

## 5 DAYS OF MINDFULNESS

Welcome to Day 1, your first step.



Today we will look into the difficulty that many have of taking the first step.

Beginning a mindfulness practice can bring immense benefits to your mental health, productivity, creativity, physical fitness, relationships, and many other areas of your life. However, beginning a practice can be anything but peaceful. In fact, many people can get overwhelmed, which is the exact opposite of how you'd like to feel!

For your very first step, accept where you are, and begin there. If you're used to being busy as most of us are, simply "sitting still and doing nothing" is plenty to start with. Your thoughts might race, you might feel an overpowering urge to stand up and do something...anything!

In these moments, know that simply sitting and being aware of the present moment are the best steps you can take to harnessing your own mind.

Thoughts that chaotically jump around are what drive the chaos in our lives.

Whether you are completely new to mindfulness or you're getting back to your practice after a break, take this moment, right where you are, to take that first deep, present, relaxing breath. Be in only this moment, be in only this space.

There is no wrong way to begin, and you can't make any mistakes. Your first attempt may only be 30 seconds, and this is why it's called a practice. When beginning, you don't need goals, and it's a great time to set aside all judgement of yourself. Simply be aware of the present moment.



Here's your prompt for Day 2. Find a comfortable space and focus on these words for a few moments.

A double shot, soy, no foam latte can be the fuel you need to get to your place of work. However, it's one of many elements of our endlessly complex lives. We make so many choices each day that we're left with decision

fatigue, thinking that we need to make decisions and judgements about everything in the world.

This makes it easy to get lost in the details of life, causing us to be overwhelmed with the little things, while we pass by all the things that are working in our favour without us even noticing. Running from place to place surrounded by distractions pulls your attention in a hundred different directions, and that's not even counting all the notifications on your phone.

Think about your morning coffee and routine, take a moment to see how many pieces of the universe had to fall into place for you to get your favorite drink, including the effort of the baristas behind the counter.

Take a break from the noise and pick something that you don't appreciate as much as you could. Maybe it's the beauty and wonder of nature, even during weather you don't like. Perhaps it's your ability to travel many miles each day to buildings that keep you safe. It could be savouring each perfectly ripe, perfectly prepared bite of food in your meal.

Appreciating all the little things that we normally ignore can keep us more present in the "now" moment, and can help us be more aware of ourselves and the world around us.



Welcome to Day 3, I hope you're enjoying the journey.

Today we have a topic that comes up with many of my clients. It's quite a biggie so are you ready?

How often do you feel that you aren't qualified to do a job or task, or that you aren't worthy to achieve more with your life? Most people, even those who hold high level, specialized positions that have extensive training and experience, are prone to these feelings, so you aren't alone.

It's so terribly easy to see things in ourselves that we can call faults, so easy to imagine that we aren't worthy of success, or love, or free time. We can list our own shortcomings all day, and create a list into the night of what we still have not yet done or become.

And yet, these qualities are simply markers on our path. We are never a finished product, and we are always on the journey of life. When you begin to carry feelings of worthiness, of enough-ness with you, you're able to step into

yourself more fully, and accept all of your thoughts and actions completely. Accepting yourself completely, the parts about yourself that you love and the parts that you don't like so much, also means you accept yourself as completely unique. You have your own life, your own gifts, and your own way of seeing the world. When you have this kind of radical acceptance of yourself, the expectations of others holds far less meaning for you, and you can be more fully present in your own experience.



Welcome to your Day 4 of mindfulness.

Have you noticed any shifts over the last few days? Maybe, it's a feeling of peace or becoming 'unstuck'. I would love to hear from you if you have had any 'aha' moments.

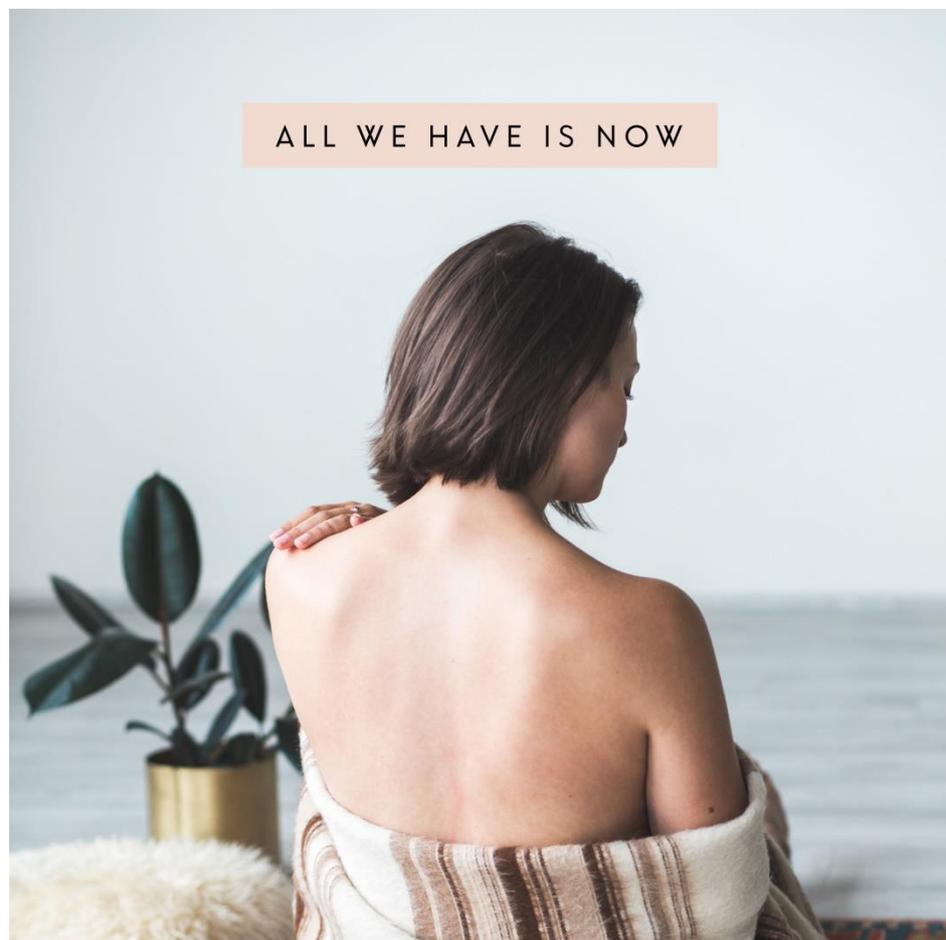
How often have you worked on a project so hard or so long that you completely dropped it and never went back to finish it? It could be a hobby, a career, or a new language. We can grind ourselves down until we're

overwhelmed, burn ourselves out, and quit whatever it was that we were working on, feeling like a failure in the process.

Results from our efforts don't often come as quickly as we'd like, and it can take more effort than we think to reach our goals. This is where you face a choice: do you quit your project entirely, or do you take a break so you're refreshed for the next phase?

When you're faced with these frustrated feelings of burnout, allow yourself to step back and take a break. Remember why you started your endeavor in the first place, and set a date for when you'll get back to your project, perhaps a week or two in the future. Allow your mind to rest and focus on more relaxing activities.

This mental space will refill your determination, and often will let your mind create better solutions to the issues that made you frustrated in the first place. Breaks like this can help you avoid true overwhelm and burnout, and allow you to enjoy the experience as well as the fruits of your labour down the road.



Welcome to Day 5, the final prompt.

Well done, you've made it to day 5. Today we go deeper and it is important to give yourself space to ponder and write down any thoughts you have to really honour your journey so far. So, let's dive in.

Now. The only moment we have in our entire existence is right this very second, the eternal now. This is a concept highlighted in the Zen teachings, and can be a core of your mindfulness practice. We so often lose ourselves in past events or future possibilities that we forget to exist right now.

This is a uniquely human challenge, and allows us to harness the power of our mysterious consciousness. We can be aware of a great deal in the present moment, from how our bodies feel sitting at our desks to the distant sounds of small woodland creatures.

Shifting to the Now can help us unattach ourselves from events in the past that hold us back, and fears about what might happen in the future. Our memories are biased, and the future is a field of possibilities. The only part that is real is the Now.

Our entire existence can be summed up in the single split second that we are experiencing in this very moment. This eternal Now is the ultimate experience of the Self, the source of all consciousness and experience. Not your body, not your memories, not the possibility of the future.

Sure, this is easy when the Now is pleasant, like spending time with people you love. What if the moment is unpleasant? As the saying goes, eat a cookie. What this suggests is to shift your perception. If there is something unpleasant about your situation, you can choose to focus on the pain, or on something else that helps you stay present and grounded, like a cool breeze or the warmth of a mug of tea.

While we must rely on the past for experience and knowledge, and we must plan for our future because we inhabit bodies that require care, we should also take time each day to acknowledge the Self, the seat of our individual consciousness, which exists only in the eternal present moment, which is Now.

Congratulations on finishing!

We covered some topics over the past 5 days that really brings in focus onto the importance of living mindfully within yourself. The beautiful thing about it is that the small changes within you will ripple out and affect others as well.

You now know how to:

- ~ Take the first step and start somewhere.
- ~ Appreciate the simple things and slow down.
- ~ Accept your gold and enoughness.
- ~ Recognise when to rest and plan to avoid burn out.
- ~ Be in the moment fully.

Some of these things seem simple but run deep in their effect. I hope you have been given new perspectives and found the opportunity to do some soul gazing.