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This material has been developed under the Erasmus + KA 210 YOU partnership.

Partner organizations: Stichting Turks Onderwijs Centrum, Buruciye Genclik ve Egitim Dernegi, Kizilelma APS

The “Solidarity Bridge for Ukranian Youngsters” project has been funded by Nederlands Jeugdinstituut National Agency Erasmus+ Youth (NJI) under the ERASMUS+ European Union grant program, with grant no. 2022-1-NL02-KA210-YOU-000083837. Neither the European Commission nor the project's national funding agency is responsible for the content or liable for any losses or damages incurred that are the result of the use of these resources.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf" (Kabat-Zinn 2004)

Introduction

This eight-lesson mindfulness-based stress-reduction manual was developed as part of the Erasmus KA 210 YOU project by the STOC, Buruciye GED, and APS Kizilelma organizations. It aims to help you become aware of the thought, feeling, and behavior patterns that don't work for you and that you might not even be aware of. It provides tools for pausing and taking a closer look at these patterns, studying how they function, and helping you become aware of the hold they have on you. You will learn as the content develops how the mind fights just accepting what is and how it perpetually looks forward or backward.

According to Zinn J.K., "mindfulness provides a simple but powerful route for getting ourselves unstuck. Once we commit ourselves to paying attention in an open way, without falling prey to our likes and dislikes, opinions and prejudices, projections and expectations, new possibilities open up and we have a chance to free ourselves from the straight jacket of unconsciousness."

If you experience any of the following, mindfulness meditation has proven to be the most beneficial:

- Constantly focused on the future, worrying or thinking about potential future occurrences, or remembering or ruminating about a past event or events and being unable to quickly focus on the present and what you are doing at that moment. Feeling anxious and stressed. Feeling tension for example in your chest, shoulders, back, tummy, etc. Feeling a sense of panic and/or dread. Feeling an over-all level of anxiety/apprehension that disturbs your feeling of well-being.
- Experiencing tension and anxiety. experiencing stress, such as in the chest, shoulders, back, abdomen, etc. experiencing fear and/or panic. having generalized worry or apprehension that interferes with your sense of wellbeing.
- Being overwhelmed and unable to distinguish between the forest and the trees. Not being able to prioritize, organize, or focus myself without difficulty.
- Patterns of interrupted sleep. Having trouble falling asleep at night and/or waking up in the middle of the night and having trouble falling back to sleep.
- Relationship tension or collapse, disagreement, poor communication, and increased levels of interpersonal tension.

Feeling gloomy, feeling blue, lacking motivation, having trouble focusing, and being depressed.

Definition of mindfulness:

"Mindfulness is the awareness that results from paying attention on purpose, in the here and now, and without passing judgment on what is. It's a strategy for moving from doing to being so that before acting, we absorb all the knowledge that an event has to give. By putting our immediate future objectives on hold and accepting the present moment as it is rather than how we would like it to be, we may be more attentive. It implies that we face circumstances with candor.

Being mindful entails purposefully disengaging from the automatic pilot mode in which we frequently function—worrying about the past or the future, for example—and tuning in to the present with full awareness.

The goal of mindfulness practice is to clearly observe the mind's beneficial and detrimental tendencies rather than trying to forcefully control it. It entails approaching our bodies and brains with a sense of openness, acceptance, and curiosity so that we may perceive what is waiting to be uncovered and be with it without too much effort. In this way, we start to gradually free ourselves from the control of our old thought patterns. As we are acting, we start to directly understand what we are doing. A smooth changeover from ignorance to awareness is starting.

How Mindfulness Functions

The term "neuroplasticity" describes the brain's adaptability. According to EEG and brain research, mindfulness alters the way the brain functions and is structured. As you exercise your attentional abilities, a brain pathway is formed that facilitates easier refocusing over time. The brain pathway that develops when someone feels down or unpleasant is depressed. The route forms if someone visualizes instances when they were content or gave a good performance. According to studies that track athletes' brain activity, some parts of the brain light up as they visualize. The brain continues to produce new neurons until death, and learning never stops. As you perform more actions, they become easier. The meditation method developed by John Kabat Zinn has beneficial effects on the mind, body, and behavior.

What Advantages Does Mindfulness Offer?

Like any other aspect of your body, your mind may be trained to function more effectively with knowledge of how it functions. Benefits include the following, according to Baer's 2003 meta-analysis:

1. Mental stability refers to keeping your mind alert and clear and avoiding extremes that are fueled by judgments of you, other people, or your experience.
2. Mind flexibility - the capacity to direct one's attention to any topic of choice as opposed to letting it flit randomly between several topics.
3. Self-awareness, which is the capacity to recognize the contents of your thoughts and comprehend the recurring mental patterns.
4. Acting rather than reacting - reducing reactivity and creating room for intentionality.
5. Exposure - By just allowing ourselves to experience our feelings without resisting or denying them, we may gradually lessen their unpleasantness.
6. Acceptance - We experience a lot of pain and suffering when we try to change situations that are beyond our control. The pain is more bearable and lessens more quickly as we focus on accepting them. Additionally, battling it makes no difference.

Mindfulness-based Principles:

1. Decide what you want. What you need to focus on is this.
2. Develop self-awareness. Knowing where you are and who you are will enable you to make changes. Watch what occurs when you alter.
3. Control attention. Become conscious of your awareness.
4. Make self-regulation stronger. aspire to pre-frontal cortex dominance
5. Show yourself and others love and kindness. Stop listening to your inner critic.

Module 1 “The key to Awareness is Breathing Awareness”

We often forget to be conscious of our breath, therefore one of the first steps in mindfulness-based stress reduction is to do just that. Simply be aware of your breath rather than trying to regulate it. In a calm and interested manner, observe, watch, and feel the breath. You may utilize your increased awareness of your breathing to focus your attention on other areas of your life as you continue to practice. Examples include focusing on an issue that needs attention and/or assistance with pain, anger, relationships, or the stress of daily life, or relaxing tight muscles.

Lesson 1: Activity 1

Breath Awareness as a Doorway to Awareness

1. Settling

Get comfy on a chair with a straight back. Your legs should not be crossed when you plant your two feet level on the ground. Keep your back away from the chair's back so that your spine can support itself. Sit comfortably, keeping your spine straight but not stiff. Relax your shoulders. If it's comfortable, gently close your eyes. If not, allow your eyes to wander to the four or five feet of floor in front of you. Focus on the physical sensations of your body making touch with the chair, such as the weight and pressure it exerts on the seat and the ground under your feet.

2. Concentrating on the Feeling of Breathing

- Draw attention to your breathing. Consider whether your breathing is deep or shallow.
- You don't need to alter or regulate your breathing in any manner. Nothing has to be corrected, and there is no specific condition to reach. Keep your attention on the breath as it passes through your nose, enters your lungs, and leaves your mouth. Give yourself a few minutes to simply accept everything as it is. Bring your focus to your navel now gently. When you inhale, you can feel your stomach rising, and when you exhale, it is sinking. Allow your focus to rest on the entire breath's duration. Saying "in" or "rising" as you inhale and "out" or "falling" as you exhale may help you become more aware of it. As much as you can, pay attention to the shifting bodily sensations during the whole inhalation and exhalation. Try to pay attention to the little pauses that occur between each inhalation and exhalation as well as between each inhalation and exhalation.

3. Dealing with Wandering Thoughts

- Sooner or later (often sooner), the mind will begin to wander from the feeling of the breath, becoming preoccupied with ideas, plans, daydreams, the past, or simply floating aimlessly.
- Whatever arises, whatever the mind is drawn to or consumed with, it is all OK. The mind wanders and becomes distracted naturally; it is neither a

mistake nor a failure. Simply acknowledge the mind's digression from the breath as it happens and gently guide it back to breathing and the rise and fall of the abdomen.

- You will feel more at peace the more gradually you are bringing your mind back. Bring your consciousness back to your breathing whenever your mind wanders, even a thousand times. Treat it gently, much as you would when instructing a young child to grasp a ball. Continue doing this exercise for a few breaths, or as long as you'd like, keeping in mind that the goal is just to be as conscious of your breath as you can be, utilizing it as a calming anchor to gently re-enter the present now.

4. Closing

- If your eyes are closed, open them when you are ready to restore your focus to the room or location you are in, knowing that you can always come back to being aware of your breath.

Refer to the Oscailt Mindfulness space course manual from 2007 and Williams, Teasdale, Segal, and Kabat-Zinn (2007).

Lesson 1: Activity 2

Three Minutes of Breathing Room

The Breathing Space offers a means to deactivate Automatic Pilot and reacquaint yourself with the present.

1. Awareness

- By turning your focus within, you may bring your consciousness into the present moment. then inquire, "What am I experiencing right now?"
- Be present in whatever is happening; don't try to escape it or change it. Train yourself to persevere for a few minutes despite the fact that doing so frequently requires bravery. What ideas are running through your head while you internally concentrate? Recognize these ideas. Keep an eye on how they act and emerge.
- You don't have to change, solve problems, or do anything with these ideas; just be aware of them and accept their presence.
- Keep an eye on your emotions. Write down adjectives that best represent your current emotional state, such as frustration, exhaustion, sorrow, pain, anger, happiness, and contentment.
- Recognize whatever sensations you may be experiencing.
- Pick up any present feelings you are having by scanning your body. Check all parts of your body—your head, shoulders, chest, arms, belly, back, and legs—and feel what sensations are taking place there right now. They might be hot or chilly, tightness, tension, resistance, numbness, or tingling. Recognize these feelings. Observe these feelings without feeling compelled to react to them. Be enquisitive and forgiving.

2. Inhale

- Now, slowly turn your attention to your breathing. Pay close attention to it and note if it is deeper or shallower. Sometimes it helps to mentally count 1, 2, 3, 4 while inhaling and 4, 3, 2, 1 when expelling, keeping track of each in-breath and each out-breath as they come one after the other.

while an alternative, it might be helpful to utter the words "in" and "out" while you

breathe in and out, respectively.

- Your breathing will serve as an anchor, drawing you into the present and what is precisely occurring for you at this very instant. It will also assist you in establishing a connection to a deeper awareness and quiet in the current moment while remaining present to whatever is occurring.

3. Expand

- Increase the area of your consciousness that is focused on your breathing to encompass the entirety of your body. Follow the breath into and out of your entire body, sensing your entire body from head to toe. Breathe in via your skin's pores. Inhale and exhale. Breathe in and out like this.
- Breathe in and out toward the perimeter of your body.
- Bring your focus to the point where the space around your body and the body itself meet, and then inhale and exhale from this location.
- Through this practice, we are connected to a larger container for ideas, feelings, and experiences without having to deny or express them.
- This area gives you the chance to switch off automatic pilot and live in awareness.
- Bring this newfound knowledge with you as you go on to the next phase of your day and let it guide your decision.

Oscailt Mindfulness Space Course Handbook from 2007 and Williams et al., 2007, are references.

Lesson 1 – Activity 3

A Quick Moment of Breathing Room to Deal with Tough Circumstances or Experiences

1. Being Conscious

- Start by standing up straight and being respectful. Put your hands down by your sides or comfortably on your lap, and stand with your two feet flat on the ground. (Try laying down on your back if you are unable to sit up straight.)
- You may either close your eyes or let them naturally land on a point around a meter in front of you.

- Give yourself permission to start concentrating on your inner experiences. Take a few deep breaths to let your attention slowly shift within, away from your outer world, and gently turn your attention to a difficult circumstance you are now experiencing or confronting; anything unpleasant, something unresolved. This might be a miscommunication, an argument, a task you have to complete but are hesitant to, or a concern about something that may or may not occur in the future.
- Once the problematic circumstance comes to mind, pay attention to the ideas that arise. Take note of your thoughts. Recognize your ideas as you observe them. Do not interact with them or follow them. Simply be aware of them and thank them.
- Draw attention to your emotions. What emotions are you now aware of? Observe them. Watch them.
- Take note of any negative emotions you may be having. Remind them of their presence.
- You don't need to make any repairs, modifications, or other changes to them. Just let them know you are there.
- Now focus on any positive emotions. Take note of and watch them. Remind them of their presence.
- When you're ready, concentrate your attention on the portion of the body where the feelings are the greatest, and then softly breathe into that area of the body. Start by breathing onto the edge of the sensation and then exhale from that edge. Spend a few breaths doing this. Then take a few breaths into the experience and out of it. Bring your focus back to your usual breath—in and out—if at any point this seems too much. At a later moment, you can revisit the experience. Otherwise, take a breath in and a breath out while you soften and open.

2. Breathing

- Redirect your attention to your breathing and the bodily feelings it causes.
- Pay close attention to your stomach and notice how the wall there expands with each inhalation and contracts with each exhalation.
- You should inhale via your nose, and you should exhale through your mouth,

letting your lips slightly droop wide.

- Simply become aware of your breathing in an inquisitive and cordial manner without changing the rate at which you breathe. Take note of the minor variations between each breath.
- It's acceptable if your mind starts to stray; this is what the mind does. Just bring your focus back to your breath while being polite and kind. If you'd like, you may tell yourself, "It's okay... whatever it is, it's already here, let me acknowledge it," as you exhale.
- As much as you can, accept yourself right now, as you are.

3. Willfully Expansion

- Now broaden the scope of your awareness such that it now encompasses a sense of your entire body in addition to the sensation of your breath.
- Inhale through your skin into your entire body. Take a deep breath in and let the contour of your body fill your range of vision.
- Breathe in the area by bringing your breath to the extreme edge or outline of your body. You can focus your attention on the region where your body and the space surrounding it meet, slightly outside of your body. Breathe in and out of this place while keeping it open to you. For a few breaths, repeat this.
- Via this technique, you may access a larger container where ideas, emotions, and sensations can exist without forcing us to deny them or express them via behavior. This area gives us the chance to disengage from our natural reactions and apply our inner understanding to the circumstance.

4. Closing

- Bring your focus back to where you are sitting (or laying), make a little movement, open your eyes if they are closed, and bring your increased feeling of awareness with you as we come to the finish of this brief breathing space exercise.

Williams et al. 2007 and the 2007 manual for the Oscailt Mindfulness Space Course

Lesson 2

"Thoughts are not facts"

According to Segal Z., Williams M., and Teasdale J. (2002), our ideas have a profound impact on how we view our surroundings and our emotions. Our outlook on life shifts and changes as our ideas do. Our minds may be like a television set with several channels; whichever channel we are focused on at the time influences our viewpoint. The ability of the mind to alter its viewpoint is an extremely significant one, although it frequently occurs in a fairly unthinking manner. Our understanding of this process can be improved by focusing on our breath.

For a mind that is always on the go, the breath serves as an anchor. We will eventually learn to gain greater distance and perspective in our thought process by returning our focus to the breath rather than associating with the many thought patterns that are continually developing.

We shall be able to liberate ourselves from the control of ingrained thought patterns that uncontrollably "pop into our mind" when we are both rooted in the breath and have established a sense of distance from our propensity to respond to ideas as they emerge in the mind.

We will eventually realize that our ideas are only mental occurrences that come and go by their own nature and not a phenomenon that has to be blindly obeyed with effort and patience.

We are neither repressing, suppressing, or acting on our thoughts when we are moment-by-moment aware of them. We have the chance to learn more about our thoughts in this state of non-reactive observation than is often attainable. It also affords us the chance to get familiar with our more prevalent automatic, automated, and unproductive thought processes, which can send our moods spiraling downhill.

For instance, it's crucial to be aware of the inevitable thoughts that will surface when you engage with this information and propose things like, "There is no point in doing this" or "It won't work, so why bother?" If such thinking is blindly adopted, it will sabotage and undermine your efforts and deprive you of the chance to develop fresh insight into the nature of your own thought and mental processes.

You don't have to struggle with your ideas, resist them, or condemn them. Instead, you may simply decide not to act upon your own ideas once you become aware of their emergence.

Right now, spend a few seconds looking directly at the thoughts that are entering your head. Close your eyes and visualize yourself sitting in a theater seeing an empty screen as a mental exercise. Simply wait for ideas to come to you. You may become aware of your ideas extremely

fast since you aren't doing anything other than waiting for them to come to you. What are they exactly? What takes place to them? When we lose ourselves in them, thoughts like magic tricks that appear genuine, but frequently shift upon closer examination.

But what about the powerful ideas that have an impact on you? While keeping an eye on anything, all of a sudden, whoosh!, you vanish, lost in contemplation. What's going on there? What mental states or specific thought types continually attract your attention and cause you to forget that they are only transient phenomena?

Amazingly, we give unwelcome ideas like "Do this, say that, remember, plan, obsess, and judge" a lot of power without even realizing it. We may become obsessed with our thoughts, and they frequently do!

Our conceptualization of things determines the types of ideas we experience and how they affect our life. No matter what form of thinking occurs in the mind, if we are in the strong, clear place of just seeing ideas arise and pass, we can recognize our thoughts for what they are: a fleeting display.

Thoughts inspire action. Various effects result from acts. Which idea will we invest in? Our major responsibility is to become aware of them so that we may decide which to act upon and which to let alone.

We may cultivate serenity and mindfulness together when we spend some time each day in a state of non-doing, watching the breath and the activity of our mind and body without getting sucked into it. We improve the mind's capacity for calmness and concentration as it gains stability.

Lesson 2: Activity 1

Alternative Ways to See Your Thoughts

- 1.** Don't try to pursue your thoughts; just observe them as they enter and go.
- 2.** Consider your ideas to be an event in your mind rather than a truth. The fact that this occurrence frequently occurs alongside other emotions may be real, and when it does, it is tempting to accept this as fact. You must still choose if it is real and how you will respond to it.

3. Publish your ideas on paper. You will be able to see things in a less painful and overpowering way as a result of this. Additionally, the time between having the concept and writing it down might allow you to ponder its significance.

4. Pose the following inquiries to yourself:

- Has this idea simply now entered my mind? Does it match the reality of the circumstance?
- Is there anything I may inquire about it?
- What if I had thought about it differently or in a different circumstance? Exist any substitutes?

5. Gently inquire whether you are too worn out.

- Am I drawing conclusions too soon?
- Am I utilizing binary thinking? Am I looking for perfection?

6. For particularly challenging ideas, it could be beneficial to deliberately take a second look at them in a calm, open frame of mind and allow your "Wise Mind" offer its own viewpoint.

Observing One's Own Criticism

Williams et al.'s 2007 study emphasizes that as we practice different types of meditation, we may notice that we react to what we are expecting, assess how things are going, and criticize ourselves if we believe that we are not experiencing the emotions that we are "supposed to be" experiencing or that we are "not very good" at meditating. Such situations are fantastic chances to recall that opining and criticizing are only forms of thinking, and can we relate to these modes of thought as merely mental happenings at such times?

A recurring critical commentary is typically heard throughout daily meditation practice: You've lost again. Can't you concentrate on your breathing for even thirty seconds? Time is being wasted on this. Like whatever else you try, you're messing this up. Why can't you do anything correctly? What's the matter with you? This kind of commentary is a typical experience, but we could learn that simply becoming aware of these thought patterns as they are is meditation.

How can we then assist ourselves?

One option, according to Williams and his colleagues, is to label the thought patterns

that come up frequently, using names like "Judging Mind" or "Hopeless Mind," or you may refer to them as subpersonalities like "My Worst Critic" or "Doubting Thomas," among others. The crucial thing is that we can identify the overarching themes and common threads that connect a variety of distinct ideas that come to mind. The labels we select should ideally enable us to have a more comprehensive and enlightened understanding of these cognitive processes.

Instead of identifying with them as a part of ourselves or hearing their voice as the voice of reality, these names may enable us to recognize them as regular visitors to the mind with some degree of detachment.

"Critical Mind" is a term that might be used to describe the entire critical judgemental bundle. After doing this, we are all able to recognize and acknowledge the critical mind when it manifests. This may make it possible for us to let the critical mind to come and go without giving it the ability to start a chain reaction of unfavorable ideas.

- Think of your right foot as having pores that you can breathe through and out of.
- Move to the calf muscles and shin bone and pay attention to any sensations there, such as pulsation, tingling, or blood flow.
- Simply take a breath in and exhale to release any tension or discomfort. Bring your focus on the kneecap, the knee's sides, and the knee joint.
- Your right thigh, the area between the knee and the hip, comes to mind.
- Sensations that may be present include tingling, blood flow, warmth, weight, and touch. allowing the awareness to extend far into the pelvis and hips, encompassing the entire region.
- Allow your breath or awareness to welcome whatever tension or discomfort you may be experiencing with an attitude of openness and inquiry.
- Keep an eye out for any weight or touch sensations with the surface you are resting on.
- Before you leave this area, visualize yourself taking deep breaths into your pelvis, hips, thighs, knees, calves, ankles, and down into the soles of both of your feet. Then, exhale from the soles of your feet.
- Imagine taking a deep breath in via the bottoms of your feet and out through your legs, from your hips and pelvis. For a few breaths, continue doing this. (Pause)
- Go to your lower back, which is frequently a source of strain for many of us. Breathe into and out of any discomfort if there is any, including tightness, pain, heavy feeling, or tension. Just being with whatever is occurring at the moment And when you go to the center of your back, halt where the liver and kidneys are

located.

- Move up to the upper back, where you may feel the rear of your ribcage swell with each inhalation and contract with each exhalation, up to and between the shoulder blades.
- Allow your breath to enter and exit this place as needed to release any tension that may be there.
- Going from the chest region and the lungs that take in air, enabling oxygen into the blood and CO₂ to be released, down to the belly and feeling the rise and fall of the abdomen, the lower tummy below the navel, and then up towards the chest region.
- Try to focus on your heart's regular pounding to see if you can.
- Move slowly from there and focus on your fingernails so that we may use both hands at once.
- Being with whatever feelings you may be having in your thumbs, tiny fingers, and fingernails. Changing hands at a rate that is comfortable for you. (Pause)
- Afterward, look at each knuckle. And around to the palms of your hands from the backs of your hands (pause).
- Imagine being able to breathe into and out of the pores on your hands and wrists. Be mindful of any pulsations that could be present here. After that, progressively explore whatever is taking place in the present moment by moving up to the elbows on the lower arms.
- And then the upper arms, shoulders, and shoulders themselves, which are frequently a source of strain for many of us.
- Breathing in and out of the shoulders, the neck, and the throat region—regions of the body that are frequently highly sensitive—and up to the face, starting with the jaw, breathing into the jaw bone, releasing any tension that may have built up here.
- Moving up to the nose, through the lips, and into the chin. observing whether you can feel your breath as it enters and exits via your nostrils. If there is any tension in the area between the eyes and the forehead, breathe into it and out of it. Also, breathe into your cheekbones and up to your eyes.
- You don't have to pretend to have any specific look; simply let your face be what it is. Being with it both externally and within.
- As you get to the head and top of the head, feel the smoothness of the curvature at the rear of the skull.
- Now imagine an area on the very top of your head that is the size of a 20 cent coin. Breathe into it and out of it by opening it up like a whale's blowhole.
- Imagine that you are exhaling via that area after inhaling through your nose.

Take a few of these in-depth breaths. (Pause)

- Then, picture that you are taking a breath in via your nose and letting it out through the soles of your feet. The breath should then go down your body, through your face, shoulders, arms, and chest.
- Imagine that you can breathe from the bottoms of your feet all the way up to the top of your body and out of your head.
- Just take a few breaths in this manner. (Pause) Keeping your complete body in the present now, pay attention to the way your breath enters and leaves your body.
- If you can feel complete inside your entire body, not rejecting anything, not clinging to anything. being aware of your true self, your ability for calm and presence, and your willingness to accept things as they are.

Advice for Body Scan

1. Regardless of what is happening to you, maintain performing the body scan. It doesn't matter whether you nod off, lose focus, become distracted, feel nothing, or forget which area of your body you should be concentrating on. The important thing is that you recognize when you've lost focus and just bring it back, even if you have to do it repeatedly for a short period of time.

2. Keep in mind that distractions and ideas are only experiences of the moment that should be acknowledged as fleeting phenomena. Following that, we may slowly bring the body scan back into focus.

3. Discard all notions of "success," "failure," "doing it really well," and "body purification." Simply following the directions and letting go of any objectives or accomplishments is the only thing that matters. It will be less effective the harder you try.

Overcoming Challenges with Body Scans

On the surface, the body scan appears simple. Simply lie down, play the CD or podcast, and move your awareness throughout your body. You're actually accomplishing a lot more than that. It takes strength and perseverance to attempt a fresh strategy if you've lived your entire life disregarding your body. There may be issues. Perhaps:

- You experienced greater physical discomfort than usual.

- You wanted the body scan to end.
- You found it difficult to focus.
- You nodded off.
- You experienced increased anxiety, depression, or frustration.
- The body scan was not possible for you.
- You weren't pleased with the body scan.
- You couldn't hold back your tears.
- You were unable to discern the purpose of the body scan.

These are all typical occurrences. Of course, there are also moments of joy and calm. When you start to struggle with the body scan and other prolonged meditations, keep the following in mind:

You must persevere even though you don't always enjoy it.

cited in S. Alidina's 2010 book, *Mindfulness for Dummies*

Lesson 3

Embracing Emotions

- Although it is evident that our ideas have an impact on our emotions, the thoughts actually come from deeper, less obvious emotions. Long after each person's specific bad ideas have vanished, those sensations could still be present, just on the edge of consciousness. The feelings we have from unpleasant experiences, such as anger, as well as physical sensations (such as a tightening in the shoulders), can be worked through by going beneath the thought level after we acknowledge the existence of thoughts as mental events. To do this, we give each facet of our felt emotions and bodily sensations a compassionate and discriminating awareness.
- At this stage, our task is to see whether we can experience our unwelcome feelings without making them worse. Given how quickly we default to aversion and automatic mode, the idea itself could seem bizarre and the job unattainable. However, engaging in such a deliberate, conscious practice—which amounts to embracing our worst fears—can be a potent act of liberation.
- As soon as we become aware of an unpleasant sensation, we try to concentrate on how it makes us feel physically. Connecting our present-moment awareness of the breath with whatever the unpleasant feelings or sensations are really helps with this. Intentionally inhale into the place that is causing the discomfort or agony, examining its "edges" and noting any variations in the sensation's intensity.

Lesson 3 Activity 1

Body Scanning

- You can perform the body scan in different positions besides lying down, such as sitting on a chair with your feet uncrossed on the floor. Having a real dedication to the practice is more vital than the posture. Although I will be leading you through the body scan exercise while you are lying down, you may follow along if you are not.
- So softly close your eyes while resting on your bed or mat with your arms at your sides and your palms pointing either downward (or upward, depending on what feels most comfortable).

- As you lay here, focus on the body. Try to feel the entire body, from the top of your head to the tips of your toes. As you do this, gradually become aware of your breathing. Instead of changing or modifying it in any way, just take note of how you are breathing right now: whether it is deep or shallow, free-flowing or more constrained.
- Consider your body's weight as well, particularly the weight of your head and thighs, which will cause them to sag on the mattress or mat. Pay attention to how your abdomen rises with each inhalation and descends, falling back into your spine, with each exhalation.
- In order to experience your left foot's big toe, little toe, and the toes in between while still lying here awake and breathing in oxygen that nourishes the body and breathing out carbon dioxide in a rhythmic cycle, gradually bring your awareness from your stomach down the left thigh, past the knee, calf, and foot.
- Take note of any unusual feelings, such as those of numbness, tingling, tingling or burning. If you leave the field blank, it is also OK.
- Focus on the left foot's pad, arch, and sole as well as the ball of the foot. Imagine that you are breathing through and out of these pores.
- Bring your focus to the inside of the ankle and the heel. You could feel some pressure there when the heel makes contact with the surface it is resting on.
- Be mindful of the skin on the surface and deep inside the muscle as you move toward the outside of the ankle, near the top of the foot, and progressively upwards into the calf muscles, shin, and shin bone. Breathe directly into this area if there is any tightness there.
- Breathe directly into the knee and explore this as best you can by moving higher to the knee, the knee cap, the sides of the knee, and deep into the joint.
- Now, slowly release your grip on the knee and focus on your leg and hip. Be mindful of any feelings in your thigh and hip when you inhale. As your thigh makes contact with the chair (or the floor), feel the weight of it. simply allowing whatever is there to be.
- Before stepping away from the left leg, see yourself breathing into and out of the hip, through the thigh, calf, and foot of the left leg. Repetition is required.
- Bring oxygen to the entire leg by exhaling from the hip and inhaling through the sole.
- Several breaths like this, curiosity, presence, and vigilance for any feelings. Let's shift to the right toes now. Without moving them, stretch your focus to the toes in between the big toe and the tiny toe. as though inhaling oxygen, they inhaled through their toes. Focus on the right foot's ball, pad, ankle, inside ankle, and heel before gradually extending your focus up to the top of the foot and towards

the right foot's ankle.

Lesson 4

Understanding Eating

Our lives are filled with ignorance. Eating is a good illustration. We eat with hardly any consciousness, despite the fact that eating involves all of our senses. Eating many times a day without truly tasting our food is conceivable. Eating while thinking about other things is just as common as eating while talking or reading. We are completely enmeshed in the mental stream and the urgent demands of our everyday life. Aspects of your sensory experience when eating may become apparent if you intentionally pay attention to each one. It's possible that the fragrance of food is not what you expected. It could be interesting to explore the texture on the tongue. It's possible that you have never tasted food in this way before, and it usually has a fuller flavor than many portions that are carelessly stuffed into your mouth. This kind of mindfulness has the power to fundamentally alter how we view food. You might wish to attempt the next straightforward activity to get a sense of how vivid this experience is for yourself. Give yourself permission to work on this activity for a while.

Lesson 4: Activity 1

One Raisin: A First Experience with Mindfulness

1. Holding

- Start by placing a raisin between your finger and thumb or in the palm of your hand.
- Concentrating on it and imagining that you have just landed from Mars and have never previously seen an item like this.

2. Seeing

- Take the time to fully view it; give the raisin your entire attention and care;
- Let your eyes explore every aspect of it; look for any asymmetrical or distinctive characteristics as well as the highlights where the light shines, the deeper hollows, the folds, and ridges.

3. Touching

- Examine the texture of the raisin with your fingertips as you turn it around, maybe with your eyes closed if it helps.

4. Smelling

- Holding the raisin beneath your nose, take a deep breath in and notice any perfume or fragrance that may develop. As you do this, pay attention to anything intriguing that may be occurring in your mouth or stomach.

5. Placing

- Notice how your hand and arm perfectly place the raisin as you gently bring it up to your lips. Place the item in your mouth gently and without chewing. Pay attention to how it enters your mouth. Spend a few seconds using your tongue to investigate it.

6. Tasting

- When you're ready, get ready to chew the raisin by paying attention to how and where it should be positioned. Then, very deliberately, take one or two bites out of it. Pay attention to what occurs next. Experience any waves of flavor that come from it as you keep chewing. Without swallowing yet, pay attention to the basic taste and texture sensations in the mouth, how they alter over time, minute by moment, and any alterations to the thing itself.

7. Swallowing

- Before you swallow the raisin, try to first observe your goal to do so as it arises. This will help you experience your purpose to swallow mindfully.
- After you've finished this mindful eating practice, notice how your body is feeling overall and try to feel the remaining raisin traveling into your stomach.

Additional Practice:

(i) Try this exercise with other foods and take note of your findings.

(ii) Slow down the eating process each time, follow the instructions from this exercise, and pay attention to the sensations.

Lesson 5

Understanding the Positive and Negative Aspects of Experience

- How can we increase our awareness of feelings—whether they are pleasant, painful, or neutral—and of the bodily sensations we experience on a regular basis?
- You might want to attempt the following in order to respond to the query:
- Be alert for any instances, no matter how tiny, when you register "pleasant" or "unpleasant" feelings during the course of the coming week. The Pleasant and Unpleasant Event Calendars (see overleaf) can be used to keep track of what actually occurred at each event, paying close attention to the interaction between feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. Recording your real experiences in each situation might be quite helpful.
- We must pay attention to what is truly happening for us internally if we are to make a commitment to being conscious of either good or unpleasant sensations at any given time. This obviously calls for paying attention, the complete opposite of experience avoidance. Making a conscious effort to pay attention to what is good or bad about a specific experience, as well as how it makes us feel in the body, the heart, and the mind, can help us not only become more aware of the reality of our experiences but also start to break the automatic habit of avoiding them.

According to Alidina S. (2010), this activity also enables us to see that experiences may be divided into ideas, feelings, and physical sensations rather than being one large blob. As a result, challenging situations become more tolerable rather than overpowering. It helps you become aware of your automatic repetitive behaviors and teaches you how to push away any negative experiences, which may end up perpetuating them, as well as how you habitually hold onto happy experiences with a desire for them to continue.

Instead of categorizing events as positive or negative, it encourages curiosity about them. This pushes you to face your bad experiences head-on rather than trying to escape them.

Lesson 5 Activity 1

Calendar of Pleasant Events

At the moment a pleasurable occurrence occurs, be aware of it. Utilize the questions to draw attention to the specifics of the event while it is occurring. As quickly as you can thereafter, record it.

| What did you think of it? | How did your body feel specifically throughout this event? | What ideas or pictures sprang to mind while this happened? (Explain ideas in words and draw pictures) | What attitudes, sensations, and sentiments were present throughout this event? | What is going through your head as you type this? |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Example</p> <p>I felt the breeze on my face as I drove home after a day at college.</p> | <p>Face seems lighter, shoulders appear to be falling, and you feel revived and elevated.</p> | <p><i>"That's good,"</i></p> <p><i>"How lovely", "It's so nice to be outside"</i></p> | <p><i>Relief, pleasure</i></p> | <p><i>It was such a small thing, but I'm glad I noticed it</i></p> |
| <p>Monday</p> | | | | |
| <p>Tuesday</p> | | | | |
| <p>Wednesday</p> | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|--|
| Thursday | | | | |
| Friday | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | |
| Sunday | | | | |

| <p>What did you think of it?</p> | <p>How did your body feel specifically throughout this event?</p> | <p>What ideas or pictures sprang to mind while this happened? (Explain ideas in words and draw pictures)</p> | <p>What attitudes, sensations, and sentiments were present throughout this event?</p> | <p>What is going through your head as you type this?</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Example</p> <p>I'm waiting in line at the canteen when I feel a nudge in my front.</p> | <p>I tensed up around my eyes, clinched my jaw, and then my shoulders sort of collapsed.</p> | <p>"I should be more firm," "some people only think about themselves," "If I wasn't so invisible, nobody would shove me around."</p> | <p>I was incensed and felt cheated.</p> <p>I then felt bad for not defending myself.</p> <p>I was incensed and felt cheated.</p> <p>I then felt bad for not defending myself. I was incensed and felt cheated.</p> | <p>"I always place the blame for anything unfair on myself."</p> <p>"I always place the blame for anything unfair on myself."</p> <p>"I always place the blame for anything unfair on myself."</p> |
| <p>Monday</p> | | | | |
| <p>Tuesday</p> | | | | |
| <p>Wednesday</p> | | | | |
| <p>Thursday</p> | | | | |

| | | | | |
|----------|--|--|--|--|
| Friday | | | | |
| Saturday | | | | |
| Sunday | | | | |

Lesson 6

Self Care

Our state of being in the world is greatly influenced by how we spend our time and the things we do. We frequently get caught up in pointless pursuits that don't benefit us in any manner. Making a list of your activities will assist you in becoming more conscious and in differentiating between activities that benefit you and those that drain you. The goal isn't simply to avoid the activities that life will inevitably provide to us since they tend to drain us. The difficulty is to make people aware of these activities and figure out whether there are any ways we can look after ourselves while doing them. On the other side, if there are activities that nourish us, it would be worthwhile to look into methods to include more of these kinds of activities in our daily life.

We seldom pause to reflect on our daily activities, therefore it could be helpful to pose the following queries to yourself:

1. Out of everything I do, what gives me energy and makes me feel more alive and present than when I'm just existing?
2. What about the things I do drains me, makes me feel less present and genuinely living, or worse, makes me feel like I'm just existing?
3. Am I intentionally choosing to enhance the time and effort I devote to nurturing activities and to decrease the time and effort I give to draining activities, accepting that there are certain parts of my life that I cannot change?

Mindfulness becomes a living reality by applying it to all of our daily activities, allowing us to embrace the richness and challenges of life with openness. We shall progressively include the things that encourage more creative responses to life into our daily routines. For instance, we could become conscious of the effects that

particular meals, music, television, and other things have on us and make deliberate decisions about what we want to consume. The practice that follows will assist us in raising our awareness of our activities?

Lesson 6 – Activity 1

Daily Self-Care Activities

1. Create a list of everything you do each day, from the moment you wake up to the moment you go to bed.

2. After you've done that, proceed down the list and classify each item as follows:

N - A nourishing activity, or anything that feeds you

D: Draining action, or an endeavor that saps your energy.

M - Mastery action (a task that, while not necessarily enjoyable in and of itself, makes you feel good once accomplished, such as defrosting the refrigerator or organizing your cabinets).

3.

(i) Decide consciously to expand the things you do for yourself.

(ii) Decide consciously to cut back on activities that drain you.

4. Monitor and take note of your level of happiness while you deliberately carry out step 3. To make this exercise more aware, you might choose to keep a weekly journal.

Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2002)

Some Practical Self-Care and Mindfulness Advice

- Before getting out of bed in the morning, focus on your breathing for at least five complete breaths while allowing the breath to "do itself."
- Take note of your posture. Observe how your body and thoughts change as you transition from lying down to sitting, standing, and then walking. Keep track of every time you switch from one position to the next.

- Take a few moments during the day to focus on your breathing for at least five complete breaths.
- Take a moment to breathe before you eat or drink. Bring awareness to the four senses you use to consume food: sight, smell, chewing, and swallowing.
- Pay attention to your body when you stand or move. Look at your posture for a moment. Pay close attention to how the earth feels under your feet. As you walk, feel the air on your arms, legs, and face. Are you hurried to reach the next situation? Be mindful of your haste even while you're in a rush.
- Encourage active listening and speaking. Can you listen without needing to concur or disagree, develop an opinion or dislike, or prepare your response in advance? Can you just express what has to be said without going too far or too far? Are you aware of how your body and mind are feeling? Can you tell what your voice tone is saying?
- While you're standing in line, pay attention to your breathing and posture. Feel your body's sensations and the touch of your feet with the ground. Pay attention to how your abdomen rises and falls. Are you impatient right now?
- Throughout the day, pay attention to any areas of tension in your body. Try to breathe into them and release any extra tension as you exhale. Recognize any stress you may be holding in your body. Do you feel any stress in your lower back, neck, shoulders, stomach, or jaw?
- Pay close attention to the things you do every day, such brushing your teeth, styling your hair, doing the dishes, or putting on your shoes. Draw emphasis to each undertaking.
- Spend a few minutes before bedtime each night focusing on your breathing for at least five complete breaths.

Williams, M., Teasdale, J., Segal, and J.K. Zinn, 2007.

Lesson 7

Additional Formal Meditation Techniques:

Walking Meditation, Mindfulness Movement Meditation, Loving Kindness Meditation, and Sitting Meditation

Aldina (2010) compared meditation to plunging into the calm water at the ocean's bottom. Even if the waves (thoughts) are near the surface, you are seeing them from a calmer, deeper level. It takes time and prolonged meditation in formal practice to provide the diving equipment needed to safely reach these serene realms. Aldina goes on to suggest that one must set aside time each day for formal practice, which includes mindfulness meditation. Knowing that a systematic mindfulness practice is at the core of a mindful way of life, one chooses when and how long to

meditate before carrying it out. Without such a pattern, it may be difficult to practice mindfulness in daily activities. This course examines other formal meditation techniques, including walking, connection, movement, and sitting meditations.

Lesson 7: Activity 1

- Use this time to set aside daily routines, letting go of the propensity to be busy and always be doing, and allowing yourself to unwind in the present, in the here and now.
- Mindfulness Meditation is basically the practice of remaining present in the now and resisting the urge to fall victim to our normal thought patterns, which cause us to lose ourselves in the past or future. The ideal way to meditate is to sit comfortably, either on a chair with a straight back and your two feet flat on the floor, on a meditation cushion with your legs crossed, or in whichever position works for you. It's crucial to have an upright back that allows for the natural curve of the spine, a head that is balanced on top of the spine, and a chin that is slightly tucked in. Your hands can be on your knees or on your legs with your arms slightly out from your body. Become more conscious of your breathing, including the inhalation and exhalation, over time. There is no need to alter your breathing in any way; simply observe it as it occurs right now as it enters and exits your body.

(Pause)

- As you breathe, pay attention to how your body is moving (perhaps your chest, abdominal, or lower belly).

(Pause)

Observing the minute changes in your head and spine as they occur when your body repositions itself in relation to space, gravity, and breathing.

- If you can, focus on the start of the inhale, the finish of the exhale, and the delay between the start of the exhalation and the beginning of the subsequent inhalation. Simply pause in the space between breaths for a minute without making any effort. Bring your focus to the sensation at the tip of your nose right now, and let it stay there as you notice and take note of it. Become conscious of the breath as it enters via the nose, feeling the nostrils widen at the in-breath. Then, as it leaves through the mouth, notice the change in temperature between

the in-breath and out-breath.

- Following the breath now, pay attention to the expansion of your chest as your lungs fill with air and the rise and fall of your stomach as you inhale and exhale. In this moment, while your breath flows effortlessly in and out of your body in a regular cycle, be aware and awake in your body.

(Pause)

- You could notice that your ideas, fancies, daydreams, or plans are taking up all of your time. It could have been a while since you focused entirely on your breath. That's OK. Expanding your awareness of your breath to encompass your entire body—from the top of your head to the tips of your toes—as well as the maximum amount of space your body may occupy, might be beneficial. Become conscious of the sensation of touch as you become conscious of the surface you are sitting on. You might feel the weight of your buttocks resting on a chair or cushion or the weight of your legs resting on the ground. You may also sense your sense of grounding as you sit upright, alive, and alert while being fully conscious of your breath and the sensations in your body. You have two options if the sensations or discomforts become overwhelming: either reposition your body into a more comfortable position. If you want to do this, be mindful of your purpose to move and move very softly. Alternatively, you might decide to welcome the pain by gently bringing your attention to where it is and breathing straight into it and out of it.

(Pause)

- Move closer and become accustomed to those feelings by allowing yourself to do so. You can also go toward the discomfort's edges and the area surrounding them. Breathe in and out like this.

(Pause)

- After then, return to the discomfort's core while being receptive to what your body is trying to tell you at the time by being open, interested, and welcoming.

Gaining awareness of your complete body, from your head to the tips of your toes.

- Sitting here in a respectful, peaceful position, visualize being able to breathe into every body pore and out of every body pore.

(Pause)

- Move your focus now progressively to hearing; you could hear internal or external sounds, or even a certain aspect of quiet. You don't need to exert any effort to listen; simply let the sound come to you and try to notice any variations in the sound's quality. Simply opening up to it, connecting with it, and allowing it to come and go in its own rhythm can allow you to stay with the sound's quality without needing to categorize it. Be mindful of the noises and the stillness in between them. If you notice that your thoughts have gone, gently bring them back to your breathing and your sense of the sounds or the silence. By beginning with the breath, moving to the body as a whole, focusing on strong sensations, and finally on hearing, you are increasing your ability to move your attention around in a flexible manner as well as to focus and touch things profoundly.
- Instead than connecting with any one idea in particular, let's concentrate on how thoughts transit through the mind as they arise, linger, and then go on, frequently giving place to new thoughts.

(Pause)

Allowing your own ideas to come and go without becoming overwhelmed by them is preferable than being diminished by them. Simply pay attention to the thinking process itself, to thoughts arriving and leaving in the same way that sounds appear and disappear, to shape-shifting occurrences, and instead of tightening up and squeezing out, to allowing a sensation of space and release, maybe even occasionally recognizing the gap between thoughts. Nothing needs to be sorted out as you sit here; simply being in the moment as it unfolds is sufficient. Thoughts can be about anything, including the past, the future, planning, frightening thoughts, being bored, or even thoughts about thoughts.

- If you discover that as soon as you become aware of this, your ideas begin to take over and consume you, return to your breathing and re-anchor yourself while maintaining awareness of the flow of your thoughts as they arise and pass away.
- For the final few minutes, we will stop concentrating on anything in particular and just sit here, allowing whatever wants to enter consciousness to do so without identifying with it or shooing it away. By remaining in the moment and remaining awake and aware of this present moment, we can allow whatever arises to arise. Recognize in your bones that this very second is the only one you

have to live.

Overcoming the Challenges of Sitting Meditation

The most typical issue with seated meditation is bad posture. After some time spent sitting, the back, knees, and other body parts begin to hurt. In such a situation, you have two options.

- While keeping your body steady, observe your discomfort and how your mind responds to it. If the discomfort isn't too bad, this is advised. Accepting events is a key component of mindfulness, even if they initially seem unpleasant. What precisely does the discomfort feel like? Where exactly is it located? What do you believe of it? All experience is in a constant state of flux and change, so you could even notice that your discomfort threshold fluctuates.
- By learning to stay with the sensations, you may apply your meditation techniques to other aspects of your life. Instead of battling other tough emotions and difficult circumstances, you may handle them in the same open, inquisitive, and embracing manner. Because your body and mind are one, being motionless gives your mind a time to settle and concentrate.
- Adjust your body's posture with awareness. It goes without saying that you can shift your body if your physical discomfort is too great. It's possible that your seating position is improper. However, if at all possible, refrain from responding hastily to the discomfort. Change your stance gently and deliberately instead. You incorporate your change of position into practice in this way. The key to mindfulness is that you respond rather than react. You must make a deliberate decision in order to respond; you must feel the emotion and decide what to do next. Reacting is instinctive, uncontrollable, and it avoids your deliberate choice. In everyday life, your capacity to respond to your own experiences in meditation improves as a result. For example, if someone irritates you, you can reply to them while maintaining control of yourself rather than reacting in an uncontrollable way.

Frustration might come from the practice itself in addition to posture. You're so accustomed to evaluating every experience that you do the same with meditation. However, mindfulness denotes impartial awareness. Bad meditation doesn't exist; such a thing doesn't exist. Sometimes your mind is able to focus and concentrate, and other times it is completely out of control. That's how meditation works. Even if it seems like you are not making progress, have faith in the process. It may appear that nothing is happening since mindfulness operates at levels both above and below the conscious mind. Don't panic; each meditation you complete represents progress because you truly practiced.

Lesson 7: Activity 2

An Act of Loving Kindness

1. Loving kindness meditation can be done while seated or lying down. You may even practice while moving around. The most crucial factor is not the stance you take, but rather the purpose of love and friendliness you bring to the situation. Warm up and relax yourself. Close your eyes gently or keep them partially open while gazing pleasantly down.

2. Start by focusing on your breathing. Wherever the breath feeling seems to be most prominent for you, pay attention to it. Your body and mind can connect thanks to this knowledge. For a while, keep feeling your breath.

3. When you're ready, check to see if any words come to mind that express what you truly want for yourself on a long-term basis and that you may eventually wish for all living things. Words like:

I hope to be well. May I be content. I hope to be well. May I never experience pain.

4. Softly recite the words again. Let them into your heart. Allow yourself to feel kind to yourself as a result of the words. If it doesn't, don't be concerned; your objective is more significant than how you're feeling. Just keep saying the words slowly and again. Let the words hang in the air.

5. Now think about a close friend or someone who motivates you; someone you care about. Imagine the individual in your mind's eye and silently address him or her with the same words. If you struggle to produce a clear image, don't worry. The intention functions on its own. Use language like:

- I wish you health. I hope you're happy. I hope you're well. May you never experience pain.
- Use these words to send this individual genuine affection.

6. When you're ready, pick a neutral person—someone you encounter frequently but

who you don't really like or dislike. Possibly a person you purchase coffee from or pass every morning when you stroll by. Using your sentences, convey a message of love and kindness once more:

- I wish you health. I hope you're happy. I hope you're well. May you never experience pain.

7. Next, pick someone you don't get along with very well. someone with whom you've lately struggled. Repeat the same sentences while thinking and feeling them. This may be more difficult. If something is challenging, recognize it and be aware of it; don't attempt to alter it or solve it; just be aware of it and breathe. You don't have to compel yourself to feel or act in any way.

8. Now consider all four individuals: you, your friend, your neutral person, and your challenging individual. Imagine or sense their presence. Say: May we be healthy, and try to send an equal measure of loving-kindness to them all. I pray for our joy. May we all be well. May we all be spared pain.

9. Lastly, extend your loving-kindness outward to include all living things, including plants, animals, land, air, and water, as well as the entire universe. Send this spirit of friendliness, consideration, tenderness, and compassion out into the world from the bottom of your heart.

- Be well, everyone. Be joyful, all of you. Be well, everyone. May there be no more pain for everyone.
- Here are some alternate alternatives if the suggested meta descriptions don't work for you. Use two or three of these as your metaphrases, or be original and think up two of your own.
 - May I live in harmony with myself and all other living things.
 - May I love myself for who I am.
 - May I always enjoy who I am right now, no matter what happens.
 - May I be spared the pain of rage and dread.
- Practice it carefully and with love while being kind to yourself. See what transpires as you let the words flow from your heart.

Mindfulness for Dummies, as reference. 2010 Shamash Alidina

Overcoming the Hurdles to Loving-kindness Meditation

- You are unable to name a specific individual. Don't worry if you can't think of a suitable buddy, neutral party, or anyone you get along with. You may skip that step for the time being or just select anybody. It is more vital to have the goal to love and be nice than to pick a certain individual.
- You speak in words yet are emotionless. This is entirely typical, especially at first. If you can, picture the words coming from your heart or chest rather than your brain. Again, how you act in the exercise is more crucial than how you feel. You should not worry about whether the sentiments may manifest in the future. Your thoughts are always wandering. This occurs in every meditation because it is just the way the mind is. As usual, gently and lovingly draw your attention back to the exercise as soon as you become aware. You train your mind to pay attention by bringing it back each time.
- You experience strong emotion. It's quite common to respond emotionally. This kind of emotional generation may be unfamiliar to you, and it has the power to release suppressed emotions. Try to keep up the practice if you can. Doing only one step is appropriate if your feelings get too intense. Alternately, halt the exercise and return to it whenever the time feels more right.

S. Alidina, 2010's Mindfulness for Dummies

Lesson 7: Activity 3

An active mindfulness meditation

As the Body Scan, movement may have a significant and calming effect on the psyche. In its most basic form, this is just a meditation in which consciousness is grounded in the moving body.

It's crucial to practice self-compassion when doing this meditation. Not pushing yourself over what your body can handle is the goal here. You need to take care of yourself when doing these stretches by listening to your body's knowledge about how

far to stretch and how long to hold it. Before beginning even these basic stretches, especially if you have a health issue with your back or any other portion of your body, speak with your doctor.

1. To start, stand with your feet hip-width apart, your knees freed so that your legs may bend slightly, and your feet roughly parallel to one another.

2. Next, as you take a breath in, lift your arms slowly and deliberately until they are parallel to the floor and raised above your head. Then, as you exhale, repeat the process with the next breath. Try to be conscious of the feelings in the muscles as they struggle to elevate the arms and then hold them in the stretch as they are moving.

3. As you continue to reach upward with your fingertips softly pressing toward the sky and your feet firmly planted on the earth, let the breath to come and go at its own rate. Spend some time noticing the stretch in your body's muscles and joints, starting at the feet and legs and working your way up through the chest and shoulders to the arms, hands, and fingers.

4. Watch your breathing and let it to naturally come in and out while you hold the stretch for a while. As you continue to maintain the stretch, keep an open mind to any alterations in the bodily sensations and emotions that may occur with each inhalation and exhalation. Be receptive to this as well if you begin to feel growing stress or pain.

5. Once you are prepared, let the arms to slowly -- very slowly -- fall back down while exhaling. Slowly lower them, observing how the feelings change as they do so. Until your arms come back to rest, dangling from your shoulders, pay special attention to the sensations.

6. If your eyes have been open, you might want to gently close them now. After completing each stretch in this sequence, stand in this position and pay attention to the movement of your breath and the sensations and feelings throughout your body, perhaps noting any after-effects of the stretch.

7. (a) Next, after opening your eyes, carefully extend each arm and hand upward as if you were collecting fruit from a tree that was just out of reach. Keep your body's sensations and your breath in the forefront of your mind as you stare up past the tips of your fingers. Feel the stretch running through your body from the outstretched fingers of one hand to the toes of the other foot as you stretch, allowing the opposite heel to the outstretched arm to lift off the floor. Allow the heel to touch the floor after you release this stretch, and then drop the hand, if you'd like, while keeping an eye on

the fingers.

After centering your face, close your eyes and tune into the sensations of the stretch.

(Pause)

(b) At this point, deliberately reach as if using the other hand to pick up fruit. While fully conscious of the breath and the feelings throughout the body, extend your other arm and hand as if you were reaching up to collect fruit from a tree that is just out of your grasp. Stretch, feeling the stretch go through your body from the outstretched fingers of one hand to the toes of the other foot. Allow the opposite heel to the outstretched arm to come off the floor. Allow the heel to touch the floor once you release this stretch before lowering your hand. As you turn your face toward the center and close your eyes, pay attention to how that stretch is affecting you.

8. Next, while gently and deliberately placing your hands on your hips, allow your body to slant slightly to the left and slightly to the right, creating a crescent-shaped curve that runs from your feet up to your hips and chest.

(Pause)

Regain your upright posture on an inhale, and when you're ready, exhale while gently bending over in the other way. The degree to which you bend sideways is not as significant as the level of focus you apply to the motion. Return to a standing posture, close your eyes (if they aren't already closed), and focus on the after-effects of that stretch to finish this exercise on an in-breath.

9. Squeeze your shoulders together in front of your body as tightly as you can while letting your arms hang passively. Start by raising your shoulders as high as they will go towards your ears, then move them backward as if you were trying to draw your shoulder blades together, before letting them fall completely to the ground. Allow your breath to control the rotational speed such that you breathe in for half of the movement and out for the other. Continue 'rolling' through these several postures as smoothly and attentively as you can, initially in one direction and then the other.

10. After completing this series of motions, stop for a while and pay attention to your body's sensations.

For further information, see *Mindfulness, a Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World*. Penman, D. Williams

Lesson 7: Activity 4

Walking Meditation in Form

To conduct a formal walking meditation, you must set aside certain time and place. However, while you go about your regular activities, you can also casually bring up the subject of your walking. You don't have to walk much more slowly to do it.

Try the following steps to engage in formal walking meditation, also known as mindful walking:

- 1.** Choose the length of your practice session. For the initial session, I advise 10 minutes, but do whatever seems right to you. Additionally, pick a practicing location. It may be wise to practice walking very slowly in a quiet environment at home the first time you attempt it.
- 2.** Maintain a stable upright posture. To achieve a center, balanced standing stance, slowly lean to the left and right, forward and backward. Relax any excess tightness in your face, and let your knees open a little. Allow your arms to drop at your sides naturally. Make sure your body is planted to the ground with dignity and elegance, like a tree.
- 3.** Pay attention to your breathing. Get in touch with the flow of each breath in and breath out. Enjoy your breath.
- 4.** Next, carefully lean onto your left foot and pay attention to how your feelings alter. After that, carefully put weight on your right foot. Observe once more how the sensations change moment to moment.
- 5.** When you're ready, gently reposition your weight such that it is almost entirely on your left foot. Now lift your right heel slowly off the ground. Let's pause for a second. Take note of the air of eagerness around something so fundamental as taking a step. Now raise your right foot off the floor and plant in front of you, heel first. Become conscious of your body's weight moving from your left foot to your right. Gradually plant the right foot's remaining portion flat and securely. Observe how the balance is still shifting from left to right. Walking meditation is similar to other forms of mindfulness. There will be mental diversion. When this occurs, gently direct your focus back to the sensation of your feet on the ground or your

breathing. It is not necessary to criticize or blame oneself.

6. Keep walking this manner, slowly and deliberately, for as long as you like. Take some time to consider your experiences when you're done.

An Exercise on Body Scan

You may use this technique to practice walking meditation while you move at your own speed. During this walking meditation, you progressively raise your body's awareness as you travel, starting at your feet and working your way up to the top of your head.

1. Start off by strolling normally.

2. Right now, pay attention to your feet's feelings. Take note of how the weight is distributed between the two feet.

3. Keep moving your focused awareness up your body. As you walk, feel your lower legs first, then your upper legs, and pay attention to how they move.

4. Now pay attention to how your hips and pelvis move and feel.

5. As your arms swing naturally to support your balance, keep scanning your awareness to the lower, higher, and finally the arms.

6. Pay attention to how your shoulders, neck, face, and eventually the entirety of your head feel.

7. As you continue to walk, become aware of the feelings of the breath as well as the body as a whole. You can keep doing this as long as you like.

Referring to Mindfulness for Dummies 2010 S. Alidina

Lesson 8

Acceptance and Change

The practice of mindfulness is a quick yet effective way to break free and reconnect with our inner strength and wisdom. The most crucial thing is to be true to who you are, to not try to change who or what you are, and to stay in touch with and allow your true essence to flow

through you.

Finding methods to respond to life that are not reactive and in which we are not slavishly pulled along in an automatic fashion has been one of the key themes of this approach. We have also discovered that accepting and being open to what is happening right now is the first step toward attaining this. This first acceptance prevents us from starting a conflict both inside and outside of ourselves. However, this does not imply that we must just accept what is happening; rather, by accepting something, we first allow ourselves room to consider what would be the best course of action at that particular time. So, the first step in embracing something is to be open to it and to investigate it more thoroughly than we may otherwise do. This first position could assist us in keeping our poise and calmness. How many times have we gone back on our responses to circumstances and realized that there were a lot more effective ways to approach them. Although we acknowledge that we have very little control over them, every one of us encounters circumstances at some point that feel intolerable and that we do not want to accept. Accepting the situation as it can help us save a lot of unneeded stress and suffering in these circumstances where there isn't much we can do. We can decide to take an acknowledging attitude rather than "banging our heads off a stone wall" and hoping and desiring things to be different. Fighting and struggle take up energy that may be better spent accumulating the tools we need to deal with the obstacles we encounter.

Review and Reflection

1. What have you learnt about mindfulness-based stress reduction from the guide?
2. What are the main barriers to living a more mindful life for you?
3. What techniques may prevent you from drifting off into automatic pilot in the future?

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