
Mindful Living Workbook

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Welcome to the Mindful Living workbook!

I am so glad you are here. Congratulations! on your decision to dive deeper into mindful well-being. You have taken the first step to raise your awareness to living a life that is in alignment with what really matters to you. In this workbook you will learn the essential skills of well being to support you to bring your full self to home and work.

My Story

I experienced a lot of difficulty and loss as a child. Like many of you, I had to grow up fast. At the age of 19, I found yog and meditation and it has been a constant rock and gem in my life ever since (20 years). I know my story is not unique, but the path I have been on and the wisdom I have found I hope is supportive to you.

When I first started practicing meditation, there was a lot of imbalance. I oscillated a lot between fear, anger, sadness, and/or confusion. I didn't know how to work with my mind, to regulate my emotions, and my heart deeply wanted to trust and be open, but it was scared and wounded. I deeply yearned to live from a truly nourished place, where I could align my mind, body, and heart and fully show up for myself with confidence, compassion, acceptance, power, & clarity. I found that when I slowed down, got quiet and turned within, I could find a place within myself that I could go to for refuge and peace. This insight was illuminating! I could come home to myself when everything else in life felt uncertain.

Meditation is a tool I have committed to and continued to practice, learn, and study. After reading many books on the subject as I had no teacher when I first started, I started to test things out on myself. When I found tools that created peace, happiness, and greater wisdom within me, I would teach and coach those skills to others. I am innately a teacher, a researcher, and a coach. I also love learning. In my path to healing, I have been privileged to share what I have learned about mindfulness and well being with thousands of people from all over the world. I feel so blessed for finding my purpose early on and being able to serve and support you.

My claim to fame so to speak is that I developed some mindfulness and well being curriculum ten years, which has given me many opportunities to share it at Stanford University, UC Berkeley, conduct research on my curriculum, and most significantly support workplaces with it. I love supporting workplaces with greater mindfulness and well being as a way of shifting the culture to one that fosters resilience, compassion, and conscious leadership. I have been privileged to consult, coach and create widescale well being programs for organizations like Pixar, LinkedIn, and Bank of the West. To learn more about how you can work with me in your workplace, retreats, in person classes, coaching, or with one of my online courses, go to www.livingwellawake.com

Are you wanting to be the best you can be and live a meaningful life? YES! I feel the most important skill for real change to occur is self awareness. With the ability to see ourselves clearly, our patterns, and what is or is not serving us, we can let go and then grow.

Mindful training is the key to developing self-awareness. From this place of clear seeing, you can identify what really nourishes you, align with what matters, and from here you can live an abundant, inspired, and meaningful life.

The skills of mindfulness and well being have great implications for our happiness, resilience to stress, our relationships at work and home, our health, and our greater world. Dr. Richard Davidson and Brianna Schulyer are researchers who have been studying the neuroscience of happiness. They have proven that well-being is a skill that can be cultivated and trained. and have identified 4 qualities of well being.

THE 4 QUALITIES OF WELL BEING:

- 1) Mindful attention
- 2) Resilience
- 3) Empathy, altruism and pro-social behavior (AKA-generosity)
- 4) Sustained Positive emotion

As you can see, mindful attention is one of the skills of well being. In my opinion, mindfulness is the first and most important step towards well being. Mindful training is a well researched and evidence-based tool that can help one to change behaviors by learning how to train and re-wire the mind. Only from a place of seeing ourselves and our life clearly can we access true well being.

WHAT YOU WILL RECEIVE

This workbook includes 5 skills for mindful living that you can practice at home and work. I have created this workbook to help you develop 1 new practice into your life a week, ending with the last section on Make a Commitment. To get the most out of this workbook, you will want to set aside time each day for these practices. I also encourage you to keep a journal where you can note your insights and what feels most relevant in your mindful journey.

These practices will help you to focus on what is most important to you, create more time in the day, promote spaciousness and stillness, be kind to yourself, see the good, increase your resilience, and tune into your inner wisdom so you can choose what you really need vs. acting out of habitual patterns.

1. Mindful Attention

2. Look for the Good

3. Surf the Waves

4. Be Kind

5. Feel the Abundance

6. Make a Commitment

May this serve you to live a beautiful, contented, and meaningful life.

With Love,

Carley





Skill One: MINDFUL ATTENTION

“The most precious gift we can offer is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.”
Thich Nhat Hahn

MINDFULNESS 101

Mindfulness is often referred to as a conscious discipline. It is a way of training the mind, heart, and body to be fully present with life. Our mind often likes to linger in the past or the future, but the present moment is the only moment we have any control of.

Mindfulness allows us to bring our whole attention to this moment. If we are acting when our nervous system is revved up, we will never be able to make a calm and skillful response because we can only act from (fight, flight, or freeze). The simple act of breathing slows our body and mind down. In a space of calm we can discern what is needed and what might be the most skillful response. The practice of deep belly breathing, can move us into a mindful space.

MINDFULNESS OF BREATH- THE FOUNDATION EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICE

Sit in a posture that allows you to be comfortable in your mind and body. Now, begin to pay attention to your breath.

How do you know that you are breathing?
Where in your body do you feel it most clearly?

BUTTERFLY THOUGHTS

I have experimented with seeing my thoughts arise and pass like butterflies. When my mind gets distracted by planning, I see it as an attractive butterfly that is flirting with me to follow. I observe it and watch it fly right past me and go. I can be aware of these butterfly thoughts, but not get attached to trying to catch them. If I realize that I have left this present moment to follow them, I can use my breath, the physical sensations in my body, or sound to come back to this moment. The key to being mindful is remaining aware of any of these experiences as they arise, without getting lost in the story or thoughts connected with any of them.

When you are meditating, don't try to create anything, just pay attention to what is happening.

What is the mind doing?

Thinking?

Being Aware?

You don't need to practice so hard. It is a light touch. Just simply ask, “What is happening now?”

This week create a daily breathing practice that you commit to most days of the week for 10-15 minutes each day. There are many guided breathing meditations including my CD, but you can also guide yourself with the questions on this page.



Skill Two: LOOK FOR THE GOOD

“The longest road you will ever walk is the sacred journey from your head to your heart.”

Phil Lane- Native American.

WORKING WITH THOUGHTS

We have approximately 82,000 thoughts a day and 70-80% of our thoughts are negative. Wow! This phenomenon is known in neuroscience as the “negativity bias.” Negative thoughts and experiences tend to be like velcro to our brains, while positive experiences and thoughts are repelled like teflon.

However, there is a silver lining, our brains are also plastic, hence the word neuroplasticity. This means that even though we have a tendency to focus on the negative we can incline the mind towards the positive.

Bringing mindful presence to positive emotions and experiences can serve as markers of flourishing and are therefore worth cultivating (Fredrickson, 2001). When we bring attention to positive emotions such as joy, contentment, love, or compassion we are not focused on negative emotions or experiences.

The term “undoing effect” is a term that says enhancing positive emotions might improve one’s psychological well-being, and perhaps also one’s physical health, by cultivating experiences of positive emotions at opportune moments to cope with negative emotions (Fredrickson, 2000).

MINDFUL OF THOUGHTS- EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICE

It can be helpful to understand what your top tunes are. We are typically living with an incessant stream of thoughts and until we are aware of them, we can’t change them. We often react to our thoughts as if they are true, but most of our thoughts **ARE NOT TRUE.**

What are your top 5 tunes?

- What you need to get done
- How you look
- What is going wrong in your life
- How you need to change
- Something you really want to happen
- What is going well in your life

This week, keep track of your thoughts with a mindful journal. Once you have your list pick 2-3 that you will start to replace with more supportive and positive thoughts.

Example: Negative thought: I am not good enough.

Positive: I am strong, resilient, and I am doing the best I can in this moment.

Life is unpredictable and we don’t always get what we want how we want, or when we want it, but guess what? This is the only life you have, so be grateful for what you have and it will be better.

What can you appreciate about today? About your co-worker? A family member? Yourself? What would it look like to share this appreciation outloud? I dare you. :)



Skill Three: SURF THE WAVES

“When the mind is quiet, we find peace, and only then can we understand our true nature.”

Tara Brach, Author of Radical Acceptance

THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTIONS

Modern neuroscience has discovered “neurons that fire together, wire together.” When we rehearse a looping set of thoughts and emotions, we create deeply grooved patterns of emotional reactivity. This means that the more you think and rethink about certain experiences, the stronger the memory and the more easily activated your feelings become.

In our culture, we tend to ignore feelings, distract with some other activity, or react to feelings. This is often because we haven’t been taught how to be with our feelings and that they are normal and part of being human. If we allow ourselves to feel our feelings they will pass on their own, but if we resist, they persist.

Our emotions have been shown by research to have the life of 90 seconds. This means that if we can become friends with our emotions and let them be here without trying to push them away or distract they will pass.

If we can sit with the discomfort, with the uncomfortable feelings, the neutral, and the happy feelings, we can understand ourselves more deeply.

By developing the capacity to stand back and witness emotional states such as anxiety, anger, or sadness, you increase your “degree of freedom”.

MINDFULNESS OF FEELINGS- EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICE

This week see if you can pay attention to your feelings over the course of the day. You may start off tired and as mid-day approaches you feel energized. **You can journal about what you notice about your feelings.**

For Example: You can start by noticing where the body is holding the most energy or tension. Then pay attention to where this energy or tension takes up space in the body. What quality is the energy? (tired, restless, calm, heavy).

After you feel the physical sensations in your body, you might ask, What am I feeling? (Is it anger, sadness, happiness, anxiety). Whatever shows up is okay, greet it with acceptance and compassion.

After you have been with your feeling, you can ask yourself, What is needed right now to support myself best? See if you can fully receive this gift in your mind, body, and heart.

Here is a helpful acronym to remember the practice.

R- Recognize your feeling

A- Accept what is here

I- Investigate where you feel it in your body

N- Neutral (Non- Attached)

S- Support Yourself

*** Practice RAINS this week and see how your feelings pass more easily.**



Skill Four: BE KIND

“If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.”

Dalai Lama

COMPASSION

Life is not easy. There is constant change in our internal and external world. Additionally, our mind is often caught in greed, aversion, and confusion and these states of mind cause suffering. Compassion is essential to live a more peaceful and happy life. It is the most precious gift of all gifts. It is what restores us and offers refuge.

WHEN MINDFULNESS MEETS COMPASSION

Mindfulness is being aware of what is happening now, feeling your full experience of emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations.

Compassion allows us to be with the suffering of ourselves or another. From a kind and accepting presence, we help to alleviate discomfort and suffering as it is occurring. Compassion sounds like this, “I know it’s been a really hard day and I am here.”

Our mind is prone to judgment. We judge ourselves and others all the time, but criticism doesn’t support us to be happy, productive, or calm.

The research shows that criticism fosters more anxiety, anger, sadness, and we experience more fear of failure. Our thoughts impact our feelings and thus our actions.

The next time you are aware of your inner critic, notice does it support you or make things worse? What would happen if you were kind to yourself instead? Try it.

COMPASSION- EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICE

Sit in a posture that allows you to be comfortable and still. Bring to mind an experience of mild to moderate difficulty that recently occurred.

Why is this so difficult ?

Who said or did what ?

Place your hands on your body in a way that feels comforting, allow your hands to bring a healing touch and sense of care towards yourself.

Now let these words drop into your mind...

This is a difficult moment.

May I be kind to myself in this moment.

May I find peace and healing.

What is the kindest thing I can offer to myself right now?

To be more patient and kind to others, we first have to start with ourselves. I love starting out the day with the question, “How can I take good care of myself today?” Everyone you interact with is going through difficulty. Most of my work is teaching mindfulness, well being and compassionate leadership at work. The workplace has so much suffering and when we remember this, we can be kind to each other and remember, this person is “just like me.”

Want to learn more about how to practice compassion at work?

<http://www.mindful.org/how-to-be-more-compassionate-at-work/>



Skill Five: FEEL THE ABUNDANCE

“Gratitude is the inward feeling of kindness received. Thankfulness is the natural impulse to express that feeling.”

Henry Van Dyke

GRATITUDE

In the West we have such an abundance of comforts and gifts that are often taken for granted. We come from a society of more is better, but what I have found is that “moderation is the key”. When we can incline the mind towards what we have vs what we don’t have, we will truly feel “we have enough.”

From a place of having enough, we recognize that we don’t need as much as we think to be happy and content. Simplicity is the key. **What really makes you feel nourished?**

- A slow day
- Time with your loved ones
- A day in nature time
- Drinking tea
- Cooking something creative and yummy and savoring it.
- Singing
- Deep conversation where you feel seen and heard
- Dancing
- Listening to or playing music

Most of what makes us feel contented is time, not more things or more experiences. Less is more and when we realize this is true, we can let go of the busyness, the need to buy more, be more and feel that we have enough and we are enough. **Contentment is not outside of us, but found within.**

I HAVE ENOUGH- EXPERIENTIAL PRACTICE

This week as you go through your day or before you go to sleep at night contemplate or journal about these questions.

What are you thankful for today?

In what ways do you express your gratitude?

What gets in the way of expressing gratitude for your life or for others?

GIVE THANKS TO RESEARCH

Focusing on the benefits and what we are grateful for creates a sense of well being.

Dachner Keltner, a researcher at the University of California, Berkely and author of *Born to be Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life*, demonstrates that our intrinsic value in this life is to be a good person and to foster that goodness for others in meaningful ways. He found the better we feel, the more good we will do. The good is what we and others will remember at the end of the day.

This week make a point to write down 5-10 things that you are grateful for each day.

You can also bring in 1 minute at the end of your daily meditation practice where you incline your mind towards what you are grateful for.



MAKE A COMMITMENT

“Without the muck, there is no lotus.”

THE REAL IMPACT OF AWARENESS

I love that mindfulness is becoming a term and concept that our world is increasingly open to and interested in. I am thankful to see how secular mindfulness is being brought into our workplaces, schools, hospitals, and home life as a way to increase our resilience to stress, be healthier, and happier. These reasons above are a good place to start, but to keep choosing the mindful path, one needs a deeper motivation and commitment.

We are coming to sit and look within because we deeply understand that our world is out of balance and this creates our inherent imbalance. We are all trying to find some solace, some peace and attune to what really matters, which is less, not more.

Mindfulness isn't about managing the stressors of life. It is learning how to see things as they are and then choosing the wise response. The dysfunctional systems and emphasis on economic development and consumerism in our world is not going to go away, unless we stand up and say No!, there is another way. To illustrate my point, did you know that Nestle corporation stated that “water is NOT a basic human right?” Why would they argue this? Is it because they want retain the ownership rights of water? Is this wise? No. This statement is coming from a deep belief of delusion, greed, and entitlement. This one thought “I want more” is where it started, but also where it can be changed.

The Buddha said, “Mind precedes all things. The mind is central. Whatever intention the mind acts on, conditions the results. The mind can be trained through awareness.”

If we have a thought that says, “I don't have enough” then we will keep accumulating and consuming until there is nothing left. We are running out of water, energy, and as a result are depleting our earth's resources by the thoughts and actions of greed and delusion. We have bought into the beliefs that we must have more to be happy, but it is **NOT TRUE** We are running out of time to save the planet for the future of all beings and I believe mindfulness is the key.

MAKE A COMMITMENT

I encourage you to make a commitment to develop mindfulness in your life. Allow yourself to see that you can train the mind and not act on thoughts of greed, delusion, or aversion that will only harm you and others in your speech and actions. When we see ourselves, our minds, and our actions with awareness, we can choose the wise choice. **ALL** our paths can merge into one and turn the tide. YES!

Mindfulness can be brought into everything you do at home and work, but it requires consistent practice and the right motivation. What is your motivation to be mindful?

I have had a meditation practice for over 15 years and it has exponentially made my life better. I am more kind, patient, loving, compassionate, and aligned with what really matters to me. **I hope you will join me on this path.**