The Power of Presence

Mindfulness at Work and Beyond



A Practical Toolkit for building awareness, reducing reactivity, and responding with intention.

What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the practice of intentionally bringing your attention to the present moment with curiosity, openness, and without judgment.

Mindfulness is not about clearing your mind or eliminating thoughts. It is about noticing your thoughts, emotions, physical sensations, and surroundings without automatically reacting to them.

When we practice mindfulness, we create a small but powerful space between what happens and how we respond.

Mindfulness is:

- Paying attention to what is happening right now.
- Noticing thoughts and emotions without immediately reacting to them.
- Approaching your experience with curiosity rather than judgment.
- Recognizing when your mind has wandered and gently bringing it back.
- Choosing an intentional response instead of operating on autopilot.

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness can support well-being, performance, communication, and emotional resilience.

At Work	In Daily Life
• Improves focus, concentration, and decision-making. • Supports creativity and problem-solving. • Reduces stress and emotional reactivity. • Helps prevent burnout. • Strengthens communication and listening. • Builds resilience and adaptability. • Encourages thoughtful rather than impulsive responses.	• Promotes calm and clarity during stressful moments. • Strengthens relationships through empathy and attentive listening. • Supports better sleep and physical well-being. • Increases gratitude and appreciation. • Helps us become more aware of our habits and choices. • Creates more meaningful and enjoyable everyday experiences.

Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence

Mindfulness strengthens the five core areas of emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence area	How mindfulness supports it
Self-Awareness	Mindfulness helps you recognize your thoughts, emotions, triggers, and physical reactions as they occur. **Ask yourself:** • What am I feeling right now? • What thoughts are running through my mind? • What is happening in my body?
Self-Regulation	Mindfulness creates space between an emotional trigger and your response. Instead of reacting automatically, you can pause, gather information, and choose how you want to respond.
Motivation	Mindfulness helps you reconnect with your values, intentions, and long-term goals rather than being controlled by the emotion of the moment.
Empathy	When you are present, you are better able to notice the emotions, needs, and perspectives of others.
Relationship Management	Mindfulness helps you communicate more calmly, listen more carefully, manage conflict, and build healthier relationships.

Key takeaway — Mindfulness trains the brain to pause, observe, and choose

wisely—essential skills for emotionally intelligent leadership, communication, and relationships.

Key Mindset Shifts

Mindfulness begins with changing how we think about our thoughts, emotions, and reactions.

Instead of...	**Shift toward...**
“I need to stop thinking.”	“I can notice my thoughts without following every one of them.”
“I need to respond immediately.”	“A pause allows me to respond with intention.”
“My feelings are facts.”	“My feelings provide information, but they may not tell the whole story.”
“I know what the other person meant.”	“I can remain curious and ask for more information.”
“Multitasking helps me accomplish more.”	“Focused attention improves the quality of my work.”
“Mindfulness requires extra time.”	“Mindfulness can happen during ordinary moments.”
“I shouldn’t feel this way.”	“I can acknowledge what I feel without judging myself.”

“I have to get mindfulness exactly right.”	“Each time I notice and return to the present moment, I am practicing mindfulness.”
“I need the situation or other person to change before I can feel better.”	“I may not control the situation, but I can choose how I meet it.”

The Pause: Moving From Reaction to Response

When something stressful happens, the brain and body may react before we have fully processed the situation. A mindful pause allows us to interrupt that automatic reaction.

Step	What to do
PAUSE	Stop before speaking, sending, or acting.
BREATHE	Take one or two slow breaths.
NOTICE	**Ask yourself:** • What am I feeling? • What am I thinking? • What is happening in my body? • What assumptions am I making?
CHECK	**Ask yourself:** • Do I have all the information? • Is my interpretation completely accurate? • What else could be true?
CHOOSE	Decide how you want to respond based on your values and the outcome you want—not

only on the emotion you are experiencing.

How to Practice Basic Mindfulness

- [ ] Find a comfortable position.
- [ ] Sit or stand in a position that allows you to feel both comfortable and alert.
- [ ] Set an intention.
- [ ] Choose to be present, curious, and kind toward yourself.
- [ ] Close your eyes or soften your gaze.
- [ ] Choose whichever feels most comfortable.
- [ ] Notice your breathing.
- [ ] Observe your natural breath without trying to change it.
- [ ] Scan your body.
- [ ] Notice areas of tension, warmth, discomfort, relaxation, or ease.
- [ ] Notice your thoughts.
- [ ] When thoughts arise, acknowledge them without judgment. You might silently label them “thinking,” “planning,” “remembering,” or “worrying.”
- [ ] Return to the present.
- [ ] Gently guide your attention back to your breath, body, or another chosen point of focus.
- [ ] Close with appreciation.
- [ ] Acknowledge yourself for taking time to pause and practice.

Start with three to five minutes a day. Gradually increase the length of your practice if it feels helpful. Consistency is more important than duration.

Mindful Breathing Practice

Mindful breathing can be practiced almost anywhere. It may help calm the nervous system, reduce reactivity, and restore focus.

- [ ] Get comfortable.
- [ ] Sit or stand with a relaxed but upright posture. Allow your shoulders to soften.
- [ ] Breathe in slowly through your nose for a count of four.
- [ ] Hold gently for a count of two.
- [ ] Exhale slowly for a count of six.
- [ ] Repeat for five to ten breaths.

You may silently repeat one of these phrases:

- “Breathing in, I calm my mind.”
- “Breathing out, I release tension.”
- “In this moment, I am safe and present.”
- “I am here now.”

Try mindful breathing:

- Before an important meeting.
- After receiving a stressful email.
- During your commute.
- Before beginning a difficult conversation.
- When transitioning from work to home.
- Before going to sleep.

Quick Reset: Box Breathing

Box breathing is a simple technique that can help steady your breathing and reduce emotional reactivity.

- Inhale for a count of four.
- Hold for a count of four.
- Exhale for a count of four.
- Hold for a count of four.

Repeat for three to five cycles.

If holding your breath feels uncomfortable, skip the holds and focus on taking slow, comfortable breaths.

Variations of Mindfulness

Mindfulness does not have to look like traditional seated meditation. You can practice it in many ways.

- **Mindful Breathing:** Focus your attention on the sensations of breathing.
- **Mindful Listening:** Give another person your full attention without planning your response while they are speaking.
- **Mindful Movement:** Bring awareness to stretching, walking, yoga, exercise, or everyday movement.
- **Mindful Eating:** Slow down and notice the flavors, textures, smells, colors, and sensations of eating.
- **Body Scan:** Move your attention through different parts of your body and notice sensations without trying to change them.
- **Journaling:** Observe and record thoughts, feelings, experiences, and patterns with honesty and curiosity.
- **Micro-Mindfulness:** Practice short, intentional pauses of 30 seconds to two minutes throughout the day.
- **Sensory Mindfulness:** Use your senses to bring yourself into the present moment by noticing what you see, hear, feel, smell, or taste.

The goal is not to find the “perfect” practice. The goal is to find a practice you can use consistently.

Applying Mindfulness at Work

Mindfulness at work supports presence, performance, communication, and emotional regulation.

- **Pause Before Reacting:** Take one or two breaths before responding to an upsetting comment, request, or email.
- **Practice Single-Tasking:** Focus on one task at a time instead of constantly switching between emails, messages, meetings, and projects.
- **Take Micro-Mindful Breaks:** Step away for a few moments. Breathe, stretch, look outside, get fresh air, or notice your surroundings.
- **Listen with Intention:** During meetings and conversations, listen to understand rather than planning what you will say next.

- **Use Mindful Transitions:** Pause between meetings, projects, or conversations. Take a breath and intentionally reset before moving to the next task.
- **Check Your Assumptions:** Before drawing conclusions about another person's behavior, ask whether you have enough information.
- **Lead Mindfully:** Demonstrate calm, thoughtful, and nonreactive behavior. Your presence can influence the emotional tone of the people around you.

Reflection

What is one recurring work stressor that often puts you on autopilot?

What would a more mindful response look like?

Applying Mindfulness at Home

Mindfulness at home supports presence, rest, and intentional living.

- **Create a Transition Ritual:** Use a walk, music, breathing practice, or a few quiet moments to transition from work into personal time.
- **Practice Digital Mindfulness:** Create specific times or spaces where you put devices away and give your attention to the people and activities around you.
- **Make Routines Mindful:** Bring awareness to cooking, cleaning, showering, gardening, walking, or getting ready for bed.
- **Notice Small Joys:** Identify two or three things you appreciated during the day.
- **Create Restorative Moments:** Use breathing, stretching, yoga, meditation, journaling, or quiet reflection to help your mind and body reset.

Reflection

What is one mindful habit you could add to your evening routine?

Applying Mindfulness in Relationships

Mindfulness strengthens connection, compassion, and communication.

- **Listen to Understand:** Give the other person your full attention instead of preparing your reply.
- **Stay Curious:** Ask questions rather than assuming you know the other person's intentions.
- **Notice Your Reactions:** Pay attention to defensiveness, frustration, impatience, or the urge to interrupt.
- **Pause Before Responding:** Allow yourself time to understand what was said and decide how you want to respond.
- **Express Appreciation:** Intentionally notice and communicate what you value about others.
- **Savor Positive Moments:** Put distractions aside and allow yourself to fully experience enjoyable conversations, celebrations, and everyday interactions.

Helpful phrases include:

- "Let me take a moment to think about that."
- "I want to make sure I understand."
- "Can you tell me more?"
- "I hear what you're saying. Let's work through this."
- "I'm noticing that I'm becoming reactive. Can we pause and return to this?"
- "What would feel helpful right now?"

Applying Mindfulness During Stressful Moments

When emotions are strong, use these five steps:

1. **Pause.** Take one or two slow breaths before responding.
2. **Notice.** Ask: What am I feeling? What am I thinking? What is happening in my body?
3. **Ground Yourself.** Notice your feet on the floor, your breath, your posture, and your surroundings.

4. **Slow Your Response.** Speak clearly and intentionally. You do not need to respond immediately.
5. **Stay Curious.** Instead of asking, “Why are they doing this to me?” consider asking: “What else might be happening?” “Do I have all the information?” “What does this person need me to understand?” “What outcome do I want from this conversation?”

The R.A.I.N. Mindfulness Practice

R.A.I.N. is a structured way to work through difficult emotions with awareness and self-compassion.

Step	Guidance
R — Recognize	Identify what is happening. **Ask:** • What am I feeling? • What thoughts are present? • What sensations do I notice in my body? **You might say:** • “I am feeling frustrated.” • “I am noticing anxiety.” • “My body feels tense.”
A — Allow	Give the experience permission to be present without immediately fighting, fixing, or judging it. **You might say:** • “This is what I am experiencing right now.” • “I don’t have to like this feeling, but I can allow it to be here.”

I — Investigate	Explore the experience with curiosity and kindness. **Ask:** • What triggered this reaction? • What story am I telling myself? • What am I afraid might happen? • What do I need right now? • Is my interpretation completely accurate?
N — Nurture	Offer yourself the support, reassurance, or care you need. **You might say:** • “This is difficult, and I can handle it.” • “I am allowed to pause.” • “I can be kind to myself while I work through this.” • “I do not have to solve everything in this moment.”

Mindful Self-Compassion

Self-compassion means responding to yourself with the same understanding and kindness you would offer someone you care about.

When you feel upset, disappointed, embarrassed, or overwhelmed:

- Take one or two slow breaths.
- Step away briefly if you need space.
- Name the emotion you are experiencing.
- Notice where you feel it in your body.
- Avoid overidentifying with the emotion.
- Remind yourself that an emotion is an experience—not your entire identity.
- Imagine speaking to yourself as you would speak to someone you care about.
- Offer yourself an encouraging or reassuring statement.
- Place a hand over your heart, hold your hands together, or use another comforting physical gesture if that feels supportive.

Try this self-compassion statement

“This is a difficult moment. Difficult moments are part of being human. I can acknowledge what I feel and respond to myself with kindness.”

The next time something upsets you: Breathe. Notice. Name the feeling. Offer kindness. Choose your next step.

Mindful Journaling

Journaling can help you observe thoughts and emotions rather than automatically reacting to them. It creates space to notice patterns, release stress, and clarify what matters.

How to Journal Mindfully

- Set aside five to ten quiet minutes.
- Take a few breaths before beginning.
- Write freely without editing or judging yourself.
- Notice recurring thoughts, emotions, or patterns.
- End with a short reflection, intention, or expression of gratitude.

Journal Prompts

- What sensations or emotions am I noticing right now?
- What thought patterns have been showing up today?
- What self-talk have I noticed?
- Is there another way to interpret this situation?
- What am I grateful for in this moment?
- Where did I feel most present today?
- When did I feel least present?
- What do I need to acknowledge or let go of?
- How could I respond more calmly to a current challenge?
- What have I learned about myself this week?

Mindful Eating

Mindful eating means slowing down and paying attention to the experience of eating without judgment.

Try the following:

- Take smaller bites and chew thoroughly.
- Notice the color, smell, flavor, temperature, and texture of your food.
- Minimize distractions such as television, email, or your phone.
- Pause halfway through the meal and check in with your body.
- Ask, “Am I still hungry, satisfied, or full?”
- Notice whether you are eating because of physical hunger, habit, boredom, or emotion.
- Take a moment to appreciate your food and the people or experiences connected to it.

Practice

During your next meal, experience one bite fully. Slow down and ask, “What do I notice?”

Real-Life Mindfulness Scenarios

Scenario 1: The Frustrating Email

You receive an email that feels dismissive or critical. Your first instinct is to respond immediately and defend yourself.

Pause and Reflect:

- What thoughts do you notice?
- What emotions and physical reactions are present?
- What assumptions might you be making?
- Do you have enough information to understand the sender’s intent?
- What outcome do you want from your response?

Mindful Response: Step away briefly. Take three slow breaths. Reread the email

and separate the facts from your interpretation. Respond when you can communicate clearly and intentionally.

Possible response: “Thank you for sharing your concern. I want to make sure I fully understand. Could you clarify what you need from me?”

Scenario 2: The Overloaded Workday

You are responding to messages during a meeting while thinking about your next deadline. At the end of the meeting, you realize you missed important information.

Pause and Reflect:

- What signs tell you that you are operating on autopilot?
- What are you trying to accomplish by multitasking?
- What is the cost of dividing your attention?
- What could you remove or postpone?

Mindful Response: Close unrelated tabs, silence notifications, take one grounding breath, and give the meeting your full attention. Write down distracting thoughts or tasks so you can return to them later.

Mindset Shift: Instead of “I have to do everything at once,” try, “I can give my attention to one priority at a time.”

Scenario 3: The Tense Conversation

A colleague disagrees with you during a meeting. You notice yourself becoming defensive and preparing to argue your point.

Pause and Reflect:

- What emotion is showing up?
- What do you notice in your body?
- Are you listening to understand or preparing your rebuttal?
- What assumptions are you making?
- What curious question could you ask?

Mindful Response: Pause and say - “I want to make sure I understand your perspective. Can you tell me more about what concerns you?”

Mindset Shift: Instead of “I need to prove that I’m right,” try, “I can understand another perspective without immediately agreeing with it.”

Scenario 4: The Unexpected Change

A project changes suddenly after you have already invested significant time and energy. You feel frustrated and resistant.

Pause and Reflect:

- What part of the change feels most difficult?
- What is within your control?
- What are you afraid the change might mean?
- What information or support do you need?

Mindful Response: Acknowledge your frustration without allowing it to determine your next step. Clarify the new expectations, identify what remains useful, and focus on the next manageable action.

Mindset Shift: Instead of “All my work was wasted,” try, “The situation changed, and I can decide how to use what I learned.”

Scenario 5: Transitioning From Work to Home

You finish work, but your mind remains focused on unfinished tasks and stressful conversations. You notice yourself carrying that frustration into your evening.

Pause and Reflect:

- What are you mentally carrying home?
- What needs to be acknowledged, written down, or released?
- How do you want to show up for yourself and others tonight?
- What transition ritual would help you reset?

Mindful Response: Write down unfinished tasks for tomorrow. Take a short walk,

listen to music, stretch, or practice two minutes of slow breathing before beginning your evening.

Mindset Shift: Instead of “I should be able to turn work off immediately,” try, “I can create an intentional transition that helps my mind and body shift.”

Scenario 6: The Inner Critic

You make a mistake and immediately begin criticizing yourself. You think, “I always mess things up,” or “I should have known better.”

Pause and Reflect:

- What words are you using toward yourself?
- Would you speak to someone else this way?
- What are the facts of the situation?
- What can you learn without attacking yourself?

Mindful Response: Name the disappointment, separate the mistake from your identity, and choose one constructive next step.

Possible self-talk: “I made a mistake. That does not mean I am a failure. I can take responsibility, learn from it, and decide what to do next.”

How to Build a Consistent Mindfulness Practice

Start Small

Begin with one mindful pause or three minutes of practice each day.

Connect It to an Existing Routine

Pair mindfulness with something you already do, such as:

- Drinking your morning coffee.
- Starting your computer.
- Entering a meeting.
- Eating lunch.
- Finishing the workday.

- Brushing your teeth.
- Getting into bed.

Use Reminders

Set a phone reminder or place a note where you will see it:

- “Pause and breathe.”
- “What am I noticing?”
- “Respond with intention.”

Practice Micro-Mindfulness

A mindful moment does not have to be long. Take 30 seconds to notice your breath, posture, thoughts, or surroundings.

Choose One Practice

Avoid trying to do everything at once. Select one mindfulness practice that feels realistic and useful.

Celebrate Awareness

Noticing that you are distracted or reactive is not failure. That moment of noticing is mindfulness.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection

Each time you pause, notice, and return to the present moment, you strengthen your mindfulness skills.

Mindfulness Self-Assessment: “How Present Am I?”

Instructions

Rate each statement from 1 to 5.

1 = Rarely true
2 = Occasionally true
3 = Sometimes true
4 = Often true
5 = Almost always true

Statement	Score (1–5)
Awareness and Presence	
I notice when my mind begins to wander.	____
I am aware of my thoughts without immediately reacting to them.	____
I can bring my attention back to the present moment when I become distracted.	____
I notice physical sensations such as tension, breathing, or posture throughout the day.	____
Emotional Awareness and Regulation	
I recognize my emotional triggers in real time.	____
I pause before responding in stressful situations.	____
I can shift from reacting automatically to responding thoughtfully.	____

I give myself space to process emotions before acting.	____
Mindful Communication and Relationships	
I listen fully without planning my response while another person is speaking.	____
I seek to understand others rather than assuming their intentions.	____
I remain present during conversations without becoming distracted by devices or unrelated thoughts.	____
I approach disagreement or conflict with curiosity rather than immediate defensiveness.	____
Mindfulness at Work	
I focus on one task at a time rather than constantly multitasking.	____
I take short mental or physical breaks to reset during the day.	____
I pause before sending emails or responding during tense moments.	____
I feel mentally present during meetings.	____
Mindfulness in Daily Life	
I create intentional transitions between work and home.	____
I regularly practice gratitude or reflection.	____

I engage in everyday activities such as eating or walking with awareness.	____
I intentionally make time to slow down, even briefly.	____
Total score	**____ / 100**

Understanding Your Score

Band	What it may mean
80–100: Strong mindful awareness	You regularly practice presence, emotional awareness, and intentional responding. Consider how you can deepen your practice and sustain these habits during especially demanding periods.
60–79: Growing awareness	You have a strong foundation and already use several mindfulness skills. Identify the situations in which you are most likely to return to autopilot and choose one practice to strengthen.
40–59: Opportunity to build	You are developing awareness, but stress, distraction, or strong emotions may frequently pull you away from the present moment. Start with one or two small, consistent practices.
20–39: Time to pause and reset	You may currently be operating in a highly distracted or reactive mode. Begin gently with brief breathing practices, mindful pauses, and increased awareness of your physical and emotional signals.

Your score is not a judgment or diagnosis. It is a snapshot designed to help you notice strengths and identify opportunities for growth.

Self-Assessment Reflection

Where did you score highest?

What appears to be working well?

Where would you like to grow?

Which situation is most likely to put you on autopilot?

What is one small mindfulness habit you could begin today?

When during your day would this practice be easiest to use?

My Mindful Response Plan

Fill in the blanks
A situation that frequently triggers stress or reactivity for me: _____
What I typically think in this situation:

_____

What I typically feel emotionally or physically:

_____

How I usually react:

_____

The mindfulness tool I will use:

_____

What I would like to choose instead:

_____

A phrase I can use to support myself:

_____

My reminder or practice cue:

_____

My Mindfulness Action Plan

Fill in the blanks
One mindfulness habit I will begin: _____
When and where I will practice: _____
The existing routine I will connect it to: _____
One situation in which I will intentionally apply mindfulness: _____
One distraction or barrier I will reduce: _____

One person who can support or encourage me: _____
How I will know the practice is helping: _____
My commitment for the next seven days: _____

Recommended Books

Books
• Wherever You Go, There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn • The Miracle of Mindfulness by Thich Nhat Hanh • 10% Happier by Dan Harris • Radical Acceptance by Tara Brach • The Power of Now by Eckhart Tolle • Emotional Intelligence by Daniel Goleman • Atomic Habits by James Clear • Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff • The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion by Christopher Germer

Recommended Apps

App	Focus
Bree Health	Support and services through Bree Health.
Headspace	Guided meditations and short mindfulness exercises designed for busy schedules.
Calm	Meditation, breathing, sleep, and relaxation tools.
Insight Timer	A large collection of free meditations, music, talks, and courses.
Ten Percent Happier	Practical mindfulness and meditation guidance for everyday life.
Balance	Personalized meditation and mindfulness plans based on individual goals and experience.

Final Thought

Mindfulness is not about perfection. It is about presence.

Every mindful breath, pause, or moment of reflection creates an opportunity to step out of autopilot and choose how you want to respond.

You may not always control what happens around you, but you can strengthen your ability to meet each moment with greater awareness, clarity, and compassion.

Bree Health Support

You do not have to manage life’s challenges alone. Confidential support is available through Bree Health.

Available Services

- Coaching and counseling services
- Legal consultations
- Financial consultations
- Health advocacy
- Virtual concierge services
- e-Learning courses
- Solutions Paths

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