



Living Mindfully

A GUIDED WORKBOOK TO
RECONNECT WITH THE PRESENT

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Introduction

Life can feel fast, noisy, and overwhelming. This workbook is a gentle invitation to pause and reconnect. Whether you're feeling anxious, stuck, or simply curious about mindfulness, this space is yours—to reflect, to breathe, and to rediscover a sense of calm from within.

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.” – Jon
Kabat-Zinn

Welcome

This workbook is your space to pause, breathe, and begin living more mindfully. It’s full of reflections, practical tools, and journal pages—all designed to help you reconnect with yourself in a gentle, grounded way.

Take your time. Use the parts that resonate. And most of all, be kind to yourself along the way.

– Sarah MacFarlane

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means paying attention—on purpose, in the present moment, and without judgment. It's about becoming aware of what's happening inside and around you without trying to fix it, escape it, or fight it.

Mindfulness can help with: • Reducing anxiety and overwhelm • Feeling more grounded • Breaking patterns of overthinking • Creating emotional space to respond rather than react

Mindfulness is more than a trend—it's backed by research. Studies have shown that regular mindfulness practice can lead to measurable changes in the brain and emotional well-being. **Reduced Anxiety & Depression:** Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) have been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and prevent depressive relapse (Kuyken et al., 2016). **Improved Emotional Regulation:** Neuroimaging studies reveal that mindfulness strengthens the prefrontal cortex and reduces reactivity in the amygdala (Hölzel et al., 2011). **Enhanced Focus & Attention:** Regular practice improves sustained attention and working memory (Zeidan et al., 2010). **Greater Self-Compassion:** Mindfulness helps individuals treat themselves with more kindness, which is linked to resilience and lower levels of stress (Neff, 2003). Practising mindfulness is like strengthening a muscle. The more we practice being present and non-judgmental, the more accessible calm, clarity, and self-awareness become—even in difficult moments.

Daily Mindful Check-In

- What am I noticing in my body right now?
- What thoughts are present?
- What emotion is here?
- Can I sit with this for one minute without needing to change it?

Grounding & Mindfulness Techniques

- 4-7-8 Breathing: Inhale for 4 seconds, hold for 7, exhale for 8.
- Box Breathing: Inhale – 4s, Hold – 4s, Exhale – 4s, Hold – 4s.
- 5-4-3-2-1 Grounding: Notice 5 things you see, 4 you can touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, and 1 you taste.
- Body Scan: Gently bring awareness to each part of the body from head to toe, noticing without judgment.
- Name It to Tame It: When emotions feel overwhelming, name what you're feeling to reduce its intensity.
- Anchoring Touch: Place a hand on your heart or chest and breathe slowly for comfort.
- Nature Pause: Step outside and focus on one natural element—clouds, trees, or birds—for 3 minutes.
- Journaling Mind Dump: Write freely for 5–10 minutes without editing to release cluttered thoughts.
- Single-Tasking: Choose one activity (like washing dishes or walking) to do mindfully and without multitasking.

Working with the Observer Self

When we learn to pause and witness our thoughts, we shift into the 'Observer Self.' This part of us notices what's happening without being pulled into it. Try reflecting:

- This week I noticed myself reacting to...
- What would my Observer Self say or do instead?

Mindful Moments Tracker

Note one mindful moment each day. Small moments count—tea breaks, noticing nature, taking a breath.

Day	Mindful Moment	How I Felt Afterwards
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Solution-Focused Reflection

- What's one small thing I could try this week to support myself?
- What's already helping me cope?
- What would my future, more grounded self thank me for doing today?

Daily Journal Prompts

- What made me feel most calm today?
- When did I feel most like myself?
- What do I need to let go of today?
- What does my ideal slow morning look like?
- How can I show kindness to myself this week?

Quotes to Reflect On

"Mindfulness isn't difficult, we just need to remember to do it." – Sharon Salzberg

"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf." – Jon Kabat-Zinn

"The present moment is the only time over which we have dominion." – Thích Nhất Hạnh

"Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor." – Thích Nhất Hạnh

"Mindfulness is the key to a happy and peaceful life." – Amit Ray

"The only way to live is by accepting each minute as an unrepeatable miracle." – Tara Brach

"Mindfulness clears the windshield of the mind so we can see things as they really are." – Travis Eliot

"Suffering usually relates to wanting things to be different than they are." – Allan Lokos

"Respond; don't react. Listen; don't talk. Think; don't assume." – Raji Lukkoor

"As soon as we wish to be happier, we are no longer happy." – Walter Landor

"Happiness is not something ready-made. It comes from your own actions." – Dalai Lama

"Every moment is a fresh beginning." – T.S. Eliot

"In the stillness of the mind, I saw myself as I am – unbound." – Nisargadatta Maharaj

Recognising Biased Thinking Patterns (CBT)

In Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), we explore how our thoughts affect our feelings and behaviours. Sometimes, our minds develop distorted or biased thinking patterns—often as protective mechanisms. These thinking styles can become automatic and unhelpful over time.

Recognising these patterns is the first step toward shifting them. By learning to spot them, you can begin to respond more flexibly, rather than getting stuck in cycles of worry, guilt, or self-criticism.

- All-or-Nothing Thinking: Seeing things in black-and-white categories (e.g., 'If I'm not perfect, I've failed').
- Overgeneralisation: Viewing a single negative event as a never-ending pattern.
- Mental Filter: Dwelling on a single negative detail and ignoring positives.
- Disqualifying the Positive: Discounting good things as if they 'don't count'.
- Jumping to Conclusions: Making assumptions without evidence.
- Catastrophising: Expecting the worst-case scenario to happen.
- Emotional Reasoning: Believing that negative emotions reflect reality.
- 'Should' Statements: Criticising yourself or others with 'shoulds' or 'musts'.
- Labelling: Attaching a negative label to yourself or others.
- Personalisation: Blaming yourself for things outside your control.

Closing Reflections

Thank you for giving yourself this time. Mindfulness is not about perfection—it's about noticing, again and again. If you'd like support putting any of this into practice or exploring things further, I'd love to hear from you. You don't have to do this alone.

**Contact**

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