

MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

STUDENT WORKBOOK

SESSION 7



RESILIENCE

This week's journals and exercises build on the resilience practiced during Session 7. With each practice and reflection, we increase our ability to recover from challenges, setbacks, and disappointments. This doesn't mean we won't ever feel sad or let down. However, we can develop inner strength and mindful practices to help us grow and learn from our setbacks.

The following exercises, meditations, and journal topics will give you something to focus on each day between sessions. Feel free to complete them in any order you like, and even to repeat any exercise you find helpful or interesting. Let yourself be led by your needs and interests this week.

Session 7 Contents:

- Journal Topics
- Building Inner Strength
- What Really Changes Your View on Things
- Visiting Your Safe Place
- Equanimity Meditation
- Appreciating Your Accomplishments
- Facing Challenges by Others
- Taking Care of Yourself

Session 7 Journal Topics:

1. In your early life, how were you taught to respond to difficulty, disappointments, or hardships? What was expected of you? Who helped you during these times? Reflect on what you were taught about hardships and resilience.
2. Think back to some of your biggest challenges in life. How does it make you feel to remember them? What feelings and sensations do these memories bring up today?
3. Reflect on all of your most valuable skills and strengths. How did you gain them? How did you refine them? Were any of them tied to hardships or setbacks?
4. Imagine a setback for one of your current goals. How would that impact you today? How does it make you feel to think about possible future setbacks?

Building Inner Strength

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

☐ Thoughts? ☐ Heart? ☐ Body? ☐ None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



MindfulnessExercises.com/Building-Inner-Strength

1. Around what event (conversation, action, relationship, completion, etc.) did you feel strong today?

2. What strengthened you today?

Building Inner Strength

3. In what way(s) did you rely on your strength today?



4. What patterns are you noticing from what you're observing in this exercise?

5. How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?

What Really Changes Your View on Things?

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

☐

Heart

☐

Mind

☐

Body

☐

Breath

☐

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
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- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
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1. How often did you change your view/feelings according to what someone else said / wanted / felt?

2. When you maintained your view, why did you do that?

What Really Changes Your View on Things?

3. When you altered your view, why did you do that?



4. How does it feel when you alter your view? Maintain your view?

Additional Notes:

Visiting Your Safe Place

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

☐ Thoughts? ☐ Heart? ☐ Body? ☐ None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
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Find yourself in a comfortable position, either sitting or lying down and make sure you will not be disturbed.

Begin by relaxing your body and focusing on your breath.

Take a nice, full deep breath in...and exhale out.

Let your belly rise and fall with each breath, no need to do anything at all, just breathe.

Good...

Think now of a place where you feel safe.

It could be anywhere you like such as the beach, or in your own room.

Sometimes I imagine being in the womb, safe and warm.

Picture all the details of this place, like colors, smells and any sensations.

The more detail, the better.

Vividly see the all the colors being bright and shimmering....

Visiting Your Safe Place

Nice....

Take another deep breath in through your nose and imagine that you can sense the smells around you in this safe and wonderful place.

Feel the sensations of safety in your body.....how does it feel?

Notice how your chest and belly feel right now, and feel all the sensations throughout your body.

Do your legs feel relaxed?

They have absolutely no where to take you right now, so they are very relaxed.

Make some small movements with your head and feel the sensations in your neck.

Perhaps your body feels lighter or maybe heavier, just notice all of the sensations in your body right now and take note of how this state feels....good.

We will start an exercise where we notice all the different emotions that we have, and feel where and in which part of our body we have them.

At times, we might feel an uncomfortable emotion rise, and if it does, you can simply remember how it feels in your safe spot, and breathe some gentle breaths.

By practicing these techniques of noticing the sensations in your body that you just learned, you physically change your body's chemistry, making you feel relaxed and secure.....great.

Let's start of by imagining the feeling of pride..... visualize yourself being proud.

You can do this by remembering back to a time when you accomplished something marvelous.

Or you can think about when you were proud of somebody else.

Just feel this sensation...and pay attention to where in your body you notice it. Really sense it's location.

Visiting Your Safe Place

Sit with this sensation for a moment.....(pause 10 seconds)

Now let's experience the feeling of excitement.

Remember vividly being excited about something, or maybe you become enthusiastic right now without any particular reason.

Notice how this feels.

Again, sense where this sensation arises in your body, and feel any physical changes you notice.

Now sit with this feeling for moment. (Pause 10 seconds)

Bring into your awareness the feeling of amusement.

Can you remember when something was really interesting to you?

Remember how it grabbed your attention?

Feel all of the sensations in your body....where do you sense this feeling?

What is the essence of what you notice?

Perhaps it doesn't feel like much at all, and that is perfectly fine.

Sit with this sensation for a moment. (Pause 10 seconds)

Now let's locate in our emotional bank, the feeling of gratitude.

Feel the feelings that arise when you are grateful.

Do you remember a time when you were grateful for something?

Also think about a time when you were grateful for someone.

Be grateful right now.... where do you feel this emotion? notice every sensation you can.

Visiting Your Safe Place

Just sit with this feeling for a bit. (Pause 10 seconds)

Now bring into your awareness the feeling of kindness.

How does it feel to be kind to someone and to do a kind act?

Humans have always strived to be the kindest creatures on earth, and this feels good for a reason.

Without kindness we would not get along well at all.

So feel all the sensations you can that come from kindness.

Noticing in your body, where are you feeling any shifts...

Sit with this feeling for some time. (Pause 10 seconds)

You have visualized many emotions and feelings.

Good job.

So right now, I want you to just relax and stop trying to do anything at all.

Don't try to bring up anything in particular, just let any emotions flow through you.

Let them pass by as soon as they rise.

Take an observer's view of what's happening, and witness all the changes.

You may encounter a feeling beginning to swell in you that doesn't feel very well, and that's completely ok.

It's ok to feel all emotions, both positive and negative.

So allow this wave to just roll on by, effortlessly.

Visiting Your Safe Place

Remember that you can always choose to come back to your safe place, feeling pleasant sensations, and breathing towards them.

By sensing the good feelings and allowing the not so good feelings to pass by, you change your entire body chemistry, for the better.

When you locate where these sensations arise, you get better understanding of your body.....good.

So let's try this again.

More quickly this time.

Imagine the feeling of joy, remember as many joyful memories as you can, all the way back to when you were a child.

You could be experiencing your biggest joy right now, noticing where in your body this sensation arises.

Notice every change.

Allowing this sensation to grow, filling you.

Let it get stronger.....

Your body is physically changing and healing, right now.

Now with this feeling present in your body, visualize your safe place again....by doing this you are strengthening the positive emotions tied to your safe spot.

Visiting your safe place often can have a great effect on relaxing your mind and body.

A relaxed body heals itself easily, and naturally feels good.

When we are under tension, sometimes it's very difficult to bring ourselves to a calm relaxed state, but practicing the safe space technique, every day, will help you to convert those hard times if they come.

Visiting Your Safe Place

Let's strengthen our safe spot even more.

I want you to visualize the feeling of passion.

Everyone is passionate about something, so find your passion, and notice the sensations that arise.

How does it feel, do you feel pleasant changes?

Where do you feel these changes?

Let this passionate feeling grow, getting stronger and stronger.

Now go to your safe place, bringing passion with you.

Relax here for a while..... (pause for a very long time)

You can always bring yourself back here, to your safe place, at any moment in your day.

Now return your awareness to the present moment, noticing the surroundings and becoming more alert.

When you're fully present, you go about the rest of your day feeling very relaxed and refreshed.



Equanimity Meditation

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

☐

Heart

☐

Mind

☐

Body

☐

Breath

☐

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
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PURPOSE / EFFECTS:

The cause of much of our upset and emotional instability is clinging and neediness around people we like, and aversion and negativity towards people we don't like. We also have an unhealthy indifference to strangers, who may need our help, or at least our good will.

This equanimity meditation helps us to examine our feelings towards people, and correct them where they are mistaken. This leads to a more balanced, wholesome, and helpful viewpoint. It also cuts off a lot of emotional turmoil at its root.

METHOD:

Summary

Meditate on three people (a loved one, an enemy, and a neutral person), examining and correcting your feelings toward them.

Long Version

- Sit in a comfortable meditation posture. Follow your breath until you feel centered and grounded.

Equanimity Meditation

- Bring to mind the images of three people: someone you like, someone you dislike, and someone towards whom you feel indifferent. Keep these three people in mind throughout the meditation.
- Focus on the friend, and look into all the reasons you like this person. Try to see if any of the reasons are about things this person does for you, or ways they uplift your ego. Ask yourself if these are really the correct reasons to like someone. Then do the same thing with the person you dislike, instead asking about the reasons you dislike them. Finally, do this for the person you are indifferent towards, asking about the reasons for your indifference. In all cases, notice where your ego is involved in the judgment of the other person's worth.
- Next, ask yourself whether you consider each of these relationships as permanent. Would you still like your friend if they did something terrible to you? What if the person you dislike really did something nice for you? What if the stranger became close to you? Think about all the relationships in the past in which your feelings about the person have dramatically changed.
- Now, visualize the person you like doing something you dislike or that is unacceptable to you. Would you still be their friend? Remember that many people have changed from friends to enemies in the past. There are people who you used to like, toward whom you now feel equanimity. Think about how there is no special reason to feel good about a person who is only temporarily your friend.
- Next, visualize your enemy doing something very kind for you. They might visit you in the hospital, or help you to fix your home. When you imagine this, can you feel positive emotions toward this person? Can you remember times in the past when an enemy became a friend? Is it necessary to feel that your strong dislike for this person will last forever? Isn't it possible that they could someday become your friend?
- Now visualize the stranger. How would you feel about them if they did something very kind for you? Isn't it the case that all your current friends were at one point total strangers? Isn't it possible that a stranger could become your best friend? It has happened before.
- Think carefully about how everyone deserves equal regard as human beings. You must discriminate and make decisions based on your knowledge of a person's character, but you do not have to hold strong feelings or judgments towards them. It is very likely that your emotions around a person will change many times, so why hold onto these emotions so rigidly?

Equanimity Meditation

HISTORY:

In Buddhism, equanimity means a very deep, even profound, state of mental balance and stability. It is considered one of the seven factors of enlightenment, and a hallmark of the third and fourth jhanas, which are deep states of meditative absorption.

This is a traditional meditation from Mahayana Buddhism. Its goal is to arouse “bodhicitta” or the mind of enlightenment. There are other equanimity meditations from other Buddhist lineages (e.g., Theravadan), as well as from other contemplative traditions.

The version presented here is adapted from the book [How to Meditate: A Practical Guide](#).

CAUTIONS:

It can be upsetting to bring an “enemy” to mind.

NOTES:

When working with the mental image of an enemy, be careful not to get lost in negative thoughts and feelings. If you find that you can’t handle working with a specific person without getting very worked up, switch to someone less upsetting.

Appreciating Your Accomplishments

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

☐

Heart

☐

Mind

☐

Body

☐

Breath

☐

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
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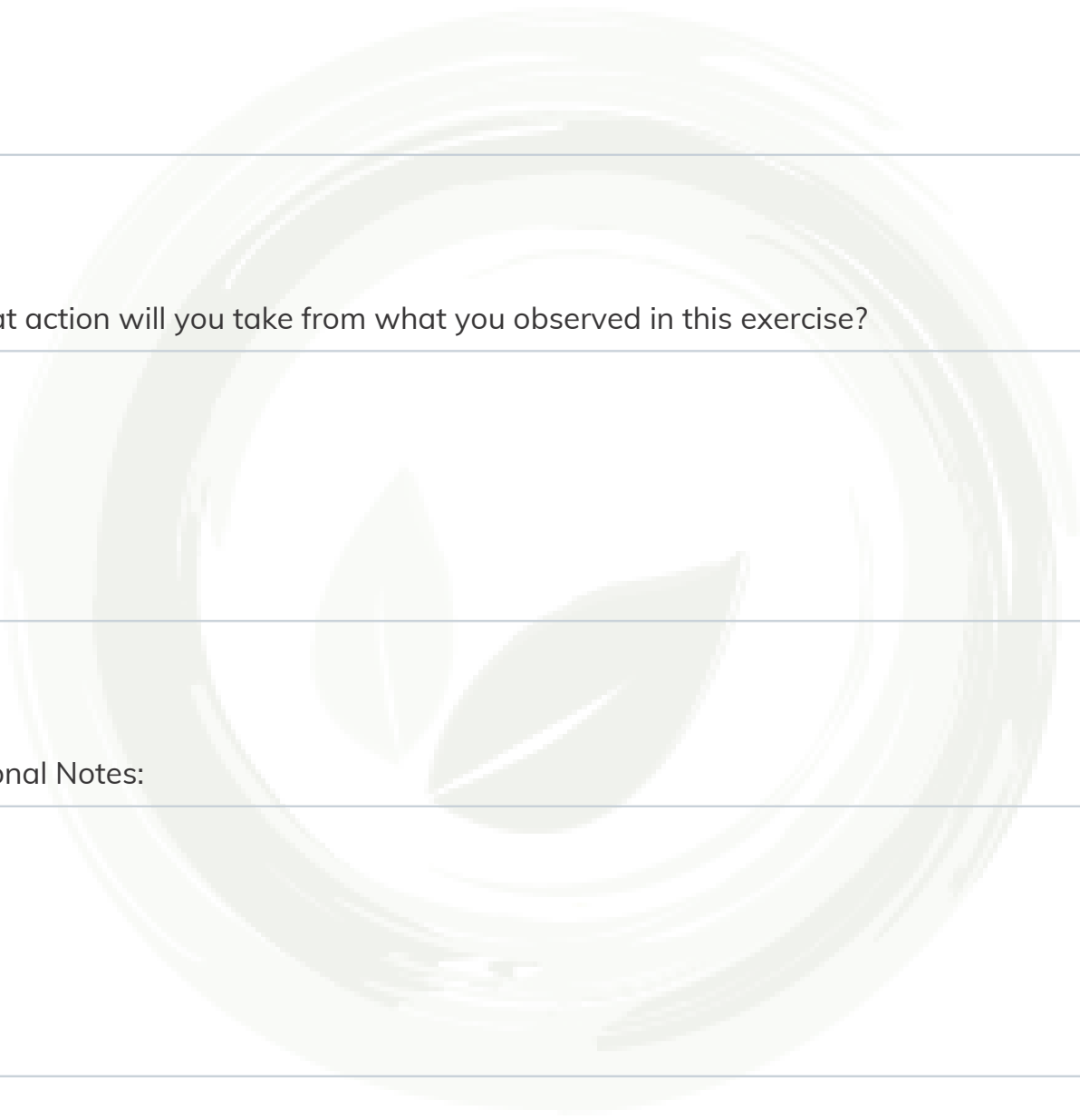


1. What did you actually accomplish at work today?

2. What will this accomplishment move forward?

Appreciating Your Accomplishments

3. How did you decide to accomplish this?



4. What action will you take from what you observed in this exercise?

Additional Notes:

Facing Challenges by Others

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

☐

Thoughts?

☐

Heart?

☐

Body?

☐

None

To begin this Meditation on Facing Challenges by Others, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
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1. By whom did you feel challenged today at work?

2. What were the outcomes of this challenge? On your work? On your relationships?

Facing Challenges by Others

3. How did others respond to this challenge?



4. What action(s) will you take from what you have observed in this exercise?

Taking Care of Yourself

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

☐

Heart

☐

Mind

☐

Body

☐

Breath

☐

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
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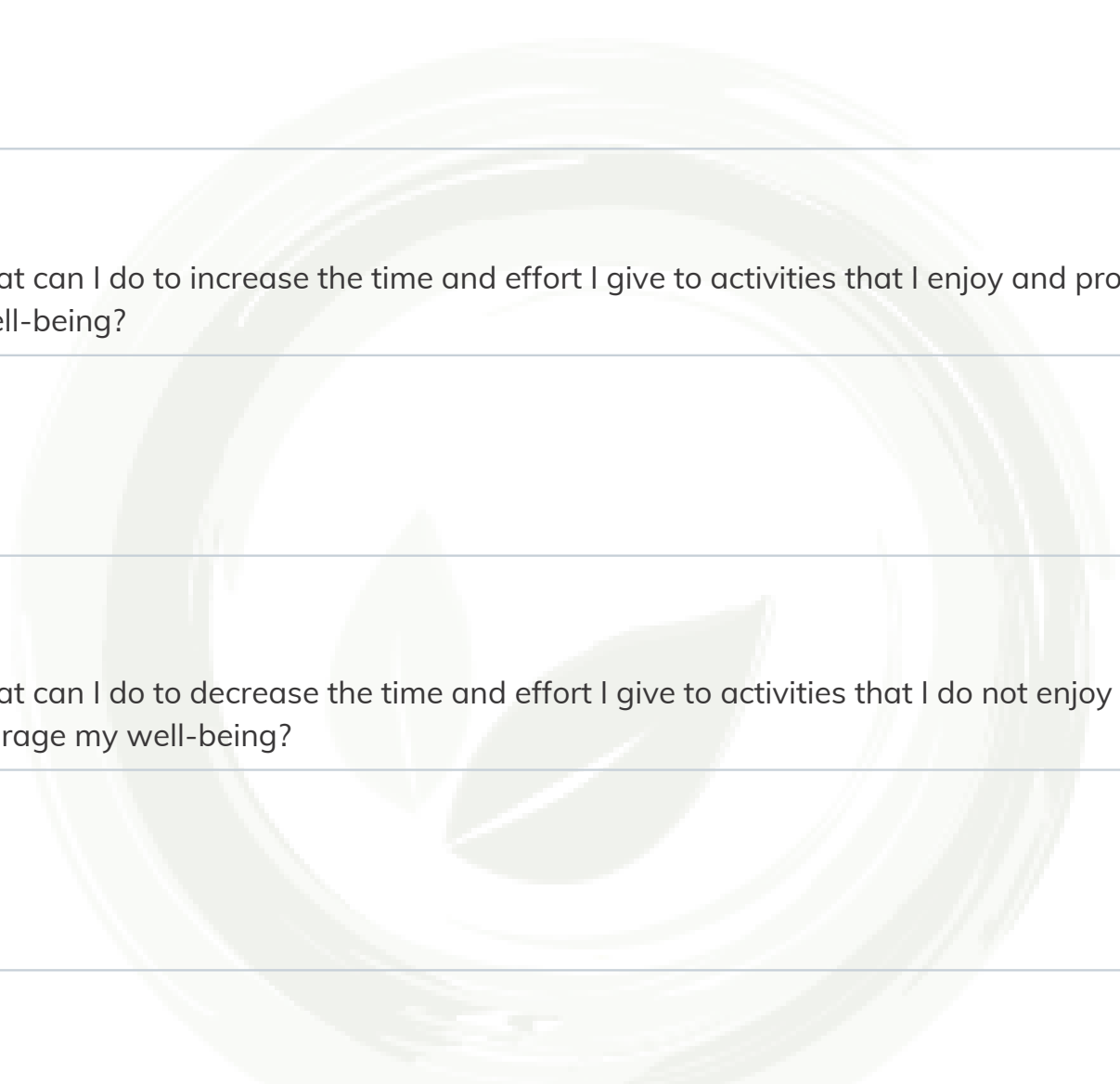
Your activities can have an influencing affect on your sense of well-being and ability to deal with stress and difficult situations. Consider the following questions as you review your activities in your effort to take better care of yourself:

1. What activities do I enjoy, what nourishes my sense of well-being and makes me feel alive and free rather than just existing?

2. What activities do I not enjoy, what saps my energy and decreases my sense of well-being and makes me feel stuck or trapped?

Taking Care of Yourself

3. Do I consciously choose activities that encourage my well-being or detriment my well-being?



4. What can I do to increase the time and effort I give to activities that I enjoy and promote my well-being?

5. What can I do to decrease the time and effort I give to activities that I do not enjoy and discourage my well-being?

By choosing to be present in the moment and making conscious decisions about what you need in these moments, you can choose activities that increase awareness and regulate mood.

You can use these daily experiences to nurture activities that can be used as coping mechanisms during stressful or difficult situations. For example, you can promote physical and mental well-being with daily physical activities such as a brisk walk, mindful stretching, swimming, jogging, etc.

Taking Care of Yourself

As you begin to include physical activities in your daily routine, this will become a readily available response for use during difficult situations.

For example, if you are in a stressful situation, a short walk to clear your mind may be just the thing you need; or if you are feeling tense and under stress perhaps some mindful stretching would loosen your muscles and calm your nerves.

The best approach to well-being is an individualized approach, taking care of yourself by whatever means works best for you.

How will you take what you learned from this forward into your life?

