



# Penn Program for Mindfulness

## Week 8: A New Beginning

You have learned the basics—a set of tools to help you to work more actively with life’s stresses. You now have what it takes to develop a clearer picture of your life and a better understanding of how to care for yourself.

Use mindfulness to create a stable resting place when life becomes turbulent. Take what you have learned and use it to experience yourself and your life more fully. Through ongoing practice your mindfulness will continue to grow. Continue to explore and inquire into each moment. Never forget that you can always stop and breathe!

Your ongoing meditation practice is the most important factor in supporting the foundation you have established. It will help you if you want to continue to improve your capacity to manage stress, or if you want to use your mindfulness to learn about something completely new. But it can be difficult to establish a daily practice without the support of a class. This is your next challenge. The weeks after this class ends will be the most important in determining whether you successfully develop an ongoing practice. We know that it is not easy. You will have to do some work if it is going to happen.

Here are some suggestions that may be helpful to you:

- 1)** Daily practice is the most important way to continue to learn and grow. Choose a time to practice every day. Make practice a regular part of your schedule and stick to it.
- 2)** Find a place in your house where your practice will not be interrupted. Arrange to have as few distractions

as possible during practice time.

- 3)** Actively experiment to find what works for you. Decide when and for how long to practice. Make a commitment and then stick to it. It is, after all, a promise that you make to yourself.
- 4)** Integrate mindfulness into your life. Make your routine activities part of your mindfulness practice. If you have a regular exercise regimen do it as ‘mindful exercise’. Mindfulness can be integrated into whatever activity you choose.
- 5)** Try to tune into the mindfulness of walking as you walk throughout your day. Go for occasional silent, mindfulness strolls around your neighborhood or your favorite park. Some people have found that this is a nice thing to share with a partner or a receptive friend.
- 6)** Make sure to practice even when you are having a “difficult” day. These days may be the most challenging for practice, and are often the most rewarding.
- 7)** Use your life to provide inspiration for practice. Especially during times of upheaval or turmoil, use your mindfulness training to help to clarify your situation and to allow you to respond, not react. Look more closely to understand the relationship between your reactions and situations.
- 8)** Try to find times for more intensive practice. Participate in continuing programs through the Penn Program for Mindfulness. If you are interested in other meditation programs, we can help to direct you.
- 9)** Practice with others. You might try to get together with others from your class, join a meditation group, or participate in one of our “advanced” classes.

**10)** Use what you have learned to look more deeply into your experience and your life. Explore your interactions and your feelings with mindfulness and curiosity. Use unconditional awareness to provide an anchor that allows you to look at events and emotions that might otherwise be difficult to examine.

**11)** Remember that your best efforts will sometimes fail. If your formal practice becomes irregular or stops, use that opportunity to learn if it really makes a difference. Don't take our word for it; compare the way that you feel and respond when you are practicing with what it's like when you are not practicing. Then use that information to establish priorities and plan for the future.

Remember that you are not your thoughts and you are not your feelings. You are much, much more than the events arising in the field of your awareness. You are the awareness itself, which is by its very nature already grounded, calm, clear and spacious. Meditation and mindfulness help you to remember this, but it has been there all along.

Good Luck! The journey is yours alone, but many thousands of people have taken the same path. We will be very happy to help you at any point along the way. After all, we are also travelers on this journey. Please don't hesitate to call us if you think we can offer advice or assistance. We wish you success, and are delighted to have you as a companion.

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**We look forward to seeing you again.**

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Penn Program for  
Mindfulness

*Mindfulness-Based Tools for Living*

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## Week Eight Homework

### Daily Mindfulness Practices

- Practice for 40 minutes every day, doing whatever practice you choose.
- Fill in the Daily Practice Guide. This will help you to schedule your practices and to keep track of the completion of each.

### Informal Practice

**Don't stop your ongoing exploration of yourself and your life. Keep going!**

| Practice                  | Date:                   | Date:                   | Date:                   | Date:                   | Date:                   | Date:                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Guided Sitting Meditation | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| Mindful Movement          | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| Body Scan                 | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| Walking Meditation        | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| 20 Breaths (1)            | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| 20 Breaths (2)            | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| 20 Breaths (3)            | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      | Time:____<br>_____      |
| Stop, Breathe, Be         | _____<br>_____<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____ | _____<br>_____<br>_____ |



## Your Mindfulness Toolbox

Below is the set of tools in review, to help you to work more actively with life's stresses. You now have what it takes to develop a clearer picture of your life and a better understanding of how to care for yourself.

|                                |  |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 20 Breaths                     | Cycle of Reactivity                                    |
| Noticing Breathing             | Noticing Triggers & Habit Patterns                     |
| Stop, Breathe & Be             | Mindfulness of Thoughts                                |
| Bodily Sensations in Stillness | Mindfulness of Senses (Sounds, Tastes, Sights, Smells) |
| Body Scan                      | Mindfulness of Emotions                                |
| Bodily Sensations in Movement  | Stop, Breathe and Feel                                 |
| Bodily Sensations in Walking   | R.A.I.S.E.   |
| Stop, Breathe and Listen       | Listening with the Heart                               |
| Space of Mindfulness           | Choiceless Awareness                                   |
| Event-Reaction                 | Holding it All with Gentleness and Kindness            |

