



Mental Fitness 101 resource pack:

Thank you so much for your participation in today's workshop!
Please feel free to contact us through *creativeperformer.co* with any follow-up questions, feedback, etc.

7 Attitudes of Mindfulness

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, Director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, these are seven essential attitudes for cultivating mindfulness in life. Excerpts below from his book "Full Catastrophe Living" (Pages 33-40)

1. Non-judging

Being an impartial witness of your own experience requires that you become aware of the constant stream of judging and reacting to inner and outer experiences that we are normally caught up in, observe it, and step back from it. Just observe how much you are preoccupied with liking and disliking during a ten-minute period as you go about your business.

2. Patience

A form of wisdom, it demonstrates that we accept the fact that sometimes things must unfold in their own time. We intentionally remind ourselves not to be impatient with ourselves because we are tense or agitated or frightened. We give ourselves room to have these experiences. Why? Because we are having them anyway! Each moment is your life in that moment.

3. Beginner's mind

An open, beginner's mind allows us to be receptive to new possibilities and prevents us from getting stuck in the rut of our own expertise. No moment is the same as any other—each one is unique and contains unique possibilities. Are you able to see what you see, with a clear, uncluttered, non-judgmental mind?

4. Trust

Developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings is an integral part of meditation training. It is far better to trust in your intuition and your own authority, even if you make some mistakes, than always to look outside yourself for guidance. If something doesn't feel right, why not honor your feelings? It is impossible to be like somebody else. Your only hope is to become more fully yourself.

5. Non-striving

Meditation's only goal is for you to be yourself. The irony is that you already are. This craziness may be pointing you toward a new way of seeing yourself, one in which you are trying less and being more. If you think, "I am going to get relaxed, control my pain, or become a better person", you have introduced an idea in your mind of where you should be, and that you are not OK right now. This attitude undermines mindfulness, which involves simply paying attention to whatever is happening.

6. Acceptance

Seeing things as they actually are in the present. If you have a headache, accept that you have a headache. In the course of our daily lives, we often waste a lot of energy denying and resisting what is already fact. When we do that, we are basically trying to force situations to be the way we would like them to be, which only makes for more tension, which actually prevents positive change from occurring. Acceptance sets the stage for acting appropriately in your life, no matter what is happening.

7. Letting go

When we start paying attention to our inner experience, we rapidly discover that there are certain thoughts and feelings and situations that the mind seems to want to hold on to. Similarly, there are others that we try to get rid of or prevent or protect ourselves from having. In mindfulness, we intentionally put aside the elevation of some experiences more than others. Instead, we let our experience be what it is. Letting go is a way of letting things be, without grasping and pushing away. If you have difficulty picturing what letting go feels like, picture holding on. Holding on is the opposite of letting go. Letting go is not a foreign experience—we do it every time we go to sleep. If we can't let go, we find we are unable to sleep. Now we can practice applying this skill in waking situations as well.

Keeping the Breath in Mind

The following passage is from Jon Kabat-Zinn's "Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life" (pp: 18-19)

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It helps to have a focus for your attention, an anchor line to tether you to the present moment and to guide you back when the mind wanders. The breath serves this purpose exceedingly well. It can be a true ally. Bringing awareness to our breathing, we remind ourselves that we are here now, so we might as well be fully awake for whatever is already happening.

Our breathing can help us in capturing our moments. It's surprising that more people don't know about this. After all, the breath is always here, right under our noses. You would think just by chance we might have come across usefulness at one point or another. We even have the phrase, "I didn't have a moment to breathe" (or "to catch my breath") to give us a hint that moments and breathing might be connected in an interesting way.

To use your breathing to nurture mindfulness, just tune in to the feeling of it... the feeling of the breath coming into your body and the feeling of the breath leaving your body. That's all. Just feeling the breath. Breathing and knowing that you are breathing. This doesn't mean deep breathing or forcing your breathing, or trying to feel something special, or wondering whether you're doing it right. It doesn't mean thinking about your breathing, either. It's just a bare bones awareness of the breath moving in and the breath moving out.

It doesn't have to be for a long time at any one stretch. Using the breath to bring us back to the present moment takes no time at all, only a shift in attention. But great adventures await you if you give yourself a little time to string moments of awareness together, breath by breath, moment to moment.

TRY: Staying with one full in-breath as it comes in, one full out-breath as it goes out, keeping your mind open and free for just this moment, just this breath. Abandon all ideas of getting somewhere or having anything happen. Just keep returning to the breath when mind wanders, stringing moments of mindfulness together, breath by breath. Try it every once in a while as you read this book.

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10 Stinkin' Thinkin' Culprits

Adapted with edits from "The Feeling Good Handbook" by Dr. David D. Burns & Dr. Aaron Beck's Cognitive Model

1. All-or-nothing thinking

You see things in black-or-white categories. If a situation falls short of perfect, you see it as a total failure. **Example:** When a young woman on a diet ate a spoonful of ice cream, she told herself, *"I've blown my diet completely."* This thought upset her so much that she gobbled down an entire quart of ice cream.

2. Over-generalization

You see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection, as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as *"always" or "never"* when you think about it. **Example:** You come outside after a hard day of work and see you have a flat tire. You immediately think—*"of course, the story of my life! This whole week has been terrible."*

3. Mental filter

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively, so that your vision of reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors a beaker of water. **Example:** You receive many positive comments about your presentation, but one person says something critical. You obsess about this comment for days and ignore all the positive feedback.

4. Discounting the positive

You reject positive experiences by insisting that they *"don't count."* If you do a good job, you may tell yourself that it wasn't good enough or that anyone could have done as well. Discounting the positives takes the joy out of life and makes you feel inadequate and unrewarded. **Example:** You receive a compliment from a colleague for getting work approved by the client on the first round—you respond by telling them *"I got lucky—they must have just been in a good mood today."*

5. Jumping to conclusions

You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion.

- **Example—Mind Reading:** Without checking it out, you arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you. While talking in a meeting you may tell yourself—*"I bet they think I'm totally clueless."*
- **Example—Fortune telling:** You predict that things will turn out badly. Before a pitch presentation you may tell yourself, *"I'm really going to blow it—I'm just not ready for this."*

6. Magnification

You exaggerate the importance of your problems and shortcomings, or you minimize the importance of your desirable qualities. This is also called the "binocular trick." **Example:** Someone compliments your shoes—you respond by commenting *"they would look much better if my feet weren't huge!"*

7. Emotional reasoning

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are.

Examples: *"I feel anxious about going on airplanes. It must be very dangerous to fly."* Or, *"I feel guilty. I must be a rotten person."* Or, *"I feel angry. This proves that I'm being treated unfairly."*

10 Types of Stinkin' Thinkin' Cont.

8. "Should" statements

You tell yourself that things should be the way you hoped or expected them to be. **Example:** After playing a difficult piece on the piano, a gifted pianist told herself, "*I shouldn't have made so many mistakes.*" This made her feel so disgusted that she quit practicing for several days. "*Musts,*" "*ought's*" and "*have to's*" are similar offenders. "*Should statements*" that are directed against yourself lead to guilt and frustration. "*Should statements*" that are directed against other people or the world in general, lead to anger and frustration. Many people try to motivate themselves with shoulds and shouldn't s, as if they were delinquents who had to be punished. This usually doesn't work because all these shoulds and musts make you feel stuck and/or discouraged.

9. Labeling

Labeling is an extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking. **Examples:** Instead of saying "*I made a mistake,*" you attach a negative label to yourself: "*I'm a loser.*" You might also label yourself "*a fool*" or "*a failure*" or "*a jerk.*" Labeling is irrational because you are not the same as what you do. You may also label others. When someone does something that rubs you the wrong way, you may tell yourself: "*He's an S.O.B.*" Then you feel that the problem is with that person's character or essence instead of with their thinking or behavior. This makes you feel hostile and hopeless about improving things and leaves very little room for constructive communication.

10. Personalization and blame

Personalization comes when you hold yourself personally responsible for an event that isn't entirely under your control. **Examples:** When a woman received a note that her child was having difficulty in school, she told herself, "*This shows what a bad mother I am,*" instead of trying to pinpoint the cause of the problem so that she could be helpful to her child. Some people do the opposite. They blame other people or circumstances for problems, overlooking ways they might be contributing to the problem: "*The reason my marriage is so lousy is because my spouse is totally unreasonable.*" Blame usually doesn't work very well because other people resent being scapegoated and they will just toss the blame right back in your lap. It's like the game of hot potato—no one wants to get stuck with it.

de-brief discussion:

What role (if any) did facets of **stinkin' thinkin'** impact your project experience? Feel free to share as much or as little as you're comfortable with.

Automatic Thought Log:

Our thoughts control how we feel about ourselves and the world around us. Positive thoughts lead to us feeling good and negative thoughts can put us down. Sometimes our thoughts happen so quickly that we fail to notice them, but they can

still affect our mood. These are called automatic thoughts. Oftentimes, our automatic thoughts are negative and irrational. Identifying these negative automatic thoughts and replacing them with new rational thoughts can improve our mood.

Where were you?	Emotion or Feeling	Negative automatic thought	Evidence that supports the thought	Evidence that does not support the thought	Alternative thought	Emotion or Feeling
<p><i>Where were you and what were you doing?</i></p>	<p><i>Emotions can be described with one word—angry, scared, etc... Rate 0-100%</i></p>	<p><i>What thoughts were going through your mind, what memories or images were in your mind?</i></p>	<p><i>What facts support the truthfulness of this thought / image?</i></p>	<p><i>What experiences indicate that this thought is not completely true all of the time? If my best friend had this thought what would I tell them? Are there any small experiences that contradict this thought—could I be jumping to conclusions?</i></p>	<p><i>Write a new thought which takes into account the evidence for and against the original thought.</i></p>	<p><i>How do you feel about the situation now? Rate 0-100%</i></p>

What does self-care have to do with being a good designer? Practicing a consistent self-care regimen is foundational for mood and energy management (AKA—keeping more creative fuel in your tank). Here are some self-care strategies for increased mental resiliency / performance:



- Listen to your body—don't try to work when sick
- Build a support system of friends—don't be afraid to reach out
- Set boundaries between “work life” and “personal life”
- Allow time for your brain to transition out of “work mode”
- Nurture other activities, hobbies, identities, etc...
- Journaling and/or gratitude practice
- Incorporate regular “treat yourself” moments
- Look good feel good (cliché, but true!)

The Value of Time

Imagine there is a bank which credits your account each morning with \$86,400.

It carries over no balance from day to day,

Allows you to keep no cash balance,

And every evening cancels whatever part of the amount you had failed to use during the day.

What would you do?

Draw out every cent of course!

Well everyone has such a bank, its name is TIME.

Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds.

Every night it writes off as lost whatever you have failed to invest.

It carries over no balance; you can't build it up.

Once it is gone, you can't get it back.

The clock is running, so how could you invest the time you are spending today?

To realize the value of one year: ask a student who has failed a grade.

To realize the value of one month: ask a mother who has given birth to a pre-mature baby.

To realize the value of one week: ask the editor of a weekly magazine.

To realize the value of one day: ask a temporary worker who has kids to feed.

To realize the value of one hour: ask lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of one minute: ask a person who has missed their flight.

To realize the value of one second: ask someone who has avoided an accident.

To realize the value of a fraction of a second: ask an Olympic swimmer who won the silver medal.

**Revised and adapted from the Academic Confidence Handbook with credits to Drs. Barbara Probert, Ed Delgado-Romero, Gizem Toska and Jason Grindstaff.*

Affirmations for Self-Esteem:

What You Are

I am lovable and capable.

I fully accept and believe in myself just the way I am.

I am a unique and special person. There is no one else quite like me in the entire world.

I accept all the different parts of myself.

I am already worthy as a person—I don't have to prove myself.

My feelings and needs are important.

It's okay to think about what I need.

It's good for me to take time for myself.

I have many good qualities.

I believe in my capabilities and value the unique talents I can offer the world.

I am a person of high integrity and sincere purpose.

I trust in my ability to succeed at my goals.

I am a valuable and important person, worthy of the respect of others.

Others perceive me as a good and likable person.

When other people really get to know me, they like me.

Other people like to be around me. They like to hear what I have to say and know what I think. Others recognize that I have a lot to offer.

I deserve to be supported by those people who care for me.

I deserve the respect of others.

I trust and respect myself and am worthy of the respect of others.

I now receive assistance and cooperation from others.

I'm optimistic about life. I look forward to and enjoy new challenges.

I know what my values are and am confident of the decisions I make.

I easily accept compliments and praise from others.

I take pride in what I've accomplished and look forward to what I intend to achieve.

I believe in my ability to succeed.

I love myself just the way I am.

I don't have to be perfect to be loved.

The more I love myself, the more I am able to love others.

What You Are Learning

I am learning to love myself more every day.

I am learning to believe in my unique worth and capabilities.

I am learning to trust myself (and others).

I am learning to recognize and take care of my needs.

I am learning that my feelings and needs are just as important as anyone else's.

I am learning to ask others for what I need.

I am learning that it's okay to say no to others when I need to.

I am learning to take life one day at a time.

I am learning to approach my goals one day at a time.

I am learning to take better care of myself.

I am learning how to take more time for myself each day.

I am learning to let go of doubts and fear.

I am learning to let go of worry.

I am learning to let go of guilt (or shame).

I am learning that others respect and like me.

I am learning how to be more comfortable around others.

I am learning to feel more confident in _____ (name situation)

I am learning that I have a right to _____(specify)

I am learning that it's okay to make mistakes.

I am learning that I don't have to be perfect to be loved.

I am learning to accept myself just the way I am.

Ways to Manage Distress Right Now!

Self-sooth. Get yourself some hot cocoa, coffee, soda, tea, juice or water. Drink your beverage slowly focusing on the sensations of taste, smell, and temperature.

Intense sensations. Go to the kitchen and take a piece of ice, and some napkins. Hold the ice in your hand, and use the napkins to absorb the melting water. Focus on the intense cold sensation of ice in your hand

Distract yourself. Pick up a magazine and focus your attention on the pictures or an interesting article. Bring your mind to whatever you are reading or looking at, redirecting it from upsetting thoughts and feelings.

Practice deep breathing. Place one hand on your belly, inhale slowly counting to 5, feeling your belly expand. Pause. Exhale slowly, counting to 5, feeling your belly deflate. Practice this deep breathing 10 times.

Use relaxation. Give yourself a little neck and shoulder massage- you can rapidly tap your fingers on your neck and shoulders or rub your neck and shoulders. Focus on different muscles in your body from your head to your feet, giving yourself permission to let go of tightness and tension.

Pray or meditate. Pray to either a higher power, your own wise mind, or just open yourself up to peace and serenity. Open your hands, uncross your arms and legs, slow your breathing and focus on acceptance. Ask for strength to bear the pain this moment. Breathe in and out while telling yourself something like "I breathe in peace and breath out distress" or "acceptance will ease my suffering".

Self-encouragement. Think of what you might say to someone in a similar situation as you. Give yourself the same encouragement and support. Tell yourself things like "I can get through this" or "this won't last forever".

Use Imagery. Imagine a wall between yourself and the situation. Or imagine a peaceful, happy, secure place. It can be some place you've been or some place you create in your mind. Imagine in detail what your place looks like, any soothing smells, if there are any comforting people or animals with you, what it feels like where you are sitting or laying, what sounds you can hear..

Make comparisons. Distract yourself by thinking about problems you don't have or that you no longer have. Focus on something that someone else is struggling with, or find a magazine article about a problem that doesn't apply to you. Consider ways that you are better off now than you were at other points in your life.

Focus on thoughts. Count backwards from 100. If you lose track, start over again. Make a shopping list. Describe the furniture in the room or other objects in front of you.



Resources

- Apps**
 - Headspace App
 - Calm App
 - Relax Melodies App
 - Oak App

- Online**
 - doyogawithme.com
 - Jack Kornfield website + podcasts—jackkornfield.com + books

- Books**
 - *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - *10% Happier*, by Dan Harris—10percenthappier.com
 - *The Mindful Athlete*, George Mumford
 - *The Power of Full Engagement*, Jim Loehr + Tony Schwartz
 - *The Miracle of Mindfulness*—Thich Nhat Hanh
 - *The Gifts of Imperfection*—Brené Brown
 - *Meditation as Medicine*—Dharma Singh Khalsa and Cameron Stauth

- Journaling**
 - 5 Minute Journal—<https://www.intelligentchange.com>