

Mindfulness for Everyone

*How to Stop Being Fu*king Rude to People!*

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Introduction

Whether you received this book as a present or actively searched for it, you are likely trying to restore something meaningful. The shift in cultural values, the frantic lifestyle, and unrelenting exposure to information and constant connectivity contribute to increased anxiety, fear, and depression. We often struggle to maintain social connections or stable relationships as we cope with stressful events or complicated personal problems. Compulsive, easily activated behaviors, can rapidly spiral into self-destructive habits like substance abuse, eating disorders, dependency, overworking, internet addiction, sexual addiction, or other escape mechanisms. Perhaps we have grown as individuals and discovered creative, effective methods to deal with everyday struggles. Yet, we are left wondering: "Now what?" "Is this it?"

Throughout thousands of years of cultural evolution, mindfulness evolved as a counterbalance to the ingrained habits that make life more complicated than it needs to be. A mindful attitude is a way of viewing life that alleviates suffering and enriches it. Allowing us to be aware of what we are experiencing in the moment, by giving us a direct view of how our minds create irrational suffering.

Mindfulness allows us to see things as they really are. It does not alter perception, nor does it change perception. Nothing is distorted. It merely pays attention to whatever arises. The conscious mind overlays our experiences, fills us with thoughts and visions, and immerses us in a whirlpool of ideas, anxieties, doubts, and desires. Being mindful means not playing that game. It's not complicated and is effective.

We think we can compartmentalize mindfulness into 10 or 15 minute sessions at home instead of doing it continuously all day. The purpose of this book is to inspire readers to be mindful anywhere, at any time. Everyone can benefit from this, from the child throwing tantrums to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporation. The more you practice mindfulness, the more you'll find yourself being mindful automatically throughout the day.

You'll find tips for learning and evaluating, but remember, they are just tips. The best teacher is you. Take what works for you and leave the rest. You might want to try mindfulness only in brief, casual settings. Perhaps you can experiment with it through journaling or other expressive outlets. You may also decide to develop a meditation practice. This book discusses all of these options. Regardless of your path, mindfulness can help you find a deeper, more fulfilling existence.

Chapter 1: Mindfulness for Beginners

More than two thousand years ago, the Buddha introduced mindfulness as a means of attaining enlightenment. Being mindful means being fully present in the moment. Mindfulness is particularly beneficial for people suffering from addictive or problematic behaviors.

What Is Mindfulness?

The term mindfulness is commonly used to describe being present in your experience without judgment. Kindness is essential. By practicing mindfulness, our attention acts as a spotlight, illuminating our experience of life.

Our experience of life refers to our internal states, such as thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations, as well as our external experiences, including noises, scents, people, and our current environment. They are all connected.

Our interest lies in how we respond to our experiences, whether we want more of it, resist it, or tune it out. We suffer a great deal when we don't like what is happening and try to change it.

It is important how we pay attention. We must be attentive to what we experience deliberately, and we must do so without judgment and with a dash of compassion, if at all possible. Our core attitudes are cultivated through regular practice.

Mindfulness teaches us to be present in whatever situation arises. This means we don't search for a specific experience. Interestingly, when we accept our experience—in other words, when we no longer resist it—we change our relationship with it.

We all possess a certain level of mindfulness. Children are naturally mindful, but as we age, we often lose this trait. Meditating, whether formally or informally, can cultivate mindfulness.

Meditation practices such as sitting, yoga, or walking are considered formal meditation. Each of these practices has its own variations and types. Formal practices are typically performed at a particular location, on a specific day, and for a specific duration.

Meditation practices that are incorporated into our daily lives are called informal meditation. It involves focusing on the task at hand rather than multitasking or focusing on other things. Eating mindfully, for instance, is a form of meditation.

I recommend that you combine formal and informal practices. If time is limited, you can keep the formal practices short. Each type of technique is beneficial and cultivates different skills, as well as supports one another. You should try to understand the experience for yourself rather than rely on anyone else's opinion.

How to Be Mindful

Practicing mindfulness is a bit like dancing. What is your motivation for dancing? Is it to boost your brain power by doing a difficult dance routine, or is it for the cardiovascular benefits? It may spoil the experience if you dance with a specific goal in mind, right? Just dancing for the sheer fun of it is much more enjoyable. The joy of dancing does not negate its health benefits. They're just the cherry on top. Similarly, practice mindfulness for the sake of mindfulness. Being mindful involves being present, paying attention, and examining the mind's inner workings. You spoil the fun of mindfulness if you're too concerned about reaping its benefits. Being mindful is not about reaching a destination, it's about the journey itself.

Mindfulness is a dance. Let it flow within you. Mindfulness provides many benefits: reduced stress, enhanced psychological well-being, and enhanced interpersonal relationships, plus many more. Concentration is one of the most important aspects of mindfulness.

The Art of Concentration

Mindfulness can be compared to snapping a photo. Before you can take a clear picture, you need to focus the lens of the camera. Concentration is like focusing the mind's lens, allowing us to see clearly what we are focusing on. Then we can utilize this skill to understand the mind and break free of painful patterns. Mindfulness requires concentration, so learning how to concentrate is the best way to begin practicing

mindfulness. Although you can benefit from both informal and formal practices, it is recommended that you begin with formal concentration exercises. Concentration is a skill that can be honed through practice. The majority of concentration techniques follow a similar pattern.

Start by choosing an item of interest. Whenever your attention wanders from the item, gently refocus it. You can choose anything you can visualize:

- A physical item, like a vase, figurine, or painting.
- A noise, for example, the ringing of a doorbell or the sound of a creek.
- Sedentary body sensation, often breathing.
- Sensory experience through movement, for example when our feet touch the ground.

When you engage in informal mindfulness, your attention is focused on the activity that you are doing: observing the traffic as you drive, the sensation of rain hitting your skin, or the action of holding a mop or sweeper. Attention on various items affects the mind differently. One or the other may be more appropriate for a particular practice period, depending on your mood and attitude.

Different attention-focused activities have varying levels of refinement or complexity. Walking, for example, is perceived by most people as being less complex or more vivid than concentrated breathing. When our minds are very busy or distracted, walking sensations may be more noticeable. Alternatively, by tuning in to the subtleties of the breath, we may be able to refine our concentration.

Concentration exercises require a level of commitment. You easily get overwhelmed and unable to concentrate when you overdo it and are too hard on yourself. When you first meditate and become mindful, you are often surprised at how feisty your mind can become. Usually, when you try to force the mind to obey, it resists. If you are lazy and fail to put enough work into concentrating, the mind just flits about and never pays much attention to anything. Testing is the only way to find the right equilibrium.

What Are the Benefits of Mindfulness?

Do you ever get lost in your thoughts? During the course of the day, while you go about your routine, your subconscious is free to think about anything. It's like you're on autopilot. However, sometimes your autopilot thought process can be detrimental, or you might be so caught up you don't actually experience the present moment. Let's say you're taking a stroll in the neighborhood to unwind, but your mind is preoccupied with your upcoming assignment. Firstly, you aren't living in the moment, and secondly, you're stressing yourself out, if you're thinking unhelpful thoughts.

Mindfulness isn't about solving problems. Acceptance is the first step in mindfulness, and it is up to you whether or not change will follow. In other words, mindfulness teaches acceptance rather than avoidance or conflict, which naturally leads to change. In other words, whatever we fight remains. The lesson of mindfulness is, acceptance, creates change.

Acceptance in mindfulness means acknowledging what is happening in this moment. Acceptance does not mean quitting or walking away.

Healing Requires Space

It can be distressing to be ill. You may have a severe or even fatal condition. You may not be able to perform simple tasks you used to do, like drive to work or take care of yourself independently. Getting sick can be a life-changing experience. But what can you do? What can you do to prepare yourself to deal with the shifts that occur without giving up?

Stress, especially prolonged stress, has been shown to weaken the immune system (American Psychological Association, 2018). Maybe you got a cold after being stressed out. Studies have shown that caregivers under great stress for an extended period of time are more susceptible to illnesses like a cold (Schulz & Sherwood, 2008). Stress can be reduced by mindfulness, which can help to manage health conditions. Stress reduction can speed up the healing process, particularly if the condition is caused by stress.

The practice of mindfulness can help you manage stress, worries, discomfort, mood disorders, and improve productivity, performance, relationships, and your general happiness. Mindfulness is improved with repetition. Monks who have studied mindfulness for a lifetime have brain functions that far exceed what scientists had previously believed (Spoon, 2018).

Relaxing Experiences

Although mindfulness can help you relax, its purpose is not to relax. Mindfulness is the ability to be aware of your own experiences, no matter what they may be, with empathy, openness, and understanding. However, mindfulness can also lead to relaxation. When you practice mindfulness, you may feel deeply relaxed, or you may not feel that way at all. You are not practicing mindfulness incorrectly if you don't. The goal of mindfulness is not relaxation.

As you continue to read, try to remain totally relaxed for a minute or two. Are you able to relax? Relaxation is a goal you're either going to achieve or not.

Feeling like you're failing will only make you more anxious and overwhelmed, which is the last thing you need. You cannot fail in mindfulness because you lack the experience you need to gain. Practice being aware of whatever you experience, as much as possible, as it happens. This will help you gain a deeper understanding.

Increased Productivity

Being mindful typically requires you to focus on one task at a time. When you garden, you just garden. When you eat, you just eat. When you walk, you just walk. Meditation, both formal and informal, trains your brain. You are teaching it through demonstrating positive attitudes like compassion, openness, and gratitude.

When you prepare a work assignment, you spend as much time as possible on that activity. When you notice your thoughts drifting, you realize what you were thinking about and then, without judging, you redirect your focus to the task at hand. So, you finish your assignment sooner, and the quality of the assignment probably improved since you put all your attention into it. Being mindful can help you be more productive!

You cannot choose to focus on your work and then become focused. You can't just suddenly be attentive. Attention can be trained just as you would train your muscles in the gym. Meditation is like working out for the mind. However, you don't have to exert as much energy as when you exercise. You need to be gentle with the mind, or else it will become distracted. Compassion is essential to mindfulness. A tough attitude makes the mind revolt. Being aware also means noticing where you are expending energy. Become aware of your worrying or self-defeating thoughts and work on preventing them.

Abstaining from work is largely caused by stress. Practicing mindful awareness can help you manage stressful situations, which will increase productivity, since you'll be healthier and more productive. When you train yourself to be curious instead of bored, anything is possible. Over time, you will find that work flows through you instead of feeling forced. In turn, you feel calmer and no longer feel like "I" am doing this. As a result, it is hassle-free, top-notch, and gratifying. Isn't that what productivity is all about?

Discovering Yourself Through Exploration

In many cases, people begin practicing mindfulness to lower stress, but once stress decreases, they continue practicing emotional regulation, which leads to an improved sense of emotional balance. Mindfulness becomes a journey of self-discovery.

Self-discovery is about removing your mask. It is likely that you have different masks for different roles. You might be a mother, father, child, lover, boss, etc. Every role requires you to fulfill certain responsibilities. But what is the real you underneath it all? Mindfulness is a way to find out who you really are.

Meditation can sometimes give you a clear sense of who you are. You may experience an intense, unified feeling of peace, serenity, and of stillness. You may feel as if your physical self is so real and strong.

You feel like you are larger than life. People who cling to these experiences repeat them in hopes of moving closer to something. Sooner or later, you realize that even the most pleasurable experiences are fleeting. The essence of who you are, the real you, transcends feelings. It's so easy to be yourself, you often don't realize it.

In Eastern philosophy, you are complete, perfect, and whole exactly as you are. Right now it may not feel like you are because you associate with your emotions and feelings,

which are constantly shifting. You are already in this state by nature, so you don't need to do anything to get there.

Shakespeare once said, “All the world’s a stage, and all the men and women merely players” (Famous Quotes | as You like It | Royal Shakespeare Company, n.d.). You begin to see your identity or mask as a game. You can continue to volunteer in your community or earn a living, but realize that this is only one aspect, one aspect of who you really are. Knowing yourself frees you from pain.

When you realize that you are the observer of all experiences, you are no longer affected by life's roller coaster ride. You are freed from pain when you realize this. The game is yours to enjoy.

We learn to live mindfully by making choices and taking steps that bring us more happiness. The practice teaches us to calm our racing thoughts and manage our moods so that we can cope with life's roller coaster with grace, replacing the dark shadow of guilt with the light of kindness. Connect meaningfully with others and release feelings of separation. To experience bliss at our core. As a result of disengaging the mind from daily distractions, mindfulness creates a peaceful environment where we discover our truth.

Take a moment to reflect on those statements. In what ways do you feel stuck? In what ways do you limit yourself? Do you sabotage yourself in any way? Is your habits, insecurities, or role that you play with others affecting you? If any of these statements apply to you, then you are still searching for or trying to regain a piece of yourself.

Mindful Leaders in History

While Lady Gaga's talent is unquestionable, she is a mindful woman behind the scenes. One of the many reasons to love her is her words. Her words are filled with compassion, understanding, and strength.

She once said, “Meditation helps me to calm down,” before leading a meditation for teens at New York's Ali Forney Center, a homeless shelter for LGBT youth. “I don't have the same kind of issues that you have, but I have a mental illness [PTSD] and I struggle with that everyday so I need my mantra to keep me relaxed” (Wozniak, n.d.).

Meditation is not just for yogis, monks, or New Age experts. It doesn't matter who you are, just as long as you want to improve your life.

Meditation might conjure images of people lying on their backs, eyes closed, without a care in the world, but there are many different forms of meditation. Meditation can be done seated, on your feet, on the move, or on your back, while stretching, or as you perform your daily routine.

“Meditation is not a way of making your mind quiet. It is a way of entering into the quiet that is already there—buried under the 50,000 thoughts the average person thinks every day,” (Meditation Quote 57: “Meditation Is Not a Way of Making Your Mind Quiet...” - Deepak Chopra, 2014) explains author Deepak Chopra.

Where is your inner quiet?

The king of pop, Michael Jackson, was a huge proponent of meditation. In fact, when Kobe Bryant met him at the age of 18, he even attempted to teach him how to meditate.

In his song *Man in the Mirror*, he sings, "If you wanna make the world a better place. Take a look at yourself, and then make a change" (*Man in the Mirror*, 1988)!

Have empathy for the person looking back at you. Meditate without thinking about who you are, who you were, or what you want to become. When meditating in your mirror, be authentic, aware, and humble.

Michael Jordan and Phil Jackson, the head coach of the Chicago Bulls, have held a secret over the rest of the league ever since Michael's first championship. The Bulls were not always the best on the court, but they had a philosophical, mental edge.

Michael Jordan explains, "I think Phil had a lot to do with that. With his Zen practice and his whole emotional approach to a game of basketball. I've experienced a lot of different coaches, but he gave me the understanding about life in a whole different frame...I think his teachings or the understanding of Zen Buddhism is how you view yourself to deal with the realities of life surrounding you and somehow be able to correlate that to the simple game of basketball" (*Hoops Mind*, 2021).

Phil Jackson continues, "This is something that we talked about a lot as a basketball team. It's about how to be in the moment; being able to visualize what might happen in those times. Michael so embraced this. I think that the beauty of his game is that he had all these abilities to adjust [and] not force his own predetermined ideas but allow those things to come together" (*Hoops Mind*, 2021).

Oprah Winfrey, talk show host, actress, writer, and humanitarian, says practicing mindfulness will not only enable us to stay present with our loved ones, but will also help us live a more fulfilling and meaningful life.

"What I know for sure, and have had to learn through much trial and error: The voice that truly matters is the silent voice of awareness, consciousness, aliveness. My advice is to start small. When you're in the shower or tub, simply be with the water. Appreciate the fragrance of the soap. The other day, I had a moment of transcendence just fully taking in the scent of my shower gel. The pleasure of the warm water and the privilege of cleanliness filled me to the point of tears. Although I'm a big proponent of formal meditation—for the discipline, joy, and calm it brings—I'm moving into an even greater phase of being fully present all the time. It's a heightened state of being that lets whatever you're doing be your best life, from moment to astonishing moment" (Winfrey, 2016).

Other mindful leaders include:

Kobe Bryant, the late American basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers;

"Michael Jackson tried to get me to meditate," Kobe Bryant once said, "but I couldn't sit still for 20 minutes." With the guidance of Phil Jackson and Mumford, however, meditation became a crucial part of Bryant's preparation for games. He continues, "It's crazy to me that meditation is viewed as hokey. Just look at the people who've done phenomenal things. Do they meditate? Absolutely... I try not to judge myself if I miss a meditation. Judgment creates the vicious cycle" (Galanes, 2014).

Goldie Hawn, actress and founder of MindUP;

"Mindfulness is really being in the moment. I think it's wonderful to be able to bring yourself back to center and actually have the sense of now. It's all we have. Yesterday is gone, tomorrow hasn't happened. So the beautiful thing is to live right now" (Mosely, 2020).

Jewel, musician, writer, mental health activist, and founder of Never Broken;

"Anxiety has been a teacher to me. It's caused me to learn there are only two basic states of being: dilated and contracted. Every thought, feeling, and action leads to one of those two states. If I was headed into a panic attack, I learned I could find my way into a dilated state by focusing very hard on a different feeling: I chose gratitude. I've put this and other [mindfulness] exercises into a free curriculum that rewires the brain through

neuroplasticity, proven to work by neuroscientist and mindfulness expert Judson Brewer, MD, PhD” (Mosely, 2020).

Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge;

“It was through hyperemesis that I really realized the power of the mind over the body because I really had to try everything to...help me through it. I saw the power of it—meditation, and deep breathing, and things like that that they teach you in hypnobirthing—when I was really sick, and I realized...this was something that I could take control of during labor” (The Duchess of Cambridge on the Early Years, 2020).

Regardless of the route you take, mindfulness can help you achieve a deeper, more fulfilling and happier life.

Chapter 2: Get Started With Mindful Journaling

Journaling may seem obvious, but many people do not know how or where to begin. Mindful journaling involves expressing what is on your mind and in your heart. It is a form of meditation. It involves examining your feelings (sadness, joy, anger, passion) and writing them down. Journaling is a way to get to know yourself and, in turn, to discover your true self: your goals, your beliefs, your thoughts, and your emotions. You are liberated from your mind by writing it down and moving on. Mindful journaling involves asking yourself questions, and in turn, you learn more about yourself. It's unnecessary to close your eyes and sit in a silent chamber, just write it down.

It's messy in our heads, and it's a constant one-way discussion. You can use mindful journaling to get in touch with yourself and begin addressing your concerns rather than ignoring them. Mindful journaling allows you to face your feelings, discover your interests, and deal with your emotions. Journaling is an essential aspect of personal growth because it helps you let go of your thoughts and become centered.

You can use these tips to build a mindful journaling practice. Every word you write is mindful in and of itself. Your thoughts are yours, and examining them will help you learn more about yourself and your goals.

Write It Down

We live our entire lives online now. Putting your thoughts on actual, physical paper will help you stay grounded and not get lost in your phone or computer. A wide variety of journals are available. You can use gratitude books, art journals, coping journals, or simply use any old notebook. Regardless of what you choose, the more you personalize it, and the more you appreciate it, the more likely you are to use it. Additionally, keeping your journal visible (at your bedside or in your office) all the time serves as a prompt reminder to sit down and journal.

Date Each Journal Entry

When we write down the date, we stay present. A reminder to not let the past struggles and pressures affect the present. We should cherish every day we have. It may sound obvious, but we should be thankful. Each day is an opportunity to start over. It's possible you didn't accomplish what you set out to do yesterday, but you have a new day to try again. You have an opportunity to start over. Your life is shaped by your actions. Be thankful.

Introspection

Take a step back and take a closer look—be objective and reflect. To illustrate, when I have a dilemma, I consider how I would help someone else. I imagine myself in their position.

"Enjoy it. Embrace it. Discard it. And proceed" (Crowe, 2005).

This quote is the essence of my journaling. We get caught up in the nuances of a situation and hold onto old feelings, and we lose sight of what's essential. It's impossible to change the past, and ruminating on it only makes things worse. Feel what you feel, it's okay. But changing your outlook can empower you to move forward.

Transparency in Emotions

In your journal, don't be afraid to express yourself. Here, there is no fear of criticism. How often are you afraid to share your words or ideas for fear of being ridiculed or misinterpreted? Journaling provides a safe space where you can freely express yourself. Be free to ask questions regarding your spirit, the meaning of life, or humanity itself.

You should write honestly about your experiences and feelings; face your fears, and accept and describe your desires and aspirations.

Make Room for New Thoughts

It's time to let go of the old and welcome the new. Resolving past issues is essential, but you should also celebrate the future and the joy in your life. We dwell on the negatives of our lives to the point that we forget to be optimistic when things go well. It's time to change the recurring thoughts in your head and make room for new ideas. Being positive will leave a profound impact.

Get Back Up and Try Again!

It's hard to form habits, but we have to work on them daily to maintain them. The writing process takes time, so start writing whenever you feel inspired. An excellent way to begin is to write down ideas, thoughts, quotes, or experiences. You don't have to write long, flowing essays. Just make a list and sum up your ideas. However you decide to do it, you have to be comfortable with it. The author of *Wanderlust: A Modern Yogi's Guide to Discovering Your Best Self*, Jeff Krasno, explains, "Journaling is the act of tapping into your stream of consciousness—where there is no right or wrong—just find your flow." (Nowicki, 2016).

Journaling is a powerful tool for making sense of life's chaos; it allows you to reflect on the world, look inward, and take stock of your life. When you're stuck, journaling can help you release pain and move forward. It becomes a comfortable space to think, focus, and cope with fears or worries. Just start.

Chapter 3: Mindfulness With Loved Ones

Our society makes grand promises about a happy life filled with close friends and meaningful connections. But with loneliness, anxiety, exhaustion, and broken relationships—or even preferring to sit in front of the TV or surf the web instead of developing deep, lasting bonds with others—we have hit epidemic levels.

There are countless TV personalities and magazines claiming to have the secrets and methods for success: “Just do these 20 things!”

Even after trying their advice, you're still unhappy, and your relationships aren't working.

Big Pharma tells millions of people that they can treat depression and anxiety by taking a pill. Yet most people remain stuck in their quest to build more meaningful connections and live more fulfilling lives.

What's happening?

Why We Are the Way We Are

Our adult brains still operate using the neural pathways we developed during our early childhood. A wiring system that tells us how to act and, perhaps more importantly, how not to act. We are accustomed to wiring that is old and incompatible with modern living.

According to attachment theory, our early interactions with our parents influence us emotionally and permanently alter our brains. Having supportive, available, and dependable parents helps us learn to regulate and manage our feelings, relax and comfort ourselves, and communicate and relate effectively. We develop the ability to be psychologically aware and present—a critical component for healthy social interactions. (Sullivan, 2012).

When our parents respond harshly to our feelings, we learn to hide our feelings. For example, they may yell at us when we are scared and need their love, withdraw when we

are hurt and need comforting, or reprimand us when we express ourselves. Rather than exploring our relationship with our parents in a way that encourages development and success, we feel nervous and suppress certain emotions, altering our behavior out of fear of alienating family members.

Essentially, we deny feelings that might undermine our feelings of protection and comfort with our parents. We emphasize the traits they like, and in doing so, we maintain a level of closeness. Over time, our ability to control and express our emotions diminishes. We become emotionally constrained, and the development and manifestation of our true selves is stifled, constrained by the psychological boundaries we were conditioned to follow.

Rather than love with our whole hearts, we live on autopilot, governed by our ingrained brain patterns. Unaware of the reason, many of us wonder why we are struggling, why our partnerships and friendships don't feel more fulfilling. We wonder, "Is this all there is?"

Only when we become aware of and pay attention to our inner worlds, and have the courage to fully engage with others, will things change.

Connecting and Being Present With Loved Ones

Christmas, Ramadan, or Yom Kippur are not the only occasions to take a moment to think about the people you cherish. Whether it's with co-workers, family, friends, or a partner, it's often beneficial to take a moment, savor the love you have and express how much you appreciate them.

Be mindful of the love you have around you, it helps love flourish. Not just love for your partner, but love for oneself, and love for friends.

Mindfulness can be incorporated in many ways with our loved ones. "Mindfulness helps partners to regulate their own responses and more fully accept one another," researchers suggest, "resulting in less negative fallout from conflict when it arises."(Graham, 2016)

Researchers in the journal *Hormones and Behavior*, found conflict spiked partners' cortisol levels, indicating high-stress levels. However, those who were more mindful

bounced back more quickly. Their cortisol levels returned to normal faster, indicating calmness. This was true for both sexes. (Graham, 2016)

Listening to children can increase understanding and kindness. Put yourself in your child's shoes, pay attention to them. Spending 10 minutes a day can be helpful to your relationship with your child and help you develop empathy and an awareness of how your child is feeling.

The brain is designed for relationships, tolerance, and adjusting to the ages and appearances of our friends. Storytelling is our favorite pastime; it allows us to visit places we've never been by sharing life lessons with loved ones. We enjoy a guilt-free soul-soothing moment with our pets. The greatest gift we can give is to be present without judgment or interruption.

Relationships are the best way to develop mindfulness, trust, and dependability. Every setback and victory shapes your ability to be intimate. When we face our fears, as we open up and reveal more of ourselves to our lovers, as we discover new ways to be together, things change. Our early coding loosens up as we move forward, giving us more freedom. We gain a broader view, and we gain clarity. We can see and understand ourselves, our spouses, and our relationships more clearly. Each moment becomes more meaningful. We can communicate more thoughtfully and effectively. We have richer experiences. Partnerships become deeper. Our love grows.

Our connections offer us endless possibilities for learning and growth. Each obstacle, every roadblock, provides the opportunity for improvement. Each catalyst gives us the chance to free ourselves from our past and step into our true selves, upgrade our programming, and connect more deeply.

By being mindful, we can find our way to liberation. Slowing down is the key. There is a way to create a buffer between trigger and reaction and choosing what is in our best interest. When the time comes, we can decide how we want to act. What kind of person are we? What is right for our relationships? How can we strengthen them? We can then get down to business and get to work. Let's bring out our best qualities. That will fortify our connections. Together we are stronger. We can be brave and express the emotions, wants, and needs we are hesitant to express. It doesn't matter if we start small or if we go far. All of our efforts matter. It takes time and dedication. Mindfulness increases our ability to be in the moment, be present, and connect. We must be gentle and kind to ourselves. It is important to nurture and take care of oneself as you shed the past and embrace the present.

Whenever we confront our fears, when we lean in and share more of ourselves with our partners, everything changes when we explore new ways of being with them. We loosen the grip of our early programming, and our range of options widens. Our perspective broadens, and our vision clears. We can see and experience ourselves, our partners, and our relationships in a more nuanced way. We can live in the present with greater awareness. We can respond with greater skill and understanding. We gain a more profound view of the world. Our connections are strengthened.

It is an act of love to be fully present with our loved ones. Self-love and love of others. We're embracing our emotions and allowing ourselves to be ourselves and grow. We cherish our relationships. We show them how much we value them. We show them how much we love them. Our energy goes into them. We love with all our hearts.

Chapter 4: Being Mindful in Public

Being considerate of others will take you and your children further in life than any college or professional degree. —Marian Wright Edelman

Mindfulness can have therapeutic benefits, but also has other merits. Mindfulness can help us reconnect with the present moment. Often, we operate on autopilot. We zone out during a tedious commute or while doing boring chores. Our brains operate automatically when we are on autopilot, which causes us to be more reactive since we are not using our higher-level brain functions. When we are not alert, we are also more likely to miss things internally (how we feel) and externally (how others feel). Essentially, we are not present but more like walking zombies.

Unfortunately, many of us forget to be kind to ourselves. Kindness is being courteous, thoughtful, and giving, both to others and yourself. Here are some ways to spread compassion while being mindful in public.

Spreading Kindness in the World

A simple hello can have a profound effect. Greet strangers with a smile. This simple act can make someone's day. Smiles are contagious like colds, but instead of spreading germs, you spread kindness. Let's all smile! Notice how your face changes when you smile. How do your mouth and eyes change? Do you feel lighter or softer inside when you smile? Work on smiling internally with a gentle, peaceful smile.

Perform a small act of kindness for a stranger or a friend. A simple act of kindness could be holding the door open for an elderly person, helping a lost person find their way, or offering your seat on the bus. What do you notice when you act without any thought of reciprocation? It feels good to be kind to others. It's a nice perk, but it shouldn't drive the practice.

If a salesperson asks you, "How are you doing?" you may hesitate. We are no longer sure of our feelings in the wake of the pandemic, let alone how to express them.

You may sound insensitive or dishonest if you respond with glowing responses like 'super' or "everything is going swimmingly." You may also feel that you are offering too

much information and excessive negativity by discussing how life is complicated with kids at home, exhaustion, or other effects of the pandemic.

"I appreciate you asking. Things are going well for me. How are you doing?"

If you want to be polite and share your thoughts without getting into a lengthy discussion, this is the perfect answer. By saying "I appreciate you asking" up front, you soften your response by demonstrating your gratitude. By saying that things are going well, you offer a glimpse into your life. Asking how they are doing shows kindness.

On the other hand, be present with your customers if you are in customer service. Being in the present makes customers feel understood on a deeper level, giving them a more personalized experience.

Help someone by opening a door. If you see someone approaching a door, open it for them. Smiles are exchanged, which will further spread compassion.

Don't be afraid to compliment someone. It could be a relative, a neighbor, or the grocer's cashier. Offer a kind and genuine compliment to everyone you meet throughout the day.

Head, Heart, and Body

Our experience comprises three parts: head, heart, and body. We are usually unaware of them. All we know is that we are excited, upset, furious, or whatever emotion we're feeling.

By practicing mindfulness, we intentionally pay attention to the present moment, so we are aware of our thoughts (head), our emotions (heart), and our physical state (body). Upon unraveling the "cloud" within us, we discover the three parts. When we deconstruct our experience, we create space inside the cloud. Allowing us to be more socially mindful in public.

How to Deal With Bad Days

Practicing mindfulness regularly can help you cope with demanding days when everything seems impossible. Perhaps as you are reading this, you're experiencing a trying day. You may have had one yesterday and found yourself struggling as you tried to change your feelings and control the outcome. On those not so good days, mindful practices can help soften the blow.

Let's dive deeper into this. I'm going to share my top mindfulness tips for when you're having a bad day and wish you were somewhere else.

Top Mindfulness Tips for Bad Days

Take note of anything that feels good or positive today. Do you notice anything?

- What are your thoughts?
- What are your emotions?
- Do you have any physical sensations?

Every experience, no matter how brief, should be cherished and appreciated. Look back on your experience at the end of the day. How do you feel?

In contrast to threats, pleasant experiences are not survival-enhancing, so we tend to forget them. However, when we can enjoy the moment, noticing how it feels in our mind, heart, and body, it's etched into our long-term memory. That memory will then be accessible, and we can experience it again at any time, especially during bad days.

Take Action

No matter how difficult it may be, taking action can be powerful. Your mind may be telling you otherwise, but get in the car and head to the gym. Working out will disperse excess stress hormones faster. (Harvard Health Publishing, 2020) It may seem silly, but taking action without mental resistance puts you in a stronger position to succeed.

Eat Your Heart Out

Grab a pizza instead of cooking dinner. Research has shown that some people sleep well if they eat a slice of pizza before bedtime. Eating delicious food can be a relaxing activity (Strokin, 2022).

Psychological Projection

We have all experienced the blues. We all go through times when our world is falling apart, and nothing seems to be going our way. However, it is not the time to project your feelings onto other people. Psychological projection is a coping mechanism people subconsciously use to cope with negative emotions or moods. Psychological projection is the act of transferring negative experiences or emotions to another person rather than facing the feelings directly (Beauman, 2019).

You can learn lessons from every experience. In the event of mood swings, identify the underlying causes and shift your perspective. We can learn a lot about ourselves from our emotional responses. It is important to take care of ourselves to ensure that we are healthy physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Take a break and pamper yourself. Additionally, eat a balanced diet, get enough sleep, and manage stress effectively.

Chapter 5: Mindfulness in Your Home

Mindfulness can be introduced in many ways at home. And it should be practiced daily. Whenever we change something, we lay down neural pathways in the brain, altering how it works. The more often we do it, the faster it will happen (Hani, 2017).

Almost all of us tend to focus on activities we enjoy. However, doing something, no matter our feelings, is always worthwhile. Having such an attitude will inspire us to do the same in other aspects of our lives that we would rather avoid. Setting an intention each morning is a great way to get your practice started. Whether you are a wife, daughter, brother, uncle, or friend, it is important to express your love constantly while mindful of the emotions of your loved ones. Being present and showing your appreciation is not just important on special occasions, but every day.

Treat Your Loved Ones With Compassion

Respond with kindness whenever possible. Think about giving your friend or relative the benefit of the doubt the next time they tell you something that irritates you. Think of something positive about them rather than something negative.

Consider that they are having a bad day and, sadly, it's showing. Maintain a positive attitude toward others, taking their positive and negative qualities into account. By taking this approach, you'll be better able to respond positively.

Whenever someone is disrespectful or rude to you, breathe. Start counting backwards from ten. Pay attention to your reaction: your body tenses and your mind begins to try and make sense of it. Make a thoughtful, considerate gesture. If the person rejects it, move on.

Too Much Technology and Not Enough Communication

We don't all enjoy small talk. Small talk is often avoided because people are afraid of appearing phony, inept, or clueless.

You may dismiss small talk as useless and only want to talk about the more profound things. But how do you start a deeper conversation with someone without the small talk?

All kinds of relationships are made through small talk. It's the key to all sorts of opportunities.

When being mindful, you must appear personable and accessible. Begin the day by saying "Good morning" to your partner. You want to show that you are a pleasant and warm person who is open to a friendly exchange.

Being Generous Really Does Make You Happier

We only get one shot at life. Those who fully comprehend this realize we have a limited amount of time to positively impact the world, so they give and share.

Generosity can make you feel empowered and aware of the needs of others while making a difference. In other words, generosity is a desire to make the lives of others better and more enjoyable through sharing.

Opportunities for generosity often surround you. Giving or sharing doesn't have to involve money or possessions. Investing your time, skills, abilities, expertise, wisdom, and knowledge is worthwhile. But, what you do with these things and how much you share them determines their value.

Generosity is an unconditional gift. The knowledge that you have contributed is the basis of generosity. We need more kind and generous people. We all benefit from their generosity. They inspire us. We are motivated by them. Now you can be one of them.

Make use of your existing resources. Write down the things you appreciate in your life and are thankful for. What could you share with your friends and family? How could it make a difference to them? Would others appreciate it as well?

Give a small amount to a friend in need if you have never given money away before. When you are comfortable, double it. Cook or buy a meal for friends when they come over. Show your generosity. However, do not let anyone take advantage of you.

The Art of Saying No

You're too tired to go for a run with your best friend. Your sister asks you to watch her children for a holiday weekend, but you hate the idea and don't want to disappoint her.

Do you ever find yourself wanting to say no, but you hesitate, not knowing how to say it?

Assertiveness is the ability to express your honest thoughts, beliefs, and desires. Assertiveness means communicating, openly and honestly, what you want and what you don't want, and what you will accept and what you won't. Although you may disagree with other people's views, you are still open to them.

Mindfulness is the key to assertiveness. Any time you interact with someone, be mindful and acknowledge how you feel and what you want and don't want. However, you should still be attentive to other people's feelings and thoughts in order to reach an understanding when the time is right.

Keep your mind in the loop. Pay attention to your feelings. Frustrated? Neglected? Concerned? Worried? Rather than letting your emotions dictate the circumstances, let them guide you. Understanding your feelings will help you pinpoint your goals. If you're unsure of your feelings, let them know you're unsure and will need some time to reflect. You should let them know when you'll reply. Be sure to reply.

Clearly state your intentions. No rambling. It will only lead to confusion. Simply say, “I apologize, but I can't.” Keep your excuses to a minimum. One

reason is all you need to justify not doing something. After stating what you want or don't want, it is important to hear their perspective. Respond politely, acknowledging their point of view and confirming your stance.

Chapter 6: Bringing Back Traditional Values for Our Children

A friend's 8-year-old son recently invited a new friend to their home. While in the kitchen pouring grape juice, his son's friend shouted from the family room, "More Doritos!" His mouth fell open, but he wasn't shocked. As a father of four, he has witnessed children's deteriorating manners firsthand.

He isn't bothered by them gaining a fresh lease on life at bedtime or muddying up the house after baseball practice. It's the decline of basic manners—addressing others with “please” and “thank you,” not shutting the door in someone's face—and the extreme disrespect that has become the norm. It would be nice if it weren't so prevalent.

It's not as if parents don't care about manners any more. Many people strive to instill good manners in their children, along with discipline, work ethic, and giving back (2014 Pew Research Center report). Parents' words and actions don't always match, and many families struggle. Despite their parents' efforts to teach their children manners, children still yell and say, “What?”

Additionally, rudeness shown by children in situations like these makes it more difficult for parents to control their anger. What do you do?

Stay Calm and Don't Get Angry

You may become enraged when your child misbehaves. It may be tempting to scold your child or shout, “What a rude child you are!” However, this rarely works. Just as disrespectful children can intensify situations, so can disrespectful parents. As a parent, you need to set a positive example. Teach kids to remain calm and courteous even in stressful situations.

Parents need to help children who have anger management issues. It will help if you put more effort into helping them than yourself. Effective parenting involves looking out for our children's needs and interests; prioritizing our own needs before theirs is not good

parenting.

Backing down does not mean defeat. It is a sign of strength. You can regain your sanity and focus by taking a breather. By detaching, you can step back and assess the situation. In the end, you are concerned about the issue.

When you are calmer, you will be able to understand and accept that letting go or being frustrated is hard on your child. Their sense of security and comfort is enhanced when they know they can count on you to understand and empathize with them. If you show them that you are aware of their worries, they will be less likely to shout. By reducing the ferocity of the conversation, you can move forward, which may include working together on a solution that addresses both of your concerns.

Practice Mindfulness Every Day

For a good reason, several schools worldwide are introducing mindfulness programs. It's important to teach our children mindfulness. They can learn to identify and control how they feel. Additionally, children can learn how to cope with stress, concentrate on important activities, as well as demonstrate compassion and kindness. Children need these traits to succeed in life, but we often don't teach them explicitly. Most of the time, we think they already know how to do them. Consider the number of times we tell kids to "listen" or "slow it down" without teaching them how to do it or providing an example.

We can nurture our children's ability to be attentive and active as parents. They can be taught strategies for improving their attention and focus, coping with challenges without becoming frustrated, and making informed choices when faced with obstacles rather than reacting automatically.

From the moment our children learn to speak, we teach them to say, "Thank you." You have probably asked your child, "And what are you supposed to say?" encouraging them to say it. Do our children really understand the meaning of gratitude?

A simple way to incorporate gratitude into your child's life is by making it a part of their evening ritual. Every night, take a moment to reflect on what you have and are thankful for. You can keep a gratitude journal or have your children share four things they are grateful for. Every day, think of something new, preferably something that took place

that day.

Mindfulness can be appealing to use as a method of discipline, but it should not be used to force children to behave. Acceptance is central to mindfulness. Develop your own mindfulness practice. Here are some tips.

Schedule a Time to Practice Mindfulness

Habits are hard to break! Practicing mindfulness can help you break them. Parents find mindfulness helps their children wind down after playing. Of course, you can do it multiple times a day.

Creating the Environment

Mindfulness should be a relaxing experience: turn off the television, lock the door, and maybe lie on the floor. Ask your child to be quiet and stay still for a few moments.

Get Them Involved

Engaging your children in mindfulness is a great way to ensure you practice it regularly. Decide who will ring the mindfulness bell each day. If you practice mindfulness with your child every day, you will never forget to do it!

Share Your Journey

Children are naturally curious about our experiences, so you can tell them when, where, and how you practice mindfulness. Tell them about a recent incident where you felt

stressed or applied mindfulness to a problematic situation, so they can see how it's helpful.

Let Them Share Their Experiences

Let your children talk about their mindfulness experiences or something difficult or upsetting. Additionally, sharing can help your other children become conscious of things they may not have noticed otherwise.

Make It a Habit

The sooner you incorporate mindfulness exercises into your child's daily routine, even for a minute or two, the faster it will become a habit.

Chapter 7: Mindfulness for Teenagers

Teenagers face a lot of challenges! School, friendships, or romance, adolescence is a time of significant change, emotionally and physiologically. You likely have trouble coping with stress. You're not alone, and you can take steps to relax, regardless of how overwhelming things get. You only need to slow down, breathe, and focus on what's happening right now.

Your mother was on to something! You should take proper care of your body not only to maintain your physique but also to keep your mind healthy. Here are a few ideas for being mindful while keeping your anxiety in check.

A Good Night's Sleep

Sleep is absolutely necessary to reduce stress. You're probably thinking: "When will I have time to sleep? I have a college entry exam Saturday morning, prom on Saturday night, and a math test on Monday?"

You may not be able to get as much sleep as you'd like, but it will be worth it. Equally important, though, is getting quality rest. Simply getting up and sleeping at the same time every day can have a significant impact on your sleep and your performance. Try it for a few weeks, even if it means you don't sleep in on weekends.

Make Sure You Get Enough Exercise

You might already be a football player or wrestler, so exercise isn't a problem. Even if you are a competitive athlete, balance your training with exercises that do not have the pressure of winning or achieving results. Try a dance class, Pilates, yoga, or another activity. Find an activity where you can move freely without worrying about your skills for fellow players, coaches, and fans.

If you have trouble energizing yourself, create a music playlist, download an ebook, or listen to a podcast during your workout. This will make you feel more in the present and help you focus better and make better decisions. You will feel happier and more relaxed.

Taking a brisk walk during a break while completing the Standardized Achievement Test (SAT) or before a demanding presentation will reduce stress and help you perform better. Not convinced? Give it a shot. It will also help you sleep better.

Family Life

We're told that our homes should feel safe and secure; this is the impression we receive from the news and society in general. However, life at home can be turbulent and stressful for many teenagers, even potentially dangerous. It's not uncommon to see parents viciously arguing, siblings may be battling their own demons, and financial stress can make home a difficult place. Nevertheless, it's a necessary part of life, so how do we find inner peace amid a sea of turmoil and disarray?

Teenagers and adults alike benefit from listening to music as a coping mechanism. Everybody has a favorite song, and like a familiar tune can soothe a scared baby, music can quickly calm us, relaxing our spirits and body. Sometimes, however, we are too stressed to let the music calm us. Listening more deeply, and being more aware of the music, allows us to feel its effects more intensely.

Being Mindful in High School

For some teens, just attending school can be a source of severe anxiety. The day is filled with so many challenges. Perhaps you want to skip school or feel queasy about the idea of seeing certain people. To begin with, be grateful that you have the opportunity to get an education.

Make Sunday the best day of the week, by making dinner, going to a pilates class, and relaxing with a bubble bath before bed. These are a few things that can make Sundays better. Mondays can still be challenging, particularly on the way to school. Walking to school is an excellent way to cultivate mindfulness.

As we walk, we are often distracted by other things, and we barely notice what is going on around us, let alone how we got there. Unfortunately, I'm no exception. I listen to audiobooks, message loved ones, scroll through Instagram, and suddenly I'm there, completely forgetting the walk itself.

While walking may not always be fun, you can make it more enjoyable. By doing so, you will relieve your anxiety and start your day peacefully and with positivity.

Dealing With Bullies

Is there anything worse than bullies? We generally have four ways of dealing with, or not dealing with, people like that. Avoid them, placate them, accept, or stand our ground.

Avoidance is a popular strategy; steer clear if you don't like someone! Stay away from events where you may bump into them. When mean kids make fun of your weight, don't engage with them. Avoidance is usually effective and helps us to stay safe. Still, it is impossible to keep people away forever, particularly in a small school, where we are likely to see the same students repeatedly. Avoidance may take away our opportunity to enjoy an event as well.

Being placate is another way to deal with troublesome people. Don't mess with them, and they'll leave you alone. Initially, this strategy works because it maintains peace and is well received. Ultimately, pleasing leaves you feeling resentful and bitter, leading to people exploiting you.

Sustainable strategies require understanding and self-confidence. The first thing is to accept that you cannot ignore or please them forever; and that you cannot change their behavior, but you can change how you respond. You do not have to like them, but you do have to acknowledge their existence.

The key to dealing with difficult individuals is to be assertive. It's important to find the right balance between passiveness and aggression. You must stand up for yourself, starting with kindness and confidence. Besides communicating your feelings, you should set clear boundaries and be able to say no, or ask for different treatment. If you have done everything you can, it may be time to involve an adult.

Chapter 8: Parenting Through Mindfulness

Almost all of our time with our children is spent in autopilot mode. We are constantly focused on achieving results, resolving issues, preparing, and planning for the day ahead or the next. Whenever we are with our children, our minds are occupied by future plans (like cooking dinner while listening half-heartedly to them talk about school). When we're in that automatic planning mode; we aren't really present for them.

When we are not fully engaged with our children, we miss the opportunity to hear what is being said on a deeper level. It might be that our child needs a hug or a helping hand at a particular moment. If we don't practice mindfulness, we may make an unwise decision in the heat of the moment or even become overwhelmed by stress. Then, instead of being considerate and sympathetic to the situation, we become reactive.

Children experience the same stress reaction as you do. A domineering, intimidating parent triggers their fight-or-flight system. If your child perceives you as a threat, they will resist, making learning impossible. In children, the upper parts of the brain, which are less evolved than their parents, are inactive (Child Development 101: Early Brain Development, 2017). Therefore, when you need to speak to your child, get down on their level and be aware of how your body language and voice might come across as intimidating. As long as you appear less intimidating and speak in a soothing tone, your child will feel less anxious and behave better.

So how do you practice mindfulness as a parent? You consciously pay attention to what is going on in the present moment, striving to be mindful rather than preoccupied. Observe what's happening right now, both inside and outside of you, with love and without judgment.

The Healing Power of Listening

When our children face problems, how can we help them?

In 2017, I found myself struggling, unemployed, broke, and stressed. I was having trouble coping, and the things that once made me smile felt a lifetime away. My one-year-old daughter was having one of her tantrums. Upset with her own limited

abilities to express her emotions and share her thoughts with words. I shuddered with irritation and feelings of powerlessness. I felt my heartbeat increasing as if my blood was about to boil, my jaw stiff. A sense of frustration, tension, and helplessness rose. My head flooded with anxious thoughts, my mind racing with concern. At that moment, I needed to step away. Thankfully, the mother of my children stepped in and allowed me a moment to breathe.

Taking care of my emotional reaction was the first step. Would I be able to remain calm under such pressure? Probably not. Therefore, I had to leave the situation to deal with my frustration. Taking some time away from the situation helped me calm down instead of shouting. It was hard to leave her, but it was better than letting my temper flare. Sometimes, leaving your child briefly in a secure environment with a trusted family member or friend is the best course of action.

I am so grateful to have the support of the mother of my children. Supporting each other is healthy for our daughter. Children feel a sense of stability and protection when they know what to expect from their parents. Mutual support and respect for each other's opinions, needs, abilities, and contributions are important. Your child will benefit from this. Additionally, it can help them cope with transitions in life, such as when they switch schools or enter puberty.

With the help of communication techniques, it is possible to transform a child's reluctance into willing participation.

As you learn how to connect with your child, be kind to yourself and refrain from judging yourself. It can be upsetting when you realize your communication style is hurting your connection. Stay mindful. If you practice mindfulness, you can move forward with a more positive, accepting attitude. Guilt is a poor teacher for your child. Be compassionate when learning, and keep in mind that we all make mistakes.

Connect Consciously

Our bond with our children is what binds us together. It's the key to raising a responsible child. When our children feel our unwavering affection, they feel more secure and calm. When they see our love, they feel appreciated and appreciate us in return. Eventually, parenthood becomes simpler as a result of this love. By intentionally fostering a loving relationship, we can create lasting bonds.

Our children need to feel as though we have faith in them and support them. Instead of hearing criticism from mom or dad, we can encourage our children with words of positivity and self-assurance to boost their motivation and promote positive behavior.

Instead of saying "Well done," describe your child's accomplishments in I-messages. Encouragement should be precise, not ambiguous: "I really appreciated your bravery when you rode the school bus even though it was frightening."

The following are some phrases that can encourage relationship building:

- I am impressed by how kind you are.
- I appreciate how hard you tried.
- I am touched by your generosity.
- I love how you handled the situation with great strength.
- I admire your sense of humor!
- I love how incredibly imaginative you are!
- I am grateful to have such a playful, loving son/daughter.

An open, trusting relationship is the foundation of cooperation. As you consciously and deliberately engage, your connection will become stronger with each passing day. Physical contact, games, teamwork, and recognition are ways to build relationships. Remind your child that you notice, acknowledge, and love them regularly. You will strengthen your connection during life's natural ups and downs.

Remember to also connect through touch. Give lots of kisses and hugs while they're young. Touch is a basic form of communication. Touching your child is a beautiful way to show your warmth, love, and affection for them. Kisses, hugs, and snuggles let children know they are loved, reduce anxiety, and promote emotional control. Hugs and kisses are both necessary and valuable forms of physical affection for children. It's also a powerful way to strengthen your relationship.

For Fathers Who Have Daughters

Most daughters are naturally caring. It is important to remember that our practices

grow stronger within our daughters, just as what we practice grows more vital for ourselves. Fathers should model the qualities they want to see in their daughters, compassion and understanding. Compassion is being kind, giving, and concerned, wanting to make others smile, and understanding is how we do it.

Why compassion? Parenting should be a matter of obedience and discipline, shouldn't it? Compassion helps us live a happy life and get along in the world, and we all want our daughters to be compassionate to themselves and others. As parents, we often resort to punishment, intimidation, and guilt to influence our children. We want them to respect us. Nevertheless, punishment and guilt do not equal authority, and intimidation does not equal respect.

Understanding is simply being aware of what others are thinking and feeling. This is our connection to others and our ability to recognize how others feel. Rather than having an "Oh, what a pity" reaction towards someone suffering, it's "Wow, that stinks, I know how it feels."

Empathy is crucial to building a lasting relationship with your daughter. It is also a skill that you can develop. How? Tuning in to your daughter's emotional signals and taking in her perspective.

It is important to be non-judgmental. Your judgment of your daughters' experiences is a disservice to them and a way to shield yourself from hurt.

To be aware of your daughter's feelings, you need to understand your own. To see the world through your daughter's eyes, you have to put your own stuff aside.

For Mothers Who Have Sons

As mothers, how do you handle a situation where you need your son to do something, but your attempts at effective communication fail? It is often at this point that you strike back to get your way. The winner gets their needs met, and the loser does not. In reality, no one wins.

Punishment doesn't teach your son anything valuable. When mothers discipline their sons for misbehaving, they hope they realize their mistakes and will want to behave appropriately. In the end, he learns that the most dominant person wins, no matter what the rules are.

Punishment leads to resentment. Although punishment makes your son more co-operative in the short run, in the long run, it makes him less likely to comply since he has grown to resent you. It builds up inside him and weakens your bond with him.

Punishment can be harmful mentally. Your son can suffer long-term damage both physically and verbally. Discipline, particularly hitting, is highly detrimental. Violence is associated with aggressive, disruptive, violent, and crime-related behavior, poor parent-child connections; mental illness; and later abuse of their own family members (Heilmann et al., 2021).

Screaming doesn't help either. According to a study of 967 families, verbal punishment during childhood can harm teens later in life, leading to school misconduct, lying, theft, or physical violence. Furthermore, parental hostility contributes to children's misbehavior and aggression, anger, and hatred. (Using Harsh Verbal Discipline with Teens Found to Be Harmful | Society for Research in Child Development SRCD, 2013). What is clear is that yelling exacerbates the problem and doesn't solve it.

Chapter 9: Mindfulness for Bosses

People spend a lot of time at work. In this sense, it is only natural that when you work, you should feel fulfilled, like you're achieving something, and enjoy it. Sadly, most people find their work draining, discouraging, and depressing. The most successful bosses understand what drives their employees and pair their talents with the company's needs, creating a winning combination. For this to happen, leaders must be in a healthy frame of mind.

Bosses face many challenges, especially during tough times and economic downturns. In addition to being challenging, being a boss can also be lonely. It's nearly impossible to keep employees inspired and focused when you're stressed and unsure of what's ahead. In addition, you may be less likely to seek advice and support from your colleagues as a boss. Anxiety is all too real when your mind spins endlessly with negative thoughts.

It's not easy to lead, but it is easy to overlook your own well-being. These simple exercises can help you balance the demands of your job and ensure your happiness and that of your colleagues.

Consider the Simple Things That Make You Feel Happy

Consider what makes you happy in life. Maybe petting your dog, holding hands with someone you love, being appreciated by your children, or watching the first flowers in your garden bloom.

Consider giving them a little more attention. While you are experiencing these activities, take time to appreciate their comfort. You can get the most out of these enjoyable activities if you allow your body time to relax.

Positive things are free and easy to soak up. Additionally, it reduces your stress levels, stimulating your parasympathetic nervous system and resulting in a flood of happy hormones. (Shamash Alidina & Adams, 2015) It may surprise you just how much it affects your work life.

Keep Smiling

Smiling tells the body that everything is fine. By doing so, you reduce your stress levels. As soon as you stop pumping adrenaline, your blood pressure decreases, and serotonin, a mood enhancer, is released (Shamash Alidina & Adams, 2015).

Self-Care

Is it easier for you to show compassion towards others than towards yourself? Do you view compassion for yourself as self-serving?

Occasionally, you have to act selfishly for your own sake! Never berate yourself over mistakes, failures, or missed opportunities. Anxiety, self-blame, and depression can be minimized or prevented by being compassionate to yourself.

Encourage Colleagues to Speak Up and Contribute in a Mindful Manner

As the boss, you need to establish the mood for meetings or workshops. Consider these suggestions:

- Be clear and specific about what you want to accomplish.
- Get the support of everyone in attendance.
- Be sure to let your colleagues know you are willing to listen to their ideas and suggestions. No question or request is too silly.
- Never publicly attack someone's idea or work, no matter how you feel about it. Please show your appreciation for their efforts.
- Encourage others to contribute their ideas. Don't make people feel uncomfortable. If they are hesitant at first, be understanding and accommodating.
- Establish a positive and inspiring work environment.

It's your job as a boss to set the tone in the office. It's important to remain loyal to

yourself and your beliefs; in other words, you must be honest and sincere.

If you appreciate your employees' talent and ingenuity, ensure that your business methods exemplify and reward these qualities. For instance, you could create a program that recognizes and honors talented employees. Each week, Google employees are allowed to work on tasks or projects they are passionate about. Thanks to this flexibility, many of Google's most successful products have been created (Shamash Alidina & Adams, 2015).

Chapter 10: Being Mindful of Your Co-workers

Our relationships with others are a significant aspect of life, especially in our professional lives. Working well with others, regardless of their position, above, below, or on a par with us, significantly impacts how satisfied, motivated, and successful we are. This chapter will discuss working mindfully, happily, and collaboratively with everyone in the office, including co-workers and bosses.

Show Your Appreciation

Whenever you receive assistance, express your gratitude no matter how it's provided. It may seem self-evident, but doing so shows respect and acknowledges the efforts of others: the mailman who delivers the company mail, the cleaner who cleans and sanitizes your office space, and the janitor who mops the building's restroom, all of them matter.

Be Open to Other People's Opinions

When a coworker challenges your position, let it go. It's easy to get upset and become combative, however, that suggests they're at fault, and you're right. But how do you know they're wrong? It's possible they may be justified as well. True mindfulness is accepting and not judging, mixed with openness and compassion.

Empathy Is a Virtue

We can establish a sense of belonging with our colleagues by sharing meaningful

experiences, such as empathy. Essentially, it means acknowledging we are all on the same team. Empathy is generally declining. According to a University of Michigan study of approximately 14,000 college students, empathy declined by about 40% in the last 20–30 years. Several factors may contribute to this decline, such as violent video games, which cause young people to become numb to others' suffering. And technology enables people to make online friends instead of real-life friends (Empathy: College Students Don't Have as Much as They Used To, 2010).

All of our lives are shaped by our connections with others, especially in the workplace. Regardless of their position in the hierarchy, how we work with others can significantly impact how satisfied, motivated, and successful we are.

Chapter 11: Text Messaging and Mindfulness

There is no doubt you know an unreliable texter. When you message them, you might not hear back until the evening. Maybe even the following day. Or the Friday after that. To them, texts aren't considered urgent enough for an immediate response. They respond to texts like emails, whenever they can.

Texting is a form of correspondence that falls between written and verbal contact. It's neither, but simultaneously both. Texting accounts for a large portion of modern communication, so we must handle it with the same mindfulness we apply to in-person conversations.

Breathe in and Out

It may seem impolite not to respond right away to a message, but taking a breath can be beneficial. Breathing helps me bring clarity and comfort to my texting habits. Practice taking a deep breath before replying, especially if the message causes a slight flutter in your feelings. Breathing in and out can help.

In this sense, not replying immediately is mindful. Of course, this does not apply if the person requires an answer instantly.

Establish Boundaries

We feel pressured to reply immediately when we text. We have been conditioned to always be available by default, hence our innate desire to react immediately to text messages. However, not setting boundaries is problematic. We are not an instant service that requires continuous, immediate feedback, responses, and interaction. It is perfectly fine to reserve your energy and delay replying, even if it temporarily inconveniences others.

Explain that you don't always answer texts instantly, but you will reply as soon as possible. People who text you will eventually realize that you aren't always reachable. Also, you shouldn't be critical of others who don't reply right away.

Spread Love

When you cannot have a more in-depth conversation, texting is convenient to share your feelings. I've sent texts to let others know I'm thinking of them. In addition, I remind them that they don't have to respond. A "just thinking of you" text can be an invitation to schedule a call, Zoom, or a face-to-face meeting when both of you are available.

Managing Conflict

In-person, some conversations can be difficult. When we feel emotional, texting can provide a safe space to express ourselves. Texting can be convenient, but it shouldn't replace phone calls or in-person meetings, especially when serious matters are at stake.

Truthfulness is a virtue. It is important to admit that you are uncomfortable talking in person and are using text as a short-term solution, until you can talk in person at some point. Awareness is crucial. What is the purpose of the text? Are you trying to start a discussion or avoid one? If the latter is true, then it's probably worth a personal, in-person discussion. Never underestimate how easy it is to misunderstand a text message. If the person reading the text misreads it, it could worsen the situation. Try to resolve any conflict constructively through an amicable resolution.

Empathize

When you reach out for comfort, consider the other person's ability to accommodate you. Begin by asking how they are, then ask for their availability. You might say, "I'm

going through a tough time and need some support. When is a good time for us to talk?”

Put the Phone Down

You're more likely to use your phone if it's always near you. Put it in your office drawer or on the other side of the house. Disable notifications. When we intentionally use our phones, we avoid denying ourselves the experience of being truly present. There's a time for texting, tweeting, or scrolling. However, conversation and affection are always better than texting when with someone special.

Chapter 12: Mindful Communication at Work

Communicating mindfully at work involves using mindfulness principles in our interactions with others. A few of these principles are setting intentions, observing, being open and accepting, and showing compassion towards others.

Set Your Intentions

If a conversation is related to an upcoming event, such as a conference call or meeting, set your intentions ahead of time. I feel better when I write my intentions either on paper or on my phone. It makes the conversation flow better, which reduces my worries.

For example, if you need to talk to an employee who is not performing well:

"I intend to assist this employee in elevating their performance through coaching. My feedback will be honest and constructive. They will listen openly and understand my goal."

You are pitching a contentious idea or a costly endeavor to senior executives.

"I intend to be fully prepared and provide executives with the information to make informed decisions. I will speak effectively and persuasively. My pitch will be considered, discussed, and accepted."

You are conversing with someone with which you have a strained relationship.

"I intend to work well with this individual. I will communicate peacefully, and they will engage without hostility."

Be Completely Present

Due to our obsession with technology and insatiable urge to constantly be connected, it's increasingly difficult to be fully present. This is especially true when communicating.

Avoid multitasking, and turn off your phone, particularly during in-person meetings. If you take notes on the computer, stay off messaging tools and refrain from checking your messages. When you talk to people, look at them. Be aware of nonverbal cues as well. Remember that you are still on camera when you are on a video call. Write down notes, make eye contact, and listen actively to the presenter. When you work from home, you may have dogs running around, dishes to do, or kids needing help with online learning. Just give it your best shot.

Keep an Open and Non-judgmental Attitude

When I set my intentions, I want all participants to be open and non-judgmental. That includes me. Before I present a new concept in a presentation, I do my research. I am well organized, and, ideally, I have considered all potential pitfalls. I should remain open to suggestions and criticism that could make the project succeed. This is particularly true when it comes to teamwork, collaboration, and resolving issues.

Compassionate Relationships

We tend to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of work and forget about the people doing it. Co-workers should be treated with empathy, consideration, and respect. You should still be firm, but you can also show appreciation.

Four Mindful Tips for Crystal Clear Emails

How often have you written an email and instantly wanted to return it? Everyone has! Due to the speed at which we can send emails, it's easy to upset someone or misinterpret them.

Don't Be Long-Winded

When you use fewer words, you usually achieve increased effectiveness and impact. Keep it simple to avoid getting buried in the details.

Is It Better to Say This in Person?

Occasionally, messages are too sensitive, complicated, or difficult to communicate via email. Ideally, you should speak to the person directly, where you can read their body language and exchange ideas. Following up with a message reiterating what was discussed is acceptable.

Take Note of Your Tone

When writing an emotional email, be aware of how the words you use can influence the tone. When you use short sentences, you may come across as rude and aggressive.

Take Into Account Your Role

When there is a power imbalance (for instance, writing to an employee), you should consider how that will impact the email. In an email, a request from a higher-up could be misinterpreted as an order.

Use Emojis

Emojis are symbols of various emotions, such as facial expressions, which can enhance written communication, defuse seriousness, mitigate negativity, clarify the message, and strengthen the sender's intention. Research has also suggested that emojis mimic social

expressions of emotion (Cavalheiro et al., 2022).

Here are examples of bad and good work messages with and without emojis.

Bad Example:

You: Today is the deadline for the project. Why hasn't it been completed?

Co-worker: I still need to add a few finishing touches to the project.

You: Let's get it done. We don't have time to waste.

In addition to not addressing your co-worker by their name, you did not include any greeting before your direct question, which can sound rude or aggressive.

Good Example:

You: Hi Meridith. How was your weekend? We have a deadline today. May I ask why it hasn't been completed? Thanks!

Co-worker: I still need to add a few finishing touches to the project.

You: We must submit the final version by 5:00 pm, I can give you until 2:00 pm. Hope that helps. Please confirm, Meridith.

When writing the opening line, it can be helpful to imagine it's a conversation. You'd be put off if someone approached you and immediately jumped right in. A line like "How was your weekend?" sets the tone for the conversation.

Bad Example:

You: What happened to that email? They didn't receive it.

Co-worker: Hi Tom, I haven't got around to sending it.

You: Why not?

Co-worker: I got tied up. My apologies.

You: The priority should have been sending that email. I need it done ASAP.

Consider the individual who will be receiving the message. What will their reaction be? How would you like them to react? Can they grasp what you're saying? Are they likely to get upset or hurt if they misunderstand you?

Good Example:

You: Hi Elizabeth, could you please let me know if you sent that email? The client is saying they didn't get it. Thanks! 😊

Co-worker: Hi Tom, I haven't got around to sending it. I had a minor emergency, but I am working on it now.

You: 🙏 Okay, please make it a priority. Thanks.

You can use emojis to have more engaging, more productive interactions with co-workers and make it less likely that they will misunderstand your message. Besides emphasizing your message and adding interest to the exchange, they simplify digital messaging and make it easier to shorten potentially long messages.

Chapter 13: Mindful Dining

Many people enjoy eating out, but there are a few things to consider! Like traveling by plane, dining in a restaurant presents an interesting human dynamic. You are in a public setting and must act in a comfortable way for others as well as for yourself. Restaurant dining calls for a high level of tact and social grace. As a result, employers often take prospective employees or key leaders to a restaurant to observe their behavior. Even if you're not an employee being tested by your employer, it's important to be mindful when dining out. Let's talk about dining mindfully, whether for business meetings, parties, or date nights.

Engaging With Staff

There is a good chance that you have encountered an unpleasant server who made you feel as if you were fortunate to be in their presence. No matter what they do, you should always react calmly and respectfully. Remember, you belong there, don't let them doubt that. Refer to the server by their name tag or how they introduce themselves. In the event that you don't know their name but want to engage them during dinner, make eye contact with them and make a very subtle hand gesture. Be careful about waving your hands, finger-snapping, or shouting at them, being subtle is key. If you want someone's attention, be courteous. Additionally, don't treat the staff poorly just because you're paying them. Be respectful. Say please, thank you, and be genuine. Self-assured people always treat others with dignity, regardless of whether they are a busboy or the boss.

Making a Complaint

In the event you are dissatisfied, let your server know promptly and calmly. If you're not happy with the server, ask to speak with management. What about sending back food or drinks? You have every right to complain if something on the menu was misrepresented. In the US, servers will typically ask you how the food tastes after several bites. If you tell

them you don't like it, they'll usually take it away and give you another dish. It's typically free, but don't complain about it if you made the mistake when ordering.

Avoid Being Difficult

After you have selected your item, close the menu. If you dine in a reputable restaurant, the server will see that you have chosen your meal. The reason for sluggish service at good restaurants is often simply that the menus are still open.

Ideally, order from the menu without modifying it. Chefs often spend a lot of time and effort on the fine details of their dishes. For example, substituting curried lentils for chicken just throws everything off. It's a different story if you have food allergies, but you should make sure you can be accommodated before you arrive. Even though the restaurant is not your in-home chef, they will likely do their best to meet your needs.

Paying the Bill

Traditionally, the host pays for all guests. When you throw a party for a friend or relative, you're footing the bill. To avoid paying, state that you are organizing, not hosting. Hosting and organizing are two different things. Here's how you might word the invitation:

"Let's celebrate Anne's birthday together. We would love to have a meal at XYZ restaurant. You will be responsible for paying for your meal and a portion of Anne's."

Therefore, it's clear you're helping to organize and not paying.

It's Proper for Men to Pay on First Dates

A staggering 78% of people think men should pay for the first date (McNearney, 2017). It seems like equality between the sexes is always the goal in today's society, so this may surprise some. Why isn't the same enthusiasm shown when paying the bill on the first

date?

Relationships are heavily influenced by finances. Having the man pay also reflects the old stereotype of the man working and the woman staying home. With limited to no income, the responsibility for restaurant meals fell to the man. Sadly, women are still judged based on appearances, while men are considered based on their wealth. When dating, it would be foolish not to consider finances since financial problems are a major cause of divorce.

If a man cannot afford to pay, there may be underlying financial problems. Firstly, he's cheap, and that's not an attractive quality. I'm not saying that men who are on a tight budget should be excluded from dating, however, the date should fit within their budget.

Tip:

Nowadays, it doesn't really matter which person walks in first, but you may find that some women appreciate it if you hold the door open for them. Whenever a host is present, they will lead the way, followed by the lady and then the man. Traditionally, if there is no host, the man enters first, pulls the chair out for the lady, and then sits.

Tipping

There are a number of reasons why tipping your server can be problematic; for some people, tipping more than \$5 is unacceptable, while for others, 20-25% is expected. In my opinion, there are very few situations where a tip is inappropriate. It is now standard practice, with tips being taxed. If your experience was poor, you should tip 10%, 15% if you received satisfactory service, and 20% or more if it was outstanding.

If you go to a restaurant with your two children and the bill is \$70, but your kids throw corn everywhere, you may want to tip \$20 or \$25. You just made them spend a lot more time cleaning up your mess.

Chapter 14: Being Mindful While Waiting for a New Job, New Opportunities, and New Connections

We have all been there, sitting in that uncomfortable chair, sweaty palms, racing thoughts, anxiously awaiting our upcoming interview. Thinking about what to say and what not to say—from thinking about our past interviews to how amazing it would be to get hired—emotions range from anticipation, anxiety, joy, and even fear. Stillness and focus are far from our minds.

You can improve focus, relaxation, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem by practicing mindfulness. Researchers have found that mindfulness is beneficial for stress management, performance improvement, strengthening relationships, bettering health, and enhancing decision-making (Kozakiewicz & Flaherty, 2016). These are all elements that play a significant role in job interviews.

Rather than impressing the interviewer with your performance, try to establish a real connection. Start by connecting with yourself. Be kind to yourself if you have negative thoughts before, during, or after your interview. Align your thoughts to how you would talk to your best friend, showing empathy and respect. Think positively, and your connection will grow. Your mental and emotional state can affect how your interviewer perceives you, so take care of them.

A Thank You Email Is a Nice Touch

Do you know when to send a thank-you email after an interview? A good rule of thumb is three hours after the interview. We often hear about the 24-hour rule, but delaying this long is not smart. Following an interview, you should write a thank you letter for three reasons: first, to show respect and proper manners; second, to remind the employer why you are qualified; and third, to emphasize your interest. There's no need

to overthink it. Your thank you note should be brief and to the point.

After an Interview, Follow Up

Recruiters are put through a rigorous hiring process, so it's important to respect that. If the interviewer stated that they would decide by Friday, don't contact them before then except to thank them.

You may be extremely interested in the job, so you want to convince the interviewer you are the best candidate. Don't do it. You run the risk of being perceived as a poor listener or inconsiderate of others' time.

However, let's say you were told you would hear back on Friday, and now it's Friday afternoon. Okay, then, it's time to take action. A brief follow-up email to see if a decision has been made is perfectly acceptable.

Confidence Is Key

You should be appreciative that the employer noticed something in you they liked. Confidence in yourself, your talents, and your drive are all signs of success. Smile and sit with poise for a more confident appearance.

Conclusion: Being Mindful Goes a Long Way

Mindfulness requires repetition and dedication. It won't come naturally to most people the first time they try. You may find your mind wandering constantly. But, over time, it will become easier. In time, you'll realize you're living a more mindful lifestyle. This will lead to many benefits, including reduced stress, improved mental health, more fulfilling connections, and a more meaningful life.

Regardless of how we apply mindfulness, its basic concepts remain:

- **Being in the moment:** Being aware of our surroundings, actions, and thoughts.
- **Being kind:** Showing respect, compassion, generosity, and kindness towards others and yourself.
- **Taking a step back:** Understanding growth is an inevitable part of life, and neither good nor bad experiences are permanent.
- **Developing a meditative routine:** Finding uninterrupted, quiet, rejuvenating time for reflection, intimacy, and peace.

When you follow these concepts and allow yourself to fail, you begin to expand your consciousness and spirit in surprising ways.

Mindfulness has never been more valuable than it is today when everything is vying for our time. Many employers consider mindfulness one of the most desirable skills, as it demonstrates a considerate, adaptable, empathetic, efficient, and resourceful employee. As we go about our daily lives at home, school, and work, we can strive to be more mindful. Whether using our favorite app, dealing with bullies at school, buying groceries, or interacting with colleagues, we all benefit from developing this skill. Being mindful makes us more aware and in the driver's seat of our actions.

Still, being mindful isn't enough to fix everything or make us better people overnight. It won't make a huge difference in our lives. Certainly not immediately. Mindfulness rewards over time, accumulating gains over time, hour by hour, becoming more than a method, rather a lifestyle. The fascinating thing is that when we practice mindfulness, we become aware of the deep, enduring essence within.

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