

# BACK PAIN RELIEF

HOME REMEDIES FOR BACK PAIN PREVENTION  
AND EXERCISES TO SUPERCHARGE YOUR  
HEALTH AND LIVE PAIN FREE!



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# Contents

[Title](#)

[Author Name](#)

[Disclaimer:](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter One: Common Causes of Back Pain](#)

[Chapter Two: Basic Standing Tips](#)

[Chapter Three: Basic Walking Tips](#)

[Chapter Four: Basic Sitting Tips](#)

[Chapter Five: Basic Driver and Passenger Car Tips](#)

[Chapter Six: Back Pain Symptoms & Signs - When You Should See A Doctor](#)

[Chapter Seven: Yoga For Back Pain Exercises.](#)

[Chapter Eight: Ten Back Pain Stretches & Exercises.](#)

[Chapter Nine: Home Remedies For Back Pain](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Bonus Book #1 - Buddhism](#)

[Chapter One: Buddhism Terminology.](#)

[Chapter Two: An Introduction to Buddhism](#)

[Chapter Three: The Four Noble Truths / The Eight Fold Path / The Precepts](#)

[Chapter Four: Karma, Rebirth & Reincarnation](#)

[Chapter Five: The Seven Factors of Enlightenment & The Five Hindrances](#)

[Chapter Six: Buddhism Rituals and Meditation](#)

[Chapter Seven: Buddhism & Daily Life](#)

[Chapter Eight: Buddhist Tips, Quotes & Resources](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Bonus Book #2 Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter One: An Introduction to Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter Two: How to Get Started On The Path to Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter Three: 11 Mindfulness Exercises to Get You Started!](#)

[Chapter Four: Yoga & Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter Five: Meditation & Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter Six: Anxiety & Mindfulness](#)

[Chapter Seven: 55+ Mindfulness Tips for Beginner's](#)

[Chapter Eight: 15 Mindfulness Apps & Resources to Improve Your Life](#)

[Bonus Chapter: 200+ Mindfulness Quotes to Live Your Life By!](#)

## Conclusion

# **Back Pain Relief:**

**Home Remedies For Back Pain  
Prevention And Exercises To  
Supercharge Your Health And Live  
Pain Free!**

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# Introduction

In general, we often take our backs for granted until it's already too late and we become injured. When exercising we often make the mistake of only focusing on our arms and legs in order to enhance our appearance. It's time to change all that!

This guide will go over prevention techniques, home remedies and exercises one can use in order to live pain free and get back to doing the things you love to do on a daily basis.

In this day and age the majority of us are now sitting in the car for hours a day commuting back and forth to work, then sitting at our desks for 8 hours a day of work, followed by sitting in front of a computer or TV for hours on end once we get home at night.

Over time this can wreak havoc on the health of your back and lead to some painful and chronic back injuries. It is my hope that you can take the knowledge found in this book and apply it to your lives in order to avoid these common pitfalls.

Thanks again for downloading this book, I hope it helps!

# **Chapter One: Common Causes of Back Pain**

For most of us back pain can seem like something that is unavoidable. However, you're actually in better control of it than you'd imagine.

There are countless ways to injure your back during the course of a normal day but here are four of the more common causes that stand out.

## **1. Thinking you're invincible.**

What I mean by this is many people will jump into any activity without thinking about the possible consequences. From finishing a few labor intensive chores around the house to playing a game of basketball or tennis. Over time these types of activities can begin to cause a lot of wear and tear on your back and lead to injury. It's not only important to stretch before doing strenuous activity but to incorporate some back exercises into your normal workout schedule in order to strengthen the muscles in your back. Building up your obliques and side abdominal muscles are crucial for the long term stability of your back. If you don't like weight training then try yoga or pool exercises. Another idea is to get an inflatable exercise ball you can sit on instead of always using a chair. As a bonus there's a ton of exercises you can incorporate an exercise ball into.

## **2. Improper Lifting Techniques.**

Bending improperly and then lifting is a major cause of back injuries. Instead follow these few steps to improve your technique.

A). Bend at the knees and be sure to keep a straightened back. Do not bend from your waist.

B). When lifting keep whatever object you're lifting in close proximity. The farther away the object you're holding, is from you, the more stress you place on your back.

C). Don't hold the item you're lifting above your armpits or below the knees.



D). Try and avoid moving something that is over 25% of your actual weight.

E). When lifting don't turn, twist, or pivot. Instead, keep your feet pointed at what you're lifting, and stay facing it while you lift. Always be sure if you're going to change your direction, to do it with your feet, instead of the waist.

### **3. Carelessness During Day To Day Activities.**

It's often the simplest of things that can cause the most damage. Something as innocuous as washing dishes, or emptying garbage can wreak havoc on your back and twist your spine if your body isn't properly prepared.

Personally, I once threw out my back taking a dish out of the lower section of my dishwasher. It's not always lifting or moving the heavy items that will do us in. That is why exercising your back and abdominal muscles is such an important thing. You need to keep the core muscles of your body in shape to help ensure long term health.

One good simple exercise to incorporate is pulling your navel in towards the spine, as you try and imagine you're wearing something tight that is pulling in the sides of the abdominal muscles.. You can do this a few minutes a day and it'll help make a world of difference over time.

### **4. Driving & Sitting in General.**

Long periods stuck in the car, or on a train, to and from work can do an incredible amount of damage to your back over time. The discs inside your back are spongy and help to cushion vertebrae in the spine. Unfortunately, these discs also have a bad blood supply.

When sitting still for long periods of time you're actually depriving the discs inside your back of the nutrition they require to function and remain healthy.. The more sitting you do, the more damage you inflict on these discs over time, and the more it stresses the entire back. Be sure to always take breaks every hour in order to stretch and get blood flow going.

## **Chapter Two: Basic Standing Tips**

In this chapter we will be talking to you about how you should stand. Most of us don't realize how we stand affects our posture, feet and leg health as well as how pressure on our shoulders will affect our lower back. Read these tips and apply them to your everyday life.

### **Tip #1 – Don't Lock Your Knees**

Locking your knees when you stand is a terrible thing to do. When locking your knees, you're putting pressure on the joints in your knees, as well as blocking off an artery that supplies blood flow through the body. If you do this for a long time there is a slight possibility that you could pass out from it.

### **Tip #2 – Put Your Foot On A Low Stool**

To alleviate back pain it's a good idea to place your foot on a low stool when standing. There is something known as swayback that occurs when you stand. This is when you have a protruding abdomen or slumped shoulders. To avoid this it is recommended that you help your posture by placing one foot on a low stool to adjust for your weight dispersal.

### **Tip #3 - Avoid Standing In One Position For Too Long.**

It is a common practice in our work environments to stand in the same place for an extended period of time. When we do this we don't exercise our muscles, and as a result, we can start to become stiff. Jobs like security guards, doormen and others that require we stay in one place for a long time are among the most affected. If you find yourself in this position, it is highly recommended to take breaks, or stay active to keep your muscles loose and the blood flowing.

### **Tip #4 – Avoid Leaning Backwards.**

When standing you will want to avoid leaning backwards. When you lean backwards you will be putting extra strain on your lower back. When you

lean backwards your center of gravity is shifted causing your spine to compress and pinch nerves.

**Tip #5 – Don't Lean Forward.**

Leaning forward is just as bad as leaning backwards. You are moving your center of gravity forward causing stress and strain on your lower back. Doing this for prolonged periods of time can cause damage and irritation to the joints, muscles, and ligaments in the lower back. If you do need to lean forward, do it carefully, making sure to bend your knees in the process so that you limit any damage that may occur

## **Chapter Three: Basic Walking Tips**

Walking is a crucial part of our daily lives. Walking, is in general, our main form of transportation. When you get up in the morning you walk from the bed to the bathroom, around your home getting ready, to the car to get to work, and then out and about through the course of your day. With all of this walking it is no wonder that we tend to over exert our bodies. In this chapter, I will be giving you tips on how to improve your walking and how to lessen the impact on your lower back.

### **Tip #1 – Avoid High Heels and Other Hard Shoes.**

High heels and hard soled shoes are more of a fashion statement than a requirement to walk. When wearing these shoes you are putting stress and pressure on your legs and feet. As a result it affects your posture, which in turn, adds stress to your muscles in the back. If you are required to wear these shoes try to do it on as limited a basis as possible.

### **Tip #2 – Watch Your Step.**

It is very important to judge the height of curbs, stairs and other obstacles in your path. Putting too much effort in trying to traverse a step, curb or other obstacle can cause your leg to come up too high and come down hard causing shock and injury to your body.

If you under estimate the distance or height you can cause yourself to trip and fall. Be careful not to come down hard on your legs when you walk because you may over judge the height, or cause your foot to get caught, causing you to fall and hurt yourself.

### **Tip #3 – Open Doors Wide Enough.**

Make sure that you open doors wide enough to fit through. You don't want to twist and turn your back to fit through a narrow opening. Doors are designed to fit people through with room to spare. If you are carrying a package or moving something through a doorway, be extra careful, in order to avoid strain on your back.

## **Tip #4 – Military Stance**

One great tip is to walk as if you were in the military. I know what you are saying, but simply put, it's the best way to walk for the long term health of your back. You'll want to pivot feet first and then the body. This is the best way to move from a standing position.

By doing this you are not putting any stress on your body when you move. The weight of your body all moves in uniformity. At the same time you'll be evenly distributing your weight to all pressure points at the same time.

In this chapter we have briefly discussed some of the points that you should be looking at when you walk. The most important thing that you should remember is to take it easy and don't rush. You don't want to cause an injury by doing something that could have easily been avoided. Make sure to do stretches every morning in order to get your muscles and back limber and ready for the day.

## **Chapter Four: Basic Sitting Tips**

In this chapter we will discuss how sitting can affect your lower back. We don't realize that when we slump in our chairs we are putting pressure on our lower backs as well as our shoulders. The softness and hardness of the chairs we sit in also affect our backs. Read the tips that I present to you in this chapter and apply them to your life.

### **Tip #1 – Sitting In The Chair.**

When at home or at work you will want to choose the right chair that best suits your needs. The chair shouldn't be too hard or too soft. You'll want to choose a chair that has a firm back to it. You'll want to avoid low overstuffed chairs if at all possible. Chairs should be used for working not lounging.

### **Tip #2 – Sit With Spine Firmly Supported.**

When you choose your chair you will want to make sure that you choose one that firmly supports your spine. You don't want to have a back that is too loose that it causes you to lean backwards as well as one that is too ridged that doesn't allow for any movement at all. Before deciding on a permanent chair you'll want to try some out on a trial basis to see how they affect you.

### **Tip #3 - Avoid Sitting In Same Position For Extended Periods.**

Just like standing in the same place for a prolonged period of time, sitting in the same place for an extended period of time is also not good for you. When you sit in the same position for a long period of time your muscles will begin to get stiff and the fluids in your body will begin to settle. When you have to sit for a long period of time you may want to consider scheduling breaks. These breaks will allow you to get up and moving in order to get the blood flowing through your body.

### **Tip #4 – Avoid Chairs That Have Rollers.**

You will want to avoid chairs that swivel or have rollers on them. Depending on your environment this can be a safety issue. Chairs with rollers can easily get caught on a rug or rip in the floor as well as topple over if leaned back on or pushed in the wrong way.

In this chapter we reviewed several different things to consider when sitting. Since this is an activity that most of us take part in on a daily basis, in front of the television and computer, it is very important that you choose the right chair for the each situation. Also, don't jump onto the next big trend in chairs or get the one that fits your grandmother. You'll want to take your time and test out a few different options when it comes to choosing the one that is just right for you.

## **Chapter Five: Basic Driver and Passenger Car Tips**

In this chapter we will be discussing how to protect yourself from back pain while sitting in a car, either as a driver, or the passenger. Most of us spend at least two to three hours a day in our cars, driving back and forth to work, running errands or just getting out for a nice leisurely drive. We don't really think of the damage we are doing to our backs and body in general. In this chapter, I will give you some tips that you should follow and apply to your daily life.

### **Tip #1 – Get In and Out Of Your Car With Your Back Straight.**

When you enter your car or exit your car you will want to do it with a straight back. You don't want to squeeze yourself in or try to get in or out at odd angles. The right way to get into your car is to place your right hand on the hood of the car and you're left on the door. Move your body into the car at a 15 degree angle as to mimic the angle of the seat. Once you clear your head you'll want to gradually move your feet into the car, plant them firmly on the ground and close the door.

Once this is completed make sure that you fasten your seat belt and adjust your mirrors. You'll want to make sure that your entire body is aligned within the operations specs of the car for optimal vision and comfort. Also, you want to sure you can comfortably reach the gas and brake pedals while seeing clearly in every possible direction.

### **Tip #2 – Adjust The Car Seat**

The drivers chair should be firmly positioned for optimal use. The back of the chair should be at an angle that is both comfortable for the driver, as well as allow them to see all around themselves through both the mirrors and the windows.

The seat should also be positioned close enough to the steering wheel in order for the driver to be able to reach both the gas and break. When someone enters the driver's seat they must encompass themselves in a



world that is both comfortable and optimized for safety. If the car is ever used by a different driver they must adjust all of the preexisting mirrors and seats for their optimal usage.

### **Tip #3 – Fasten Your Seat Belts.**

Fastening your seat belt is not only the law it is a good way to ensure that your body stays in a fixed but movable position. When you wear your seat belt the belt allows you to move around in the chair but also allows you to keep a standard posture. If you don't wear your seat belt you'll begin to lean to one side or lean forward in your seat. This is not a desirable position.

### **Tip #4 – Get Out and Stretch.**

When you're on long trips you'll want to get out of the car every few hours to stretch and loosen up your muscles. Just like sitting at work or standing, like we discussed previously, the same applies when you're riding in a car. You'll don't want to be sitting in the same position for hours on end. Not only will your muscles begin to ache but your concentration will begin to waver.

### **Tip #5 – Take A Small Pillow.**

When you travel long distances, or are going to be in the car for an extended period of time, you may want to consider taking a pillow and placing it between your lower back and the car seat. This will give the driver extra support and comfort while on those long drives. It will also help you when you pull over at a rest area for a quick cat nap.

### **Tip #6 – Make Sure Your Driver Is Awake.**

As a passenger in the car it will be your job to keep the driver awake. To do this you'll need to be comfortable as well. When sitting in the passenger seat of the car make sure that your knees are bent not stretched out. If you're short in stature you may need to bring along a small box or something that can be placed on the floor to rest your feet upon.

### **Tip #7 – Plan Your Route Before You Go.**

Make sure that you plan your trip before you go. You will want to make sure to travel roads that are smooth and will not jar the car causing unwanted pressure or strain on your back. You will also want to watch traffic conditions to ensure that you're not sitting in traffic jams for hours on end.

## **Chapter Six: Back Pain Symptoms & Signs - When You Should See A Doctor**

There are a wide range of different ways to injure the back. Here I'll go over some of the symptoms of back pain to watch out for. These symptoms can often range from mild to excruciating in intensity.

### **Symptoms May Include:**

Pain that begins to radiate from the lower back down to your buttocks and into your thigh, calf and even toe.

Sharp pain in a specific area of the body such as the upper back, neck or lower back. Can often occur after improperly lifting a heavy item, or over exerting yourself physically. Upper back pain is sometimes also a sign of an impending heart attack or other major condition. Chronic aching in the lower or middle back due to standing or sitting over an long period of time.

Unable to stand up straight without experiencing muscles spasms or pain in the lower area of the back.

Constant stiffness or aches along the spine, from the tail bone up to the base of your neck.

### **Call A Doctor About Your Back Pain If:**

Your pain begins to increase if you bend forward from the waist or while coughing. It may be a sign that you've herniated a disc.

You experience tingling, weakness, or numbness in the legs, arms or groin. This could mean you've possibly damaged your spinal cord.. Immediately seek medical supervision.

You experience pain that goes down from the back, into the back of your leg. In this case you could be suffering sciatica.

You notice a fever, or frequent and burning urination to go along with your back pain. This could be a sign that you're suffering from an infection.

You begin losing control of your bladder or bowels while experiencing back pain. Immediately seek medical supervision.

Some other areas of concern include dramatic weight loss, a history of previous trauma, a history of previous cancer, pain lasting for more than a month, pain that does not subside after you've rested and night time pain.

## **Chapter Seven: Yoga for Back Pain Exercises**

One of the easiest and most effective ways to eliminate chronic back pain is to practice a few back strengthening yoga exercises every day. Here I'll go over a few great yoga exercises to help you beat that back pain that's been keeping you from fully enjoying your life.

These moves will help strengthen your core and back. It is recommended to do functional training such as shown down below on an average of 2 to 3 times each week for between 20 and 30 minutes at a time.

The great thing about these exercises is that they can be performed just about anywhere. Just be careful to keep close attention on how your form is during each exercise. Remember, it only works if you do it properly. Form is key! Also, try to repeat each of the exercises between 2 and 4 times in order to reap the back strengthening benefits.

### Warm Up:

#### **Decompression Breathing**

Breathing in some extra oxygen can really make a world of difference, especially when you're lengthening your body. This move will help show you how to better breathe deeply, and also how to keep your spine strong and long all the time.

First stand with toes touching and keep your heels apart slightly. Shift your weight onto your heel, then unlock the knees while gently pulling both of your heels toward one another. Be sure to stand up tall, keep arms stretched high overhead, and your fingertips pressed together. When you inhale also lift your rib cage out away from your hips. When exhaling begin to tighten your core in order to support your lengthened spine. Keep repeating these breathing techniques and process until you're feeling supported and tall.

### Yoga Exercises For Back Pain:

I'm not going to bore you with lengthy descriptions on each of these exercises. I find when performing yoga it's best to learn by watching visual instruction. Form is a key factor in yoga and I find it can sometimes get lost in written translation.

These exercises are all easy to search for and find on sites like YouTube. You don't need to incorporate all of them into your routine but you should do a little research on each and determine which one's would best suit your particular set of circumstances.

- A.) Neck stretch**
- B.) Roll on back**
- C.) Knee hug**
- D.) Reclining twist**
- E.) Bound reclining twist**
- F.) Cat cow**
- G.) Cat pose press**
- H.) Tail wag**
- I.) Hip rolls**
- J.) Triangle pose**
- K.) Lunge**
- L.) Active lunge**
- M.) Lunge hip opener**
- N.) Sitting forward bend**
- O.) Serpent partial lift**
- P.) Elbow serpent**
- Q.) Sitting twist**
- R.) Corpse pose**

## **Chapter Eight: Ten Back Pain Stretches & Exercises**

Taking the time to learn a few effective, safe stretches and exercises is a great way to relieve chronic back pain. Always be sure to consult your physician before undertaking any new exercise regiment. In this chapter, I'll touch on ten great stretches and exercise you can easily incorporate into your daily routine. Feel free to mix and match whichever one's make the most sense for you.

### **Stretch #1: Extension**

Begin by lying face down with both feet fully extended behind you. Next lift up your head. Follow this up by arching your back and support the upper portion of your body with only your arms. Keep your elbows locked straight and keep your hands at your side in order to better accentuate your stretch.

### **Stretch #2: Rotation Stretch**

This is intended to stretch all the muscles that help rotate the back. To accomplish this sit comfortably while turning only your shoulders in one direction while holding the position. Using an exercise ball is a great tool to enable you to do this stretch effectively and comfortably.

### **Stretch #3: The Sideways Bend**

This stretch is also done in the seated position. To begin, clasp both hands together then extend them overhead. Keep the arms extended and bend your entire upper body over to one side while holding the stretch. Next repeat this stretch in the other direction. Again, using an exercise ball is a great tool to enable you to do this stretch effectively and comfortably.

### **Stretch #4: The Hamstring Stretch**

These stretches are crucial to any proper back stretching regiment. Correct posture depends both on how flexible your back is but also on the muscles linking your other extremities with your back.

There are many ways to perform this particular type of stretch. A simple way that I prefer to use is sitting, with a leg extended, while the other leg is

kept folded inward. Next, reach down slowly to touch your toes on the extended leg. Switch legs and repeat the process.

### **Exercise #1: The Ab Crunch**

Strengthening your abdominal muscles is an often overlooked yet incredibly important group of muscles to focus on when working to alleviate back pain. Begin by placing both feet on something like an exercise ball (I prefer the exercise ball because it really helps to hone the workout without ever straining my back). Next, place hands behind your head and perform a sit-up. That's all there is too it.

### **Exercise #2: The Exercise Ball Crunch**

Using the exercise ball helps to accentuate the effectiveness of your crunch on the abdominal muscles. Start by laying with your back firmly on the ball and your feet on the floor. Next, using only your abs lift both your shoulders and head. When both of these are lifted, hold the position instead of going back down.

### **Exercise #3: Planks**

These can be done either with the exercise ball or without. Lie down face first, then push your body up, balancing with only the toes and forearms (if you're using the ball then on your shins instead of toes). The key part of doing a plank properly is holding the torso as rigid as possible without your butt stuck up in the air.

### **Exercise #4: The Press**

Doing a bench press can help exercise both the shoulders and upper back. First lie down on something that supports your back (bench or exercise ball both work). Don't concentrate on the weight you're pressing, instead the important thing here is your control and form. Press upwards while at the same time contracting the ab muscles and keeping your back supported.

### **Exercise #5: Dumbbell Row**

For this exercise I suggest using an exercise ball. It's not necessary but I prefer it for the support it provides while doing the exercise. Also, as with the press exercise don't concentrate on the weight you're pressing, instead the important thing here is your control of your movement and form.



First lay front down on your ball. Hold a pair of weights straight down without your arms locked. Next, bend your elbows and pull up both weights until your elbows have become level with your torso. Be sure to keep the shoulders relaxed. Lower the weights and repeat for between 1 to 3 sets consisting of between 10 to 16 reps.

### **Exercise 6: Bicycle**

This exercise should always be gradually started. Lie on your back and fold both arms behind the head. Next, bring down one of your elbows to your opposite knee. Relax, then bring the other elbow to the opposite knee. As you begin to get used to the process, speed up until you begin to resemble the motion of a bicycle being peddled.

## **Chapter Nine: Home Remedies for Back Pain**

### **Ice:**

Simply applying ice wrapped in a protective covering (to prevent ice burn) or a cold pack is still among the best pain relieving treatments available. When applying ice do not do so for more than twenty minutes and only apply a maximum of ten times during the course of an entire day.

Icing is most effective on minor injuries such a muscle pulls or back strains.. Ice calms down inflamed and swollen tissue.

### **Heat:**

Apply heat for between 15 and 20 minutes.. Moist heat is superior to dry heat. When using heating pads do not set on high.. Always use the low or medium settings. Also do not fall asleep while using a heating pad in order to avoid burning yourself accidentally.

Heat is most effective for chronic pain or stress related back pain. Heat is good for soothing our central nervous system, and allowing relief from fear and stress, which play a factor in many chronic back pain issues.

### **Massage:**

This is a major way to help treat back pain. Many studies show the significance having a routine massage can make, depending on the type of back pain your experiencing. Each type of pain requires different techniques so it's important to do a little research on what kind of massage would work best for your set of particular issues.

### **Acupuncture:**

Studies on this technique are mixed but personally I know people who swear by it. The majority of research I've seen suggests that acupuncture provides some beneficial relief and only a small chance of any negative side effects. Personally, having needles stuck in my back doesn't sound appealing but what works for me is bound to be slightly different then what

might work for you. I would always seek out a well trained professional for the best chance of success with the method.

### **Diet:**

You are the things you eat. There are a good number of foods that actually help reduce inflammation; and on the flip side, also foods that increase it. When suffering from back pain it's important to choose foods wisely.

Keeping a diet revolving around plant based foods, like chia seeds and flax, is your best chance to keep inflammation at bay, especially, when you eat these combined with fish like mackerel, salmon, herring, tuna, black cod and trout. Other foods to consider are vegetables like spinach, kale, broccoli, beets, and carrots. Protein like chicken, beans, turkey and cocoa are important. Spices like cinnamon, basil, ginger, garlic, rosemary, oregano, turmeric and cumin are great for seasoning.. Be sure to drink water, or true teas and herbal teas like white, oblong and green tea.

Make sure you're getting enough calcium in your diet. It's easy to overlook this but bone mass decreases as we age and calcium helps contribute to maintaining and forming bone mass. A lack of calcium can lead to other back and bone conditions like osteoporosis.

Some of the foods to avoid include fast foods, saturated fats and processed foods. These foods all help to increase inflammation. This means try to also avoid pasta, white bread, rice, snacks or drinks high in sugar, alcohol and caffeine.

### **Aroma Therapy:**

There are many essential oils that are great for relieving pain and soothing aching backs. Some have properties that are anti-inflammatory and help to reduce inflammation while others are analgesic, and help to reduce pain. There are also oils that have antispasmodic and anti-rheumatic properties..

Here is a list of some essential oils I recommend checking out.. The one's that may be right for you will of course be determined by your particular set of back issues.

### **Important:**

Some oils are not suitable for women who are pregnant and some oils should not be used in concert with certain medications. You should always consult a doctor before beginning treatment.

1. Thyme – An antispasmodic. Great for muscle and joint pain. Also good for a backache.
2. Chamomile – An anti-inflammatory. Great for relieving spasms and muscle pain. Also good for lower back pain and headaches.
3. Lavender – An anti-inflammatory. One of the most popular essential oils. Great for relaxation and pain relief. It also has sedative and anti-microbial properties. Does well on spasms, muscle tension, allergies headaches and joint pain.
4. Sweet Marjoram – A sedative. Good for relieving stiffness, spasms, muscle pain, osteoarthritis and rheumatism.
5. Eucalyptus – An anti-inflammatory and analgesic. Good for nerve pain and muscle pain. Should only be used in small increments.
6. Rosemary – An antispasmodic and analgesic. Good for headaches, back pain and muscles pain.
7. Peppermint – Good for nerve pain, joint and muscle pain.
8. Sandalwood – A sedative. Good for sedating the nervous system which helps to alleviate nerve pain and muscle spasms.
9. Clary Sage – An anti-inflammatory and antispasmodic. Helps at easing muscle tension and spasms. Use only in small increments.
10. Juniper – An antispasmodic. Good for relieving muscles and joint aches, spasms and nerve pain.
11. Yarrow – An analgesic. Is a strong restorative and pain reliever that is great for joint aches, muscle soreness and pain.
12. Ginger – Good for improving mobility and easing back pain. Good for rheumatic and arthritic pain. Also good for sprains and muscle pain.

13. Frankincense - An anti-inflammatory. Helps at alleviating stress and also serves as a gentle sedative.

14. Vetiver – Good for muscular pain and general back aches.

15. Wintergreen – Good for nerve pain, headaches and arthritis.

16. Helichrysum – Expensive but valued as an antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory and analgesic. Great for quick pain relief and supporting our nervous system.

While it's possible to use these oils individually, it can also be good, to blend as many as 3 oils together. Before applying dilute first with something like jojoba oil, sweet almond oil or olive oil.

You can apply the mixtures in a variety of settings. From soaking in a bath tub, getting a relaxing massage, to using with a hot / cold compress. I would try different oils and different applications to find the ones that best suit your needs.

### **Herbal:**

Research into herbal remedies is in it's infant stages. There are quite a few herbs that are believed to decrease inflammation and ease pain. It's important to be careful and proceed with caution.

#### Here a few common remedies for pain relief.

1. Capsaicin – Made from hot Chile peppers, this is a topical that can be used to help relieve pain. It's slow acting and can sometime for the effects to be noticed.

2. Feverfew – Used in the treatment arthritis and body aches. Avoid if pregnant.

3. Turmeric – Used in relieving inflammation and pain. Try to limit your dosage and do not use if suffering from gallbladder disease.

4. Devil's Claw – Good for lower back issues and arthritis. Do not take if pregnant or if you suffer from ulcers or gallstones.

5. Valerian Root – For muscle cramps and spasms.

6. St. John's Wort- Good for sciatica and arthritis.

7. Kava Kava – Good for neuropathic pain and tension headaches.

### **Medications:**

Many people will often resort to trying pain relievers before seeing a physician, or pursuing other avenues of back pain prevention. It's important to remember everything you've tried including what worked and what didn't. It's also crucial to keep track of what you're taking as certain medications don't interact well with other medications.

#### Some back pain relief medications include:

1. Acetaminophen – Commonly found in Tylenol. Safe in normal doses. Helps with pain relief.

2. NSAIDs (Non Steroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drugs) – Commonly found in ibuprofen (ex. Advil, Motrin), and also found in naproxen (ex. Alleve). Great for the treatment of pain affecting muscles and bones.. Better than acetaminophen for back pain relief. Not suggested for long term use as they can lead to dangerous long term side effects.

3. Narcotic Painkillers – Prescribed by a doctor, and include oxycodone, codeine, morphine and hydrocodone. These come with many side effects, like possible constipation, confusion, sedation, nausea, urinary retention and allergic reactions. These can also quickly become habit forming. Good only as prescribed for short term use.

4. Muscle Relaxers – Commonly found in carisoprodol (ex. Vanadom, Soma) and cyclobenzaprine (ex. Flexeril). These focus in on the muscles instead of our central nervous system. Only use under close doctor's supervision as they can become habit forming.

5. Adjuvant Medication - Not normally prescribed for pain relief, they're usually prescribed along with other types of drugs to be used in combination for back pain relief. Often used in pain related to our nerves. These can include beta blockers, anticonvulsants and antidepressants.

6. Anesthetics – Work by blocking affected nerves that surround our spinal cord. Can come in over the counter topical creams, or in local anesthetics,

like lidocaine and novocaine that need to be administered.

7. Steroids – Used to treat back pain brought on by inflammation. Should not be used for longer than a couple of weeks as they can cause long term complications.

### **Water Therapy:**

Exercising in a pool is a great way to help with back pain. Water buoyancy supports a bunch of your weight making it simpler to move around and improve flexibility. Water will also add resistance to your movement, in turn strengthening muscles. Pool exercises will also help to improve balance, agility and overall fitness. Pool exercise is also great for sufferers of back pain, arthritis, joint replacements and a host of other health issues. Exercising in a pool also helps to reduce the risk of falling and injuring yourself.

Before beginning any new exercise routine always consult your doctor to make sure these pool exercises make sense for you. Here are a few tips to help you get started.

1. Use water shoes. They will help provide more traction on the floor of the pool.
2. Water can be either chest or waist high.
3. Use a flotation vest or belt for deep water.
4. Slow movements offer less resistance, in comparison to faster movement.
5. Don't keep pushing through if feeling any pain.
6. Webbed gloves made for water or inflated balls can help to increase resistance.
7. Keep hydrated. Even though you're in a pool your body still needs water.

### **6 Pool Exercises:**

1. Side and Forward Lunges – Do this near a pool wall in order to support yourself. For forward lunges take a huge step forward and for side lunges

take a huge step to your side. Don't let your forward knee go past your toes. Begin with three sets of ten lunge steps.

2. Water Walking / Water Jogging - In waist or chest high water, walk 15-20 steps forward, followed by the same backward. Over time build up speed until jogging. Then alternate between walking for half a minute and jogging half a minute. Continue at least five minutes.

3. One Leg Balance – Keep standing on just one leg while raising your other knee up to hip level. Hold for around thirty seconds and then switch legs. Try two sets of five on both legs.

4. Sidestepping - Face towards pool wall. Then take a sideways steps using your body as well as your toes facing the wall. Take around twenty steps in one set direction and then switch to the other direction. Go twice in both directions.

5. Hip kickers - Stand at the pool wall with one side of your body there for support. Then move your one leg forward keeping your knee straight, as if you were kicking. Then begin again at your starting position. Next move that same leg to your side, and again return to your starting position. Finally, move the same leg, but this time behind you. Repeat for three sets of ten and then change the kick leg.

6. Arm Raises – Use webbed gloves or a set of arm paddles to add resistance, and keep arms held at your side. Then bend both elbows to ninety degrees. Next raise and then lower both your elbows and your arms down towards the surface of the water, while still keeping the elbows at the bent ninety degree angle. Do three sets of ten.

There are many other fields of study and therapies for helping to relieve back pain.. Beyond the obvious of losing weight and getting better sleep here is one more alternative to consider.

### **Talk Therapy:**

Still a new field but some studies suggest that Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) can have long term positive effects on those suffering chronic lower back pain. If you want an alternative option to normal medicine this may be an avenue to research further.



## Conclusion

Well I hope that you enjoyed going through this book of back pain tips. Hopefully you'll take away something from it to apply to everyday life. Through my years of experience I have found that following these simple tips and applying them to your lifestyle will greatly decrease your level of pain and allow you to live a happier life.

Education and exercise is key to keeping our bodies safe and healthy. If we just take a little extra time to treat them right, they will treat us right in the long term.

Thank you again for reading this quick book. I wish you all the best in health and happiness.

***Don't forget to check out the included FREE bonus books below!***

# **Bonus Book #1 - Buddhism**

## **Introduction**

First off, thank you for purchasing my book “Buddhism: Buddhism For Beginners – Buddhist Teachings For Living A Life Of Happiness, Peace, and Enlightenment (Buddhism Rituals, Buddhism Teachings, Zen Buddhism, Meditation and Mindfulness)”. By purchasing this book, you've shown that you're serious about learning Buddhism and trying to become your best self.

Buddhism is practiced by close to 300 million people worldwide. It's an ancient religion that's been around for thousands of years. The term Buddhism is taken from the word “bodhi” which means “to awaken” and was brought into prominence by a man called Siddhartha Gautama, now commonly referred to as the Buddha. The Buddha became enlightened or awakened at around 35 years of age and spent the remaining 45 years of his life traveling the country, teaching his beliefs to everyone from servants to noblemen. Through the centuries his teachings have been passed down and developed into the forms of Buddhism being practiced today.

Buddhists practice daily in an effort to develop inner peace, kindness, and wisdom. They do this, not only for themselves, but so they can share there sense of enlightenment with others in order to make the world a better place.

Many believe Buddhism to be less a religion and more a way of life. It's often termed as a philosophy because it seeks out wisdom. In short, Buddhism is normally summarized as trying to lead a moral life, being aware and mindful of your actions and thoughts, while developing wisdom and understanding.

Practicing Buddhism and making it a part of your daily life will allow you to understand yourself and the world in new and exciting ways. It will empower you to overcome any tribulations or adversity that is thrown in your direction. It will help to improve your overall sense of well being,

while also developing mindfulness. In short, the goal of Buddhism is to help you find eternal happiness.

This book will touch on a lot of different Buddhist topics, along with providing you some insights, resources and inspirational quotes to help you during the course of your journey. Becoming a Buddhist is not a change that happens overnight. It will take some time and work on your end. However, the amount of effort you put in is absolutely worth it in the long run.

I'm sure you're ready to begin.. Let's get started!

# Chapter One: Buddhism Terminology

## *Buddhism Terminology*

When first starting out there's a lot of new terminology that gets thrown around. I decided to put this section first so you could get an idea of what some of the terminology is before I start using it throughout the book, or you see it mentioned elsewhere during further studies.

I suggest reading over this section now and then referencing it when needed. This is by no means a definitive terminology guide. This is just a small sample to help get you started in your studies.

***Abandonment*** – This refers to a true cessation. It is an empty mind devoid of fault or delusion.

***Abhidharma / Abhidhamma*** – This is the third section in Buddhist canon that is devoted to philosophy and human psychology.

***Anapanasati*** – This is having mindfulness of your breathing.

***Anatta*** – Not self or insubstantial. This is one of the 3 characteristics of our existence.

***Anicca*** – Impermanent. Another of the 3 characteristics of our existence. Buddhism teaches us that all physical and mental phenomena aren't permanent. Nothing will stay as it is and nothing will last.

***Arahant*** - Enlightened one. This is someone who is free of any defilement. This is someone no longer a part of our cyclical existence.

***Awareness*** - Every mind is included in the sense and mental awareness. Included are five different kinds of sense awareness. These are ear awareness, eye awareness, body awareness, tongue awareness, and nose awareness. There are also two different kinds of mental awareness. These are non conceptual and conceptual awareness.

***Beginner's Mind*** – This is a mind open to experiencing the moment. This is a mind that is free of any conceptual overlay.

***Bhikkhu*** – This is a Buddhist monk.

***Bhikkhuni*** - This is a Buddhist nun.

***Blessing*** – This is our mind being transformed from a negative to positive state. It is our mind going from a state of unhappiness and weakness to one of happiness and strength. It does so through inspiration of the holy beings. For example Buddha, our spiritual guide, or a bodhisattva.

***Bodhi*** – Awakening or Enlightenment.

***Bodhicitta*** – Known as wisdom heart. This is a heart or mind that has been awakened.

***Bodhisattva* / *Bodhisatta*** – Someone that has taken the vow to be a completely enlightened Buddha. This is someone with complete availability and readiness to help all living beings.

***Bodhi Tree*** – This is the tree that the Buddha attained his enlightenment under.

***Brahma-Vihara*** – This is a sublime or heavenly abode. The four states of mind that are said to lead to one's rebirth in the heavenly realm. These are compassion, loving kindness, equanimity, and appreciative joy.

***Buddha*** – This is a fully awakened being. Also refers to the actual Buddha who was born over 2,500 years ago in India.

***Buddha-Dharma* / *Buddha-Dhamma*** – These are the actual teachings of the original Buddha.

***Confession*** – This is the purification of our negative karma using the four kinds of opponent powers. These are the powers of reliance, force, regret, and promise.

**Consciousness** – We each have six primary minds or consciousnesses. These include ear, eye, body, nose, mental, and tongue consciousness.

**Dana** – Generosity. This is learning the ability to give. It's the first quality that needs to be perfected for someone to become Enlightened and become a Buddha.

**Delusion** – This is a mental factor that comes about from attention that's not appropriate, while attempting to make our mind uncontrolled and less peaceful. There are three primary delusions. These are desire, anger, and ignorance. From these delusions all the other kinds spring forth. Those include things like pride and jealousy.

**Dependent Origination** – This doctrine states that all physical and mental phenomena will both arise and eventually pass away dependent on conditions and causes.

**Dhammapada** – The most well known of the Buddhist scriptures. In total it's 423 verses that were spoken by Buddha himself. These verses focus on mental training and ethical conduct.

**Dukkha** – Anything temporary. Suffering. This includes both physical and mental pain. It's the first Noble Truth . It acknowledged that suffering is a reality.

**Ego** – This is our pattern of habits we've conditioned in ourselves over time that we often mistake as a sense of actual self.

**Enlightenment** – Awakening. A feeling tone.

**Investigation** – Inquiry or interest into an experience. One of the factors of Enlightenment.

**Jhana** – Mental absorption. This is a state consisting of strong concentration which suspends, temporarily, the five hindrances,

**Kalyana Mitta** – This is a spiritual friend. Teachers are commonly referred to in this manor.

**Karma** – Action or deed. This is a law known as cause and effect. It's any intentional action either good or bad that brings either unpleasant or pleasant results.

**Kilesa** – Defilement. These are undesirable qualities. It is a factor of our mind that keeps us from seeing things clearly.

**Karuna** – Compassion.

**Mental Noting** – This is a technique that is used when meditating to help focus our mind on the object of our meditation.

**Merit** – This is a wholesome action which helps to bring about good karmic results.

**Metta** – Loving kindness or gentle friendship. This teaching helps to cultivate our normal capacity of a loving and open heart. This practice leads to the further development of fearlessness, concentration, love, and happiness.

**Middle Way** – Discovered by Buddha, this is a spiritual path that tries to avoid self indulgence and self mortification.

**Mudita** – Empathetic or appreciative joy. This is the development of our being happy when we see other people's happiness and good fortune.

**Neutral Person** – This is someone you feel no disliking or liking to.

**Nirvana** – This is the liberation and freedom from our cyclical existence.

**Pali** – An ancient language used in the Theravada Buddhism scriptures.

**Panna** – Wisdom. Known as one of our five spiritual faculties.

**Parami** – These are the qualities in our character that need perfecting in order to attain Enlightenment.

**Precept** – This is a principle that sets a standard for our ethical conduct. This is the foundation of each Buddhist meditation that we practice.

**Piti** – This is a gladdening of the body and mind. It is one of the factors necessary for Enlightenment.

**Uddhacca-Kukkucca** – This is a hindrance of meditation. It's an agitation of our mind.

**Saddha** – Confidence. Faith. This is one of our five spiritual faculties.

**Samadhi** – Concentration. This is a deeper state of meditation. It's one of our five spiritual faculties. It's also a factor of Enlightenment.

**Samatha** – This is a term that refers to the group of meditations that are aimed at practicing Samadhi.

**Samsara** – Rebirth. Wandering on. Known as the ocean of our worldly suffering. It's the state that's governed by our five hindrances.

**Sangha** – This is a community of Buddhist practitioners who have attained a direct realization on our reality.

**Sankhara** – Physical or mental formation.

**Sati** – Mindfulness. Careful attention paid to physical and mental processes. This is a key factor in meditation. This is a factor of Enlightenment.

**Satipatthana** – This is the four different foundations of mindfulness. These include feeling, contemplation of our body, mind, and the Buddha's own teachings on mindfulness.

**Sense Doors** – These are six different perceptual gates that we experience our world through.

**Sila** – Ethical or moral conduct. A virtue and foundation of the Buddhist practice.

**Sutta or Sutra** – This is a discourse from the Buddha or from a disciple of the Buddha.



***Theravada*** – This is the path of elders. A popular form of Buddhism in many regions of Asia. Uses Vipassana meditation as a big part of its tradition.

***Thina-middha*** - Sloth. One of the hindrances of meditation.

***Three Jewels of Refuge*** – These are the Buddha, The Sangha and The Dharma. Practitioners of Buddhism take some refuge in the knowledge that Buddha was able to find freedom and teach the Dharma as a path towards that same freedom, while also founding the Sangha, a extremely supportive community of like minded people who follow the same path.

***Tranquility*** – Mental and physical calm. This is a factor of Enlightenment.

***Upekkha*** – Equanimity. This is the ability to remain impartial even during the midst of our ever changing conditions. It's a factor of Enlightenment.

***Vedana*** – Feeling. This is the unpleasant, neutral, or pleasant feeling tone that comes with all of our experiences. It's one of the 5 aggregates.

***Vicikiccha*** – This is the type of doubt that will undermine faith. It's a hindrance of meditation.

***Vinaya*** – Discipline. These are the regulations and rules that govern the conduct of nuns and Buddhist monks.

***Vipassana*** – To see things clearly. It's also referred to as insight meditation. It's being able to practice mindfulness moment to moment. This sense of careful observation and sustained awareness allows us to more fully experience pain, pleasure, fear, joy, sadness, and happiness. Over time, as our insight begins to deepen, we are able to develop peace and equanimity when faced with change. This allows us to become increasingly guided by compassion and wisdom, as we move forward in life.

***Viriya*** – The mental and physical energy needed for us to diligently practice mindfulness. The courageous heart of our energy. It's one of the factors of Enlightenment and it's also one of the 5 spiritual faculties.

***Wrong View*** – Our mind's proclivity towards clinging to different concepts, even at reality's expense. Thinking something selfless when it's self. Thinking something is permanent that is impermanent.

***Yogi*** – Someone undertaking a spiritual path towards awakening.

# **Chapter Two: An Introduction to Buddhism**

## ***A Brief History of The Buddha***

So before we dive into Buddhism, let's first start with the Buddha. Born as a tribal prince in Nepal around 566 BC, Siddhartha Gautama lived in comfort during much of his early years. He was shielded from all knowledge of suffering and sickness by his father until the age of 16. Eventually he married and had a child.

At 29 years old, he decided to leave his life of wealth and privilege, venturing out to find the meaning of all the suffering going on in the world. He continued on his mission for six years, until one day he abandoned his old ways of thinking and instead sat in a mindful meditation underneath a bodhi tree. It was after this moment that Siddhartha Gautama became known the Buddha, or Enlightened one.

Over the next 45 years, the Buddha wandered India, teaching the path he had come to realize in the moment of his Enlightenment. He taught this path to anyone he could, be they rich or poor. As time went on, a community of monks and nuns from all the different caste and tribes began to form around him, devoted to the practice of his teachings. At the age of 80, Buddha passed away. His last words are thought to be "Impermanent are all created things; Strive on with awareness".

After the Buddha's death, his followers continued to orally pass down his teachings and traditions for 200 years before they were written down for future generations. Over the centuries, groups of followers have splintered off and developed their own forms of Buddhism. I'll go over some of the different variations in the later section of this chapter.

## ***Difference Between Buddhism & Other Types of Religion***

The main differences found between Buddhism and other types of religion is Buddhism doesn't believe there's a God who controls, creates, and is in charge of the lives of all living things. In Buddhism, happiness and suffering isn't the creation of a God, but is created by every individual being

linked together with a karmic force, that's also a part of each individual person.

The Buddha taught his followers that people become who they are not because of their origin or social rank, but because of their personal actions. Buddhism also differs from other religion in that it believes all living beings have the ability to only govern and control themselves, they have no ability to do so for other sentient beings.

Buddhism also teaches that all living beings have their own Buddha inside. That everyone has the ability to become a Buddha. Liberation and Enlightenment are equal truths for everyone, not only a privilege for a select few. This type of equality for all is rarely seen in other religions.

## ***Forms of Buddhism***

Buddhism is centered around the belief that our suffering on earth can be relieved if we attain Enlightenment. During the long and storied history of Buddhism, several popular forms have emerged, each of these forms have their own unique spin on the Buddha's teachings, beliefs and practices. In this section, I'll briefly discuss the four dominant forms of Buddhism and what sets them apart from one another. In general, other forms of Buddhism believe in the same teachings of Buddha but put them into practice differently from one another.

### **Theravada Buddhism**

Often lumped together with Hinayana, known as the Small Vehicle. Theravada Buddhism is the oldest form of Buddhism, it's dominant in areas of Southeast Asia, like Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, and Burma. The name Theravada translates to the phrase "Doctrine of Elders". This form of Buddhism is centered around the Pali scriptures, written down from the spoken traditions, or direct teachings from the Buddha himself. By meditating, studying these texts, and also following the Eight Fold Path, these Buddhists believe they'll be able to attain Enlightenment. In this form of Buddhism, a strong emphasis is placed on heeding the advice of those who are wise.

## **Mahayana Buddhism**

Also known as the Great Vehicle. This is the largest form of Buddhism being studied by practitioners today. This form of Buddhism focuses on the concept of compassion, and believes that working out of compassion in order to liberate others from suffering is of the utmost importance. Tibetan Buddhism, Tantric Buddhism, and Pure Land Buddhism all have formed under the banner of Mahayana Buddhism. Some believe Vajrayana to be an offshoot of Mahayana Buddhism while many consider it to be its own separate branch.

## **Vajrayana Buddhism**

Also known as the Diamond Vehicle or Thunderbolt Vehicle. This form of Buddhism offers a quicker path to finding Enlightenment than any of the other forms I'll be discussing. Followers of this form, believe that the physical has some type of effect upon the spiritual and that the spiritual has a similar effect on the physical. Buddhists following Vajrayana Buddhism encourage chanting, rituals, tantra, and a solid understanding of the other ancient forms of Buddhism. They believe that this is the way to attaining Enlightenment. Vajrayana Buddhism, in the storied history of Buddhism, actually marks a big transition from the speculative thought of Mahayana to the employment of skilled techniques.

## **Zen Buddhism**

This form of Buddhism is credited as being from China, with teachings coming from a monk named Bodhidharma. This form of Buddhism treats daily practice and meditation as the most essential components for finding Enlightenment. This form of Buddhism plays down the role of studying ancient scripture.

## ***Buddhist Concepts***

In this section I'm going to discuss two concepts central to Buddhism. These are the Buddhist concepts of Enlightenment and liberation. It's important to have an understanding of each of these concepts, as they play a central role in Buddhism.

## **Buddhist Concept of Enlightenment**

Also referred to as Bodhi, which means full awareness or a full awakening of the Law of Dependent Origination. What is that you might ask? Well, this is physical and mental corporeality on which our lives as human beings are developed. Becoming fully aware, a person is able to overcome any delusions, afflictions, or other impurities. This allows a person to create a life of true happiness and peace. Our capability of awareness is divided up into multiple levels ranging from low to high. This means you can spend your whole life practicing the Dharma, but that doesn't mean you'll ever reach full awareness. Everyone has the ability to become enlightened, but the level of Enlightenment you reach will depend on your karmic force and your mental cohesion of all your past lives.

## **Buddhist Concept of Liberation**

Also referred to as Moksha, which means to liberate, release, or transcend beyond. In Buddhism, liberation consists of different levels ranging from simplicity, all the way to absolute freedom. Whenever a person is able to transcend beyond the afflictions or bondage of hatred, craving, self attachment, ignorance and pride, they reach a new realm of liberation. However, until you're able to liberate yourself from all these afflictions, and no longer be controlled by these mental impurities, you won't be able to experience a true state of liberation.

For a person to reach absolute freedom, a person must eradicate all the roots of their afflictions, as those very impure roots are the reason for birth and death itself, also known as Samsara. It's important to know that in order to become truly free and liberated, you don't need to travel anywhere else, you can practice right now and right here, in this world, as this person.

# **Chapter Three: The Four Noble Truths / The Eight Fold Path / The Precepts**

## ***The Four Noble Truths***

These are four truths derived from Buddha's first teaching called "Turning the Wheel of the Dharma." In this teaching, Dharma refers to what truth Buddha had discovered. In this section I'll be going over each of these four truths as they help to comprise the very essence of the Buddha's teachings and are the framework for better understanding Buddhist thought.

### **The First Noble Truth – The Truth of Suffering.**

Often referred to as Dukkha. This truth basically states that all experiences and phenomena are in the end not satisfying. This is because everything is Dukkha, or temporary. Even our life itself is temporary. The Buddha taught us that in before one can understand things like life and death we need to first understand the concept of self.

### **The Second Noble Truth – The Truth of the Cause of Suffering.**

Often referred to as Samudaya. This teaches us that the cause of our suffering is our thirst or cravings. For example, we're always searching for things outside our self in order to attain happiness. However, no matter what success we achieve we never stay satisfied. Buddha teaches us that this thirst for more grows out of our ignorance of self.

People go through their lives reaching for one thing or another in order to be more secure about themselves. Then over time they grow upset when the world around them doesn't behave in a way they think it should.

The ideas of rebirth and karma are often closely associated with this particular Noble Truth.

### **The Third Noble Truth – The End of Our Suffering.**

Often referred to as Nirhodha. This truth holds the hope of us putting an end to our thirst and craving once and for all. Buddha taught that with enough diligence and practice, we can one day put these things aside and reach Enlightenment. Once a person is enlightened this leads to the enlightened person existing in a state of Nirvana.

If the first truth tells us what our illness is, and the second truth gives us what is causing that illness, then the third truth let's us know there's a cure available.

### **The Fourth Noble Truth – The Path Freeing Us From Suffering.**

Often referred to as Magga. Continuing the metaphor above, this truth involves being prescribed a certain treatment by Buddha in order to help cure our suffering.

This treatment is referred to as the Eight Fold Path. In Buddhism one doesn't just believe in ideals and doctrines. Instead, the focus is on living your life around these ideals and doctrines. If followed, one day you may reach Enlightenment and become a Buddha yourself.

### ***The Eight Fold Path***

In this section, I'll discuss each step of the Eight Fold Path . The Eight Fold Path is a means by which one can reach Enlightenment. The Buddha explained this path during his first sermon after becoming enlightened. The majority of Buddha's teachings happen to deal with at least some part of this path. It's almost like an outline that helps to pull all his teachings together.

The word samyan or samma is translated as the word right. It means wholesome, wise, ideal, and skillful. It's also used to help describe something that's coherent and complete. When using the word “right” it doesn't mean that you have to do it this way or you're wrong. It's closer to the idea of equilibrium, such as riding the waves in a boat and still being able to remain “right”.

The Eight Fold Path is commonly known as the fourth of the Buddhist Four Noble Truths. Those truths are used to help explain our lack of satisfaction



with life. The Buddha teaches that only by understanding thoroughly what causes us to be unhappy can we ever resolve it.

The path to reaching this Enlightenment is a difficult one that cannot be achieved quickly or easily. It means we'll need to undergo a major shift in how we relate to, and understand the world all around us. It's through the dedicated practice of the Eight Fold Path that we can one day achieve that understanding.

Practicing the path will reach into every aspect of our lives, every moment of the day. It's not something you can do part time or when you have a spare hour. It's also very important to realize that all of these steps support each other at all times. Therefore, you can't try and master each of these steps one by one. They aren't separate parts, they are one whole.

### **1. Right Understanding / Right View**

This is insight into what the true nature of our reality is. This is a way of seeing that transcends every view. It's a more detached way of viewing things. Practitioners work on this in order to understand how reality actually works. This leads to understanding our suffering, aging, sickness, death, delusion, greed and hatred.

### **2. Right Intention**

This is an unselfish desire of realizing Enlightenment. A practitioner should always be aspiring to get rid of the qualities they know are immoral and wrong. Understanding the right view helps practitioners to understand the differences between wrong intention and right intention.

### **3. Right Speech**

This is the act of using our speech in a compassionate way. Practitioners will abstain from lying and divisive speech. They will also refrain from idle chatter and abusive speech. Practitioners won't say things they know aren't beneficial, untrue or timely.

### **4. Right Action**

This is our ethical conduct. It's our manifestation of compassion. Practitioners try and train themselves to be moral in their activities, and refrain in acting in ways that will bring harm, corrupt themselves, or others. Practitioners should abstain from stealing, taking life, sexual misconduct, and causing harm in any way.

### **5. Right Livelihood**

This the act of making our living through the use of non harmful means. Practitioners are not to work or trade in occupations that will directly, or even indirectly lead to a living being getting harmed.

Some businesses or jobs to steer clear of include, businesses involving weapons or instruments used for harm and business involving harm to human beings. For example, prostitution. It also includes avoiding businesses involving intoxicants or poison, and businesses dealing with meat and the slaughter or breeding of animals.

### **6. Right Effort**

This is the act of cultivating our wholesome qualities, while also releasing all of our unwholesome qualities. Practitioners should try making a persistent effort to rid themselves of all harmful words, deeds and thoughts. Practitioners should instead try to engage in thoughts and actions that would be useful and good to not only themselves, but also others, through their words, deeds, and thoughts.

### **7. Right Mindfulness**

This is the practice of mind and whole body awareness. Practitioners need to always be keeping their minds ready and alert to any phenomena that can affect either the mind or body. They should try and stay deliberate and mindful at all times, making sure that they don't speak or act due to forgetfulness or inattention.

### **8. Right Concentration**

This is the act of our meditation, or of some type of concentrated and dedicated practice. Practitioners need to try and concentrate on one object of attention till they are able to reach a state of full concentration and meditative absorption. This practice can be developed by using mindful breathing, repetition of phrases, or visualization.

The Eight Fold Path can be divided up into three different sections. These are ethical conduct, wisdom, and mental discipline.

### **The Path of Wisdom**

Right Intention and Right view make up this path. Right Intention is the commitment and energy a person needs in order to be engaged fully in the practice of Buddhism. The Right View isn't based on beliefs and doctrines but in our perception of the true nature of the world we live in and ourselves.

### **The Path of Ethical Conduct**

Right Livelihood, Right Action, and Right Speech make up this path. This path calls out to us to be compassionate in how we speak, and our actions to others. It also means doing no harm to anyone else in our daily lives, while cultivating personal wholesomeness. This part of the Eight Fold Path ties into the Five Precepts which I'll be discussing in the next section.

### **The Path of Mental Discipline**

Right Concentration, Right Mindfulness, and Right Effort make up this path. It's imperative we fully develop our mental discipline in order to cut through any delusions. Most forms of Buddhism actually encourage its practitioners to meditate in order to focus their minds and achieve clarity.

### ***The Precepts***

In this section I'm going to discuss what are known as the Precepts of Buddhism. Usually religions have ethical and moral rules that act as commandments. Buddhism has a set of Precepts. I must stress, it's important to know that these aren't a list of rules that need to be followed.

In most religions many of the laws are believed to originate from God, so breaking any of those laws can be seen as transgression or sin against God. Buddhism on the other hand doesn't have a God, so breaking the Precepts while not looked well upon, are also not transgressions or sins against God.

There are different sets of Precepts you'll run across in Buddhism. Depending on what school of thought you follow these may differ from one another. You'll commonly find that there are five, ten, and even sixteen different Precepts. Some orders even have lists that are longer than that.

### **The Five Precepts**

The most common list is known as the Five Precepts. For many Buddhists, these are considered the basic ones that should be followed.

1. *Abstain from killing.*
2. *Abstain from lying.*
3. *Abstain from stealing.*
4. *Abstain from sexual misconduct.*
5. *Abstain from abusing any intoxicants.*

It's important to know that by following the Precepts, you're training yourself to behave like a Buddha would.

### **The Ten Grand Precepts**

This list of Precepts expands upon the Five Precepts with an additional set of precepts.

1. *Abstain from killing.*
2. *Abstain from lying.*
3. *Abstain from stealing.*

- 4. Abstain from sexual misconduct.*
- 5. Abstain from abusing any intoxicants.*
- 6. Abstain from blaming others and elevating oneself.*
- 7. Abstain from talking about other people's faults and errors.*
- 8. Abstain from being stingy.*
- 9. Abstain from being angry.*
- 10. Abstain from speaking any ill of any of the Three Treasures.*

### **The Three Pure Precepts**

Many Mahayana Buddhists also vow to always uphold what are known as the Three Pure Precepts.

- 1. To always do good*
- 2. To never do no evil*
- 3. To save all living beings*

The word “kusula” and the word “aksula” are often translated to the “good” and “evil” mentioned in the above precepts, but they can also be translated as “skillful” and as “unskillful”. Basically a “skillful” action brings a person closer to becoming enlightened and an “unskillful” action leads a person further away from becoming enlightened.

The last precept about saving all living beings is a vow promising to bring all living being to eventual Enlightenment.

### **The Sixteen Bodhisattva Precepts**

These refer to the Ten Grand Precepts and also the Three Pure Precepts along with what are referred to as the Three Refuges.

*1. I take my refuge in Buddha.*

*2. I take my refuge in Dharma.*

*3. I take my refuge in Sangha.*

# Chapter Four: Karma, Rebirth & Reincarnation

## *Karma & Buddhism*

In terms of Buddhism, karma is normally defined as a willful action that is driven by our intention and leads to future consequences. Many people think that this term means something to do with fate or a sense of cosmic justice. They think karma is the result of someone's actions.

That's not what Buddhists view the term to mean. Buddhists believe that karma is the action itself not the results of the action. Buddhists believe the law of karma is simply a law of cause and effect.

For Buddhists, the concept of karma is complex and non-linear. Buddhism views the present as being shaped by both our present and past actions. What we do in the moment shapes things now and later down the road. This means that we don't need to feel resigned and powerless already bound by fate.

Every moment has new potential because what we do is what happens to us. Change is always a possibility. To change our lives and to change our karma we simply need to change our minds and any repetitive patterns we've fallen into over time.

Buddhism also teaches us that outside forces besides our karma will shape and impact our lives. Some things that will do so can include natural forces like gravity, sudden natural disasters, and even the changing of seasons. When something bad does occur it's isn't a form of punishment. Rather, it's an event that's unfortunate and requires not judgment but compassion.

Remember Buddhism does not teach or believe there to be some mysterious force or God who doles out rewards and punishment for people it deems good or bad. Karma is not a form of moral justice. Karma does not reward or punish. It's not the result, instead it's the action you take. Karma is a natural law and doesn't have anything to do with rewarding or punishing people.

## ***Rebirth, Reincarnation & Buddhism***

Most cultures view reincarnation as a form transmigration of our souls to a different body after we have died. In Buddhism, there's no teaching for this. In fact, one of the most basic doctrines in Buddhism is that of “anatta”. What is that? Well, it means no self or no soul. Basically, it means there is no type of permanent spirit or essence of our individual self able to survive our death.

Buddha often taught that we view as our permanent self, is nothing more than an illusion that is created by “skandhas” or the five aggregates. These are how our bodies, emotional sensations, consciousness, beliefs, and ideas work together to deceive us into believing there is a distinctive permanent self.

### **The Five Skandhas**

These are the five physical and psychological aggregates, that according to the Buddha, are the very basis of our constant self grasping. These are in essence, blockages preventing us from reaching Enlightenment. They come in all forms, from mental and physical, to material and spiritual. The Buddha's teachings taught us that the individual is merely a combination of all five aggregates or skandhas of existence.

In Buddhism, the idea is to examine what is known as the “self” more accurately. We can do this by making use of, and exploring these five aggregates or skandhas. By better knowing ourselves, the hope is we can one day move past all our defilement and disillusion. Remember, the skandhas aren't you. They are only conditioned phenomena that is temporary. Once you realize these aren't you, you'll be on the path to Enlightenment.

#### **1. Form**

Some forms include elements like water, earth, wind, and fire. There are also the things that are made from each of these elements. You can include the five senses in this section as well.



## 2. Perception

This can be either conceptual or non-conceptual. It's the knowledge that puts things together. For example, when we see a shirt we know it's a shirt because we are able to associate it with our prior experiences with shirts.

The non-conceptual perceptions include our five senses and the conceptual perceptions include things like ideas and thoughts.

In each case, perception can be either discerning or it can be non-discerning.

For instance our non-conceptual five senses are considered to be discerning when operating normally, perceiving their proper objects, such as shapes, smells, sounds, tastes, and textures. Mental perception is discerning when distinguishing things like names and identities.

Perceptions are considered to be experienced subjectively. Buddhist teachings say our perceptions are important because they make the basis for our disagreements.

## 3. Feeling

This references sensations not our emotional feelings. These sensations are thought of as pleasant, painful or neutral<sup>1</sup>. They are both sensations of the mind and of the body.

Buddhist teachings value feelings as important because they form the basis of both aversion and attachment. These two things are the root of most conflicts between people who have not been Enlightened.

## 4. Consciousness

This refers to our consciousness of the impressions we get from our five senses, including from mental objects, like our ideas, thoughts and emotions.

Consciousness is our sensitivity or awareness to any object without conceptualizing it. It's considered by many to be our base, helping to tie all

of our experiences in life together.

### 5. Formations

These refer to our thoughts and our emotions. It refers to our mental states. Some teachings refer to 51 important states. I won't be going over all of them here but to give you an idea, a few of these include diligence, absence of attachment, conscientiousness, faith, absence of delusion, absence of aggression, ignorance, anger, doubt, desire, harmful belief, and pride.

### **The Three Marks of Existence**

Buddhism teaches that everything in our physical world, which includes psychological experiences and mental activity, is marked by three distinct characteristics. These are suffering, impermanence, and a lack of ego. It's through our awareness and examination of these three marks that we can liberate ourselves from the clinging and grasping that are binding us to delusion and illusion.

#### 1. Impermanence or Anicca

This is a core property of everything conditioned. All things are constantly in a state of flux and are therefore impermanent. Since everything is in flux it means that liberation is always a possibility.

#### 2. Suffering or Dukkha

Also means imperfect or unsatisfactory. All things mental and material that have not been liberated are Dukkha. This means that even pleasant experiences and things that are beautiful are Dukkha. Hence the term “life is suffering”.

#### 3. Lack of Ego or Anatta

Also known as non-self. This teaching means that you aren't an autonomous, integral entity. The individual ego or self is simply a byproduct of skandhas. It's important to understand that skandhas are

empty. These aren't qualities individuals can possess, since there is no actual self to possess them.

Buddhism believes that not only is nothing carried from life to life but nothing is even carried over from moment to moment. Instead, everything including all living beings, are constantly in a state of flux. Everything is always changing, everything is always becoming, and everything is always dying.

People like to turn to doctrines and religion in order to get simplified answers for unknowable questions. Buddhism isn't set up that way. Just believing in something whether it's rebirth or reincarnation serves no actual purpose. Buddhism practices seeing illusion for the illusion it is and seeing reality as reality.

The Buddha's teachings show us that our often delusional belief in a sense of self causes most of our dissatisfaction in life. Once we are able to experience illusion for the illusion it really is we can finally become liberated.

# Chapter Five: The Seven Factors of Enlightenment & The Five Hindrances

## *The Seven Factors of Enlightenment*

In this section I'm going to discuss the Seven Factors of Enlightenment and what they involve. These are seven qualities that both describe and lead to eventual Enlightenment. These factors are also seen as great antidotes for the Five Hindrances which I will be discussing further in the next section.

### **1. Mindfulness**

This is also a part of the Eight Fold Path, and is crucial to the proper practice of Buddhism. Mindfulness is mind and whole body awareness during the present moment. When you're mindful, you're fully present, not off daydreaming or worrying about other things.

Being mindful also means that you must release any habits of the mind that help to maintain your illusion of having a separate individual self. Being mindful doesn't judge between disliking or liking. Being mindful means you're dropping all your conceptualizations. For example when mindful breathing, your focus is just on breath not on “your” breath.

### **2. Investigation**

This is a deep look into the very nature of our reality. It's an analytic approach in many ways. It is an investigation of both Buddha's doctrines and the nature of what we call existence. Buddha always taught his followers to never blindly accept something on faith alone. Instead, they should thoroughly investigate what he taught, so they could come to terms with the truth for themselves.

### **3. Energy**

This factor plays an important role, as the quest for one's Enlightenment requires unending courage and strength. One needs energy in order to

achieve. One also needs to always advance and not falter. Only through dogged determination and diligence can one hope to attain Enlightenment.

#### **4. Happiness**

A famous quote by the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama says that "'Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions." This means that it's the things we do, not the things we get, that grows our happiness.

Buddhism teaches us that craving things that we believe are outside of ourselves only further binds us to our suffering. Once we understand this, we can start to let go of these cravings and find true happiness.

#### **5. Tranquility**

This factor deals with tranquility or calmness of our consciousness and body. While the last factor was more about a joyful type of happiness, this factor is focused more on the contentment felt, of someone who's finished their work and is at rest.

Like the previous factor this factor cannot be contrived or forced. It will happen naturally as we attain the other factors.

#### **6. Concentration**

Another part of the Eight Fold Path. This factor differs from being mindful in that concentration requires we focus all our mental faculties onto a single mental or physical object, while practicing the Four Absorptions. I'll discuss what those are in a later section of this chapter.

Concentration is in essence, a slowing down of our consciousness and mental activity by focusing on single point. When mastered, all sense of our individual self will disappear and both the object and the subject are absorbed completely into one another.

#### **7. Equanimity**

In Buddhism, this refers to the balance between the extremes of desire and aversion. Basically, it's not allowing yourself to be swayed in either direction by the things you like or dislike. It's an evenness of our mind. It's a sense of freedom that can't be upset from loss or gain, blame or praise, pain or pleasure.

Achieving equanimity allows us to be indifferent to the demands of our ego, and all its cravings. It doesn't affect our mindset toward the well being of others around us. When it comes to others we are not indifferent.

## ***The Five Hindrances***

The Buddha's teachings taught us that five hindrances exist that stop us from reaching Enlightenment. These mental states are known as hindrances because they help bind us to our suffering and ignorance. Realizing our Enlightenment means freeing ourselves of these hindrances.

Hindrances can't be ignored or pushed under the rug. They will only go away once we've realized they are states we've created for ourselves. Once we are able to perceive this, we can begin the path towards Enlightenment.

For hindrances, one must practice and meditate. The initial step is recognizing the hindrance, then acknowledging it, and finally understanding you're the one who's making it real.

### **1. Sensual Desire**

This refers to anything from the desire for sex to desiring certain foods. When these feelings arise the first thing to do is recognize your feeling, acknowledge it and then try and just observe the desire and not give in to it or chase the feeling.

### **2. Ill Will**

Feeling anger and rage is often an easy to spot hindrance. The cure for this is to try and cultivate metta or loving kindness. Metta is a virtue that Buddha taught should be used in times of ill will and anger.

We often get angry because someone has bruised our ego. One needs to practice letting go of anger, acknowledging its presence, while also acknowledging that anger is born from our own pride and ignorance.

### **3. Sloth, Drowsiness. or Torpor**

Many people find they have trouble keeping up their energy or staying awake during meditation. The Buddha taught that we should always pay attention to the thoughts we are chasing when getting tired, and then shift the mind somewhere else. If that doesn't work, try switching to a walking meditation, pinching yourself, or splashing water on your face.

If this type of drowsiness occurs on a regular basis, as you constantly feel low on energy, you need to find out if there's some type of psychological or physical cause. Any health issues should always be resolved in a timely fashion.

### **4. Worry and Restlessness**

This particular hindrance comes in many different forms. Some of these forms include remorse, anxiety, and feeling rushed. Trying to meditate when in this state of mind is not a comfortable proposition.

If you're in an anxious state of mind don't try and force the anxiety away. Instead try to imagine your body as if it were a container. Observe the anxiousness moving around freely, don't attempt to separate or control it.

People suffering PTSD or chronic anxiety disorders may find meditating to be incredibly intense. In some cases you may need to find psychological assistance before trying to start practicing any intensive meditating.

### **5. Skepticism or Uncertainty**

Doubt and skepticism aren't good or bad. In reality, it's something you can start working with. Never ignore doubt or tell yourself to avoid feeling doubt. Instead, keep yourself open to what your skepticism and doubt are trying to warn you about.

Throughout life we often get discouraged when our experience practicing meditation doesn't quite live up to what we expected. This is why it's important to remain unattached to any expectation. The effectiveness of our meditation sessions will differ over time. Some meditation sessions could get deep, while other could be filled with frustration.

Don't let those tough periods get you down. Oftentimes, in the end they bear the most beautiful of fruit. That's why it's important not to label our meditation sessions as being good or bad. Avoid attaching any expectations.

### ***The Four Absorptions***

Absorption is often referred to as Jhana. These Jhana are stages of development in the Right Concentration, which is part of the Eight Fold Path. Jhana refers to our mind being entirely absorbed in concentration. Jhana also relates to the word Jhapeti, meaning “burn up.” Jhana is seen as burning away of our confusion and defilement.

The Buddha's teachings discussed four levels of Jhana. However, over time eight levels came into fruition. These eight levels can be split into two sections. The first is Rupajhana or the lower level. The second is Arupajhana or the higher level. The lower levels are referred to as form meditations and the higher levels are often referred to as formless meditations.

Some Buddhist schools of thought use the Jhanas to measure the progress of students. Others believe that these measurements can lead to attachments being formed and are an obstacle on the road to Enlightenment.

### **The Rupajhanas**

The first Jhana will be marked by happiness and rapture.

The second Jhana will find the analytic mind stilled as the practitioner enters a state of pure awareness that is free from any type of conceptualizations. A feeling of rapture will also permeate the body.



The third Jhana will find the sense of rapture subsiding only to be replaced with a sense of full body pleasure. The practitioner is also more alert and mindful.

Finally, the fourth Jhana will find the practitioner infused with bright and pure awareness as all their sensations of pain and pleasure melt away.

### **The Arupajhanas**

These Jhanas are often referred to as a peaceful immaterial liberation that transcends all material form. These Jhanas are usually known for their boundless space, objective spheres, nothingness, and boundless consciousness.

These objects will become more subtle, when each one is mastered the preceding object will fall away. Eventually only a subtle perception will remain.

### ***Renunciation***

This is a word that comes up often when discussing Buddhism. I wanted to devote a section to going over what it means to those who practice.

In English, the word “renounce” means to relinquish or give away. It also means to disown or reject. Some may view this as penance or a form of punishment but renunciation in Buddhism is different.

For Buddhists this word is most often related back to a term that means “to go forth”. It's usually used when describing the act of a nun or monk going into a life of homelessness to be liberated from their lust.

In a broad sense, renunciation can be viewed as letting go of the things that bind us to our suffering and ignorance. Buddha taught us that true renunciation means we need to thoroughly perceive how we've made ourselves unhappy through greediness and grasping for more. Therefore, when we do finally follow through on our renunciation, it's a liberating and positive act, not some form of punishment.

Remember, enjoyment of something itself isn't a bad thing or cause for renunciation. If you eat something you enjoy, you don't need to throw it out. Your goal is to enjoy the food without any attachment to it. Only eat what you need for substance without overeating and being greedy. The same principle applies to most other things and our possessions as well.

# Chapter Six: Buddhism Rituals and Meditation

## *Buddhism Rituals*

When practitioners are practicing at home or coming to a temple to honor Buddha, many will perform rituals in the process. Some of the common rituals include chanting, bowing, praying, eating a vegetarian meal, meditating, and celebrating Buddhist holidays like Buddha's day of birth. In this section, I'll discuss a few of these rituals briefly.

### **Bowing**

Bowing is also referred to as prostration. When a practitioner enters into a room where a Buddha statue rests, they will put both their palms together while bowing to show respect for Buddha and all he has taught us. The practitioner will bow three times facing the statue and kneeling with palms both turned upward while on a stool for kneeling.

Opening one's palms is representative of compassion and wisdom during the first bow or prostration. Then, you turn out a single hand to symbolize the cultivation of internal wisdom, while moving your other hand. This means the offering outwards of compassion.

The second bow or prostration indicates Buddha's bestowal of compassion and wisdom upon the practitioner. The third bow or prostration shows the practitioners sincerity of prayer to Buddha. In all, it takes three bows or prostrations in order to emphasize earnestness and build up the proper concentration.

### **Chanting**

A Buddhist chant is speech that's pure. It's free of curses, lies, slander, and negativity. Chanting is uttering the teachings of Buddha, thereby training our thoughts through constant repetition to be a vision of perseverance, benevolence, charity, and self discipline.

Gongs are often used as a chanting instruments during Buddhist ceremonies. Gongs are used primarily for three different purposes. First, to announce a meeting time. Second, to mark different service phases or chanting tempos. Third, to help aid the practitioners during the course of meditation.

### **Lighting Incense**

Burning or lighting incense is a gesture used to pay the highest respects to Buddha. A piece of incense being lit, prompts us to better follow the practices and teachings of Buddha, while training our mind to only focus on a singular object while meditating.

The act of actually lighting the incense, helps remind us to free ourselves from life's constant cycle of life and death from reincarnation, mental affliction, and attachment to our more material desires. Practicing with incense can help to guide us during our journey through spiritual development.

### **Altar Offerings**

You'll often find in temples, tables laid out with flowers and fresh fruits placed on them. Buddhists will then place items on these altars to show appreciation for Buddha and his teachings. This is most commonly seen on Chinese New Years, as thousands of practitioners will go to temple with their offerings to thank Buddha for a harmonious and safe year.

Offerings at temples are normally fresh flowers and fruit. Occasionally you'll also see smaller vegetarian dishes. In essence all the offerings of food are vegetarian, since Buddhism advocates being vegetarian to avoid killing or harm animals for food.

### ***Buddhism Meditation***

Meditating is about our mind and purifying it. It's a technique used to develop the concentration that can only be gotten through having direct experiences, not only from reading. The purpose behind meditation is calming our wandering minds. Buddhist meditation includes a variety of

different meditation techniques, squarely aimed at tranquility, concentration, and insight.

The first step to calm the mind is Samadhi. One must focus on a single object while directing our false minds so it will no longer engage in any type of egotistical thought. This step is followed by self contemplation or Vipassana. This is the process where we get our minds under control, while engaging in introspective contemplation.

Meditation is the adjustment of our breath, mind, and body. First let's discuss body adjustment. This is where you sit upright, keeping your legs crossed with your hands placed on knees. Next, close both eyes, while keeping your head up and back straight. If for some reason you can't keep your legs crossed, you can sit using a chair.

The second adjustment is the breath adjustment. Breathing is a crucial part of meditation. Be sure to concentrate on where air will enter into your nostrils.

The final adjustment is the mind adjustment. Be very conscious of your breath as you're inhaling and exhaling. Whenever air goes in your nose, count to one in your mind. Don't count when air is exiting the nose. Count to ten using this method, before repeating again from one.

If you meditate regularly, thought will eventually weaken, concentration will strengthen and you'll find moments of inner peace and deep calm. When starting out it's good to meditate for approximately 15-20 minutes each day, extending your time 5 minutes every week until you've gotten to a point of meditating 45 minutes a day.

There are several variations and types of meditation you can engage in. These include Vipassana meditation, Loving-kindness meditation, Zen meditation, and Mindfulness meditation just to name a few. Each one will slightly differ from the other. I suggest checking out my resource section for places you can find more in detail explanations of each form of meditation, their intentions, and how to properly practice them in your daily life.

# Chapter Seven: Buddhism & Daily Life

## *Buddhism & Daily Life*

Most people think that living a spiritual life on a daily basis means we need to ignore or somehow neglect our daily lives. This is far from true. Becoming a spiritual person means becoming the realest version of yourself. Being a kind person is the greatest thing we can do in our lives.

So how do we go about cultivating a kind and loving heart on a daily basis. It's not enough for us to tell ourselves how to feel and how to act. When you fill yourself with ideas of things you should do, you'll often only end up feeling guilty for not becoming what you think you should be. In order to make a real change you need to transform your mind. You need to learn how to become less self centered, and you need to want to honestly become a kindhearted person.

Each morning, after waking up, before leaving our bed and thinking about breakfast or work, you need to start your day off thinking about a mantra you find puts you in a good state of mind. I like to start off my day by repeating this mantra:

*“Today I'll do as little harm as I can. Today I'm going to try and benefit others whenever possible. Today I only want to take part in actions that will help others attain happiness.”*

Starting off the day with positive intention is extremely beneficial. I find that when I'm setting my motivations the moment I wake up, I don't allow negativity to worm it's way into my mind and pull me out of my positive mindset.

After getting ready for the day and before heading off to work I suggest, meditating or reciting your prayers. This puts you in a great head space to have a successful day.

Now if you don't have enough time to meditate in the morning, make sure to make time at some point in the day. Daily meditation is crucial. I know

life is busy and it can be hard to make time, but you need to make your path to Enlightenment a priority in your life. When you respect yourself in a spiritual manner, you'll find you'll respect yourself more, and respect others who are around you.

While I prefer carving out some time for morning meditation, I know this can be difficult for some people, especially those with kids. If you can't wake up an hour before everyone else in your household, you can try having your kids or spouse meditate with you. If you don't have time for some other reason besides family, try and make time during the afternoon, if you're at home, or early evening when you get home from work.

After you've left the house and headed to work, how do you go about practicing Dharma in the workplace? Well, remember your mantra and make an effort to be kind to everyone around you. Some people also use frequent events that happen during the day as triggers, in order to help bring them back to a proper state of mind. These things can be anything from the phone ringing, to being stopped at a red light. Once a trigger occurs, train yourself to stop for a moment and go over your mantra. Eventually when these triggers occur in the future your mind will be conditioned to think of your mantra automatically.

During the day try and be as mindful as possible. Be aware of your feelings, what you're saying, and what you're thinking. Don't just coast through the day spaced out on autopilot. Be present and experience your life instead of only reacting to it. For example, I used to always be guilty of going on autopilot when driving, I can remember making wrong turns because I was on automatic pilot. I wasn't focusing on the moment. Now I practice mindfulness all the time, no matter the situation.

Cultivating mindfulness is a key component to Buddhism and should be an area of focus in your daily life. Combined with meditation it makes for a powerful one-two punch. Once you become more mindful of yourself and your actions, you can start becoming more mindful of others and the world around you. This will only benefit you in the long run.

Every evening before bed, I like to study and do a review of my entire day. I take some time to go through my day and see what areas I can improve on

the following day. I like to reflect on everything that occurred and really mull it over. When I find things I'm unhappy about, I like to remedy them. I do this by performing a purification service, forgiving myself, and letting go of the negative energy I was feeling. This allows me to clean myself up emotionally and begin the next day anew. I also find it aids in my sleep and overall feeling of restfulness during the night. I no longer have the weight of negative energy on my mind.

As you can see from this small breakdown, practicing Buddhism in your daily life doesn't need to be something that consumes you. Just direct your mind with positive intention, carve out some time for meditation, practice mindfulness, and review each day before bed. You can also do additional things like read scripture or practice rituals but I leave that up to you. Everyone has their own specific routine they prefer to follow. Just remember, by transforming your attitude even when in the middle of your normal daily activities, your life will become much more meaningful.



# Chapter Eight: Buddhist Tips, Quotes & Resources

## *10 Quick Buddhist Tips & Tricks For A Happier Life*

In this section I'm going to share some 10 quick tips and tricks anyone following the path of Buddhism should know. Hopefully you'll find them to be useful.

1. Smile more. It might feel forced at first, but over time you'll find it comes much more naturally and plays a big part in changing your overall mood. I also found it to be quite the stress reliever. Remember, it takes less muscles to smile than it does to frown.
2. If you're having problems meditating try yoga. Yoga is a great way to take your focus away from your thoughts and place it on breath. Yoga can also be relaxing, which helps to ease the mind. Yoga allows you to keep present in the moment. These are all things that will come in handy when meditating.
3. Stay surrounded with positive people. The less you're around negativity and negative people, the less chance you'll have spiraling into negativity yourself. Negative thinking needs fuel to survive, don't feed the beast.
4. Change up the intention of what you're thinking from something negative to something positive. For example, instead of thinking this car ride is going to take forever, think this time will give me more time to practice mindfulness and enjoy the company of the people I'm driving with. Do this enough and your mindset will shift to thinking this way naturally.
5. You responsible for your life. Don't play the victim card. Instead be the hero of your story. You always have choices. Nothing is permanent. Things can always change if you make them.
6. Help the people around you. Whether it's friends, family, or strangers always be willing to go the extra mile for someone else and lend a helping hand. Not only is it the kind thing to do, it also feels better to give.

7. Nobody's perfect. People will make mistakes. Let yourself forgive and move forward. It can be easy to harp on past mistakes. Don't waste the time and energy. It serves no purpose.

8. Make a list of things you're grateful for. I like to do this weekly. I find it helps to center me and keep my mind focused on the important things in my life. I like to jot down at least 5 to 10 things I'm grateful about in my life.

9. Read some positive and inspiring quotes. I've included some you can start with in a later section of this chapter. I've found quotes to be big motivators. I keep some handy that I can read whenever I'm feeling low or uninspired.

10. Sing A Song. Singing helps express our feeling and relieve stress. I've always found it to have an immediate and positive effect on my mood. You don't need to remember all the lyrics or have a great voice. Just sing a song and see how you feel afterward.

## ***A Brief Guide to Buddhist Apps & Resources***

Here are a ton of great resources I've found that will help you along in your studies. I've listed some apps and websites with plenty of reference material to help you out with any of your questions. I've also included a small list of books I've found to be both inspiring and beneficial.

### **Apps to Download**

#### **[Buddhify](#)**

Available on both IOS and Android. This app is a great tool for practicing mindfulness with over 80 mindfulness meditations included, along with ways to track and monitor your progress. This is a paid app. Costs \$2.99 on Android and \$4.99 on IOS.

#### **[Buddha Mind](#)**

Available on IOS only. When wearing a compatible Bluetooth heart rate monitor this app allows you to measure and track your heart rate during

meditations and other activities. Now you can see what type of results meditation is having on your body over time. This is a paid app. Costs \$2.99.

### [The Ultimate Buddhism Library](#)

Available on IOS only. This is a collection of 50 books pertaining to Buddhism all in one spot. Get a complete grasp of Buddhism right on your phone. These books cover Southern Buddhism, Northern Buddhism, Modern Works and Jataka. This is a paid app. Costs \$0.99

### [Insight Timer](#)

Available on IOS and Android. This app is a meditation timer which also functions as a guide to mindfulness. People using the app can share all their meditation times with other users and friends. They can also check in on different people meditating in their area. This app also comes with guided meditations from teachers like Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg and Elisha Goldstein. Finally this app also comes with a timer that will allow you to keep time of your meditation. This app is free to download but does have in app purchases of \$4.99.

### [Buddha's Brain](#)

Available on IOS only. Great app with strong strategies for rewiring your brain. Also offers guided meditations. This is a paid app. Costs \$4.99.

## **Resources to Visit**

### [Buddhist eLibrary](#)

This is an amazing resource that is completely free. Files can be downloaded in the forms of PDF files on just about anything related to Buddhism. Also comes with audio, video, and image libraries. Not the easiest as far as getting around due to having to download material and then sift through it. However, the sheer volume of free information more than makes up for it.

## [Buddhanet's World Buddhist Directory](#)

Great free resource that is also available as a free app on both IOS and Android. This site allows you to find Buddhist related organizations and meditation groups wherever you are in the world.

## [Buddhist TV Channel](#)

Online site dedicated to Buddhist issues and news throughout the world. Also has tons of articles and resources for all things Buddhism, including opinion articles, podcasts, and other important issues.

## **Books to Check Out**

[What the Buddha Taught by Walpola Rahula](#)

[The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as Taught By S.N. Goenka by William Hart](#)

[In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pali Canon by Bhikkhu Bodhi](#)

[Peace Is Every Step: The Path of Mindfulness in Everyday Life by Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

[The Wisdom of No Escape and the Path of Loving-Kindness by Pema Chodron](#)

[The Heart of the Buddha's Teaching: Transforming Suffering into Peace, Joy, and Liberation by Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

[Start Where You Are: A Guide to Compassionate Living by Pema Chodron](#)

[Real Happiness: The Power of Meditation: A 28-Day Program by Sharon Salzberg](#)

## **21 Buddhist Quotes to Motivate**

In this section I'm going to share some quotes pertaining to Buddhism that I found to be inspiring, powerful, or motivational. Hopefully they'll make you think or bring a smile to your face.

1. "Greater in battle than the man who would conquer a thousand-thousand men, is he who would conquer just one — himself. Better to conquer yourself than others. When you've trained yourself, living in constant self-control, neither a deva nor gandhabba, nor a Mara banded with Brahmas, could turn that triumph back into defeat." — Gautama Buddha

2. "It is impossible to build one's own happiness on the unhappiness of others. This perspective is at the heart of Buddhist teachings." — Daisaku Ikeda

3. "Purity or impurity depends on oneself, No one can purify another." — Gautama Buddha

4. "We need the courage to learn from our past and not live in it." — Sharon Salzberg

5. "The secret of Buddhism is to remove all ideas, all concepts, in order for the truth to have a chance to penetrate, to reveal itself." — Thích Nhất Hạnh,

6. "People get into a heavy-duty sin and guilt trip, feeling that if things are going wrong, that means that they did something bad and they are being punished. That's not the idea at all. The idea of karma is that you continually get the teachings that you need to open your heart. To the degree that you didn't understand in the past how to stop protecting your soft spot, how to stop armoring your heart, you're given this gift of teachings in the form of your life, to give you everything you need to open further." — Pema Chödrön

7. "Long is the night to him who is awake; long is a mile to him who is tired; long is life to the foolish who do not know the true law." — Gautama Buddha

8. “When you dig a well, there's no sign of water until you reach it, only rocks and dirt to move out of the way. You have removed enough; soon the pure water will flow,” said Buddha.” — Deepak Chopra

9. “Searching outside of you is Samsara (the world). Searching within you leads to Nirvana.” — Amit Ray

10. “How wonderful it would be if people did all they could for one other without seeking anything in return! One should never remember a kindness done, and never forget a kindness received.” — Kentetsu Takamori

11. “True change is within; leave the outside as it is.” — Dalai Lama XIV

12. “Whatever a monk keeps pursuing with his thinking and pondering, that becomes the inclination of his awareness.” — Gautama Buddha

13. “Service which is rendered without joy helps neither the servant nor the served. But all other pleasures and possessions pale into nothingness before service which is rendered in a spirit of joy.” — Mahatma Gandhi

14. “Mindfulness helps us get better at seeing the difference between what’s happening and the stories we tell ourselves about what’s happening, stories that get in the way of direct experience. Often such stories treat a fleeting state of mind as if it were our entire and permanent self.” — Sharon Salzberg

15. “The Way is not in the sky; the Way is in the heart.” — Gautama Buddha

16. “Being vegetarian here also means that we do not consume dairy and egg products, because they are products of the meat industry. If we stop consuming, they will stop producing. Only collective awakening can create enough determination for action.” — Thích Nhất Hạnh

17. “If you want to take care of tomorrow, take better care of today. We always live now. All we have to do is entrust ourselves to the life we now live.” — Dainin Katagiri

18. “We don’t need any sort of religious orientation to lead a life that is ethical, compassionate & kind.” — Sharon Salzberg

19. “If there is any religion that could respond to the needs of modern science, it would be Buddhism.” — Albert Einstein

20. “We are not going in circles, we are going upwards. The path is a spiral; we have already climbed many steps.” — Hermann Hesse

21. “You only lose what you cling to.” — Gautama Buddha

## Conclusion

Thanks again for purchasing this book on Buddhism. I hope that you've found the information provided to be helpful and informative. Buddhism is purely based on our own experiences, morality, practice, rationalism and insights. Buddhism doesn't force blind allegiance to a set of Gods or dogmas. The core of Buddhism is not as much about faith but about bettering yourself through diligence, mindfulness, meditation and self reflection.

Many people view Buddhism as more philosophy than traditional religion. However you view it, Buddhism and its teachings are a guide to an incredibly effective way of transforming your life and securing long lasting happiness. The experiences shared from thousands of years of Buddhist traditions has created an amazing resource for anyone who wants to follow the path to a happier life culminating in Enlightenment.

Remember nothing is permanent, your actions will definitely have consequences, and change is always possible. If the teachings of Buddhism speak to you, I suggest checking out the resource section and begin the process. It's never too late to make a change in your life.

I hope you find the path you're looking for after reading this book.

Good luck! I wish you nothing but the best!





# **Bonus Book #2 Mindfulness**

## **Introduction**

Mindfulness is an idea that's been around for a long time and has begun to gain more traction with the general public over the past few years. It's a way of thinking, and a set of techniques, a person can use to help improve their life in a meaningful way. Perhaps, you feel cut off from your feelings or constantly overwhelmed by them. Maybe, you keep falling from one bad situation to another, or you're having difficulty interacting with those around you. Whatever your set of circumstances, the information in this book can help you.

Practicing mindfulness and making it a part of your daily life will let you regain control of your feelings and behavior. It will empower you to overcome any adversity that comes your way. It will improve your overall sense of well being, while also calming your mind and spirit.

This book will touch on a lot of different mindfulness topics, along with providing you some resources and inspirational quotes to help you during the course of your journey. This is not a change that happens overnight. It will take some time and diligence on your part. However, the work you put in is well worth it in the long run.

I'm excited to begin. Let's get started!

# Chapter One: An Introduction to Mindfulness

## *An Introduction to Mindfulness*

What is mindfulness? Well, mindfulness is the awareness of your mind at any given moment. What does that mean in practical terms? It means being able to step back from having any type of immediate response to a situation, and being aware of how you feel, what you're thinking, along with being aware of what is happening in your surroundings. Mindfulness is paying attention to both yourself and the world going on around you. It's about experiencing things instead of just witnessing them happen.

Mindfulness has a few different components that I'll break down and discuss a little further.

### *Being In The Moment*

This is the ability to live in the present, fully aware that you cannot change the past, knowing that your future has yet to be written. Both your thoughts and feelings are valuable and valid because they are occurring in the moment.

### *Attentiveness*

This is the ability to really begin noticing what is going on around you. It can be something as simple as feeling the texture of the floor with your feet, or feeling your heart beating.

### *Being Non-Judgmental*

One of the goals of becoming mindful is being aware of things without judging them as bad or good automatically. Being aware of the entire situation going on around you will allow you to take appropriate action.

### *Compassion*

It can be easy to give in to our negative thoughts and feelings about not only our self but about the other people around us. To show compassion is

to recognize your own limitations and fallibility as a person, and to show forgiveness and understanding for both yourself and others.

### *Being Non-Reactive*

This is similar to being non judgmental. You don't want to immediately react to a situation the moment it occurs. I'm not saying don't react at all. I'm saying that you want to take a moment to assess the situation and experience the moment that is going on around you. Once you've done that, you can then act appropriately.

Some skeptics may say what if you're in immediate danger, don't you want to react immediately? The answer I always give, is in the vast majority of situations you'll encounter throughout your lifetime, having the ability to stay in control of your actions and emotions, will allow you to much better assess and respond to any situation then you'd be able to do if you were simply reacting based on fear.

## ***The Benefits of Mindfulness***

In this section I'm going to discuss some of the many benefits associated with living a more mindful lifestyle. These benefits have all been researched extensively and have empirical data to back up their beneficial claims.

### *Reduced Negative Thinking*

Studies have shown that mindfulness helps reduce rumination and negative thinking. In addition to this, people who practice mindfulness experience fewer symptoms of depression.

### *Stress Reduction*

There's been over 40 medical studies that have shown that practicing mindfulness will help to alleviate stress. It's been shown that practicing mindfulness on a daily basis can alter your cognitive processes, helping to decrease both anxiety and stress long term.

### *Improved Memory Function*

Being mindful will help to boost your working memory. Studies have shown that people who participate in mindfulness meditation have substantial increases in their memory capacity over time.

### *Focus*

Another benefit, is an enhanced ability to focus and an increased ability to suppress any distracting information. Mindfulness has been shown to correlate directly with better attentional functioning and cognitive flexibility.

### *Less Emotional Reactivity*

People who practice mindfulness develop skills to become more self observant than those around them. It also allows people to better handle negative or stressful situations without letting their emotions overcome them.

### *Stronger Relationships*

Several studies have shown that mindfulness has a positive affect on relationship satisfaction. Being mindful allows you to respond well under relationship stress instead of lashing out. It also allows you to communicate your emotions better to your partner. Mindfulness has also been shown to help protect a person from the stressful emotional effects that occur during relationship conflict.

Besides the benefits listed above, mindfulness has also been shown to help enhance a person's morality, self insight, fear modulation, intention and immune functioning. As you can see, the benefits of being mindful are abundant and well worth the time and effort you put into practicing it.

# Chapter Two: How to Get Started On The Path to Mindfulness

## *How to Get Started On The Path to Mindfulness*

So you've decided you want to become more mindful. However, you're not quite sure how to go about achieving this. Well, in this section I'll go over some of the different steps you can take in order to start down the path to leading a life of mindfulness.

There are several different practices and disciplines that help to cultivate mindfulness. A few of these include tai chi, yoga, qigong and meditation. All of these are wonderful methods. Most of my personal experience lies in mindfulness meditation and yoga, so those are the areas that I will concentrate on primarily in this book.

There are two main forms of meditation along with various other types that focus on certain areas we want to work on. I'll briefly go over both main forms and the various types so that you understand the differences between them.

### *Two Main Forms of Meditation*

1. Concentration Meditation – This type of meditation is where you narrow your attention and focus on your breath along with an object, image, or sound. You do this in order to help calm your mind and allow for more clarity and a higher awareness to emerge.
2. Mindful Meditation – This type of meditation is where you open up your awareness and attention to all sensations, thoughts, feelings, sounds, smells and images without judgment or evaluation.

### *Various Meditation Types*

1. Awareness Meditation – This is the practice of moment to moment observation of your surroundings, and the world, as they truly happen to be.

This type of meditation promotes a stable, clear awareness of one's thoughts without any judgment.

2. Loving Kindness Meditation – This kind of meditation is a heartfelt wish of happiness and well being to not only yourself, but extending out to everyone else around you. This meditation helps to reinforce our emotions of compassion, kindness, love and appreciation.

3. Japa Meditation – This type of meditation is a repetition of a Sanskrit term or mantra while using the rotation of a rosary or beaded Mala. This meditation is considered to be extremely effective for tension and stress.

4. Transcendental Meditation TM – This kind of meditation has been widely researched and uses a practiced seven step program that gives each of its students a personal mantra or sound, using a comfortable seated technique with eyes closed.

5. Passage Meditation – This type of meditation uses inspirational and spiritual passages, that are supported by seven different disciplines. These disciplines fit any non religious or religious philosophy, enabling a practitioner to stay kind, calm, and focused.

6. Vipassana Meditation or Insight Meditation – This kind of meditation practices mindfulness and shedding a light on the subtlest workings of our mind. This is done in order to bring the true nature of our reality into sharper focus. This allows us to have a much deeper interconnection between our body and mind.

7. Yoga – The benefits of practicing yoga are both clear and very conclusive. This type of movement meditation, using relaxation techniques and breathing, allows you to drastically reduce stress and tension, from both your mind and body.

8. Qigong & Tai Chi - These art forms speak to people who enjoy martial arts and want to learn meditation and relaxation techniques. These techniques are very popular among seniors.

I'm also a big fan of walking meditation. I find it's something I can easily weave into my daily life. I keep my walks simple, however, some people prefer elaborate labyrinth walking or even trying their hand at meditative dance. I've yet to do either so I can't comment on how effective they are in relation to just a normal walking meditation.

## **Simple Meditation Techniques For Beginners**

Most traditional forms of meditation come from some type of older religious origins. However, you don't need to be a monk in order to reap the rewards meditation provides.

What form of meditation you decide is best for you, will depend on your purpose and preference. For instance, I stick to mindful meditation, walking meditations, and yoga. I found those are what work best for me in my life.

In this section, I'm going to discuss simple ways you can begin opening your mind to meditation. I'll go into mindfulness exercises and mindfulness meditation in later chapters. These are just a few ways you can begin practicing immediately while doing ordinary things. The purpose of these suggestions are to start learning how to begin slowing down and calming your mind.

### **Breath Awareness Meditation**

This is a very effective form of meditation all by itself. Let's go over how you can begin to start practicing this form of meditation.

First, try sitting upright in a relaxed position, keeping your spine straight. Begin by closing your eyes. Take a few moments to yourself and simply be. Notice whatever you happen to be experiencing, in that particular moment, without taking any action on it.

Once you've allowed yourself to get settled in, start noticing your breath as it both leaves and enters your body. Don't try and manipulate your breathing patterns in any way. Experience your breathing and feel how the air moves in and out of your nose along with how your body moves when breathing.



At times your mind will begin to wander away from your breath. That's completely normal, it doesn't matter. It's actually a part of this meditation! If you notice, you're no longer only observing your breath, you can easily focus your attention back to it when your mind wanders.

Let each of your experiences, emotions, thoughts, and bodily sensations continuously come and go, while staying in the background of your awareness of your breath. Notice how these things all come and go, effortlessly and automatically, like your breath.

Over time, you'll learn the different tendencies your mind has. You'll see how it tries to hold onto certain experiences, while resisting others. Letting your mind settle down naturally will allow you to recognize these tendencies, while giving you the opportunity to let go of them and any of the negativity attached to them.

### *Audio Or Guided Meditation*

It's also possible to find a serene and calm peace of mind while doing mundane activities. Things that you find to be boring or routine can be changed into mindfulness exercises you can use for deeper self relaxation.

For example, I enjoy walking so I turned the time I used on my walks into time I can practice walking meditation. You can meditate while doing a variety activities. Anything from sports like biking and swimming to hobbies like painting and gardening.

Another simple way to begin meditating is by seeking out relaxing activities when you begin to feel stressed. Listening to some music, writing in a journal, and reading are all good examples. These activities all work in a similar way. They help to focus your mind while also lowering your beta brain activity. This helps to naturally put your mind in a more meditative state.

Guided relaxation meditations are great form of meditation that uses instruction, imagery, stories, natural sound effects and music to help you focus, relax and follow along. You can find these offered in every format imaginable from CD's and DVD to MP3 downloads and cassette tapes.

Another popular form of meditation is Brain Wave Entrainment. These audio CD programs have been gaining in popularity. This form of meditation uses binaural beats to help synchronize your brain waves and then alter the brain wave frequencies into a specific state of consciousness. What this does is enable a person to reach a deeper state of meditation very quickly.

The different forms and methods of meditation are almost endless. You're really only limited by your imagination. The sooner you get started, the sooner you'll start to enjoy the simple pleasure of existing.

## **Chapter Three: 11 Mindfulness Exercises to Get You Started!**

### ***11 Mindfulness Exercises to Get You Started!***

In this section I'm going to go over 11 different mindfulness exercises that will help to kick start your path towards a more mindful existence. You don't need to learn and perform all of these exercises. Just pick out the ones that you're most comfortable with and begin from there.

1. Mindful Breathing – I discussed this one in the chapter above under Breath Awareness meditation. You can practice this one for as little or as long as you'd like. I would start off small and try it for a couple of minutes. As you get more comfortable, begin to increase the amount of time. When I practice my breathing, I usually do so for about 20 minutes. However, if I need to center myself, I'll often take a few minutes out of my day to practice this exercise and get back on track.

2. Mindful Observation – In this exercise you can either sit or stand up. All you need to do is pick a object in your current environment and focus only on that object for one to two minutes. Don't do anything else put pay attention to the object you're looking at. Visually inspect every inch of the object and relax into harmony for as long a period as your concentration will allow you to.

3. Mindful Listening – This exercise is used to help open your ears to listening to sounds without judgment. A lot of the things we hear every day are influenced in some way by our prior experiences. Start this exercise by picking out a musical track you've never heard. Then close your eyes and put on a pair of headphones to block out all outside sound. Once you've begun listening to the track, try not to get drawn into any judgments of the music itself or the person singing it. Instead, let yourself follow the music thinking of nothing else.

4. Mindful Awareness - This exercise is meant to help you become more aware and find a deeper appreciation for even the simplest most mundane

tasks. To begin this exercise, think of something that happens or that you do on an every day basis. Once you've thought of something, go ahead and do it, only this time take a moment to be mindful of where you are, how the thing you're doing benefits you, and how you're feeling in that precise moment.

5. Mindful Appreciation – Make a list of 5-10 things in your everyday life that normally go unnoticed or unappreciated. What these things are isn't important. It can be either people or objects. Once you've made your list start to give thanks and show some appreciation to them. The goal of this exercise is to begin noticing the things that go on in your life, that you normally take for granted, or let go unnoticed. Try to learn more about these things and appreciate how they benefit your life.

6. Mindful Immersion – The goal of this exercise is to learn how to be content in the given moment, instead of getting caught up in wanting and striving for other things all the time. For this exercise, pick one of your normal tasks. Now, instead of doing it as quickly as possible, take the time to appreciate every aspect of the task while you're completing it. Don't think of finishing it. Immerse yourself in each action of the task. Feel and become the motions needed to complete the task. You want to align yourself mentally, spiritually, and physically so that you're fully in the moment enjoying each action you're taking.

7. Mindful Movement - This exercise involves you doing intentional movement like yoga, walking, or stretching. Your intention during this exercise is to focus on your body and breath, noticing any sensations when moving and any moments when you're still. This is one of my personal favorites as far as mindfulness exercises go.

8. Sitting Meditations – These can last for any period of time from only a few minutes to over an hour. There are countless variations you can practice but these types of meditations often involve using your breath as the main focus of the exercise. Some sitting meditations will also include awareness of your bodily sensations, sounds, feelings, and thoughts.

9. Body Scans – These exercises move your focus to attention around your body, showing curiosity in your experiences, while also observing every

sensation as you gain awareness of it. You can find a variety of these different meditations for free online. They normally range between 3 minutes and an hour.

10. Guided Meditations - These are meditations that are led by other people. You can find a ton of these online for free or a nominal charge. They often come in a variety of easy to play formats. I suggest you should try as many as possible until you find the ones you're most comfortable with. In these meditations an expert will normally walk you through a set of mindfulness exercises and allow you to reach a deep meditative state.

11. Guided Imagery – This is a gentle yet profound exercise that directs and focuses your imagination in a more positive manner. These can be simple or very complex. It's often referred to as visualization, although this technique involves all of your senses and emotions. This form of meditation has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health and well being.

# Chapter Four: Yoga & Mindfulness

## *Yoga & Mindfulness*

Many mindfulness practitioners find yoga and mindfulness to go hand in hand with one another. The poses used in yoga are great for helping to focus your mind and attention in a positive manner. At the same time, yoga also allows you relieve tension and build physical strength.

Here is a good introductory to some of the poses you can use to help you focus and increase your mindfulness. While yoga may not be for everyone I urge you to give it a serious try. Not only is it good for your mind but it can work wonders on your physical health.

I've become incredibly flexible and limber over the last few years from practicing yoga. Old lingering injuries I used to have no longer bother me and I've got a lot more energy to get me through the day. Hopefully you'll see the benefits and incorporate it into your daily ritual.

## **Yoga Poses for Mindfulness**

While I'm going to briefly discuss each of the poses I started off with when yoga training, I suggest going on a site like You Tube and finding videos of yoga routines and poses. Personally, I've always been a visual learner, so I find seeing people perform the moves to be more helpful then reading descriptions of them. There's a ton of videos walking you through each step and showing you exactly where each part of your body should be during a particular pose. I'm in no way a professional yoga trainer so I'll try to explain each pose I use as best I can.

### 1. Corpse Pose

This is the initial pose that will start and end most sessions of yoga. All you need to do for this pose is lie down on your back, with your arms straight down by your sides, keeping your palms both turned upwards. Once you've done that move your feet about a foot or so apart from one another. Next,

close your eyes and begin to practice breathing mindfully. Continue to do this until you've felt all the tension release itself from your body.

## 2. Downward Dog Pose

This is a popular move in yoga and is a little harder than say the cat or needle's eye poses. To perform this move get on your hands and knees. From there you should move your body so that the soles of both your feet are on the ground. You also want to lift your hips up, while straightening your legs, keeping both your arms out directly in front of you. You should be forming a triangle shape with your tail bone as the the top point of the triangle. Once you've gotten into this pose try taking at least 5-10 mindful breaths.

## 3. Cat Pose

For this pose get on your hands and knees, placing your hands underneath your shoulders and your knees under your hips. Next, take a breath and gently curve your spine, tail bone, and neck making a C shape that's facing the floor. You want to allow your chin to tilt down towards your chest area.

Continue this pose for a few moments. Take a deep breath and alternate the pose. You'll want to pick up your head so it's going towards the sky and arch your spine downward towards the floor so that your tail bone is sticking up in the air. Continue this pose for a few moments. Take a deep breath and alternate between poses a few more times.

## 4. Needle's Eye

From the corpse pose, bring your feet in close to your butt, while still keeping them about a hip's width apart. Then, press both the soles of your feet onto the ground.

First, pick up your right foot and pull your right foot in near to your chest area. Join both your hands around your right thigh area and keep stretching your muscles gently while you're pulling the knee inwards.

If you're not that flexible don't worry you'll improve over time. After you've done the one leg, switch and do the same movement with the other one.

While you're performing these movements be sure to recognize how your body feels during the process. Make sure to keep taking mindful breaths throughout.

### 5. Warrior Pose

In a standing position, reach out both your arms to the sides, while moving both your feet so that they are wide apart from one another. Ideally your toes should be lining up under where your fingers are.

Next, turn your right foot so it's at a 90 degree angle, while turning your other foot slightly inward. Don't lean, instead bend slightly so your right knee goes over your ankle. From here you need to stretch both your arms as far as you can and continue to hold the pose as long as you're able. Don't forget to breathe.

Switch sides and repeat the process. Don't be alarmed if you have difficulty with this one at first. It's more difficult than the other poses mentioned. It will take some time before you get the hang of it and build up your endurance.

### 6. Fish Lord Pose

For this pose you need to sit down on the ground cross legged. You'll need to place your left foot up and then underneath your right thigh area. When you've done that your left heel should also be next to your right side hip.

Cross your right leg over top your left leg, while pressing the sole of your foot into the ground right next to your left thigh area. Using your left hand, hold onto your right knee, then twist your spine so you'll be able to actually reach your right hand behind yourself.

Stretch the top of your head towards the sky and remember to breathe and stay in the moment. Continue to hold this pose as long as you're able to. Once you're done, switch and repeat the process on the other side.



## 7. Bend Forward

Finish off by relaxing all your muscles from your last pose and stretch both your legs out directly in front of you with both feet together. Push your legs into the ground, feeling the rush of energy come flowing over your muscles. Flex all your toes forward in an upwards direction, lifting your chest towards the ceiling. Continue to breathe like this a few times.

Next, you want to bend over and reach towards your feet, or as far as you can reach. Try rotating your thighs, so you'll be able to lie over them, with your chest area bent over top your knees. Slowly breathe in and out a few times. Hold this pose as long as you can manage and then release. Go back into corpse pose and take a few last deep breaths.

That's it you're all done. Feel free to continue with more advanced exercises or move on to your preferred form of meditation. Don't worry if you're not able to perform these poses or hold them for long when you're new. It takes time to strengthen these muscles and your flexibility. Over time it will get easier, and you'll find yourself holding each pose for longer periods of time.

# Chapter Five: Meditation & Mindfulness

## *Meditation & Mindfulness*

In this section I'm going to discuss the important role meditation plays in attaining mindfulness. Before I started trying to become more mindful I never tried or gave much thought to meditation. I actually kinda looked down on it. I thought it was nonsense. I'm not really sure where my negative thoughts came from on the subject, since I really knew very little about it. I admit, it was something I needed to work through when I first started out.

It took some time and convincing from friends, but I eventually realized the positive affects meditation could have on my life. After a few months of practice, I was blown away at what a difference it made in how I not only viewed the world around me, but how I felt inside about myself. Now I meditate daily in the morning, and go on frequent walking meditations during the course of my week. Hopefully you'll gain some of the same benefits I did from embracing the power of meditation.

While some people learn how to meditate to enhance and deepen their spiritual growth, others practice outside its religious setting for health and wellness purposes. I fell into this category, as I'm sure many of you will as well.

I've found meditation can be used to manage stress and alleviate a lot of the pressure we tend to put on ourselves. Meditation teaches the mind how to be still and behave. It allows us to quiet the chatter in our minds and turn off the self internalized monologue that constantly interferes with our inner peace.

By practicing mindfulness meditation daily, you'll begin to train your mind to find calm, appreciation, happiness and love in everyday interactions and circumstances. It will allow you to push past obstacles that once seemed insurmountable, while giving you a greater sense of purpose and sense of well being.

While being mindful is the main tool in our meditation, we must be aware of our breath (or whatever we're using as the primary focus of our meditation), so that it can be properly used to include all of our mental and physical processes. This way, over time we can start to become more and more mindful of all our actions and thoughts.

People often think that when we meditate we're trying to stop every thought and let our minds rest in peace with the complete absence of thought. New practitioners biggest complaint is that they often feel they're doing something wrong because they aren't able to turn off their thoughts. However, thinking that is the meaning of meditation is incorrect. You're supposed to have thoughts when you meditate.

Mindfulness meditation is what we do with thoughts when they occur. When you feel like you're being distracted by your thoughts, you'll want to bring back all your attention to whatever the object of your meditation is. That's how you learn how to relate differently to any future distractions. Over time, it will dramatically improve your ability to both focus and concentrate.

Meditation comes in many forms. I suggest finding a local teacher or group to help you out when first getting started. Some places these might be available are at local gyms, yoga centers, houses of worship, and senior centers. You can also ask your doctor for recommendations. Personally, I had a local yoga center with a great teacher so I didn't need to search for long before I found someone to guide me.

### ***Mindfulness Meditation Instruction***

In this section I'll go over a few simple instructions on how you can get started with mindfulness meditation. You can use any form of meditation you prefer but this is my personal favorite and is the one I practice most often.

Start by either getting a chair to sit in or a cushion to sit on the floor with. Always keep your spine straight. Slowly relax into a comfortable sitting posture. Begin by taking a few deep and calming breaths. You want to allow your body and mind to get completely relaxed, while at the same time

making sure your mind stays alert and attentive to the moment. Take note of any areas in your body that are feeling tense and any areas that are feeling relaxed. Don't attempt to force or fix anything. Just let your body go with the flow.

Try and remember to allow your mind to remain soft. You want to allow your awareness to wash over your entire body. Continue to feel the sensation of sitting. Use your mind to help you sidestep any natural tendencies to think about your body or imagine its existence. You want to let images and thoughts come and go as they do without feeling bothered or concerned by them.

Continue to feel all of your body and any awareness that comes from within you, but not from your mind. Being aware of your body will help to anchor you and focus your attention on the present moment.

Now begin to sweep all of that awareness through the rest of your body. Be sure to feel every sensation. Don't attach any goals or agendas just focus on the moment. Stay mindful of all these new sensations and stay in the moment.

Once some time has elapsed, you can begin to move your awareness to any sounds around you. Awareness of sound will help you to create openness, receptivity and spaciousness in your mind. Try and stay aware of not only the sounds, but of the silence that occurs in-between those sounds. As you did with the sensations of your body, you'll want to shift your awareness away from trying to define the sounds, or having thoughts regarding the sounds. The only thing you want to do is try and hear the sound exactly as it is.

After some time has passed, you can begin to bring back your full attention to your breathing. Be sure to locate your breath where it's clearest and keep your awareness there. For me this is often the sensation I get from the rising and falling of my chest.

When breathing, let your breath go naturally without trying to control it in any fashion. Feel your breath only from within your breath itself, not from

your head. You want to feel the full cycle of your breath from the very beginning to the very end.

When doing this, let go of anything around you. Let it all rest in the background. You want your breathing to be natural without you trying to force it. Your goal is to rest in a state of deep relaxation, being mindful of your surroundings and the sensation of your breathing.

As your mind begins to wander, be aware and guide yourself back to your anchor without any judgment. Once you've had some practice, you'll notice it becomes like second nature to do this. At first, I had a hard time not negatively judging myself for wandering off. I was able to work through those feelings and stop judging myself over time.

Keep yourself in the moment, being mindful of your surroundings for as long as you're able to. Just focus on each breath, keeping yourself anchored. I started out just doing a few minutes a day and worked my way up slowly over time. Now I can meditate for long periods of time if I so desire.

I've found the more I meditate, the more I'm able to get rid of any fears and unnecessary attachments. It allows me to live a more joyful life, filled with wisdom and compassion.

# Chapter Six: Anxiety & Mindfulness

## *Anxiety & Mindfulness*

Many people suffering from anxiety have found that meditation and being more mindful in their every day lives can make a huge impact. It's been shown that mindfulness can drastically reduce the amount of stress and anxiety in a person's life. By being more aware of ourselves moment to moment we're able to rewire our brains to deal with stress and other anxiety triggers in a healthier way.

Relaxation and anxiety are polar opposite states of being. If you're experiencing one then you won't be experiencing the other. That's the reason why being mindful is a great antidote to any stress and anxiety you may be dealing with. Stress and anxiety aren't able to burden our minds if we don't let the negative thoughts into our minds.

Mindfulness teaches us to live in the moment, while focusing on what we are currently doing. It teaches us how to regain our focus when our mind begins to inevitably wander off. By focusing on the moment and the sensations of our body it makes it more difficult to consciously worry.

It takes some time and practice to learn the techniques needed to quiet down your mind. Also, it won't miraculously cure all your anxiety issues, but it can help to ease them quite a bit. In this section I'm going to go over a few of the ways I like to practice mindfulness, especially when dealing with anxiety issues.

1. Come Back – When you feel like things are starting to go off the rails, take the opportunity to stop for a moment and tell yourself to “come back.” What I mean by this is that you want to take a few mindful breaths and focus only what you're doing in that given moment. Don't let any outside thoughts take you away from what you're doing in the present.
2. Body Scan – There are lots of great scripts for different body scans available for free online. In essence you just want to meditate by focusing on what sensations are going on in your body at that precise moment.

3. Three Senses – With this technique you experience the current moment using your sense of sight, touch, and sound. Begin by taking a few deep breaths. Then ask yourself these questions:

*Name three things I can hear (ex. the TV, the radio, other people talking)*

*Name three things I can see (ex. the sky, the furniture, my pets)*

*Name three things I can touch (ex. the floor, my clothing, the glasses on my face).*

Answer each of these questions to yourself, taking time to answer each one. This will force you to focus on the current moment rather than any negative thoughts you may be having.

4. Mindfulness Tasks or Cooking – When I've had a tough day I like to come home and cook a nice healthy meal. However, while I'm cooking I make it a point to really be mindful of each step I'm taking and really experience creating the meal. I carry this over to eating the meal as well, trying to enjoy and experience each and every bite of my food. I find that once I've finished cooking, eating and cleaning up, all while practicing mindfulness, whatever issues I was having during the day that was raising my anxiety levels have melted away, leaving me relaxed and ready to enjoy the rest of my evening. These same principles will work when applied to most normal daily tasks and chores.

5. Mindfulness Walking – If something gets me stressed out at work I like to take a break and go on a quick walk. I use this time to practice my mindfulness, letting whatever issues got me worked up fade into the background. By taking a break from the stressful activity, focusing only on the moment, I'm allowing my mind and body a chance to calm down and get over whatever issue had me riled up in the first place. Once I'm done, I find I usually have a much clearer mind and I'm ready to tackle whatever obstacle I need to face head on.

6. Guided Meditations – I find one of the times my anxiety levels are at their highest is when I'm trying to go to sleep. I used to have issues with my mind not wanting to turn off and constantly chattering away with negative

thoughts. In order to gain control over your mind, you need to train it to quiet down when you want it to. I've found that listening to guided meditations before sleep, that specifically deal with lessening stress and anxiety have worked wonders in getting me to a point where I can close my eyes for bed without worrying about having an anxiety attack. Once you learn to slow down and soothe your mind, you'll find that most bouts of anxiety can be dealt with before they spiral out of control.

Remember, you aren't your anxiety. Stress and anxiety aren't a permanent part of who you are as a person. They are just negative thoughts and feelings. Don't try and fight your anxiety, just take it in for what it is, knowing that it will pass, and understand that you're the only one in that is in control of your mind.

I suggest also trying to learn from your anxiety. Oftentimes, our fears and anxiety uncover areas of our life that need some attention. By stepping back and evaluating what your anxiety is trying to tell you, you'll be able to figure out what actions are needed to solve some of the problems you're dealing with, perhaps putting those fears to rest once and for all.



# Chapter Seven: 55+ Mindfulness Tips for Beginner's

## *55+ Mindfulness Tips for Beginner's*

In this section I'll go over 55+ tips that will help you become more mindful over yourself and your surroundings. I have this list in a file on my computer that I can reference whenever I feel the need to refocus. I hope these tips have the same positive impact on your life that they did in mine.

1. Whenever you need to relax, simply concentrate only on your breathing and allow your subconscious to take over.
2. When driving, turn off all music or talk radio, experiencing the sound of silence. It takes a bit to get used to. You'll feel like something may be missing. However, after time you'll see that with silence you're able to otherwise fill your mind with different perceptions, many of which are very rewarding. Practicing this can leave your mind calmer, quieter and much more focused overall.
3. Eat slower than normal. Try eating a meal in silence each week as an experiment. This will help you experience the eating more fully. You may also want to cut out reading, listening to music, or watching TV while you're eating. Eliminating these things will allow you to become more attuned with how you eat and will give you more awareness when you're eating among other people.
4. When you're working, use your breaks to really relax instead of just pausing on what you're doing. For example, instead of having a drink and talking with your fellow workers, take a short walk and meditate.
5. Be aware of how often you're letting your mind dwell on past memories or future possibilities. Is this something that is necessary? Are these memories affecting you negatively? The future and the past are places we visit for planning and learning. However, many of us end up living in the past or future, instead of focusing on the here and now. Don't let yourself fall into that trap.

6. Use your environmental cues as a reminder to continually center yourself. Allow the cues around you to help signal to yourself that it's time you take a minute to pause, take a deep breath, and become more aware of your bodily sensation. When you do this it allows your mind to settle down and regroup.
7. When going to work and stopped at a light, take a moment to pay close attention to what's around you, where your mind is at, and your breathing.
8. When your done with your work day and you're walking to your vehicle, focus on your breathing and the air around you. Listen to any sounds you hear. Your goal is to be able to walk without the feeling of being rushed. You shouldn't feel anxious to get home.
9. When you get home after work, be sure to say hello to everyone in your home. Look into each of their eyes when doing this. Afterward, take about 5-15 minutes to stay quiet and still. If you happen to live by yourself, enter your home and embrace the quietness of your environment and the feeling of that silence.
10. Spend some more time in nature. I take long walks and hikes whenever possible.
11. Notice how your mind is constantly judging things. Don't take these judgments too seriously. These thoughts aren't who you are.
12. Practice listening without judging. It's harder to do than it sounds.
13. Don't feel forced to always be doing something. If you have some free time take that time to simply be.
14. When walking, be aware of how your weight is shifting, the sensations you feel in your feet. Focus more on yourself and less on where you're headed.
15. Take some time to focus only on your breathing. Feel the flow of your breath and how your chest rises and falls.

16. Take notice of what you're doing while you're doing it. Try and be in tune with all your senses.

17. When you're eating, notice the texture and colors of your food as well as how it tastes.

18. If your mind begins to wander to negative thinking, bring it back gently to your breath.

19. Remember your thoughts are only thoughts, You aren't obligated to react to them or even believe them.

20. Think of all the activities you do that you tend to zone out in. Some examples are texting, doing chores, web surfing, & driving. Take some time and practice being more aware when participating in these activities.

21. Practice short bursts of mindfulness. Our brains react better to shorter sessions of mindfulness many times throughout the day, rather than a few long sessions of being mindful.

22. Pick out a prompt to help you remember to be mindful. It could be getting a cup of coffee triggers you to take some time to be mindful, or hanging your coat up when you get home from work. Whatever triggers help you remember to practice mindfulness on daily basis will work just fine.

23. Learn to properly meditate. Mindfulness is a skill we need to learn and sharpen over time. Being able to meditate properly will allow you to accomplish this.

24. Practice being mindful while you're waiting. Whether it's in line or at a doctor's appointment, these moments are great opportunities to practice being more mindful.

25. Practice first thing when you wake up in the morning. I find this helps me set the tone for the rest of my day and gets my body more in tune with my surroundings. Take a few minutes before you start reading your paper, watching TV, or getting ready for whatever tasks you have on hand that day.

26. Right after waking up, before getting out of your bed, focus on your breathing. Observe at least 5 mindful breaths.

27. Be aware of changes in posture. You need to stay aware of how your mind and body feel when you're going from lying down, up to sitting, up to standing, up to walking. Notice your posture from one transition to the next.

28. Use any sound you hear as a bell for mindfulness. Really use that opportunity to listen and be present.

29. During the course of your day, take a moment from time to time to focus on your breathing. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

30. Pay attention when you're eating. Consciously consume your food, bringing awareness to tasting, chewing, and swallowing. Realize that your food was connected to something that helped nourish its growth.

31. Bring awareness to talking and listening. Can you listen to someone without either agreeing or disagreeing, disliking or liking, or planning what things you'll say when it's your turn to talk? While talking, can you simply state what you need to say without understating or overstating? Are you able to notice how both your body and mind feel? The more you practice being aware and present the easier it'll get over time.

32. Focus some more attention on your normal everyday activities. These include washing, brushing your teeth, and getting dressed. Try and practice bringing mindfulness to each of these activities.

33. Notice any points on your body where you're feeling tight. Try and breathe into them, while exhaling let go of any excess tension you feel. Do you have tension stored in any part of your body. For example, your shoulders, neck, jaw, stomach or back? If so, try stretching and practicing yoga at least once each day.

34. Before bed, take a moment to bring some attention to your breathing. The same as you did when you wake up in the morning. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

35. Create a 15 minute invite on your calendar regarding mindfulness for each day and be sure to commit to always spending that time with yourself.
36. Take breaks from your job to help gain perspective on what you're doing.
37. Find some other people at your job who are interested in becoming more mindful and practice your mindfulness together.
38. Find a mindfulness mentor. This can be anyone practicing that you can get advice from and can talk about your practicing with.
39. Focus on individual tasks instead of trying to multitask.
40. Try and take a walk outside every day leaving your phone behind or turned off.
41. Try riding a bike to work. You'll need to be mindful if you're biking through some traffic.
42. Pause and center yourself for about 30 seconds at your job before diving into the work you have to accomplish.
43. Turn a unused closet or room into a meditation space.
44. Implement boundaries to help let your mind shut off. For instance turn off your phone after 9 pm or don't bring it in your bedroom before going to sleep.
45. Don't beat yourself up if you get distracted. There will be days that are far more hectic than others.
46. They call it "practice" for a good reason – It takes a lot of repetition to properly develop your mindfulness muscle.
47. Not everyone will develop there mindfulness habits at the same pace. For some it may take as little as 8 weeks. For others it will take longer. Just keep going and you'll get there eventually.

48. Don't get dragged down by your problems. Problems can be an opportunity to grow. Learn to recognize problems and solve them.

49. Don't wallow in your past. Live each day without regret. The more you look to the past the harder it will be to enjoy your time in the present.

50. Always create new goals for yourself. Give yourself something to look forward to each day.

51. Take time to appreciate yourself. If you can't learn to find value in yourself you'll have a hard time finding it in others.

52. Learn something new everyday. Even if it's something small. Continued growth and knowledge will only benefit you in the long run. Making mistakes is par for the course. It's only that we learn from our mistakes that matters.

53. Appreciate the small things your friends and family do for you. Do small things for the people in your life to show how much you care.

54. Mindfulness is not something to do a few minutes a day. Over time it should become a part of your life. The goal is to bring more awareness and compassion to every situation you find yourself in. Learning how to be more mindful in all situations will only benefit you long term.

55. Try out aromatherapy to increase your focus. I've found that smell helps me focus more than chants or mantras. Most people don't think to try aromatherapy. I know I didn't at first.

56. Have an open and clean space to meditate in. You want as little distraction surrounding you as possible when meditating. This especially rings true when you're first starting out. Try to find an area that is free of clutter and distraction when meditating at home.

57. Let in some air and natural light to your meditation area. Many people, myself included, are able to focus much better when breathing in fresh air and surrounded by sunlight.

58. Choose the kind of meditation that resonates with you. Don't practice a form of meditation just because it's what someone said you should do. Learn the different methods, and decide for yourself. The more comfortable you are, the better chance you'll have at sticking with it. While I enjoy mindfulness meditation and walking meditations, my partner prefers yoga and guided sitting meditations.

# Chapter Eight: 14 Mindfulness Apps & Resources to Improve Your Life

## *14 Mindfulness Apps & Resources to Improve Your Life*

In this section I'll discuss and share with you 14 different mindfulness apps & resources you can use in your every day life. Not all of these will apply to everyone. Feel free to pick and choose the ones that best work for your particular situation. Many of these have made a real difference in my life and I highly recommend them.

### [1. Stop, Breathe & Think App](#)

This app is available on the Android, iPhone and the Web. This app gives a good variety of basic meditations, that will range in lengths. Some things included are mindfulness meditation, body scan practice, and loving-kindness meditation. This app is ideal for both the home and when you're on the go. This app does a good job of harnessing the emotional components by having you tell it how you feel both physically and mentally. From there it will then give you some suggestions on different meditations to practice in order to get the most out of your session. This is a free app although there are special features you can unlock for a small fee. This is the main app I use on a daily basis.

### [2. Buddhify](#)

This app is available on both Android and iPhone. This app comes with over 80 different guided meditations you can use depending on your schedule and where you're at emotionally. In all there's over 11 hours worth of meditations. This is a paid app and has a one time fee of \$2.99.

### [3. Insight Timer](#)

This app is available on both the Android and iPhone. This app is a meditation timer which also functions as a guide to mindfulness. People using the app can share all their meditation times with other users and friends. They can also check in on different people meditating in their area.



This app also comes with guided meditations from teachers like Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg and Elisha Goldstein. Finally this app also comes with a timer that will allow you to keep time of your meditation. This app is free to download but does have in app purchases of \$4.99. Definitely worth your time to check out! This one is a favorite of many of my friends.

#### [4. Headspace](#)

This app is available on Android, iPhone, and the Web. This app is like a trainer for the mind. With tons of content including different series focused on health, relationships, and performance. This is a paid monthly app that comes with a 10 day free trial where they go over 10 different practices to help you get started. I'd recommend trying this out on the trial and seeing how you like it before making any longer commitments. I use this app and enjoy it but having to pay a monthly fee isn't for everyone.

#### [5. Calm](#)

This app is available on Android, iPhone, and the Web. This is a free app that allows you to choose both sounds and background scenery. For example, a sunny seaside with the sounds of crashing waves. After you've chosen your selections you can then set a timer and relax for the amount of time you designated. Personally, I use this app before bed to help put me in a relaxed state.

#### [6. Mindfulness Meditation Mental Workout](#)

This app is available on Android, iPhone and the Web. This app is designed by meditation expert Stephan Bodian. It comes in either a free lite version or the full paid version (\$12.99 / 1 year). With this app you'll get guided meditations, relaxation exercises, body scans, inspirational talks, meditation instructions and a 8 week plan filled with daily activities to help you put what you've learned into practice. I've only tried the lite version of this app as I already use many other mindfulness tools, however I've gotten really good feedback from a few of my friends who've purchased it.

#### [7. Mindful](#)

This is a website devoted to mindfulness. It's home to it's own magazine and newsletter on mindfulness. This site contains lots of great articles discussing mindfulness, and how we can use it to positively impact our daily lives. I'm constantly learning new things from the articles on this site and it's a wonderful source on all the latest new resources and tools to try out.

### [8. Relax Melodies](#)

This app is available on both Android & iPhone. This app contains more than just melodies. It also has beautiful natural scenery to choose from and a selection of meditations. This is a free app and one I definitely recommend trying out.

### [9. Meditation Timer Pro](#)

This app is available on the iPhone. This app is simple to use and navigate. It offers prepare time, interval time and cool down time. It also offers a variety of sounds and background images. My favorite feature is that it will save logs of your meditations and keep statistics on your progress. You can also set reminders to let you know when it's time to meditate. This is a free app and one I would use all the time if not for the fact that I recently switched to an Android based phone.

### [10. Take A Break](#)

This app is available on both Android & iPhone. This app is great for when you need a reminder to take a short 7 minute break for relaxation or a longer 13 minute long break for meditation. Comes with a variety of calming sounds and music. This is a free app that is good for people who get wrapped up in work and forget to take some time out to relax and meditate during the day.

### [11. Omvana](#)

This app is available on Android, iPhone, and the Web. This app offers over 500 of the world's top audios on meditation, body, mind, productivity, lifestyle and relationships. It comes with guided meditations from famous

authors and a variety of inspirational tracks to help you get inspired each day. This app is free to download and then has in app purchases ranging from .99 cents to \$7.99. This is an app worth checking out and offers a ton of content.

### [12. Walking Meditations](#)

This app is available on both Android & iPhone. This app is perfect for anyone that has trouble sitting still when wanting to meditate. This app helps bring your meditation into each moment of your day. This app will guide you to experience both your body and your surroundings fully as you take a walk, letting go of any preoccupations that normally inhabit your mind. I really enjoyed what this app taught me. When I first started out I had a real problem with remaining still. This app helped me mediate on the move until I learned to slow down. This app costs \$1.99 to purchase.

### [13. American Mindfulness Research Association \(AMRA\)](#)

This website is the home to AMRA. Here you can find mindfulness health articles, mindfulness measurement tools, along with mindfulness research and training programs located across the globe.

### [14. Mindful Net](#)

This website is dedicated to mindfulness and providing access to as much content on the subject as possible. Has links to research, articles, resources, apps. and other sites that can help you learn more about mindfulness.

**Here is a short list of mindfulness books I've read over the years and found to be very helpful:**

[The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation](#)  
by Thich Nhat Hanh

[Being Good: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life](#) by Hsing Yun

[The Art of Living: Vipassana Meditation as Taught by S. N. Goenka](#) by William Hart

# **Bonus Chapter: 200+ Mindfulness Quotes to Live Your Life By!**

## ***200+ Mindfulness Quotes to Live Your Life By!***

In this section I'll go over 200+ quotes relating to mindfulness that I've come across over the years. Whenever I'm feeling stressed or out of sync, I like to read over these quotes. They always leave me feeling inspired, ready to take control of my life. Hopefully you enjoy these quotes as much as I do.

1. "Do every act of your life as though it were the last act of your life." - Marcus Aurelius
2. "Keep your eyes on the stars and your feet on the ground." – Theodore Roosevelt
3. "The present moment is filled with joy and happiness. If you are attentive, you will see it." - Thich Nhat Hanh
4. "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try again. Fail again. Fail better." - Anonymous
5. "Looking at beauty in the world, is the first step to purifying the mind." - Amit Ray
6. "The secret of getting ahead is getting started." - Mark Twain
7. "Expect the problems and eat them for breakfast." - Alfred A. Montapert
8. "Be kind whenever possible. It is always possible." - Dalai Lama
9. "Paradise is not a place it's a state of consciousness." - Sri Chinmoy
10. "Drink your tea slowly and reverently, as if it is the axis on which the world earth revolves – slowly, evenly, without rushing toward the future; live the actual moment. Only this moment is life." – Thich Nhat Hanh

11. “Mindfulness is the aware, balanced acceptance of the present experience. It isn’t more complicated than that. It is opening to or receiving the present moment, pleasant or unpleasant, just as it is, without either clinging to it or rejecting it.” – Sylvia Boorstein

12. “Perhaps ultimately, spiritual simply means experiencing wholeness and interconnectedness directly, a seeing that individuality and the totality are interwoven, that nothing is separate or extraneous. If you see in this way, then everything becomes spiritual in its deepest sense. Doing science is spiritual. So is washing the dishes.” – Jon Kabat-Zinn

13. “Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” – Victor Frankl

14. “Mindfulness is about being fully awake in our lives. It is about perceiving the exquisite vividness of each moment. We also gain immediate access to our own powerful inner resources for insight, transformation, and healing.” – Jon Kabat-Zinn

15. “There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle.” – Albert Einstein

16. “You have a treasure within you that is infinitely greater than anything the world can offer.” – Eckhart Tolle

17. “Wanting to reform the world without discovering one’s true self is like trying to cover the world with leather to avoid the pain of walking on stones and thorns. It is much simpler to wear shoes.” – Sri Ramana Maharshi

18. “To see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour.” – William Blake

19. “If you clean the floor with love, you have given the world an invisible painting.” – Osho

20. “The most fundamental aggression to ourselves, the most fundamental harm we can do to ourselves, is to remain ignorant by not having the

courage and the respect to look at ourselves honestly and gently.” – Pema Chodran

21. “Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside.” – Sri Ramana Maharshi

22. “Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won’t).” – James Baraz

23. “Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.” – Carl Jung

24. “The moment one gives close attention to anything, even a blade of grass, it becomes a mysterious, awesome, indescribably magnificent world in itself.” – Henry Miller

25. “When you realize nothing is lacking, the whole world belongs to you.”  
- Lao Tzu

26. “As soon as we wish to be happier, we are no longer happy.” - Walter Landor

27. “The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness. Mindfulness means being awake. It means knowing what you are doing.” - Jon Kabat-Zinn

28. "If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion." - Dalai Lama

29. “In today’s rush, we all think too much — seek too much — want too much — and forget about the joy of just being.” - Eckhart Tolle

30. “If we learn to open our hearts, anyone, including the people who drive us crazy, can be our teacher.” - Pema Chodron

31. “If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, infinite.” - William Blake

32. "Suffering usually relates to wanting things to be different than they are." - Allan Lokos

33. "In the end, just three things matter: How well we have lived. How well we have loved. How well we have learned to let go" - Jack Kornfield

34. "Everything is created twice, first in the mind and then in reality." - Robin S. Sharma

35. "Don't believe everything you think. Thoughts are just that – thoughts." - Allan Lokos

36. "In this moment, there is plenty of time. In this moment, you are precisely as you should be. In this moment, there is infinite possibility." - Victoria Moran

37. "Mindfulness isn't difficult, we just need to remember to do it." - Sharon Salzberg

38. "Respond; don't react. Listen; don't talk. Think; don't assume." - Raji Lukkoor

39. "Each morning we are born again. What we do today is what matters most." - Buddha

40. "If you concentrate on finding whatever is good in every situation, you will discover that your life will suddenly be filled with gratitude, a feeling that nurtures the soul." - Rabbi Harold Kushner

41. "I wish that life should not be cheap, but sacred. I wish the days to be as centuries, loaded, fragrant." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

42. "Begin at once to live, and count each separate day as a separate life." - Seneca

43. "It's only when we truly know and understand that we have a limited time on earth – and that we have no way of knowing when our time is up – that we will begin to live each day to the fullest, as if it was the only one we had." - Elisabeth Kübler-Ross

44. "There's only one reason why you're not experiencing bliss at this present moment, and it's because you're thinking or focusing on what you don't have.... But, right now you have everything you need to be in bliss." - Anthony de Mello
45. "Observe the space between your thoughts, then observe the observer." - Hamilton Boudreaux
46. "Our own worst enemy cannot harm us as much as our unwise thoughts. No one can help us as much as our own compassionate thoughts." - Buddha
47. "The mind in its natural state can be compared to the sky, covered by layers of cloud which hide its true nature." - Kalu Rinpoche
48. "The basic root of happiness lies in our minds; outer circumstances are nothing more than adverse or favorable." - Matthieu Ricard
49. "Impermanence is a principle of harmony. When we don't struggle against it, we are in harmony with reality." - Pema Chodron
50. "If one were truly aware of the value of human life, to waste it blithely on distractions and the pursuit of vulgar ambitions would be the height of confusion." - Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche
51. "We are awakened to the profound realization that the true path to liberation is to let go of everything." - Jack Kornfield
52. "Knowledge does not mean mastering a great quantity of different information, but understanding the nature of mind. This knowledge can penetrate each one of our thoughts and illuminate each one of our perceptions." - Matthieu Ricard
53. "To diminish the suffering of pain, we need to make a crucial distinction between the pain of pain, and the pain we create by our thoughts about the pain. Fear, anger, guilt, loneliness and helplessness are all mental and emotional responses that can intensify pain." - Howard Cutler



54. “Why, if we are as pragmatic as we claim, don’t we begin to ask ourselves seriously: Where does our real future lie” - Sogyal Rinpoche

55. “We have only now, only this single eternal moment opening and unfolding before us, day and night.” - Jack Kornfield

56. “Mindful and creative, a child who has neither a past, nor examples to follow, nor value judgments, simply lives, speaks and plays in freedom.” - Arnaud Desjardins

57. “Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.” — Thich Nhat Hanh

58. “If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in the moment, live in the breath.” — Amit Ray

59. “If someone comes along and shoots an arrow into your heart, it’s fruitless to stand there and yell at the person. It would be much better to turn your attention to the fact that there’s an arrow in your heart...” — Pema Chödrön

60. “Feelings, whether of compassion or irritation, should be welcomed, recognized, and treated on an absolutely equal basis; because both are ourselves. The tangerine I am eating is me. The mustard greens I am planting are me. I plant with all my heart and mind. I clean this teapot with the kind of attention I would have were I giving the baby Buddha or Jesus a bath. Nothing should be treated more carefully than anything else. In mindfulness, compassion, irritation, mustard green plant, and teapot are all sacred.” — Thich Nhat Hanh

61. “Do not ruin today with mourning tomorrow.” — Catherynne M. Valente

62. “Few of us ever live in the present. We are forever anticipating what is to come or remembering what has gone.” — Louis L'Amour

63. “Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more.” — Mother Teresa

64. “In this moment, there is plenty of time. In this moment, you are precisely as you should be. In this moment, there is infinite possibility.” — Victoria Moran

65. “I don’t need anyone else to distract me from myself anymore, like I always thought I would.” — Charlotte Eriksson

66. “Mind is a flexible mirror, adjust it, to see a better world.” — Amit Ray

67. “Life is a dance. Mindfulness is witnessing that dance.” — Amit Ray

68. “Restore your attention or bring it to a new level by dramatically slowing down whatever you're doing.” — Sharon Salzberg

69. “One is a great deal less anxious if one feels perfectly free to be anxious, and the same may be said of guilt.” — Alan W. Watts

70. “Respond; don't react. Listen; don't talk. Think; don't assume.” — Raji Lukkoor

71. “Don’t let a day go by without asking who you are... each time you let a new ingredient to enter your awareness.” — Deepak Chopra

72. “In a true you-and-I relationship, we are present mindfully, non intrusively, the way we are present with things in nature. We do not tell a birch tree it should be more like an elm. We face it with no agenda, only an appreciation that becomes participation: 'I love looking at this birch' becomes 'I am this birch' and then 'I and this birch are opening to a mystery that transcends and holds us both.’ — David Richo

73. “If you’re reading these words, perhaps it’s because something has kicked open the door for you, and you’re ready to embrace change. It isn’t enough to appreciate change from afar, or only in the abstract, or as something that can happen to other people but not to you. We need to create change for ourselves, in a workable way, as part of our everyday lives.” — Sharon Salzberg

74. “It stands to reason that anyone who learns to live well will die well. The skills are the same: being present in the moment, and humble, and brave, and keeping a sense of humor.” — Victoria Moran

75. “You have to remember one life, one death – this one! To enter fully the day, the hour, the moment whether it appears as life or death, whether we catch it on the in breath or out breath, requires only a moment, this moment. And along with it all the mindfulness we can muster, and each stage of our ongoing birth, and the confident joy of our inherent luminosity.” — Stephen Levine

76. “Whatever your eye falls on - for it will fall on what you love - will lead you to the questions of your life, the questions that are incumbent upon you to answer, because that is how the mind works in concert with the eye. The things of this world draw us where we need to go.” — Mary Rose O'Reilley

77. “Treat everyone you meet as if they were you.” — Doug Dillon

78. “Most of us take for granted that time flies, meaning that it passes too quickly. But in the mindful state, time doesn't really pass at all. There is only a single instant of time that keeps renewing itself over and over with infinite variety.” — Deepak Chopra

79. “It's good to have an end in mind but in the end what counts is how you travel.” — Orna Ross

80. “Through recognizing and realizing the empty essence, instead of being selfish and self-centered, one feels very open and free” — Tsoknyi Rinpoche

81. “Learn to say no to demands, requests, invitations, and activities that leave you with no time for yourself. Until I learned to say no, and mean it, I was always overloaded by stress. You may feel guilty and selfish at first for guarding your down- time, but you'll soon find that you are a much nicer, more present, more productive person in each instance you do choose to say yes.” — Holly Mosier

82. “The mind which is created quick to love, is responsive to everything that is pleasing, soon as by pleasure it is awakened into activity. Your apprehensive faculty draws an impression from a real object, and unfolds it within you, so that it makes the mind turn thereto. And if, being turned, it inclines towards it, that inclination is love; that is nature, which through pleasure is bound anew within you.” — Dante Alighieri

83. “Walk as if you are kissing the Earth with your feet.” — Thich Nhat Hanh

84. “A mind set in its ways is wasted. Don't do it.” — Eric Schmidt

85. “All beings want to be happy, yet so very few know how. It is out of ignorance that any of us cause suffering, for ourselves or for others” — Sharon Salzberg

86. “Our culture encourages us to plan every moment and fill our schedules with one activity and obligation after the next, with no time to just be. But the human body and mind require downtime to rejuvenate. I have found my greatest moments of joy and peace just sitting in silence, and then I take that joy and peace with me out into the world.” — Holly Mosier

87. “Mindfulness has never met a cognition it didn't like.” — Daniel J. Siegel

88. “Like a child standing in a beautiful park with his eyes shut tight, there's no need to imagine trees, flowers, deer, birds, and sky; we merely need to open our eyes and realize what is already here, who we already are - as soon as we stop pretending we're small or unholy.” — Bo Lozoff

89. “[Mindfulness] is not concerned with anything transcendent or divine. It serves as an antidote to theism, a cure for sentimental piety, a scalpel for excising the tumor of metaphysical belief.” — Stephen Batchelor

90. “Let the breath lead the way.” — Sharon Salzberg

91. “We too should make ourselves empty, that the great soul of the universe may fill us with its breath.” — Laurence Binyon

92. "Stop, breathe, look around and embrace the miracle of each day, the miracle of life." — Jeffrey A. White

93. "What is it about our expectations, plans, or ideas that hold such sway over us? It is as if we've written a script for a play of our lives that runs about a month ahead of actual life; if reality varies from what we've created in our minds we disengage or pout." — Holly Sprink

94. "We may be living past and future lives at the same time we are living this one." — Doug Dillon

95. "Collaboration is the essence of life. The wind, bees and flowers work together, to spread the pollen. Mindfulness gives us the opportunity to work with the cosmic collaboration." — Amit Ray

96. "Concentration is like a leash for our mind, keeping it under control and obedient and not giving it too much room to move as it wishes." — Evan Sutter

97. "Live in the mysterious. Accepting and being fully at peace with not knowing what's going to happen in the future will allow us to be fully present and more peaceful in the present." — Matthew Donnelly

98. "Compassion is not complete if it does not include oneself." — Allan Lokos

99. "To reteach a thing its loveliness is the nature of Metta. Through loving kindness, everyone & everything can flower again from within." — Sharon Salzberg

100. "An open beginner's mind is a powerful tool for developing patience." — Allan Lokos

101. "The mind is just like a muscle - the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets and the more it can expand." — Idowu Koyenikan

102. "Without the ability to be present we are missing much of what the adventure has to offer." — Allan Lokos

103. “Mind is like a net, drawn by the needles of past and future. Mindfulness is the way for not getting stuck into that net.” — Amit Ray

104. “Mindfulness is not the path of chasing. It is the path of beautification. When flowers blossom, the fragrance spreads, and the bees come.” — Amit Ray

105. “Whatever it is you want in this life, be it material things, a place you want to be, or an experience you want to have, you must first make it real in the realm of your consciousness.” — Brandi L. Bates

106. “When you have any sort of intense emotional reaction, you have a choice: look for proof that you should feel it even deeper or look for the thought process that is triggering the emotion. One takes you on a downward spiral, while the other upwards. One breeds toxic patterns, the other awareness. The choice is yours.” — Vironika Tugaleva

107. “When you open your mind, you open new doors to new possibilities for yourself and new opportunities to help others.” — Roy Bennett

108. “When we allow the mind to shut down we let things be as they are.” — Matthew Donnelly

109. “Meditation is the art of silencing the mind so that you may hear the inklings of the Soul.” — Manprit Kaur

110. “We cannot force the development of mindfulness.” — Allan Lokos

111. “The future is always beginning now.” — Mark Strand

112. “Why do they not teach you that time is a finger snap and an eye blink, and that you should not allow a moment to pass you by without taking joyous, ecstatic note of it, not wasting a single moment of its swift, breakneck circuit?” — Pat Conroy

113. “If you surrender completely to the moments as they pass, you live more richly those moments.” — Anne Morrow Lindbergh

114. "We spend precious hours fearing the inevitable. It would be wise to use that time adoring our families, cherishing our friends and living our lives." — Maya Angelou

115. "Seeking is endless. It never comes to a state of rest; it never ceases." — Sharon Salzberg

116. "It's good to have an end in mind but in the end what counts is how you travel." — Orna Ross

117. "Be happy in the moment, that's enough. Each moment is all we need, not more." — Mother Teresa

118. "Look at everything as though you were seeing it either for the first or last time. Then your time on earth will be filled with glory." — Betty Smith

119. "Life is a preparation for the future; and the best preparation for the future is to live as if there were none." — Albert Einstein

120. "Begin at once to live, and count each separate day as a separate life." - Seneca

121. "Waste not fresh tears over old griefs." — Euripides

122. "One can make a day of any size, and regulate the rising and setting of his own sun and the brightness of its shining." - John Muir

123. "Renew thyself completely each day; do it again, and again, and forever again." Henry David Thoreau

124. "I wish that life should not be cheap, but sacred. I wish the days to be as centuries, loaded, fragrant." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

125. "Try dying every day to your old self.. So that you emerge renewed and young again as the tired mind sheds its load." - Kristin Zambucka

126. "There is no better means of attainment to the spiritual life. Than by continually beginning again." - Saint Francis de Sales

127. "Living the past is a dull and lonely business; looking back strains the neck muscles, causing you to bump into people not going your way." — Edna Ferber

128. "The passing moment is all that we can be sure of; it is only common sense to extract its utmost value from it." - W. Somerset Maugham

129. "Slow down and enjoy life. It's not only the scenery you miss by going too fast - you also miss the sense of where you are going and why." -Eddie Cantor

130. "Always hold fast to the present. Every situation, indeed every moment, is of infinite value, for it is the representative of a whole eternity." - Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

131. "As you walk and eat and travel, be where you are. Otherwise you will miss most of your life." - Buddha

132. "To see a world in a grain of sand and heaven in a wild flower, Hold infinity in the palm of your hand and eternity in an hour." -William Blake

133. "Wanting to reform the world without discovering one's true self is like trying to cover the world with leather to avoid the pain of walking on stones and thorns. It is much simpler to wear shoes." — Ramana Maharshi

134. "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are" – Theodore Roosevelt

135. "If you feel lost, disappointed, hesitant, or weak, return to yourself, to who you are, here and now and when you get there, you will discover yourself, like a lotus flower in full bloom, even in a muddy pond, beautiful and strong."— Masaru Emoto

136. "Don't let yesterday use up too much of today."— Cherokee Indian Proverb

137. "I tell you the past is a bucket of ashes." — Carl Sandburg



138. "When one door closes another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us." — Alexander Graham Bell

139. "It's but little good you'll do a-watering the last year's crops." — Mary Anne Evans

140. "In the carriages of the past you can't go anywhere." — Maxim Gorky

141. "If you wait for tomorrow, tomorrow comes. If you don't wait for tomorrow, tomorrow comes." — Senegalese Proverb

142. "God made the world round so we would never be able to see too far down the road." — Karen Blixen

143. "Life is all memory, except for the one present moment that goes by you so quickly you hardly catch it going." — Tennessee Williams

144. "When we lack mindfulness, we are like someone who builds a house out of ignorance. . . . The wind comes and blows it away." - The Jesus Sutras

145. "It is only possible to live happily-ever-after on a day-to-day basis." - Margaret Wander Bonnano

146. "Slight not what's near through aiming at what's far." — Euripides

147. "It's surprising how much memory is built around things unnoticed at the time." - Barbara Kingsolver"

148. Rejoice in the things that are present; all else is beyond thee." — Michel de Montaigne

149. "I got the blues thinking of the future, so I left off and made some marmalade. It's amazing how it cheers one up to shred oranges and scrub the floor." - D.H. Lawrence

150. "Nothing ever gets anywhere. The earth keeps turning round and gets nowhere. The moment is the only thing that counts." — Jean Cocteau

151. "With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future. I live now."  
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

152. "Seize from every moment its unique novelty, and do not prepare your joys." — André Gide

153. "Let us not look back in anger, nor forward in fear, but around in awareness." — James Thurber

154. "Children have neither past nor future; they enjoy the present, which very few of us do." — Jean de la Bruyere

155. "Speech is the mirror of the soul; as a man speaks, so he is." - Publilius Syrus

156. "I think over again my small adventures, my fears, those small ones that seemed so big, all those vital things I had to get and to reach, and yet there is only one great thing: to live and see the great day that dawns, and the light that fills the world." - Inuit Saying

157. "When we understand how precious each moment is, we can treat each breath, each moment, as a newborn baby."- Michelle McDonald

158. "Do every act of your life as if it were the very last act of your life." — Marcus Aurelius

159. "Forever is composed of nows." — Emily Dickinson

160. "When the mind, one-pointed and fully focused, knows the supreme silence in the Heart, this is true learning." - Sri Ramana Maharshi

161. "Constantly observe and study the workings of the Ego. Understand it to control and use it. Failing which, the Ego takes over the control. We are turned into monkeys under the control of our masters, our egos." - Unknown

162. "Today stretches ahead of you waiting to be shaped. You are the

sculptor who gets to do the shaping. What today will be like is up to you." - Steve Maraboli

163. "Love the moment, and the energy of that moment will spread beyond all boundaries." - Corita Kent

164. "How many times have you noticed that it's the little quiet moments in the midst of life that seem to give the rest extra-special meaning?" - Fred Rogers

165. "Self-awareness is an act of self-kindness." - Reuben Lowe

166. "Try pausing right before and right after undertaking a new action, even something simple like putting a key in a lock to open a door. Such pauses take a brief moment, yet they have the effect of decompressing time and centering you." - David Steindl-Rast

167. "Make your meditation a continuous state of mind. A great worship is going on all the time, so nothing should be neglected or excluded from your constant meditative awareness." - Sri Ramana Maharshi

168. Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, and only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let other people spend it for you." - Carl Sandburg

169. "When your mind is made up, there's no point trying to change it, but YOU still have a choice." - Reuben Lowe

170. "Why is it that when we follow our hearts, we also end up being paralyzed by fear? Following the heart is the easy part, while the way we handle our fears makes the difference between Kings and Paupers." - Unknown

171. "The key is to trust your heart to move where your unique talents can flourish. This old world will really spin when work becomes a joyous expression of the soul." - Al Sacharov

172. "It is true that we are called to create a better world. But we are first of all called to a more immediate and exalted task: that of creating our own lives." - Thomas Merton

173. "Fear is a dark cloudy mist of ignorance. And Knowledge is like the Sun, in whose presence the dark cloudy mist disappears instantaneously, resulting in clarity of thought and profound wisdom." - Unknown

174. "Study how water flows in a valley stream, smoothly and freely between the rocks. Also learn from holy books and from wise people. Everything- even mountains, rivers, plants and trees- should be your teacher." - Morehei Ueshiba

175. "Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a spring day, listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time." - John Lubbock

176. "If I had my life to live over again, I would ask that not a thing be changed, but that my eyes be opened wider." - Jules Renard

177. "A person may rise to the highest degree of contemplation even when busily occupied." - St Mary Euphrasia Pelletier

178. "Life is a great and wondrous mystery, and the only thing we know that we have for sure is what is right here and right now. Don't miss it." - Leo Buscaglia

179. "Without mindful awareness, the shadows of your past may haunt your present." - Reuben Lowe

180. "The point of diving in a lake is not immediately to swim to the shore, but to be in the lake. To luxuriate in the sensation of water. You do not work the lake out; it is an experience beyond thought. Poetry soothes and emboldens the soul to accept mystery." - John Keats

181. "Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature, is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace." - Mary Sarton

182. "One day I will find the right words, and they will be simple." - Jack Kerouac

183. "In the space between your thoughts there is your truth." - Reuben Lowe

184. "Look not mournfully into the past, it comes not back again. Wisely improve the present, it is thine. Go forth to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart." - Longfellow

185. "Earth and sky, woods and fields, lakes and rivers, the mountain and the sea, are excellent schoolmasters, and teach some of us more than we can ever learn from books." - John Lubbock

186. "In still moments by the sea life seems large-drawn and simple. It is there we can see into ourselves." - Rolf Edberg

187. "Live your life each day as you would climb a mountain. An occasional glance towards the summit keeps the goal in mind, but many beautiful scenes are to be observed from each new vantage point." - Harold B. Melchart

188. "Perhaps then, some day far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer." - Rainer Maria Rilke

189. "Life exists only at this very moment, and in this moment it is infinite and eternal, for the present moment is infinitely small; before we can measure it, it has gone, and yet it exists forever." - Unknown

190. "Need to be smart by existing. Need to be wise by living." - Unknown

191. "Life is like a taste of honey, sour, bitter, spice, salty. Hope you will taste the honey one day.....SOON!" - Unknown

192. "Trees are sanctuaries. Whoever knows how to speak to them, whoever knows how to ...listen to them, can learn the truth. They do not preach learning and precepts, they preach undeterred by particulars, the ancient law of life." - Herman Hesse

193. "Expecting is the greatest impediment to living. In anticipation of tomorrow, it loses today." - Seneca

194. "It is a mistake to look too far ahead. Only one link in the chain of destiny can be handled at a time." - Winston Churchill

195. "I don't think we are here for anything. We're just products of evolution. You can say, "Gee, your life must be pretty bleak if you don't think there's a purpose." But I'm anticipating a good lunch." - James Watson

196. "The next message you need is always right where you are." - Ram Dass

197. "Something precious is lost if we rush headlong into the details of life without pausing for a moment to pay homage to the mystery of life and the gift of another day." - Kent Nerburn

198. "Knowledge is knowing that we cannot know." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

199. "When we are in the midst of chaos, let go of the need to control it. Be awash in it, experience it in that moment, try not to control the outcome but deal with the flow as it comes." - Leo Babauta

200. "Once you stop clinging and let things be, you'll be free, even of birth and death. You'll transform everything...And you'll be at peace wherever you are." - Bodhidharma

201. "Be a lamp unto yourselves! Work out your liberation with diligence! Fill your mind with compassion!" - Buddha

202. "We see things not as they are, but as we are." - H.M. Tomlinson

## Conclusion

Thanks again for purchasing this book. Hopefully you've learned what it means to be mindful and how to go about incorporating the exercises and techniques shown in this book into your every day life.

I've found being more mindful of myself and the situations I'm in has dramatically improved my life for the better. It took me a little time to get started. Meditation and staying still felt very foreign to me at first. However, once I got the ball rolling, really embraced the ideals of mindfulness, everything began to fall into place. Areas of my life I once struggled with, like relationships, began to blossom and I was able to embrace new opportunities with open arms as they came to me.

I hope you find the same success after reading this book.

Good luck! I wish you nothing but the best!