

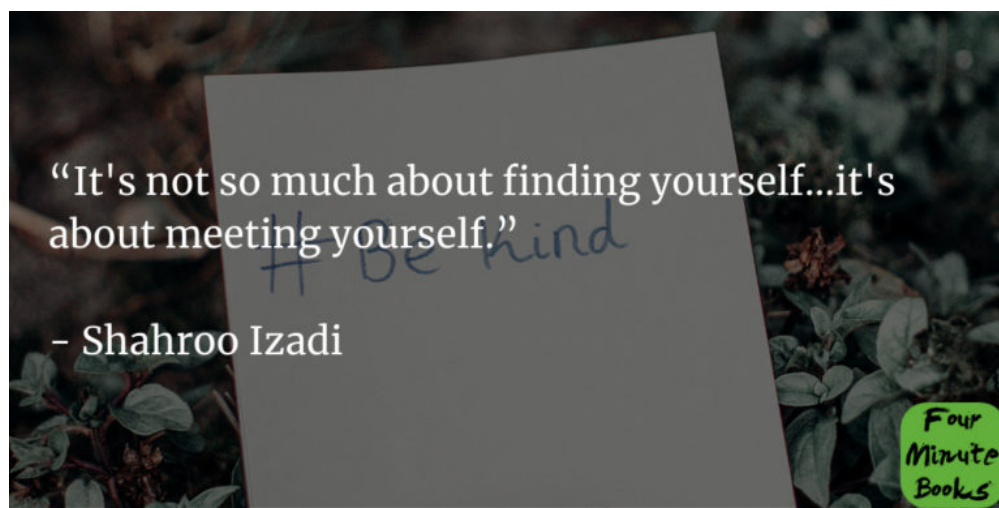
# The Kindness Method Summary

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**1-Sentence-Summary:** *The Kindness Method* by Shahroo Izadi teaches how self-compassion and understanding make forming habits easier than being hard on yourself, using the personal experiences of the author and what she's learned as an addiction recovery therapist to show how self-esteem is the true key to behavior change.

**Read in:** 4 minutes

**Favorite quote from the author:**



Have you ever desperately wanted to change something about yourself, but you can't seem to make it a lasting change? Maybe you've wanted to drop drinking for a while, or maybe you're still stuck in the same dead-end job that you promised yourself you'd quit years ago.

If this is you, you're definitely not alone. Most of us want to change ourselves, and we have plenty of resources, but it's hard to make a major lifestyle change stick. So what is the secret to lasting change?

Therapist Shahroo Izadi would say you're probably missing one key component: self-compassion. As a specialist in addiction recovery, she has helped countless people learn to make changes and understand themselves on a deeper level. In her best-seller, *The Kindness Method*, she gives practical exercises to help anyone learn how to make and sustain lasting change.

Here are the 3 of the most helpful lessons this book taught me:

1. Self-compassion and maintaining a judgment-free zone are vital for lasting change.
2. Look at what has worked for you in the past and learn from it.
3. Make sure your plan is realistic and incremental.

Let's jump right into these lessons!

## **Lesson 1: If you want to create lasting change, make sure you have self-compassion and have a judgment-free zone.**

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Izadi tried countless diet fads and weight loss programs and was a pro at losing weight. The only problem was that she couldn't keep it off. Whenever her weight crept up, she would feel she wasn't worthy of social gatherings and would alternate between starving herself and beings-eating.

After struggling for years, she finally realized that maybe the struggle she was having was more about her self-image than the actual number on the scale. She noticed other overweight people and thought about how she surely wouldn't expect them to ostracize themselves over their weight as she did to herself.

**Soon she was aware of the gap between the expectations she had for others and the expectations she had for herself.** So she decided she would try something different. She would be kind to herself no matter what the scale read. To her surprise, she not only started to lose weight faster, but it improved every other aspect of her life. All because of a little self-compassion.

Another essential component for maintaining lasting change is to have a judgment-free zone. Through her work in addiction recovery, she noticed that people needed to be able to talk about their issues without judgment.

She learned that many people struggling with addiction turned to the dark web to share coping mechanisms. This helped people share tips anonymously and be much more candid about their struggles.

This is one of the reasons that support groups like Alcoholics Anonymous are so helpful to people. Sometimes you need a place where you can love yourself no matter what your struggles are and not feel judged. So make sure that you feel like you can be completely honest with yourself about your struggles. How else can you overcome them?

## **Lesson 2: Start improving by examining what has worked in the past and what hasn't.**

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Shahroo believes that achieving real change requires less "finding yourself" and more *meeting* yourself. Doing this means understanding your current patterns so you can make a plan that works for you.

Start by thinking of a time you really honed in on your skills and achieved something that wasn't easy. Then, pull out a notebook and draw a map with a central bubble labeled "When I'm in the zone." Around it, write the circumstances surrounding this endeavor. Ask things

like how did you feel? Where were you? Was there a specific thing you did that helped you?

Once you're finished, look for patterns and insight about what works for you. Try to apply this information to your new plan as best you can. You can also make a "What hasn't worked map" and learn from past mistakes what doesn't work.

Now you're going to make another map, this time with a bubble labeled "What's the harm?" Add all of the negative impacts of the behavior you want to quit. **This will show you ways that your behavior has affected your life in ways you may not even realize.** This will motivate you when things get hard because it reminds you of why you want to change.

Lastly, label a map "Why haven't I changed already?" This is the time to reflect on the reasons why it's so hard to quit what you're doing. For example, maybe if you want to quit drinking but are having a hard time, it's because you rely on it for confidence when you're in social settings. This can provide you with a deeper understanding of why you do it, which can help you find ways to stop.

### **Lesson 3: Build a plan and make sure that it's both incremental and realistic.**

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Now that you've taken time to examine where you are and where you want to go with maps, it's time to finally create your plan. Exciting!

The very first thing you'll want to do is write a date down of when you will review your progress. By doing this, you'll make sure you stay accountable, and you have a dedicated time to tweak your plan and review how things are going. If possible, set it for every three weeks.

Many of us want to start out pretty extreme when we want to achieve a goal. This is when it is important to remember to keep things realistic. I'm sure we've all had the experience of starting off the new year by saying we'll do something drastic like cut out all carbs and spend two hours at the gym. Then, a week later, you're back to old habits.

**The problem with going too extreme is that it will be much easier to get discouraged and quit.** When your goals stay realistic, you'll be able to achieve expectations at each step in the process. Doing this will make you feel proud of yourself, which will, in turn, give you more motivation to keep going because you know you are capable of accomplishing things.

For your last map, write "What I'm proud of." Then you can decide what incremental changes you can make that will bring you closer to the life you want to lead.

### **The Kindness Method Review**

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As someone who has struggled with being too hard on myself, *The Kindness Method* is a game-changer. I really love the way books like this make me feel. They help me recognize that it's okay to be imperfect and that I can still be happy and productive despite my weaknesses.

### **Who would I recommend The Kindness Method summary to?**

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The 49-year-old who could use a way of losing weight that actually works, the 27-year-old that wants to beat their alcohol addiction, and anyone that wants a better and more realistic way of forming good habits.