

MINDFUL LIVING

Live the life you want

Written by Kate Parish - Master Mindfulness, NLP and EFT
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ABOUT ME

My passion is helping people to see that they can live the life that they want and take advantage of all the wonderful opportunities that this amazing journey presents to us. Having taught in schools all over the world, I am passionate about education and developing our minds - the more we work on self development, the more open we become to what the world provides. We fully understand how developing skills can have a huge positive impact on a person, their confidence, their self awareness, their life skills and their over all wellbeing. Education that is delivered in a passionate, motivating and inspiring way gives skills that we can use to develop our own selves and go on to motivate and inspire others. At Gateway Workshops we believe in promoting a growth mindset and love seeing all our students strive!

Go, be brilliant!

“Every morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most.”

Buddha

The aim of this eBook is to learn all about ‘Mindfulness’, a wonderful and powerful way of being that everyone is capable of achieving.

You will gain an understanding of what mindfulness actually is and how it can benefit us in our lives.

This life-transforming eBook will allow you to look at your current level of mindfulness and work on how you can develop it, as we guide you through the essential ‘Mindfulness’ principles and practices. This eBook will provide you with some mindfulness exercises and tools that you can use to practise mindfulness for yourself or to use with clients. If you are a person interested in helping others, and yourself, then this eBook is for you!

If you would like to further your learning in this area then we offer fully accredited, insurable courses in EFT, Life Coaching, NLP and Mindfulness, which will take you to qualified practitioner level!

You can find the courses at:

https://www.gatewayworkshops.co.uk/course_summary/



CONTENTS



CHAPTER 1

What is Mindfulness?

CHAPTER 2

The Core Components of Mindfulness

CHAPTER 3

The Core Assumptions of Mindfulness

CHAPTER 4

Ideas relating to Mindfulness

CHAPTER 5

Mindfulness exercises and tools

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"The outer situation of your life and whatever happens there is the surface of the lake.

Sometimes calm, sometimes windy and rough, according to the cycles and the seasons.

Deep down, however, the lake is always undisturbed. You are the whole lake, not just the surface."

- Eckhart Tolle

"The quality of your communication shapes the quality of your life. Every cell in your being aligns with what you declare."

Niurka, Supreme Influence: Change your life with the Power of the Language You Use

"Folks are usually about as happy as they make their minds up to be".

- Abraham Lincoln



"We can't solve problems using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them"

- Albert Einstein

What you think, you become.

What you feel, you attract.

What you imagine, you create.

- Buddha

How you feel affects what happens to you so change your thoughts and change your life.

Change what you own.



**CHANGE
YOUR
THOUGHT
AND YOU
CAN
CHANGE
YOUR
WORLD.**

Chapter 1. What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness. An interesting word, a simple word, a word full of possibilities, but what exactly does this mean? Does this mean that I need to have a full mind, or to clear my mind? Does it mean I need to be quiet or to be fully involved? Am I thinking too deeply into this? All of these questions are an example of how strong our minds are, how we can think at a million miles an hour and how having mindfulness can support our whole lives. We are always thinking, our minds are always active, but are we always mindful? Do our minds stray? Can we start thinking about one thing and then get caught up thinking about another thing? If we have many things to do, is it harder to start because we are thinking about too many things that we end up not completing anything? These are examples of how our minds can be so active, but not necessarily focused.

Mindfulness therefore suggests that the mind is fully attending to what's happening, to what you're doing, to where you are. This may sound simple, but as we have demonstrated above our minds can flit and veer off in all sorts of wonderful/annoying directions, perhaps we are fretting about the future, or something that has happened in the present, perhaps we are anxious about something that has happened in the past. Whatever it is we are thinking about, we are not fully focused on the present and what is happening now.

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we are doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what is going on around us. We are mindful.



There are many ways, practices, examples of how we can become more mindful, and throughout the course we will be delving into these in more detail. But for now, to get us started, here is a quick five steps to mindfulness:

Five Steps to Mindfulness

1) First Mindfulness Exercise: Mindful Breathing

The first exercise is very simple, but the results, can be very great. When you breathe in, you know that this is your in-breath. When you breathe out, you are mindful that this is your out-breath.

Have a go now and notice how it really focuses your mind on breathing alone and how a sense of letting go comes into play.

You are now breathing mindfully, you are bringing your mind home to yourself. So the object of your mindfulness is your breath. As you breathe in, this is my in-breath, as you breathe out, this is my out-breath. When you do this then all other thoughts stop, they cease, you are focused on your breathing. The past ceases to matter, your pile of laundry, your work issues, your financial problems are not causing you anxiety because you are mindful of something else.

Mindfulness does not make your problems disappear – this is not the aim. The aim is to refocus, to become present, to calm the mind so that positive ways forward can be seen more clearly. Decisions are never made well in an anxious state.

2) Second Mindfulness Exercise: Concentration

The second exercise is to concentrate while you are breathing. To follow your breath as you breathe out all the way to the end, to follow your breath as you breathe in all the way to the end. From the beginning of my out-breath to the end of my out-breath, my mind is *always* with it. Therefore, mindfulness becomes uninterrupted, and the quality of your concentration is improved.

By continuing in this manner your breathing will naturally become deeper, slower, calmer and it happens naturally!

3) Third Mindfulness Exercise: Awareness of Your Body

The third exercise is to become aware of your body as you are breathing. You have become aware of your breath and you have been concentrating on each breath all the way to the end. You have now stepped into mindfulness and all the energy that that brings. You can now take this one step further and become aware of your body. This helps us to connect our mind with our body and to become fully established in the present – to become alive!

“Breathing in, I am aware of my body. Breathing out, I am aware of my body.” I know my body is *there*. This brings the mind fully back to the body and the mind and body become one reality.

4) Fourth Mindfulness Exercise: Releasing Tension

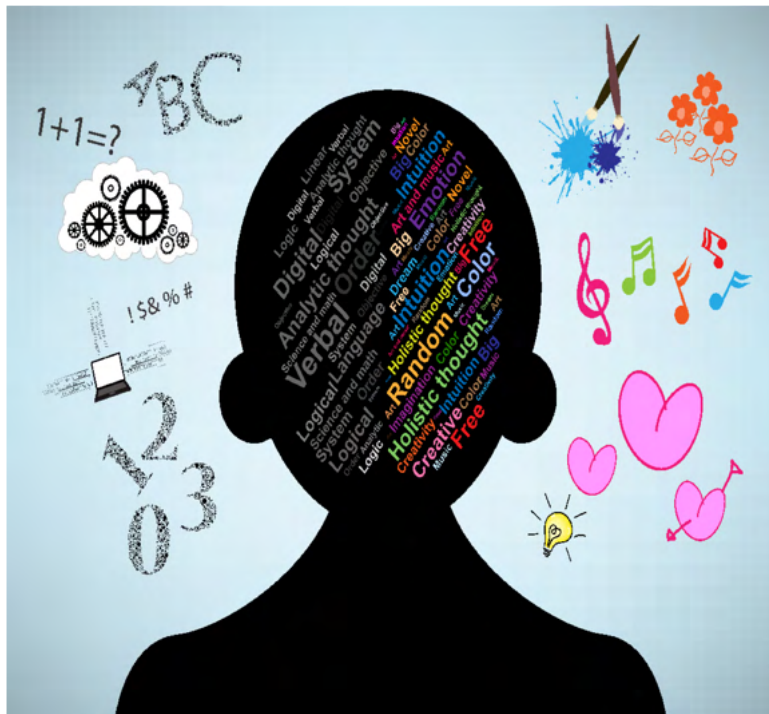
This next exercise is to release the tension in the body. Once we have become aware of our body then we may start to become more aware of any tension or pain that is present. We can use our minds to support the release of this tension and pain.

“Breathing in, I’m aware of my body. Breathing out, I release the tension in my body.” By giving ourselves this little bit of time to become more aware of ourselves and our bodies then we are enabling mindfulness and putting ourselves into a more productive, yet peaceful state. This can be done at any time of the day – while working, while sat at traffic lights whilst in a shop queue, whilst watering plants etc. Take that time to become one, to become mindful, to focus.

5) Walking Meditation

When we are being mindful we become aware of something and enjoy it. We can practise mindful breathing, mindful eating, mindful exercise etc. You become aware of it and enjoy it. Effortlessness. We can do this with mindful walking. Every step becomes enjoyable, every step helps us to see the joy, to become more positive, to see the wonders of life.

We can practice mindful walking throughout the day and it is not only excellent exercise for our bodies but also by doing this in a mindful way – being aware of the present and every step – then we are also supporting our minds.



The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is often seen as a way to gain some short-term relief from stress, anxiety, depression etc, while others see it as a cure for health issues, a way for us to enhance concentration and develop inner peace.

Whilst mindfulness does do all of these things in some form, the primary aim of mindfulness practice is not to achieve any of these. It is actually a practice to train our mind and for raising awareness of 'what is'. It enables sustained wakefulness and presence. The more we practice mindfulness the stronger our mind will become. In mindfulness, the mind is not thought, but rather, conscious awareness, so mindfulness encourages us to learn from our own experience.

Eckhart Tolle sums this up beautifully:

“In today’s rush, we all think too much, seek too much, want too much, and forget about the joy of just being”

There are many physical, mental and emotional benefits of mindfulness that are commonly held, even if they are still not yet fully recognised in medical fields. These include:

- Mental strengthening, being able to be happy in the present
- Calming of the mind
- Controlling of our emotions in a positive way
- Physical benefits come from the increase in motivation, self-worth, and self-understanding
- Increased energy
- Supports digestion
- Relaxes tension
- Lowers blood pressure
- Benefits circulation and stress is lowered
- Heart benefits – physically through lowered blood pressure and stress and emotionally through increased acceptance and understanding
- Strengthening our coping mechanisms

As children, we are not generally taught how to strengthen our minds and control our thinking, we are focused on learning and remembering facts. Through training our minds and becoming more mind/body attached then we increase our abilities to detach from thought, emotion and body sensation – enough to actually witness them from the outside in.

This, in turn, enables us to regulate our emotions, train our brains to efficiently focus and teach our bodies to recognise and to relax when we do lose our focus.

Chapter 2. The Core Components of Mindfulness

Attention, Intention and Attitude

ATTENTION – how able are we to focus on just one thing at any one moment

Multitasking – helpful or a hindrance? In today's world, we often work longer hours and pack more into every day. As a result, we end up juggling different activities at the same time in order to get those 'To-Do' Lists done! Multitasking in many situations can be useful, necessary and productive – if we are able to multi task effectively. However, research has shown that multitasking, switching between tasks, can reduce productivity by up to 40%. Switching between tasks divides our attention and can decrease the quality of what it is that we are doing because we are not fully concentrating on one thing. This can become habit and can lead to stress and feeling unfulfilled as nothing gets done to a satisfactory level – nothing feels complete.

Some examples of doing more than 1 thing at a time:

- Getting to your workplace but not remembering your journey
- Finishing a film but not fully understanding what happened
- Going to get something, but then forgetting what it was you were going to get
- Finishing an exercise class but not remembering what exercises you have just done. Your mind was on too many things!



INTENTION – We need to change our intention in order to focus our attention

Do we ever stop to consider our motivations? To reflect on what we are doing? We are all so busy that we often feel we just do not have the time to do this. However, by taking the time to reflect and to set clear and positive intentions for what we are doing we can actually save ourselves time by getting rid of doing things that are not always necessary. Sometimes we do things on auto pilot because we have always done them – but are they always necessary? Are there better ways to do it?

What is our intention in doing this?

To become more mindfully aware of your intentions you need to:

- 1. Become more self-aware.** Recognise what is important to you right now, what are you feeling? Why are you feeling it? What are your expectations of the situation you are in? What are your expectations of those around you? Think about why you are where you are.
- 2. Recognise your own mental filters.** What destructive thought patterns does your mind frequently hold on to? Why? Once we recognise what our mind filters out and what we hold on to then we can actively start to work with our minds and choose differently.
- 3. Think about your intentions.** Think about the situation you are in and what your intentions are for the outcome. Think about what matters most to you. For example, you may be needing to let a supplier know that their product is not up to quality. Think about your intention here – is your intention to cancel your orders with the supplier, or is your intention to stay with the supplier, but to get them to improve their quality? Thinking about what your intention is will enable you to decide how the conversation should go.
- 4. Enable direct attention.** As you become more self-aware of what it is that you want, as you recognise what destructive thought patterns you hold on to, as you give more consideration to your intentions, you will be able to direct your attention to exactly what it is that you want. You will be able to pay more attention to what really matters in the situation: the people, the task, the outcome?

ATTITUDE - Towards other people, their own intentions and personal motives.

We are all imperfect human beings and as good as our intentions are, we have all fallen foul to saying and/or doing things that we do not agree with, or that we don't mean. If we can understand that in general no one has bad intentions, people generally do not set out to upset or harm people. Everybody is reacting in way that they feel necessary, perhaps they have been taught to react this way, perhaps they are not able to handle emotions, perhaps they have had some bad news, perhaps they are at the end of their tether. If we can become more mindfully aware about recognising and accepting that people do not act or behave perfectly because of a myriad of reasons, this allows us to extend more acceptance to others, to become more mindful.

We all try and make the best choices that we can. These choices are generally made due to our experiences, understanding, and the information that we hold currently. By understanding this we can be less judgemental on the actions that people take. They have taken those actions for a reason – a reason that we may not understand, but a reason none the less. Any action that anyone takes has one goal – to accomplish something that will benefit them, to accomplish something that we value.



Chapter 3. The Core Assumptions of Mindfulness

In order to benefit the most from mindfulness and to help others benefit from mindfulness we need to really believe the benefits and know that living mindfully will make a positive change in our lives. So we are not going to talk here of facts, beliefs or truths – we are going to talk about assumptions that we may want to make about mindfulness. This means we are not imposing views on anyone.

If we can make these assumptions about mindfulness and mindful living, then we will be able to benefit from mindfulness more positively:

1. Feeling better? Actually better?

Mindfulness is not about feeling better in that instant. It is not about stopping the tears and feeling better for the short term. Most people seek feeling better over actually being better because it can make you stop feeling the hurt etc sooner. However, it does not stop it for long and the feelings come back. Seeking to actually 'be' better is about changing our thoughts and mindset, and thinking mindfully. Choosing to become better, to make better decisions, to progress. So, mindfulness is not about feeling better. It is about being better able to face everything that is thrown at us – the good, the bad and the ugly, and being less reactive so we can make better choices. We seek quick fixes less and instead focus on the reasons behind the feelings and work on changing those.

In essence, mindfulness is more about how we can be a better person, than about feeling better.

2. Our Inner World shows in the Outer World

We are always looking to attach meaning to things that happen, to life itself, to events that happen. Whilst this is great, we do need to be aware of the meanings that we are attaching. For example, where have they come from? Have they come from mindful thought or from perception? Our inner worlds can affect this and manifest themselves in the outer world. For example, if we are having a bad day, then we will assign different meanings to things on the outside world than if we were having a good day, than if we were relaxed.

3. Hurt people, Hurt People

This brings us nicely onto this assumption. The assumption that people who are hurt, are more likely to hurt others – whether intentionally or unintentionally. Hurt people are generally focused on themselves, they are focused on protecting themselves, on putting barriers up as a human defence mechanism. If someone is harbouring an undealt with hurt, then how they deal with other people may be irrational. People who hold on to jealousy, end up hurting another person who actually they really look up to, people who feel unlovable, end up hurting others in relationships – they try and protect themselves. Hurt people are often unaware of where their hurt has come from.

If we can mindfully look at ourselves and any of our hurts and really get to grips about where they have come from, then we can start to forgive ourselves, we can practice self-compassion.

Also, if we can use this understanding to recognise certain behaviours in others and how these may have come from past hurts, then we can act more mindfully towards them and not be judgemental or create preconceptions.

Anger can erupt out of hand and can suffocate and poison our lives. However, if handled correctly anger can also be a positive emotion, an emotion that is needed at that time to get your message across. It just needs to be controlled and managed, so that we are not passing the hurt on to others – we are just starting our case.

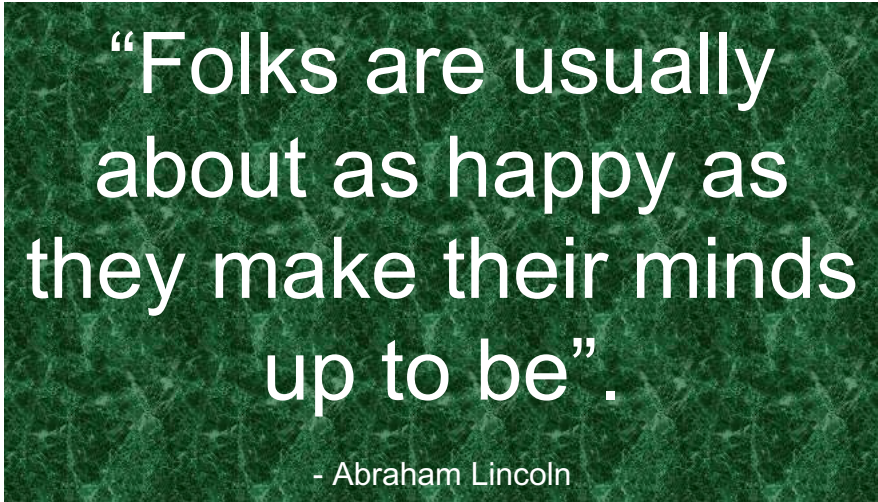
4. Directing anger

We then move swiftly on to how we can direct our awareness of our anger and fully acknowledge why we may be feeling this way. By recognising our pain with an attitude of self-compassion, then we can direct our hurt through naturally and stop the anger trigger before it explodes.

To do this we need to be more mindful of how we feel and to recognise subtle changes and feelings. This helps us to develop our intuition, empathy and creativity – as these skills depend heavily on our ability to notice subtle feelings.

We then need to recognise compassion for ourselves and others in a non-judgemental way. This enables us to value pain and recognise it as a normal part of being human as opposed to being an indication of failure. It helps us to identify with our pain and not let it overwhelm us.

When we put these skills into practice then we create a gap between the feeling and the emotion and in this gap we can be mindful. We can even start to have compassion for the people who have wronged us and caused the pain, as we begin to think about reasons for this – we are thinking more rationally as we have not let the emotion overwhelm or control us. If we are to accept this assumption as truth, then how can it change our attitudes towards life and others?



“Folks are usually
about as happy as
they make their minds
up to be”.

- Abraham Lincoln

5. Life has emotional consequences

As buddha said “What we think, we become”. What we choose to focus on in our lives has emotional consequences for us.

We can all at some points spend so much time on focusing on things that don't benefit or serve us in anyway. Often the things we spend the most time thinking about are these things that actual hinder us or cause us to worry and stress. At times like this what we should be doing is focusing our attention inwards and recognising how our thoughts are influencing us. If we recognise this then we are more able to identify positives and to experience the world differently. That is not to say that we should ignore stress, worry and things that we need to do – more that we should recognise the emotion that these things are causing us, and recognise it as just that – an emotion! We can control that emotion and see it differently. A lot of what worries us is thinking about how it will affect the future – if we can be more mindful on the present then we can identify steps to alleviate our worries and stress and to focus on the fact that “No-one knows what the future will hold”

It starts with the simple acceptance that:

We can feel free and open in the present moment if we choose to let go of stress and worries that are standing in our way.

In short, we are not our thoughts, but if we don't recognise that this is true - then it's easy for us to be carried away by them. Mindfulness, and being present, is truly transformational.

'What we think, we become' is a reminder to monitor our thoughts and realise that:

- We can have control over our thoughts
- We are not our thoughts
- We can become more mindful of our thoughts
- We are responsible for choosing how to act or respond to our thoughts
- We don't need to allow our thoughts to consume us

What you think, you become.

What you feel, you attract.

What you imagine, you create.

- Buddha

6. Changing the Outer World does not alter the Inner World

“A change is as good as a rest” Whilst this is true, it doesn’t always tell the whole story. For example, many of us change our jobs, place we live, financial status, relationship status, all in the hope that this will change how we view the world, our ‘inner world’ experience. It may work for a while, and temporarily change our perspective on things, but lasting change starts on the inside and works its way out.

Mahatma Gandhi said this perfectly:

'Our greatness lies not so much in being able to remake the world as being able to remake ourselves'

Living in the modern material world, it is very difficult to get away from comparing your life and what you have, with the perfect vision of someone else’s life that they have portrayed over social media or other outlets. We often get caught up in wanting what someone else has. Whilst achieving material goals is rewarding, they are not the source of true fulfilment in life. We all know someone who looks like they have it all, have a great job, financially secure, stable family life etc, but they are still unhappy. Conversely, we have all seen those who have very little but are constantly happy, upbeat and loving life.

This is because there is no outside source that can completely fulfil us. We have to make the conscious decision for ourselves, the decision that we will enjoy life, let go of self-limiting beliefs, be grateful for what we have, live in the present and recognise that happiness comes from within.

7. We need to reflect and connect, to be

What is the difference between ‘being’ and ‘doing’?

We are all mostly ‘doing’. We are always doing something – jobs, tasks, cleaning, travelling, organising, socialising, exercising, sorting, tidying, watching TV etc. The list is endless! Even if we are not busy, then a lot of our time may be taken up with worry, loneliness, stress and a disconnection with the world around us. We are thinking all the time! However, when we don’t give ourselves time to ‘be’, then we are not reflecting on our lives and not connecting effectively.

Reflection enables us to feel grounded, calm and in control. If we give ourselves some time to reflect on things such as our purpose, values, role, priorities – then we may be able to get rid of some of the jobs on our ‘to do’ list and replace them with more meaningful tasks – more important tasks. Giving ourselves time to reflect also allows us to connect better with things around us. This includes any relationship with another person, thing or idea. We need connection to thrive and we need reflection in order to connect.

Chapter 4. Ideas relating to Mindfulness

Now let's have a look at some ideas relating to mindfulness. If you have completed our Neuro-Linguistic Practitioner training course then you will already have touched on these, as the ideas are interlinked.

The ideas that we can take control over our minds and thoughts and learn how to do this – which our NLP course and eBook focuses on – in order to live more mindfully – which we focus on the importance of in this eBook.

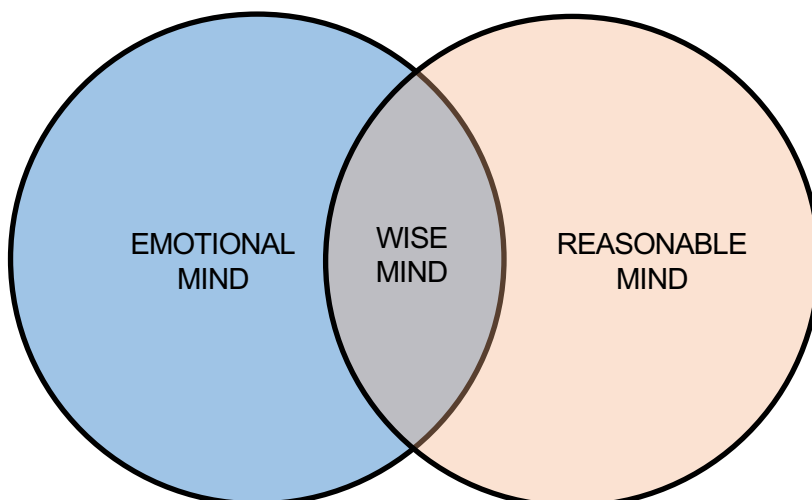
The Wise Mind

When understanding Mindfulness it is important to note that people naturally experience the world, either led by their emotions, or by reason. Too much of either can be problematic as it doesn't represent the whole scale of any situation.

Going through life using only logic can become dissatisfying, while being overly emotional about circumstances can cause stress and disorganisation.

In order to live a healthy and balanced lifestyle, it is vital to understand how to combine emotions with reason. This is often referred to as “wise mind.”

We all have three states of mind; the Wise Mind, the Emotional Mind and the Reasonable Mind. While we all have the ability to use any of the three, most people sway towards using one specific state of mind, almost all of the time.



The Wise Mind continued:

THE REASONABLE MIND:

The reasonable mind involves relying heavily on fact and information, regularly using knowledge to create plans. Approaching every situation from an intellectual point of view, those using the reasonable mind easily become captured in debate, refusing to take other people's views into account and sometimes having a detrimental effect on productivity as a result.

THE EMOTIONAL MIND:

The emotional mind is the part where people act compulsively based on feelings, thoughts and emotions, often with little time to consider whether what they are doing is a good idea. The emotional mind often revolved heavily around beliefs and honesty, making assumptions about 'the correct' thing to do, while not often basing decisions on fact.

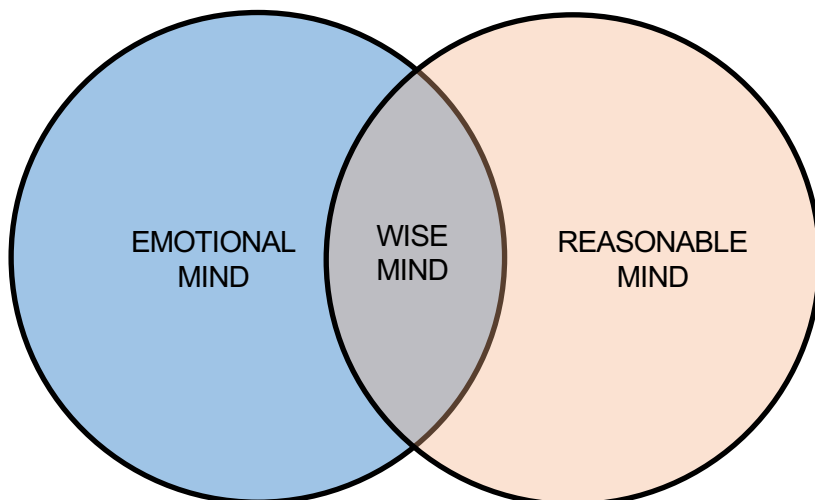
THE WISE MIND:

The wise mind is a combination of both the emotional and reasonable mind. Taking emotions into account but balancing this with knowledge to come to a decision, those with a wise mind often make more rational and well-informed decisions. This is where people determine whether facts or beliefs are true, also understanding feelings and the implications of their actions.

THE WISE MIND EXERCISE

Name and explain a time when you recently acted in each of the following states of mind. See if you can find correlation between the outcome and the state of mind you used.

1. The Emotional Mind
2. The Reasonable Mind
3. The Wise Mind



The Wise Mind continued:

The wise mind is perhaps the most complicated of the three to master, being developed over time and requiring thought and reasonable analysis of your own feelings. We activate the wise mind through taking numerous aspects into account, becoming more confident the more often this is used.

The wise mind can be activated even when emotions begin to get the better of us, however a certain level of awareness of actions must be present in order for this to happen. Through this, we are able to understand yet control emotions, combining this with facts and knowledge in order to make informed decisions, often resulting in a more desirable outcome. Practice makes perfect, as emotional triggers will become more easily controlled and noticed when attention is paid to which state of mind is being used.

As a Mindfulness Practitioner, it is important to understand this for our own lives. From here, we can apply this to new circumstances and help others to understand how they can control their own emotional triggers to an extent.

When we access the wise mind, we are able to:

- Control emotions when feeling threatened
- Understand methods of stopping emotions becoming out of control in times of conflict
- Determine a path or decision when you are unsure

There are endless benefits to developing the wise part of your mind with practice and they are as follows:

- A more enjoyable view on life
- The ability to understand and control self-sabotaging thought processes or actions
- Being able to stop negative thought processes which do not result in positive outcomes
- Being able to replicate thought processes which have positive outcomes, bringing future positivity
- Being able to regulate emotions when feeling threatened, insulted or when things do not go to plan
- Ability to better navigate decisions following unfortunate life events, for example in times of grief
- More resilience and the ability to combine the best parts of both the emotional and reasonable mind

The Lazarus Technique

So, listening is important, we can see that and we fully understand the reasons why. But what do we do when it seems that all we are doing is listening and the session or conversation is not moving forwards as it should.

A common occurrence as a Mindfulness Practitioner is meeting a client who speaks for long periods of time. While it is vital to listen to and understand your clients, it is also important for practitioners to lead sessions in the correct direction, in order to help the client reach their desired outcome. One of the best-known professors in the area of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy was Arnold A. Lazarus. Famously creating the 'Lazarus Technique' in order to increase focus for patients.

The Lazarus Technique is incredibly beneficial, enabling practitioners to determine the cause of a specific issue or area for improvement and help their clients to refocus.

Take yourself back to the last discussion you had with somebody who was unhappy. They most likely spoke for long periods of time, immersing themselves in the issue and not looking from anybody else's perspective. Situations when emotions are running high often result in these situations and the Lazarus Technique can restore direction and diffuse a client in a high-energy state.

To carry out this technique, you must begin by asking the client to describe their situation using only one word. Through this, they will noticeably simplify their problem, outlining it in a more understandable method and enabling you to determine the cause of the problem far more quickly than listening to a long-lasting rant.

EXERCISE:

Next time you find yourself in a conversation where the other person is fully immersed in their issue, request for them to pause. Once they have stopped speaking, test this technique, asking them to describe their problem using only one word. You will often notice quick developments and be able to redirect the conversation more positively.

After you have tested the Lazarus Technique, take notes on its success:

1. How was your experience using the Lazarus Technique?
2. Did you notice benefits and did it achieve the desired result?
3. Did you determine the cause of the issue? How quickly, and if not, why?
4. What were the main lessons to take away from the use of this technique?

Chapter 5. Mindfulness Exercises and Tools

Exercises:

Exercise 1: Observational and Mindful Walk – Individual or in a group

Mindful walking is an excellent activity to do whether on your own or in a group, or even just in a pair with your client. It is a way of making ourselves present – and can be a great form of meditation.

You can walk anywhere you want, wherever is accessible to you. It is always nice to be in nature, but in reality, this is not always possible for us where we live or in the time frames we have. It is also not necessary to walk in the perfect surroundings because observational and mindful walking is about seeing the beauty in everything and being non-judgemental about what we see. This allows us to be happy in our surroundings as we recognise that wherever we are has wonderful aspects of it.

First, you walk silently for around 5-10 minutes, really focusing on what is around you and bringing all your awareness to your environment. To centre ourselves to do this we need to direct all our attention to the actual process of walking. Observe each step and recognise the feeling of our foot rising and falling to the ground. Think about the movement of our muscles and the sway of our arms. Once we are mindful and in the present then we can begin to observe our surroundings.

We are aiming to be non-judgemental here about what we see and to simply observe and take it all in – we are not adding our thoughts to what we see. If our mind starts to wander then we simply bring it back to the sights, sounds, smells, objects, colours around us. Again, not making any judgement about these, simply just observing them.

This allows us to be mindful and in the present moment – and is an excellent way to clear our minds and to enable us to refocus and re-energise.

If doing this in a group then you can come together at the end of the walk and discuss what you have all observed. You may find that people have observed differently things, and this in itself is extremely interesting and a great conversation point.

Observational and Mindful walking is an excellent skill to develop and because we can do this anytime and anywhere, then it is easy to integrate this into our daily routine as a mindfulness practice.

Exercise 2: Mindful Listening

Why do we want to be a mindful listener? Why is this a good quality to have?

Mindful listening is an important skill to have because it makes us more available and open to others, more approachable and genuine. It is a useful tool to have in many situations – listening to a friend, a job interview, a business meeting, a client consultation, listening to your children. Whatever situation it is, if you are mindfully listening then the person who is speaking will have a more positive experience and will feel more connected to you as a person.

The following exercise can be used in groups or 1-1. It helps participants practice being mindful with another person and recognise that listening is actually a skill and doesn't always happen naturally. Quite often when we are listening to someone, we are also thinking about something else. Something we have to do, our job list, somewhere we need to be etc. We are also often thinking about the answer that we will give, what answer will make us seem interesting, funny, knowledgeable etc.

The following exercise helps us to be mindful listeners who are able to listen to someone openly and without judgement or distraction.

4 steps of the mindful listening exercise:

Step 1: Have each group member write down one thing that they find stressful

Step 2: Tell the group that we are going to share what we have written with another person and when we are listening to what the person is saying then we need to focus on them, clear our minds and really take in all that is being said. To do this we need to know that we are not expected to respond, or respond immediately – we can take some time to formulate what we are going to say according to what has been said to us. Often non-verbal cues such as a head nod, a hmmm and eye contact will encourage the talker to continue as they know that you are fully engaged and open to what they are saying. You are listening without judgement.

Step 3: Swap roles – the listener becomes the talker and the talker becomes the listener.

Step 4: Reflect in your pairs about how it felt to disclose something that makes you feel stressed. Then reflect on how this felt when you knew the listener was fully engaged. Did this make it easier?

Step 5: Note down how you knew the other person was being a mindful listener – was it their eye contact? Non-verbal cues? Their responses? Reflect on how you can use these to become a more mindful listener for others.

Exercise 3: Mindful Seeing Exercise

This exercise is used to ground us, to make us more aware and to reduce stress in an immediate situation. Mindful seeing also supports imagination and can be used when imagination needs to be encouraged – such as during school/college/university assignments, work based assignments, writing a letter etc

4 steps to Mindful Seeing:

Step 1: Find a space where you have a view of the outside world – it does not matter what this view is – it can be of a concrete jungle, a wall or stunning countryside – this exercise will work with any view.

Step 2: Look at what you can see without judgement – so if your view is not particularly inspiring then it does not matter – we are looking at it without any preconceptions or judgement. If you see a road, look at the details, the lines, the gradient, the colour, the texture etc. We are not making any decisions about the view or deciding if we like it or not – we are simply looking at it and taking in every detail.

Step 3: Look at the view as if it is new to you, as if you have never seen this before. Pay attention to all the small things in this new reality.

Step 4: Don't judge yourself if you get distracted. Simply bring yourself back to looking at view and taking in every detail.

When you are viewing things mindfully you will see things that you have never seen before and you will begin to have a new appreciation for things that you may never have noticed before.

Exercise 4: Mindful Eating

When eating mindfully, we not only ground ourselves, put ourselves in a more mindful state and allow our minds to refocus – we can also gain a new appreciation for food and lose weight! We have all been in the situation where we are eating on the run, eating mindlessly because we are busy and just need some sustenance, eating quickly because we have somewhere to be, eating fast foods due to time constraints or availability etc. When eating mindfully we need to bring our attention and focus to the food and the act of eating. This encourages appreciation, focuses our mind, and is another time that you can incorporate mindfulness practice in to your everyday timetable. By eating mindfully, we are aware of everything that we are eating and this is how it could support weight loss. As we become more aware of what is going in our mouths, as well as recognising when it hits our stomachs, and therefore when we feel full.

4 steps to Mindful Eating:

Step 1: Put away all distractions and focus on the food in front of you. Pay attention to what it looks like, smells like, feels like (if you can touch it) – tune in to your body.

Step 2: Pay attention to the utensils you are using – how they feel in your hand, how they feel when they gather up the food.

Step 3: Pay attention to your mouth before the food enters – your mouth is getting ready to receive the food and so will be producing saliva – imagine what the food will taste like before you taste it.

Step 4: Put the food in your mouth and taste it – really taste it – slowly chew and be aware of taste, texture, temperature, smell. Check in with your body and then repeat with the next mouthful



CONCLUSION

You have completed the reading, well done!

We do hope that you have enjoyed your learning journey and are ready to start making use of some of the things that you have learnt.

Now you have reached the end of this eBook, we recommend you apply this to your everyday work, testing the benefits of all the Mindfulness exercises you have learnt about. Mindfulness students can see the best results by using learned techniques on clients, as opposed to only reading. Through having the confidence to do this, you are able to progress more quickly in your Mindfulness knowledge.

Using newfound knowledge and applying it immediately to everyday life has noticeable benefits, ensuring it is used when it is fresh in your mind and giving you the opportunity to practice what you have learnt and make it work for you. Mindfulness understanding relies on students putting information into practice and this greatly increases the overall success of Mindfulness Practitioners and coaches. While literature and lectures may create a larger range of knowledge, experience can only be gained through applying this in your working life.

Enjoy this positive journey of opening up your mind to all that you can be. It really is eye opening what our unconscious mind wants to do for us, we just need to give it the right messages and then it will deliver!

If you would like to further your learning in this area then we offer fully accredited, insurable courses in EFT, Life Coaching, NLP and Mindfulness, which will take you to practitioner level! You can find the courses at:

<https://book.gatewayworkshops.co.uk/>

We are here for any questions you have and you can email us at:

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Go be amazing!

