

Stage 1: The foundations of Mindfulness

Sometimes in order to open your eyes, you need to close them.

There are many different explanations and definitions of mindfulness out there, but they all have the same theme:

Mindfulness is living in the now without labelling or wishing it was otherwise.

Essentially we all know this state and innately we all understand it but somewhere along the way we get caught up in busyness and stress of life and we lose a sense of being in the now because we can no longer remember how to.

There is a Pali word for mindfulness which translates as "remembering continuously" because we all know what it is and we have had moments of feeling how it is to be in the moment, we just need a little help to remember how to live there.

What is mindfulness?

- 🌀 Living in the moment, less in the past or the future
- 🌀 A way to cultivate inner peace and happiness
- 🌀 Recognising feelings without becoming caught up in them

What it's not

- 🌀 Emptying the mind
- 🌀 A relaxation technique (though it will make you more relaxed as a by-product)
- 🌀 An escape from life
- 🌀 A way of living without planning – in fact you become a better planner as a result

"Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It's a way of entering into the quiet that's already there. Buried under the 80,000 thoughts the average person thinks every day."

Deepak Chopra

Let me ask you a question: Have you ever tried to not think? Or had someone tell you "Stop thinking about that"? If you had, how easy was it to do that and how effective was it?

Most people, in my experience find this advice difficult to follow. It seems like the more you try not to think about something, the more you think about it! True?

So let me tell you a little about the mind, it's very active (you knew that!) and every day you have up to (and sometime more than) 80,000 thoughts a day (this is according to the scientists).

If I told you not to think and that mindfulness was about having no thoughts, zero. What chance do you think you would have? 10%? More? Less?

Whatever it is it would be extremely difficult wouldn't it.

That's why we don't even try.

Because Mindfulness is about focusing on awareness not your thoughts, about retraining yourself to come out of your head and into to your body, your sense of self and your senses.

Mindfulness is about giving less attention to your thinking and more attention to your experience of this moment.

How: Anchors to the moment

3 anchors: Your breath, body and senses (see, feel, hear, taste & smell) all connect you to the present moment.

Why? Circles of wellbeing:

The health benefits of mindfulness range from stress and pain relief and improved sleep patterns to a greater likelihood of breaking out of depression or addiction. The benefits are well documented scientifically and there are many articles that you can read on the findings.

Really the benefits radiate out from being happier in your own skin, calmer, healthier and more content to having a set of highly effective lifestyle skills that make every aspect of our everyday lives more rewarding.

The word “practice”

We call mindfulness meditations “practices” because that’s exactly what they are. The very word practice implies repetition which is apt as you can only change your mind-set by doing an exercise regularly. Just like going to the gym, the more you practice an exercise, over time you will see more and more of results.

Easy? It’s a skill for life and some days will be easier than others. Even the word “practice” implies an ease, a sense of “I’m only trying” which makes the experience a more enjoyable one. It takes the pressure off.

2 ways:

You can use the formal, informal or both.

Formal: Eyes closed, sitting down in a chair or supported against a wall or crossed legged on the floor. I will be providing you with formal practices over the coming weeks and months. All will be less than 10 minutes long with some being less than 5 minutes. In this way I want it to be as easy as possible for you to incorporate into your life so as to see results and from there making it easier to create new habits.

Informal: These will be suggestions for how you can bring mindfulness into your everyday life. That is, how can you practice mindfulness and drive the car, or wash the dishes, or write an email or eat a meal. Lots of people love these practices because they don’t require extra time

Time of day:

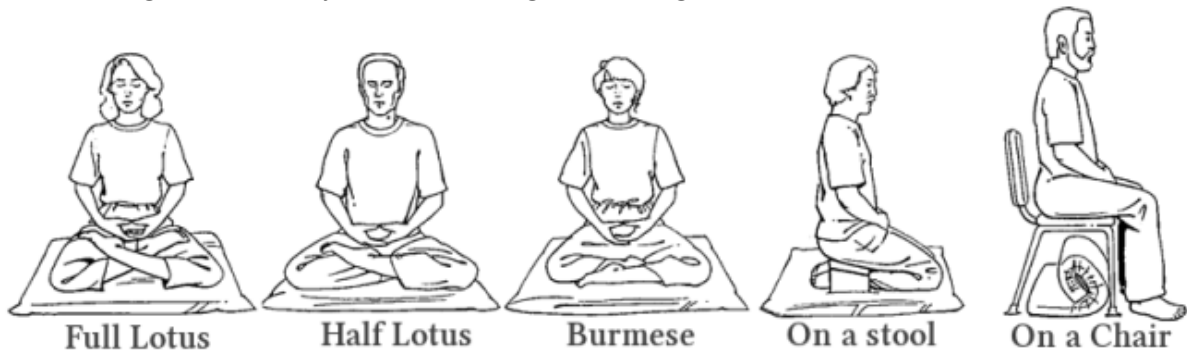
I want this experience to be incredibly easy for you to achieve results quickly so I’m not going to tell you when or where to practice. For some people the morning time is best for them, for others its lunchtime and others still it’s the evening time. All have their merits and all have their advantages, so pick what’s right for you.

Posture

Meditation is active: you are re-training your mind and your awareness to come to the moment. Therefore mindfulness is an active process rather than a passive one, i.e. it is something that you're engaged with rather than something that happens to you. For that reason posture is very important. Here are some tips for setting up your meditation posture.

Think: Open, relaxed and upright

- ॐ Sit upright - you can meditate sitting on a chair, cushion, or cross legged on the floor. Whichever you choose, make sure that you are comfortable.
- ॐ Make sure your spine is long and straight and slightly away from the back of the chair if you're sitting on one.
- ॐ Realign your posture - scan your body and ensure there's even distribution of weight between your left and right side, legs, arms etc.



Important to note:

What we practise in Mindfulness whether it's sitting on a chair with our eyes closed or doing an informal practice, the skills that we are developing are skills that will appear in our lives. So as we practise not judging ourselves in our practice, we learn not to judge ourselves in our lives. As we become more familiar to connect with the moment through our senses we will find it easier to live in the moment as we drive the car, or walk to the dogs, or tackle that project.

In this way mindfulness becomes one of the greatest tools for a happy, peaceful and fulfilled life.

Over the course of Stage 1 (5 weeks) you will get:

- ✓ A newly recorded Mindful Walking meditation practice
- ✓ Other ways to bring mindfulness into your every day (informal practices)
- ✓ Supercharging your practice with intentions
- ✓ New Mindfulness +intention formal practice
- ✓ Dealing with resistance & procrastination
- ✓ Working with Practice sheets for instant feedback
- ✓ Reflection and summary.
- ✓ Bonus meditation and webinar. (Monday June 29th at 8pm via ZOOM)