to commit

Do the stepped programme with someone

Remember why you picked up the Workbook in the first place

Write down your progress and reflections in your own journal

The obstacles you encounter are very much part of the learning, all can be explored

Work out what time of day suits you best for practice

Intend to practise for a couple of minutes and see what happens...

Never tell yourself off, gently encourage yourself instead

'Don't let the perfect be the enemy of the good'





Compassion

“I used to think being kind to myself was self-indulgent. I see now that it’s the only thing that keeps me sane and steady when life gets messy.”

Mindfulness Course Participant, 2024

As you move through each week of this workbook, you’ll meet a range of practices and invitations. Beneath them all, lies something far more important: the quiet, steady cultivation of compassion for yourself.

The Compassionate Mind Foundation describes compassion as “a sensitivity to suffering in self and others, with a commitment to alleviate and prevent it.”

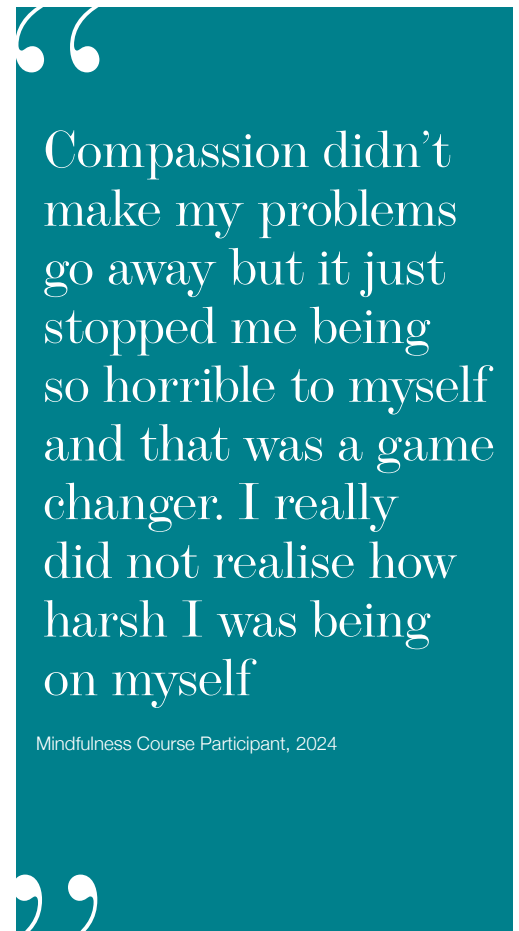
In my experience, most of us extend this kindness easily to others, yet struggle to offer even a fraction of it to ourselves. To help you remember its qualities, compassion can be held in the simple acronym S.A.F.E. - a reminder that compassion is, at its heart, a sense of inner safety.

Sympathy - the soft wish to care for yourself when you feel frightened, weary, or alone. The gentle instinct to place a hand on your own heart, just as you would for someone you love.

Acknowledgement - meeting yourself and your life exactly as they are in this moment. Not resignation, but recognition, the quiet truth from which all genuine change begins.

Forgiveness - the understanding that we are all human, prone to missteps and misunderstandings. Forgiveness loosens the grip of self-judgement and lets us breathe again.

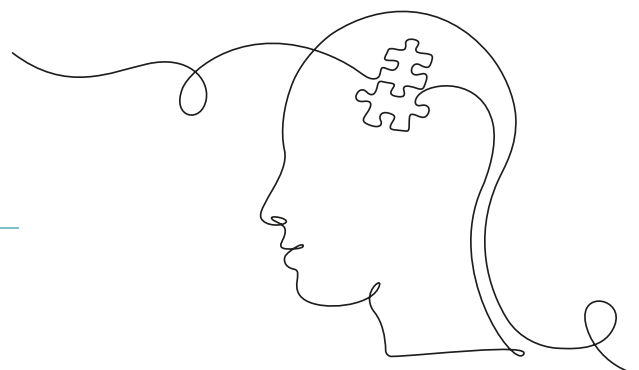
Empathy - the capacity to listen inwardly, to feel the shape of your own experience, and to sense the shared humanity that connects you to others.



Compassion didn’t make my problems go away but it just stopped me being so horrible to myself and that was a game changer. I really did not realise how harsh I was being on myself

Mindfulness Course Participant, 2024

Compassion is not something to achieve; it is something to uncover. A softening. A turning toward. A remembering that you, too, are worthy of kindness.





Exercise: Becoming Your Own Best Friend

Bring to mind someone - a family member, a friend, or even a special pet - with whom you have felt a deep bond. Someone you have loved or admired, someone who has touched your life with their presence.

Close your eyes for a moment and picture them clearly: their face, their posture, the way they move through the world. Let their qualities come alive in your mind's eye.

What makes them so special to you?

Is it their humour?

Their courage?

Their warmth?

The way they listen?

Their patience?

Their ability to stand beside you and steady you?

This is the essence of self-compassion. Consider for a moment:

What might shift in your life if you began to treat yourself with the same tenderness you offer others?

What might ease?

What might open?

And what, honestly, gets in the way?

Write down your reflections:

*Now gently imagine this:
What if you could offer these same qualities to yourself?*

What if you could become your own ally, your own safe base, your own best friend?



When we are stressed, overwhelmed, or afraid, we often forget to care for ourselves. Yet this is precisely when compassion is most needed. In these moments, we are like a frightened child and we can learn to call upon the protective, steady, compassionate parent within us to soothe and support the parts that feel vulnerable.

If you'd like to explore this further, a beautiful resource is: Lee, D. (2012). *The Compassionate Mind Approach to Recovering from Trauma*. London: Robinson. The Compassionate Mind Foundation also offers a rich collection of materials:

www.compassionatemind.co.uk



Home Practice

1. Soothing Rhythm Breathing

A helpful way to begin your self-compassion journey is by learning soothing rhythm breathing. This simple practice supports emotional regulation and offers a powerful way to self-soothe.

By slowing and softening the breath, we gently stimulate the vagus nerve, increasing heart rate variability - a sign that the body is better able to respond to stress. This activates the parasympathetic nervous system, the body's natural soothing system, helping us meet difficult moments with more calm, steadiness, and clarity.

Listen to the audio recording;

[Click here](#)

Practise at least once a day this week. You might like to begin when you feel relatively calm, allowing your body to become familiar with the rhythm, and gradually build toward using it in moments of pressure or overwhelm -the times when the threat system is activated and steadiness is most needed.

2. Set Daily Intentions

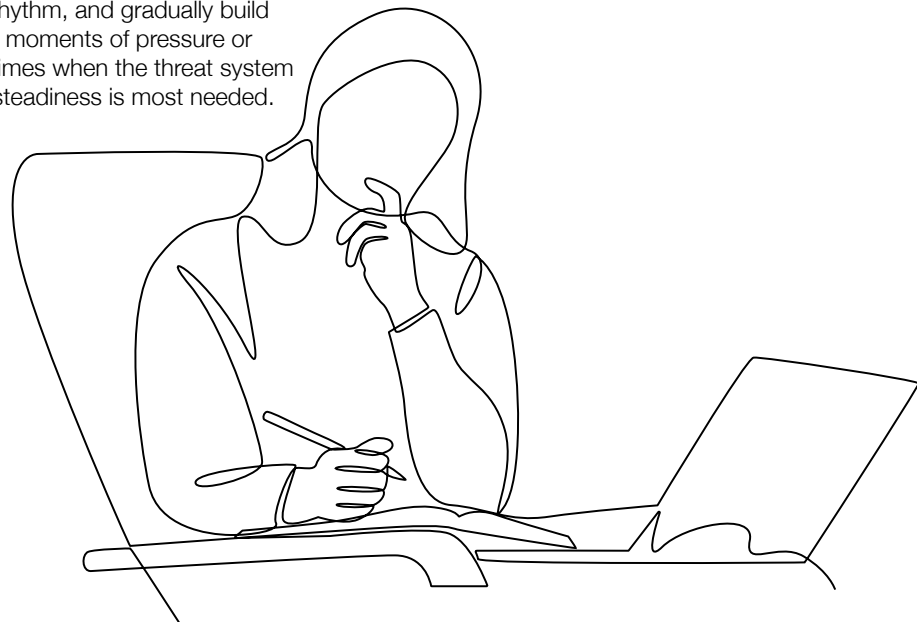
Each morning, take a moment to write down an intention for the day ahead.

These intentions are not tasks or demands, but gentle directions for how you wish to show up.

They might be qualities you want to cultivate, slow down, be kinder to myself, offer patience, or small actions aligned with your values, such as go outside for ten minutes or send a message to someone who needs support.

Try not to let this become a "to-do" list. Instead, think of intentions as quiet signposts that help you return to what matters.

Write your intentions using the template on the next page or in your own journal.





Daily Intention-Setting Template

Morning Intention

Take a quiet moment at the start of your day.
Gently place a hand on your heart or stomach if that helps you settle.

You might choose: to slow down, to listen more deeply, to soften my tone, to take a mindful pause, to be kind to myself, to step outside, to connect with someone I care about...
Let your intention be simple, humane, and achievable.

Today, I intend to...
(Choose a quality, a way of being, or a small valued action.)

Evening reflection

At the end of the day, return to your intention without judgement.

How did this intention shape my day?
(Notice moments when it was present — even briefly.)

What got in the way, if anything?
(Again, no judgement - only gentle awareness.)

What did I learn?
(About myself, my needs, my patterns.)

A Gentle Reminder

Intentions are not rules to follow.
They are compass points - guiding you back to what matters, one small moment at a time.

Step Two. Wake Up





Step Two. Wake Up.

A gentle invitation to come home to your life

“I don’t want to get old. I have this very silly fear, dear friend, that one day I’ll be old, without ever having really been young.”

Beatrice Sparks, Go Ask Alice

There is a way we drift through our days without quite noticing them. A way the body continues, but the head and heart waits somewhere else. A way of living that looks like functioning, but feels like disappearing. Many people who arrive at mindfulness speak of this quietly:

“I felt like I was running on empty.”

“I was getting through the days, but not living them.”

“Life was happening around me, and I was missing it.”

This is the landscape of autopilot - a protective habit the mind creates in busy or difficult times, but one that can slowly thin our lives of colour, meaning, and joy.

You may know this feeling:

Driving a familiar route and realising you remember none of it.

Reaching the end of a week and wondering where the time went.

Feeling like life is speeding up while you’re just trying to keep pace.

Waiting for holidays, endings, escapes - anything that isn’t this.

Autopilot is not a failure. It can be helpful for some aspects of life and is the mind’s attempt to protect you. But living there for too long comes at a cost.

Why Autopilot Becomes a Problem

1. It is quietly exhausting.

When the mind runs the show without awareness, it often drifts into rumination, worry, or driven striving. This drains our energy and can nudge us toward anxiety, burnout, or low mood.

2. It steals the nourishment from our days.

When we are not present, we miss the tiny, shimmering details that make life feel alive: the warmth of a cup of tea, a kind glance, the sky shifting colour.

Many participants say mindfulness helped them “feel joy again” — not because life changed, but because they finally noticed it.

In this step we begin learning how to wake up: To catch the moment when autopilot has taken over.

To pause, even briefly.

To return to the body, the senses, the breath - the gateways back to the present.

This is how we begin to reclaim our life and live it more fully.





Reflection Prompts

Take a moment and explore gently:

Where in your life do you notice autopilot most often?

What parts of your day feel "blurred" or rushed?

What moments do you most long to be present for?

What might it feel like to wake up, even for a breath or two?



Raisin Exercise

An invitation to step out of autopilot and awaken the senses

Set aside ten quiet minutes this week. Make it a small pause carved out just for you. Find a raisin (or any small piece of food). Let it rest in your hand. This tiny object will help you explore what it feels like to wake up from autopilot and meet your experience with fresh eyes.

When you're ready, listen to the guided recording;

[Click here](#)

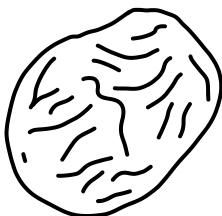
See what happens when you truly pay attention.

What did you notice?

What sensations or emotions arose in your body as you explored the raisin?

How did this differ from the way you usually eat?

What would it be like to live more of your life off Auto-Pilot-paying full attention?



"I felt totally calm in that practice. My mind was quiet for the first time in a very long while..."

"I usually eat a handful of raisins or anything else I have to hand, whilst doing 10 other things!!! That felt really weird to slow down and it tasted like wine...really enjoyed it"

"I have never eaten such an amazing tasting raisin"



Home Practice

Focusing deliberately on one thing, even for a short while, can feel surprisingly difficult. When life is full and fast, when you're juggling many responsibilities, your attention is easily tugged in every direction. Minds wander; thoughts claim centre stage; the smallest thing can pull you away.

This is completely human.

Learning to focus, even softly, is like training a new muscle. It takes time. It takes patience. And it takes kindness. Yet each moment you notice the pull toward distraction, and gently guide yourself back -is a moment of waking up from autopilot.

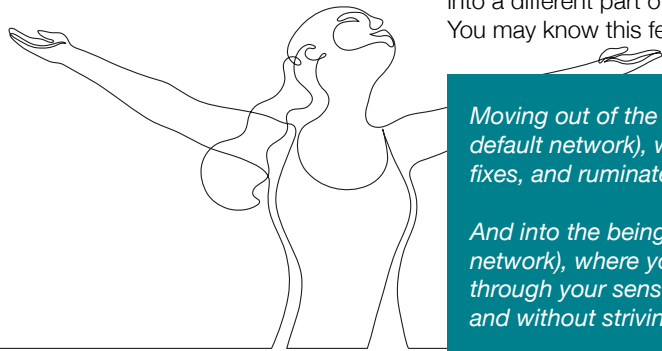
Breath and Body Practice

To support this strengthening of attention, we begin with a simple, grounding practice.

Here, the breath and the body become your home base, a place to rest your attention, a place you can return to again and again. Over time, your body shifts from being ignored or overridden to becoming an ally, a refuge, a source of information and steadiness.

In this practice, you'll also learn how to drop into a different part of the mind:

You may know this feeling:



Moving out of the doing mode (the default network), where the mind plans, fixes, and ruminates,

And into the being mode (the salience network), where you experience life through your senses -directly, simply, and without striving.

When you are ready, listen to this guided recording:

[Click here](#)

Allow yourself to arrive in the present moment.

Practise with the recording once a day. You may find yourself thinking you cannot spare the time, that there are too many tasks, too many demands, too many people needing you.

But pause for a moment and consider this instead:

What if you cannot afford not to give yourself this space?

This practice takes only 16 minutes. Let it be a gift to your nervous system, your wellbeing, your future self. A small offering of care, given daily.

Routine Activities

Choose a simple, everyday activity you usually do quickly and on autopilot; showering, brushing your teeth, making coffee, washing your face. This week, try bringing Raisin mind to the experience.

Let yourself feel the water, smell the soap, notice the textures, the temperature, the sounds.

Instead of rushing through the moment with a head full of lists, allow yourself to drop into the body and be where you are.

What happens when an ordinary moment becomes a place to land?

One Mouthful

Once a day this week, eat the first mouthful of one meal mindfully.

Slow down enough to taste, to feel, to receive the experience.

See what you discover.

Single-Mindedness

Multi-tasking often feels efficient, but it scatters the mind and tires the body. It increases mistakes, fuels stress, and keeps autopilot running. This week, practise doing one thing at a time. Commit fully to one task before moving to the next. Be firm, yet kind, with yourself. The next task, and there will always be another, can wait its turn.

Step Three. Anchor





Coming Home to the Present, the Body, and the Senses

“To allow ourselves to be truly in touch with where we already are... we have got to pause long enough for the present moment to sink in; long enough to feel it, to see it in its fullness, to hold it in awareness.” Jon Kabat-Zinn

Becoming more present is one of the great discoveries participants share during mindfulness training. You may already have noticed how easily the mind drifts, carried by thoughts, stories, plans, memories, drifting further from the present moment and even further from the body.

This step is about learning to use the body as your anchor. Moment by moment. Sensation by sensation. Returning, again and again, to the place where life is actually lived. The more familiar you become with the landscape of your own body - its signals, rhythms, whispers and warnings - the more you can steady yourself, regulate your emotions, and rediscover small joys in the everyday. The body becomes both your refuge and your guide.

The body also speaks early. Long before anxiety rises fully, long before irritation hardens, long before low mood settles in, the body will be sending signals. When we learn to listen, these signals can become friends rather than our foes.

In mindfulness, we practise befriending it all, even the uncomfortable parts. As Bessel van der Kolk writes: *“In order to change, people need to become aware of their sensations... Physical self-awareness is the first step in releasing the tyranny of the past.”*

This step is an invitation into that awareness.

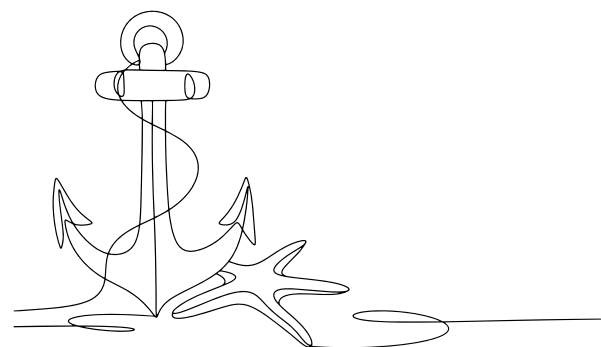
Body Scan Meditation

Arriving through sensation

The Body Scan invites you to move your attention slowly through the body - from the feet to the crown of the head, noticing sensations with curiosity and without judgement.

Regular practice strengthens your mind-body connection, increases your ability to recognise internal signals, and can help ease tension, pain, anxiety, low mood, and sleep difficulties. Listen to the guided practice here:

[Click here](#)





Coming Home to the Present, the Body, and the Senses



Speaking and Listening: 50:50 Awareness

Being with others without neglecting yourself

Throughout your day, see if you can keep a small portion of your attention resting in your body, even while speaking or listening. This isn't about achieving a perfect 50%.

It's about remembering that you are here too, your breath, your feet, your posture, your sensations.

This simple shift supports empathy, steadiness, and self-care in conversations, especially when emotions run high.

Where does your body feel supported?
Where does it tighten?

What changes when you stay connected to yourself while with another?

Sense Foraging

Awakening through the senses

Research shows that it isn't stress or sadness alone that harms us - it's the shutting down of our senses. When we stop seeing, hearing, tasting, and feeling the world directly, we slip into overthinking, rumination, and overwhelm.

Sense foraging is a powerful antidote. Throughout the day, pause and reconnect to your senses:

*The sound of a kettle humming
The warmth of sunlight on your arm
The texture of your clothing
The taste of your tea
The colours shifting outside your window*

These moments
nourish. They ground.
They awaken the
heart.

To explore more on the science of sensory presence, see Norman Farb and Zindel Segal's work:

<https://betterineverysense.com>

“Learning about sense foraging has been mind-blowing for me. So much I wasn't noticing and it's all here...I am now remembering to use my senses to rebalance myself... really seeing, really hearing things...it's amazing and on Retreat Day I found that incredible... being in the garden by the water and the chickens and everything but you can do it at work as well. I am feeling my feet on the floor and bum on the chair, smelling the coffee, looking out of the window and really focussing in on small things. I sometimes just close my eyes and let all the sounds arrive at my ears but don't get carried away by it all. Just noticing.”

Mindfulness Course Participant, 2024



Sense Foraging Exercise

An invitation to awaken the world around you

If you have a few moments, let's practise together.

Take a soft breath. Let your gaze settle.

1. Look Around You

Gently scan the room you are in and notice five things.

Let your eyes land lightly on each one.

Perhaps name them silently to yourself – lampshade... yellow pen... cup of tea... the curve of a chair... the slant of light on the wall...

No need to judge or evaluate. Just noticing.

Write them here if you wish:

2. Close Your Eyes

Now close your eyes for about 30 seconds.

Let your attention rest on the breath:

The full duration of the in-breath, the full duration of the out-breath.

Riding each wave of air as if it were the only thing asked of you.

3. Open Your Eyes Again

When you feel ready, open your eyes and notice five new things — objects, colours, shapes, movements you may not have registered before.

Name them silently to yourself.

Write them here:

If you find yourself noticing details you would normally overlook - the texture of a cushion, the play of shadows on the curtains, a cobweb, then you are sense foraging.

This simple act helps to reawaken the senses, interrupt overthinking, and gently support your wellbeing.

This is how we return to the world. One small noticing at a time.



Home Practice

“I really took to the concept of checking in on myself. Whilst the body scan took more time to adapt to - checking in quickly became a great way of tapping into mindfulness throughout the day”

Mindfulness Course Participant, 2024

Body Scan

Try and do this most days this week.

Some days, you will not feel like doing it, but remember why you are doing this programme, and do it anyway?

The intention of the Body Scan practice is to fall awake out of autopilot. However, we have discovered that many colleagues have also used this practice to help them sleep.

Sense Foraging

Continue sense foraging on a regular basis. Set the intention to do so at least twice per day.

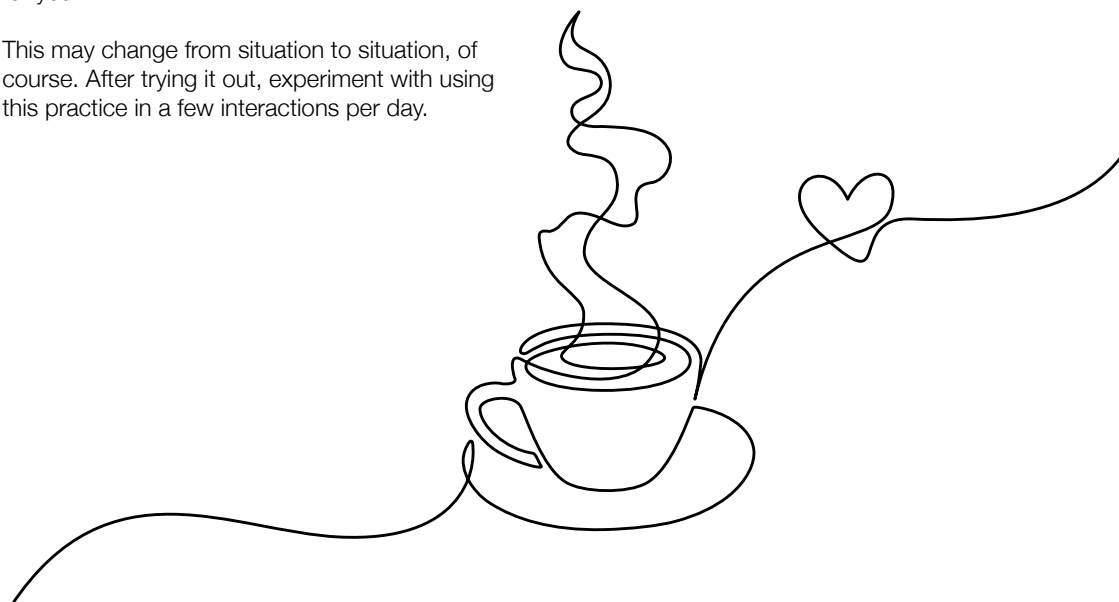
Even if it is noticing the cool air on your face when you leave the house in the morning, the smell of your morning coffee, or get out in nature as much as you can and notice the sights and sounds, sometimes without labelling, maybe just noticing colour, movement, shapes, or sounds that are near or far, spaces between sounds, rhythm or volume.

50:50 Awareness when speaking and listening

Chose a time when you might practice this. Maybe start with an easy conversation.

Notice what you can physically sense at your anchor points (your feet on the floor, in your hands and fingers, in your sit bones, movement of the breath). Have an explore of which anchor points are easier to foreground for you.

This may change from situation to situation, of course. After trying it out, experiment with using this practice in a few interactions per day.



Step Four. Pause





Step Four. Pause

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”. Viktor E. Frankl.

Pausing

Creating mini breathing spaces.

Many people imagine meditation as something done in stillness - sitting cross-legged for long periods, eyes closed, removed from the world. And while these formal practices are deeply helpful for building awareness and acceptance, mindfulness also lives in much smaller, more ordinary moments.

Small pauses woven through the day.

A breath before answering the phone.

A moment of awareness while washing your hands.

The feeling of your feet meeting the ground when you walk.

These brief returns to presence help us flow through the day with a little more ease and a little less reactivity. They soften autopilot, reduce stress, and reintroduce tiny moments of calm, clarity, and enjoyment into ordinary routines.



3-Step Breathing Space (3SBS)

The Three-Step Breathing Space is one of the most practical tools in mindfulness - a small “pit stop” where you shift your attention from the momentum of the day, come home to yourself, and begin again with steadiness.

Listen to the recording:

[Click here](#)

It can take as little as 30 seconds, yet can completely change your mood and the rest of your day

A: Acknowledge

First, simply notice what's here. What is on your mind? What emotions are present? What sensations can you feel in the body? No judgement — just meeting yourself honestly.

B: Breathe

Then, gently gather your attention around the sensations of the breath — or, if the breath is not comfortable, choose another anchor such as the feet, the seat, or the hands.

C: Expand

Finally, widen your awareness to include the whole body sitting, standing, or lying here. A sense of your body breathing and belonging in this moment.

This is the shift from doing to being.



Mindful Movement and Walking

Awakening the body as an anchor

Mindful movement offers another doorway into presence - one that many people find even more accessible than sitting meditation. Whether you already practise yoga, tai chi, or qigong, or are entirely new to movement-based awareness, the invitation remains the same:

Move slowly.

Move with curiosity.

Move without judgement.

Meet each sensation directly.

For some, movement provides a more stable and grounding anchor than the breath. This week, try practising with the mindful stretching recording:

[Click here](#)



Then gently weave mindfulness into ordinary movements - reaching for a cup, standing up from a chair, bending to pick something up. Feel the muscles lengthen and gather.

Notice the shifting of weight, the subtle and more noticeable sensations across the body.

Walking as Practice

We walk countless steps each day, often without registering a single one. What would it be like to walk mindfully, even for a few moments?

Notice:

The lifting of the foot

The moving through space

The placing down

The shifting of weight

The sensations across the sole of the foot, the ankle, the leg

Each step can become a quiet homecoming.

Everyday Activities

You can bring mindful attention to your everyday activities, for example, cleaning your teeth, washing the dishes, peeling the vegetables, taking a shower or even putting the bins out.

“If while washing dishes, we think only of the cup of tea that awaits us, thus hurrying to get the dishes out of the way as if they were a nuisance, then we are not ‘washing the dishes to wash the dishes. What’s more, we are not alive during the time we are washing the dishes. In fact, we are completely incapable of realizing the miracle of life while standing at the sink”.

The Miracle of Mindfulness, Thich Nhat Hanh



Home Practice

Pausing in the middle of your day

1. *Three-Step Breathing Space (3SBS)*

Practise the 3SBS at least once a day this week.

Let it be short, simple, 30 seconds, 3 minutes, whatever the moment allows. Try placing your practice at natural transitions and in everyday moments:

On waking, whilst waiting for the kettle to boil, queuing in the supermarket, after a difficult conversation, before opening your inbox, in the car before driving home.

Each time you pause, even briefly, you interrupt autopilot and return to yourself.

What did you notice when you paused today?

2. *Mindful Movement*

Use the stretching recording once this week, and sprinkle small mindful movements throughout your day.

Choose one everyday movement - reaching, bending, standing and try doing it with full awareness. Feel the body move, unfold, shift, settle.

Which movement did you explore? What did you learn?

3. *Mindful Walking*

Choose one small stretch of walking each day - a hallway, a garden path, the walk to your car - and let it be your mindful walking practice.

Move gently.

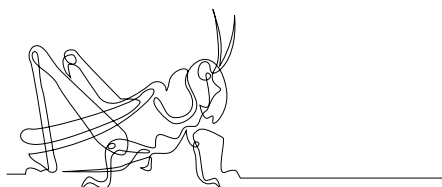
Feel the lifting, the moving, the placing of each foot.

How did mindful walking change the quality of that moment?



Who made the world? Who made the swan, and the black bear? Who made the grasshopper? This grasshopper, I mean - the one who has flung herself out of the grass, the one who is eating sugar out of my hand, who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down - who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes. Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face. Now she snaps her wings open, and floats away. I don't know exactly what a prayer is. I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields, which is what I have been doing all day. Tell me, what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last, and too soon? Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?

The Grasshopper by Mary Oliver



Step Five. Perspective: Thoughts are not Facts





Step Five. Perspective: Thoughts are not facts

Shifting the lens through which we see the world

“There is nothing either good or bad
but thinking makes it so.”

Shakespeare, Hamlet

Our minds are extraordinary. Creative, protective, endlessly imaginative and also wonderfully, confusingly tricky.

Moment by moment, the mind is making meaning out of the smallest scraps of information coming in through the senses. It does this to keep us safe. Across evolution, we've learned to make split-second interpretations of our environment, long before we have the full picture.

These instant interpretations are shaped by:

Our mood in that moment

Our personal history

Our upbringing and culture

Our evolutionary wiring

The result? Our mind creates stories so quickly and so convincingly that we rarely notice it happening.

Exercise: How the Mind Makes Meaning

Read each of these sentences slowly:

John was on his way to school.

He was worried about the maths lesson.

He was not sure he could control the class again today.

It was not part of a caretaker's duties.

What happened inside you as you read?

Did you picture a boy?

A classroom?

A teacher?

A worried child?

A troubled adult?

Someone in charge?

Someone powerless?

What shifted as each sentence contradicted your assumptions?

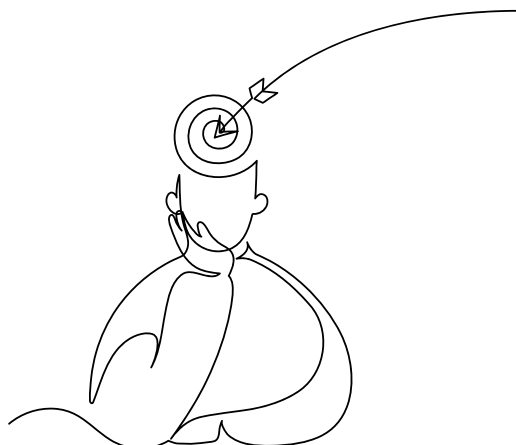
Did your mind update easily, or did you feel a flicker of resistance?

This simple exercise shows how quickly we create mental pictures - how automatically we fill in gaps, add colour, invent details, and weave stories.

“We don't see the
world as it is, but
as we are.”

Williams and Penman,
Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World, 2011

Each person reading this passage will have constructed a different scene from the same sparse information. This is the nature of the mind: always interpreting, always predicting, always shaping the world through our own internal lens.





Understanding Reactivity

The ABC Model

A simple way to understand reactivity;

A = the event or stimulus

B = our interpretation

C = our emotional and behavioural reaction

Most of us leap straight from A to C, believing our emotional reaction is caused directly by the event.

But B -the interpretation- is where so much changes.

Two people can face the same situation and feel entirely different emotions depending on the story their mind has created.

How Mood Shapes Perception

Our emotions tint the lens through which we see the world:

When we feel low, our attention zooms in on everything that isn't working.

When we feel anxious, we scan for threats and signs of danger.

When we feel good, we breeze through challenges that might otherwise overwhelm us.

This becomes especially important when we get stressed.

Once negative beliefs and emotions take hold -

“I’m not coping”

“I’m failing”

“Everyone else is managing but me” — the mind begins selecting evidence to support these thoughts.

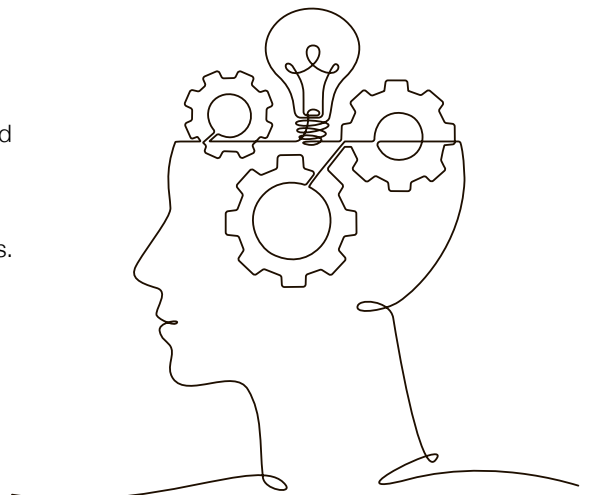
We remember moments that fit the story.

We miss the moments that contradict it.

And the belief deepens.

This is not a personal flaw; it is human biology. But with mindfulness, we can begin to notice the stories our minds generate and gently question their accuracy.

This step is the beginning of loosening the grip of thought and seeing clearly again.





Imagine a Scenario

“Get out of our heads and learn to experience the world directly, experientially, without the relentless commentary of our thoughts. We might just open ourselves up to the limitless possibilities for happiness that life has to offer us .” Mark G. Williams

Scenario 1

You are feeling low because you have just had an argument with a close friend. Your chest feels tight, your mood heavy.

Shortly afterwards, you walk into the kitchen at home and see another friend/housemate/partner, but they rush off quickly, saying they can't stop.

Write down the thoughts that went through your mind:

Scenario 2

You are feeling very happy because you've just received some wonderful news — perhaps a kind message, an unexpected compliment, or something going well in your life.

Your mood is lifted, your body lighter.

A little later, you walk into the kitchen and see the same person rush off quickly, saying they can't stop.

Write down the thoughts that went through your mind:

You may have noticed how different the thoughts and feelings were in each situation. The external event was exactly the same.

What changed was you, your mood, your emotional state, the lens through which you were seeing the world.

This illustrates an important truth in mindfulness: thoughts are not facts. They are interpretations shaped by how we feel in the moment, and by the stories our past has taught us to believe. Mindfulness helps us cultivate a new relationship with these thoughts, seeing them as passing mental events rather than absolute truths. When we do this, we give ourselves a real chance to regulate our emotions, soften our reactions, and respond with greater wisdom and care.



Recognising the Mind under Pressure

Common Stress Thoughts

Recognising the mind under pressure

When we are stressed, unhappy, overwhelmed, or exhausted, certain thoughts tend to appear again and again - not because they are true, but because they are symptoms of the mind under strain.

Here is a list of thoughts many people recognise (adapted from Hugh Poulton):

I can't enjoy myself without thinking about what needs to be done

I must never fail
Why can't I relax?
I must never let people down
It's up to me
I must be strong
Everyone relies on me
I'm the only one who can do this
I can't stand this anymore
I must not waste a minute
I wish I were somewhere else
Why don't they just do it properly?
Why aren't I enjoying this anymore?
What's the matter with me?
I can't give up
Something has to change
There must be something wrong with me
Everything will fall apart without me
Why can't I switch off?

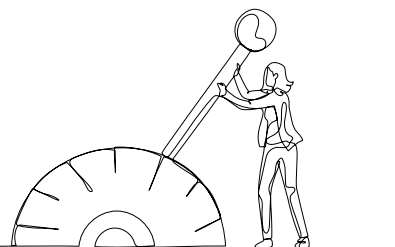
These are the thoughts that often arise when we have "hit the wall", feel totally overwhelmed.

The mind begins issuing demands, judgements, warnings, and self-blame-all of which can feel painfully personal and unquestionably true.

But notice this:

These thoughts are astonishingly common. People across different lives, roles, ages, and backgrounds report almost exactly the same sentences. This tells us something important: These thoughts are not truths. They are signs - signals of stress.

In the same way a headache signals a cold, these thoughts signal that your mind and body are under pressure. And like any symptom, they tend to make us feel worse, pulling us deeper into exhaustion, fear, or self-criticism.



Stepping Back From Thoughts

Seeing thoughts as events, not instructions or truths.

One of the key skills in mindfulness is learning to recognise that thoughts are simply mental events arising in the mind- not commands, not facts, not reflections of your worth or competence.

The Sounds and Thoughts meditation can help cultivate this ability. It teaches you to sense when your thoughts and feelings are beginning to turn against you and gives you the superpower of noticing them early, before they gather momentum. When you learn to observe thoughts rather than obey them, you soften their grip.

[Listen here](#)



Negative Thoughts Worksheet



Which Thoughts Visit You?

Noticing the patterns of a stressed mind

When we are under pressure, certain thoughts arrive like familiar visitors.

They come with urgency, conviction, and a sense of truth — even though they are simply symptoms of stress, not reflections of who you are.

Use this worksheet to gently notice the thoughts that tend to appear for you.

1. Which of these thoughts feel familiar?

Tick or underline any that resonate:

- I must never fail
- I can't stand this anymore
- Everyone is relying on me
- Why can't I switch off?
- Something must be wrong with me
I must be strong
- I'm the only one who can do this
- Why aren't I enjoying this anymore?
- Everything will fall apart without me
- I wish I were somewhere else
- I must not waste a minute
- What's the matter with me?
- Why can't I relax?
- I can't enjoy myself without thinking about what's next

Or write your own:



Negative Thoughts Worksheet

2. How do these thoughts affect you?

Notice the impact:

In your body:

(tightness, heaviness, fluttering, tears, agitation?)

In your emotions:

(anxiety, irritation, sadness, numbness?)

In your behaviour:

(pushing harder, withdrawing, overworking, snapping, shutting down?)

3. If these thoughts are symptoms, what might they be signalling?

(exhaustion? overwhelm? lack of rest? loneliness? pressure?)

4. Where do you feel the first hint of stress - before the thoughts arrive?

(body sensations, energy shifts, tension?)

This worksheet isn't about "correcting" thoughts.
It's about seeing them clearly, so you can meet yourself with more compassion.



Reflections; Seeing Thoughts Clearly

A space to soften the grip of the mind

Find a quiet moment.
Let the breath settle, the shoulders loosen.
Read each prompt slowly and respond gently.
What thoughts have been most persistent this week?

Did any thoughts arrive with particular force or urgency?
What were they demanding or warning you about?

If these thoughts were symptoms rather than truths, what might they be
telling you about your needs right now?

What happened when you used the 'Sounds and Thoughts' practice?
Did you notice any space appear around the thoughts?
Even a breath's worth?

How did your body respond when you believed the thoughts?
And how did your body feel when you saw them as passing mental events?

Is there a small act of self-kindness you can offer yourself right now?
Something supportive, simple, comforting?

Step Six. Coping





Step Six. Coping

Turning toward what hurts with courage and care



“The breathing space is not a break or diversion from reality but a way of re-engaging with it.”

Penman & Williams, 2011

When we meet difficulty, it's instinctive to turn away. Most of us learned this early in life - that if something hurts, if something feels overwhelming, the safest thing to do is to push it down, avoid it, stay busy, keep going. For a time, this strategy protects us. It helps us cope. It carries us through moments we weren't equipped to face. But over the years, these habits of avoidance can quietly solidify. They turn into beliefs:

I must stay strong
I must hold it all together
I must not let anything show

And slowly, a distance grows - a disconnection from our own inner world. The difficulties don't disappear. They wait, patiently, beneath the surface. And we lose touch with the parts of ourselves that most need care.

Mindfulness offers another way. Not a harder way - a more honest one. It invites us to turn toward what troubles us, gently and bravely, with the tenderness we would offer a friend. It helps us recognise vulnerability as part of being human, not a sign of weakness. Meeting our experience as it is - rather than suppressing or battling it - allows something unexpected to happen: a sense of steadiness begins to form, clarity returns, and we find ourselves able to respond rather than react. This is not easy work.

But it is profoundly freeing. It is a shift from burying our struggles to befriending ourselves through them.

Moving Toward Acceptance: Two Stages

1. Noticing the discomfort of turning toward difficulty. Simply acknowledging the flinch, the tightening, the resistance, the “I don't want to feel this.” This alone is a courageous first step.
2. Meeting the discomfort in the body. Instead of engaging in the story or trying to solve anything, we bring awareness to where the difficulty shows itself physically: the chest, the throat, the stomach, the jaw, the hands. We explore the landscape of the body with curiosity and care.

This week's personal practice - the Exploring Difficulty Meditation will help you learn this new way of relating to yourself.

A Word of Caution

When practising, please choose a difficulty that is manageable, a “2-kilogram” difficulty, not a “50-kilogram” one. You are learning a radically different way of being with discomfort, and this early stage is about building safety, confidence, and trust. If at any time it feels overwhelming:

Open your eyes

Return to your anchors (breath, feet, seat, hands)

Or pause the practice altogether
There is no pushing through.
No forcing

We meet ourselves gently, kindly, and with great respect.

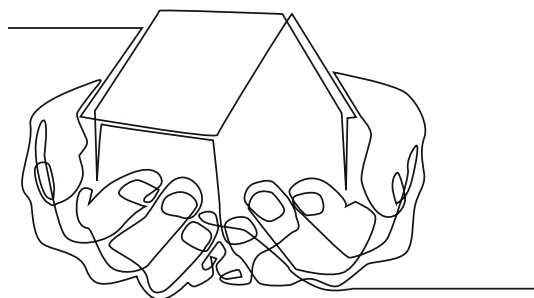


This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival.

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.

The Guest House by Rumi, 13th Century





Home Practice

Learning to meet difficulty with gentleness

1. Exploring Difficulty Meditation

This week, practise the Exploring Difficulty meditation at least once.

Choose a difficulty that feels manageable, something small but real, a gentle weight rather than a heavy one.

Let the body be your guide. Notice where the difficulty shows itself -

*The clench in the stomach,
The tightness in the throat,
The heaviness in the chest.
Rather than analysing or fixing, simply feel.
Stay close to sensation.
Stay kind.*

Listen to the recording here:

[Click here](#)

What did you notice?

2. The 3-Step Breathing Space (3SBS) – In Moments of Difficulty

Use the Breathing Space when difficulty arises during the week.

Acknowledge what's here (thoughts, emotions, body sensations).
Breathe - gently gathering the attention around the sensations of the breath or another anchor.
Expand awareness to the whole body, steady and breathing.
This is a way of turning toward difficulty for just a few breaths - not to change it, but to meet it.

When did you use the Breathing Space this week?

3. Small Acts of Self-Support

Choose one small, caring act each day: resting a moment longer, drinking water slowly, stepping outside for fresh air, placing a hand on your heart.

These gestures speak directly to the body's soothing system and help build a kinder inner climate. What small act helped you most?



Reflection Worksheet

How I Meet Difficulty

Use this page at the end of the week to explore what you learnt.

1. When difficulty arose, how did your body react first?
(*tightness, heat, numbness, tension, energy drop?*)

2. What were the thoughts that appeared around the difficulty?

3. What emotions accompanied it?

4. Did you notice any resistance to turning toward the difficulty?
What form did that resistance take?

5. What happened when you met the difficulty through the body rather than through thinking?

6. Did anything soften, change, or become clearer after the practice?

7. What support do you most need when you are struggling?
(*comfort, rest, reassurance, company, boundaries?*)

Step Seven. Finding Joy





Step Seven. Finding Joy

Reawakening what is good, nourishing, and life-giving

We have not evolved to be happy. We have evolved to survive. Our brains are wired for threat detection, to fiercely search for danger, to scan for what might go wrong, to keep us alert and ready to fight, flee, or freeze.

This ancient system kept our ancestors alive, and we still carry it with us today. But in modern life, most of the “threats” we encounter are not lions in the grass, they are the creations of the thinking mind:

Worries about the future
Regrets about the past
The sense of not being enough
Uncertainty, unfinished tasks
The fear of being judged
The fear of failing

Often, we become the threat:
Am I liked? Did I do enough? What if I’m not good enough?

So the question arises:

Is joy still possible in a threat-based brain?
And the answer is: Yes, joy is absolutely possible.

There is hope, grounded in science and lived experience, that we can train the mind to grow new pathways, pathways of calm, appreciation, connection, and happiness. When we practise mindfulness, we strengthen these pathways. Research even shows changes in the brain’s grey matter around the amygdala - the part of the brain that activates the threat system - resulting in less reactivity and more stability, clarity, and ease.

Joy is not the absence of difficulty.
Joy is the capacity to notice what is good and nourishing alongside difficulty.
It is the art of letting beauty in again.

Pain versus Suffering

Understanding the difference between pain and suffering

In life, pain is unavoidable, but suffering is optional. A simple contemplation can help illuminate this:

Imagine this:

You’re meeting a close friend for lunch. You’ve been looking forward to it. You arrive at the café, find a table, and wait. After 25 minutes, a message pops up: “I’m so sorry. I completely forgot we were meeting today.”

The Pain

A small sting of disappointment.
A sinking feeling.
A natural ache - because you cared, because you were excited.

This is the first arrow:
the simple, human pain of something not going the way you hoped.

The Suffering

Then, watch what the mind does:

“I must not matter to them.”
“This always happens.”
“People don’t value me.”
“Why do I bother?”

Emotions swell: hurt, resentment, loneliness, embarrassment. The body responds: tight chest, knotted stomach, clenched jaw, heat in the face, shoulders rising.

This is the second arrow - the self-criticism, the assumptions, the catastrophising, the old stories that flood in and turn pain into suffering. Sometimes a third and fourth arrow follow. We attack ourselves in ways far harsher than the original event ever warranted.

The Insight

The fact your friend forgot lunch is the pain. Everything the mind layers on top becomes the suffering. Mindfulness helps us see these second arrows, to notice when the mind is firing them, to pause before they gain momentum, and to respond with compassion rather than attack. This is where joy begins - not in avoiding difficulty, but in softening around ourselves when difficulty arrives.



Home Practice

Befriending Meditation

Inclining the mind toward kindness

As we've been learning, thoughts can be persistent, persuasive, and sometimes unkind. Across many wisdom traditions, people have used phrases of goodwill as a way of gently training the mind toward compassion, for ourselves and for others.

This is the intention behind the Befriending Meditation. It is not about forcing kindness, but about planting seeds, offering the mind a different tone, a different direction. Over time, these phrases can soften self-criticism, quieten the inner judge, and help us reconnect with our natural capacity for warmth.

This practice can be especially powerful when your relationship with yourself feels strained or fragile.

Listen: [Click here](#)

What did you notice after practising?



Home Practice

Random Acts of Kindness; Small gestures, big shifts

“No act of kindness, however small, is ever wasted.” Aesop

Kindness is a quiet way of opening the heart and improving our wellbeing.

For the next week, try offering one small act of kindness each day. Tiny is good. Ordinary is good. Genuine is enough.

You might:

Smile at someone you pass
Let someone go ahead of you in a queue
Make someone a cup of tea
Bring flowers home
Send a message to a friend
Tidy something you wouldn't normally tidy
Thank someone properly

What matters is the intention - choosing kindness even if you don't feel especially kind in that moment. The behaviour leads; the feeling often follows later.

These small acts can shift perspective, soften stress, and gently reconnect you with others.

What act of kindness did you offer today?



Home Practice

Appreciation; Training the mind to notice the good

Earlier in the programme, we explored how autopilot pulls us away from what nourishes us. The mind is naturally drawn toward what is missing, wrong, uncertain, or unfinished. Appreciation is a way of turning the gaze back toward what is here - what is good, steady, beautiful, supportive, delicious, comforting.

Each day this week, bring to mind 10 things you appreciate in your life right now. Keep them small and specific.

The way the dog greets me each morning,
the softness of her ears, the sound of her paws
on the floor.

My daughters laugh, my partners patience,
the way the postman whistles

Or appreciate the uncomplicated pleasures of daily living:

Hot water
Morning light
A warm jumper
The taste of coffee
Chocolate brownies
Central heating

Write them in your journal or count them on your fingers.
Push gently past the familiar four or five - keep going until you reach ten.
You may notice that during the day you begin to spot things you appreciate.
This is the brain changing - a new pathway forming.

10 small appreciations:

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10



Nourishing and Depleting

Bringing awareness to the balance of your day

Is your life in balance?

Let's explore.

Step 1

Take a sheet of paper and write down 12–15 activities you typically do in an average day - from the moment you wake to the moment your head touches the pillow.

For example:
morning coffee, shower, school run, breakfast, emails, meetings, chores, cooking, scrolling, walking the dog, watching TV, making dinner.....etc

Step 2

Next to each activity, write whether the activity is usually nourishing (makes you feel good, energises you, gives you a sense of achievement etc) or is usually depleting (makes you feel bad, sad, de-motivated, loss of energy etc) :

N for Nourishing
D for Depleting
N/D if it depends

Step 3

Pause and reflect.

What do you notice?

More N's or more D's?

Any surprises?

Step 4

Gently explore:

Can I savour the nourishing moments more?

Am I fully present during them?

Do I rush through them?

Could I linger - even slightly?

Could I bring mindful awareness to make them more nourishing?

Am I multitasking during something that actually nourishes me?

Can I make the depleting moments less depleting?

Could I approach them differently - with less tension, more acceptance?

Could I pause before beginning?

Could I do the task mindfully rather than through gritted teeth?

Could I acknowledge myself afterward?

Could I offer praise or reward for moving through something hard?

Awareness creates choice and choice creates change.



Joy Reflection

Noticing what lifts the heart

Take a few quiet moments at the end of the week to reflect gently.

1. What moments of joy did you notice this week - even tiny ones?
(smiles, moments of beauty, connection, ease, humour...)

2. Were there moments you almost missed, but caught because you were paying attention?

3. What helped you open to joy - even when life felt busy or difficult?

4. Did any act of kindness (given or received) shift your mood or soften your day?

5. What did you appreciate most this week?

6. Where did you feel joy in the body? (warmth, expansion, lightness)

7. What small joys would you like to notice more often next week?



Befriending Meditation Worksheet

Leaning towards kindness

Use this worksheet alongside the Befriending Meditation.

1. Which phrases resonated most with you during the meditation?

2. How easy or difficult was it to offer kindness to yourself? What thoughts arose?

3. What emotions did you notice? (gentleness, sadness, resistance, warmth, discomfort?)

4. Where in your body did you feel the effects of the practice?

5. Imagine offering kindness to yourself as you would to a dear friend — what might you say?

6. Is there a small phrase of goodwill you'd like to carry into daily life?
(e.g., May I be steady, May I be kind, May I find ease)

Step Eight. First day of the Rest of Your Life





Step Eight. First day of the Rest of Your Life

Putting your learning into practice

“Mindfulness has been compared to weaving a parachute. But there’s no point in doing this when we’re falling headlong towards destruction. We have to weave our parachute every day, so that it’s always there to hold us in an emergency.”

Williams & Penman, Finding Peace in a Frantic World, 2011

Over these past steps, you’ve been slowly, steadily weaving your parachute-thread by thread, moment by moment. Not in crisis, not in panic, but in the quiet places of your everyday life.

This parachute is not made of fabric but of awareness, compassion, perspective, and choice. It is something you build through gentle repetition, something that becomes stronger with each return to the present moment.

This workbook has offered pathways into this weaving.

Here is what you have touched:

The Ideas

- **Prioritising You** - recognising your own worth and the vital role of compassion.
- **Waking Up from Autopilot** - being present in your life as it is happening.
- **Anchoring in the Body and Senses** - coming home to your inner steadiness.
- **Thoughts Are Not Facts** - loosening the grip of the mind’s stories.
- **Coping with Difficulty** - turning toward what hurts with courage and care.
- **Finding Joy** - reawakening what nourishes, uplifts, and connects.

These themes are not steps to complete but movements in a lifelong dance, ways of returning, again and again, to yourself.

The Practices You Have Explored

Each practice has been a stitch in the parachute, strengthening your capacity to meet life as it unfolds:

- Compassionate Qualities
- Soothing Rhythm Breathing
- Setting Daily Intentions
- Body Scan
- Raisin Mind for Routine Activities
- Body and Breath
- Three-Step Breathing Space (3SBS)
- Mindful Movement
- Body–Breath–Sounds–Thoughts Practice
- Exploring Difficulty through the Body
- Appreciation
- Rebalancing Life (Nourishing & Depleting)

Some practices may have resonated deeply. Others may have felt unfamiliar or challenging. All of them contribute to building the inner resources you can carry forward long after these pages close.

Audio Recordings included in the Workbook are as follows:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/E62XyJBTBzPiftxe1j>

Creating new habits





Creating new habits

A practical guide to carrying mindfulness into daily life

New habits are not built in grand gestures, they are shaped by small, regular returns. Below is a simple framework to help you integrate what you've learned:

1. Choose One Anchor Practice

Pick one practice that feels natural, supportive, or nourishing:

Soothing Rhythm Breathing
Body Scan
3-Step Breathing Space
Body & Breath
Mindful Walking
Befriending Meditation
10-Finger Gratitude

My chosen anchor practice:

2. Link It to Something You Already Do

New habits grow best when they're attached to familiar ones.

Examples:

After brushing my teeth
Before my morning coffee
When I park the car
Before I open my emails
When I get into bed

I will practise when I...

3. Keep It Short and Kind

A few minutes a day is enough.
Consistency matters more than duration.
Let it be gentle, not forced.
A gift, not a demand.

4. Expect Forgetting (It's Part of the Process)

You will forget.
You will fall out of rhythm.
This does not mean you've failed.
This means you are human.
Each time you remember is a moment of practice.



Creating new habits

A practical guide to carrying mindfulness into daily life

5. Check In Weekly

Ask yourself:

What helped me this week?

What got in the way?

What small adjustment would support me now?

My reflections for this week:

6. Let the Practice Support Who You Want to Become

Mindfulness is not about perfecting the present moment, it is about becoming the person who can meet the moment with honesty, warmth, steadiness, and care.

Who am I becoming through this practice?



Thank you for taking the time to journey through this workbook. My hope is that somewhere within these pages you have found a practice, an idea, or even a small moment of recognition that will support you in meeting your days with more kindness, presence, and ease. Mindfulness is not about becoming perfect or getting life “right”; it is about learning to see clearly, to choose differently, and to walk our path with a little more compassion for ourselves and others. As you continue your own mindful way, may this final piece from Portia Nelson offer both reassurance and possibility, a reminder that awareness opens new choices, and new choices gently shape a new way of living.

I
I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost ... I am hopeless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.

II
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I'm in the same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.

III
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it is there.
I still fall in ... it's a habit.
My eyes are open.
I know where I am.
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.

IV
I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.

V
I walk down another street.



Afterword

As you finish this workbook, you might notice your own versions of these five chapters, places where you fall into old patterns, places where you recognise them sooner, and moments when a new path quietly appears. Mindfulness does not ask us to erase our holes in the pavement; it invites us to see them with honesty, kindness, and curiosity.

With time, the very awareness that once felt uncomfortable becomes a source of freedom.

You have already begun this journey simply by pausing, by noticing, by choosing to explore your experience with greater care. Each small moment of awareness is a step toward “another street”- one shaped less by autopilot and more by intention, compassion, and the possibility of change.

May you continue to walk gently with yourself. May you remember that new streets are always available. And may the practices you have met here support you in finding steadiness, clarity, and ease in the days to come.

Thank you for walking this part of the path.



Reading material

Finding Peace in a Frantic World

[Click here](#)

Better in Every Sense

Farb and Segal 2024

[Click here](#)

Mindful Way through Depression

[Click here](#)

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression: A New Approach to Preventing Relapse

[Click here](#)

A Monks Guide to Happiness

[Click here](#)

Full Catastrophe Living

[Click here](#)

MBCT Full Reading List

[Click here](#)

The Compassionate Mind Workbook,

Beaumont and Irons (2017)

[Click here](#)

Recovering from Trauma using Compassion Focused Therapy

[Click here](#)





Other useful material

Meditations (Apps and Online)

Oxford Mindfulness Foundation App

[Click here](#)

Frantic World

[Click here](#)

Oxford Mindfulness Centre

[Click here](#)

This organisation offers daily mindfulness sessions, and I highly recommend them.

Dharma Seed (Buddhist teachings as well as MBCT teachings)

[Click here](#)

Tara Brach

[Click here](#)

I am particularly fond of Jon Kabat Zinn and highly recommend his new App:

Jon Kabat Zinn App

[Click here](#)

Organisations

<https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk>

<https://oxfordmindfulness.org>

<https://www.mindful.org>

<http://franticworld.com>

Retreats

When you have an established mindfulness practice, you may benefit from attending a silent retreat. It is suggested you start with a 1-day Retreat and build up to 3 days plus.

<https://gaiahouse.co.uk>

<https://www.sharphamtrust.org>

<https://bodhi-college.org>

<https://www.astpsychology.co.uk>

Research

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/31774604/>

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(14\)62222-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(14)62222-4/fulltext)

<https://www.mindful.org/how-mindfulness-may-change-the-brain-in-depressed-patients/>

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/can-mindfulness-change-your-brain-202105132455>

A great little film

[Click here](#)

And 'About Time' another film with a great mindful message:

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2194499/>



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