

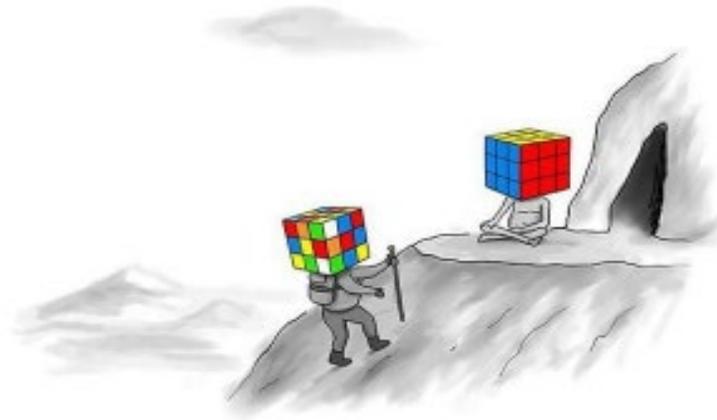
Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D  
Last revised\_120420  
Do not copy or distribute without permission

**Mindfulness Basics  
A Mindfulness Audio Program**

**Manual for the audio program**

**What you need to know to get started on the practice of mindfulness**

**By:  
Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D.**



***This material is intended for use only for the NIH staff and patients. Please do not distribute copies to others.***

## Contents

### List of audios and topics

Introduction to the program

Helpful suggestions

Day 1. Introduction to mindfulness

Day 2. The indispensable components of mindfulness

Day 3. Attitudinal foundations of mindfulness

Day 4. Body Scan

Day 5. Mindfulness blossoms

Day 6. Practice development and common challenges to meditation

Day 7. Mindfulness meditation with various anchors

Day 8. Application of mindfulness to walking, eating, and consumption

Day 9. Application of mindfulness to COVID 19 and mindful hand hygiene

Day 10. Compassion for health: loving kindness meditation

Detailed practice descriptions:

Mindful breathing

Body scan

Mindful walking

Sound as an anchor

Mindful seeing and contemplation

Mindful movements

Mindful eating and consumption

Mindfulness and COVID: Hand hygiene

Compassion for health

Loving Kindness meditation

Transforming difficult emotions

Tips for daily mindfulness

Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D

Last revised\_120420

Do not copy or distribute without permission

**Pause and breathe**

**Concluding poem**

**Short list of resources**

## Introduction to the program

Attention is a powerful tool. Scientific explorations in the West and old age wisdom traditions from the East tell us that, when we bring the power of our kind and gentle attention to ourselves and to our experiences, we engage the natural healing abilities that can serve our wellbeing on all levels—physical, psychological, and even spiritual.

The word mindfulness refers to this kind, tender, and friendly awareness that we can bring to the present moment experiences. This is known to reduce stress and enhance wellbeing. When we practice mindfulness, we are simultaneously practicing a number of overlapping skills such as: present moment orientation, non-judgment, letting go, and acceptance. The science behind mindfulness and its health benefits is very strong.

### The program

The mindfulness program we are offering you is designed to help cultivate and strengthen your innate ability to be mindful. It consists of 10 audio recordings from 10-25 minutes. These audio recordings focus on learning and practicing mindfulness basics. We ask that you listen at least once to each recording per day for 10 days during the program. Allow sufficient time to start and to end your practice so you do not feel rushed while listening to the recordings. One of the fruits of mindfulness is cultivating calmness and stillness.

Mindfulness is a very simple practice. What might make it challenging is the persistence and the patience that is needed for regular practice. Often, we schedule our activities based on what feels urgent and important. But they are two different dimensions. Naturally, what feels urgent and important goes on the top of the list (e.g. an acute health issue). What is not urgent and not important goes to the bottom of the list (e.g. a TV program that is not too interesting). The question of prioritization become a bit more complicated when we try to choose between not urgent but important versus urgent but not really important, especially if you step back and think about it. We sometimes buy into a false sense of urgency.

Your self-care practices may not feel urgent, but they are important. Think about the times when you postponed important self-care practices in favor of what might have felt urgent at the moment but was not really important. By their nature, mindfulness and meditative practices will not feel urgent. It, therefore, requires additional attention and commitment to make it a regular part of your day.

The program is educational in nature. It can be helpful in reducing stress. It can also be a helpful adjunct but not a substitute for medical, psychological, or psychiatric treatments. Please consult your healthcare provider if you have any concerns.

The program and audio recordings are designed by Dr. Ameli and are informed by her 18 years of teaching, reading and writing, practicing, and researching mindfulness with the purpose of transforming your relationship to stress and to assist you to enhance self-care.

### **The teacher**

Dr. Ameli is an accomplished clinical psychologist, researcher, author, and teacher. She has been studying, practicing, and teaching mindfulness for well over 18 years. She has worked at the National Institutes of Health in several capacities for over 20 years. She has held academic positions at Yale University and University of Connecticut prior to her NIH career. She received the NIMH Director's award in 2009 in recognition of her "extraordinary commitment to promoting employee health and productivity by stress reduction through mindfulness."

Dr. Ameli was invited by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2010 to write a book on the subject of mindfulness which was published in 2013. Her book received the Benjamin Franklin Award in body, mind, and spirit category in 2014. She is a frequent lecturer on mindfulness locally and nationally. Her book has been translated to several languages. One of her mindfulness programs, developed for healthcare workers at the NIH has been published in the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA Network Open, Ameli et al 2020).

### **Please Note the Following**

**Regular time & suitable place:** If possible, choose a regular time during the day to practice. Also choose a place in which you feel safe, distraction free, and comfortable. You can make this your special place with a few cherished items. A place where you can take a deep breath, exhale, and say "Yes I am here." That said, you can practice anytime, anywhere as long as you feel comfortable.

**Clothing:** Wear comfortable clothing for added ease. Taking off shoes and removing glasses can also add to your comfort.

**Yoga mat/blanket:** It is recommended that the Body Scan (Day 4), to be performed in the lying down position, on a blanket/yoga mat if possible. If not possible, it could also be practiced in the sitting position. We will practice the Body Scan in a seated position on Day 5.

**Meditation Cushion:** Some prefer practicing on a meditation cushion when practicing mindful breathing. If you are not used to meditation cushions, it is better to sit on a chair for sitting practices.

**No pagers-cell phones:** You owe it to yourself to carve out and keep your practice time distraction-free. Please turn off your cell phones or pagers or other sources of news and communication to the extent that is safe for you and your family. Focused attention is a necessary element of mindfulness practice.

**Practice Journal:** Journaling about your practice can enhance your efforts.

**Day one**  
**Introduction to mindfulness**

The first audio introduces you to the concept of mindfulness followed by a short practice. Below are several definitions of mindfulness and related information that we hope will enhance your understanding of mindfulness and its practice.

**Definitions of Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is to be aware... It is to be in touch with your felt experience in each moment..."  
"Mindfulness is to know when you are breathing in and to know when you are breathing out..."  
"Mindfulness is the capacity to be aware of what is here. Anything can be the object of mindfulness. Your breath. The sky..."

**-Thich Nhat Hanh**

Book recommendations:

*Peace is Every Step*

*True Love*

*Be Free Where You Are*

*Being Peace*

"Mindfulness is paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment by moment."

**-Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.**

Book recommendation: *Full Catastrophe Living*

"Mindfulness is to distinguish awareness from mental activity, it is to learn to be aware of our own mental states without being caught in them."

**-Jack Kornfield**

Book recommendation: *Wise Heart*

### Audio #1 Transcript

My name is Rezvan Ameli and I will be your mindfulness guide. On behalf of myself and our research team at the National Institutes of Health, also known as the NIH, I want to thank you for your participation. After a few introductory comments I will introduce you to mindfulness and then we will have a short practice.

I am a clinical psychologist and have been at the NIH for over 20 years working as a clinician, researcher, writer, and teacher. One of the areas of my great interest in the past 2 decades has been mindfulness. Mindfulness is known to reduce anxiety and stress, improve coping, and enhance resilience, wellbeing, and quality of life. I became interested in mindfulness when I was going through a very stressful and painful time in my life and since then I have seen its benefits in mine and many other lives.

You might have had other experiences with meditation and mindfulness and may even have established practices. Please know these and other life experiences will only enrich your current experience with the teachings we will be offering you. Please bring the **beginner's mind** to the teachings that will follow. Engage in them as if for the first time and with a fresh mind.

I am delighted to share my experiences with mindfulness and guide your experience in the next 10 days through the audio recordings that you will receive each day. Please give yourself the gift of your time and attention to the mindfulness practices that we have lovingly and attentively recorded for you.

I believe these short lessons are efficient and effective. There is, however, a caveat. Strivings, expectations, and judgments are some of the most powerful sources of stress and I hope that our lessons will strengthen your ability to let go of attachment to the results and expectations, including expectations from these lessons. I invite you to a space of acceptance, ease, and presence during our lessons together.

So, what is mindfulness? Mindfulness is an umbrella term for several formal and many informal practices. Formal practice can include a regular practice of, for example, mindful breathing, mindful walking or body scan. The audio recordings that are offered can indeed establish a formal practice of mindfulness for you in the next 10 days. Informal practices are the application of mindfulness principles to various activities and experiences throughout the day.

At their core, these practices are all about relating to our experiences with moment to moment attention and awareness. To be present to and stay with your experiences as they unfold: if you are showering just shower, if you are eating just eat, if you are cutting vegetables just do that, and if you are guided to focus on the breath stay with the breath. Mindfulness changes our relationship with stress by helping us choose our response rather than automatically react to stressful situations out of habit.

**Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D**

**Last revised\_120420**

**Do not copy or distribute without permission**

One of the simplest definitions of mindfulness is to be aware and in touch with our felt experiences in each moment. In addition to the intention to be mindful, and turning our attention and awareness to our experiences, the invitation is to come to the table of mindfulness with a special attitude, a certain attitude, and that is an attitude of non-judgment, friendliness, openness, acceptance, and even tenderness.

We keep the mind engaged in what is happening right now and when the mind wanders away, we gently redirect the mind back to the present moment experience while maintaining a friendly, non-judgmental, open and accepting attitude.

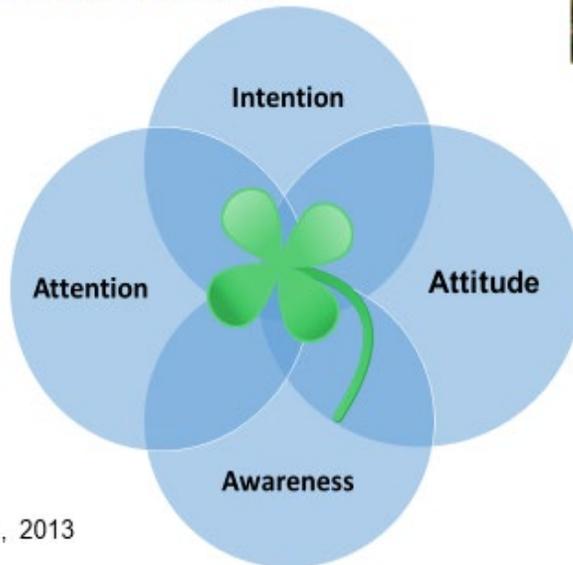
Let's do a short practice right now. I sound a soft bell to start and to finish the practice. Listen to the sound to the end with focused attention.

Our practice will be in a sitting position. So if you have not been sitting, take a moment to find a seat and make yourself comfortable. You may even stop this audio for a moment and restart it when you are in a comfortable position.

## Day Two

### The indispensable elements of mindfulness

#### Mindfulness Essentials



Ameli R., 2013

- **Intention.** Mindfulness is a conscious choice. Setting our intention to be mindful is necessary for establishing a regular practice.
- **Attention & Attitude** are the two wings of mindfulness. Focused attention and a tender, positive, loving attitude. A sharpshooter has focused attention. Is s/he mindful? Typically not. The attitude with which we focus our attention is a necessary component of mindfulness, the invitation is to engage a kind, tender, gentle, accepting, non-judgmental, and friendly attitude. A compassionate one.

#### **This is what compassionate attitude looks like!**



- **Awareness** is the ability to witness our experience without being caught in the experience. The ability to observe ourselves. The ability to observe the breath, a sound, a thought, a memory without losing the quality of a witness.

## Audio #2 Transcript

Welcome to our second practice.

Today I'd like to bring your attention to 4 elements or aspects of mindfulness that I find to be indispensable. And then we will do a mindful breathing practice incorporating sounds.

First, I'd like to introduce you to two definitions of mindfulness which capture these 4 elements. One definition is by Dr. Kabat-Zinn and the other by Dr. Kornfield. References to their work are listed in the manual.

Jon Kabat Zinn, a biologist from Harvard, was instrumental in bringing mindfulness to the folds of Western medicine. His definition of mindfulness is quite popular. He defines mindfulness as paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.

Jack Kornfield is a well-known American teacher of Buddhism. He says "Mindfulness is to distinguish awareness from mental activity. It is to be aware of our own mental states without being caught in them."

These 2 definitions highlight four aspects of mindfulness that I believe to be important in developing our practice of mindfulness.

The first aspect or element is intention. Mindfulness is a purposeful act. It is a choice. Even after years of practice, mindfulness remains a choice. Intention helps us persist with practice development. Whenever you find yourself wavering about practicing mindfulness regularly, check back with your intention to practice. You may develop an intention to practice to welcome a sense of well-being (without striving), or to stay mindful and nonjudgmental, to be present to your experiences, to cultivate peace or joy, any mindful intention will serve you. You can also develop an intention for each individual practice. Stating these seemingly simple intentions to yourself with commitment and purpose, can be powerful engines for continued and regular practice.

The second element of mindfulness is focused attention and refocusing the attention when it wanders away. Typically we choose an anchor to focus and refocus the attention. Similar to the anchor of a boat which prevents the boat from drifting too far, an anchor of attention helps steady the mind. Various meditative traditions use different anchors. For example, in Transcendental meditation a Mantra, which is repeating a word or a sound is used to concentrate the attention. Some other forms of meditation may use a visual anchor such as an image, a color, or light of a candle. Still, others may use a place on the body such as the space between the eyebrows, or the upper lip as the anchor of attention. In mindfulness meditation the anchor of attention can be anything. Any activity. The most popular ones are the breath,

walking, and bodily sensations. We will practice and introduce you to several anchors of attention during the course of these audio recordings.

The third element of mindfulness is the attitude with which we concentrate the attention. What arises in the field of consciousness can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. Regardless of these qualities of experience, the invitation is to maintain an attitude of non-judgment and remain accepting, friendly, and open to the experiences that unfold. This can be challenging especially if the experience is unpleasant in nature. What is important to remember is that avoidance of experience does not work. Even if there is pain, avoiding pain increases tension and does not produce relief. What is already here in the mind or body cannot be avoided. Mindfulness invites us to allow what is already here to be here without avoidance. By accepting and making room for the experience psychologically, we create a breathing space around the experience which then can diminish the unpleasantness. It is like dissolving a spoonful of salt in a bucket instead of a glass of water! We lighten up the experience. Especially in reference to unpleasant states, understandably, it is difficult to make room for them. And, the good news is that with practice we can. We all have the capacity to be mindful of our experiences and enhance them with practice.

The fourth element of mindfulness is the ability to witness our experiences rather than becoming one with them. It is to observe our thoughts, sensations, and emotions without getting caught or lost in their story. It is to cultivate the ability to observe our thoughts, emotions, and sensations as events in the field of consciousness – observe them as they arise, linger, and pass and then another one arrives...and then another....Labeling is a helpful way of increasing our ability to witness our experiences without entanglement. In our practice today I will incorporate labeling and you can see if that helped with your ability to observe and witness experiences. It is important to understand that “not getting caught” is not the same as dissociating from our experiences, pushing them away, or suppressing them. Far from it. Observing and witnessing experiences is about acknowledging their presence, letting them be, standing side-by-side with them, and then to also letting them go. It is to stay even with our difficult experiences without reactivity and or attachment.

Now we will turn to our practice for today.

I will sound a soft bell to start and to finish the practice.

Our practice will be in a sitting position. So if you have not been sitting, take a moment to find a seat and make yourself comfortable.

**Day Three**  
**Attitudinal foundations of mindfulness**

**Audio #3 Transcript**

Several attitudinal orientations are known to enhance mindfulness. The relationship between these qualities and mindfulness is reciprocal. They strengthen each other. When we practice mindfulness we are simultaneously strengthening nonjudgment, patience, beginner’s mind, trust, non-striving, acceptance and letting go. Dr. Kabat Zinn has recently added 2 more qualities to these 7 attitudes, that is, generosity and gratitude. He has a 26-minute YouTube video-recording on these 9 attitudes of mindfulness that I highly recommend. We have touched on several of these attitudes in our previous 2 lessons.

1. Non-Judgment

- Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming the stance of an impartial witness to your own experience.
- Even when you notice the mind has become judgmental, observing and becoming aware of judgments is the mindful approach. The task is not to stop judgments...the task is to become aware, let go, and direct the attention back to the anchor.
- We must also distinguish between discernment and judgment. Discernment help us to see what is and establish proper boundaries, whereas judgment obscures our vision and feeds into a biased view of ourselves, others and the world.

2. Patience

- Patience is necessary for development of mindfulness.
- A child may try to help a butterfly emerge by breaking open a chrysalis but chances are the butterfly won’t benefit from this help.
- Practicing patience reminds us not rush through some moments of our lives in order to get to other ‘better’ ones – each moment not valued is a moment not fully lived.

3. Beginner’s Mind

- Is the willingness to see everything as if it is for the first time. It is the recognition that each moment is unique and contains unique possibilities.
- Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we ‘know’ stop us from seeing things as they really are. This will prevent us from being receptive to new possibilities...we get stuck in our own “expertise.”
- Try it with familiar experiences/people. Next time you see someone you know, try to see them with fresh eyes, as they are in the moment you see them. Try it with problems... with nature... with the dog... with the food.

4. Trust
  - Is to believe in yourself, your feelings, your own authority and intuition. It is to sit with your own experience and observe what is really here even if you may make mistakes along the way. It is trusting in your sense experiences. It is not about being reckless or impulsive. It is not an invitation to act.
5. Non-Striving
  - Is to back off from expecting or seeking specific results.
  - To accept things as they are.
  - With patience and regular practice, movement towards wellbeing occurs naturally.
6. Acceptance
  - Acceptance is about making room for what is already here--- pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. We often waste a lot of time and energy denying what is here when we do not have a choice. We do not have a choice about our human condition which includes sickness, pain, and death. What we have a choice about is how we relate to these experiences. We always do our best to take good care of ourselves. For example, if we have a headache, resisting the headache is not useful. Accepting the headache is here does not mean we will not seek remedy. Pain is pain and is an inevitable sensation. Pain plus resistance creates unnecessary friction and suffering. Acceptance helps to take the suffering out of the equation. It helps make room for the experience, whatever it is, so we can choose our response rather than react out of habit.
7. Letting Go
  - Is about cultivating an attitude of non-attachment. Each time we exhale we are letting go of our breath. Each time we take a step we are letting go of our stability.
  - If we find it particularly difficult to let go of something because it has such a strong hold on our mind, we can direct our attention to what 'holding' feels like. Holding on is the opposite of letting go.
  - Letting go is to accept the truth of impermanence. Nothing is permanent. It is to accept not to hold on to what we cannot hold on to. Lama Suraya Das asks, "how can we respond to loss, failure, illness, death, tragedies, calamities, injustice, betrayal, shock, trauma, abuse, grief, and life's most hurtful wounds?" and adds, "Attachment is like holding on tightly to something that is always slipping through our fingers--it just gives us rope burn. "
  - Letting go of what does not serve us can be practiced at different levels. We can start with letting go of the objects we no longer need, actually start with one drawer and let go what is not needed!
8. Gratitude

Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D

Last revised\_120420

Do not copy or distribute without permission

- Is about being thankful for what we have and not to take for granted.
  
- 9. Generosity
- Is about giving of ourselves to bring joy to others.

*YouTube Recommendation "Attitudinal foundations of mindfulness" by Jon Kabat-Zinn. 26 minutes. The video is very well done. It is done in 2016 and he adds gratitude and generosity to the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2n7FOBFMvXg>

"When the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness are brought back to their core, two basic principles remain, to notice and to bring in a positive outlook to every experience. To exercise gentleness, friendliness and gratitude towards all experience, even difficult ones, as they unfold, moment to moment under the gaze of your full attention. The gentle consciousness that is aware of the experience, even tense or not so gentle experiences, without being caught in them or losing the texture of gentleness."

-Rezvan Ameli, 2010

**Day Four**  
**Body Scan**

**Audio #4 Transcript**

Welcome to the fourth lesson. Today we will be focusing on the practice of body scan and will incorporate mindfulness principles in this practice.

The recommendation is to do this first practice of body scan on the floor, lying down on a mat or blanket without a pillow... if possible. So if you need to stop the audio for a moment and prepare for this practice please do so.

The purpose of body scan is to become aware of the sensations in different areas of the body. Very often we ignore our bodies. We spend a lot of time in our heads and not enough time in our bodies. Sometimes we only become aware of a body part when it hurts and the intensity of the discomfort brings our attention to it. Regular practice of body scan helps us stay in closer touch with our body and what is happening in the body. In this practice we explore various regions of the body. We employ curiosity and the beginner's mind. We befriend the entire body and we bring our even-handed attention to all parts and pay attention to all sensations from very subtle or may be even imperceptible all the way to gross sensations. Sometimes people feel relaxed or even feel drowsy or dreamy when practicing body scan. That can be an added bonus but it is not the goal of this practice. The idea is not to manipulate your experience yet it is preferable to cultivate awareness during the practice. During this practice you do not need to change anything...no need to manipulate your experience...nowhere to go...nothing to do....similar to other mindfulness practices, body scan too is a practice of being... not doing.

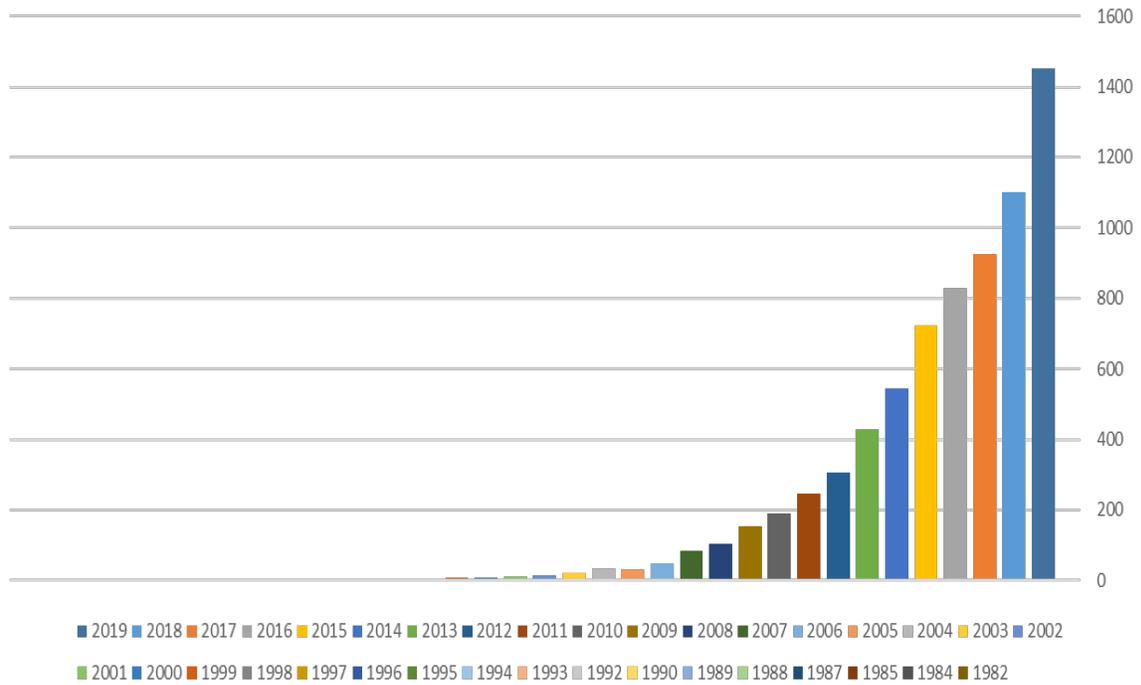
Now we turn to the practice of body scan. Allowing enough time to experience this practice without feeling rushed.

As usual I will announce the beginning and the end with the sound of the bell.

Day Five

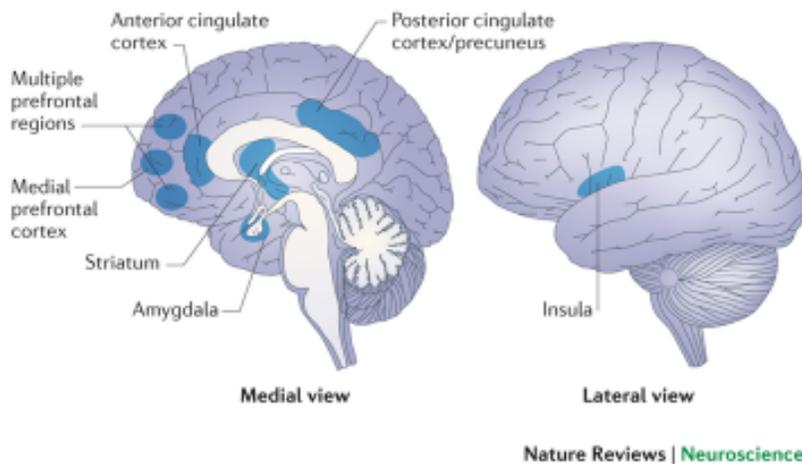
Mindfulness Blossoms  
The Science Behind Mindfulness is Strong

Source: Pub med –Articles published on mindfulness in peer reviewed journals 1982-2019



## Brain Areas Found to be Affected by Mindfulness

The brain areas include the anterior cingulate cortex, prefrontal cortex, posterior cingulate cortex, striatum, insula, sensory cortices, and amygdala (Tang *et al* 2015; Zeidan 2015).



### Mindfulness Helps Reduce Stress By:

- Present moment orientation.
- Letting go of thoughts and judgments.
- Relinquishing attachment to outcomes, expectations, and strivings.
- Recognition that much of the stress comes from the inside and our own choices, not from the outside.
- Respond rather than react.
- Decrease negative and increase positive emotions.

### Audio #5 Transcript

Welcome to Audio number 5. Today I tell you a little about why mindfulness has become so popular and its mechanisms of action. We then will practice mindful breathing and incorporate the body scan in a seated position.

Mindfulness and mindfulness research have become extremely popular in the last 2 decades. I believe there are several reasons. The capacity for mindfulness is almost universal, it is effective, it is flexible, it is inexpensive and safe, it does not require adherence to a particular religion or belief system, and it is strongly supported by research. There has also been a synergy between the presence of spiritual figures such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, popularity of mindfulness teachers, and scientists and neuroscientists such as Jon Kabat Zinn, and Richard Davidson. In your manual you will see a graph of the growth of mindfulness research that is reported from PubMed.

In terms of the mechanism of action, scientists believe mindfulness regulates attention, regulates emotions, and also enhances the so called “meta cognition” which is the ability to appraise reality impartially. Do you remember the 4 elements of mindfulness we discussed in the second lesson? These regulatory functions of mindfulness make a lot of sense when we consider the 4 elements of intention, attention, compassion, and the ability to observe and witness the experience rather than becoming one with it.

This latter point is especially important since it is this ability to become aware to witness and observe our experience that allows us to change our relationship with stress. Hans Selye who is known as the father of stress research says, “It’s not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.” And, Victor Frankl a renowned neurologist and psychiatrist says “between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom”.

And this is where a technique like mindfulness can be so helpful. The more aware we become of what is happening in our minds, hearts, and bodies the better we become able to witness and observe, and the better choices we make in our responses. We choose our response rather than react out of habit. Stress is a part of life. We cannot change that as humans we will experience stress. What we can change is how we respond.

Now we are going to turn to our practice.

**Day Six**  
**Practice development and hindrances to meditation**

**Audio #6 Transcript**

**Practice Development**

Developing a regular practice can be challenging. You need to maintain strong intention and consider your practice an important and health promoting part of your day, a necessity that does not take the back seat during your busy days. From experience the following tips can be helpful. Please also remember the concepts of urgent and important from page 4 under “The Program.”

1. **Make time.** The more regular your practice becomes the more you notice its beneficial effects. Ideally you want to have a daily practice, even if for a few minutes.
2. **Make place.** Do your practice where you feel safe and can be left undisturbed and distraction free.
3. Set up your smart phone with a “pleasant sound” to begin and end your practice.
4. When you miss practice remain kind and non-critical towards yourself, simply start over and recommit to practice.
5. You can practice formally which is typically a regular dedicated practice. You can also practice informally. Consider short practices throughout the day. Formal and informal practices strengthen each other.
6. Make it a priority (see page 4).

*(Adapted from Ameli, 2013, 25 Lessons in Mindfulness, PP 41-57)*

**Hindrances or common challenges to meditation**

There are five challenges to meditation. These are forces in the mind that hinder our ability to see clearly or become concentrated. They are universal and have remained the same over several thousand years! We all experience them. They are natural phenomena that arise in the course of meditation. They are not a sign that meditation “is not working” or you are doing something incorrectly. It does not matter that they arise. What matters is that when they arise to recognize them and to have a friendly relationship with them. The primary instruction in working with these challenges is to turn them into the object/anchor of meditation.

In their subtle or mild forms noticing and attending to them is enough to dispel them. When the hindrances are strong we need to become more curious and investigate them.

The challenges to meditation are:

- 1) Craving— desire by itself is natural. It can become a hindrance when we grasp for it. This can be a subtle “wanting” or a strong urge.

- 2) Aversion— this is the experience of dislike, not wanting something, wishing things were different than they are. It can be in the body, mind, or both. This can take the form of a subtle pushing away or strong avoidance.
- 3) Sloth and torpor—this is an experience of physical drowsiness or mental sluggishness or both. Heaviness of the body and dullness of the mind. During meditation we want to develop a mind that is both calm and alert. There is a difference between a passive state and a receptive state. Mindfulness requires active engagement in a receptive state. Too much tranquility results in “sinking mind.” Too much alertness can make us tense and may contribute to past or future (rather than present moment) orientation. Recognize when it is happening. Sometimes that is enough. If not, check in with your intention, your posture, and your breath. Directing energy towards the intention can revitalize mind and body.
- 4) Restlessness, agitation — this too could be experienced in the mind or body, i.e. physical restlessness or mental agitation. Recognition, refocusing and concentration, remembering your intention, smiling, cultivating stillness, and postponing reactivity/activity are helpful ways to deal with restlessness and agitation. Remember Victor Frankl “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” You are at choice to respond. Always. You do not have to react!
- 5) Doubt —this is experienced as either doubt about one’s own ability to engage in practice or doubt about the practice or its utility. It is a state of ambivalence and indecision that prevents us from fully applying ourselves and causes us to hold back which creates a vicious cycle. It is a serious hindrance since it can result in a person giving up practice altogether. Recognition, understanding, studying more, and discussion with a teacher will help with this hindrance.

When you notice these hindrances and they persist, think about the acronym RAIN and incorporate it in your practice. Tara Brach, a well-known mindfulness teacher has a YouTube presentation that I highly recommend. It is close to one hour but I think it is well worth the time. The link can be found in your manual. Briefly, R stands for recognize. The recognition of a hindrance. A stands for accept/allow. Whatever ever has arisen in the mind or the body we first recognize it and then we allow it, accept it as is. It is already here... we make room for it. I stands for Investigate. Become curious. Bring the beginner’s mind to it. Become aware of all of its qualities subtle or obvious. Ask, can I be with this? Where does it reside in the body? How strong is it? Noticing and aware that if you stay with the experience it will shift and change. All experiences are impermanent. Get to know it and know it well. And, N stand for non-identification/ non-personal nature of whatever it is. Witness and observe the experience without personalizing it.

**Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D**

**Last revised\_120420**

**Do not copy or distribute without permission**

In our practice today I invite you to incorporate RAIN if needed. What that means is that when you recognize the mind has wandered away, you pay attention to where the mind wandered to. Has it wandered to a thought? An emotion? A sensation in the body? Any of the above hindrances? –Then allow and accept this new object of attention, investigate its nature and quality, observe and witness it without entanglement or without personalizing it, and then bring the attention back to the anchor of the practice. This is not an easy practice. It requires focused attention, acceptance of emotions or the states of mind that may arise, and patience.

Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D  
Last revised\_120420  
Do not copy or distribute without permission

## **Day Seven**

### **Audio # 7**

This day included a mindfulness meditation and various anchors were incorporated into the meditation. There were no didactic comments.

**Day Eight**  
**Applications of mindfulness**  
**Mindful walking, mindful eating, mindful consumption**

**Audio # 8**

Welcome to lesson 8. Mindfulness is versatile and can be applied to all states and activities. We can do any number of regular daily activities mindfully: showering, brushing teeth, walking, and eating. In the manual I have provided a document called Tips for Daily Mindfulness so you can get some ideas from it, but truly the sky is the limit. Be creative. What is important is the intent, the focused attention in the present moment, and the attitude.

**Mindful walking** is a very popular practice. You can bring the mindful attitude to your walks. Thich Nhat Hanh a well-known mindfulness teacher says that walking mindfully is really to enjoy the walking ...not to arrive somewhere but just to walk. Even when you walk from point A to point B, during the walk you do not have to think about point B you can simply immerse yourself in the walk itself. Anytime you walk you can make the walk a mindful one. You simply have to remember you can walk mindfully and then choose to do it. This can be part of a formal or an informal practice.

Mindfulness has been successfully applied to various sports and the speed of walk is not relevant. You can walk mindfully with any speed. You can run mindfully. In order to increase your awareness of walking, you may want to alter the habitual ways in which you walk. Typically, for a mindful walk you may slow down below your habitual speed to increase the awareness of all the subtle motions that go into a step. One way to do this is to bring your attention to the basic elements of each step, that is, 1.lift one foot, 2.move that foot forward, 3.place it on the ground, 4. Notice the shift of weight while you get ready to lift the other foot and so on. You may want to take a few minutes right now and practice mindful walking. Keep your focus on the walk and when the mind wanders bring it back and refocus. You may even become aware of the pleasure that is associated with movement of the body. So the basic elements of a walk are lift, move, place, and shift.

I sound the bell for you to start your practice.

Choose an area where you can take a few steps in one direction before turning around and repeating your steps. Remember there is no right or wrong way to do this.

(5 minutes of walking practice)

**Mindful Eating.** Another popular mindfulness practice that could be done both formally and informally is mindful eating. The principles are simple. When you eat, just eat. No multitasking. Involve all the senses. Look at the food and its visual qualities, smell the food, notice the texture, the taste, notice the speed with which you eat, can you change your habitual speed a little? Notice your bite sizes. Become aware of the movements that go along with chewing the food, notice when judgments form, notice when you swallow the food, bring the beginner's mind to what you are eating, you will be surprised that your habitual likes or dislikes may shift or change. When your attention wanders away bring it back, focus on what you are eating. Enjoy eating and be grateful for what you are eating.

**Mindful consumption.** When we pay attention to how we eat we naturally become increasingly aware of what we eat. We can gradually become more mindful about our consumption. Consumption is not only in the form of what we eat and put in our mouth, it applies to all senses. What we bring into our body through all our senses matter. We are nurturing ourselves through food but also through what we hear and listen to, what we see watch or read, what we touch, what we smell and taste, and whom and what we interact with throughout the day. All of these including food ultimately translate into chemical transactions that connect mind and body. As we exercise mindfulness we become more aware and conscious of our habitual consumption patterns. This awareness can help choose our responses rather than allowing the habitual automaticity to take over our lives. We can exercise choices that we believe can serve us.

I now invite you to take a minute and find a small piece of food. May be a raisin, or a grape, or a small piece of a larger fruit for example a slice of an apple, or orange...be creative any food can serve this purpose. Pretend you are from another planet and just given this object to figure out. Spend the next 3 minutes exploring the qualities of this object with focused attention, curiosity, and beginner's mind. I will sound the bell to start and stop.

(3-5 minutes of practice with mindful eating)

**Day Nine**  
**Applications of mindfulness to COVID 19**  
**Mindful hand hygiene**

**Audio # 9**

Welcome to our 9<sup>th</sup> lesson. Today we will focus on application of mindfulness to COVID 19 and in particular mindful hand hygiene. I believe the application of mindfulness to COVID 19 is three- fold.

1. By regular practice, we decrease stress and enhance general well-being.
2. Mindfulness can help us make new habits and break unwanted ones.
3. It can help us with maintaining perspective and will help recognize silver linings that can enhance hope, joy, and optimism even in the Time of COVID-19.

I would like to share a few more words about making and breaking habits. Imagine how we can apply mindfulness to the three most problematic behaviors that contribute to COVID-19 transmission. Poor hand hygiene, problem with social distancing, and touching our faces habitually. If we approach social distancing, use of public spaces, hand hygiene, touching our faces, or our super market shopping habits with mindful attention and awareness, we will be able to overcome many of our habitual responses and with that alter our behaviors—this will promote our own, our loved ones, and the public’s health and well-being.

Let’s focus on hand hygiene and how this can become not only a way of improving patient care and public health but also how it can contribute to our own health and well-being not only to keep away germs but also to increase the time we spend being mindful.

Thich Nhat Hanh invokes this spirit when describing simple tasks: “I clean this teapot with the kind of attention I would have giving the baby Buddha or Jesus a bath.” For Thich Nhat Hanh, nothing should be treated more carefully than anything else. This is a simple but a very deep and profound teaching.

When you perform hand hygiene the teaching is to bring the same quality of attention and tenderness to the task as if you were giving a precious baby a bath.

I will review some mindfulness tips for hand hygiene and then I will ask you to practice this important activity on your own.

The overarching idea is to engage as many senses as possible in your experience of hand hygiene including sight, sound, touch, smell, and locomotion. You have the choice to transform hand hygiene experiences to enjoyable pauses and mindful moments during your busy day. Become present to your hand hygiene experience. Let go of the past, let go of the future, and when mind wanders bring it back and refocus on your sensations. No matter how many times you clean your hands mindfully, each experience can be slightly different. There is no right or wrong. No final product. Each time, bring in an attitude of curiosity and the beginner's mind.

1. Before starting your hand hygiene, pause for a moment and take a breath.
2. Direct your attention from the outside to the inside and focus only on the experience of hand hygiene. Let go of the past or future thoughts. No talking or interacting with others. No rushing. Simply sensing.
3. Look at the soap/liquid dispenser. Notice it. Notice the shape, color, size, or other visual qualities.
4. When pressing to get the liquid soap/gel/foam, become aware of the sensations created by pressing. Notice the sound and feel of what is delivered to your hand/s. Notice the temperature. Notice the visual qualities of soap/gel/foam.
5. Feel your hands rubbing together. Palm, back of the hand, fingers, between the fingers. At some point you may even smell your hands for the scents that are present.
6. If running water, bring the same quality of awareness to the experience of soaping, washing and drying the hands, noticing the rich sensations of water and lather on different parts of your hands.
7. Enjoy yourself and consider this as a gentle hand massage you give yourself several times during the day.

**Day Ten**  
**Compassion for health**  
**Loving-kindness meditation**

**Audio # 10**

Welcome to the last of our 10-audio series. We hope that these instructions have been helpful for your mindfulness learning and practice.

You recall from our second lesson when we talked about the 4 essential elements or aspects of mindfulness. Intention, attention, the attitude of friendliness, non-judgment and compassion, and the ability to observe and witness experiences. Today we will highlight the importance of loving-kindness and compassion.

Loving-kindness and compassion are important anchors for meditation. Various versions with subtle differences are taught by contemporary teachers of meditation such as Pema Chadron, Sharon Salzberg, Jack Kornfield, Tara Brach and others.

There has been an explosion of studies in the field of psycho-neuro-immunology, demonstrating that the body's cellular and molecular defense mechanisms known as the "immune system" are regulated in part by the nervous system. Stressful life experiences influence the activity of the immune system and interfere with the body's natural healing processes. Recent studies show intriguing connections among stress, feelings of helplessness, immune system deficits, and diseases. The question is no longer whether or not mind and body influence each other, we know they do. A major question for research is to what extent the mind influences the increase or the decrease of specific disease processes.

Meditative practices have proven effective time and again to facilitate healing. One has to make a distinction between healing and cure. The power of meditative and mindfulness approaches is in the attitudinal transformation that brings about a sense of healing; whereas, the expectation of cure is inherently inconsistent with such an approach. There is a paradox inherent in such a view. The paradox is this: any strong investment in the outcome of meditative practices undermines the practice itself! Cultivating non-striving is in the heart of meditative practices. Their healing power comes from a systematic discipline and commitment to a way of being, not from engaging in one or two practices or techniques when we feel bad or want something.

Negative attitudes such as hostility, anger, cynicism, and frustrated expectations of others are among sources of stress. Cultivating and directing feelings of empathy, compassion, warmth, tenderness, and love towards self and others is what the lovingkindness meditation is about, and is considered an antidote to negative attitudes. It helps us cultivate strong positive emotions and let go of ill will and resentment. When practiced regularly, this form of meditation has a softening effect and helps one to be kinder to self and others.

The practice of loving-kindness meditation uses repeated phrases, images, and feelings to evoke the spirit of loving-kindness and friendliness.

This practice can be a part of a formal sitting practice or it can be extended as you walk or move about and go through your day. The avocation of loving-kindness is what matters. Loving-kindness is taught as an antidote to fear, anger, confusion, and a closed heart. The image given in ancient texts for lovingkindness is of a mother holding her most beloved child. In this practice, we gradually move from directing simple phrases of loving-kindness to ourselves, to loved ones, to benefactors, friends and people everywhere and finally, to difficult people and beyond. Initially, this practice can feel awkward or prayer-like. It can even bring about feelings of irritation and anger. If this happens, it is especially important to be patient and kind toward yourself and hold whatever arises in the spirit of tenderness and affection. In the practice of loving-kindness meditation, phrases relating to love and kindness are repeated. At first, the practice may feel mechanical, simplistic, or awkward. If you experienced negative emotions in response to this practice, it is especially important to hold these emotions with a kind and gentle attitude. Whatever arises in you should be held in the spirit of compassion and acceptance.

Although there are no limits on the number of individuals toward whom we might direct loving-kindness phrases, initially it is typical to include a benefactor, a dear friend, self, a neutral person, someone difficult, and then all beings.

I have chosen statements that have been meaningful for me to send messages of love and kindness. Please take the time and come up with statements that are meaningful for you for future practices.

First, we send the messages of love and kindness to a “Benefactor”-- someone with whom you have a positive and uncomplicated relationship. Could be a hero. A teacher. A spiritual figure.

Sit comfortably-- bring a smile in---invoke tender feeling inside. You can think about someone, a child, an elderly person, a pet... someone which brings natural feelings of tenderness to your heart. You may even touch the region of the heart for added sense of heart connection and tenderness.

Inwardly or outwardly saying:

- May you be free from anger, resentment, or hatred
- May you be filled with compassion and kindness
- May you be safe and protected
- May you be peaceful
- May you live with ease and be free

Take a deep breath and exhale fully ...now turning your attention to a “Dear Friend”- someone towards whom you have natural feelings of love—yet the relationship can be more complex.

May you be free from anger, resentment, or hatred  
May you be filled with compassion and kindness  
May you be safe and protected  
May you be peaceful  
May you live with ease and be free

Now take another deep breath and exhale fully and turn the attention to yourself. Holding yourself in the spirit of kindness and tenderness:

May I be free from anger, resentment, or hatred  
May I be filled with compassion and kindness  
May I be safe and protected  
May I be peaceful  
May I live with ease and be free

Now taking a deep breath, exhaling fully and bring to mind a “Neutral Person”- someone you do not know well. Someone towards whom you feel impartial.

May you be free from anger, resentment, or hatred  
May you be filled with compassion and kindness  
May you be safe and protected  
May you be peaceful  
May you live with ease and be free

Now taking another full breath and bringing to mind “Someone Difficult”- bring to mind someone who you might have only mild negative feelings. Someone who does not invoke extreme negative emotions. This is very important. Even with someone with whom you are experiencing mild negative emotions can be difficult. In that case send them your intention that you will send messages of love and kindness to them when you are ready. If ready, we now send messages of love and kindness to this person:

May you be free from anger, resentment, or hatred  
May you be filled with compassion and kindness  
May you be safe and protected  
May you be peaceful  
May you live with ease and be free

Now we will send loving kindness to “All Beings”

May all beings be free from anger, resentment, or hatred  
May all beings be filled with compassion and kindness

**Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D**

**Last revised\_120420**

**Do not copy or distribute without permission**

May all beings be safe and protected

May all beings be peaceful

May all beings live with ease and be free

Gong

## Detailed Practice Descriptions

### Mindful Breathing

Decide how long you will be engaged in mindful breathing ahead of time. It can be useful to set a timer/digital bell sound (AKA gong) until you develop an internal sense of elapsed time. There are several software programs that you can download for free on your cell phone.

- **Posture.** Settling in your seat, sitting comfortably, upright and alert but also relaxed. Pay special attention to your posture. Back straight, chest open, shoulders relaxed, neck balanced so that the spine is upright throughout. Your weight distributed equally on the buttocks. If sitting on the floor, sit on enough height so that your hip bone is at the same level or higher than your knees.
- **Intention.** You might close the eyes. Bring the attention from the outside to the inside. Becoming still. Silently stating your intention for the mindfulness practice that you are about to engage in.
- **Attention.** Bring your attention to the breath. Bring in curiosity and the beginner's mind to this experience. Noticing when you are breathing in. Noticing when you are breathing out. Noticing your breath just as it is. No need to change anything. Breathing in and breathing out. As you breathe in notice the flow of air moving through your nostrils, down in to your lungs and as you exhale notice the flow of air getting back out of the nostrils. Following/tracing the breath as it goes in and comes out.
- Noticing when your mind wanders to thoughts, images, memories, emotions, sensations, or sounds. Noticing these natural states of the mind with kindness and gentleness and bringing the attention back to the breath.
- **Compassion.** If judgment arises, remind yourself that there is no right or wrong way to do this, bringing in the attitude of "acceptance" towards whatever arises in the mind.
- **Witness.** Simply observe the breath and observe when thoughts, images, memories, sounds etc. arise without entanglement and gently bring attention back to the breath.
- **End of practice.** End your practice with the soft sound of a bell (AKA gong).

## Body Scan

The purpose of this exercise is to become increasingly more aware of body sensations. The purpose is not to relax although often people tend to relax. If you end up in a relaxed state that is simply a bonus. During the exercise, there is no need to change anything. The task is to just notice.

- **Logistics:** Quiet place, warm blanket, pillow under the knees if you have back problems.
- **Intention.** Acknowledging your intention for the practice you are about to do.
- **Attention.** Turning Attention Inwards. Allowing the eyes to close. Quieting the mind with a few mindful breaths. Bringing the attention to the body. Noticing the sensations associated with touch in the places that are in contact with the floor/mat or if sitting, with the seat.
- **Systematic Examination of Body Sensations.** Bringing the attention to various parts of the body and noticing the sensations that are present in that part. Noticing any sensations of pressure, tingling, warmth, cold, itch, pain, etc. In some parts you may sense nothing and that is fine too. Noticing/feeling the sensation then letting go and bringing the attention to the next part. You may consider the following sequence:

Toes of the left foot  
Sole of the left foot  
Heel  
Top of the foot  
Ankle  
Left leg  
Left calf and shin  
Left knee  
Left thigh  
Toes on the right foot  
Rest of the right foot-sole, top, heel, ankle  
Right calf and shin  
Right knee  
Right thigh  
Entire pelvic region  
Lower back  
Lower abdomen  
Heart region--mid chest--middle back  
Upper back and shoulders  
Arms  
Forearms

Hands and fingers

Neck, back of the neck, sides of the neck, front of the neck

Back of the head, sides of the head including ears, top of the head,

Face, forehead, temples, eyes, muscles around the eyes, nose, muscles around the nose,

Jaw, mouth, tongue.

After completing the systematic exploration of body sensations, take a head to toe notice of the body as a whole. Continue with a few mindful breaths and when ready open your eyes and move to your next activity. If you are lying down, roll to your right side and using your left hand, push yourself up and gently come back to a seated position. Rub your hands together fast and then cup your palms, put them on your eyes without touching the eyes for a few seconds. Gently open the eyes. Resume regular activities with kindness and gentleness towards yourself.

- **Compassion.** Remain tender and kind throughout. If you discover areas of discomfort notice without resistance. Indeed, devote a few mindful breaths to the area of discomfort with your full attention, as if breathing in and out of that area. When your mind wanders gently bring it back. Become aware if the mind becomes judgmental and critical. Observe the judgmental mind gently let go and return to body scan.
- **Witness.** Simply observe the body sensations and observe when thoughts, images, memories, sounds etc. arise without entanglement and gently bring attention back to examining body sensations.
- **End of practice.** At the conclusion of your practice bring the attention back to your surroundings.

*(mindful breathing and body scan have been adapted from Ameli, 2013)*

## Mindful Walking

Mindful Walking can be done at any speed and almost anywhere. However, to learn to walk mindfully we slow down to appreciate the various components of a simple step.

- **Intention.** Make a specific intention to walk mindfully for a specific period of time. Bring in the beginner's mind and genuine curiosity to this activity.
- **Attention.** To walk mindfully is to attend to the basic elements of a step: lift, move, and place. First, lift a foot. Second, move the lifted foot forward. Third, place that foot on the ground. Then, as you shift your weight to that foot, you begin the lifting process with the other foot.

You can even break the elements of walking even further, i.e., focusing on the various parts of your feet in the process of walking: lift heel, lift ball of foot and toes, move foot forward, place heel on ground, place ball and toes of foot on ground, shift weight to forward foot.

Notice the bodily sensations in each component of the step. When mind wanders or judgments, emotions, thoughts arise, acknowledge them gently, and bring back the attention to walking.

- **Compassion.** Maintain a kind, gentle, and nonjudgmental attitude towards whatever that arises.
- **Witness.** Witness your experience without entanglement with thoughts, feelings, memories, images that may arise.

*(adapted from Ameli, 2013)*

## Sound as Anchor For Mindfulness

- **Posture.** Sitting in a comfortable position. Back straight and erect. Head balanced. Shoulders relaxed and away from the ears. Chin very slightly tucked in. Quieting the mind with a few mindful breaths. Taking a sweeping head-to-toe scan of the body. Acknowledging all the sensations including any thoughts or feelings that are here.
- **Intention.** Acknowledging the intention for this practice. Deciding the amount of time you are planning to spend on the practice.
- **Attention.** Turning the attention to "hearing" and sounds in the environment. Letting the body and the breath move to the background. Giving full attention to hearing. Listening to sounds near or far. High or low. Soft or harsh. Allowing all the sounds to be here. Noticing any judgments and evaluations that come up. Bringing the mind back to hearing sounds and the silence between the sounds when it is carried away. No need to go after the sounds—not to strive—let the sound enter the field of awareness and consciousness.
- **Compassion.** Maintain a kind, gentle, and nonjudgmental attitude towards whatever that arises.
- **Witness.** Witness your experience without entanglement with thoughts, feelings, memories, images that may arise.

## Mindful Seeing and Contemplation

- Mindful seeing is really about being aware of your surroundings and seeing things as if for the first time. When we see familiar vistas, objects, and people habitually, we miss out on all the wonderful nuances that familiarity can offer. When we see mindfully, it becomes easier to cultivate gratitude and joy.
- “The object of contemplation is to learn to look at something actively but without using words. It is to experience directly whatever one chooses to look at. The eye sees and the mind sees without any intervening step. This is not easy to do, as our minds are usually busy converting the image we see into words as if we were describing it to someone. Descriptive words are wonderful tools to use on those occasions when we need to convey a scene to others. However, most of the time we do not. Rarely do words capture the richness and the subtleties of our true experiences. Contemplation teaches us to see what is without the filter of descriptive or judgmental words. When we use no word-filters, we gain a direct and instant knowing. When we learn to see with our whole attention, the world that emerges to our view is filled with infinite wonder and uniqueness.”
- *(adapted from James W. Green, “Integrative Meditation”)*

*(adapted from Ameli, 2013)*

## Mindful Movements

Adapted from the video recordings of “Mindful Movements” by Thich Nhat Hanh; can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mz-dJFkmrk>

“Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.”

Mindfulness is the capacity to be aware of what is here. Now. Anything can be the object of mindfulness. It is to be in touch with our felt experience in each moment. Mindful movements are based on conscious breathing: when you breathe in you are aware you are breathing in and when you breathe out you are aware you are breathing out. This is a very simple but very powerful way of staying in touch with your felt sense and your moment-to-moment experience.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

### General Comments:

All movements are repeated 4 times. Smiling during the movements will cultivate and enhance an internal atmosphere of gentleness, kindness, calm, joy and peacefulness. Slowing down the movements will cultivate and enhance awareness and felt experience of the body.

### 1st Movement

- Feet firmly placed on earth. Standing straight. Standing tall. Shoulders relaxed. Breathing in deeply. Smiling. Breathing out.
- **Breathing in** slowly raise your arms up in front of you. Palms down. Stretch.
- **Breathing out** slowly bring your arms down. Smiling. Aware. Gentle.

### 2nd Movement

- Feet firmly placed on earth. Standing straight. Standing tall. Shoulders relaxed. Smiling.
- **Breathing in** slowly raise your arms all the way up to the sky. Palms facing each other.
- **Breathing out** slowly bring your arms down. Palms facing the earth. Aware. Gentle. Smiling.

(You can add: Standing upright. Feet firmly planted. Arms to the front. Interlock fingers. Turn palms out as you maintain the interlock. Thumbs pointing towards the floor. Palms stretched open. And now slowly bring your arm up over the head. Side chests up. Palms open and towards the ceiling. Bring your arms back down. Bend the elbows. Change the interlock. And repeat.)

### 3rd Movement

- Standing firmly. Back straight. Standing tall. Smiling. Fingertips on shoulders. Arms parallel to the ground.

- **Breathing in** slowly open your arms, blooming like a flower.
- **Breathing out** slowly bring back your fingertips to your shoulders. Aware. Gentle. Smiling.

#### 4th Movement

- Place your feet apart. Wider than your shoulders. Starting from the center. Palms touching. Aware. Gentle. Smiling.
- **Breathing in** slowly bringing your arms up. Making wide a circle. At half circle, when the arms are stretched at the sides, **breathing out**.
- Reverse.

#### 5th Movement

- Place your feet apart. Wider than shoulders. Bend over and let your hands drop. Smiling. Slowly. Gently. Aware.
- **Breathing in** raising your arms all the way up to the sky.
- **Breathing out** coming back all the way down to the earth.

#### 6th Movement

- Standing firmly. Hands on your hips. Keeping back straight. Put your feet together in a “V” shape. Standing on your toes. Smiling. Aware. Gentle. Slow.
- **Breathing in** rising as much as you can.
- **Breathing out** lowering yourself to sitting. Remaining on your toes all the time.
- For additional balance choose a place 2-3 yards ahead and focus your gaze there.

#### 7th Movement

- Standing firmly. Hands on hips. Feet wide apart. Smiling. Slow. Aware. Gentle.
- **Breathing in** begin to make circles with the upper body.
- **Breathe out** half way and come to a full circle.
- Reverse.  
(You can add: standing firmly. Hands on knees. Rotating the knees around while keeping the feet flat on the floor. Reverse.)

#### 8th Movement

- Standing firmly. Hands on hips. Back straight. For additional balance choose a place 2-3 yards ahead and focus your gaze there. Smiling. Gentle. Aware.
- **Breathing in** slowly bring your RT leg up as bending the knee towards the belly. Toes pointing.
- **Breathing out** slowly stretch the foot out in front of you. Toes pointing.
- **Breathing in** bringing the RT leg slowly up again towards the belly.
- **Breathing out** putting the foot down. Switch legs.
- For additional balance choose a place 2-3 yards ahead and focus your gaze there.

#### 9th Movement

- Standing firmly. Back straight. Smiling. Slow. Gentle. Aware.
- **Breathing in** begin to slowly make a wide circle with your RT leg, toes pointing, starting in the front, then leg goes to the side when in half circle begin **breathing out**. Leg goes to the back.
- **Breathing in** bring the leg back to the side when in half circle begin **breathing out** as your bring the leg back to the front.
- Switch sides.

### 10th Movement

- Standing firmly. Knee caps up. Back straight. Smiling. Slow. Aware. Gentle.
- Take a big step to the RT. Feet wide apart. Strong legs. Knee caps up. Turn your LT foot slightly in. Turn your RT foot out to 90° rotating the entire leg from the root of the thigh. RT heel in aligned with the arch of LT foot. RT hand on the RT hip.
- **Breathing in** bring your LT hand and arm slowly up, stretching upwards all the way so that the whole LT side of the body will be gently stretched out, simultaneously bend the RT knee. Knee and ankle in a straight line and 90 degree angle to the thigh. LT leg stretched.
- **Breathing out** bringing your arm slowly back down and straightening both knees.
- Switch sides.

*(adapted from video recording by Sounds True, Mindful Movements)*

## Mindful Eating & Consumption

The simplest definition of mindfulness is paying attention. Paying attention with focus, intent, acceptance, moment –to- moment, and without judging. Mindfulness reduces stress partly by helping us to break away from the “automatic pilot” and “multitasking” mode and to appreciate simple but important daily activities. We can bring mindfulness to all activities – including breathing, walking, seeing, talking, and to eating. In our busy lives, we often forget to really eat and do just that. When is the last time you ate with your focus being to truly experience what you are eating? To really connect with the eating experience remembering this is one very important way with which you nurture and take care of your body. We eat habitually. We eat fast. We multitask while we eat. What’s more, for many, eating food can be a loaded issue. We struggle with our relationship to food.

There is a body of research that points out links between fast eating and multitasking during meals and the likelihood of weight gain and obesity. There are now programs that use mindfulness for treatment of eating disorders such as binge eating and bulimia. Research results are promising.

Mindful eating can inform what and how much we eat even when the goal is simply to become more mindful of our daily activities for general stress reduction. Approaching food and eating in a more mindful way is very simple. For instance, the next time you eat foods –such as raisins, grapes, or strawberries - I invite you to experiment with mindful eating.

Here’s how:

First, try to eat only one, not a handful. Involve as many senses as you can. In doing so, try to discover and appreciate all that you have not paid attention to until now. See the shape and color, feel the texture, and smell of what you are about to eat. Then chew slowly. Experience the release of taste in your mouth-- pay attention to the nuances that your taste buds are telling you about. If thoughts, judgments, or emotions arise notice them, let them go and return your attention to what you are eating and to your moment-to-moment experience. Mindful eating is no different from mindfulness in any other activity such as breathing, walking, listening or seeing. They all share the same basic foundation,-- focused attention, a non-judgmental attitude, acceptance, patience, staying curious and maintaining a willingness to consider even routine experiences as unique (this is also called “beginner’s mind”), letting go, and a relaxing of expectations. Here are a few other tips for mindful eating:

- **Intention.** Make a specific intention to eat mindfully for a given meal or a snack. Come to the table to eat and do just that— eat. This can include a decision to eat in silence. Focus on only the food – don’t watch TV, work, or read. Just eat.

If a whole meal is too much, your intention could be to take one or two bites of each meal mindfully. Or even focus on one meal of the day and eat mindfully for a portion of that meal.

- **Attention.** Notice and sense what you are about to eat. Look at the food and really see it—notice color, shape, and other visual qualities carefully—notice the plate, the silverware. Smell the food. Notice various qualities of the smell. Feel the food in your mouth—notice texture and taste. Notice how fast or slow you chew. Experiment with the speed of your eating. Try to slow down if you are habitually a fast eater. Chew slowly. With genuine curiosity notice bodily sensations associated with eating. Notice the bite sizes you take. Experiment with your habitual bite sizes.

Notice bodily sensations associated with eating. Notice any judgments that arise in response to taste, smell, and texture of the food. Notice emotions that arise. Acknowledge them and return your attention to the meal. Become aware of the desire to swallow. Bring in the beginner’s mind and approach each mouthful the same way as if the first bite. Stay curious. Bring yourself back to mindful eating when your attention wanders. And above all enjoy what you are eating!

When we pay attention to how we eat in this way, naturally we will also pay attention to what we eat. What are the ingredients in our food? Where are they coming from? Who made the food? Is the food from a farm, the sea, a distant land, or a nearby community? Cultivate gratitude for the food.

- **Compassion.** Eating mindfully is a compassionate act towards yourself. During eating notice if the mind becomes judgmental. Notice the judgmental mind and gently let go. Maintain a kind and tender attitude towards yourself and the food and the eating experience. Make it a nurturing experience.
- **Witness.** Put your attention on the food you are eating and observe what arises without entanglement with thoughts and emotions.

*(mindful eating have been adapted from Ameli, 2013)*

## **Mindful Consumption**

There is a difference between HUNGER and APPETITE. Hunger is a natural need for food. Appetite is a learned and conditioned craving. The same concept can be applied to thirst and other needs. Mindful attention can help us distinguish between needs and cravings and become increasingly aware of a true need to satisfy a real need versus the variety of false appetites we have acquired over time.

It is important that we cultivate awareness of the sources of nourishment for mind and body. Whatever enters our body in the form of the food we eat, liquids that we drink, what we hear and listen to (music, gossip), what we watch, see, or read (meaningful, beautiful, calm scenes, or sex and aggression driven movies, books) or other sensory stimulations deeply influence us. Everything that we ingest in its larger sense, impacts our mind, body and spirit. We must be attentive to and be an active participant in choosing what we allow to enter us. If we pay attention we become aware of the toxins that we allow in our bodies out of habit or negligence. What we consume is our choice.

*(adapted from Ameli, 2013)*

## Mindful Hand Hygiene: Clean hands & Calm minds

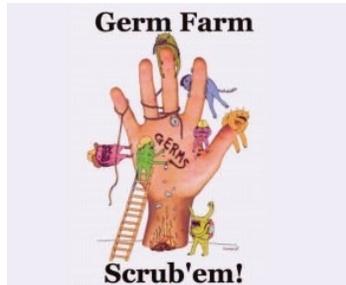
### Hands & Fingers

Hands and fingers are among the most important sensory organs and take up a lot of brain space. The cortical homunculus represents the importance of various parts of the body as seen by the brain. That means we experience a lot through our hands and fingers.



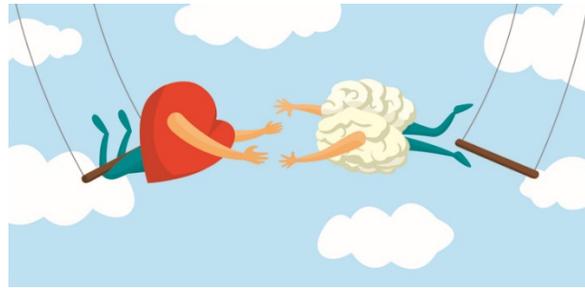
### Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is considered one of the most important aspects of preventing infection. In hospitals it is a requirement for patient care.



### Mindfulness applied to hand hygiene

We can bring mindfulness to our hand hygiene with focused attention and a curious and positive attitude, bringing the mind and an open heart to the practice of hand hygiene!



Hand hygiene performed mindfully, can enhance our adherence to a very important patient care and safety issue as a healthcare professional and at the same time it can enhance our own health and well being. As we take care of our patients under our care, simultaneously, we take care of ourselves.

Thich Nhat Hanh invokes this spirit when describing simple tasks: “I clean this teapot with the kind of attention I would have were I giving the baby Buddha or Jesus a bath.” For Thich Nhat Hanh, nothing should be treated more carefully than anything else. This is a simple but a very deep and profound teaching.

### Tips for Mindful Hand Hygiene

**Please send me your unique experiences with hand hygiene and I will add them in. Send them to: Rezvan.Ameli@nih.gov**

*The overarching idea is to engage as many senses as possible in your experience of hand hygiene including sight, sound, touch, smell, and locomotion. You have the choice to transform hand hygiene experiences to enjoyable pauses and mindful moments during your busy day. Become present to your hand hygiene experience. Let go of the past, let go of the future, and when mind wanders bring it back and refocus on your sensations. No matter how many times you clean your hands mindfully, each experience can be slightly different. There is no right or wrong. No final product.*

1. Before starting your hand hygiene, pause for a moment and take a breath.
2. Direct your attention from the outside to the inside and focus only on the experience of hand hygiene in the present moment. Let go of the past or future thoughts. No talking or interacting with others. No rushing. Simply sensing.
3. Look at the soap/liquid dispenser. Notice it. Notice the shape, color, size, or other visual qualities of the dispenser.
4. When pressing to get the liquid soap/gel/foam, become aware of the sensations created by pressing. Notice the sound and feel of what is delivered to your hand/s. Notice the temperature. Notice the visual qualities of soap/gel/foam.

**Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D**

**Last revised\_120420**

**Do not copy or distribute without permission**

5. Feel your hands robbing together. Palm, back of the hand, fingers, between the fingers. At some point you may even smell your hands for the scents that are present.

6. If running water, bring the same quality of awareness to the experience of soaping, washing and drying the hands, noticing the rich sensations of water, lather, etc. on different parts of your hands.



And, bring a similar mindful attitude to your other routine activities such as tooth brushing, showering, or cooking. Sky is the limit.

## Loving-Kindness

### Loving-kindness, Healing, and the Immune System

Loving-kindness and compassion (in Pali, Metta and Karuna, respectively), that have been recommended for over 2500 years, are important anchors for meditation. Various versions with subtle differences are taught by contemporary teachers of meditation such as Pema Chadron, Sharon Salzberg, Jack Kornfield, Tara Brach and others.

There has been an explosion of studies in the field of psycho-neuro-immunology, demonstrating that the body's cellular and molecular defense mechanisms known as the "immune system" are regulated in part by the nervous system. Stressful life experiences influence the activity of the immune system and interfere with the body's natural healing processes. Recent studies show intriguing connections among stress, feelings of helplessness, immune system deficits, and diseases such as cancer. The question is no longer whether or not mind and body influence each other, we know they do. A major question for research is to what extent the mind influences the increase or the decrease of specific disease processes.

Meditative practices have proven effective time and again to facilitate healing. One has to make a distinction between healing and cure. The power of meditative and mindfulness approaches is in the attitudinal transformation that brings about a sense of healing; whereas, the expectation of cure is inherently inconsistent with such an approach. There is a paradox inherent in such a view. The paradox is this: any strong investment in the outcome of meditative practices undermines the practice itself! Cultivating non-striving is in the heart of meditative practices. Their healing power comes from a systematic discipline and commitment to a way of being, not from engaging in one or two practices or techniques when we feel bad or want something.

Negative attitudes such as hostility, anger, cynicism, and frustrated expectations of others are among sources of stress. Cultivating and directing feelings of empathy, compassion, warmth, tenderness, and love towards self and others is what the lovingkindness meditation is about, and is considered an antidote to negative attitudes. It helps us cultivate strong positive emotions and let go of ill will and resentment. When practiced regularly, this form of meditation has a softening effect and helps one to be kinder to self and others.

### Introduction to Loving-kindness Meditation Practice

The practice of loving-kindness meditation uses repeated phrases, images, and feelings to evoke the spirit of lovingkindness and friendliness. The blessings of this practice are cited in ancient texts:

*"As your heart grows in lovingkindness, your dreams become sweet. You fall asleep more easily and awaken contented. Your thoughts become pleasant. Your health improves. Angels will love and protect you. Men and women will love you as well. Animals will sense your love and will not harm you. People will welcome you everywhere. Your babies will be happy and if you lose things they will be returned to you. Even if you fall off a cliff a tree will be there to catch you. As your heart grows in loving kindness the world becomes more peaceful and beautiful around you."*

This practice can be a part of a formal sitting practice or it can be extended as you walk or move about and go through you day. The avocation of loving-kindness is what matters. And in the end of our life when you look back, what matters is very simple: Did I love well? Lovingkindness is taught as an antidote to fear, anger, confusion, and a closed heart. The image the Buddha gives for loving-kindness is of a mother holding her most beloved child. In this practice, we gradually move from directing simple phrases of loving-kindness to ourselves to loved ones, to benefactors, friends and people everywhere and finally to difficult people and beyond.

*“At first, this practice can feel mechanical or awkward. It can even bring about feelings of irritation and anger. If this happens, it is especially important to be patient and kind toward yourself. Allow whatever arises to be held in the spirit of lovingkindness and affection. Like water on stone, in time, drops of lovingkindness begin to wear away even at the places of greatest difficulty and the sweet current of love, which exists in each and every one of us, will eventually flow.”*

*(Adapted from Jack Kornfield)*

### **Loving-kindness Meditation**

In the practice of loving-kindness meditation, phrases relating to love and kindness are repeated. At first, the practice may feel mechanical, simplistic, or awkward. It may feel like a religious prayer or even bring about feelings of impatience, frustration, or irritation. If you experienced negative emotions in response to this practice, it is especially important to hold these emotions with a kind and gentle attitude. Whatever arises in you should be held in the spirit of compassion and acceptance.

Although there are no limits on the number of individuals toward whom we might direct loving-kindness phrases, initially it is typical to include self, a benefactor, a dear friend, a neutral person, someone difficult, and then all beings.

“Self”

“Benefactor”-someone with whom you have a positive and uncomplicated relationship.  
Could be a hero. A teacher. A spiritual figure.

“Dear Friend”- someone towards whom you have natural feelings of love—yet the relationship can be more complicated.

“A Neutral Person”- someone you do not know well. Someone towards whom you feel impartial.

“Someone Difficult”- Like other practices, we begin with someone who does not invoke extreme negative emotion.

“All Beings”

Now we direct the following phrases towards the above people. One at a time.

- Sit comfortably--Bring a smile in---invoke tender feeling inside. You can think about someone, a child, an elderly person, a pet... which brings a smile and feelings of tenderness to your heart. Inwardly saying:

May (I, you, she, he, it, we, all beings) be free from anger, resentment, or hatred

May (I, you, she, he, it, we, all beings) be filled with compassion and kindness

May (I, you, she, he, it, we, all beings) be safe and protected

May (I, you, she, he, it, we, all beings) be peaceful

May (I, you, she, he, it, we, all beings) live with ease and be free

You may replace other meaningful statements. Repeat the same for all.

## Transforming Difficult Emotions

We do have the capacity to transform difficult emotions. To transform them, we have to first accept our role in creating them. We need to become increasingly mindful and conscious that emotions arise from within, not from without. Even if there are legitimate reasons why we may feel certain emotions in response to outside events, the sources of these emotions are within us nonetheless. The mindfulness approach to difficult emotions is to recognize them as universal human experiences, learn to live with them, and make room for them in our minds and hearts. There are two skillful ways of handling difficult emotions:

- Carefully experiencing and exploring them by bringing in an attitude of curiosity, attending to the three characteristics of all experience, i.e. impermanence (everything that rises passes away), location (where is the pain/where is the emotion felt), and intensity (moment to moment awareness of its intensity) with a non-personalizing, non-identification attitude.
- Holding them with compassion, kindness, gentleness, and generosity.

### RAIN

In dealing with emotions, including negative emotions, we bring the same qualities of mindfulness (e.g. non-judgment, gentle, accepting, curious, beginner's mind) to the experience as we bring to mindful breathing. Bringing conscious awareness and curious exploration to dark states of the mind tends to change them. One mindful approach to difficult emotions is to remind ourselves of the acronym **RAIN** (*Wise Heart* by Jack Kornfield):

- **Recognize.** Become aware of the difficult emotions. With continued practice of mindfulness you become aware of the emotions, positive or negative, even in the more subtle forms. This is important since it is easier to transform emotions when they are not too strong.
- **Accept.** Allow/accept the difficult emotions without resistance, without grabbing on or trying to avoid the emotion. To make room for the experience. To accept their presence with a friendly attitude. "Hello pain/ anger/ fear. I see you. Yes. I know you are here. Welcome!"
- **Investigate.** Bring in an attitude of curiosity and the beginner's mind to the emotion. Hold whatever that is here with gentleness and friendliness.
- **Not Personal.** Recognizing the universality of the experience and the non-personal nature of it. Whatever the experience, the emotion, it is part of the human condition. Become a witness to it. Make space around it. Become aware that you're larger than the pain/anger/fear.

We do the practice of RAIN on the bedrock of a general attitude of compassion and friendliness towards ourselves that eventually will extend to others. When we appreciate that much of the behavioral representations of strong emotion embedded in our humanity, we will be better able to witness it in ourselves and others with an increased sense of acceptance.

There is an awakening that happens when you decide to stay and not run away from the difficult emotions and the felt sensations.

**In practicing RAIN, you first start with situations that are only mildly troubling. Do not start with an area of severe chronic pain, high anxiety, or feeling of hatred. With practice, you will eventually be able to transform stronger emotions.**

### Practice of RAIN

- **Position:** Sitting upright and alert, chest open, head balanced, shoulders relaxed and away from the ears, closing the eyes.
- **Getting in to a mindful state:**
  - Taking a few mindful breaths
  - Noticing any sensations in the body. Acknowledging their presence. Letting go.
  - Noticing any thoughts. Acknowledging their presence. Letting go.
  - Noticing any emotions. Acknowledging their presence. Letting go.
  - Returning to the breath.
- **Focusing on a difficult emotion/pain/discomfort:**
  - Think of something that makes you angry or fearful. Choosing a person/situation that is troubling but not enraging/or overwhelmingly frightening. Or focus the attention on the pain or discomfort in the body. **Choose only one to focus on.** After you made your choice take a few mindful breaths, bring what you have chosen into mind, and focus your attention to it. If it is an interpersonal situation, bring it to life in your mind with enough details to make it vivid.

**Recognize.** Notice what is here. Notice and allow yourself to experience the anger/fear/discomfort/pain.

**Accept.** Allowing these emotions/sensations to be present. Accepting what is here. Making room for it. Saying “hello”, saying “yes”.

**Investigate.** Now turn the attention to investigating the experience with genuine curiosity. Become a curious witness and observe without entanglement. Notice the actual sensations in the body.

Where is it located in the body now? In the upper body? In the belly? Where? What sensations are here? Tingling? Vibrating? Burning? Radiating? Or a solid lump? What is the texture of it? Is it rough? Sharp? Wavy? Foamy? Does the inside feel unsettled? Disturbed? Or calm like the calm before the storm? What does it look like? What size is it? Are there images associated with it? Are there any colors to it? What does it sound like? Is it shrieking? Loud? Humming? Banging? What kind of noise? Or silent? What does it taste like? Bitter? Sour? Or maybe even sweet or is it tasteless? What does it smell like? What thoughts are

Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D

Last revised\_120420

Do not copy or distribute without permission

running through the mind? **Non personal/Non-identification:** Energy of emotions such as fear or anger or pain is a natural phenomenon like rain or gravity. Observe it with kindness and gentleness. Notice the possibility of a more objective, **non-personal** relationship with it. Considering it as "energy of anger" or simply "anger" or "fear" or "pain" rather than "my anger" "my fear" "my pain." These are universal. This recognition allows a more objective distance. Remember, you are bigger than your anger, fear, or pain!

**Impermanence.** As you explore these with care and friendliness, notice any changes. Like all experience, anger, fear, and pain change constantly. Notice its impermanence.

**End of Practice:** When ready, slowly bring your attention back to the breath.

Tara Brach has an excellent 55 minute recording on RAIN. I highly recommend watching it.

Here is the link on You Tube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdviZ2ISxfc>



*"Mindfulness is paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of experience moment to moment." -Jon Kabat-Zinn*

*"Mindfulness is awareness. To breathe in and know you are breathing in. To breathe out and know you are breathing out." -Thich Nhat Hanh*

*"Mindfulness provides important teachings to help experience life with joy and suffering with understanding." -Rezvan Ameli*

### **Tips for Daily Mindfulness**

Mindfulness can be integrated in the day. It can be practiced formally, as in a regular time and place, or sprinkled informally throughout the day. Studies are showing that even brief periods of mindfulness are useful strategies for reducing stress and enhancing wellbeing. Informal practice is typically easier if you do not have a private place or a consistent schedule. To begin, I recommend a brief formal practice during the day; many prefer mornings, and informal practices throughout the day. Be creative. Any **one** of the practices listed below, if used **regularly**, can enhance your practice of mindfulness. Remember, the overarching task of mindfulness is to train the mind to stay present in the moment and focus on what you choose to focus on rather than let the mind go where it wants to go. During practice, when your mind wanders, and it will, notice where the mind has wandered to, name it, and gently bring the mind back, without judgment. The object of focus can be your breath, bodily sensations, various activities, and when you develop the skills, even thoughts and emotions.

1. **Mindful shower.** Start the day with a mindful shower or any other cleaning ritual you may have. During this time, pay attention to the sensations in your body as you feel the warmth of the water, wash your body, massage your scalp, etc. Notice the pleasurable aspects of these sensations. When the mind wanders to the tasks ahead or concerns

from the past, bring it back and keep focusing on your immediate experience. Alternatively, you can start the day with a mindful tooth-brushing.

2. **Set your home/work computer with a soothing “gong” sound** to remind you to take a couple of mindful breaths at chosen intervals (e.g., <http://www.mindfulnessdc.org/bell/index.html> or <http://fungie.info/bell/#>). There are several applications for smart phones that could be set for mindful reminders.
3. **Use circumstances beyond your control (e.g., traffic lights) to practice mindful breathing.** Worrying about being late does not change the wait time, but it does increase the production of stress hormones and puts the body in the “stress response” mode. You have a choice in such circumstances to not let your “worry mind” hijack the focus of your attention.
4. **Perform hand hygiene mindfully.** There is an entire document in this manual that addresses mindful hand hygiene.
5. **Consider starting and/or ending meetings with 1-3 minutes of meditation** (e.g., sitting quietly and resting your attention on your breath) whenever possible.
6. **Stretch for a few seconds every hour.** Become aware of the state of your body and physical sensations. Breathe into areas of tension, soreness, or discomfort and keep your attention on them for a few breaths.
7. **Stay connected to your inner friendliness/tenderness/self-compassion** as much as possible and view various mishaps with an inner smile, not of sarcasm or bitterness, but rather with a smile of openness, recognition, and acceptance. Choose a label that meaningfully captures the particular daily hassle or annoyance with which you struggle. Name it for what it is, let it go and come back to your breath and inner positivity.
8. **Tension and anxiety are contagious!** Cultivate peace, quiet, calm, and good cheer whenever and wherever you can.
9. **Smile. Smile. Smile.** Smiling is good for you and for the people around you. Smiling and laughter give the body the message of ease, comfort, and joy. It changes the internal chemistry of your body.
10. **Practice gratitude** for what your life is offering you regardless of grievances at least once a day!
11. **Walk mindfully.** Rushing is rarely worth the heightened anxiety and physiological arousal that it causes in the body. Even if you choose to walk fast, during the walk, keep

the focus of your attention on the here and now, and keep your mind on the walk and how it feels to walk fast, rather than worrying about what you need to do next. See if you can separate the sensations of fast walking from feeling rushed and worried about the next event. Even better, slow down.

12. **Slow down and savor.** Slow down and savor what could be savored throughout the day. Slow down and **savor what you eat.** Eat a couple of bites from your lunch mindfully. Let go of past or future thoughts and focus on enjoying the tastes, textures, and nourishment of the food. Nourishing yourself well is not only about what you are eating, it is also about how you are eating.
13. **Pay particular attention to transition times** such as work to home, home to work, car to home, home to car, meeting to meeting, one type of work or activity to another, and practice mindful attention during these times.
14. **Reduce multitasking.** Multitasking increases anxiety, tension, and errors and actually can reduce efficiency.
15. **Stay nonjudgmental** toward yourself and others. Judgments and expectations increase negative emotions. Forgive yourself and others for imperfections and mistakes or even bad behavior. Silent affirmations such as “I forgive myself” or “I forgive you/him/her” can help letting go of difficult emotions.
16. **Be generous.** Be generous with your smile and use words like “thank you” even for simple things, or say “sorry” if you had been short or harsh in your stressful moments. Sometimes the greatest acts of generosity is about paying attention to someone, spend time with them, or acknowledge them in thoughtful ways. Be generous in other ways, too, when possible.
17. **Email mindfully.** Be thoughtful about what you send out. Pause when emotions are stirred up. Do not send out emails during such times.
18. **Remember, emotions come from the inside. Triggers are events, not your emotions.** People respond differently to different emotional triggers. When negative emotions are present, recognize them and attend to them. Take care of yourself and your emotions mindfully. Take a break. Center. Pause and take a few mindful breaths and then let go of judgments. Let go of the small, ego-driven self. Find your bigger/higher-self before proceeding. You may even think what your moral hero would do in a similar condition.
19. **Know when you are emotionally triggered.** Do not ignore your emotions. Accept them with kindness and without judgment. Consider your emotions as a crying baby. Or a sick or frail elderly person. What would you do with them? Take care of your difficult emotions, e.g. anger, irritation, fear, insecurity, jealousy., with the same tenderness

that you would attend to the crying baby. Bring the same attitude to your emotions. Remember feelings are universal. Bring your attention from the outside to the inside. Do not react. Pause. Breathe mindfully for a few breaths. Then choose your action before proceeding. Proceed from choice, not from reactivity.

20. **When difficult/negative emotions arise in you toward another**, recognize the emotion has arisen, accept the emotion within, and remind yourself of the universality of human emotions. Try to imagine the other person as someone you care about or love, or as a vulnerable baby, or a frail elderly person. How would this image impact what you choose to do next?
21. **Have compassion toward yourself**. When difficult situations/emotions arise, acknowledge that “it is difficult/it hurts,” that suffering is universal and you are not alone, and bring your caring and mindful attention to yourself and say, “this is difficult” “I am hurting” “may I be kind to myself.” Ask “what do I need right now?” Respond to yourself as if you are a friend or loved one whom you deeply care about. How would you treat that loved one in this situation? What would you tell them to do?
22. **Attention and compassion are the skills, among many others, that are strengthened with mindfulness**. These skills can enhance your own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. You DO matter to people around you.

**Sprinkle short pauses throughout your day**



**A Pause for Breath is a Pause for Health**

During the course of the day, if you find yourself feeling stressed, rushed, or self-critical, or if you start experiencing heart palpitations or butterflies in the stomach, or if you get emotionally/psychologically triggered, remind yourself to **pause**. You can also pause for no reason at all. You can pause simply to be kind and attentive to yourself.

Pauses during the day will give you an opportunity to integrate mindful attention. You can refocus your attention from the outside to the inside and check in with yourself to see what is happening -- in your body, in your mind, and in your heart. Become present both to the moment and to yourself.

When you pause, notice what thoughts are going through your mind, what feelings are present, and what body sensations you are experiencing. Take note of them without entanglement, attachment, or judgment. Simply observe. The idea is not to change anything. The idea is to notice what is happening right now. Then, gently bring your attention to the breath and focus it on the process of breathing. Take note of the in-breath as the air flows into your nostrils, moves down your wind pipe, and into your lungs. And, take note of the out-breath as the air flows back up and out of the nostrils. Sensing the breath and sensations of breathing from the beginning to the end. Use the breath and the breathing sensations to anchor yourself in the here and now, the present moment. After a few breaths, gently proceed and choose what is next.

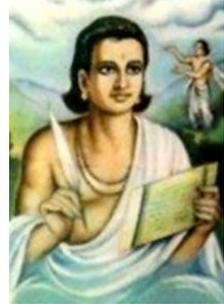
**Short pauses for health can go a long way to decreasing stress and promoting wellbeing.**

Rezvan Ameli, Ph.D  
Last revised\_120420  
Do not copy or distribute without permission

### Look To This Day

**By: Kalidasa** *Kālidāsa was a Classical Sanskrit writer, widely regarded as the greatest poet and dramatist in the Sanskrit language. He is believed to have lived around 4th-5th century CE.*

Look to this day:  
For it is life, the very life of life.  
In its brief course  
Lie all the verities and realities of your existence.  
The bliss of growth,  
The glory of action,  
The splendor of achievement  
Are but experiences of time.



For yesterday is but a dream  
And tomorrow is only a vision;  
And today well-lived, makes  
Yesterday a dream of happiness  
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.  
Look well therefore to this day;  
Such is the salutation to the ever-new dawn!

## Short List of Resources

### Reading Recommendations/short list:

- **25 Lessons in Mindfulness: Now Time for Healthy Living** by Rezvan Ameli
- **Radical Acceptance** by Tara Brach
- **Thanks!**, Robert Emmons
- **Forgiveness Is a Choice**, Robert Enright
- **Mindfulness In Plain English**, Bhante Gunaratana
- **Peace is every step; True Love, Be Free Where You Are, Being Peace** by Thich Nhat Hanh
- **Full Catastrophe Living** by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- **Wise Heart** by Jack Kornfield
- **A Mindful Way Through Depression** by Zindel Segal et al
- **The Power of Now**, Eckhart Tolle
- **Essential Spirituality** by Roger Walsh

### Poetry

Mary Oliver  
Rumi  
Hafiz  
Gibran  
Rilke  
John O'Donohue  
Kalidasa  
Wendell Berry

### Local and other Educational and Retreat centers

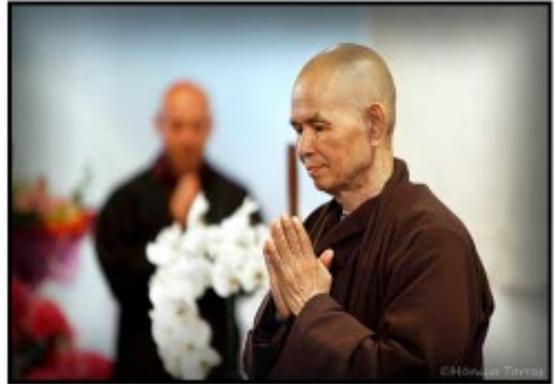
Below places all have informative websites that can provide you with rich additional information.

Insight Meditation Community of Washington  
Omega Institute, New York  
Spirit Rock, California  
Deer Park, California  
Yogaville, Virginia  
Day Spring, Gaithersburg  
Insight Meditation Society, Massachusetts  
Plum Village, France  
Himalayan Institute, New York  
Vipassana Meditation: [www.dhara.dhamma.org](http://www.dhara.dhamma.org)



**Thank  
you**

**Any  
questi  
ons?**



### **Contact us!**

This concludes our lessons. Thank you for your attention and participation. We hope that this introductory lesson has ignited enough interest and motivation to continue with self-care activities including mindfulness. At our end we will be happy to answer your questions. In the manual we have provided you with a short list of books and resources that you might find helpful.