

# THE HAPPY MIND

A BEGINNERS GUIDE TO  
MINDFULNESS



KATIE LAVIDGE

# Table of Contents

STEP 1: DEFINING MINDFULNESS03

Identify what it means to be mindful, it's benefits and what you hope to gain from a regular mindfulness practice.

STEP 2: UNDERSTANDING HAPPINESS08

Explore what it means to be happy and the freedom that comes with embracing our whole being.

STEP 3: TOOLS OF MINDFULNESS14

Learn simple and effective ways to bring mindfulness into your everyday life no matter where you are, who you're with or what you're doing.

STEP 1:

Defining Mindfulness

## STEP 1:

# DEFINING MINDFULNESS

Hi there, welcome to step one of your mindfulness practice! Before you embark on your mindfulness journey, let's take a moment to look at what mindfulness is and what you hope to gain from being more mindful.

What is Mindfulness? Mindfulness is described by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1994) “as paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgementally”. While this ancient teaching has been around for thousands of years, it's adapted over the century's to fit the needs of each generation and has metamorphosed into what seems to be the newest health trend we see today. While this buzzword was once only practiced by monks and spiritual seekers of enlightenment, it has now broken through the

**Step 1: Defining Mindfulness**

barriers of religious affiliations and has gained the attention of anyone looking to be happier and healthier.

Thanks to scientific research, it's been shown that Mindfulness can help improve the following areas:

- Reduces anxiety
- Physically rebuilds your brain
- Improves our ability to focus and make decisions
- Boosts creativity and problem solving
- Reduces pain
- Has the ability to prevent and treat depression
- Increases body satisfaction
- Leads to a healthier happier way of life

So now that we have a brief understanding of what mindfulness is, where it's come from and the many benefits it has to offer, let's take a more personal approach to understanding mindfulness.

We are all unique individuals and each one of us has come to this book with different reasons around what we would like to achieve from being more mindful. Since all time is valuable, it's important to identify what it is you would like to gain in return for your commitment. So let's take a moment to dive into what drives you and what a successful mindfulness practice looks like to YOU!

Here is a worksheet designed to help identify your values and goals while gaining some clarity around what exactly you are looking for from a regular mindfulness practice. I invite you to take 10-15 minutes out of your day to explore these questions and get your wheels turning around the topic.



**Step 1: Defining Mindfulness**

Grab a pen and paper and write down answers to the following:

- What core values drive you? These are guiding principles that help you identify what's important to you and how you choose to show up to life.  
I.E.: authenticity / loyalty / adventure / freedom / family
- Identify your goals. What would you like to accomplish in your life? In what direction would you like to drive your life?  
I.E.: Be a patient, loving and supportive parent. / Be the CEO of my company. / Climb Mount Everest.
- Look at the areas of your life that you would like to improve. What aspects of your life would you like to be better at?  
I.E.: take care of my health / spend more time with family / find more patience with my colleagues / be more involved in my community
- Once you've identified your values and goals and have some clarity around what you are looking to improve, start to imagine what your life would look like if you were living those values, working towards those goals and seeing those areas of your life improve. How would you feel? How do you see mindfulness helping you get to that place?  
I.E.: Mindfulness helps me be more patience and fully present so that I can improve my relationship with my partner which aligns with my goal of creating a happy home that aligns with my core value of family.

\*Remember, we are human beings that are constantly changing everyday and these answers are not set in stone. You are welcome to re-visit this worksheet whenever you like and change any of your responses at anytime.

# MY MINDFULNESS

DATE

AREAS OF LIFE YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE:

1 .....

2 .....

3 .....

4 .....

5 .....

6 .....

MY VALUES:

☐

☐

☐

MY GOALS:

☐

☐

☐

WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE IMPACTED BY A REGULAR MINDFULNESS PRACTICE?(I.E. HEALTH, WORK, FAMILY)

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO HAVE THOSE AREAS IMPROVED? HOW WOULD YOU FEEL WHEN THOSE AREAS ARE IMPROVED?

"THERE IS NO ENLIGHTENMENT OUTSIDE OF DAILY LIFE."  
-THICH NHAT HANH



STEP 2:

UNDERSTANDING  
HAPPINESS



**STEP 2:**

# UNDERSTANDING HAPPINESS

To be happy. That seems to be the big goal in most people's lives. If I'm happy, then it won't matter where I work. If I'm happy, then it won't matter how much money I have. If I'm happy, then my relationships will be stronger. If I'm happy, then \_\_\_\_\_.

Have you ever noticed that the goal post for "being happy" is constantly moving? It seems that as soon as you acquire what you initially deemed crucial to your happiness, something else pops up and becomes the new goal for attaining happiness. For example, you might decide that in order for you to be happy, you need to live in a bigger home. So you work hard and save up and are able to get that big home and you are happy for a moment. Then you decide that what you actually need to be happy is a new car. You get the car and again, you are happy for a moment. Then you decide that you need to get a promotion to be happy,

## Step 2: Understanding Happiness

and so on and so forth. It's a seemingly endless cycle where we keep investing our happiness in external values.

I'm going to let you in on a little secret... Happiness is internal. True lasting happiness will never be achieved through external factors such as people, places or things but rather from an internal well of self-love, appreciation and acceptance of all that is in this moment. To be truly happy we need to let go of our own limiting beliefs, expectations and superficial wants that tie us down to what we think we should be and do, this will give us freedom to create a life that aligns with our deeper purpose, values and goals. It's through letting go we are able to untether ourselves from a life lived for others and invite a purpose driven life to unfold.

However, human beings are extremely complex creatures that have many layers to their personality. Some of these aspects we associate with positive connotations, others negative. In an attempt to understand these different sides of our self and to try to make sense of our place in this world, we put stories and emotions to them. We then choose to identify with the "positive" characteristics and share them to the world as "who we are" while suppressing the "negative" parts doing our best to keep them under control and hidden from the people we meet.

The truth is, all these varying aspects of our self are neither "good" nor "bad" as they all make up the uniquely beautiful and complex individuals that we are. But for fear of being judged, misunderstood or ostracized we choose to hide the aspects of the self that we deem unpleasant or unworthy of sharing. However, to reject aspects of the self requires an unnecessary expenditure of energy and disembodies the spirit leaving us feeling fragmented, exhausted and unfulfilled.

It's time to shed our fears and stop pushing away integral parts of ourselves. Let go of expectations around

**Step 2: Understanding Happiness**

who we think we should be and concerns of how we will be seen by others and embrace our WHOLE self.

Acknowledge all the wildly beautiful and different sides of ourselves, invite them to come to surface, see them, hear them, love them. Know that each aspect serves as a tool to help us learn more about who we are on a deeper level and grow into the person we are meant to be in this world. Embrace the good with the bad and see all layers of the self as teachers guiding us along our journey through life unfolding with each new experience we encounter. To be wholly in love with all aspects of ourself, that is true happiness and can only be experienced in the NOW.

STEP 3:

TOOLS OF  
MINDFULNESS

## STEP 3:

# TOOLS OF MINDFULNESS

While selling all your earthly belongings and hiking up to the mountaintops of Nepal is one way to find your zen, it may not be for everyone. That's okay. Throughout history mindfulness has been evolving along with society. People have re-invented it time and time again so that it may stay alive throughout the centuries. In the past there have been incredible influencers such as John Cabot Zen, Thich Nhat Hanh, and many more who have been taking these ancient teachings and re-working them so they can be widely understood among the people of their time.

And now it's our time. It's a new century and along with it we have new tools and a new way of living. It's a time where technology is growing at an exponential rate and where external stimulus is seemingly never ending. We are pioneers, paving new ways to use our hi-tech tools to help make our life more efficient, more productive and more

**Step 3: Tools of Mindfulness**

connected than ever before. But this rapid technological growth can be a double-edged sword and can pull us away from the very thing we are truly seeking, the present moment.

Lucky for us we are equipped with 3 tools that are by our side every moment of our life from the day we are born to the day we die. These magical companions are our Body, Breath and Mind and they can help us drop into the present moment whenever and wherever we want.

Here are some simple exercises that you can incorporate into your day that will help you translate this ancient practice into your modern life. After all, “there is only one time that is important-- Now! It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power” – Leo Tolstoy.



## BODY

You may be reading this on the bus ride into work, at home in your bed, or maybe you're one of those incredible multitasks-ers and walking and reading at the same time. Whatever you're doing, wherever you are, pause for just one moment. Feel the temperature of the air on your skin. Is it hot? Is it cold? Notice any sounds from the world around you. Are they soft or harsh? Are they pleasant or annoying? Look up, what do you see? Is the lighting around you bright or dim? Is there nature or art surrounding you? Now notice where your mind goes when you start to take in your surroundings.

It's through our senses that we are able to experience the world around us and this can only be achieved in the present moment. You can't smell the coffee you had yesterday morning and you can't feel a hug you will get from a friend tomorrow. All of life's moments can only be fully experienced in the present and we come to our senses to find our connection to the NOW.


Use the following worksheet to learn how to use your senses to get out of your head and into the present moment.


# YOUR SENSES


SEE - HEAR - SMELL - TASTE - TOUCH


## SEE


Stop what you are doing and find 3 things around you that are the colour yellow.


















## SMELL


Notice any smells from the air around you. Write down 3 distinct things you can smell right now.

















## TOUCH

Find 3 things that are touching your skin right now. Maybe it's your clothing, jewellery or desk.







## HEAR

Listening to a song and identify 3 unique instruments can you hear that make up the song.

## TASTE

Write down the smell, texture and taste of what you are eating and savor the bite.

## BREATH

Did you know that when the length of your exhale is longer than the length of your inhale it physically sends a signal to the brain to relax? By elongating the exhale we stimulate our parasympathetic nervous system which sends a signal to the brain telling us we are safe and not to stress.

To tap into this calm state we can use our breath to anchor us into this moment and create some space between external stimulus and our response to it. It's in this space we are able to override our reptilian brain and move from a place of instinct and survival to a place of intentional reaction allowing us to create a life that aligns with our values and goals.

Below is a simple breathing exercise to try the next time you find yourself becoming anxious or stressed out. You can also find more breathing exercises in the tools section of [www.thehappymind.co](http://www.thehappymind.co)

## BREATHING EXERCISES

When you're ready, find a comfortable position either sitting or standing. Eyes can be open or closed, however you feel most comfortable. Now close your mouth and breathe through your nose in the following pattern:

- 1) Inhale for the count of 3-2-1. Pause.
- 2) Exhale for the count of 5-4-3-2-1.
- 3) Inhale 3-2-1. Pause.
- 4) Exhale 5-4-3-2-1.

Repeat 10 times. Notice how your shoulders melt down, your muscles soften, and your thoughts begin to disappear as the focus stays with the breath. Welcome to this moment.

## MIND

While meditation is one of the most popular forms of mindfulness, not everyone has the luxury of sitting in isolated silence for 20-40 min a day. Luckily there are other ways we can train our brain to become the observer of our thoughts and practice mindfulness at any given moment in our day. But just like any other muscle in our body, it takes practice and discipline to train the brain.

We've all heard the old saying, "It's not about the destination, it's about the journey" and I couldn't agree more with this age-old adage. However, it seems to me that in today's fast past digital world we're starting to fill in those little moments of our sacred journey with social media streams and mindless mental chatter. If you think about it, when was the last time you stood at a red light or waited in line without looking at your phone or making a mental to-do list?

A recent study by Psychology Today reported that 46.9% of our day is spent in what they refer to as "mind wandering". That means that almost half of our waking life is spent wrapped up in the stories our mind creates and we are missing out on experiencing all the beauty life has to offer in the present moment. And remember, it's only in the present moment that we are able to experience our environment completely, feel fully, live authentically and ultimately create a life by design that will bring us lasting happiness.

So how do we break this stream of "mental wandering" and re-train our brain to build new neuro pathways that anchor us into the present moment? Here are 3 simple steps that you can start practicing today to help you gain control over those wandering thoughts:



**Step 3: Tools of Mindfulness**

1. OBSERVE – Start looking for mental cues that will help you spot mind wandering thoughts as they are occurring. Some examples might be the physical tightening of shoulders or increase in heart rate when feelings of stress or anxiety come up. Use these physical and emotional cues to help you witness mental patterns. Now notice how the simple act of observing these thoughts takes the power away from them and gives it back to you.

2. ANCHOR – Now that you're in the power seat, time to shift your attention to the present moment. Find something beautiful to look at such as a painting or a flower. Your breath is another great anchor that is always by your side and ready to be utilised. Whatever it is, find one thing that you can use to anchor your attention to the present moment.

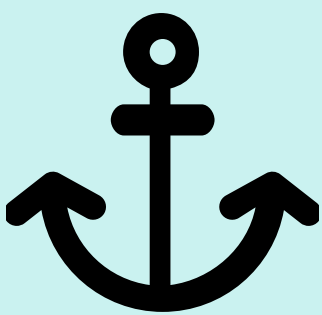
3. REBUILD – Commit to sitting with your anchor for 15-30 seconds uninterrupted. Stare at that flower, look at the richness of the colour, feel the texture of the petals, smell it's floral freshness. Anchor to your breath and notice how the air feels as it enters into the nose, moves down the back of your throat and fills up your belly, ribs, and chest. Then watch that same breath escape the body, softening the chest, ribs, and belly. This simple act of anchoring into the present moment 15-30 seconds will begin to “rewire” the way you think through neuroplasticity.

Taaahdah!!! You have a new brain... well not really. But you have broken down your old pattern of thoughts and built new neuro pathways in their place. Keep this up and you will start subbing out those old feelings of stress and anxiety created by your thoughts from the past and future and replacing them with happiness and contentment as you are able to experience life fully in this moment!

# MIND WANDERING

**OBSERVE**

Write down 3 mental cues that will help you recognise when your thoughts are not serving you.



**ANCHOR**

Identify one thing around you right now that can help you anchor to this present moment. Write down that one thing.

**REWIRE**

Sit with your anchor for 15-30 seconds and write down everything you can see, feel, touch, and smell about this anchor in great detail below:

“LIFE ISN’T ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF. LIFE IS ABOUT CREATING YOURSELF.”  
–GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



# CONCLUSION

THANK YOU!

## CONCLUSION:

# THANK YOU!

Congratulations! By reading this book you've officially taken the first step toward a happier more mindful way of living. I hope that the lessons and tools in these pages will bring more mindful moments into your daily life and you can utilise the power of the present moment. While there will be times that creating that space between external stimulus and your response to it might seem impossible, over time, with practice, finding head space will become easier and easier. Start building mindful habits today, enjoy the process, and be kind to yourself along the way. Remember, life isn't about being perfect, it's about being present.

Happily Yours,

Katie Lavidge

[www.urban-flow.com.au](http://www.urban-flow.com.au)