
MINDFULNESS

A Young Adult's Guide to Meditation



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CHAPTER 14

Cheat sheet

You've learned so much! Here's a recap to refresh your memory.

- ✓ Mindfulness is healing
- ✓ You have the tool you need – your breath
- ✓ You know to be mindful is to experience the present moment
- ✓ You know how to get rid of the Monkey

FOUNDATIONAL ATTITUDES

1. Non-judging
2. Patience
3. Beginner's Mind
4. Trust
5. Non-striving
6. Acceptance
7. Letting Go

SIMPLE RULE TO FOLLOW:

The Monkey gets busy; and we are reminded to not judge ourselves; we become aware of what we are thinking or feeling, regardless of whether it's "good" or "bad" and... we let it go. We let it, figuratively, roll off our backs.



TO DO'S

- Redirecting your awareness to the present moment
- Using your breath to help with focusing
- Refocusing when the Monkey visits
- Don't judge yourself
- Be kind to yourself
- Show yourself gratitude for putting yourself first

MINDFUL LEADERSHIP – 5 BEHAVIORS

1. Focus when people talk to you
2. Before making decisions, stop and think and then decide
3. Empower the people around you
4. Sleep well at night
5. Have a regular meditation practice

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS – ADULT MODE

- ★ Focus on the Here and Now
- ★ We Engage in Fact
- ★ Remain Calm & Rational
- ★ Engage in Problem Solving
- ★ Be Observant and Self-Reflective
- ★ Explore Assumptions
- ★ Decide on a Course of Action

GIVE JOURNALING A TRY

Journaling also allows us to be present while keeping perspective.

STOP, THINK & DECIDE!

& Be Grateful



CHAPTER 15

I can make this work!

We've been together now for 15 chapters! That tells me that you are intrigued and are willing to bring mindfulness practices into your life.

You can actually do this, and I will be here for you for part of your journey. In addition to the exercises found throughout the book, in Chapter 16, you will find a variety of meditation exercises written by me for you and recorded by me for you.

I say that I will be here for you for only part of your mindfulness journey, because you will grow and learn beyond anything you could've imagined. You will incorporate mindfulness into your life. Not just incorporate the meditations, but to truly experience the present moment several times throughout your day, with appreciation and gratitude. You will find it easier and easier to STOP, THINK and DECIDE. You will find it easier to manage your emotions and to ground yourself and find peace in times of distress. You will learn how to use your emotional intelligence and effectively communicate with others in "adult-mode". You have wisdom, clarity, capability, power, love and compassion. You will tune into each one of those aspects of yourself the more you practice. I am so proud of you!

Remember, you do you!





CHAPTER 16

Exercises galore

Meditation 6: Our Beach¹⁸

Take a moment, to find a comfortable seated position. Sit back into your chair, I mean really sink into your chair as if the weight of gravity was holding you there, with a gentle and comforting embrace. Place your feet on the floor - and begin to scan your body - releasing all the tension that you encounter... Lift your head and soften your shoulders.

Now, if you feel comfortable doing so, please gently close your eyes. If not, gently turn your gaze downwards and relax your face. Let's now focus on our breathing. Take a deep breath in through your nose and then out through your mouth. As you breathe in, you're filling your lungs with life-giving oxygen and as you breathe out, release all your tension along with your breath. Feel the tension slip away from you, falling away like rain into the ground. This is your time. Continue breathing with intention... Again. Keep your body relaxed and breathe. Again. Imagine a beautiful and serene beach scene, either from memory or pictures. The sky is clear and a beautiful shade of blue. There's not a cloud in the sky. Just blue sky as far as the eye can see. You're standing on the sand. Your feet sink a little as if the sand were warmly

¹⁸ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



caressing your feet. Wiggle your toes and feel the heat from the sand enter your body, slowly progressing upwards. Feel the warmth soothe your muscles and melting your stress away.

You notice the sounds around you, distant at first, but somehow clear. You hear the seagulls flying in the sky, squawking above the beach, as if trying to catch your attention. They are beautiful with their outstretched wings set brilliantly white against the amazing blue sky. You notice the joyous sounds of children in the distance paddling in the waves. Distant radios playing music... all of it the wonderful sounds of happy people. Enjoy the scene and breathe... You feel the heat of the sun sink into your skin, warming you... heart, body and mind. The heat is melting your tensions and worries away. You walk further towards the ocean, the water jewel-toned, like a brilliant sapphire gemstone. Your feet encounter wet sand, the earth harder here, and the sand cool. The waves command your attention, and you look out and see them... hear them gently coming on shore, soaking your feet, and retreating again. Breathe, as you find joy in the rhythmic motions of the ocean, washing upon your feet and leaving again... and again. The water is surprisingly warm. Warmed by the noon-day sun. Heat from the sun, warmth from the ocean envelope you and there, in this serene



experience, you think of gratitude and you feel deep and profound joy... Breathe in happiness... When ready, come back to your space and slowly open your eyes. Continue to feel the sun's rays on your skin, continue to feel the comforting warmth you now have deep into your soul, as your mind comes back from our beach.



Meditation 7: Senses Aware¹⁹

Take a moment to look around. In a moment I will ask you to take a seat. However, before you do that, I ask that you stand up and move your body, swaying and stretching, releasing the tension that roots itself in our muscles. Move your body side to side to whatever rhythm you like.

Slow your body's motion... and when you're ready, find your seat and work on getting comfortable. Sit back into your chair and if possible, your feet flat on the floor. Lean your center of gravity back into your chair so that your chair is completely supporting you. Extend your neck upwards and lower your shoulders. If comfortable, slowly close your eyes, blocking out the light and welcoming the immediate peace that comes from the darkness.

Breathe in... and breathe out. Breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Focus on the sounds of your breathing. As you breathe in, your chest rises and as you breathe out, your shoulders and chest dip just a bit. The sounds of your inhalation, how would you describe it? Focus on your breathing and the beautiful sound it makes.

Open your awareness to your environment. Notice the sounds you hear. What are they? The soft humming sound coming from your air-vents? Sounds of life around you. Distant birds chirping? The sounds of cars in the distance? Notice how some sounds are nearer to you and others are farther away.

¹⁹ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Notice these sounds... and just observe.

Now, open your awareness to what your skin feels. Let's observe these sensations.

Do you feel the temperature of the room? What do you notice? Is it pleasant? Comfortable? Is your skin cold or warm?

As the air circulates around you, pay attention to the reaction of your body. Feel the air around you caress your skin. Notice the nape of your neck... do you feel a slight breeze? Cooling your neck, the tiny hairs reacting in the gentle flow of air.

Bring your awareness to your chest, notice the light sensations of your beating heart. Light at first. Focus.... Your heart is beating and as your awareness focuses here, the sound of your beating heart fills your ears.

Your awareness is filled with sensations. From your breath, the sounds in your environment, the temperature on your skin, the sounds of your heart.

Observe it all.

Bring your awareness back to your breath. Refocus only on the sounds of your breathing. Your body is relaxed. Enjoy the feeling of peace and calm right now.

Slowly open your eyes.

Be kind to yourself this today. When stress comes, focus on your body's sensations, like we did today, and your brain will make the connection, and calm will follow.



Meditation 8: Finding the Now²⁰

First, let's begin by finding a comfortable seated position. I want you to sit back into your chair and relax yourself into this position. If comfortable, close your eyes gently and breathe with intention... and notice an immediate sense of relief at reducing the stimuli around you.

Focus your thoughts on your breathing and observe. With intentional effort, let's manage our breathing, it's our tool here that will focus and center us to spend time in this one moment.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Do this with intention but at your own level of comfort. As you breathe in, focus on the feeling of your breath filling your lungs and as you breathe out through your mouth, notice how your body sinks a little deeper into your chair, grounding you to this earth.

Your mind may wander... that's okay. Don't judge yourself too harshly, this is natural. Let's just take the moment to notice when our mind wanders to the past or future and

²⁰ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



bring your attention back to your breath -- and how relaxed you feel in the present moment.

Allow yourself this comfort. As you continue to breathe, redirect your attention to your neck and shoulders. You may notice some tension there, let's work on letting that go. Rotate your shoulders in circular motions, forwards or backwards is up to you. As you breathe in through your nose, rotate them up, and as you rotate them down, gently release your breath through your mouth. Let the release of your breath and the downward movement of your shoulders pull you deeper into your chair as the tension dissipates. Again.

Observe your tension release itself from its grasp on you. It's floating above you, like a physical manifestation, dark and murky, floating up and away, further away from you and up into the sky. Now your body is relaxed and free of all tension.

Breathe in and feel your lungs expand... breathe out and feel comfort. Your mind is calm. You are in the moment. When ready, slowly open your eyes, and be glad. A moment in time is precious and you found it.



Meditation 9: Patience²¹

I'd like us to begin a little differently today. From wherever you are, seated on your sofa, lounger, your car, or maybe even seated on your bed; I want you to shake it off!

Wiggle around to some fast beat from a song you love. You remember... feel the energy and just move. Loosen your shoulders, move your hips, throw your hands up in the air and wave them like you just don't care!

Anyone get that reference?

Okay, it's time to return to your favorite spot but even though you're no longer standing, let's keep this up, move your body, no extraneous exercise here, just a bit of fun as we loosen our tired bodies. Slow it down now, to a slow roll, there you go, slower and slower. Perfect. Now, let's get comfortable. Sit back in your chair or wherever you are seated and find a cozy and relaxing position. If possible, place your feet flat on the floor, hands on your lap, loose and comfortable. Ready? If comfortable for you, slowly close your eyes and enjoy the darkness. Now, let's breathe. As you breathe

²¹ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



naturally, let it progress to breathing with intention. You decide how fast and how deep... but be in control.

Become aware of your body. Do you notice any tension, or anxiety, maybe even impatience? Don't judge yourself. It's okay. Just notice it and let it go, imagining all the pain floating up and away from you, through your ceiling and up into the universe.

Be aware of any thoughts coming into your mind and any emotions you feel. Let these thoughts and emotions float away as before. It's okay. Breathe. Fill your lungs with air... with life. Exhale all negativity and judgment. Let it go. If you find your mind wandering, simply find your breath again... and breathe. Find yourself in this one moment. There is no other moment like this moment, your now.

Allow feelings of impatience to come into your awareness. Feel the impatience in your body. Where is it? What does it feel like? Be aware of the immense burden that impatience can be... and let it go. It has floated away and is no longer your burden.

Breathe... again. Bring your attention back to yourself and to the comfort of your chair and breathe. Slowly open your eyes and thank yourself for finding your patience.



Meditation 10: Finding Your Confidence²²

Find yourself your favorite comfortable spot. If that's not available to you, with a little effort, every spot can be more comfortable. Work on getting comfortable. If seated, sit back as far as you can go, spine straight and shoulders relaxed.

Let's begin with our breath. Notice the natural rise and fall of your body as it breathes for you. Slowly, let's take control. Using our intentional breathing skills, breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Be comfortable and pace your breathing as you wish. The pace and depth of your breathing are in your control.

Breathe in again, oxygenating and nourishing your body.

Bring your awareness to whatever is going on for you right now.

Let's use our imagination. Your body will now defy gravity. Feel yourself float just above your chair. Look down on yourself. Do you see your tension? Where in your body is it? Observe where the tension sits in your body. Let it be. Just observe and sit with it and breathe.

²² Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Notice any thoughts that arise through your mind. Observe them, without judgement. Sit with your thoughts and breathe. No longer floating, your body sinks, and you are connected with your chair again, sinking deeper, in the chair as if caressing your entire body. Feel gravity gently keeping you in your chair now. It feels good. Gravity, your friend, is draining you of all tension. It's draining your self-doubt... releasing your mind to enjoy this moment. Breathe in self-trust, compassion, love and confidence. These are who you are. You are trustworthy, compassionate, full of love and confidence in yourself. Observe your body and mind as you absorb your positive attributes. Be glad in yourself, in your ability to remove all unwanted pains and thoughts. Breathe. Use the breath to anchor your awareness in the present moment. Use it to bring calm to your mind when you encounter doubt and feel unworthy. You know yourself better than anyone. Trust in your abilities and the world will be better because of it.

Now, bringing your awareness back to your space, allow your mind to scan your body, noticing how refreshed you feel. How comfortable and relaxed you are in your own mind, finding your confidence. When ready, slowly open your eyes and see a new world where you trust yourself and believe in yourself with humility and compassion.



Meditation 11: You're Ready for Today²³

As you sit in your chair, find yourself a comfortable position. Scoot back and allow your chair to fully support you. Find your just-so-comfy spot. Elongate your neck, drop your shoulders and bring your awareness to your abdomen and the tightness that you find. Release it. Find your breath. Breathe with intention, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Breathe in and out at your own level of comfort.

When ready, gently close your eyes and enjoy the quiet that envelopes your mind. Breathe in and exhale. With each breath in, take in the new energy of today... a new day. As you exhale, let go of yesterday. Breathe in energy.... Let go of stress and worry.

Continue, breathing in through your nose, the energy coursing through your body... your body tingling with energy, excited for today. As you continue to breathe, you notice your mind wander, thinking of what today will bring. You are okay. Breathe out all distractions, refocusing on your breath, as you breathe in and out. Feel the rise and fall of your chest as you fill your lungs with energy. Release your worry, release your

²³ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



thoughts, and fears. You are in this one moment, enjoy this moment... there is no other like this one moment. Breathe...

We want to increase your energy. If possible, slowly push back your chair and stand. As you stand, slowly release the extra tension you find in your body. And stretch. Reach up, your arms high over your head as much as you can reach and stretch. Breathe... Breathe in... all the energy you can to fill into your body. Continue to breathe in and out, releasing your tension and accepting the joy that comes from it. Today is a new day.

Take a moment, to shake out your body, slowly finding your movement and accepting energy all over. Feel the warmth in your muscles as you get ready for today.

Life has been hard and today may not be much different. What is different, is your opinion of today. Whatever today may bring, you are strong and resilient. Be kind to yourself, in the midst of any challenge or chaos you encounter. Give yourself a gift, whether that's 15 minutes of your favorite music, or half an hour of your favorite sitcom show. You deserve kindness. You are generous... and we are grateful. When ready, open your eyes, slowly find your seat again..... you are ready for today.



Meditation 12: Your World²⁴

For today's exercise, we will explore our senses and become aware of today's world.

Before you get comfortable, it would be best if you can open a window and then sit where you have a view of the outside. If available to you, you can also sit outside.

Please do this now.

The very nature of mindfulness is to tune into our experiences in any given moment, noticing how things come and go. Nothing is permanent. Everything is always changing. We're going to observe this today.

As always, it's best to be comfortable so as you sit, find that comfy spot. When ready, make sure to reduce the tension in your body by first, rolling your head slowly, releasing the tension you hold in your neck. When done, stretch your neck and lower your shoulders. Now, let's work on getting comfortable. Sit back into your chair. Feet on the floor, your spine against your chair and find your breath. Slowly, notice your arms and with intention, fill them with warmth and relax your muscles. Slowly, notice your thighs, they can be the last place we think about. They hold tension too. Fill them with a heavy warmth as they too, relax. Your body is ready.

²⁴ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Always, breathing with intention - breath in through your nose and out through your mouth.

When ready, gently close your eyes and notice the immediate quiet and relaxation that surrounds you. Breathe in and breathe out.

Now, open your sense of hearing. Notice the presence of any sounds. What do you hear? Birds chirping? Maybe cars, distant then close. Wind, rustling the trees? Notice how you find each sound and you capture it in a moment in time. The sounds change. A bird chirps, then stops. A car travels by then is gone. You hear people, then they are gone. Keep listening. When a sound comes into your awareness, focus on it, enjoy it and then open yourself to other sounds. Our world is full of sounds, even in the silence, we have the sound of our breathing.

Now, we will open our sense of sight. When ready, please slowly open your eyes and see the world. It's always moving too. What do you see? Do you see the cars you heard? Do you see the chirping birds? How about the people? The trees swaying in the wind? What else do you notice? The clouds, slowly floating across the sky? Our world is always changing. Notice those large and small changes.

Before we end, clasp your hands. Gently, touch your hands with the other. Feel your fingernails. Feel their smoothness or their roughness. Feel their length. Now,



feel the backs of your hands. What do you feel? Clean smooth skin? What do they look like? We are always changing too. Maybe once soft and young hands have changed to soft and older hands. Still lovely; still you but with all the blessings of age.

We are always changing, as is the world we live in. Notice them and appreciate our world. The sounds, sights... our touch, our entire being.

As you begin today, feel your importance in this world. Appreciate yourself. I know, I certainly appreciate you.



Meditation 13: Feel the Power²⁵

For this meditation, you can choose any position you find most comfortable. Some people choose to lay down. If you're working from home, I won't tell on you!

When ready, and if you are comfortable close your eyes – and find your breath.

Breathe naturally and at your own pace. Feel your body breathing for you, feeding you with every inhalation.

Take your right hand and place it on your abdomen. Observe. What do you feel? A gentle rise and fall? Maintain your focus on your belly. Feel the texture of your clothes as your hand sits there. What do you notice? Soft fabric, buttons, zipper? Just observe, be aware of just the sensation of touching.

Now, turn your attention back to your breath as your hand remains on your belly – and observe. What do you notice? When ready, raise your left hand and place it on your chest, your breathing most noticeable here. Both hands are feeling the rise and fall motions as your body breathes. A wondrous miracle of life. Next, let's move towards

²⁵ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



your neck. Slowly, move your right hand from your belly and gently caress your fingers along the front of your neck.

The rhythm of life is powerful here. Against your fingers, the rise and fall of your breath is more noticeable, more impactful. Notice anything else? Do you feel the beat of your heart? Your breath and your heart, giving you life and energy. Both hands, right now, are experiencing the wonder that is you.

Enjoy this gift of life. Feel the power you have on this earth. The power of life, yes, but also the power of compassion and the presence of joy. Joy because you are in the moment and are ready, to approach today, with the knowledge that you are special.

There is no other you. As you go about your day, allow this moment to remind you of your compassion, towards yourself and towards others.

Your breath is powerful. Experience this moment again, anytime and anywhere. Just, even if only using one hand, find your breath, focus and center yourself. Experience the calm it brings. When ready, you may open your eyes and see today as brand new.



Meditation 14: Healing Power²⁶

For this exercise, you will need to become still. So, in whichever position you prefer, find yourself a comfortable spot. Move around as you try to get comfortable and think about your neck, arms, legs and feet. It's best if you are resting against something, a chair or even a bed. If you are comfortable with this, gently close your eyes. Let's use our breath to focus us. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Focus on your breath and the gentle rise and fall of your chest. Again.

Feel how your breath is instantly allowing you to relax and focus on this one moment. Feel the weight of gravity pull you deeper and deeper into comfort. Be aware of your body. What do you feel? What sensations are you feeling in your body? Tension, pain? Slowly, turn your awareness to that area. Feel them... and accept them as best you can. Bring your attention back to your breath, breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. It's normal to feel tension in our breath when we find tension or pain. Release it, take in healing power of oxygen through your nose. Let it nourish your body and heal your pain. Breathe them out. Out through your mouth and away. Notice any feelings, emotions that arise now? Can you let some of these

²⁶ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



go? Be kind to yourself and let them go. Breathe. Allow all negativity to leave you as you exhale. There is no space for that now. Now you are in this one moment, your body filling up with healing oxygen getting deep into your cells, plumping and feeling energized. Gently, expand your awareness to your entire body. Feel your weight, your shape as it connects with your comfy spot. Notice any remnants of pain or tension. Sometimes they are hard to get rid of. Keep your awareness there as you breathe. Let this too leave your body with every exhalation, leaving you easily out through your nose and out into the sky.

Bring your attention to your chest. As it breathes you notice the gentle rise and fall of your chest. There's a gentle light rhythm to your breath. As you continue to breathe you become more and more aware of the sound of your heart, the engine that transports oxygen and as it does so, your tension and pain are completely released, and they are... gone. Gradually, bring your awareness back and slowly move your muscles, feel them come alive. You are free of worry and pain. When ready, slowly open your eyes, allowing the light to enter and you can go about your day.

Be kind to yourself and remember that your breath is always with you. Engage in this exercise whenever and wherever you need to.



Meditation 15: Beginning, Middle & End²⁷

Find a comfortable seated position with your back straight, neck extended and bring your shoulders down. Now, sink deeply into your chair. With intention, relax as best you can. Your chair is supporting you, so ease back and relax... Bring your attention back to your shoulders and allow them to fully relax... and rest your hands wherever it's comfortable for you. As you do this, feel the weight of your eyelids. They want to close. If you are comfortable with that, allow them to close. Feel them blanket your eyes, blocking out all light. You immediately feel a sense of relief and comfort. Relax your brow and feel a softness spreading through your face. Your forehead... temple... eyes... lips... and your jaw.

Let go of your day. Let go of any pressure to be anywhere else. You have nothing to do but be in this one moment now, here with me.

Be mindful of the temperature of the room, the sounds around you and allow your focus to gently settle on your breath, taking a deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth... allowing your mind and body to relax. Notice where you feel your breath. In your abdomen... nose... lungs? Focus on that area,

²⁷ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



connecting with the beginning of each breath as it comes and leaves. As it leaves you, notice a new breath and welcome it. Again, and again.

Whenever you notice your mind wandering, come back to your breath. Don't judge yourself, it's okay and is normal. We practice mindfulness every time we notice our mind wander and we bring it back to the present moment. Continue focusing on your breath, every breath experienced, is your experience of every moment.

You may feel restless or you may notice some emotional reactions. It's all okay, just notice the feelings, the sensations and accept them. Move the parts of your body that are calling to you. Respond by rotating your arms or flexing those muscles wherever your body is demanding attention. Then ease back and focus your attention on your breathing again. Let's just do our best to stay in the moment.

Notice how every breath has a beginning, middle and an end. Follow one breath after another after another. How do you feel?

Gently wiggle your fingers and toes. Bring your attention back to the room and when you're ready, open your eyes.



Meditation 16: Your Smile²⁸

You seek joy. So do I. It's all around us and... it's in us. We just need to turn to it and invite joy into our hearts and minds. Join me and let's find joy together.

Whether you are sitting or lying back, move yourself just so, so that with every movement, you are settling yourself into your most wonderful cozy spot....

Comfortable? Great. Now, bring your attention to your breath and begin inhaling and exhaling with intention. Remember, to inhale through your nose, and breathe out through your mouth. Don't rush your breath... don't make it too deep or too shallow. This is just a time for you to breath naturally but focusing all your attention to every breath. Continue breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. As you breath in and out, in your comfortable spot, I want you to refocus your attention from your breath to your face. What do you feel? I want you to ease the tension that you find there. Focusing first on your forehead and temples and the stress that just tends to sit there. Sometimes that is not enough, so let's work on that.

Bring your 2 hands to your face and gently, smooth the muscles on your forehead and those over your eyes and temples. Using your ring fingers, begin in the middle of your

²⁸ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



eyes, and in sync, move your fingers gently and follow the curve line of your eyebrows and work your way to your temples. Again, and a little firmer, stroking your muscles above your eyebrows, moving your fingers from between your eyebrows and pass them over to your temples. Press firmly here. Each hand should be on your temples. Rub that area in a way that makes you feel relaxed, ache free, and just joyful. Repeat the full movement a few more times, I'll wait.

I know you feel so good right now. We will now explore the rest of your face a little. As before, use both hands, any finger, or many fingers, with your eyes closed, I want you to feel your face. Feel the valleys and hills of your nose, cheeks and chins. Feel your nose and notice your inhalations and when ready, feel your lips and notice your exhalation. Feel the shape of your lips and the soft cheek muscles next to them. There is only one you in this world, and you are beautiful.

Keeping your eyes closed, I want you to smile. A big toothy grin. Keep your hands on your face. What's different? What do you feel? Your smile is broad and your cheeks react and help you to spread your smile even wider. Your lips are less sumptuous because they're in the act of a glorious smile. Despite your eyes being closed, your eyes have responded to your smile and they are almost smiling along with you.



Your smile is an expression of happiness and joy. Your smile is beautiful. I wish you could see yourself smiling like this. This is how others see you when you smile. It's glorious. It's contagious in the most wonderful way that anything contagious can be.

You are happy and contented right now.

You love to smile.

And you are responsible for your own smiles.

When I see you smile, I smile with you. The entire world smiles with you.

Remember this moment, your eyes closed, smile wide. It's like dancing when no one can see you. That's always our best self.

Gift others with your smile today. Better yet, gift yourself again and again today, with your smile.

Thank you for spending this time with me and letting me be part of the reason you smile.



Meditation 17: Yummmmy Chocolate²⁹

Today, I'd like us to experience mindfulness using a technique called "Mindful eating". To truly experience the Now in this way, you will need something to eat. I recommend something small. Look around you to see what you find. Many people use raisins, or chocolate. For those of you who know me, you know that I've chosen chocolate. I do suggest you use anything that you can get your hands on like grapes, cereal, protein bars, hard candy or mints. Check your drawer, the bottom of your purse and if you're home, run to your kitchen and grab something. I will be walking us through the exercise of eating chocolate, so it would be best if you can find some. Pause the recording here until you're ready to begin.

As I don't want you to choke, I will suggest that you do this exercise sitting up. So, find yourself a comfy chair and take a moment to position yourself so that your back is up against the chair, your neck is extended, and your shoulders are down. Instead of placing your feet flat on the floor, you can choose to cross your legs on your seat. That's such a comfortable position. Now for the object of our attention. Place your

²⁹ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



chosen food into your hands. You may need to choose several and place them in your palm or somewhere close.

Mindful eating is not just an opportunity to eat. It's about savoring the moment... the now. Just in a different way.

Place your piece of chocolate in your hand. Is it wrapped? If so, hold onto it with both hands, gently touching the wrapper. Admire it, and notice the color of the wrapper, the design.... And how the light dances on the shiny wrapper. Glide your fingers along the edges... along the seams where the wrapper meets. Do you see where you can open it? Let's do this. In a slow controlled fashion, tear the wrapper open and discard it, leaving the chocolate in your hands.

Look at it, admire it. What do you see? Beautiful dark chocolate, even though it's not in your mouth yet, you can see its creaminess. Turn it over in your hands... view it from all angles. Then raise it and smell its delightful scent. Your mouth waters, in anticipation of its glorious taste.

Close your eyes.... You can still smell it. It's so close to your lips you can taste it.

You're almost there. The chocolate has been in your hands for a few moments now.

The texture under your fingers has changed, softened, causing your fingers to slightly



glide along the chocolate, releasing more of its scent as some of it transfers onto your fingers. It's time.

Place the chocolate into your mouth and savor it. Give yourself time with it. Enjoy the texture... quickly melting into your mouth. Move your tongue around as you enjoy this wonderful piece of confectionary goodness.

When you're ready, swallow it. Focus on how it eases itself past your mouth and into the back of your throat and into your stomach.

Your mouth is left with the same residue as your fingers. Yes... your fingers. You can take this moment to enjoy what remains. What is left on your fingers. I won't tell.

Enjoy this moment and smile. Give me a big, broad, smile. There's nothing better than enjoying a wonderful piece of chocolate. This is a minute you will never get back, but boy did you really make the best of it! You really enjoyed this moment. You experienced this Now in a way that you hadn't before. I'm so happy for you.

When you can, open your eyes and I won't stop you from licking the rest from your fingers.



Meditation 18: Be Thankful³⁰

It's so easy for us to bring to mind all that brings us anxiety, worry or fear. If ever there was a time for us to enjoy this moment, is now, this moment. Join me. Please close your eyes if you like and follow along. Let's begin.

It's morning and you're in bed. You've just woken up and you wish you could sleep a few more hours. That's your first thought. It happened, we can't wish the thought away so accept it and let it go. Before you get up, adjust yourself in bed, move around, warm up your muscles and feel the tension from lying in bed all night, release. Be thankful for your bed, for having a bed to wake up in and blankets to keep you warm. You find yourself in the shower, a place we normally rush through can be enjoyable. Instead of thinking about your day, think about experiencing your shower... Enjoying it. Be thankful for your shower, for clean water, for soap and the fresh scents that fill your bathroom... and for the towels that dry you. You're in your kitchen about to make coffee. You run on automatic as you make your coffee, but your mind is elsewhere. You are thinking of the future. Of work that needs to get done, meetings that need to happen. It's okay, let's let that go. Instead, examine all the little steps it

³⁰ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



takes to make your coffee. Wrap your fingers around your mug, the mug warm from the coffee. Enjoy the warmth as it heats your hands and heats your insides. Be thankful for your delicious coffee. Be thankful for the perfect mug that holds it. It's time for the morning news. You turn on the TV and find your favorite news channel. The world is a hard place right now. We can't shut that out. But we can be thankful for news anchors and all the people behind the cameras who bring us the news every day. Be thankful for the television that brings us that news and other shows where we can experience joy and laughter and adventure.

Throughout your busy day, you experience frustration, exhaustion and even intolerance. That's all normal but let's let it go. It's okay. Refocus instead, giving thanks that you are employed. You have an income, yes, but you also have a purpose and people rely on you. People need you. It's time to end your day. You look at your bed... where you started your day. You are thankful that you have a bed, you are thankful to have a home to find rest, find joy, experience love and compassion and to be productive and valued. In bed, before falling asleep, place your hand over your heart... feel it beating... feel the warmth of your body. Be thankful for your body and all that it does for you. Be thankful for your mind and all that it gives you. Be thankful for your spirit and all that you are because of it.



Meditation 19: Stop and Listen³¹

How do we protect ourselves against COVID-19?

How do we work out for ourselves, and the world, the injustices in our society?

Big questions... grave concerns are all around us. How do we cope?

We can incorporate mindfulness to help us with the emotional impact current events have on us. We can also use it to help us make wise decisions. Let's work on both.

Sit back and settle yourself into your chair. Let's get as comfortable as we can. Place your feet on the floor, back against the chair, neck extended and shoulders down.

Now, you may still be tense, but gently allow your eyes to close and allow the darkness to seep into your soul and soothe you. As you embrace the immediate peace you begin to feel, start focusing on your breath and let's do this with some intention by breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Again. Throughout this meditation, remember to always return to focus to your breath, as it has calming effects as well as can center and focus us. The breath can help us experience this moment. The now.

³¹ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Feel a deep sense of gratitude for these moments you are gifting yourself. You deserve it.

You are safe right now. You are protecting yourself from anxiety and worry. Continue to focus on your breath. And Stop and listen to your heart. Feelings and thoughts rise up, some soothing, some, not so much. But take it all in. This is what is going on for you. But... stop and listen. It is not you.

Feelings can sit inside our body, like warm honey in your chest when you're happy.... Or knots in your stomach when worried. We can take some control here. As you sit, comfortable in your spot, tilt your head up, towards the sky, and imagine... your anxiety and worry, those knots in your stomach unravel and dissolve into nothingness.

Whatever is left, allow it to rise above you and watch it dissipate into the world, from which it came.

Stop and listen... to your passionate mind when the world's injustices harm. Bring to bear the power and beauty of who you are and what you have to contribute to this world. Stop and listen... think and then decide and respond.

Our passion can equate rationality and safety. Your mind is strong, you are powerful, you are needed. The world needs to hear... from you, in whatever way you decide that



to be. Be mindful... stop and listen. Respond with grace and love and... safety... for you, me, everyone.

This is being mindful. Stop and listen... listen to your breath as you continue to breathe with intention. Stop and listen to where the worry sits in your body and ... make it disappear. Imagine it gone... find calm. Center your thoughts... Stop and listen to your mind... and decide.

You are beauty, you are important, you are needed.



Meditation 20: Courage to be Mindful³²

Sometimes we find ourselves concerned about others. And rightly so. People we love, our family and friends, neighbors, society, humanity. It's okay. It's a beautiful thing.

Let's not forget to be concerned for ourselves. Mindfulness calls it Self-Compassion. I practice "Courage to be Mindful".

Let's practice...

We will begin differently today. Usually, I'd ask you to get comfortable, usually seated, but for today, I want you to get out of your chair, stand up and step away from your device just a bit to give yourself room to move.

When standing, slightly open your legs, relax your knees and bring your shoulders slightly back. You are in a relaxed position but strangely at attention as well.

Begin focusing on your breathing...

³² Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



You can probably say this along with me by now.... Breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth. Again, with intention and continued focus on your breath.

Your breath gives you life... yes, but it also gives you oxygen and breathing like this allows your nervous system to... simmer down.

You trust me? I want you to slowly sway your body left and right, imagine yourself a metronome and your very movement is aware of... is counting.... time.

Side... to... side. Now, your attention is divided... just a bit. You're focusing on your breath and focusing on your movement. Both will take over automatically soon.

Swing your arms open and allow them to join your body's movements. When your body sways to the right side, your arms slightly swing to your right side. Conversely, when your body sways to the left... so do your arms.

Continue with your movements.

Your autonomic nervous center will take over your breathing. While the inertia will take over your body's movements.



Let's engage our thoughts. Our mind is wondrous, we are capable of so much love and compassion. Let's take this moment to be good to ourselves.

You are selfless throughout so much of your day. How much of your day is spent on taking care of others? How much of your day is focused on taking care of you? Be glad for yourself because you are giving so much of yourself. Give yourself some of that kindness. Share it with yourself.

You feel your body warming... it is warming from the movements of your body... and your heart is warming with love, kindness and compassion for yourself.

You deserve happiness, love, relaxation, recreation, and joy. You can take care of you.... every day, promise yourself to build in some time just for you.

You are loved. ... and you take care of special things. And you are special.



Meditation 21: Stop, Look & Listen³³

We're going to do something different today.

Settle yourself so that as we talk, you're comfortable. Let's use our breath to focus us to experience this moment. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. I may not remind you of this later, but continue to do this, with intention... You may find it easier to listen and contemplate if your eyes are closed. So, if you're comfortable with this, please gently close your eyes.

You are comfortable, you're breathing with intention and your eyes are closed. You should feel an immediate sense of relief. Hang on to that.

When I was learning how to drive, my aunt, who taught me, would always tell me to "Stop, look, and listen" when I came to a stop sign.

Now, thinking back, that was sound advice for driving and ensuring my safety and of those around me, but as I examine my moments with greater clarity through mindfulness, I realize how perfect advice this is for life.

³³ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Let's imagine today is Monday. What happens for us on Mondays?

For me, in the early morning, I cringe because I know I will have emails already sitting in my inbox. When I stop, look and listen, I realize that I am not really frustrated, I am anxious. It's about what is happening inside of me that I need to pay attention to.

By incorporating my aunt's driving lesson into my life, I stop, look and listen. What's going on inside of me, what's going on around me?

Stop, look and listen.

When frazzled, upset, busy, or even when you are feeling joyful. Let's experience ourselves right then and there. Stop what you are doing and ask yourself why are you doing it? Why do you feel the emotions you feel? Look around you. What is going on in your environment? Listen, to the sounds around you.

Mindfulness allows us to experience the moment... the now. Let's make a conscious effort to do that. When we find ourselves in an emotional place that we do not desire, change it. When we find ourselves happy in our emotional place, savor it.

I hope you are calm and continuing to focus on your breath. Your mind may be all over the place, mostly in the past because of my questions. However, think on one thing for



the future... incorporating stop, look and listen into your day. This can be easy, I promise. Begin by just stepping away from school or work a few times a day. If not physically, at least with your thoughts. Count the number of times you stand up and move away from your desk. Chances are they are few. Change that.

Just by remembering to count the times you get up you will want to increase those mini-breaks. On those breaks, those “stops”, I hope you can look and listen both internally and in your environment. Connect yourself to what is going on for you. Learn to tap into yourself as often as you can.

I wish you the very best, often and always.



Meditation 22: Being Kind³⁴

I'm all in for being good to myself. I've spoken before about Self-Compassion. I've recently been reading about Metta meditation, the art of practicing loving-kindness. In "Courage to be Mindful", I share that it's a bit more complicated than just being good to myself. But what to call it? Metta meditation is about being kind to myself, yes, but also to others.

This can be hard. We're so focused on ourselves, especially with mindfulness activities, that it can be.... Well, maybe not hard, just different, to focus on someone else when they are not even with me while I practice it.

I also don't have to have loving-feelings for the person or people I am being kind to. I guess I'll just call it, Being Kind. Let's practice.

We always want to be comfortable when we meditate. So, as usual, find yourself a comfortable position, whatever that is for you. Sitting down, laying back in a big comfy

³⁴ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



chair, or even laying down. The mind will be expected to work now, and we don't want distractions from our body, so dig in and be comfortable.

Focus yourself... center yourself.... Use your breath to help to guide you into experiencing this one moment. With intention, breathe in through your nose... and out through your mouth. Continue in this fashion and allow your mind to notice the rise and fall of your chest as you continue breathing. Now, we'll want to reduce the light around you. If you're comfortable with this, gently close your eyes. I love this part. I hope you feel the immediate sense of peace and calm from just the simple act of closing your eyes and listening to your breath.

Maybe yesterday was very productive or maybe it wasn't. Life throws so much our way that it can be hard. Be kind to yourself. You deserve it.

Focus on your breathing. Feel the oxygen nourishing your body and mind. You work hard... at work... school... at home and maybe in relationships. Allow yourself this time to be comfortable. You deserve comfort and peace and calm and joy. Imagine the feeling of joy permeating through your body... almost even... permeating through your very soul. This is wonderful. Be glad for yourself. Accept yourself... just as you are. You are strong and passionate... and kind. Feel your kindness as you appreciate these moments you give yourself.



Now, think on someone who is important to you. It's with these people that sometimes we can have not-so-kind moments. We don't feel non-kindness from our bones... our heart. It's just sometimes it's easier to hurt someone you love. Let's work on that.

This person is important to you, in so many ways. They are there for you and you care for them deeply. You are thinking about them now.... with such compassion and kindness and warmth and love. This warm loving feeling is filling your body... radiating. Next time you are with them, remember these feelings and be kind to them. Tell them how much they mean to you... and show them through small but thoughtful ways. A note, a text, maybe even a kiss on the forehead.

There is no better time than right now for you to dedicate yourself to being kind.



Meditation 23: Milky Way³⁵

Let's begin our meditation by sitting back and settling yourself into your favorite spot. This is your time, so be comfortable and enjoy the space you are creating where it's just you. No one needs you right now. There is nothing that can't wait.

As we move into our meditation, close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so and welcome the stillness and peace that immediately takes hold as you turn-off the lights of your world right now. Just for this little while. You are in control. This is your time.

You are being cradled, as your body sinks even further, just enough into your favorite cozy spot, as gravity grounds you there... almost as if gravity were forcing you to find relaxation.

Now, let's use our internal tool... our breath, to help guide us into our meditation. Bring your awareness to your breathing and for now... just take notice....

Breathing in through your nose.... Breathing out through your mouth.

³⁵ Colón-Wagner, R. (2020). *Courage to be mindful. Manuscript in preparation.*



Breathing in through your nose – you breathe in energy and life and... invigoration

Breathing out – you breathe out all the tension that has been held up in your body and mind for way too long.

Breathing in.... breathe in positive energy & life, as your body becomes more and more invigorated.

Breathing out... breathe out the last remnants of tension.

Continue breathing like this, with intention, focusing on breathing-in energy and breathing-out tension. As you do this for a few more breaths, scan your body, from your head to your toes, to make sure all tension is breathed out.

You are grounded now... sitting back and relaxed... your eyes are closed... temporarily pulling away from your surroundings. And you are focused on your breathing.

Beautiful, you are now relaxed.

Take notice now of the silence... The feelings of peace and calmness have begun to take hold in your heart and it's radiating outward, to every part of you. Up into your head and fingers, and all the way down to your toes.



Imagine the Milky Way, a billion stars huddled together in space, giving us its beauty and elegance every night. Imagine this Milky Way is inside you, the energies of excitement and celebration are twirling and twirling inside you as it travels around your body, like your blood, but magical.... Tingly...

Every cell in your body is singing with delight. Your physical body is charmed with the magical enchantment of energy lifting you... filling you with excitement and love.... The excitement and love that comes from the heavens.

Your cells are smiling, they are filling with wonder at the enchantment of being able to smile for their first time... ever. Let's add to our joy. This thrilling experience now demands itself be represented on your face. Bring a smile to your lips... lift your eyebrows a bit and feel your face smiling with every facial muscle. Your face is now representing the wonderful tingling magical feeling of excitement and celebration that has filled your entire being.

Continue to feel the swirling energy moving about your body and mind. You notice every spark of energy as it tingles you... everywhere.... A physical manifestation of pure joy, happiness and celebration.



This magical energy of joy and celebration is inside you... always. As we bring this meditation to a close, remember this feeling. It was all you. I didn't ask you to recall a moment in your life when you felt joy or celebration. I guided you to experience it without attaching memories. Just feelings and emotions. You are capable of so much joy.

You can bring yourself these joyful feelings whenever you need an emotional time out. Connect with your body and the energies we hold and begin to feel your body smiling.



Thank you for reading!

MINDFULNESS:

*A Young Adult's Guide
to Meditation and other
ways to chillax and take
control*

We hope you enjoyed this Guide and found it helpful! If you have any questions about this guide you can reach out to CTAC at info@ctacny.org

Ruth



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