



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY



DCRC
Dementia Collaborative
Research Centres



MINDFULNESS BOOKLET

FORMAL AND INFORMAL WORKSHEETS WEEKS 1-8

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Version 2.0
15 September 2017



Getting Started

Before You Begin...

It's important to consider what it is that you hope will happen as a result of doing this program. For example, you may hope for some effective ways of dealing with stress or worry, ways to cope with illness or difficult life situations, better concentration, an increase in the ability to be present and fully engaged in life, or to accept more fully yourself and others, just as you/they are. ***What is it that you hope will happen as a result of following this program?***

The **Getting Started Worksheet** will help you answer this question and will create the foundation for your practice over the next eight weeks. **Please complete the worksheet.** Take your time in doing this. This is especially important because it is difficult to begin a meditation practice on your own and you will *greatly increase your odds of staying with this if you are clear about your goals and when and where you will do the practices.*

Videos and Reading

For each week, under **Videos**, you will find offerings by master teachers of mindfulness, which will motivate and inform the week's topics. Under **Reading** are articles, formatted for easy reading and ready to be printed for your manual. If you are so inclined, you may also want to keep a "Mindfulness Journal" to write your impressions in a more free-form manner than just the worksheets and practice sheets allow.

Each week, the length of the video selections will vary, but the total will usually be **45 minutes or less**. It's a good idea to choose a given day of the week and time (for example, Sunday at 8pm) so that you can watch them in one sitting. This can be done in place of your 30-minute practice for that day, if you like. Also, at least skim the readings on that day, but plan to read them in their entirety by the end of the week.

If English is not your native language, **Google Translate** is integrated into the site, but given that the translation is computer-generated, it's far from perfect.



Daily Practice

You will be doing about **30 minutes of daily practice**, and each week introduces a new set of practices, taken from the "Guided Practices" you see in the menu just to the left of this text. Each week, you will print a **Formal Practice sheet** which is tailored for that week and will be your guide for that week's practice. *[NOTE: The main practices range between 32 and 37 minutes in length, and there are a few which are shorter than 30 minutes.]*

In addition, there is **Informal Practice**, which will help you integrate the learnings and practices into your daily life. Unlike the formal practice, you don't have to schedule this into your day, it's simply having an intention to bring a special awareness into some of the activities that you already do on a daily basis. At the end of each day, you will take just five minutes or so to reflect on the day, using that week's **Informal Practice sheet** as a guide. Although this may look less important than the 30 minutes of scheduled formal practice, it is through the Informal Practice that you will see and realize the concrete and natural benefits of the learnings and practices of MBSR.

Health Considerations

Many people come to the course with some physical limitations and it's important that you know that ***you are free to modify any of the practices, especially the yoga sequences, to make them best work for you.*** *Being aware of your own limits, and modifying the practices when necessary is, in itself, mindfulness in action.*

Also, during the course of this program, whether you have physical limitations or not, it is possible, even likely, that difficult feelings or unpleasant memories may arise. Since this program is done without interaction with an instructor, it is important that you take care of your own emotional and mental health. ***If things come up which are too difficult to handle, you should take a break from the course and/or seek the help of a good counselor or therapist. If you are under a counselor or doctor's care already, please let them know of your plan to go through this program, and keep them informed of your experience as you go along, so that they may monitor any unexpected reactions to the course or practices.***

Ready to start?

Once you've completed the **Getting Started Worksheet** you're ready to go! *When you're ready, begin with **Week 1***



Getting Started in MBSR

This worksheet begins your MBSR journey. Actually writing your responses to these questions and those on the practice logs will help ground your practice and learnings in a way that would not be possible if you simply answered these questions in your head. In a way, this is the first mindfulness practice: being mindful of your intentions and commitment to the process you are about to begin.

So, first, there is probably something that drew you to this program that made it seem like a good idea. For example, you may wake up in the middle of the night with worries and concerns that keep you from getting a good night's sleep, or you may be dealing with health issues and you've heard that mindfulness can help you deal with them, or you may have trouble concentrating, or you may simply want to increase your ability to be present and fully engaged in life, to accept more fully yourself/others, just as you/they are.

By the end of the course, I am hoping that:

While there are things you hope that will get better, it is important to recognize positive aspects of yourself, because it is these things that form the base for any self-improvement. We tend to take for granted our own core strengths, so give yourself a few minutes to reflect on this. For instance, what would a good friend or close family member say that they appreciate about you?

Some of my strengths are:

Finding a specific time and place for your half-hour of daily practice is likely to be one of the most difficult hurdles, and writing down now when and where you'll be doing your daily practice will help you to keep your promise to yourself to practice each day. People often choose to practice first thing in the morning, before roommates or family members are up and about, and others like the evening shortly before bedtime, or just after arriving home from work. Precisely when you practice is less important than having a set time and place, a time that you know you can practice without having to attend to the telephone or be responsive to others, and a place that is quiet and separate from others.

When will I practice? (Try to be concrete, e.g., 6:30am M-F, 7:30am Sat/Sun):

Where I am planning to practice (e.g., corner of the bedroom, basement, etc.):

In addition, you will want to allow time each week to prepare for the coming week's practice by watching that week's videos and/or starting the reading indicated for that week. Since we recommend practicing six days a week, you could choose to prepare for the coming week on the seventh day, starting at the same time you normally would practice. On this day, it's best to reserve a time period of 60-90 minutes.

The time & day of the week I will get ready for the coming week's practice is:



Week 1 - Simple Awareness *Introduction to the Body Scan*

Now that you've experienced the **Introduction** and completed the **Getting Started Worksheet** (see **Getting Started**), you are ready to begin. *Welcome!*

NOTE: *The links to all the materials described below are given in the colored section at the bottom of the page.*

Videos

The videos for this week begin with two short videos by Jon Kabat-Zinn, **Life is Right Now**, in which he talks about how science is beginning to understand the process and effects of meditation, and **Befriending the Body**, where he talks about the importance of our relationship with our body in this course.

The video, **Managing Anxiety with Mindfulness** by Rachel Green, was originally made to address anxiety, specifically test anxiety and panic attacks, but provides a great introduction to some of the basic components of mindfulness meditation, including mindful eating and breath meditation..

Readings

Each week, there are readings which are an important part of the program. This week, the main reading is about the **Body Scan Meditation** you will be doing for your 30 minutes of daily practice this week. **Mindfulness for Caregivers** describes why mindfulness can be applied in caring for people with conditions affecting the brain. Also included are **7 Myths of Meditation**, and **Why We Find It So Hard to Meditate** address common misunderstandings, including the idea that one must have a quiet mind to meditate successfully.

Daily Practices

This week begins your 30-minute daily **Formal Practice**, which is the **Body Scan Meditation**, which you can find in your week 1 folder. Below, you can see the document names to the **Formal Practice sheet**, where you will be making brief notes about your practice.

For the **Informal Practice** this week, it is suggested that you bring mindful awareness to some otherwise routine activity such as washing the dishes and/or eating a meal. At the end of each day, using the **Informal Practice sheet** you will be printing or downloading for this week (see below), take just five minutes or so to see if you can recall a daily activity which you brought awareness to that day.

OK, let's get started! Below are your materials for this week:

Videos [with most browsers, once you start the first video, the others will follow automatically]

Life is Right Now and **Befriending the Body** by Jon Kabat-Zinn [11 min total]

Managing Anxiety with Mindfulness by Rachel Green [15 min]

Reading [print these for your manual or read them online]

Mindfulness for Caregivers by Presence Care Project

The Body Scan Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn

7 Myths of Meditation by Deepak Choprah

Why We Find It So Hard to Meditate by Mindful Staff

Practice Sheets [print PDF file to record your daily practices]

Formal Practice [PDF] – Body Scan

Informal Practice [PDF] - Simple Awareness

Practice Log - Week 1

FORMAL PRACTICE: Read [The Body Scan Meditation](#). Do the [Body Scan](#) at least six times this week. Don't expect to feel anything in particular from this practice. In fact, give up all expectations about it. Just let your experience be your experience. *The link for the Body Scan, and for all the Guided Practices, can be found in the left-hand menu of the online course (palousemindfulness.com).*

Record on this form each time you do the Body Scan. In the comment field, put just a few words to remind you of your impressions of that particular body scan: what came up, how it felt, what you noticed in terms of physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, etc. ***It's important to write the comments immediately after the practice because it will be hard to reconstruct later.***

INFORMAL PRACTICE: Each day this week, see if you can bring mindful awareness to some otherwise routine activity. Before you go to bed each night, see if you can recall at least one example of "simple awareness" and record it on the [Informal Practice Log \(Simple Awareness\)](#).

Date Completed

Formal Practice Comments (Body Scan)

17/09/2016	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>I felt a cold sensation throughout my legs and a slight tightness around the abdomen area as I'm taking in deep breaths. My shoulders were relaxed yet I felt tall and upright. With each breath I felt calm, peace, and perhaps a bit of apathy. By the end of the session I felt quite refreshed.</i></p>

Week 2 • Mindfulness and Compassion
Lovingkindness Meditation

Kindness and compassion are at the core of almost every meditative tradition.

Moreover, *self*• kindness may be the most important component of MBSR • it's the oil that makes the gears of mindfulness work. Without it, the practices are at best, dry, and at worst, harsh and counter•productive. *Ironically, although self• compassion may be the most important component of mindfulness, it is almost totally overlooked in many mindfulness programs.*

Videos and Reading

The first video, **The Evolutionary Roots of Compassion**, explores the idea that we, as humans, have a deep•seated inclination to care for others, and the article, **Survival of the Kindest**, indicates that even Darwin believed this. As natural as the capacity for compassion is, Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk who has logged 50,000 hours of meditation practice and who also has a PhD in cellular genetics, makes the case for consciously supporting this capacity in the video, **Cultivating Altruism**.

We also explore compassion in caregiving in **5 Compassionate Practices**, and the natural linkages between mindfulness and compassion in Shauna Shapiro's video, **How Mindfulness Cultivates Compassion**.

In our culture, it can be argued that the person we are least kind to is ourselves, and in **Self•Compassion**, Farida Zaman points out our tendency to be overly critical of ourselves and describes some ways to cultivate a healthy self•compassion. In the video, **Overcoming Objections to Self•Compassion**, and in the article, **The Five Myths of Self• Compassion**, Kristin Neff explores misconceptions about self•compassion, including the belief that motivation requires self•criticism, and the idea that being kinder to ourselves makes us complacent and less effective.

Daily Practices

In keeping with this theme, we introduce the **Lovingkindness Meditation**, which we suggest you try at least once this week. It is a shorter practice (13 min), so when you do this meditation, you can extend it for another 17 minutes to give yourself a full 30 minutes on that day. Or, if you'd like to extend a bit of lovingkindness to yourself(!), you can stop at the end of the 13 minute meditation.

For the **formal practice** this week, you can choose between the Body Scan, and the Lovingkindness meditation.

For the **informal practice**, on any given day, you may choose any of the practices you've experienced so far in Week 1 or this week, and enter your experience on the supplied log.

Videos

- The Evolutionary Roots of Compassion** by Dacher Keltner [4 min]
- Cultivating Altruism** by Matthieu Ricard [18 min]
- How Mindfulness Cultivates Compassion** by Shauna Shapiro [16 min]
- Overcoming Objections to Self•Compassion** video by Kristin Neff [12 min]

Reading

- Survival of the Kindest** by Paul Ekman
- 5 Compassionate Practices** by Presence Care Project
- Self•Compassion** by Farida Zaman
- The Five Myths of Self•Compassion** by Kristin Neff

Practice sheets

- Formal Practice** [PDF]
- Informal Practice** [PDF]



If we could read the secret history of our enemies, we should find in each man's life sorrow and suffering enough to disarm all hostility.

- Henry Longfellow

Hurt people hurt people. That's how pain patterns get passed on, generation after generation after generation.

Break the chain today. Meet anger with sympathy, contempt with compassion, cruelty with kindness. Greet grimaces with smiles. Forgive and forget about finding fault. Love is the weapon of the future.

- Yehuda Berg

To love our neighbors as we love ourselves means also to love ourselves as we love our neighbors. It means to treat ourselves with as much kindness and understanding as we would the person next door who is in trouble.

- Frederick Buechner

Practice Log – Week 2

FORMAL PRACTICE: Practice at least six times this week, and choose between the Body Scan meditation or **the Lovingkindness Meditation**.

Try the Lovingkindness Meditation at least once. As before, don't expect anything in particular. Just let your experience be your experience.

INFORMAL PRACTICE: At least once a day, consciously use one of the informal practices you've learned from week 1 or from this week, and make note of it on the **Informal Practice Log**.

Date Completed

Practice Comments (include whether Body Scan, Sitting or Yoga)

<p>17/09/2016</p>	<p>EXAMPLE <i>Today was the first day I attempted the Lovingkindness Meditation. During meditation I got reminded of my mother, and all the sacrifices she has made for me and our family. As the meditation continued, I got reminded of the privilege of having the circle of support that I have.</i></p> <p><i>I had trouble relating to the people outside of these circles in a deep level, but I do feel that I can start forming some positive connections as I continue on with the meditation. There are certainly some mixed emotions throughout the session but I find that there is peace in focusing on the positives.</i></p>

Week 3 • Attention and The Brain
Introduction to Sitting Meditation



How many amazingly beautiful things do we miss in a day, simply because we don't expect them to be there, or because our attention is somewhere else, or because we are not even focused on anything present right now, but on a past or anticipated future event?

Videos

This week's videos include **The Monkey Business Illusion** by Daniel Simons, a cognitive scientist at University of Illinois, who illustrates the limitations inherent in our ability to perceive fully what is going on around us. You may be surprised at just how specific (and limited) our powers of attention are. Shauna Shapiro gives a compelling account of how meditation creates physical changes in the brain in **Mindful Meditation and the Brain**. Finally, there is a short piece by Jon Kabat-Zinn, **Coming to Our Senses**, followed by an entertaining **All it takes is 10 Mindful Minutes** that includes juggling and a provocative challenge to do "nothing" for 10 minutes.

Readings

Sitting Meditation describes the practice we are introducing this week. **Mastering Your Own Mind** discusses the growing body of research that demonstrates how meditative practice, even when done for a relatively short period of time (weeks not years), can physically alter the brain in positive and adaptive ways.

Daily Practices

This week, for the **formal practice**, we introduce the **Sitting Meditation**, using breath as the primary object of awareness, alternating this with the Body Scan (Sitting one day, Body Scan the next, etc.). It can seem that the goal of the Body Scan or a Sitting Meditation is to stay focused on exactly one thing at a time (ankle, wrist, breath) and that when you notice your awareness has moved (to a memory, internal narrative, sound and wonderings about the sound), that you are somehow failing.

These practices will increase your ability to focus and concentrate, but they will also expand your ability to be with whatever comes into your field of experience, non-judgmentally.

Your **NOTICING that your attention has moved to another object is, in itself, mindfulness in action**. Mindfulness includes both a concentrative attention (think laser beam) AND a capacity to perceive a larger picture (think floodlight). Both are important. Focusing on only one thing leaves the larger picture unseen, and maintaining only a broad focus does not allow exploration of the parts.

The **informal practice** this week is about becoming aware of how we experience and process pleasant events. They don't need to be major events, they can be something as simple as noticing the sun on your face or someone smiling at you. Just as we did last week, allow a few minutes before going to sleep to complete the informal practice log. **Below are your materials for this week:**

Videos [with most browsers, once you start the first video, the others will follow automatically]

The Monkey Business Illusion by Daniel Simons [2 min]

Mindful Meditation and the Brain video by Shauna Shapiro [6 min]

Coming to Our Senses by Jon Kabat-Zinn [9 min]

All it takes is 10 Mindful Minutes by Andy Puddicombe [10 min]

Reading [print these for your manual or read them online]

Sitting Meditation by Jon Kabat-Zinn [excerpted from Full Catastrophe Living]

Mastering Your Own Mind by Katherine Ellison

Practice sheets [print PDF file to record your daily practices]

Formal Practice [PDF] • Body Scan, Sitting Meditation

Informal Practice [PDF] • Pleasant Events Calendar

The range of what we think and do is limited by what we fail to notice.
And because we fail to notice there is little we can do to change.
Until we notice how failing to notice shapes our thoughts and deeds.
• R.D. Laing

Practice Log - Week 3

FORMAL PRACTICE: Read the [description of the Sitting Meditation](#). Between now and next week, practice at least six times, alternating the Lovingkindness, [Sitting Meditation](#) and [Body Scan](#). As before, don't expect anything in particular from either of these exercises. See if you can give up all expectations about it and just let your experience be your experience. *The link for the Sitting Meditation, the Body Scan, and for all the Guided Practices, can be found in the left-hand menu of the online course (palousemindfulness.com).*

Record on this form each time you practice. In the comment field, put just a few words to remind you of your impressions: what came up, how it felt, what you noticed in terms of physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, etc. ***It's important to write the comments immediately because it will be hard to reconstruct later.***

INFORMAL PRACTICE: At the end of the day before you go to bed, recall one specific pleasant event and record it on the [Pleasant Events Calendar](#).

Date Completed Formal Practice Comments (include whether Body Scan or Sitting)

<p>17/09/206</p>	<p>EXAMPLE <i>As I attempted my first sitting meditation I felt that it was remarkably similar to the Body Scan I did in the past week. There was a bit more emphasis on my breathing and I felt aware of each breath that I took, the feelings in my chest as I inhaled and relaxation as I exhaled. It was challenging to focus my mind on the meditation however I was able to pull myself back after each distraction. Overall there was a sense of calmness throughout the session and peace.</i></p>

Palouse Mindfulness

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

Week 4 • Dealing with Thoughts

Introduction to Yoga



It can seem that the object of meditation is to get rid of all thoughts and distractions, and when that isn't happening, you may feel like you are failing at meditation and/or the meditation can turn into a struggle, wanting your experience to be different than it is. In fact, the kind of meditation you are learning is more about working skillfully with *any* internal or external experience, and isn't really about "getting rid" of thoughts and distractions. In fact, it can be said that wandering thoughts are the weights that train the muscles of the mind.

Videos

The first video, **Non•Striving**, addresses the possibility of taking the striving out of meditation (and life!). The second video, **Attention, Intention, Attitude**, explores the attitude we take toward ourselves in meditation, which is often harsh, and the possibility of being gentler with ourselves. In the third video, **Dealing with Thoughts (in life and in meditation)**, Tara Brach talks about our relationship with thoughts, including a short practice of intentionally bringing awareness to thoughts. The last video, **Surrender to the Monkeys**, is also by Tara, and addresses our wanting for things to be different than they are and the wisdom of taking things just as they are.

Reading

The reading list this week begins with **Mindful Yoga** by Jon Kabat•Zinn. It's important to read this before beginning the Yoga practice that begins this week. The other articles in this section address some common misconceptions in meditation.

In **Meditation: It's Not What You Think**, Jon Kabat•Zinn points out that while meditation can often be accompanied by peace and relaxation, "*meditation is not relaxation spelled differently*", and as Erik Wikstrom says in the quote above, "*The moments of stillness are one of meditation's byproducts, not the practice itself.*"

13 Tips for Mindful Caregiving, looks into integrating mindfulness into your care process.

Daily Practices

For the **formal practice** this week, we introduce **Mindful Yoga (Yoga 1)** into your 30 minute practice, alternating with the other practices from the past week. This is all outlined in your Week 4 Practice Log, below. **Even if you are an experienced yoga practitioner, be sure to read "Mindful Yoga" in the reading below, before beginning the yoga practice. Mindful Yoga is different than many traditional yoga practices in that there is less of a focus on the exact posture achieved and more focus on body/mind awareness.**

The **informal practice** is about becoming aware of how we experience and process unpleasant events. As previous weeks, allow a few minutes before going to sleep to complete the informal practices log. *Below are your materials for this week:*

Videos

Non•Striving by Jon Kabat•Zinn (3 min)

Attention, Intention, Attitude by Shauna Shapiro (16 min)

Dealing with Thoughts (in life and in meditation) by Tara Brach (20 min)

Surrender to the Monkeys by Tara Brach (4 min)

Reading

Mindful Yoga by Jon Kabat•Zinn

Meditation • It's Not What You Think by Jon Kabat•Zinn

13 Tips for Mindful Caregiving by Presence Care Project

Practice sheets

Formal Practice [PDF] • Mindful Yoga (Yoga 1), Body Scan, Sitting

Informal Practice [PDF or WORD format] • Unpleasant Events Calendar

Practice Log – Week 4

FORMAL PRACTICE: Read the [description of Mindful Yoga](#) (*this is very important, even for experienced yoga practitioners*). Practice at least six times this week, alternating Lovingkindness, [Mindful Yoga 1](#), [Sitting Meditation](#).

At least one of the days, do a [Body Scan](#). As before, don't expect anything in particular from the practice. In fact, give up all expectations about it. Just let your experience be your experience.

Record on this form each time you practice. In the comment field, put just a few words to remind you of your impressions of that particular session: what came up, how it felt, what you noticed in terms of physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, etc. **It's important to write the comments immediately because it will be hard to reconstruct later.**

INFORMAL PRACTICE: At the end of the day before you go to bed, recall one specific unpleasant event and record it on the [Unpleasant Events Calendar](#). The unpleasant event doesn't have to be major. It could be, for instance, being mildly annoyed by a minor event.

Date Completed

Comments (include whether Body Scan, Yoga or Sitting)

17/09/206	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>This week has been quite different from the two previous weeks. The session today was more interactive, with more movement and motions. With each pose I took deep breaths and could feel my muscles as they stretched and contracted, and tight joints felt better. None of the exercises for this session was particularly challenging so I was happy that I could complete them all. By the end of the session I felt a sense of accomplishment.</i></p>

Week 5 • Stress: Responding vs. Reacting
STOP: The One-minute Breathing Space



Between stimulus and response there is a space.

In that space is our power to choose our response.

In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

• Victor Frankl

This week's videos

How To Make Stress Your Friend, comes from Kelly McGonigal, a psychologist specializing in health medicine, who puts stress in perspective, re•framing stress, not as an enemy to health and well•being, but as a response which is protective and even life•giving. She perhaps goes a little too far in saying that health endangering stress simply comes from a "belief that stress is bad", but her video provides a good counter•balance to the idea that stress is always bad.

In the last video, Susan Bauer•Wu describes how mindfulness can counteract a disproportionate stress reaction and introduces you to **STOP**, a mindfulness practice you can use literally anywhere anytime to ground you and help you to be more resilient and effective in the face of difficult situations.

Reading

Harvard Health's **Understanding the Stress Response** describe the physiological and neurological effects of stress, distinguishing between acute stress, which is short•term and adaptive, and chronic stress, which is the primary cause of stress•related health problems.

Anatomy of Fear is a graphic depiction of the stress response. **PCP STOP and De Stress** is a description of the process you will be using for this week's informal practice.

Daily Practices

For the **formal practice**, we introduce "Yoga 2" and continue with the Sitting Meditation, alternating between them. If there are any of the yogas you haven't yet tried, this could be the time to try one or more of them.

For the **informal practice**, you will look for opportunities to practice **STOP** during the course of the day. Don't expect to remember the precise steps of "STOP" during the most trying parts of the day • it's enough just to remember to stop and take a breath.

The best way to make it second nature is to practice it when you aren't stressed, such as during the "in between" times, like waiting in line, walking from one room to another, getting in/out of your car, etc.

Below are your materials for this week:

Videos

How To Make Stress Your Friend by Kelly McGonigal [14 min]

STOP: A Short Mindfulness Practice by Susan Bauer•Wu [4 min]

Reading

The Anatomy of Fear Discovery Magazine graphic

Understanding the Stress Response article from Harvard Health Publications

PCP STOP and De Stress Presence Care Project

Practicesheets

Formal Practice [PDF] [or WORD format] • Mindful Yoga (Yoga 2) and Sitting

Informal Practice [PDF] [or WORD format] • STOP: The One Minute Breathing Space

Practice Log - Week 5

FORMAL PRACTICE: Practice at least six times this week, alternating [Mindful Yoga 2](#) with the [Sitting Meditation](#). As before, don't expect anything in particular from doing these. In fact, give up all expectations about it. Just let your experience be your experience.

Record on this form each time you practice. In the comment field, put just a few words to remind you of your impressions of that particular session: what came up, how it felt, what you noticed in terms of physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, etc. It's important to write the comments immediately because it will be hard to reconstruct later.

INFORMAL PRACTICE: Read the description of [STOP: One-Minute Breathing Space](#). Carry the [Informal Practice Log](#) with you during the day, and at least once during the day (waiting in line, just before getting in or out of your car...), practice using "STOP", and record it on the Informal Practice Log when you can.

Date Completed

Formal Practice Comments

<p>17/09/2016</p>	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>I was unsure about this week's practice. As the session progressed however I felt that this week was a bit more challenging than last week's session, and it did not help that I was experiencing some knee pain from a few days ago.</i></p> <p><i>I couldn't complete some of the motions however I did do most of it. Although I was slightly discouraged at first I still felt accomplished at what I was able to do and felt very good after doing these exercises. I felt happy and content with what I was able to do at this stage.</i></p>

Week 6 • Dealing with Difficult Emotions/Sensations
Soften, Soothe, Allow



The most intimate relationship we will have in our entire lifetime is with ourselves. No one hears our hearts the way we do. No one knows our hurts the way we do. We are the sages of our soft spots and our edges. Self-compassion is showing up to that relationship with honesty and with love.

- Jamie Ridler

Mid-way assessment

We are now at the halfway point, and this is a good time to reflect on what's been happening so far for you in doing the practices and in your daily life.

Taking the time now for reflection will help you to notice and appreciate any positive changes that may have resulted from the practices.

It can be helpful to actually write down your thoughts at this point, reflecting on your personal learnings as well as the things you may still be struggling with. As you do this, you may recall a specific incident in your life that stands out, that somehow relates to the work you have done so far in this course.

Dealing with physical and emotional discomfort

This week's topic has to do with dealing with discomfort, both physical and emotional. We normally react to pain or discomfort in one of two ways:

Blocking: We try to block or deny the discomfort by pushing through it through force of will, by distracting ourselves, or by self-medicating with food, alcohol or drugs. This is ultimately unsatisfactory since as soon as you stop "pushing through" or your distraction or self-medication wears off, it can come back even stronger..

Drowning: We become overwhelmed by it, drowning in the discomfort and its associated fears or judgments ("I can't stand this!", "What if this continues or gets worse?", "How could they/I have been so stupid!?!", etc.). This leads to incapacitation and a sense of hopelessness and powerlessness.

It's bad enough that neither of these strategies are very effective or satisfying, but a continuing reliance on them usually makes things even worse than they already are. There is a middle ground, a place where you are neither pushing away difficult feelings/situations, nor being subsumed by them.

This "middle way" involves learning to feel the sensations or emotions, but not being swept away by them. A surprising and counter-intuitive result of staying with something in this way is that the "I've got to get out of here" component of the discomfort often lessens, or sometimes can even disappear.

Videos

In **Turning Toward Difficulty**, Vidyamala Burch of **Breathworks** describes this counter-intuitive "middle way". Her mindfulness teaching is primarily concerned with chronic physical pain, but this presentation applies just as well to emotional pain. In **The Three Components of Self-Compassion**, Kristin Neff talks about the importance of dealing with difficult emotional and physical issues with self-kindness and gentleness. Finally, in **Awakening Self-Compassion**, Tara Brach describes RAIN, a particular way of tapping into this "middle way", again emphasizing the importance of self-compassion.

Readings

The readings for this week include **Thinking with the Heart**, by Chris Germer, which describes the origination of the **Soften•Soothe•Allow** process. **The Soften, Soothe, Allow process** is a one-page description of the process that will be used for the informal practice this week.

If you or a loved one is dealing with pain, **The 5 Step Pain Process** is a must-read.

Daily Practices

For the **formal practice**, we focus a little more on the sitting meditation, alternating it with your choice of one of the other practices. On the first day, though, if you have something that happened that is mildly difficult, try the **Soften, Soothe, Allow Meditation** (see it on the menu to the left). The situation doesn't have to be a major issue, in fact, it's best if it's mild or moderate. For instance, it could be impatience while waiting in line or being mildly annoyed by some minor event.

The **informal practice** will be to try the **Soften, Soothe, Allow process** at times when you are experiencing an unwanted emotion. As mentioned above, it's best not to start with the most pressing issue in your life. *If, at the end of the day, no unwanted emotion comes to mind, take the time to feel gratitude for something that happened that day.*

Below are your materials for this week:

Video

Turning Toward Difficulty by Vidyanala Burch [10 min]

The Three Components of Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff [6 min]

Awakening Self-Compassion by Tara Brach [23 min]

Reading

Thinking with the Heart: The origin of *Soften, Soothe, Allow* by Chris Germer

The Soften, Soothe, Allow process *one-page description of the Soften, Soothe, Allow process*

The 5 Step Pain Process by Vidyanala Burch

Practice sheets

Formal Practice [PDF] • Various (*Soften•Soothe•Allow Meditation on 1st day*)

Informal Practice [PDF] • see **The Soften, Soothe, Allow process**

Week 7 • Mindfulness and Communication
Mountain & Lake Meditations



To listen is to lean in softly with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.

• Mark Nepo

If you were to consider all the truly stressful situations in your life, you'd probably find that many, if not most, involve other people. This week, we focus on communication and what it means to be mindful in our interactions with others, whether it be family members, co-workers or neighbors. Our focus up until now has been on our internal world (thoughts, feelings and sensations); now we move from the intra-personal to the inter-personal, taking into account another's world, and the place where their world and ours meet. This means recognizing that "the other" (person or persons) have their own perceptions, feelings and needs, which are almost certainly different than ours.

Listening

Most of us don't really listen very deeply when we are in conversation. As Tara Brach says in **The Sacred Art of Listening**: "We spend most of our moments when someone is speaking, planning what we're going to say, evaluating it, trying to come up with our presentation of our self, or controlling the situation. Pure listening is a letting go of control. It's not easy and takes training... The bottom line is when we are listened to, we feel connected. When we're not listened to, we feel separate."

Dealing with Conflict

Effective communication with those who we disagree with is extraordinarily difficult. If you are like most people, you have a fall-back strategy to deal with conflict that was learned early in life, one that is habitual and embedded in interactions with others. The three most common strategies are: **accommodate** ("be nice"), **demand** ("me first"), or **withdraw** ("I don't care"). There is a fourth way, one that involves investigating both your world and the other's world, that can sometimes yield a surprising and creative solution that honors both worlds. In the martial art, Aikido, this would be called **blending**, a move that harms neither party and turns conflict into more of a dance than a fight. This is complex and an art form in itself, and forms the basis of Marshall Rosenberg's **Non-Violent Communication (NVC)**, something that is briefly introduced this week.

Videos

Susan Piver, in an entertaining and provocative presentation, **The Art of Being Heard**, describes four principles of mindful communication (timing, listening, agenda-less-ness, confidence). Her description of confidence may surprise you, especially given the fact that this particular presentation was given to a business audience. In the second video, Tara Brach talks about **The Sacred Art of Listening**, and in **Awakening Through Conflict**, she begins to answer the question of how one deals with conflict in communication.

Reading

Included in the reading is a written companion to the video above by Tara Brach, also called **The Sacred Art of Listening**. Anger is sometimes confused with hatred and identified as an emotion that a "spiritual" person would not have. Sylvia Boorstein clarifies this misunderstanding with **The Most Frequently Asked Question**. Our typical way of dealing with anger is to either externalize it or stuff it, and in **The Answer to Anger** Pema Chodron describes a powerful middle way, neither exploding nor imploding. **Conflict Management Styles** describes the four ways of dealing with conflict outlined above (accommodate, demand, withdraw, blend), and **The Heart of Non-Violent Communication (NVC)** by Marshall Rosenberg, is an introduction to NVC, a skillful way of communicating in difficult situations.

When is the last time that you had a great conversation, a conversation that wasn't just two intersecting monologues, which is what passes for conversation a lot in this culture? But ... a great conversation, in which you overheard yourself saying things that you never knew you knew? That you heard yourself receiving from somebody words that absolutely found places within you that you thought you had lost ... a conversation that brought the two of you on to a different plane? ... a conversation that continued to sing in your mind for weeks afterwards ... I've had some of them recently ... they are food and drink for the soul.

• John O'Donohue

Daily Practices

This week, we introduce the **Mountain Meditation** and the **Lake Meditation**, one of which we suggest you try at least once this week, in place of one of your normal 30 minute practices. These are both shorter practices (20 min), so on the day you do one of these meditations, you will have a shorter practice session (if you'd like a full 30 minutes, you can add 10 minutes of silent meditation on your own that day).

For the **formal practice** this week, we are now at a point where you can freely choose between any of the three main practices you've experienced so far: Body Scan, Sitting Meditation, Yoga (and the Mountain Meditation or Lake Meditation at least one day).

The **informal practices** up until now have been focusing on the intra•personal (what's happening inside you) and now we begin paying attention to the inter•personal, using the **Communication Calendar**, noticing what happens when we bring mindfulness into relationship.

Videos

The Art of Being Heard *by Susan Piver [16 min]*

The Sacred Art of Listening *by Tara Brach [19 min]*

Awakening Through Conflict *by Tara Brach [9 min]*

Reading

The Sacred Art of Listening *article by Tara Brach*

The Most Frequently Asked Question *by Sylvia Boorstein*

The Answer to Anger *by Pema Chodron*

Conflict Management Styles *summary of communication styles*

The Heart of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) *by Marshall Rosenberg*

Practice sheets

Formal Practice *[PDF] [or WORD format]* • Body Scan, Sitting, Yoga (+ Mountain or Lake Med.)

Informal Practice *[PDF] [or WORD format]* • Communication Calendar

Practice Log – Week 7

FORMAL PRACTICE: Practice at least six times this week, doing either a **Body Scan, Yoga, or Sitting Meditation** (guided or unguided). Also, **listen to the Mountain Meditation or the Lake Meditation at least once**. As before, don't expect anything in particular. Just let your experience be your experience.

INFORMAL PRACTICE: Each day, at the end of the day before you go to bed, recall and record one communication experience on the [Communication Calendar](#). It doesn't need to be a particularly difficult communication, simply one in which you can recollect wanting something in particular to come out of the conversation (even if it was simply wanting a smile or a particular kind of response).

NOTE: For the first time, in this informal practice, we are expanding our mindfulness to include another person's world, and there is a space (4th column) to consider what **they** wanted out of the communication and what **they** actually got. To really do this, you'd have to, at least for the moment, put yourself in the other party's shoes. A complete exploration of this would, of course, include asking them about this, which would be critical in an important communication. **There is a very powerful process that includes a methodology for really understanding another's feelings-wants-needs-perceptions, [Non-Violent Communication](#), which is well worth exploring, but is beyond the scope of this week's practice.**

Date Completed	Practice Comments (include whether yoga, body scan, or sitting)
17/09/206	<p>EXAMPLE</p> <p><i>As a change of pace I did my meditation this morning at my backyard since it was such a lovely day outside. As I sat on the grass with my ear phones I played the Lake Meditation audio from my phone.</i></p> <p><i>I could feel the light breeze and warmth of the morning sun. It definitely helped me visualize the lake. There was a sense of peace, and although there were times where my mind wondered it was a simple task of coming back into this quiet space.</i></p>

Week 8 • Conclusion of the MBSR 8 weeks
Developing a Practice of Your Own



Time to reflect...

This brings us to the final week of the course, and if you have been watching the videos, reading the recommended material, and doing the practices, you have accomplished a lot! As a result of your dedicated learning and practice, it's likely that there have been some changes in you since you began, so now might be a good time to ask yourself: ***What changes have you noticed since you began the course?***

The changes may be different than you expected and they might not be monumental. They could include subtle shifts, such as discovering that you are sometimes able to find space in the middle of a busy day, or that you are a little more resilient in encounters with others, or you're just a little kinder to yourself in difficult situations. It's often the subtle changes that are actually most profound, because they indicate learning that has been integrated, that they come from the inside•out rather than top•down.

Developing a practice of your own

Now you may want to consider the question: ***How will you continue practicing mindfulness in your daily life, on your own?*** You may decide that you would like to continue the practice in a formal way, incorporating in your schedule a sitting meditation or yoga, for instance, or you may already have an idea of how you would incorporate into your life one or more of the many informal practices (e.g., simple awareness, mindful eating, STOP, Soften•Soothe•Allow, or PAIN processes).

Everyone who completes the first 8 weeks does it in a unique way, a way that suits their temperament and needs. One person might continue with a 30• minute per day meditation practice, another might take a regular yoga class, another may have made their daily walk into a meditation using present moment awareness of their inner and outer worlds as they walk, and yet another may intentionally use one or more of the many informal practices throughout their day.

The important thing is not the specific practices you choose, but that you make them yours, and that they resonate with you in a way that and that they help you to be more alive, engaged and joyful in your daily life.

Be patient toward all that is unsolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue.

Do not now seek the answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them.

And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now.

• Rainer Maria Rilke

Videos and Reading

The videos include **Mindfulness is Not A Crystal Ball**, a brief summary of mindfulness in daily life by Susan Kaiser Greenland, a video by Tara Brach on **Happiness**, and a funny but poignant piece, **How My Son Ruined My Life**, by James Baraz's mother. In **Compassion and Mindfulness**, Jon Kabat-Zinn reinforces the key role that compassion and self-compassion play in this course.

Continuing on...

Please continue with **Weeks 9-16 Mindfulness**. For these weeks, it is important to continue your own mindfulness practice as you begin exercising your loved one. Practice logs are available from the Mindfulness section of the site.

For our program participants; extra logging pages are available on your booklet, and please feel free to raise questions during the teleconference.

Supplementary Materials are available for Weeks 17 onwards.

We hope this course has been useful thus far!

Videos

Mindfulness is Not A Crystal Ball by Susan Kaiser Greenland [2 min]

Happiness by Tara Brach [20 min]

How My Son Ruined My Life by Selma & James Baraz [7 min]

Compassion and Mindfulness by Jon Kabat-Zinn [5 min]

Reading

Deepening a Personal Meditation Practice by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Suggestions for Daily Practice by Jon Kabat-Zinn

In the Service of Life by Rachel Naomi Remen

Practice Log – Week 8

FORMAL PRACTICE: Practice at least six times this week, doing anything you’ve learned up until now (Body Scan, Sitting Meditation, Yoga), with or without guidance. As before, don’t expect anything in particular. Just let your experience be your experience.

INFORMAL PRACTICE: At least once a day, consciously use one of the informal practices you’ve learned (Simple Awareness, Mindful Eating, STOP, Soften/Soothe/Allow) and make note of it on the **Informal Practice Log**.

Date Completed Practice Comments (include whether Body Scan, Sitting, Yoga, or Lovingkindness)

Date Completed	Practice Comments (include whether Body Scan, Sitting, Yoga, or Lovingkindness)

