

Natural Synergy

MINDFULNESS AND INNER PEACE



25 Personal Growth Lessons For Tuning-In
And Living Your Best Life Ever

Contents

Part I - Awakening Awareness	6
1. Definition of Mindfulness	8
2. Mind Body Connection	10
3. How to Use this Book.....	13
Part Two - Practicing Awareness.....	15
1. Mindful Meditation.....	15
Choosing Consciousness	15
The Gift of Rest	17
2. Mindful Movement.....	19
Yoga.....	19
Tai Chi.....	19
Breathing & Relaxation	20
3. Mindful Relationships	22
Appreciation.....	23
4. Mindful Healing.....	24
Pain	24
Resilience	25
5. Mindful Eating.....	27
Nutrition.....	27
Health.....	28
6. Mindful Decluttering.....	30
Clearing a Path	30
b. Clean Habits.....	31
7. Mindful Emotions.....	32
Self-Awareness.....	32
Barriers.....	32
8. Mindful Manifestation	34
Dream Catching – Journaling	34
Vision Boards	35
9. Mindful Listening	37
Staying Present	37

Openness	38
10. Mindful Forgiveness.....	39
Detachment	39
b. The Absence of Fear	40
11. Mindful Gratitude	42
Grateful Journal	42
Affirmations	43
12. Mindful Joy.....	45
a. Remaining Present	45
b. Feeding the Senses.....	46
13. Mindful Productivity	47
a. Organization	47
b. Discipline	47
14. Mindful Frolic.....	49
Time for Play	49
Laughter	50
15. Mindful Honesty.....	52
Asking for Help	52
Introspection.....	53
16. Mindful Spirituality	54
Faith	54
Perspective.....	54
17. Mindful Best-Life Practices	55
Courage	55
Consistency	55
18. Mindful Communication	56
Speaking your Truth	56
Questions and Answers	56
19. Mindful Work	57
Success	57
Effort	57
20. Mindful Giving.....	58
Compassion.....	58

Service	58
21. Mindfulness and the POWER of your thoughts	60
Reprogramming Negative Thoughts	60
Positive Self Talk for Amazing Results.....	60
22. Mindfulness Parenting	62
Encouragement is a natural motivator.	62
Inspiring Future Generations	63
23. Mindful Acceptance	64
Self-Love.....	64
Inner Peace	65
24. Mindful Pet Ownership.....	67
Kindred Spirits.....	67
Companionship	67
25. Mindful Boundaries.....	68
Saying No	68
Letting Go.....	68
Part Three - Putting it all Together	70
1. Continue your Practice.....	70
2. Suggestions to Deepen your Practice	70
3. Exploration	71
Resources	72
4. http://www.statisticbrain.com/stress-statistics/	72
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fight-or-flight_response	72
6. https://www.quora.com/How-many-thoughts-per-second-come-to-our-mind	72
7. http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/food-medicine/why-being-mindful-matters	72
8. http://www.apa.org/topics/sleep/why.aspx	72
9. http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Yoga	72
10. http://www.5lovelanguages.com/	72
11. http://www.londonmindful.com/blog/the-importance-of-rest/	72
12. https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/body-sense/201204/emotional-and-physical-pain-activate-similar-brain-regions	72
13. www.spiritual.thinking.blogspot.com	72
14. http://www.gratefulness.org/	72

15.	http://www.louisehay.com/about/	72
16.	https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-wise-open-mind/201108/5-steps-make-affirmations-work-you	72
17.	http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/11/15/the-importance-of-play-for-adults/	72
18.	http://www.dailyuw.com/arts_and_leisure/article_af698438-1e3d-11e6-ab78-036da3a967e8.html	72
19.	http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-clear/forming-new-habits_b_5104807.html	72

Part I - Awakening Awareness

“Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing it is not the fish that they are after” ~Henry David Thoreau

- Introduction

Have you ever been driving somewhere, reached your destination and couldn't remember the drive? Or what about sitting down to eat a meal, looking at an empty plate and having no memory of how the food tasted?

These are examples of mindlessly experiencing activities. For most people, wandering through life on auto-pilot seems to be the norm, and the majority of us appear distracted and extremely busy both mentally and physically.

We can't recall brushing our teeth in the morning, walking from the grocery store to the car or even the conversation we just had an hour ago. That's not to say that being busy is negative. However, being constantly preoccupied without thought can adversely impact your well-being.

Moving mindlessly from one task to the other creates a disconnection between the mind and body. This disconnect may lead to a mental overload with physical consequences such as chronic pain, insomnia and a host of other symptoms.

We live in a hectic society, and an overwhelming number of us are stressed out. The fact that we simply cannot control every facet of life is an unavoidable part of the human experience, but we certainly try. People fill their days with calendar entries, appointments, and activities, never allowing downtime for rest or unplanned miracles.

Although the lack of control has been the truth of our existence throughout history, the 21st Century yields greater challenges. Technology has provided us with amazing channels for communication, yet we feel more disconnected, alienated and uncomfortable in our skin than ever before.

Families can't relate or have time to eat dinner together, and children are overloaded with too many activities and external influences.

This accelerated pace of living has provided us with mass amounts of information and constant pressure to keep up.

We are bombarded with a barrage of messages, texts, emails, social media sites and news. Our brains are encumbered with a steady stream of information and ideas, which creates a powerful burden that draws our attention away from ourselves.

As we lose touch with our bodies and ourselves, we can experience a foggy disconnection resulting in physical and mental illnesses or overwhelming stress. Our brains become inundated with the unnaturally quick pace and leaves us vulnerable to experiencing anxiety and self-judgment.

Studies show that an extraordinary 77% of Americans reported experiencing [reoccurring symptoms](#) caused by stress. So what does mindfulness have to do with stress? Science tells us that when we are faced with stress, our brains transmit a surge of adrenaline that helps us decide whether to freeze, fight or flee.

The physiological reactions to stress are the body's way of protecting us from perceived danger. The brain perceives a threat, and we release hormones such as cortisol and noradrenaline. This phenomenon, also known as the [Fight or Flight Response](#) helped our ancestors survive dangerous situations.

In modern society, we aren't being chased by dinosaurs, but we still have a physical and mental reaction to life's daily stressors. These can include traffic, being overwhelmed or worrying about finances, love or health.

As we become more aware of our body's reactions through mindfulness, we can control the impact of stress in our lives. That's just one of the amazing benefits of the practice of mindfulness - it can help alleviate stress.

1. [Definition of Mindfulness](#)

"Mindfulness" is a term used a lot but has different meanings to people.

Often discussed in relation to reducing life's stress, mindfulness can also be a tool for radical self-care and when practiced, will encourage a more

fulfilling life. The idea of being mindful involves the technique of awareness and a state of being fully present in the moment.

While it is an essential element rooted in many spiritual traditions, mindfulness is something that anyone can practice anywhere and anytime. You may be wondering what benefits there are to being mindful in any situation.

Think back to the examples earlier about driving and eating without thought. Imagine the experience of savoring a meal or really noticing the gorgeous scenery while driving (and watching the road, of course). The encounter with a simple activity such as eating becomes richer and more satisfying when you are aware of the details involved.

Mindfulness is more than just being aware – it has stretched into a practice prescribed to assist people with physical and emotional health. Today mindfulness is prescribed by doctors to ease anxiety, stress, and physical symptoms. But what if you're not stressed out or unhealthy? Why would you care about mindfulness?

Consider what thoughts occupy your mind. Do you spend your time recalling past experiences, or consistently frame the future running various imaginary scenarios through your mind?

It's very common for people to rehearse the future and rework past experiences rather than remain focused on the present moment. Why?

Sometimes the present experience is painful, not something we wish to do, not easy or perhaps even boring.

This tendency to rehash or think ahead can impact our lives because the thoughts and images that we replay over in our minds form our words. From these words our actions take shape, and these actions encourage our behaviors.

Our behaviors progress to shape our choices and those choices ultimately create the lives we live. Since Western culture is based upon principles absorbed in material achievements, the norm is to stay busy by doing more to get more.

The trouble is that when you're focused on things and in a consistent state of 'doing', you miss out on the beauty of simply being in the moment. Habitual thought patterns and behaviors can negatively impact your life, especially if the thoughts are negative and the behaviors are unhealthy.

2. Mind Body Connection

The capacity of the human brain is incredible. Much like a computer, our brains process an approximate 2500-3000 conscious thoughts per hour. It is a bit harder to track the unconscious thoughts.

The conscious mind is the one that handles what food you're going to eat, or what clothing you may wear. The unconscious mind is the super computer processing the great 'ah-ha' moments.

Have you ever had an experience when you're doing one activity such as washing the dishes, and a thought pops into your mind about something completely unrelated? The thought could be the answer to a problem you couldn't solve, or an idea for a new product, story or recipe.

This sudden burst of inspiration is the work of the subconscious mind which actively continues working on problems while your conscious mind takes the lead. The subconscious mind processes the complex issues (unsolved problems) without upsetting the flow of daily life. This frees up the conscious mind to handle the simple tasks (the dishes).

So what does this have to do with the body? Think back to the fight or flight example above and imagine you're overwhelmed in a situation at work or school, or stuck in a traffic jam.

As your body reacts to the stress, cortisol levels spike and neurotransmitters are released, and your brain determines the best course of action. If your body continually releases the stress hormones and neurotransmitters, your health will suffer. How?

If stress builds up and remains unchecked, the autonomic nervous system that involuntarily regulates breathing, respiration and internal organs suffers. Stress can build over time, settling in our body and impacting mental and physical health.

What if you could learn to be aware of your body's stress reactions? You can and it's as simple as recognizing that thoughts are a powerful vehicle creating our experiences. That means: what we think we become and the thoughts we focus on will manifest into our world one way or another.

Have you ever witnessed someone complaining about having a bad day and focused on how horrible things are going? You may notice that as they continue to pay attention to the awful events, their experience worsens.

But if that same person could observe the perceived 'bad' things, recognize them and find a place of acceptance, the unpleasant events would stop compounding. In fact, if they could go so far as to mindfully choose a better thought, their day would become brighter.

As you learn to pay attention to your thoughts, you will begin to feel overall wellness. You'll face challenges with ease, forgive others quickly and "see" emotions rising like a dust storm. As you make peace with your inner thoughts, gently acknowledging them, you will live in a sense of calm instead of a constant state of reaction.

3. How to Use this Book

There is no right or wrong way to use this book. Since mindfulness is a practice use the tools presented as guides while you learn to relate to your life experiences in a new way. You can flip back and forth from each section, reviewing when you feel the need or skipping ahead as you desire.

Being mindful doesn't cost anything and can be practiced anywhere at any time. The best part is that you already have everything you need to be mindful inside of you. So you have the ability to expand and evolve your mindfulness practice as your life and situations progress. Remember that being aware is simply being present and you can start right now.

Take a deep cleansing breath and close your eyes. Notice the sounds around you in the present moment such as birds chirping outside, people talking or cars honking in the distance. As you observe these sounds, do not become attached to them.

Now, can you feel your breath? Notice it moving in and out of your body. How does it feel? What are the sensations associated with that breath? If your mind wanders, gently guide it back to the focus of the breath. Continue to breathe naturally. This is an example of being mindful and guess what? You just meditated too!

You can use this book to practice being mindful informally, simply by bringing conscious awareness to the present moment (like we just did in

the exercise above). You can also practice being aware of performing everyday tasks such as brushing your teeth or folding clothes.

The more often you practice awareness, the easier it becomes to notice elements of an experience without judgment. Soon, you will achieve a sense of wakefulness that is consistent, and mindfulness will become a habit.

It's also possible to create a formal practice where you set a particular time to meditate each day and keep track of your progress. The key is to remember that change takes time. Grant yourself the grace of continued practice and be patient as the magic of mindfulness slowly unfolds.

As you notice shifts in your consciousness and behavior, you will sleep more soundly, handle stressful situations differently and be less inclined to react without thought.

Throughout this book, there are several concepts that offer ideas for finding practical ways to integrate a mindfulness into your life. Feel free to take an idea and make it your own. You can give each of them a whirl to try to see what works for you!

Part Two - Practicing Awareness

“Look past your thoughts so you may drink the pure nectar of this moment” ~ Rumi

1. Mindful Meditation

- Choosing Consciousness

By choosing to read about mindfulness you have made an important step in a positive direction. One popular way to expand your awareness is through meditation. Many people aren't sure how to meditate and don't know what it is. Meditation is easy and can be a fun part of your life.

First, note that you don't have to sit for hours on a pillow in front of candles to meditate. You can if you choose to, but it's not necessary. Meditation is about consciously choosing to acknowledge the mind's powerful influence over our actions and lives. That sounds easy doesn't it?

We have discussed how our thoughts can wander which makes it impossible to fully embrace the activity we are engaging in. Meditation offers a way to slow down, taking the time to connect with the breath. This cleanses your mind of the random thoughts – that's being mindful through meditation.

Let's practice right now. In a comfortable position, notice the elements surrounding you. Are you seated or standing? How does the chair or floor

feel underneath your body? What are the sounds in the room? Become fully present in the moment hearing the sounds and feeling the current sensations.

Now, focus on your breath. Listen to it as it travels through your body, in and out. Don't try to control or change your breathing, just acknowledge it. As you feel a sense of calm, begin to monitor the breath. When you inhale, slow down the breath and count to four. Then, do the same as you exhale, slowly counting to four. Continue this breathing for a few moments. How do you feel?

This breathing exercise is a simple way to find calm during a demanding situation and a wonderful way to begin a meditation practice. Perhaps try to change the breath count, focusing on making the inhale and exhales the same length. What are the sensations now?

If you're mind wanders during meditation, don't be alarmed or judge yourself. Just acknowledge the thoughts, and redirect your mind back to the breath count. Some people find it helpful to set an alarm for breath work so they aren't worried about the time and can focus their attention solely on the breath.

Einstein believed that "the only constant is change" which is an accurate statement. It would appear that Einstein never dabbled in meditation as

the breath is also a constant. That's the wonderful thing about meditation through breath work - your breath is always with you.

Have you ever noticed that if you're irritated or stressed, your breathing becomes shallow? The next time you encounter an unpleasant or upsetting situation, try the breathing exercise above and see what happens.

- [The Gift of Rest](#)

How often do you rest? Do you sleep well? If you have learned to relax your mind and body - good for you! You are likely less stressed and much healthier because of it. If not, you're part of a growing number of people who don't get enough rest and push their bodies and minds to a harmful limit.

Experts agree that sleep is an essential element for health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, studies show that millions of people are sleep deprived. In fact, the [National Sleep Foundation](#) reports that 60 percent or more of adults report experiencing sleep disturbances.

What causes sleep disturbances? In addition to environmental factors, stress, and emotional discord, disordered sleep can be a result of health issues such as a dysfunctional nervous or cardiovascular system or a faulty immune system.

Other than bedtime, how do you know it's time relax? Would you know if you were essentially running on empty? It's impossible to give 100 percent

to your work, life, family, and friends if you are mentally and physical exhausted.

When you're mindful, you are able to tune into your body's clues that it's time to rest and unwind. Some subtle signals our bodies provide to tell us it's time to rest include tight muscles, headaches, aches, pains, moodiness, yawning and emotional changes.

By listening to your body, you can make the time for rest. Try this exercise right now: close your eyes and scan your body. Notice how each part of your body feels, from the top of your head, to your toes.

Do you have pain? Are you hungry? How do you feel, depressed, happy, lethargic or cranky? When you take the time to check in with yourself and practice listening to your body, you can make time for rest.

As you make the time to listen to your body, you will learn what you need to stay fatigue free. Whether it's a yoga class, a nature walk, or free time to connect with family and friends, rest is imperative for good health.

2. Mindful Movement

“It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop”

~Confucius

- **Yoga**

The term “yoga” comes from a Sanskrit word that means ["to unify"](#) or “yoke” the mind, body and spirit. This fusion of movement, breath work and meditation seeks to unify our mental, physical and spiritual selves.

As you attain this union, you will better connect with your inner self and feel a sense of deep tranquility. Yogis report a great sense of ease, reduced body pains, better sleep and overall calmness.

Some people practice yoga to become more physically fit, while others practice yoga to stay calm. Whatever the reasoning behind doing yoga, yogis attest to a more focused, mindful and peaceful mind. Why not give yoga try?

- **Tai Chi**

Defined as a gentle way to combat stress, Tai Chi ([TIE-CHEE](#)) has lasting benefits. Much like yoga, Tai Chi is centered on postures and centered on deep, mindful breathing.

Unlike yoga, Tai Chi is rooted in martial arts and was originally created for self-defense. There are a variety of Tai Chi practices, each promoting peacefulness through a flow of gentle movements.

This ancient tradition is used for stress reduction and to ease symptoms of other health issues and considered one of the most graceful forms of movement. See if Tai Chi would work for you.

- **Breathing & Relaxation**

Yoga and Tai Chi are excellent examples of breathing and relaxation techniques that provide a self-paced, non-competitive form of mindful movement. Using a series of guided, focused and slow movements (Tai Chi) or postures (Yoga), one can find peace, solitude and a steady composure.

Many people find Tai Chi and yoga appealing as it doesn't require a lot of special equipment and can be practiced anywhere, alone or in a group setting. Although there are studios offering these courses, you can likely find online courses to do at home as well.

You don't have to be in great shape to practice yoga or Tai Chi.

Although yoga and Tai Chi are considered safe, you will want to consult with your medical practitioner before beginning any movement regime.

3. Mindful Relationships

“Do what you did at the Beginning of the Relationship and there won’t be an End” ~Tony Robbins.

Everyone has a different way to give and receive love. Another part of being mindful is to recognize the way your partner offers and accepts love. In 1995, Gary Chapman published a book entitled [The Five Love Languages](#). This book outlines five main behaviors people tend to gravitate towards to express and receive love.

Gary Chapman's theory is that we each have an emotional 'love tank' that becomes filled up (or not) based upon how we relate to love. Often, the way we offer love is how we wish to receive love. For example, if your partner uses words to affirm others, they probably feel loved when they are validated with words.

The five love languages include: Gifts, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, Quality Time and Words of Affirmation. Each notion outlines a particular concept that is interchangeable with the rest.

Most people will have two or more that resonate with them. Someone who relates to "gifts" feels loved by giving and receiving gifts. An individual who relates to "Acts of Service" feels filled up by acts of kindness by their mate.

It is believed that while we grow up speaking one or two of these languages, the others can be learned. If you want to have a mindful partnership, consider learning your partner's love languages and focus on filling up their emotional love cup for a more intimate and fulfilling experience.

- **Appreciation**

Dale Carnegie professed we should "give honest and sincere [appreciation](#)." He believed in the importance of showing appreciation for one's efforts as a crucial component for getting along with others. Think back to a time when you felt appreciated. Were you more eager to take on other projects and to work harder?

Can you recall a time when your efforts went unnoticed? How did you feel? Were you motivated to do more for that person or company? It can be very demotivating when you put forth a great effort, and you aren't appreciated for it.

Humans are hard-wired to seek affirmations from others. Knowing that we matter, and having the purpose to contribute something to our world is a major component of knowing why we exist.

If you don't care what others are saying or doing it's a negation of their efforts. When we mindfully show appreciation for others' efforts, we are paving the way for self-love and self-appreciation.

4. Mindful Healing

"Pain is Inevitable in Life. Suffering is Optional" ~Buddha

- Pain

In our society, many believe the notion of "no pain, no gain" is the way to success. Often, we are taught to push through the pain and keep a stiff upper lip even if it hurts. This can include staying in a painful relationship, an unsatisfying job or exercising to the point of pain.

In a mindfulness practice, the central focus is finding a pathway to observe any physical discomfort and acknowledging the emotions that may accompany the physical feelings.

Most physical pain has an emotional counterpart. In fact, when the same parts of our brain that activates during physical pain are activated we feel emotional pain. Studies indicate that pain is usually comprised of [emotional and physical pain](#).

Think back to a time when you hurt yourself (say, tripping on the kerb) and felt embarrassed. What could have made the pain better or worse? How long did you hang onto that emotion?

As you become more adept at bringing awareness to your feelings, no matter how uncomfortable, you can validate and release them. That is, you

can simply acknowledge the emotion, feel it and then let it go. By allowing the release of waves of emotions they won't settle into your cells.

The term to “acknowledge” is to see things the way they are, not how you think they are. When you accept something, that’s the idea of finding peace with things the way they are. By acknowledging and accepting your emotions, you are less likely to feel the pain associated with them.

- **Resilience**

Why is it that some folks can face a challenge head on, viewing the event as a learning experience while others are afraid of difficulty? A key factor in how one handles problems is resilience.

Resilience is the ability to see experiences differently and formulate a quicker or more skillful response to challenges. When you see challenges through the eyes of fear you’re not able to react in a way that will allow you to solve the problem.

Those who are mindfully resilient can face a struggle with courage through the vantage point of viewing the encounter as an opportunity for growth.

As you become more mindful, you will learn to be more aware of your thoughts and actions. You will begin to notice a pattern of thoughts that rise when you are faced with a challenge.

Think back to a time when you were faced with a problem in your life. How did you view the issue? Were you afraid of the outcome and what were the thoughts associated with any action you took?

Once you master mindfulness and acknowledging things as they are you can change your viewpoint related to problems and how they impact your life.

5. Mindful Eating

“Let Food be thy Medicine and Medicine be Thy Food”

~Hippocrates

- Nutrition

One of life's most vital activities is eating. Next to sleep, nourishment is a crucial function required to sustain human life. In the days of the caveman, gathering and hunting for food was a matter of survival. The majority of time for early society was spent searching for, preparing and storing food.

Today's modern society puts a different spin on eating. As we rush from one activity to the next, many of us, mindlessly shovel fast food lunches in our mouths at record speed. Since modern technology does the work for us, minimal time is spent focusing on food.

Psychologist and mindfulness author, Jon Kabat-Zinn, believes that a vast majority of today's culture consumes food on auto-pilot. The importance of food for sustenance, wellness, and overall health becomes lost in the involuntary and rushed act of mindless eating.

As we focus on our busy lives, we fail to slow down and take the time to truly nourish our bodies. That is, we are motivated to eat out of convenience and not for optimal health. When you stop and pay close attention to what you're eating, you will experience many health benefits.

The benefits of mindfully eating include better digestion since you provide your brain time to anticipate how the food will taste. As you view and smell the food, you are stimulating the first [phase of digestion](#).

Have you ever smelled fresh cookies in the oven and your mouth watered? This is an example of your body planning to eat and break down food. During digestion, your brain signals your body to prepare for the meal by releasing a host of digestive enzymes.

The digestive dance continues in response to a meal but if we don't pay attention to what we are consuming, the body isn't fully aware, and we are not gaining the full benefit of digestion.

- [Health](#)

When we are too busy, our health can suffer due to the added stress we are putting on our bodies. Eating mindlessly and quickly is just one of the examples of how stress can impact our health. Another is multi-tasking.

Think of a time when you did two things at once. What needed to be done at the same time as another task? Slowing down seems to be a foreign concept to many busy people. But trying to do things simultaneously is neither beneficial or efficient.

When we slow down and do one task at a time, we can give 100 percent of our efforts and ensure the stress triggers aren't activated. It's important to notice what is going on with us internally as we go about our day.

Mindful Decluttering

"The only way to Discover our True Potential is to Clear Out the Clutter and Focus on What Matters" ~ Anonymous

- Clearing a Path

When you look at your home, room or office, what do you see? Is your space an inviting oasis of peace and tranquility? Or are you constantly stepping over the piles on the floor to get to the papers stacked in the corner?

Take a look at the space where you spend most of your time – your car, workspace, bedroom. How does that space feel to you? Are you inspired to be creative or peaceful? Or, does the area close in around you as you enter?

In an effort to declutter the spaces you spend your time in, take an assessment of the area, asking yourself some questions. What is the purpose of this room? Then ask yourself if you're using that room for its intended purpose.

If you aren't able to honestly affirm that the energy in the space is encouraging its intended purpose, it may be time to declutter. You can declutter your physical space, your relationships or your diet.

Take stock today for a brighter future tomorrow. As you become more mindful, you will be able to tune in to how things impact your energy.

- **b. Clean Habits**

As you assess the spaces where you spend most of your time, ask yourself if the items, people or ideas serve your purpose. For example, if you wish to receive a promotion, does the stained coffee mug collection on your desk fit into that image?

Clean habits involve finding the time to go through each room in your home, car, and your workspace. As you evaluate the items in the space, envision the image of your life as you want it to be. Do these items support the vision of your improved life as you see it?

Letting go of concern isn't always easy, but as you learn to be more mindful about what you allow into your space, you can form clean habits that support your desires instead of depleting them.

6. Mindful Emotions

"Some People Feel the Rain, others just get Wet" ~ Bob Marley

- Self-Awareness

Emotional intelligence refers to a person's ability to recognize their own emotions as well as other's emotions. Also, an emotionally intelligent person is one with the capacity to distinguish between feelings to guide their behavior and thoughts. A mindful person is an emotionally intelligent person.

Think about a situation in your life that brings you joy and fills you with vital energy. Now, think about something in your current experience that is depleting your energy. Does this job, person or project feed your soul or drain your precious energy?

A mindful person also holds the capability to tell the difference between situations, people, places and events that nurture their soul, or suck the life from it.

When you choose to become more self-aware, you will learn to recognize the people, places and things that support your life vision, versus the circumstances that drain you of your vitality.

- Barriers

There are some barriers to finding our emotional intelligence, and one is honesty. When you are honest about your feelings and become more aware of your own experience, you can locate the areas of your life that need some attention. Are there areas of your life that you wish were different?

When we mindlessly allow our emotions to rise and dictate our actions, we are forming a barrier to self-growth. Ask yourself where in your life you gave up your truth in exchange for being right, first or seen. How does that situation feed your soul?

It could be a co-worker that you constantly gossip about or a neighbor who you refuse to grant an apology. Ask yourself when you chose your pride instead of backing down to let someone else shine? Do these feelings serve the vision you see for your improved life?

As you move mindfully through your experience, meditate upon the times you have allowed your emotions to drive your actions without a second thought. Don't judge these experiences, just notice them. Where can you loosen your grip on an idea and perhaps elect to take a different course of action?

7. Mindful Manifestation

“Manifest plainness, embrace simplicity, reduce selfishness, have few choices” ~Lao Tzu

- Dream Catching – Journaling

There is a lot of power in the written word. As you journey into mindfulness, writing down your thoughts can be an effective way to keep track of your progress. Journaling can provide an avenue to generate change in your life by visualizing your dreams.

Some people don't enjoy writing but keeping a journal isn't about having to write. It is a useful tool to record thoughts that pop into your head as you mindfully move out of a mindless, mental fog into the light of awareness.

Choose a journal that speaks to you. Are you drawn to a leather bound hardcover? Or, do you prefer a whimsical, colorful soft notebook? Find a journal that makes you smile and treat yourself to a new pen to go with it.

Journaling doesn't have to be challenging and can be handled in any way that appeals to you. You don't have to have a schedule other than opening it each day to see what comes into your mind. If you're not a writer, perhaps start by scribbling a word or two, or drawing a picture of your thoughts at that moment.

You can write about your life in this present moment, noting how you feel and what you envision your next phase to be. Expand your awareness by reading over your journal once per week to see where you are making progress.

As you become more mindful, you will look forward to reviewing your journal entries. There are hidden gems of wisdom between the pages that will assist you as you embrace your current experience and discover how to change it.

- [Vision Boards](#)

Do you have a vision for your life as you wish it would be? If you never think about the concept of co-creating your life, a vision board can be an excellent tool. Many people aren't sure what a vision board is, or even sure how to create or use one.

A vision board is a creative way to take your ideas, dreams, thoughts and deepest desires and bring them to life. It can serve as a creative visual reminder to keep us on track to manifest the life we desire.

Start by getting a large piece of cardboard or paper, glue, scissors and magazines. Clip the photos, words, and sayings that resonate with you. They can be places, people or things, as long as those images and words bring a smile to your face.

Ask yourself what you really want. Is there a place you wish to visit? Do you want to be more financially stable? What about the dream job of caring for children, or having a more committed relationship? These are the types of clippings you want to include on your vision board.

When creating a vision board, don't limit yourself. Use colorful pens, fabrics, and textures and don't overthink the items that attract you. Just cut and glue and before long, you will have a visual reminder of what you wish to manifest into your life.

Hang the board in a place where you can see it each day to help you stay in the present moment, focused on the things you wish to draw into your life, and not rehashing the past or hyper-focusing on the future. Each time you see your vision board, ask yourself if your current state of mind supports those visions.

8. Mindful Listening

“Most People do not listen with the Intent to Understand. Most people Listen with the Intent to Reply” ~ Steven Covey

- **Staying Present**

When someone is speaking to you, do you listen? Or, do you mentally check out and start pondering the events on your "to do" list? If you're truly present in the conversation, you will be able to listen to their words with the intent of understanding what they are saying.

There is no magic trick to staying present in a conversation, but it does take practice. The next time you are talking with someone see if you can actively listen without replying. Allow the person to finish their thought completely before you respond. In fact, why not try to say, "I understand" when they are done, and allow some silence.

Think back to a conversation you have had recently. Did you talk about yourself? Did you relate the person's story back to your own life and respond before they finished their thought? Or, did you engage and ask questions, without injecting your experiences?

You may be surprised at what you hear when you actually listen and stay present in the current moment.

- Openness

Being mindful involves staying open to the possibility of radical shifts of perspective. As you become more aware of your current state, you may notice thoughts that are unfamiliar to you.

Try this exercise: as you go about your day, observe how the air smells and feels against your skin. What are the sounds and sights around you? Does a familiar situation cause you to revisit the past or jump ahead into the future? What do you notice?

Then, examine whether you open to the new ideas or grip too tightly on the past and future thoughts that keep you in the dark.

Are you drifting back into a state of unawareness? As you ask yourself this question, do you notice self-judgement or emotions?

Soon, noticing your emotions, surroundings and feelings will become a habit. Be open to any shifts in perspective, and mindfully aware of your reactions as you learn to acknowledge thoughts without judgment.

9. Mindful Forgiveness

“Hanging on to Anger is like Drinking Poison and Expecting the other person to Die” ~Buddha

- Detachment

The term ‘non-attachment’ can be scary for some folks. First, let’s discuss what it isn’t. Rest assured, being unattached to something does not advocate existing in the world as a cold and detached person.

The idea of detachment does encourage us to view things a bit differently than we may be used to. While there are emotions involved in the viewpoint, the mindful individual is not attached to the feelings surrounding the event or the outcome.

Imagine a time when you were feeling excited and happy about a vacation, trip or event. Once that event passed, how did you feel? Were you happy and filled with positive memories, or did you immediately feel blue, wishing you were still on vacation or at a minimum planning for it?

A relevant example is a wedding. Why do people feel sad after a big trip or life event? Shouldn't they just enjoy the memories and continue with life? It isn't an easy concept but certainly an important one in your mindfulness journey.

Why would you want to detach? You will find that you are no longer living in the future, focusing on expectations. Clarity helps you relate to the world instead of viewing things as you hope they will be. Finally, you will no longer chase happiness – living in the present allows you to enjoy the good and recognize the not-so-good.

The beauty of detachment is the ability to feel the feelings, enjoy happiness while it is present and feel calm when it's not. The difference between attachment and non-attachment is the viewpoint.

The manner in which you view and react to the emotions that arise determine whether you are attached, or not. As you continue to cultivate mindfulness, you will find the space to see the emotions as they arise, feel them, and let them go.

- **b. The Absence of Fear**

What are you afraid of? Some folks are afraid of spiders, or heights. Others fear commitment and having children. Most people are afraid of something, but living in fear isn't healthy, mindful nor productive.

If you are overwhelmed with anxiety and fear, meditation and yoga can be beneficial. The act of connecting your mind and body eases a fearful heart and redirects the mind to more pleasant things.

For example, by practicing the breathing noted in Section 2 above, you can learn to move past your fears of the future and focus on the moment. As you learn to detach from fearful emotions and the perceived or possible outcome of a stressful situation, you will find that the present moment is more peaceful.

This isn't to say that you won't ever feel afraid, emotions are a normal part of the human experience. However, a regular mindful practice will leave you more aware and better equipped to handle daily stressors. You will find that by staying present, feeling the emotions and letting them go, you are happier.

10. Mindful Gratitude

Let Gratitude be the Pillow upon which you kneel to say your Nightly Prayer” ~

Maya Angelou

- Grateful Journal

What are you grateful for? Do you recall saying grace at the Thanksgiving dinner table or writing “thank you” notes? These are examples of being grateful. What if you managed to find a minimum of five things to be grateful each day? How might your attitude and life change?

When you cultivate an attitude of gratitude, you are focusing on the positive and acknowledging the negative as part of your overall experience. For example, when you keep a daily list of things in your life that you appreciate, you will notice more things that you value.

Remember the example of a person having a bad day from Section 2? If you are consistently focused on the negative aspect of life, it seems as though the pleasantries multiply, simply because you are hyper-focused on them.

Since the same theory holds true for positive things, why not be gracious for the abundance in your life now? By focusing on the things you’re grateful for, you will learn to appreciate life. When you couple gratitude with non-attachment, you will be amazed at how good you feel!

Try to keep a small notebook by your bedside table, in your car or at work. Make a commitment to jot down at least five things you appreciate each day. When you're feeling low, re-read those items and feel your energy rise. Your emotional load lightens when you are living in a constant state of grace.

- [Affirmations](#)

When was the last time you appreciated yourself? When you're working on being grateful, don't forget to include your qualities in the list. You can be thankful for good health, your sense of humor or athletic abilities. By using affirmations, you can take gratefulness to a deeper level.

An [affirmation](#) is a statement of professed certainty that is repeated with confidence and belief. They can be said out loud, or written and hung in places you view often. Affirmations can be a reminder of the positive attributes we carry and a way to absolve us of negative messages we have received.

Louise Hay, a [pioneer in the self-help](#) movement, encourages the daily use of affirmations to enhance life and attain inner peace. She is just one of many who believe that we can co-create our lives, instead of falling victim to the circumstances surrounding us.

You may wonder how to use affirmations. Start by reviewing your journal and see if there is a recurring theme that needs addressing. Do you

consistently write about a past hurt or insecurity? Take that statement and turn it into a positive. How?

Think of something you may have been told in the past such as “you’ll never make any money as a writer”. Now, think about how you might rephrase that statement into a positive declaration that affirms your desire to make money writing? You could say, "I am a paid writer" or "I have a fulfilling and fruitful writing career".

Give affirmations a try and see what happens. You can use affirmations to elevate your mood and give you confidence in your abilities. Remember to keep track of the unfolding miracles as your life becomes better and more enjoyable!

11. Mindful Joy

“Comparison is the Thief of Joy” ~ Theodore Roosevelt

- a. Remaining Present

How often are you present within the moment? When you're with your kids, are you mentally there, or at the meeting from yesterday? Do you always worry about the things you have to do or something that happened already?

Now, think back to the discussion about detachment above, specifically in relation to the day's 'to do' list. If you're not attached to the outcome of completing the list, you can stay present. As you remain in each moment as it unfolds, you will find that the day is brighter.

Tip: If you feel overwhelmed with the day's activities, ask yourself: what would happen if all of these tasks didn't get completed today? Also, review the ideas from Section 1 about making time to rest. Honestly acknowledge (without judgment), that you may be 'too busy' and explore why.

When you remain in the present moment, you're able to engage fully with people, communicate more effectively and experience a sense of grace and peace that aren't visible to a mind focused on the past or future. Don't miss the moments directly in front of you by constantly looking far ahead or behind.

- b. Feeding the Senses

Humans have five senses that enable us to experience the world. These include sight, sound, hearing, taste, and touch. As you move about your life, what do you do to feed your senses? Often, we are busily moving about the day mindless cutting off certain senses while overloading others.

When you're eating, how often do you really taste the food you're eating? Do you know what colors are on your plate, or how the food smells? When you are walking from the store to the car, do you notice the trees or hear the birds chirping? Or do you simply get from point A to point B without a thought?

Try this: The next time you walk from the car to the office, eat lunch or take the kids to the park, focus on the present surroundings. If you're in the car, turn off the radio and drive. Notice the scenery and engage with the passengers.

If you're walking to the park, notice the trees and how the sidewalk feels under your feet. What are the sounds you hear? Is it hot or cold outside and how do you feel?

Take the time to feed each of your senses and explore how rich life becomes. Practice staying present with each activity and ask yourself how you feel, what you smell, taste, hear and see. Note the sensations in your journal.

12. Mindful Productivity

"The Way to get Started is to Stop Talking and Begin Doing" ~ Walt Disney

- Organization

A busy mind can be a cluttered mind, much like having a cluttered living or work space. It's hard to be productive when your mental and physical spaces are disorganized. Ask yourself: are you able to find things quickly? Does your living space bring you a sense of peace or frustration?

Some people aren't sure how to be organized. You can hire a professional organizer, or simply take the time to look around your work, driving and living spaces and really see what's going on. Sometimes a disorganized space is a way to hide from the truth of our current life situation.

Getting organized can be as easy as making a commitment to analyzing one space at a time, removing the clutter (as noted in Section 6) as you go. Using mindfulness as your guide, ask yourself if the items in the space support your productivity or hinder your life goals? As you clear your space of the objects hiding you from the truth, your productivity will increase tenfold.

- Discipline

Being mindful takes practice and discipline. Many people worry that they lack the willpower to be mindful and implement the ideas in this book. Do

you worry that you won't be able to try yoga, eat well, meditate daily or keep a gratitude journal?

The important thing to remember is that mindfulness is a practice. When you practice something, the results happen gradually. A day without mindfulness doesn't equal failure. Since it's a practice, that means you get to rehearse it each day.

Of course, you are human and will have days when you catch yourself not being mindful or not feeling like writing in your journal. That's okay. Accept the emotions, feel them and let them drift slowly away (detaching).

This life is a journey, and there is no race to get the finish. In fact, the time we have is short, so the finish comes much sooner than most people realize. If you continue to cultivate mindfulness and practice staying present in each moment, life unfolds as it should.

Don't get caught up with the 'what if's' and find peace that you are reading this book for a reason. Affirm: "I am exactly where I need to be."

13. Mindful Frolic

"Fun is Good" ~ Dr. Seuss

- **Time for Play**

Have you ever watched a group of kids on the playground? They are free and light and their laughter lights up the sky. Sadly, our society tends to view play for adults as counter-productive and irresponsible.

Other than competitive play, many adults don't have time for play or are too stressed out to consider anything so seemingly frivolous.

Experts agree that play is crucial to invite joy into the human experience.

The [absence of play](#) can have grave consequences for adults as we move through life, rigid with the responsibility that deemed us, adults.

Play is a necessary component to a balanced and mindful life. It involves a purposeless enjoyment that is fun and joyful. Play isn't focused on any outcome but offers a sense of freedom for your spirit. Experts agree that play can [boost productivity](#), elevate mood and increase overall joy.

Some good examples of play are dancing, laughing, or even walking the dog. For some, play includes an activity or hobbies such as needlepoint or tennis. Others find joy in reading or a long hike. The key to playtime is a sense of abandon from the "should do" of adulthood.

There are limitless ways to invite more frolic into your life. Why not doodle, paint, play softball or marvel at an art exhibit? If you have a difficult time playing, explore activities you used to enjoy doing as a child and do them as an adult.

When you give yourself consent to mindfully play each day, you are well on your way to a mindfully balanced life.

- [Laughter](#)

It's been said that laughter is the best medicine. While some believe that laughing can heal and inspire, others have faith that laughter [enhances](#) our lives and makes us healthier.

If you've ever laughed, you know first-hand the sheer joy a belly laugh can bring. For the time you're focused on and mindfully laughing, your bodies' natural endorphins are elevated, and you are at peace.

It's safe to say that laughter can be as nourishing to the body and soul as food. There is even a type of yoga called [laughter yoga](#). The founder of this program encourages laughter through movement to harness the power of staying present.

It is believed that laughter can help to de-stress our bodies and minds, as well as boost the feel-good endorphins we crave. The next time you're

feeling blue, why not try watching a funny movie, or reading something funny?

The idea isn't to force laughter but to be naturally present to the situation such as watching something funny. While you're busy laughing, your body's stress hormones will decrease, and your immune system may improve.

14. Mindful Honesty

“Honesty is Absolutely Vital on the Path of Awakening” ~ Dan Brule

- **Asking for Help**

In her work, Brene Brown discusses the need for human connection. She talks about the power that [connection](#) holds in our human life experience and how it provides us with meaning. We are innately wired to connect to one another and greatly fear not having the connection or rejection.

While the fear of disconnection could shed light on why some people are afraid to ask for what they want, it doesn't have to be the truth. We can learn to request help mindfully and practice radical honesty even if it means not receiving what we ask.

As you awaken and nurture a sense of mindfulness, you will soon begin to emerge as a person who asks for what they need without fearing the outcome. Remember the example in Section 21 about acknowledging your emotions and setting them free? Do this when you ask for help and see what happens.

When you can acknowledge the situation (that you need help), feel the emotions that rise (I am stressed!), and you remain detached to the outcome, you will be more inclined to ask for what you need. What if you don't get the help you need?

If you don't get the help you desire, you may have to re-evaluate the relationship, task, or job with honesty. As you learn to remain detached from the outcome, the practice of asking for what you need will turn into a habit.

- **Introspection**

Examining one's behaviors and patterns can be enlightening. As we dive deep into what makes us happy, sad, full or empty, the notion that we are co-creating our experience may weigh heavy on our souls. You may ask yourself, "If I am unhappy, why did I create this?"

It's important to remain gracious with yourself as you explore and discover the thought patterns that have led you to the point where you are. Remember to acknowledge, accept, feel and release, without judgment.

15. Mindful Spirituality

“Real Spirituality is the Greatest Rebellion in the Sky” ~ Osho

- Faith

What does faith mean to you? Faith is an inspired confidence, without question, and can be in a person, place, thing or belief. When we have faith in something, we believe in it. How does faith interact with mindfulness?

When exploring awareness, you can easily see where you may be lacking faith and how it's impacted your life. Ask yourself: do I have faith in my abilities? What am I sure of? See if you can connect with yourself and your faith. What do you believe in and why?

- Perspective

Our perspectives can be a massive judgment that keeps us from fully exploring the world around us. Have you ever held on so tightly to a belief or viewpoint that you were not able to view the situation any other way? When we allow our beliefs to hold us back from experiences, we deny our true self.

Try this: imagine you're at the end of your life thinking about the things you only dreamt of doing. What would you do if you could? How could you implement those dreams and desires into your current life? What would happen if you tried to do one of those things on the list?

16. Mindful Best-Life Practices

"It's better to Live your own Destiny Imperfectly than to live an Imitation of Somebody's else's Life with Perfection" ~ Elizabeth Gilbert

- **Courage**

It takes courage to practice mindfulness. Sometimes, dealing with unpleasant emotions seems foreign and isn't fun. When you challenge your internal rules and self-talk, you are stirring the pot of how it 'always was'. Why not try to remove the "should" in your life?

Seeing the world and others through a set of fundamental rules only disconnects us from others and ourselves. If we can muster the courage to acknowledge our perceptions mindfully, we can change our experience. Many things are out of our control in the world and finding a way to challenge our viewpoint bravely is the cornerstone of a peaceful existence.

- **Consistency**

Fostering a mindfulness practice takes consistency. In fact, it takes about [21 days](#) for new actions to become a habit. Once you realize how to recognize your habitual way of thinking, you can reform those thoughts and begin to cultivate new and healthier habits.

Try this: see if you can write in your journal, keep a gratitude list or practice acknowledging thought patterns for 21 days. At the end ask yourself if you feel differently. Did you recreate a new habit and change your perspective? What can you practice next?

17. Mindful Communication

"The Most important thing in Communication is to hear what Isn't Being Said" ~ Peter Drucker

- Speaking your Truth

When you practice radical honesty, you may find that others are less than thrilled. Why? If others aren't practicing mindfulness, you may experience folks who only react to your honesty without awareness.

Remember to tune mindfully in to yourself. Where are you holding onto a perception?

Explore why you may be experiencing the emotions present and work to formulate appropriate actions. As you detach from the outcome and focus on your truth and perceptions, you may inspire others to join the journey to a peaceful and more mindful existence.

- Questions and Answers

If someone asks you a question, do you hear them? Or are you so busy formulating the response that you don't allow them to finish their sentence? Often we are too busy in our minds preparing a rebuttal that we don't actually hear the question being asked.

Be sure to practice actively listening. Try this: the next time someone asks you a question, twist your tongue in your mouth five times before you answer. What happens? Were you able to tune in and hear what was said? Or, were you able to figure out what wasn't being said?

18. Mindful Work

“There is no substitute for Hard Work” ~ Thomas Edison

- Success

Success is many different things to different people. For some, acquiring material possession equals success. If you were to have only a few days to live, how would you measure the success of your lifetime? What might you do differently? Write these things in your journal and see what arises for you.

- Effort

It has been said that the sum of our efforts equals the consequence. For many, a mindfulness practice seems too difficult. Think back to a time when your mind was racing, and you were bogged down in thought after thought. If you could learn to manage emotions and feel more peaceful and happy, would it be worth the effort?

19. Mindful Giving

“We Rise by Lifting Others” ~ Robert Ingersoll

- **Compassion**

As you journey through becoming more mindful, what should you do if you aren't feeling loving? It can be tough to admit that you don't like someone and are unable to find compassion in your heart. It's even harder to admit that you dislike yourself.

Remember that resistance is a normal part of our life experience, and there are ways to get past it. You can cultivate compassion for a complicated person and free yourself from the ego-centered emotions as you gradually experience a deeper level of empathy.

Try this: sit quietly and center yourself. Picture the person you're having trouble with and imagine creating a space in your heart for them. Focus on finding one positive thing about the person and breathe in that word until you feel peaceful. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the focus and begin again.

- **Service**

In fact, studies reveal that those who [volunteer](#) are less likely to die early than those who don't. In fact, giving to others can assist when you're feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. Altruism is a wonderful way to

manage stress and anxiety as it takes us from an inner focus to a more mindful approach towards someone else.

The best part is that when we learn to show compassion for others, we are more likely to find space for self-compassion and gratitude.

So when you volunteer at the local food bank or cat rescue, you are doing something positive for your mindful practice and the community.

Giving back is a wonderful way to connect with others and build a sense of community that may be lacking in your life. Ask yourself: where can I give back and how will it serve me in return? How can I practice staying centered and present when helping others?

20. Mindfulness and the POWER of your thoughts

Keep Reminding yourself: I get what I think about whether I want it or Not" ~ Dr. Wayne Dyer

- **Reprogramming Negative Thoughts**

Eckhart Tolle said the main source of being unhappy isn't the situation, but the thoughts we think about it. If we can find a way to change our perspective, we can discover a way to feel peaceful, even when things appear unbearable.

The next time you are in a situation that seems too horrible to manage, stop. Take a breath or four and focus on the thoughts running through your mind. Where are you? Are you worried about the future, or stuck in the past? Ask yourself: what is the next best thought I can find? Then reach for that thought and affirm, "I can do this."

This simple process is a step to reprogram the negative self-talk that tends to creep up when things get tough. If you can learn to be aware of your thought patterns, you will be able to change them. Adjusting our perspective isn't easy, but it's the lifeline to happiness and remaining in the moment.

- **Positive Self Talk for Amazing Results**

Have you ever made a mistake? When you do, what is the conversation you have with yourself? Do you find grace to forgive yourself and move along? Can you see the experience as an opportunity to grow and change?

Or, when you make an error, do you bombard yourself with the negative dialogue you've heard others say? This type of negative inner monolog can paralyze you from moving forward and make you feel stuck.

Try this: the next time you make a mistake, acknowledge it as part of the human experience. Breathe through the emotions. Whether it's shame, fear, embarrassment or anger, just feel it. Then, just as quickly as you felt the emotions, let them go. Now, feel the power of being present.

Mindfulness requires us to embrace a willingness to see things from a new perspective. It takes remarkable courage, but as you practice making mistakes and learning from them, you may be surprised at how easy it is to regroup after a storm.

21. Mindfulness Parenting

“Listen earnestly to anything your children want to tell you, no matter what” ~ Catherine M Wallace

- **Encouragement is a natural motivator.**

With children, adult motivation can be the difference between a healthy self-esteem and a shattered self-image. When a parent uses discouraging words, a child learns to speak negatively about themselves.

As a parent, sibling, mentor or caregiver for a child, you can encourage them with the use of positive phrases. It’s important to focus on the action and not the child. You can use words such as “great effort on that drawing” or “look how much you improved” for any child at any level.

It doesn’t matter if the child isn’t proficient at the task they are attempting. You can still cheer them on for their efforts and inspire future behavior that is valued and accepted. By encouraging kids with inspiring words, you will enhance their self-esteem and belief that they can do anything.

Try this: recall a time in your life when you weren’t encouraged to do something you truly desired to do. How did that make you feel? Did the experience impact you as an adult and if so, how? What did you long to hear from adults as a child?

If you have a child who is unable to perform a task ask yourself how you can encourage the acceptance of the limitations. Focus on the effort, not the outcome. By helping the child stay mindfully present on the energy they put forth, you teach them to stay present.

- [Inspiring Future Generations](#)

Raising kids in the 21st Century holds challenges that our parents didn't face. Today's children are a generation that is enthused by technology, instant gratification, and material wealth. They eat fast food, watch reality television and move mindlessly.

How can you raise a mindful child and inspire future generations? The easiest way is to lead by example as a mindful parent will raise mindful children. Be sure to talk to your kids about the importance and benefits of mindfulness and being present and focused.

When you provide children with opportunities to turn off technology and tune in to themselves, you're teaching mindfulness. Just think, successive generations of mindful children will rise above the stress and learn to engage fully in life, no matter what technology brings.

22. Mindful Acceptance

"Accept what you cannot change. Change what you cannot accept."

~ Anonymous

- **Self-Love**

How do you feel when you look in the mirror? Do you catch a glimpse of your reflection and feel happy with the image you see? Or, do you constantly compare yourself and feel less than perfect? Interestingly, many people do not feel they measure up.

If you feel this way, ask yourself what or who you are trying to imitate? From a place of non-judgment try this exercise: find five things you like about yourself every day (hint: add to your daily gratitude journal). Say those things out loud to your reflection.

When you catch yourself thinking negative thoughts or comparing yourself to others, work to feel grateful for the positive things you listed.

Acknowledge any emotions that rise, feel them and let them gently float away.

Saying loving things to or about yourself may seem strange at first, but stick with the process. Much like all mindfulness work, change takes time. If you commit to the process, you will soon notice that it is easy to replace negative self-talk, and positive affirmations become a habit.

When we focus on the opinions of others to justify our self-worth, we will always come up empty. But when we can locate the deep self-love that lives in our center, we will feel connected and whole. Staying mindfully aware of the thoughts that run in and out of our minds is the best way to start loving ourselves.

- **Inner Peace**

What does inner peace mean to you? Inner peace is typically a state of mind wherein one is mentally and spiritually in a state of pure calm. If you wonder how to achieve this, you may be surprised to hear that you don't have to be on a yoga mat to bring about inner peace.

We all have the capacity for an inner calmness that can be harvested and relied upon in times of extreme stress. The key component is to take the time to understand how to connect with ourselves and harness the sense of tranquility. How do you react when you are stressed?

Achieving a balanced lifestyle is the key to finding inner calm. Learning to forgive yourself and others, laugh, love and nourish your body, mind and soul are also key elements of inner peace.

Ask yourself: where is my life out of alignment with my desires? What am I holding onto that no longer serves me? Does my job/relationship fulfill me or deplete my energy? Do I make time for play, movement, and fun?

As you delve deeper into your mindfulness practice, continue re-evaluating these questions and adjust your life accordingly. Inner peace is your right and happiness is yours for the taking.

23. Mindful Pet Ownership

"Until one has loved an animal a part of one's soul remains Unawakened." ~Anatole France

- **Kindred Spirits**

If you own a pet, you know first-hand how much fun they can be. Pets are kindred spirits that provide unconditional love and affection to their owners. The act of interacting with pets is known to reduce stress, ease depression, reduce loneliness and provide powerful mental connection and health benefits such as acceptance and validation.

- **Companionship**

Some people view their pets as part of the family. Why? The fellowship provided by pets is amazing. Having a companion can ward off physical illness and reduce the feelings of isolation. Also caring for another living creature can provide people with a purpose they may not otherwise have.

If you aren't ready to own a pet, perhaps you can donate your time to a local shelter? You can reap the rewards of the mental and physical benefits of pet ownership without the responsibility of pet ownership.

24. Mindful Boundaries

The greatest boundaries that we face in our lives are very often the ones we ourselves create in our minds" ~ Allyn Spragins

- **Saying No**

When you have a "to do" list that is jam-packed with activities, do you still find it difficult to turn down a request or accept a new project? If so, you're not alone. Many of us rely heavily on the acceptance of others for our self-worth, and we have trouble saying "no".

If you continue to take on requests you don't have time for, you may begin to resent the person making the request. Whether it's your boss, friend, spouse, or child, the consequences of not setting boundaries can negatively impact your relationships.

Feeling pressured and stressed isn't healthy. In fact, having too much to do can make us feel ineffective and unhappy. In fact, too much "business" can lead to burn out and unproductivity.

As you become aware of your inner self and more honest about your limits, you will become better skilled at setting boundaries. Practice saying "no" when you're tired, and getting rest when you need it. The more mindful you become, the easier it will be to say, "no thank you".

- **Letting Go**

What weighs you down? Are you struggling with old baggage that keeps you from being your best self? If you are hanging onto the past it could be hurting you physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Perhaps it's time to take an inventory and just let go?

Here is a fun exercise to try: write down everything you are ready to drop. Jot down the things you want to let go. It can be an emotion, fear, behavior, limitation or belief. It can even be a person, anything you have an attachment to that weighs you down or holds you back.

As you focus on the intention, you desire the opposite of the thing you don't want, formulate a positive affirmation for each item.

As you recite the affirmations, visualize the release of your attachment to those beliefs, emotions, fears, etc.

Part Three - Putting it all Together

"With an open mind I can continue to believe that anything is Possible."~ Anonymous

1. Continue your Practice

Learning to recognize your emotions, thoughts, and physical sensations as a gift. As you become more mindfully aware, your overall well-being will improve. Activities such as sleeping, working and coping with stress will be enhanced.

You will experience better self-esteem and a sense of peace that you gravitate towards in stressful times. Your relationships will seem to flow easier and more fulfilling.

Take time to rest and nourish your body and mind. Strive to be gracious, give back to others, and encourage love for yourself and others. In doing so, you will find yourself tethered to the present moment and not focused on the future or clinging to the past.

So tune in, and listen to the subtle voice of your spirit. Let it guide you on your journey into a mindful existence.

2. Suggestions to Deepen your Practice

As you move towards a more mindful life, work on your journal. Review it often and perhaps begin a dialogue with your inner self. Get creative and

don't edit your thoughts, feelings or ideas. Censorship has no place in your journaling.

Take some time to draw yourself in your current state. What do you see? Using colors and shapes, analyze how you view yourself to learn to love and accept yourself just as you are.

If you don't feel like writing, jot down the feelings that arise if you can't write. Do you notice any trends or recurring themes or words?

Keep a diary of manifestations and successes! You can even get a colorful box to place mementos of magical things that appear in your life. Refer to that box when you feel discouraged or depleted and remember how important our thoughts are to our reality.

3. Exploration

Jot down a list of songs that move and inspire you. Play those songs over and over and write down what you feel when you hear them. You can also do this with songs that inspire negative moods and learn to accept whatever memory may be triggered. Take the time to explore the sensations that arise and ask how you can accept them and let them go.

Resources

4. <http://www.statisticbrain.com/stress-statistics/>
5. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fight-or-flight_response
6. <https://www.quora.com/How-many-thoughts-per-second-come-to-our-mind>
7. <http://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/explore-healing-practices/food-medicine/why-being-mindful-matters>
8. <http://www.apa.org/topics/sleep/why.aspx>
9. <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/Yoga>
10. <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/>
11. <http://www.londonmindful.com/blog/the-importance-of-rest/>
12. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/body-sense/201204/emotional-and-physical-pain-activate-similar-brain-regions>
13. www.spiritual.thinking.blogspot.com
14. <http://www.gratefulness.org/>
15. <http://www.louisehay.com/about/>
16. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-wise-open-mind/201108/5-steps-make-affirmations-work-you>
17. <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2012/11/15/the-importance-of-play-for-adults/>
18. http://www.dailyuw.com/arts_and_leisure/article_af698438-1e3d-11e6-ab78-036da3a967e8.html
19. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/james-clear/forming-new-habits_b_5104807.html