

# Mindfulness Course For Health & Well Being

## Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

### SESSION EIGHT

#### Maintaining & Extending New Learning: Planning a mindful future

*The Summer Day*

*Who made the world?*

*Who made the swan and the black bear?*

*Who made the grasshopper?*

*This grasshopper, I mean ---*

*the one who has flung herself out of the grass,*

*the one who is eating sugar out of my hand,*

*who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down -*

*who is gazing around with her enormous and complicated eyes.*

*Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face.*

*Now she snaps her wings open and floats away.*

*I don't know exactly what a prayer is.*

*I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down*

*into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass,*

*how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields,*

*which is what I have been doing all day.*

*Tell me, what else should I have done?*

*Doesn't everything die at last and too soon?*

*Tell me, what is it you plan to do*

*with your one wild and precious life?*

Mary Oliver: *House of Light*. Beacon Press, Boston. 1990

These hand-outs have been developed by Mindfulness Practitioners and Mindfulness Service User Volunteers, using a range of resources that include Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat-Zinn (1991), Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale (2013), The Mindful Way through Depression by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn (2007) and The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress by John Teasdale, Mark Williams and Zindel Segal (2014).

## SESSION 8 MAIN PRACTICES AND DISCUSSIONS

- Body scan
- Letter to Self
- Mindful walking
- Discussion of expectations and experiences of the course
- Seeing and touching exercise
- Sitting practice



The mind has a way of processing the "stuff of everyday life" that is wiser than any of us might have imagined...

## GUIDANCE ON HOME PRACTICE: SESSION EIGHT

### MAINTAINING AND EXTENDING NEW LEARNING

#### EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS

Since being mindful in everyday life is what this whole course is aimed at, keep reminding yourself to take opportunities to become aware, whatever you are doing. Decide which everyday mindfulness practices you will do each day for the next four weeks.

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#### GUIDED PRACTICE

From all of the meditations we have tried, settle on a plan of practice for the next month and record your reactions on the Record Form.

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**It may help to remind yourself that what you need at times of difficulty is no different from what you have already practiced, many times, during this course.**

## HOME PRACTICE RECORD FORM - SESSION EIGHT & BEYOND

Day/ Date	Practice Yes/No	Comments
Day: Time:		

*An ounce of practice is better than a ton of theories...*

## SESSION EIGHT THEME: Maintaining & Extending New Learning

*Planning for a new way of living.* Maintaining and extending a more mindful and caring way of being requires clear intention and planning. It is helpful to link intentions for regular mindfulness practice to a personally significant value or positive reason for taking care of yourself.

People say that what we're all seeking is a meaning for life. I don't think that's what we're really seeking. I think that what we're seeking is an experience of being alive....

- Joseph Campbell, *The Power of the Myth*

In *FROG AND TOAD TOGETHER, A CHILDREN'S BOOK* that speaks as much to adults as to children, Arnold Lobel recounts a day in the life of Toad...

As the day began, Toad sat up in bed and wrote on a piece of paper: A list of things to do today. Then he wrote: Wake up. As he had already done that, he was able to cross it out straightaway. He then wrote on the paper a plan for the rest of his day: eat breakfast, get dressed, go to Frog's house, take walk with frog, eat lunch, take nap, play games with frog, eat supper, go to sleep. He got up and worked his way through the list, crossing off each item as it was completed. When he got to the house of his friend, Frog, he announced: "My list tells me that we will go for a walk." So they did and Toad crossed take walk with Frog off his list.

Then disaster struck: a strong wind blew the list out of Toad's hand. Frog was all for running after the list to catch it, but poor Toad just could not do that - it was not on his list of things to do! So, while Toad sat there immobilized, Frog ran after the list, mile after mile in vain; he just could not catch it and returned empty-handed to the disconsolate Toad. Toad could not remember any of the things that were left on his list to do. So he just sat and did nothing. Frog sat with him. Eventually Frog pointed out that it was getting dark and that they should go to sleep. "Go to sleep!" Toad shouted triumphantly. "That was the last thing on my list!" So Toad wrote on the ground with a stick, go to sleep. Then he crossed it out, delighted that he could, at last, cross out his whole day and Frog and Toad went to sleep.

Poor One-Mode Toad! Yet many of us often behave just like Toad, as if doing were the only mental mode available to us. Too often our lives seem to be little more than one long "to do" list.

It is not so much making "to do" lists that is the problem. The problem is our sense of impending doom if we don't get through the list; that and the myopic narrowing of our lives that can result.

Although we may not fully realize it, as human beings, every single one of us can live in the open spaciousness of the being mode far more than we do. The more we make that possibility real for ourselves, even in tiny ways, the more we can enrich our own lives and enhance our mental health. It is not wise, then, to reserve our use of the doing mode for those areas of life in which it is a skilful, effective response and instead put more of our energies into the cultivation of being?

Adapted from: *The Mindful Way through Depression* by Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn.

## EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS - SOME SUGGESTIONS TO TRY

- When you wake up in the morning, before you get out of bed, bring attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.
- Notice changes in your posture. Be aware of how your body and mind feel when you move from lying down to sitting, to standing, to walking. Notice each time you make a transition from one posture to the next.
- Whenever you hear a phone ring, a bird sing, a train pass by, laughter, a car horn, the wind, the sound of a door closing - use any sound as the bell of mindfulness. Really listen and be present and awake.
- Throughout the day, take a few moments to bring attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.
- Whenever you eat or drink something, take a moment and breathe. Look at your food and realise that the food was connected to something that nourished its growth. Can you connect to how this food came to be here on this plate in this moment; the sunlight, the rain, the earth and the farmer. Pay attention as you eat, consciously consuming this food for your physical health. Bring awareness to seeing your food, smelling your food, tasting your food, chewing your food and swallowing your food.
- Notice your body while you walk or stand. Take a moment to notice your posture. Pay attention to the contact of the ground under your feet. Feel the air on your face, arms and legs as you walk. Are you rushing?
- Bring awareness to listening and talking. Can you listen without agreeing or disagreeing, liking or disliking, or planning what you will say when it is your turn? When talking, can you just say what you need to say without overstating or understating? Can you notice how your mind and body feel?
- Whenever you wait in a line, use this time to notice standing and breathing. Feel the contact of your feet on the floor and how your body feels. Bring attention to the rise and fall of your abdomen. Are you feeling impatient?
- Be aware of any points of tightness in your body throughout the day. See if you can breathe into them, and as you exhale, let go of excess tension. Is there tension stored anywhere in your body? For example - your neck, shoulders, stomach, jaw, or lower back? If possible stretch or do mindful movement once a day.
- Focus attention on daily activities, such as brushing your teeth, washing up, brushing your hair, putting on your shoes or doing your job. Bring mindfulness to each activity.
- Before you go to sleep at night, take a few moments and bring your attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.

Adapted from: Madeline Klyne, Executive Director, Cambridge Insight Meditation Center

# GROUNDLESSNESS

WE ARE ALL SEEKING solid ground. Yet if we look closely we see there is really no such place to stand. At first, feeling this is frightening. So we spend almost every waking moment constructing stability, devising borders and boundaries in an attempt to define and solidify our turf. How exhausting and unsatisfying. This is particularly evident when we are faced with a life-altering event, a medical emergency, an unanticipated diagnosis, a crisis in the lives of our children. It is in these moments that our usual sense of stability is undermined.

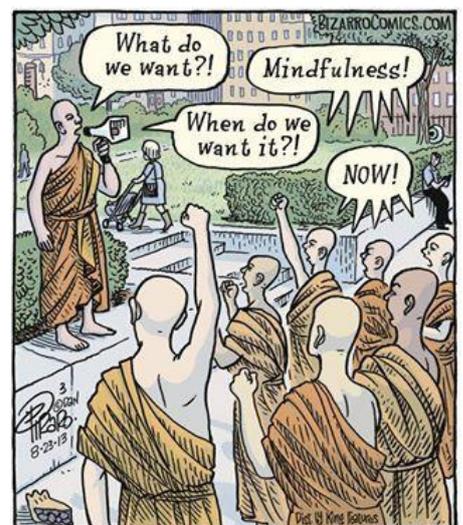
People arrive at Mindfulness Courses feeling insecure, uncomfortable with the changes in their lives yet wanting to do something about all this. They often say they feel shocked, enraged, discouraged, depressed, weighed down by helplessness and confusion. Yet all of these ingredients are the sparks and kindling for change. People come to their first mindfulness group, often in a state of turbulence. This turbulence may be groundlessness itself. The splintering of the stable, the counted-on, the taken-for-granted, the known. Because of this, these moments may also be catalysts for deep, unanticipated development. Often this is the spot where the work of mindfulness begins, learning how to dance with uncertainty, using it as an opportunity for discovery.

Perhaps for all of us there is a treasure waiting to be found within the vast net of our lives usually referred to as uncertainty!

Adapted from *Heal Thy Self, Lessons in Mindfulness in Medicine* by Saki Santorelli.

“There is a story of a woman running away from tigers. She runs and runs and the tigers are getting closer and closer. When she comes to the edge of a cliff, she sees some vines there, so she climbs down and holds on to the vines. Looking down, she sees that there are tigers below her as well. She then notices that a mouse is gnawing away at the vine to which she is clinging. She also sees a beautiful little bunch of strawberries close to her, growing out of a clump of grass. She looks up and she looks down. She looks at the mouse. Then she just takes a strawberry, puts it in her mouth, and enjoys it thoroughly. Tigers above, tigers below. This is actually the predicament that we are always in, in terms of our birth and death.

Each moment is just what it is. It might be the only moment of our life; it might be the only strawberry we’ll ever eat. We could get depressed about it, or we could finally appreciate it and delight in the preciousness of every single moment of our life.”



## MAINTAINING AND EXTENDING NEW LEARNING

The advantages of awareness, allowing and letting be, and mindfully *responding* to situations rather than immediately running off pre-programmed, "automatic" *reactions* have been a recurring theme throughout this course.

Allowing and letting be maybe the springboard to some form of skilful action directed at changing your inner or outer worlds. However, there are also situations and feelings that it may be very difficult, or actually impossible, to change. In this situation, there is the danger that by carrying on, trying to solve an insoluble problem, or by refusing to accept the reality of the situation, you may end up "banging your head on a brick wall", exhausting yourself and actually increasing your sense of helplessness. In these situations, you can still retain some sense of dignity and control by making a conscious, mindful decision not to attempt to exert control and to accept the situation as it is, if possible, with a kindly attitude to the situation and your reactions to it. *Choosing* not to act is much less likely to cause distress than being forced to give up attempts at control after repeated failures.

In the so-called "Serenity Prayer" we ask for:

The grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, the courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

Where do we find this grace, this courage and this wisdom? At some level, we already have all these qualities - our task is to realise them (make them real), and our way is non-other than moment-by-moment mindful awareness.

## THE FUTURE

Decide, right now, what your regular pattern of practice will be over then next few weeks, until we meet again, and stick to it as best you can throughout this period. Note any difficulties you have, so that we can discuss them next time.

Also remember, that the regular breathing space practice provides a way of "checking in with yourself" a few times a day. Let it also be your first response in times of difficulty, stress or unhappiness - KEEP BREATHING!

Adapted from: Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy by Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale.

**Right now a moment of time is passing by!... We must become that moment.**

- Paul Cezanne.

## USE YOUR UMBRELLA

A young woman, studying in India, undertook to develop love, kindness, and goodwill through her meditation practice. Sitting in her room, she would fill her heart with loving-kindness for all beings. Yet each day, as she went to the bazaar to gather her food, she would find her loving-kindness sorely tested by one shopkeeper who daily subjected her to unwelcome caresses. One day she could stand no more and began to chase the shopkeeper down the road with her upraised umbrella. To her mortification she passed her teacher standing on the side of the road observing this spectacle. Shame-faced she went to stand before him, expecting to be rebuked for her anger.

"What you should do," her teacher kindly advised her, "is to fill your heart with loving-kindness and with as much mindfulness as you can muster, hit this unruly fellow over the head with your umbrella."

Sometimes that is what we need to do. It would be easy enough to hit the man over the head with the umbrella. The difficult part is to do it with loving kindness in our hearts.



Adapted from Christina Feldman & Jack Kornfield: "Stories of the Spirit, Stories of the Heart"

May you walk in beauty every day.  
May you stand in your truth.  
May you wake up to the beauty within you and around you.  
May your mindfulness practice grow and flower  
and nourish your life and work and your world  
from moment to moment and day to day.  
For the sake of yourself and all those who know you  
and love you and for the sake of all beings near and far,  
known and unknown.

John Kabat-Zinn

## Oriah Mountain Dreamer, Prelude to The Dance, 2001

What if there is no need to change?

No need to try to transform yourself

Into someone who is more compassionate, more present, more loving or wise?

How would this affect all the places in your life where you are endlessly trying to be better?

What if the task is simply to unfold?

To become who you already are in your essential nature:

Gentle, compassionate and capable of living fully and passionately present?

What if the question is not

"Why am I so infrequently the person I really want to be?"

But "Why do I so infrequently want to be the person I really am?"

How would this change what you think you have to learn?

What if becoming who and what we truly are happens not through striving and trying

But by recognising and receiving the people and places and practices

That are for us the warmth of encouragement we need to unfold?

How would this shape the choices you make about how to spend today?

What if you knew that the impulse to move in a way that creates beauty in the world

Will arise from the deep within

And guide you every time you simply pay attention

And wait.

How would this shape your stillness, your movement?

Your willingness to follow this impulse

To just let go and dance?

## **Beginning Again**

And here we are  
The course coming to a close.  
Our final moments to reflect  
On time and how it flows.  
Everything comes to an end  
That's just how it goes.

What have I learned?  
What will I take away?  
What will keep me on track?  
What will lead me astray?

And yet, as an ending,  
An opportunity to begin again.  
Indeed in each moment,  
An opportunity to begin again.

In a moment of awareness  
An opportunity arises to change the status quo.  
Or if there's nothing we can do,  
Perhaps we breathe and let it go.

And even if we miss the chance,  
Other opportunities will come and go.  
It's never too late to turn towards  
With curiosity, Openness and acceptance.  
And here we are.

*Written by Peter Morgan*  
[www.freemindfulness.org](http://www.freemindfulness.org)  
[www.wordstositwith.com](http://www.wordstositwith.com)

## MINDFULNESS BOOKLIST AND WEBSITES

This is a short list of books and websites that may be of interest to people who have been on the 8 week mindfulness course. There are many other good books and websites on the subject of mindfulness, though some of these are aimed at therapists or trainers.

### BOOKLIST

Jon Kabat-Zinn. (1990). Full Catastrophe Living. How to cope with stress, pain and illness using mindfulness meditation. Piatkus Books.

Mark Williams, John Teasdale, Zindel Segal and Jon Kabat-Zinn. (2007). The Mindful Way Through Depression: Freeing Yourself from Chronic Unhappiness. Guilford Publications.

John Teasdale, Mark Williams, and Zindel Segal (2014). The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress. Guilford Press.

### OTHER BOOKS

Christopher K. Germer (2009). The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion. Freeing Yourself from Destructive Thoughts and Emotions. Guilford Publications.

Jeffrey Brantley. (2003). Calming your anxious mind. New Harbinger Publications.

Jon Kabat-Zinn. (1994). Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life. Piatkus Books.

Jon Kabat-Zinn. (2005). Coming to Our Senses: Healing ourselves and the world through mindfulness. Piatkus Books.

Saki Santorelli. (1999). Heal Thy Self: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine. Bell Tower.

Thich Nhat Hanh, (1975). The Miracle of Mindfulness. Beacon Press.

Thich Nhat Hanh, (1990). Present Moment Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness verses for daily living. Parallax.

### WEB LINKS

Mental Health Foundation - Be Mindful Website

<http://www.BEMINDFUL.CO.UK>

Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy

<http://www.mbct.co.uk>

The Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice, University of Wales, Bangor, UK

<http://www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness/>

The Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society based at the University of Massachusetts, USA

<http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/>