



**The Mindfulness
Workbook**

Acting with Intention

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
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- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

Setting an intention before beginning a task or activity can help guide your actions so that they are in line with your values. Doing this can support personal growth and positively influence your actions, work, and relationships.

METHOD:

Summary

Before you start an activity, set an intention for what you would like to embody and cultivate. Carry your intention with you throughout the day and change it as necessary.

Long Version

1. Before beginning a task or activity, ask yourself what you wish to embody or cultivate during your work.

- You can set an intention for any activity, such as meditating, going to a meeting, having dinner with your family, or having a conversation with a coworker.

Acting with Intention

Mindfulness Worksheet

- Intentions can include practicing more self-compassion, deep listening, gratitude, and cultivating supportive relationships.

2. When setting your intention, try to clarify what is most needed in that moment.
3. Try to mindfully carry this intention with you as you proceed, checking in periodically to re-align yourself if you forget.
4. At the end of the day reflect on whether you remembered your intention(s) and how often you followed them.
5. Look for specific instances and congratulate yourself for any times, however few or brief, that you embodied your intention and then congratulate yourself!

OPTIONAL: In addition to specific intentions for a certain activity, you can also set a more general intention for your day when you wake up each morning.

HISTORY:

Setting an intention for your day or before an activity is a common practice in various cultures. In the Buddhist tradition, Right Intention is the second teaching in the Noble Eightfold Path. It includes committing oneself to personal growth and ethical behavior, resisting unhealthy desire, and not causing harm to oneself or others.

CAUTIONS:

Be careful not to confuse intentions with goals. Goals occur in the future, while intentions can be embodied in each moment.

Also, remember that acting according to your intentions takes time and practice. Please be kind to yourself if you do not remember your intentions. It is common for people to forget their intention shortly after forming it, and even remembering it once throughout the day is worthy of celebration.

Nature Gazing from Roots to Sky

Mindfulness Worksheet

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Nature gazing is a practice that helps to remind us of our interconnectedness with the natural world. We are as much a part of it as the trees, the birds, and the butterflies, and so taking the time to be present with it is a deeply restorative practice.

This specific practice invites us to take a close look at a tree, opening our attention to it completely from roots to branches and then to the sky above. For this practice, you'll need to find a comfortable outdoor space where you can spend a few minutes offering the fullness of your attention to a tree of your choosing.

PRACTICE:

1. To begin, find a tree in an outdoor space where you can see the sky above or around it. Stand within a couple of metres of this tree, taking a moment to firmly root your feet into the earth beneath you. It can be helpful to take a few slow, mindful breaths to ground your energy.
2. Let your gaze land upon the earth, taking a few moments to notice the surface you stand on. Then, as you shift your attention to the base of the tree, consider the roots that extend from this tree and deep into the soil. Without seeing them, can you sense the support that these roots provide this tree? Consider both the structural support and the energetic support.

Nature Gazing from Roots to Sky

Mindfulness Worksheet

3. Slowly let your gaze move up the tree trunk, shifting your gaze quite slowly. Pause on any knots or patterns in the bark that are interesting to the eye, being completely present with the unique form this tree holds. If you'd like, you can extend your palms out to meet the tree trunk, exploring your sense of touch here as well.
4. Continue moving upwards at a slow and steady pace, inviting in a sense of reverence for this tree if it is not already present within you. Consider how majestic this tree is – or, if it is still young, consider how much it has weathered up until this point. Still, it stands.
5. Let your gaze continue until it reaches the wild and unpredictable web of branches above. Notice the textures, colours, and forms of these branches. Are there leaves or needles? Are they bare? What shape do they take? Take your time to explore this with curiosity.
6. Finally, when you are ready, let your sense of sight shift from the branches to the open sky. What feelings arise in you as you move your attention to the invisible realm of air? What energies or qualities do you sense are present in the sky?
7. To ground back into the earth and into your body, repeat the same pattern of observation but in reverse. As you move, consider all the qualities this tree embodies, noting where these qualities are present in you, too.
8. When you are finished, root yourself firmly through your feet before moving on. You might like to sit beneath the tree to reflect for a while.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What was this practice like for you today? What feelings, thoughts, or energies did it stir within you?

Nature Gazing from Roots to Sky

Mindfulness Worksheet

2. What likeness did you find between yourself and the tree or between yourself and the sky?



3. What other objects or elements of nature might you like to bring this level of attention and openness to?



Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

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In the world of meditation and mindfulness, we often talk about the importance of being present. But what does that mean, exactly? Why is it important? And if we deem it important, how can we refine our present-moment awareness?

By taking a big-picture view of the past, present, and future, it's easy to understand how staying present helps us experience safety, happiness and ease.

When our mind is occupied with ruminating over past thoughts and experiences, or when our mind is fixated on what ifs and future thinking, the mind is not rooted in reality. The past and the future are only appearances.

When our ruminations about the past or our worrying about the future are unpleasant, we're robbing ourselves of present-moment contentment. Even if our memories of the past or our thoughts about the future are pleasant, contentment, happiness and peace of mind cannot be experienced anywhere but right here and right now.

By staying rooted in the present moment, we're available for the experience of contentment. We become more fully integrated with reality as it's presenting itself to us right now, and not as it appears in our minds.

In the following meditation, we'll practice noting when our mind gets stuck in the past or the future by attempting to anchor it to present moment awareness of breath.

Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

MEDITATION ON PRESENT MOMENT

- Take a comfortable seat in a quiet place
- Close your eyes and breathe in and out through your nose
- Stay present, with your attention on the breath
- Notice each time the mind wanders off to a past memory
- Make a quick note of this wandering by silently saying the word 'past,' then return to present-moment awareness of breath
- Notice each time the mind wanders off into future thinking
- Make a quick note of this by silently saying the word 'future,' and return to breath awareness
- Let go without lingering, and come back to the present (awareness of breath) as quickly as you can
- Repeat the above process as often as you need to
- As you get better at staying present with the breath, refine your definition of 'past' and 'future'
- Are you lingering with awareness of the first part of the inhale? Past
- Are you thinking forward to the completion of the exhale? Future
- What does it mean to stay present, exactly?

WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

Describe your experience with the meditation in general

Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

Did labeling the wandering of the mind as 'past' or 'future' help you let go and return to the present?



Do you have a tendency to stay in one or the other? Past or future?

Describe what it feels like to be fully integrated with the present moment.

Have you ever had a memory of the past that changed over time?

Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

Have you ever worried about a future circumstance that never happened?



How might past experiences cloud your perception of the present?

How might thinking about the future cloud your perception of the present?

What would it feel like to experience the present moment, without memory or future thinking involved?

Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

Describe a time when you experienced complete contentment and joy. In that moment, were you in the past, present, or future?



Describe a time when you were completely integrated with the present moment, how did it feel?

How do you think you would benefit from being more present?

Past, Present, Future

Mindfulness Worksheet

FOR ADVANCED PRACTITIONERS

When we first begin to meditate, we find it challenging to be still in the present moment. Over time, we get better at recognizing when the mind wanders to the past, or jumps ahead to the future, and we get better at quickly returning to the present.

As you get more accomplished with staying present with the breath, you can begin to ever more subtly define the past and the future. For example, practice being present with this one inhale breath.

And then, remain present with the first part of the breath, the middle part of the breath, the latter part of the breath, and so on. And then, remain present with this one microsecond of your experience, the first part of that millisecond, the middle part of that millisecond, the latter part, and so on.

The more we drill down into the present moment, the more difficult it is to find.

REVIEW

Past and future are mere appearances in our minds. Our memories of the past, and our worries about the future are always changing. We cannot put a finger on the past or the future and say, that's real, so why are we wasting so much time there?

We spend a lot of emotional energy on rehashing the past, or forward thinking to the future. We unnecessarily waste time in emotional states of unease when past or future thinking is unpleasant.

By relaxing into our present moment reality, we're able to connect with what's real, and connect to the only moment in which contentment is possible. This one, right now.

Managing and Mitigating Stress

Mindfulness Worksheet

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There are numerous sources of stress in each of our lives. From small, more manageable stressors to larger ones that have a greater impact, none of us are immune from the challenges of life. Sometimes there are things we can do to prevent stressors from arising – and sometimes we can't. However, even when we cannot control certain life happenings, can we better manage our reactions to stress?

1. Take a moment to consider what stressors are present in your life. Begin by checking off whichever stressors of the following list are of concern to you (whether the concern is minimal or significant).

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Children's behavior | <input type="checkbox"/> Politics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Busy schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Relationship with partner | <input type="checkbox"/> Weather |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Messiness/clutter | <input type="checkbox"/> Beginning a new job/career | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific phobias |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bills and payments | <input type="checkbox"/> Household chores | <input type="checkbox"/> Exams/studies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retirement/savings | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental concerns | <input type="checkbox"/> Loud noises |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal debt | <input type="checkbox"/> Divorce/separation | <input type="checkbox"/> Pollution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work | <input type="checkbox"/> Public speaking/presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Food/diet |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployment | <input type="checkbox"/> Moving homes/cities | <input type="checkbox"/> Social interactions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Personal health | <input type="checkbox"/> Technology/social media | <input type="checkbox"/> Busyness of life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Health of loved ones | <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback/work review | <input type="checkbox"/> Plans for the future |

Managing and Mitigating Stress

Mindfulness Worksheet

2. Now in the table below, write down all of the stressors that are present for you right now in the left hand column. Then, note how stressful each of these are for you on a scale from one to ten – and then write ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ under ‘I can manage or mitigate this.’

3. In the box beneath each stressor, write what you might do to mitigate or manage the stressor. If you’ve said ‘No’ to any particular stressor, answer the following question instead: how can I support myself in finding peace during or after the stressor has passed?

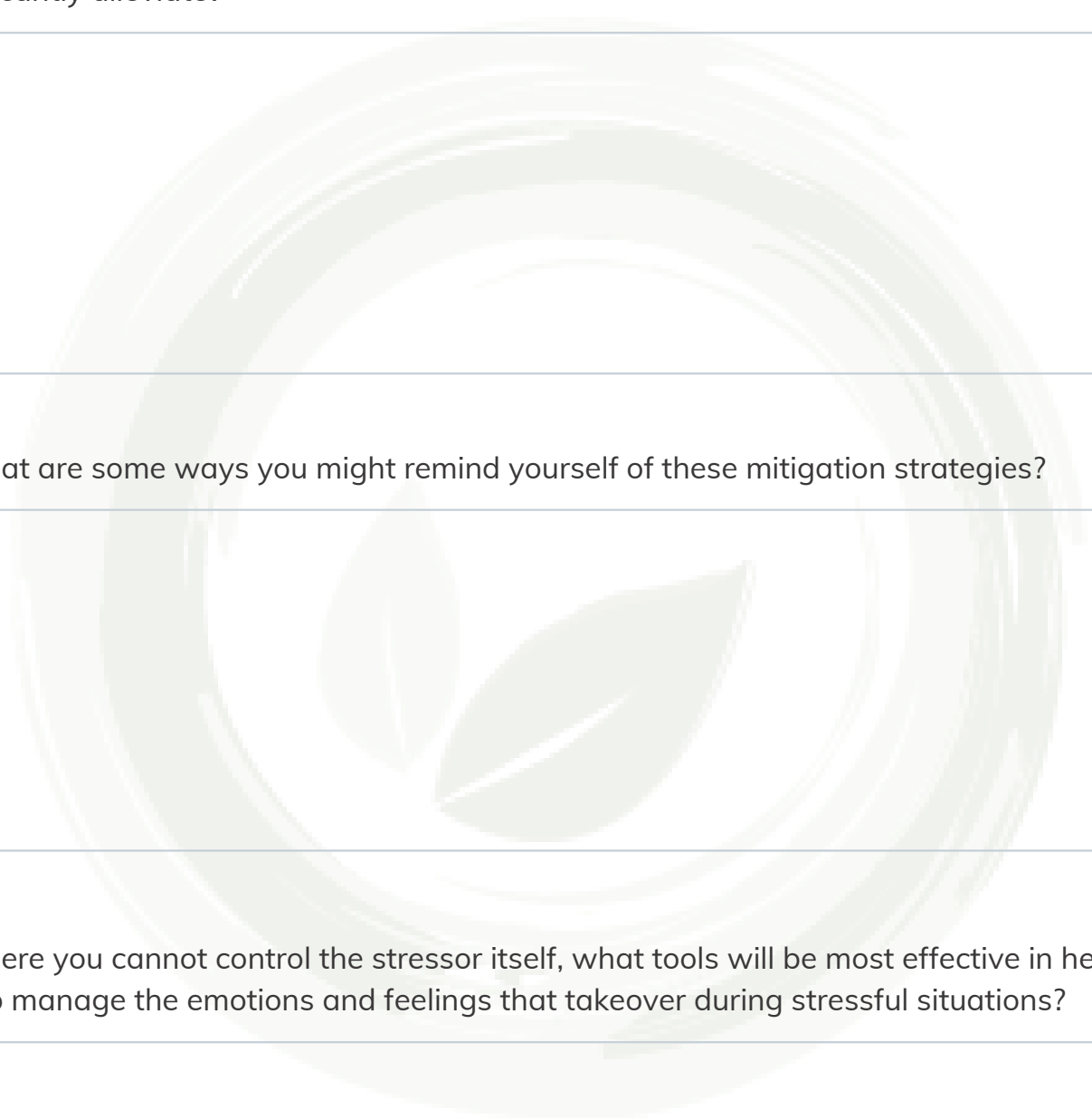
Stressor	Level of stress (1-10)	I can manage or mitigate this. (Yes or No)
Management/mitigation approach:		
Management/mitigation approach:		
Management/mitigation approach:		

Managing and Mitigating Stress

Mindfulness Worksheet

MOMENT'S PAUSE:

1. What is one stressor you think your management or mitigation efforts will help to significantly alleviate?



2. What are some ways you might remind yourself of these mitigation strategies?

3. Where you cannot control the stressor itself, what tools will be most effective in helping you to manage the emotions and feelings that takeover during stressful situations?

Letting Go

Mindfulness Worksheet

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Letting go is a practice of softly surrendering what no longer serves us. It invites us to melt into this present moment by easing the body and softening the mind.

Whether what we yearn to let go of is physical tension or some inner whisper, we can practice letting go by coming back to the body and by consciously inviting a gentle relaxation to wash through us.

There are many different ways to explore this notion of release. The following practice is a basic body scan that incorporates our intention to let go of what no longer serves our wellbeing. Explore it with curiosity, openness, patience, and compassion.

PRACTICE:

1. Come to a comfortable lying down position, resting on your back with a straight spine. Your arms and legs can rest comfortable on the surface supporting you. Take five to ten grounding breaths and then draw your attention to the crown of the head.
2. As you slowly begin to scan your body from head to toe, notice any areas of tension you come across (thoughts included). Whenever you come across some type of tension, take a few deep breaths into this area (or into this thought). As you inhale, silently whisper: I see you. As you exhale, silently whisper: I am softening.

Letting Go

Mindfulness Worksheet

3. Continue this witnessing and mindful breathing as you whisper:

I see you... I am softening.

I see you... I am softening.

4. In place of 'I am softening,' you might also whisper 'I surrender you.' Choose whichever affirmation resonates with you the most or create your own.

5. After finishing your scan through the entire body, hold your entire being in your full awareness as you ground through the breath for another few minutes. If any other thoughts or feelings arise that yearn to be let go, repeat the same affirmations alongside each breath.

6. When your practice feels complete for the time being, ground yourself through the physical body as it meets the surface beneath you. Open your eyes when you feel ready to.

NOTES:

Letting go is not something we accomplish just because we've told ourselves we want to release something. It is a process that takes varying amounts of time depending upon what we want to let go of and upon other factors. In cases of trauma, working with a mental health professional is advised. Also, this is not a practice that replaces whatever steps we might need to take to effectively manage serious health concerns. For instance, if unusual pain is present, consult your healthcare provider.

Additional practices that may also facilitate the process of letting go include progressive muscle relaxation, mindful journaling, diaphragmatic breathing, and visualization.

Imagining Your Inner Land to Build Healthy Boundaries

Guided Meditation Script

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

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Your Inner Land

This guided meditation is for helping you build healthy and purposeful boundaries....

When you make a healthy boundary for yourself then things that sometimes have hurt you in the past will not be able to reach you anymore.

Take 5 deep breaths.

As you feel the weight of your body and how it presses down, make sure that your spine is completely straight, and your posture exudes that you are confident.

Gently close your eyes increasing your ability to focus.

As you breathe easily and gently you feel safe and relaxed.

As the sun rises you see you are standing in beautiful lush green grass and there is a small house that you've built by hand in the middle of it.

Imagining Your Inner Land to Build Healthy Boundaries

Guided Meditation Script

Your Inner Land

This house represents you and all the work that you put into yourself and the grass represents the world outside of you.

You decide that it would be good to plant some trees and some shrubs so that these plants will aid in protecting you from harm, and they also benefit the world.

For example, a Raspberry bush is very spiky and dense, yet it gives a bounty of fruits for us to enjoy and be nourished by.

If you plant many in a row, they will protect you as well as a tall electric fence, but this plant also gives.

It serves two purposes.

When you plant tall trees, they will protect you from harsh winds if placed in a way that is good through all of the seasons.

Tall trees supply us with the most oxygen therefore they are giving while also protecting.

The trees also serve many purposes here.

You look at these beautiful life forces that you are planting on your land and you notice they need a water source.

You find the lowest lying area and begin digging down and around making the shape of a small pond.

As you step back from the circle of dirt you've created you know that only a few heavy rains need to pour down and it will begin to fill and turn into a natural source of water.

This pond serves many purposes on your land.

It not only provides you and the wildlife with water, but it also gives you somewhere to go to meditate and reflect on the good things in your life and the good things that you do for others.

Closer to your house you see you need some vegetables and fruits so create a garden that is easy for you to access and water when necessary.

Imagining Your Inner Land to Build Healthy Boundaries

Guided Meditation Script

Your Inner Land

You plant all of the fruits you like and any kind of vegetables you need.

Your garden flourishes and provides.

All this garden needs from you is to be tended to.

You look around and you see you need an Orchard.

So you strategically plant many apple trees and other fruiting trees, right next to the protected area by the big tall trees and a little closer to the pond so that they can drink.

This Orchard supplies you with the most delicious apples you've ever tasted and their nutrients are off the charts.

You look around your plot of land and you are proud.

Not only do all these plants protect you and your home but they give to you and the community around them.

So make sure you work on the garden within you and put up proper barriers that if planted well and with love and care, they also give.

You are protected and allowed to lead a happy life.

And lastly look again at your hand built home and make any necessary changes to it.

You are an excellent builder, after all.

Good job today.



Gratitude Practice

Mindfulness Worksheet

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PURPOSE / EFFECTS

Gratitude practice is simply being thankful for the good in our lives. By focusing us on positive rather than negative thoughts, it helps us to see the cup of life as half-full rather than as half-empty. It reminds us not to be greedy and to find satisfaction in what we have, though we may strive for more. Gratitude requires no sacrifice but provides great rewards in compassion, happiness, and mindfulness.

METHOD

Summary

Every day, acknowledge something for which you are grateful.

Long Version

1. Keep a journal you can use for your gratitude practice. This journal can be separate from the one which you use for Emotional Journaling, or you can use the same one if you wish. Every day, write down five things for which you are grateful, no matter how simple or humble. Be honestly appreciative, and don't patronize yourself with gratitude for, say, "having food unlike all those starving kids in China."

Gratitude Practice

Mindfulness Worksheet

2. If you don't wish to journal, at the end of every day, say your five things to yourself before going to bed.
3. See the giver behind the gift. When something nice happens, think about the person who made this pleasant experience happen. Did your partner bring you a cup of tea without asking? Did a friend call just to see how you were doing? Did the checkout girl at the grocery store notice a rotten piece of fruit in your bag and tell you so you could exchange it? It doesn't matter if the experience was small. Express your genuine gratitude to this person and remind yourself that people are often surprisingly, overwhelmingly kind. Say thank-you to everyone.
4. If you are a religious person, use your gratitude as an opportunity for praise. Always begin your prayers with thanks to God for your blessings, rather than supplications for favor. Saying grace before a meal is a type of gratitude practice that many of us have experienced; it can even be done by the non-religious.
5. Use the emotional strength that gratitude practice brings you as a tool. Recognizing the beauty of the world does not mean ignoring its flaws. Do your best every day to earn your blessings; Community Service / Charity is a great way to manifest your gratitude.
6. Do this even when you don't feel like it. When you're angry or sad, gratitude is even more important than when you're happy. These emotions are valid, of course, but by reminding yourself of what there is to be thankful for, you can take off their destructive edge.

■ HISTORY

Gratitude practice is part of many of the world's major faiths. The Psalms of the Hebrew Bible are full of thanks and praise to God for all his blessings. Christian worship centers on thanking Jesus for his sacrifice on behalf of the world. The prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam, said, "Gratitude for the abundance you have received is the best insurance that the abundance will continue."

The Hindu ritual of puja expresses gratitude to its deities through offerings. And gratitude is an important part of Buddhist lovingkindness practice. The contemporary positive psychology movement recommends gratitude practice as one of the strongest tools for promoting a sense of general wellbeing in all.

Changing Your History Channel

Mindfulness Worksheet

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We each of a personal history story that, whether we are conscious of it or not, influences everything from our wellbeing to our beliefs about who we are to our perception of the world. Stories are an important part of who we are, and yet when we are overly attached to old narratives, it becomes difficult to step beyond our own limitations.

The following exercises are designed to help you set aside and/or transform your telling of history and to consider new, refreshed ways of relating to your personal narrative.

They provide us with the opportunity to view old stories in a new light, changing the way we perceive what has come before us. Remain curious and compassionate as you observe whatever arises.

1. Recurring Story Counts

How often does the same story come to mind over the course of a week? This exercise is one to keep in mind as you move through the next seven days.

To explore this, consider a story that you sense has a strong prevalence in your mind as of late. Keep a tally on either this sheet of paper, your phone, or your computer, noting how many times the story comes to mind over the next week.

Changing Your History Channel

Mindfulness Worksheet

After seven days have passed, consider: Is there a way I might shift the narrative of this story to find greater peace in it? What about this story is appealing to the mind? Does it support my wellbeing?



2. Recalling Positive Stories

Consider a time in your life when you felt loved, cared for, and supported. Where were you, what were you doing, and who were you with? Retell this story in as much detail as possible, embodying the warmth of it. Consider the sights, sounds, aromas, and any other sensations you recall experiencing during this moment in history.

3. Uncovering Strength and Hope

Call to mind a piece of your history that was challenging for you at the time but that helped you to harness strength, hope, courage, and resilience. In as much detail as you can (and as feels safe for your psyche to explore), write down what happened and how it helped you to grow.

Avoid delving into past trauma, opting for light to moderate challenges you've faced. Consider the lessons learned, the skills gained, and any other positives that arose from this challenging situation.

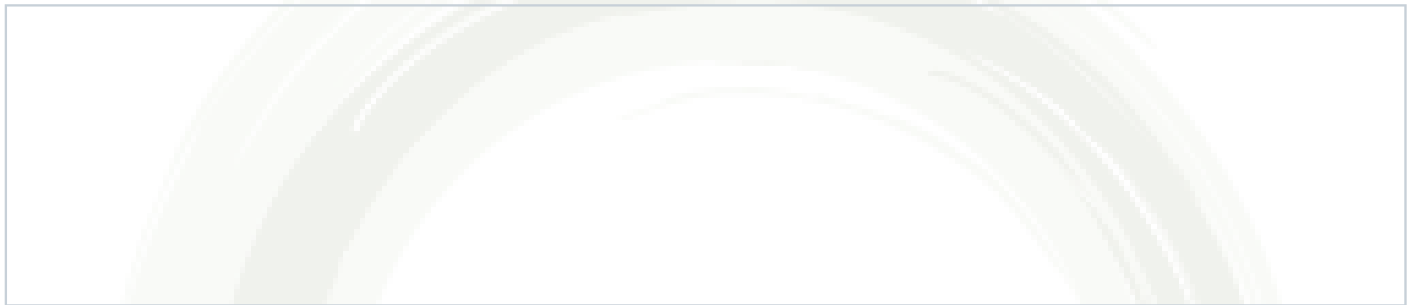
Changing Your History Channel

Mindfulness Worksheet

4. All-Time Favorite Stories

Consider a story that deeply inspires and uplifts you, whether this be a childhood tale, the plot of your favorite movie, or a story relayed to you by a friend or family member. Answer the following questions in relation to this story:

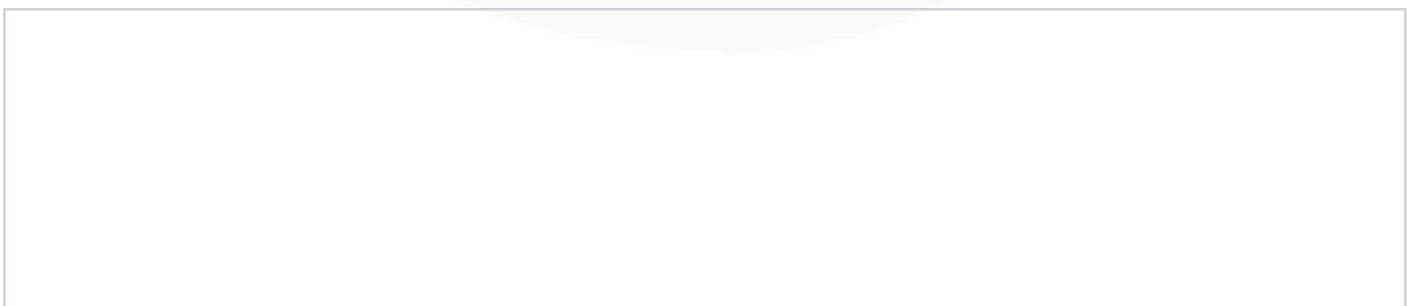
Who are the characters in this story? What inspires you about them? What are the themes in this story? How are these themes also present in your own life story?



5. Finding Comfort in Neutrality

Consider a recent happening in your life that was neither good or bad – something that was a neutral experience for you. This might be the load of laundry you did over the weekend, your train ride into the city, or an interaction you had with a customer service agent recently.

Now, consider where a hidden beauty rests in this story. What went well during this seemingly neutral event? What can you appreciate about this neutral life happening? Explore the small details of this event to heighten your appreciation of the less-than-exciting moments of life.



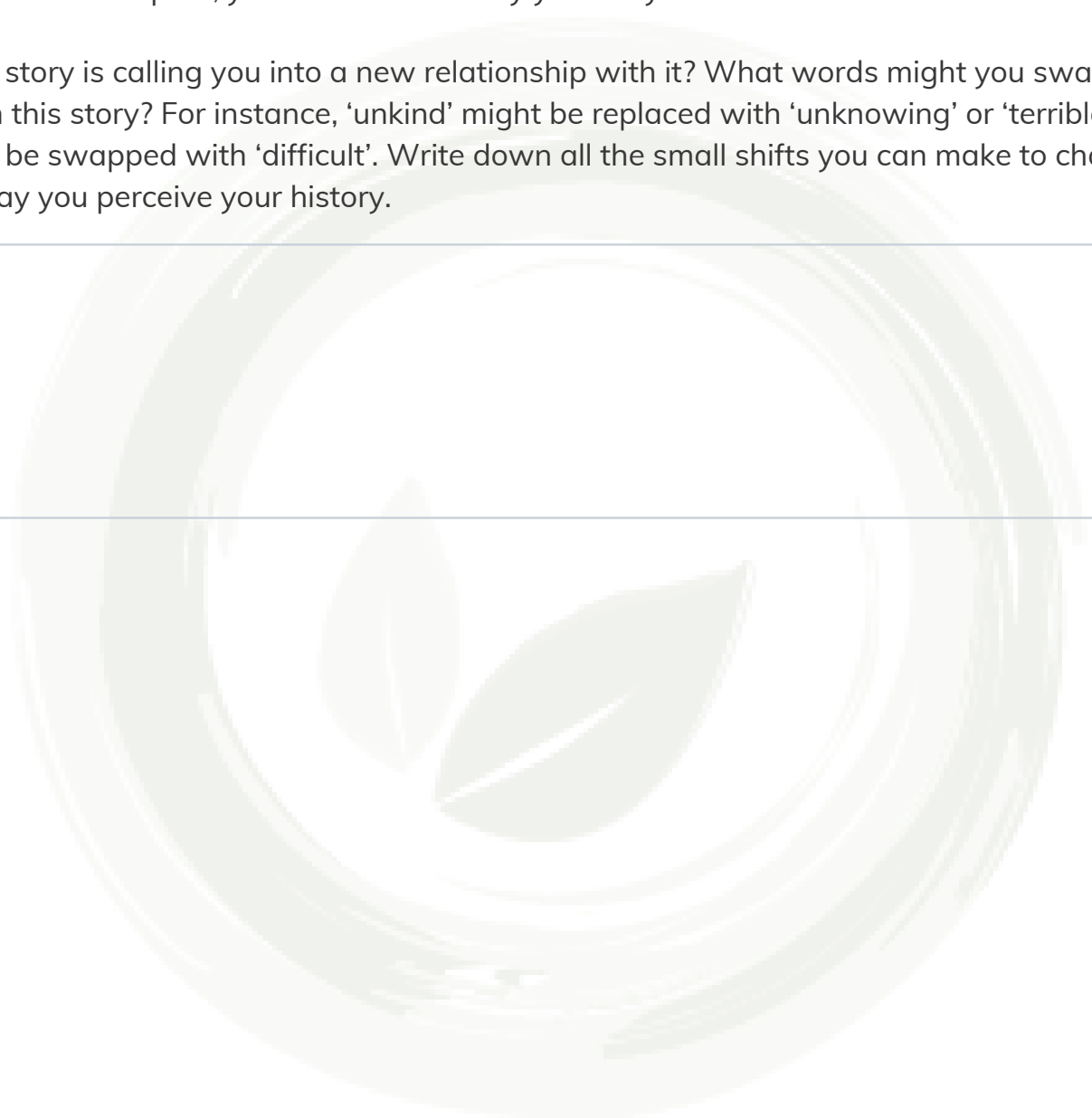
Changing Your History Channel

Mindfulness Worksheet

6. Changing the Channel

Consider what history channels you want to change, knowing that you can't change what happened in the past, you can shift the way you relay the details.

What story is calling you into a new relationship with it? What words might you swap within this story? For instance, 'unkind' might be replaced with 'unknowing' or 'terrible' might be swapped with 'difficult'. Write down all the small shifts you can make to change the way you perceive your history.



Breath Awareness Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

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Throughout much of our modern way of living, we tend to forget that we're breathing. While the breath continues on without our conscious effort or awareness of it, drawing our attention to it can deepen our sense of peace and ease by easing the body's stress response.

Mindful breath awareness and deep breathing practices can help to reduce cortisol levels, one of the body's primary stress hormones. So it goes without saying that the breath is a powerful tool that is worthy of our fullest attention.

PRACTICE:

1. To practice, begin in a comfortable seated position, straightening the spine and softening the rest of the body.
2. When you feel ready, close your eyes as you draw your attention to the breath. Without trying to change the breath in anyway, notice how effortlessly it flows into and out of your body.
3. Keep this relaxed, open attention on your breath for 2-3 minutes. If the mind wanders (as it does for all of us), simply observe this movement away from the breath before compassionately inviting it back.

Breath Awareness Meditation

Mindfulness Worksheet

4. To move deeper into this exploration, pay attention to each subtle movement of the breath:

- The inhalation, beginning at the nostrils and moving slowly through to the lungs
- The slight pause at the end of the inhalation, chest and belly expanded
- The exhalation and the way the body contracts or 'falls' as the breath moves back out
- The slight pause at the end of the exhalation, chest and belly relaxed

5. Spend another 3-5 minutes observing each of these subtle phases of the breath. Then, expand your awareness to encompass the entire physical body. Note what parts of the entire body move in tandem with the breath.

6. Continue to watch the breath as it moves through the entire body for 3-5 minutes. All together this practice will run anywhere between 10 and 15 minutes.

7. When you are ready, gently shift your attention to the floor or other surface beneath you. Ground yourself into the physical world before slowly opening your eyes.

NOTES:

Breath awareness has been an important part of many ancient traditions. Buddhism, for instance, has long understood the importance of the breath, noting such practices in the ancient Anapanasati Sutta.

In other regions of the world, too, the breath has long been revered as a powerful life force that is worthy of great consideration and devotion.

Though a seemingly simple movement of energy that we often take for granted, the breath holds the potential for great inner peace, personal power, and insight.

Being Still

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



We're addicted to movement. We get uncomfortable when our minds are asked to stand still, to do nothing, to wait, to listen, to rest.

Mindfulness and meditation help us notice how much we habitually chase distraction, and help teach us to get more comfortable with stillness.

The problem with distraction is that it takes us away from the present moment, the only place in which it's possible to experience true happiness and contentment. When we're always chasing things, happiness is always somewhere out there - away from where we are.

When we're present, quiet and still, we open ourselves to the possibility of recognizing that where we are is pretty good. It's in the stillness that we're able to see the true nature of our minds, and we're able to recognize that true nature as one of contentment and joy.

We can work with mindfulness of stillness both on and off our meditation cushions. Below is a brief exercise to calm the mind in meditation, and another to try as you go about your day.



Being Still

Mindfulness Worksheet

MEDITATION ON STILLNESS

- Take a comfortable seat in the most quiet place you can find, far from distractions
- Set a timer for 3, 5 or 7 minutes
- Close your eyes and draw your attention to your breath
- Give yourself permission to rest, to do nothing, to simply be still
- Rest in the presence of breath and body awareness
- Each time you notice the 'doing' of future thinking, or the 'doing' of rumination on the past, remind yourself that you have permission to let it go, to stay present, to rest
- Feel your mind relax back into the freedom of spaciousness.

A MINDFULNESS TASK

Try the following as you go about your day...

- Do only one thing at a time, avoid multitasking
- Notice how often during your day you get the opportunity to do nothing
- Can you take advantage of these moments and do less?
- Notice when you fill space with mindless or busy-ing activity
- Notice when you fill space in your mind by thinking
- How often, outside of formal meditation, do you just sit and notice and listen?

WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

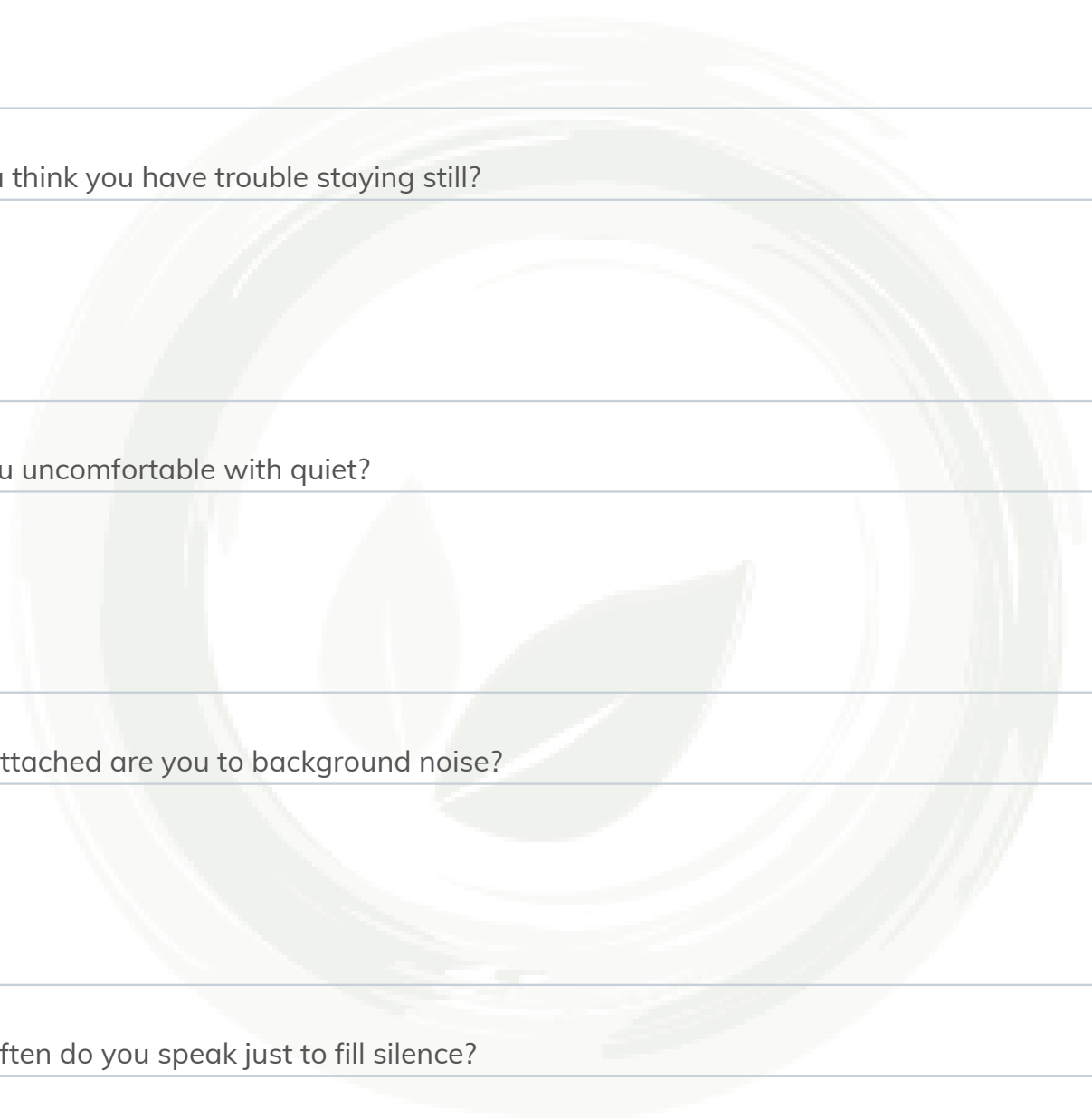
Describe your general experience with the meditation



Being Still

Mindfulness Worksheet

Describe your general experience with the mindfulness activity



Do you think you have trouble staying still?

Are you uncomfortable with quiet?

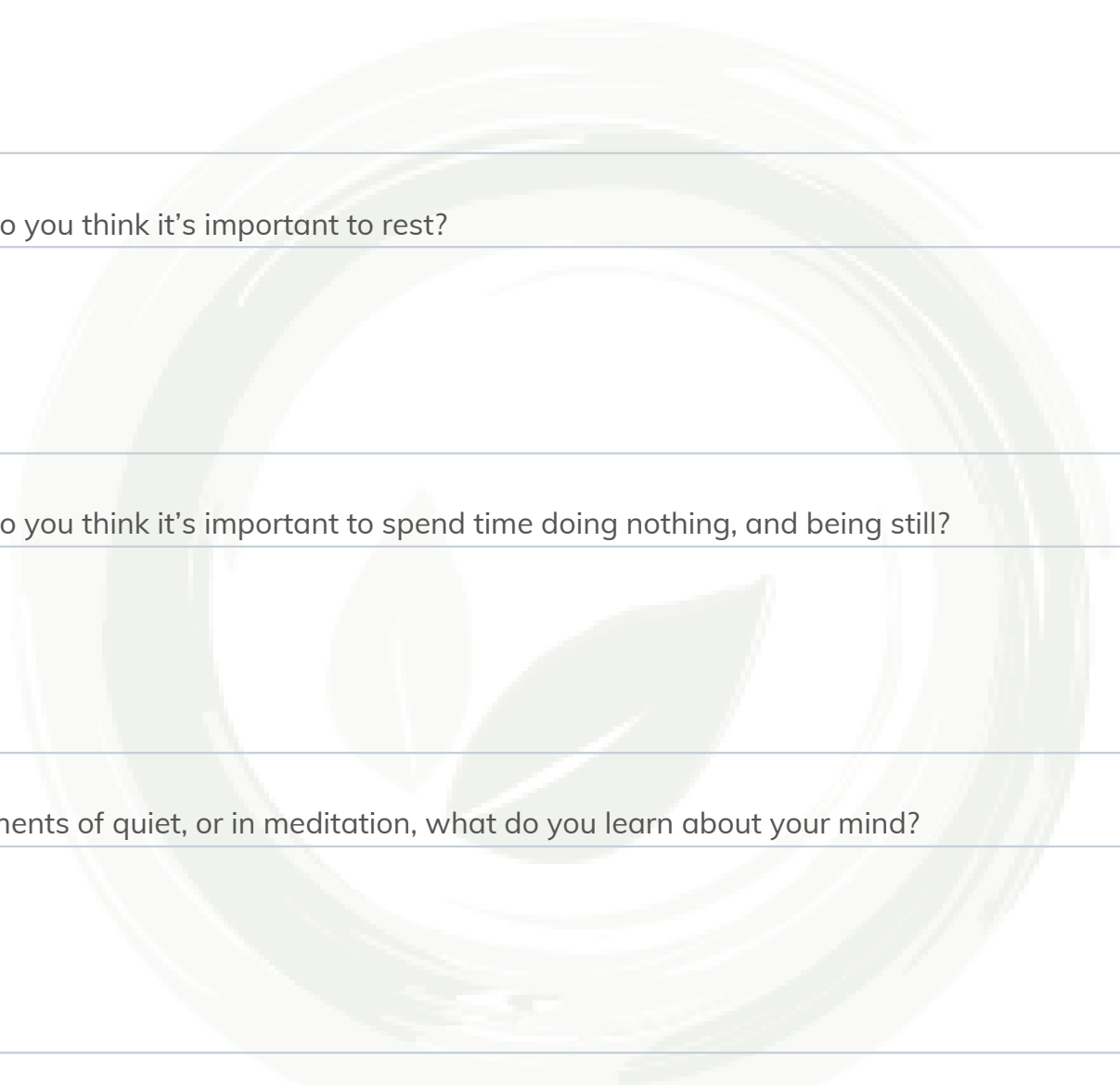
How attached are you to background noise?

How often do you speak just to fill silence?

Being Still

Mindfulness Worksheet

How often do you pick up your phone, or check your email, or open a new browser tab, just for something to do?



Why do you think it's important to rest?

Why do you think it's important to spend time doing nothing, and being still?

In moments of quiet, or in meditation, what do you learn about your mind?

In meditation, were you able to reach a sense of complete relaxation? What did it feel like?

Being Still

Mindfulness Worksheet

REVIEW

Once we intentionally decide to spend more time in stillness, and less time mindlessly chasing movement, we notice that much of what we do is unnecessary.

When we occupy our body, speech and mind with unnecessary movement, we distract ourselves from what really matters. There's far more time to do the things that are really important to us. There's far more space in the world than we realize.

Once we begin to notice this space, and to allow for its presence, we will begin to notice how free and happy and content we can be, even without doing a thing.



Being Positive

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



DAILY

1. What will make you happy today?

2. What beauty do you see in your world today?

3. What is the foundation of your world today?

Being Positive

Mindfulness Worksheet

4. In what new way(s) can you express yourself today?

WEEKLY:

Please take 20-30 minutes each week and address the following questions:

1. What new ideas do you have this week?

2. Around what are you directing your life this week?

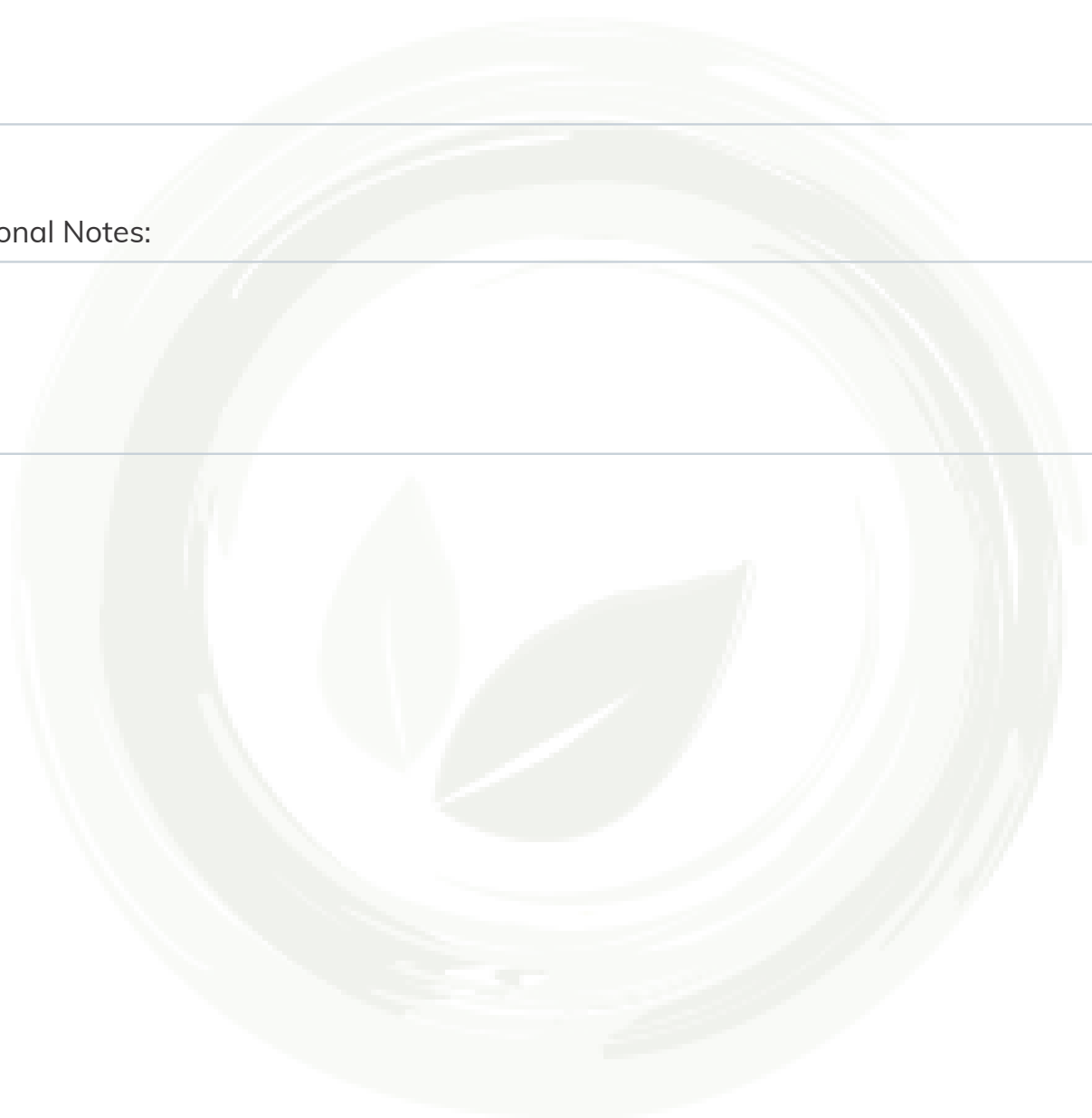
3. How do you see your future?

Being Positive

Mindfulness Worksheet

4. What are the events, circumstances, people that you made the most difference with this week?

Additional Notes:



One Breath at a Time

Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts? Heart? Body? None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



ONE BREATH A TIME

There's a popular saying in addiction recovery circles: "One day at a time".

This refers to our very human tendency to feel we have to solve all our problems RIGHT NOW. That we think we have to figure out or achieve EVERYTHING. In a nutshell: to be in control of life.

"One day at a time" reminds us that it is impossible to climb a mountain all at once, or even to know what's going to happen 100 feet up.

But taking it step by step makes it a lot more manageable.

It brings us back into the present moment, which, if we're honest with ourselves, is the only place where we have any "control". And that control is not usually about our external situation, but about how we're reacting – or not reacting – to it.



One Breath at a Time

Mindfulness Worksheet

The beauty of meditation is that it allows us to break life down into even tinier pieces.

When we use our breath as an anchor, bringing us back to the present moment again and again as our minds wander off into problem-solving or fantasizing or worrying, we find a natural, built-in way to be present. In this presence, it's easier to be compassionate to ourselves.

We do this by meditating one breath at a time.

Within this one breath, there is only the here and now.

This breath is a gentle, life-giving reminder that that conversation or presentation we are dreading or rehearsing isn't actually happening right now.

That all we can really do and know is that we are alive, here, now.

This is the place where are.

These are sounds we hear.

This is the sensation of breathing.

Life is much simpler than we believe, but that's so easy to forget when we get overwhelmed.



A teacher of mine likes to say that breathing is a great meditation focus – because it's portable, and free! And we always have access to it.

Anyone who's ever struggled to breathe knows what it feels like to realize they've taken breathing for granted.

Tara Brach says, ***“Life is not a problem to be solved.”***

Again, this is so easy to forget. We speed around on autopilot, believing that if we can just get things right, we won't have to suffer.

One Breath at a Time

Mindfulness Worksheet

And yet, the First Noble Truth of Buddhism is that being alive means we will experience pain. There's no escaping it.

And trying to escape it means we miss out on so much of the beauty of life.

The smell of the fresh air.

Our health.

A loved one we're sitting next to.

The taste and nourishment of the food we're eating.

Even entire good days can slip by us when we're focused on making things better, or different.



If you're focusing on one breath at a time in your meditation, it might help for you to set your timer at intervals – you could 2 minutes, 3 minutes or 5 minutes.

Whenever your timer dings or chimes, you can use this as a reminder to come back to this one breath.

Then this one.

Now this one.

You can remember, again and again, how each breath contains multitudes. Each breath reminds us of the richness of the life we've been given – the richness of sorrow, of gratitude, even of anger. The richness of being a living, breathing being.

Remember: there is a reason meditation is called “practice”. We are not accustomed to moving slowly, or to being in the present. Everything in our culture conditions us not to. So it's important to have a great deal of patience and kindness for yourself when you are trying to focus on the breath.

One Breath at a Time

Mindfulness Worksheet

It can help to say, silently, “One breath at a time.”

Or, “This breath. Now this one. Now this one.”

Or you can use Thich Nhat Hanh’s reminder:

“Breathing in, I know that I am breathing in... breathing out, I know that I am breathing out.”

Anxiety may come up when we are trying to take things one breath at a time.

Shouldn’t I be doing something? What if I fall behind?

Anxiety is not a bad thing! We can use it as a doorway into the present moment. What is it like to breathe with anxiety? One breath? Then another?

Does more anxiety arise? How does that feel?

When we take things one breath at a time, it’s much more manageable than “I must conquer all of my anxiety, AND all of my to do list... before bedtime.”

Taking things one breath at a time, we might also experience relief. To let go of what we’re holding of the future, and the past.

What does this relief feel like?

This breath asks nothing of us. In this moment, there is nothing to “do”.

This meditation reminds us that life is, simply, a series of moments. One after another.

One breath at a time can bring us into our body. It can attune us to feelings we hadn’t noticed we were feeling, whether on a mental or physical level.

And like climbing the mountain one step at a time, it can help us take the experience of that feeling... bit by bit, manageably, one breath at a time.
