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# Guiding Notes On MINDFULNESS WEBINAR SERIES titled

## EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND CONFIDENCE BUILDING

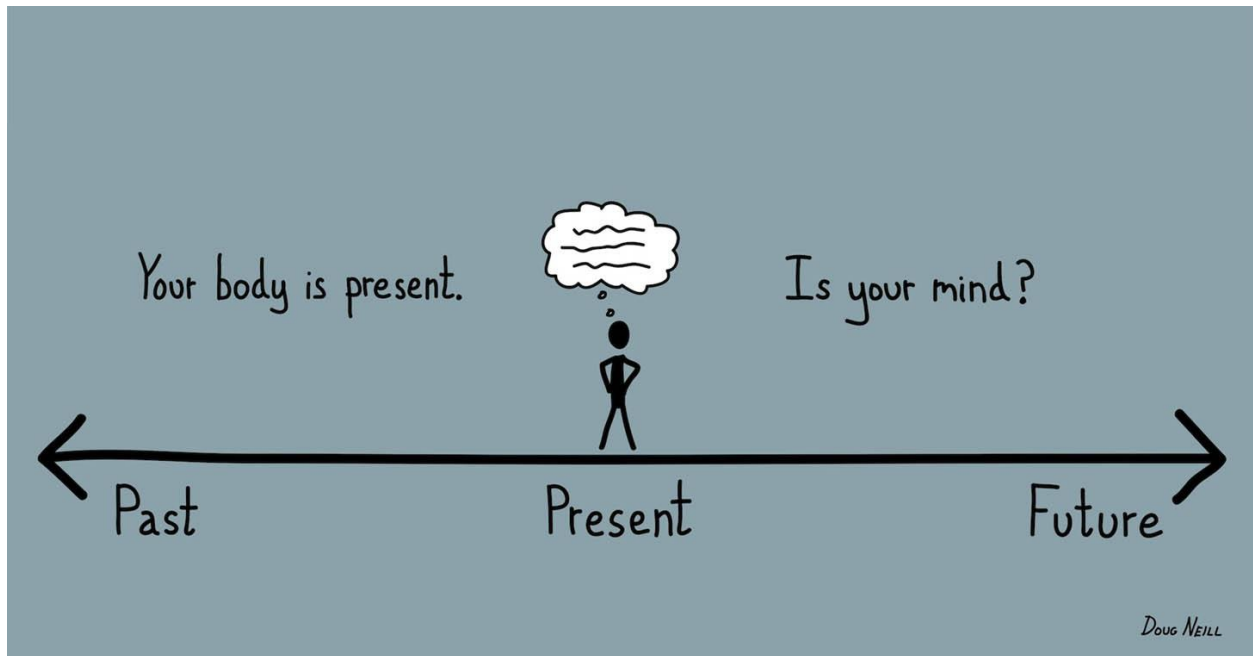
for Women Entrepreneurs

*('This Guiding Notes is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this Guiding Notes are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government')*

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## Overview



Mindfulness is different from other types of trainings, and it is not about the techniques or tools. Participants can only reap the benefits by doing these practices regularly. This workbook focuses on simple, doable mindful approaches to life.

As you practice this daily, you will experience shifts in your relationship to experience itself. Mindfulness practice allows you to deepen your knowledge about yourself, you get to know yourself better, experience life with the flow and transform your capacity to appreciate life, whatever this life may mean for you. Mindfulness practice is also an invitation to experience life for what it is and also to understand how precious your breath is. The basic fact that you are alive is a miracle that empowers you to make each moment how you want it to be rather than being the victim of circumstances; however, painful or mundane it be.

These exercises are designed to support your learning and practice of Mindfulness.

## What is Mindfulness?

"Mindfulness means paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment non-judgmentally". **Jon Kabat-Zinn**

### What Mindfulness is not:

- to relax
- a religion
- a technique to stop your thoughts
- difficult
- easy
- a way to be unconcerned with the future anymore
- impossible to investigate scientifically

### Core principles of Mindfulness

- open mind
- friendliness (non-judging)
- curiosity
- patience
- acceptance
- letting go
- kindness and compassion
- gratitude
- trust

### Benefits of Mindfulness

- feel connected to yourself and others
- releases stress
- increases energy
- better physical and mental health
- enhances mood
- strengthens immune system
- sharpens focus

## How to Live Mindfully in the present moment and be peaceful

1. **Use your senses** – ears (what am I hearing, sound, noise), skin (feel your skin, is it hot, cold, warm, tingling sensation), eyes (what am I seeing, colours, shapes, brightness), tongue (how is the taste like, juicy) and nose (what am I smelling, look for the smell in the room, around).

Start by noticing what you see around your surroundings. Say to yourself, "I see..." "colors, shapes, and contrasts in types and textures.

Next, focus on what you hear. Say to yourself, "I hear..." sounds, noise, etc

Do the same for what you smell, taste, and touch.

Instantly you are in the present moment

2. **Drinking Tea/coffee/any drink meditation:**

- Focus on the thought 'I want tea.'
- Be mindful of the way you walk to the kitchen or any area where you can make tea.
- Focus on preparing water.
- Bring full awareness to the way you choose the kettle or dekchi to heat water, notice how the water boils if you can see it, listen to the sound of the water boiling, be fully present to this act.
- Choose your tea: notice how the colour changes when you put tea leaves, or a tea bag, notice the smell, be aware of your breathing, your thoughts,
- Prepare the teacup: notice how you pour tea in your favourite cup. Maybe you want to sit down and enjoy this tea.
- Notice how you sit, look at the cup, its shape, maybe there are some patterns, colour.
- Slowly take a sip, don't swallow it yet.
- Be aware of the temperature, taste, smell, how the tea feels in your mouth
- Notice your thoughts.
- Now swallow the tea, notice if you can feel the tea going down the throat, neck, chest, stomach.
- If you find your mind wandering at any point, don't worry, smile at it and say mind, you are just doing your job, and gently bring your attention back to the physical sensations of drinking tea.
- Be grateful for taking the time to have this tea mindfully, creating space for peace and joy at this moment, notice how this felt, and if you like it, you can bring this mindfulness practice with you to your next activity.

3. **BIBO: Breath in Breath Out**

Breathing regulates our nervous system, helps you calm down if anxious, overwhelmed, or simply stressed. It's a superpower – gives you the power to choose your reactions.

Square Breathing  
Inhale for 4 seconds  
Hold your lungs full for 4 seconds  
Exhale for 4 seconds  
Hold your lungs empty for 4 seconds

4. Spend some time reflecting on the core principles of Mindfulness

- What does it mean to you?
- How do you behave when you apply these principles in your daily life?
- What did you notice when you applied these principles?
- Do you see any change in the perception of experiences?

a. Open mind

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b. Friendliness (non-judging)

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c. Curiosity

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d. Patience

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e. Acceptance

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f. Letting go

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g. Kindness and compassion

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h. Gratitude

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i. Trust

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## Management of Emotions and Stress

### Thoughts, Emotions, Feelings and Choosing Reactions



Source: <https://www.mybodytutor.com/>

Thoughts (are not always true) have an impact on the emotions you feel and the actions you take. Emotions are signals that happen inside the body; feelings are sparked by emotions but occur in mind from thoughts and images associated with the emotion.

#### Thoughts

- ✓ Observe your thoughts (Mindfulness) like an observer.
- ✓ Thoughts are not facts – they are assumptions, stories we tell ourselves, opinions.
- ✓ Know how thoughts trigger feelings – situation does not trigger it's the interpretation of the situation that triggers feelings.
- ✓ Be able to shift perspectives, e.g. I must work, or I choose to work.
- ✓ Be aware of and change negative/critical/emotionally abusive self-talk (labelling the thoughts) – notice how you talk to yourself.

- ✓ Notice where your mind goes and bring it back – being worried does not help, so does just sitting and getting consumed by the painful experience.
- ✓ Acceptance of reality – accepting the reality and finding out what are your options

**Emotions** (Energy in motion) affect your thoughts and actions.

- ✓ Emotion is energy in motion and gives you information about yourself.
- ✓ It is always changing; you are not stuck with one emotion all through your life.
- ✓ Emotion is a physical experience if you feel angry; your heart beats faster.
- ✓ You can observe your own emotion; you are not your emotion.
- ✓ Emotion influences your thoughts when you feel bad; you may have negative thoughts.
- ✓ Emotion tends to be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.

**Actions** influence your thoughts and emotions.

Something happens – creates thoughts and emotions – drives actions. Mindfulness helps to create a space between Action and reaction.

### **Awareness of pleasant experiences calendar**

Instructions: Be aware of one pleasant event or occurrence each day while it is happening. Record your experience below.

<p>What was the experience?</p> <p>Example: I am eating, talking to my friend, colleague.</p> <p>Had a fruitful discussion with a colleague</p>	<p>Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?</p> <p>Example: I love the taste of this food.</p> <p>I am so happy to talk to my friend</p> <p>Pleased we agreed on the points discussed</p>	<p>How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?</p> <p>Example: my body felt relaxed, flexible, I was smiling a lot.</p>	<p>What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?</p> <p>Example: Content, happy</p>	<p>What thoughts are in your mind right now, as you write this down?</p> <p>Example: I am feeling great, I feel like hugging everybody right now. I will go and give a big hug to all my family members, which I don't do often.</p>
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<b>Monday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Tuesday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Wednesday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?

<b>Thursday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Friday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Saturday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?

<b>Sunday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the pleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
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### Awareness of unpleasant experiences calendar

Instructions: Be aware of one unpleasant event or occurrence each day while it is happening. Record your experience below.

<b>Monday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Tuesday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?

<b>Wednesday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Thursday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Friday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?

<b>Saturday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?
<b>Sunday</b> What was the experience?	Were you aware of the unpleasant feelings while the event was happening?	How did your body feel, in detail, during this experience?	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event?	What thoughts are there in your mind right now, as you write this down?

## Managing Stress

It is crucial to understand what you are thinking and feeling as that can help manage stress. You feel stressed when you are unconscious of what is going on in your head. When you notice and observe this, you have the option to choose if you want to keep yourself stressed or do something about it. So, with this awareness, Mindfulness allows you to participate in this choice actively and make a difference to the way you want to engage with stress.

What would you choose?

Be a victim of your autopilot thoughts and emotions or do something to release this stress, be calm, and react from a space of love, compassion, and kindness.

The choice is yours.

## Reflections

What am I stressed about? Family, work, disagreements, deadlines	What are my stress symptoms? Do you get easily frustrated?	What are my physical signs of stress? Shortage of breath, tight jaws, sharp sensation in the stomach, headache, tense, tightness	What are my emotional signs of stress?	What are my behavioural signs of stress?
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## Mindful Listening and Communication

### The Art of Listening and the Art of Being Heard

Mindful listening practice is a form of meditation. This practice enhances awareness of your mental habits during a conversation. When you understand what is being said, you will have the superpower to guide the conversation to where you intend to.

Here's how this works.

- You can do this with anyone, a friend, family member, or co-worker.
- Each person takes turns to speak for 3 minutes, uninterrupted.
- The speaker talks about anything for 3 minutes or less. If it feels awkward, notice, pause, and sit in silence until you feel like talking again.
- Then switch the other person to do the same.

You can do this a few times.

- The purpose of this meditation is mainly to listen mindfully.
- Pay attention to what the speaker is saying – as well as your own mind's inner dialogue.
- Notice how your mind works when you're in communication.
- After the first try and both parties have listened for three minutes, exchange your experiences.

For example:

- ✓ Was there an urge to share your own story?
- ✓ Was there an impulse to offer advice?
- ✓ Did you feel any emotions?
- ✓ Did you make any assumptions on what the other person was saying?
- ✓ What are the unspoken qualities of the interaction?

Whatever you noticed during this practice, there's a chance you experience a similar inner monologue on everyday life. On autopilot mode, it is difficult to catch the subtle

inner mind tendencies. Only when you are mindfully listening, you can observe what is driving your conversation, and start to change habits, if necessary.  
Think of mindful listening as offering a gift of being fully present with the person you are.

Category	Powerful Questions you can ask when you are listening
Restating	Is this what you meant I hear that I understand that
Discovering	What do you want? What will you have? What is possible? What is your desired outcome? What is vital here?
Curious	What are you learning? What are you unwilling to change? What is at risk? What is making you confused? What does the organisation need from you? In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this? How does this relate to your long-term goals? What other options do you have? How might you approach this differently?
Responsibility	What will you do? What is your conclusion? Let me summarise what I have heard When will you do it? What accountability do you want? How will you know you have reached it?

- ❖ Make yourself super comfortable, warm, as if you are cocooning yourself, feeling safe and warm will help cultivate the emotional quality of compassion.
- ❖ Sit comfortably, or if you wish to lie down, feel free to do so.
- ❖ Take a slow deep, mindful breaths
- ❖ Allow your body to settle into its natural flow of breath.
- ❖ Feel your breath going in the area near your heart if you can.
- ❖ Notice whether your chest is rising or falling.
- ❖ Be aware of the warmth of your body.
- ❖ See how it feels if you put your hand, representing self-kindness and care, softly on your heart area and notice any effect of the warmth of your hand on your heart.
- ❖ If you instead prefer to place your hand on your belly or your lap, that's fine too

### Someone that makes you smile

When you're ready, think about someone, you can think of a pet too, that makes you smile. Someone with whom you have a happy and positive relationship. Could be an aunt or uncle, grandparents, perhaps your young son or daughter, a spiritual figure, or another person you hold in high respect, whether the person is alive or not.

- ❖ Wish this person well with words like:  
"May you be happy, may you be healthy, and may you be free from suffering."
- ❖ Allow these words to speak to your heart if you can.
- ❖ Tune in to both the words and the meaning behind the words. And if some other words come to mind, use them. Use words that represent kindness and compassion for you. Continue repeating this word. Remember, you don't need to force any feelings at all--just wish wellness and make space for any feelings to arise.
- ❖ Now, in the same spirit, bring yourself to mind. Wish yourself well. You are just as worthy as any other being on the planet. You deserve an equal amount of kindness and care.  
"May I be happy. May I be healthy. May I be filled with compassion and kindness towards myself. May I be free from suffering."

For some, wishing well to yourself can be the most challenging stage or just weird. You may feel guilty for sending kindness to yourself or think you're overindulging yourself.

If this is the case, this stage of the loving-kindness meditation is going to be a useful exercise for you to help relieve stress. Stress can often be heightened by being too hard on yourself -- and this meditation is a great antidote.

If you felt the resistance to practice self-kindness, that's okay. Given time, this will be a particularly nourishing and healing meditation for you. Try to be patient as best as you can.

Continue gently and notice what happens with interest.



### Neutral person

Next, recall a neutral person--someone you neither like nor dislike, someone you hardly know. For example, recall someone at the tollbooth, supermarket checkout, or the mail carrier. Remember that they, like you, have a life outside their work role. Consider their friends and family, their hopes and fears, desires, and dreams.

- ❖ Wish them well. Use your own words or use these:  
"May you be happy and healthy. May you be filled with love and peace. May you be free from all pain and suffering."

### A difficult person

Next up is someone you don't like--a difficult person. This person may be dead or alive. As a beginner, choose someone who's quite difficult--not the most difficult person you know. It may be someone who has caused you problems and suffering in the past. Consider her/him as a whole person, beyond just the hurt the person caused you. As a human being, this person also experiences pain, anxiety, stress, and a host of difficulties.

- ❖ See if you can forgive her/his actions, which s/he may have done unknowingly. And if the pain inflicted on you was deliberate, perhaps there was a reason--the person's emotional state, his vulnerability, and pain, her/his needs being unfulfilled.
- ❖ If you can, ask the person to forgive you for any hurt, you caused her/him too. You're not assuming what he did was right--just letting go of the pain caused by her/his actions. Letting go of the pain warms your heart instead of hardening it.  
"May you be well and happy and healthy. May you be free of stress, anxiety, pain. May your heart be filled with self-kindness and compassion."
- ❖ Recall all four of you: yourself, your friend, your neutral person, and your difficult person. As you imagine all of you together, see if you can offer a sense of well-wishing and compassion to all, equally.

You can finish this meditation by offering loving-kindness to all beings on the planet--being mindful of the difficulties and suffering that all beings experience and wishing them to be free of that sufferings.

"May all beings be well; may all beings be happy."

- ❖ Now come back to yourself.
- ❖ Bring your attention to your breathing, feeling its natural pace and depth. Bring a sense of warmth, affection, and gratitude to your breath.

Before you end the meditation, appreciate your efforts to cultivate one of life's most nourishing qualities--compassion.

- ❖ Remember, you can practice this loving-kindness meditation at any time.

- ❖ And you don't need to do all the stages if you don't have time.
- ❖ You can do just one or two or whichever stage you feel you need to.

For further details:

RAIN Meditation: <https://www.tarabrach.com/wp-content/uploads/pdf/RAIN-of-Self-Compassion2.pdf>

8 Weeks Free Mindfulness Sessions <https://palousemindfulness.com/>

### **About the author**

Ms Deepanjali Sapkota prepared these guiding notes. She is the Mindfulness Coach for the webinar series titled “Entrepreneurial Emotional Wellbeing and Confidence Building’. These webinar sessions were conducted by EMERGE and Thulo.com during the month of June-August 2020, to help women entrepreneurs manage their mental well being during the Covid-19 lockdown period.

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