



The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress

John D. Teasdale , J. Mark G. Williams , Zindel V. Segal , Jon Kabat-Zinn (Foreword)

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Imagine an 8-week program that can help you overcome depression, anxiety, and stress--by simply learning new ways to respond to your own thoughts and feelings. That program is mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and it has been tested and proven effective in clinical trials throughout the world. Now you can get the benefits of MBCT any time, any place, by working through this carefully constructed book. The expert authors introduce specific mindfulness practices to try each week, plus reflection questions, tools for keeping track of progress, and helpful comments from others going through the program. Like a trusted map, this book guides you step by step along the path of change.

Guided meditations are provided on the accompanying MP3 CD and are also available as audio downloads. Note: The MP3 CD can be played on CD players (only those marked "MP3-enabled") as well as on most computers.

See also the authors' *The Mindful Way through Depression*, which demonstrates these proven strategies with in-depth stories and examples. Plus, mental health professionals, see also the authors' bestselling therapy guide: *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression, Second Edition*.

Winner (Second Place)--American Journal of Nursing Book of the Year Award, Consumer Health Category

The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress Details

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Jon Kabat-Zinn (Foreword)

From Reader Review The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-Week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress for online ebook

Kathy says

This is a book that I have worked through with a friend. We will continue to do it again. I will keep it close for a long time.

Sebastien says

The program is quite good but, for me anyway, it was tricky to follow on a consistent basis. The book is self-conscious - not in the way an AI is self-conscious (because it's not that), but rather in the way that it understands that you're going to find certain parts difficult and doesn't necessarily expect you to succeed, which is good. There are tons of quotes from people suffering and doubting themselves while doing the program, which I found to be helpful.

This book definitely isn't for everyone, but I think most people would certainly gain something from reading it.

LaGina says

As a PTSD suffer this workbook gave me something to focus on when I was having a bad day. I got it in ebook form but would love to have had it in paperback so that I could have it at the ready to help me work thru my episodes.

D says

For anyone who experiences emotional problems that won't go away, the despair and demoralization, the sheer joylessness of depression, is never very far away.

Bringing Back Hope

- What if, despite what your thoughts may try to tell you, there is nothing wrong with you at all?
- What if your heroic efforts to prevent your feelings from getting the best of you are actually backfiring?
- What if they are the very things that are keeping you stuck in suffering or even making things worse?

The root of many emotional problems:

1. The tendency to overthink, ruminate, or worry too much about some things
-

coupled with

2. A tendency to avoid, suppress or push away other things.

Mindfulness means being able to bring direct, open-hearted awareness to what you are doing while you are doing it; being able to tune in to what's going on in your mind and body, and in the outside world, moment by moment.

Our reactions to unhappiness can transform what might otherwise be a brief, passing sadness into persistent dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

Most of us don't feel able to let things take their natural course -- when we feel sad or unhappy, we feel we have to *do* something, even if it's only trying to understand what's going on. Paradoxically, it is those very attempts to get rid of unwanted unhappy feelings that get us stuck in every-deepening unhappiness.

Foundations

1. Living on 'Automatic Pilot' vs Living with Conscious Awareness and Choice
2. Relating to Experience through Thought vs Directly Sensing Experience
3. Dwelling on and in the Past and Future vs Being Fully in the Present Moment
4. Needing to Avoid, Escape or Get Rid of Unpleasant Experience vs Approaching It with Interest.
5. Needing Things to Be Different vs Allowing Things to Be Just as They Already Are
6. Seeing Thoughts as True and Real vs Seeing Them as Mental Events
7. Prioritizing Goal Attainment vs Sensitivity to Wider Needs

We want a balance of doing and being in life.

8-Week Program

Week 1 Moving from living on 'automatic pilot' to living with awareness and conscious choice

Week 2 Moving from relating to experience through thinking to directly sensing

Week 3 Moving from dwelling in the past and future to being fully in the present moment

Week 4 Moving from trying to avoid, escape or get rid of unpleasant experience to approaching it with interest

Week 5 Moving from needing things to be different to allowing them to be just as they already are

Week 6 Moving from seeing thoughts as true and real to seeing them as mental events that may not correspond to reality

Week 7 Moving from treating yourself harshly to taking care of yourself with kindness and compassion

Week 8 Planning a mindful future

Two ways of knowing: 1) Thinking about 2) Tuning in directly (awareness)

Our emotional reactions reflect the interpretations we give to situations rather than the situations themselves.

Our interpretations of events reflect what we bring to them just as much as the reality of the event themselves.

Thoughts are not facts -- they are mental events.

Often we are unaware of our interpretations.

Scene: walking down the street. See someone you know on the other side of the street. Smile & wave. The

person doesn't respond, just walks past w/o any sign of recognizing you.

Thought Feeling

- What did I do? Worried
- Wonder how that happened Curious
- Nobody likes me Depressed
- Be that way Angry
- Hope they're OK Concerned

Exact same situation; multiple reactions.

Kindness is the foundation for all skillful practice.

The move from doing to being is the way to freedom.

Mindful Standing Stretches

Raise arms up
to the side
One arm up
both arms up, side bend
Shoulder box
head tilts: front and sides.

Mindful Movement

Savasana
Pelvic tilts
Knee curls
Cat-cow
Core-balance on knees
Twists

From Full Catastrophe Living, J Kabat-Zinn

Aversion is the drive to avoid, escape, get rid of, numb out from, or destroy things we experience as unpleasant. It is the power behind the driven-doing that keeps us entangled in negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, anger, and stress.

Deliberately turning to face, investigate, and recognize unpleasant feelings -- and your reactions to them -- is a powerful affirmation that you do not have to get rid of them. Instead they can be held in awareness, seen for what they are, and met with *conscious response* rather than *automatic reaction*.

If we can see negative states of mind for what they really are, we can take them less personally, we react with less aversion, and we have a chance to act in ways that will let the states of mind pass, rather than get us stuck even deeper in them.

Physical discomfort provides opportunity to learn how to relate more skillfully to all kinds of unwanted experience -- including **emotional** discomfort. This skill frees you from getting trapped in depression, anxiety, and stress.

When you become aware of physical discomfort, see if it's possible to intentionally bring your attention

right into the part of the body where the experience is most intense. Once there, explore with **gentle**, interested attention the pattern of sensations.

By deliberately moving your attention **toward** and **right into** the region of intensity, you reverse aversion's automatic tendency to **move away** from and **avoid unpleasant experiences**. You also give yourself a chance to see pains in the body for what they are -- not things we have to get rid of or away from at all costs, but constantly chancing patterns of physical sensation that can be held in awareness and known.

The skillful response to aversion is to:

- 1) Recognize it for what it is
- 2) Name it (aversion)
- 3) Treat it with respect, allowing it to be present until it passes
- 4) Continue to explore with gentle, soft attention, how it affects your body.

The 3-min Breathing Space

Every day, take a 3-min breathing space, 3x/day

Learn to respond to unpleasant and difficult experiences by intentionally taking a breathing space rather than reacting automatically with aversion.

Holding something gently in awareness is an affirmation that we can face it, name it, and work with it.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house

Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture.

Still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

- Rumi

Why is it so important to cultivate allowing/letting be?

Shifting our basic stance from one of 'not wanting' to one of 'opening,' allows the chain of habitual automatic reactions to be broken at the first link.

- All unpleasant feelings pass of their own accord if we do not force them.

-There is a kind of peace and contentment we can experience even in the presence of unpleasant feelings.

To be at ease, we let go of the struggle of needing to make things different.

Allowing experience means simply allowing space for whatever is going on, rather than trying to create some other state.

Your actions will be most effective if you can respond as early as possible to signs that your mood is worsening.

The Breathing Space: Ways to See Thoughts Differently

1. Simply watch the thoughts come and go in the field of awareness, without feeling you have to follow them.
2. Remind yourself to view the negative thoughts as mental events, rather than facts.
3. Write your thoughts down on paper. This helps you see them in a way that is less emotional and overwhelming. The pause between having the thought and writing it down provides an opportunity to take a wider perspective.
4. See if you recognize the thinking pattern as one of your 'Top 10' unhelpful thoughts.
5. Focus with kindness and compassion on the feelings that may be giving birth to the thoughts, asking yourself, "What feelings are here now?" How am I experiencing these feelings in the body?

You can turn activity into a simple yet powerful way to raise mood and enhance well-being.

Activities that Help: Mastery and Pleasure

Mastery - give a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction or control, like writing a letter, mowing the lawn, doing something you've been putting off.

Pleasure - give a sense of enjoyment, like calling a friend for a chat, taking a long, hot bath, or going for a leisurely walk

When you feel low, take your time to ask yourself: How can I best take care of myself right now?

- turn toward rather than away from situations
- see thoughts as thoughts, not facts

Staying Present

Practice bringing your attention back to your body. Relax into the moment. Feel the simple movements of your body throughout the day.

Remember to tell yourself "Well done" when you complete a task or part of a task.

Getting the body active can reverse fatigue and inertia of a depressed mood.

- Live with awareness and conscious choice
- Know experience directly through the senses
- Be here now, in this moment
- Approach all experience with interest (v avoiding the unpleasant)
- Allow things to be as they are (vs needing them to be different)
- See thoughts as mental events (vs necessarily true and real)
- Take care of yourself with kindness and compassion (vs focusing on goals regardless of the cost to you or others).

Every time we are truly mindful, we nourish the precious intention to care for ourselves and for other people.

Bring awareness to routine activities.

Stay present.

Tips for Everyday Mindfulness

- When you first wake up, before you get out of bed, bring your attention to your breath. Observe 5 mindful breaths.
- Notice changes in your posture. Be aware of how your body and mind feel when you move from lying down to sitting, to standing, to walking. Notice each time you make a transition from one posture to the next.
- When you hear a phone ring, a bird sing, a train pass, laugh, a door - use any sound as the bell of mindfulness. Really listen and be present and awake.
- Throughout the day, take a few moments to bring your attention to your breath. Observe 5 mindful breaths.
- When you eat or drink, take a minute and breathe. Look at your food and realize that the food is connected to something that nourished its growth. Can you see the sun, the rain, the earth, the farmer, the trucker in your food? Pay attention as you eat, consciously consuming this food for your physical health. Bring awareness to seeing your food, smelling your food, tasting, chewing, swallowing.
- Notice your body while you walk or stand. Take a moment to notice your posture. Pay attention to the contact of your feet with the ground under them. Feel the air on your face, arms, and legs. Are you rushing or taking your time?
- Bring awareness to listening and talking. Can you listen without agreeing or disagreeing, liking or disliking, or planning what you will say when it is your turn? When talking, can you just say what you need to w/o overstating or understating? Can you notice how your mind and body feel?
- When you wait in line, use this time to notice standing and breathing. Feel the contact of your feet with the floor and how your body feels. Bring attention to the rise and fall of your abdomen. Are you feeling patient?
- Be aware of any points of tightness in your body. See if you can breathe into them. As you exhale, let go of tension. Is tension stored anywhere (eg, neck, shoulders, stomach, jaw, lower back). Stretch once a day.

- Focus attention on your daily activities like brushing your teeth, washing, brushing your hair, putting on your shoes. Bring mindfulness to each activity.

- Before you go to sleep, take a few minutes and bring your attention to your breathing. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

- Madeline Klyne

Love after Love

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

- Derek Walcott

Lynette Monteiro says

Reviewed here among other books:

10 Books That Are Good for Your Health

Sandy says

Excellent introduction to meditation, although it is missing metta (loving-kindness) and self-compassion, two things which I (and my teacher) feel are an important part of dealing with depression and distress. (Actually, important to anyone dealing with the the difficulties that come with being human, even if those difficulties don't have labels.)

This was the text for an introduction to mindful meditation class. I enjoyed the class, and the book is a good refresher. Definitely worth taking the time to do it, week by week, as it says. It has several types of meditation, most of which build on earlier skills. I now have a good variety of tools to choose from.

Amanda says

Ironically I practiced mindfulness far more frequently before I attempted this program. In the end it was overwhelming to me and I have passed the book on to someone else (mom). Doing the guided body scan and breathing space meditations seem to work best for me at this time.

Leslie Jonsson says

Useful if at times repetitive ways of applying mindfulness concepts to depression, anxiety and other mental health issues.

Andrej Kamenský says

Do you want to explore and learn how to implement mindfulness into your daily life? Moreover, do you happen to suffer from recurring depression, anxiety or low mood states? Would you like to learn to cope most skillfully with life's stress, turmoils and situations? Would you like to alter in a positive and more compassionate way your relationship to yourself, your experience and people around?

Well, then look no further. This book is a kind guide that will help you on your way. It will not give you all the information about mindfulness, more ideas to think about. It is more focused to help you develop a stable and sustainable mindfulness practice and equip you with effective tools to battle recurring depression or other troublesome emotional states. And it will also give you information what is mindfulness, why you have to do the things it asks you to do and provide you with broader context and reference for more 'theoretical' books.

I totally recommend to people who do not want to just 'think about' mindfulness, but who want to 'develop mindfulness' in their lives.

The book is written by some respectable professors from Universities like Cambridge, Oxford and Toronto. Therefore it's safe if you do not want to enmesh yourself in anything "New-agey" or spiritual.
