A PERFECTLY HERE TEACHING GUIDE

Five Days of Mindful Living

Five free daily lessons from Dr. Manijeh Motaghy to bring awareness, clarity, kindness, and well-being into everyday life.

Dr. Manijeh Motaghy

Author of It's Not Easy to Be Human

Explore the book and purchase: drmanijehmotaghy.com/book/

All 5 lessons are included in this guide. You can work through one lesson each day, at your own pace.

DAY 1 OF 5

We can flow mindfully in everyday life

Hello Friend,

Welcome. Over these five days, I invite you to explore how you can bring more awareness, clarity, and kindness into ordinary moments of your life.

Mindfulness is both a quality of mind and a practice to develop this quality. It is being calm, alert, present, and kind; knowing how your body feels, noticing what goes on in your mind, and being aware of emotional changes. But the most important aspect of mindfulness is the goal of being well for all involved. Otherwise, it would give you partial benefits if you just learn to be present to do a task better.

Some call mindfulness a tool, which would indicate putting it down and returning to mindless living. The magic is in carrying this quality and goal of well-being with us throughout the day and into every experience. We, hence, develop it so that we may think and act through greater clarity, objectivity, and compassion.

There are many ways you can develop mindfulness. Object awareness is one effective way. Try it today. Choose an ordinary object near you. Look at its colors and shape. Notice its texture and what its role is in your life. Can you remember when you first received it, before it became so familiar and redundant that you stopped noticing it?

Then notice if a feeling comes up. You do not need to manufacture a particular feeling. Just recognize what is present. Invigorate a sense of gratitude for this object. Reflect on what it took for it to be created and how it came to you.

Ask yourself, what else in my life has become so ordinary that I no longer give it my attention? Then choose one more thing or person to give particular attention and appreciation to. Register how it feels to do so.

Tomorrow, we will look at how the meanings we give to things influence our mood and actions.

With kindness,
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DAY 2 OF 5

Notice the impact of meanings you add to situations

Hello Friend,

We give things names and meanings. Over time, those meanings can seem absolute. We stop noticing the difference between our expectations of an experience and the actual reality of the experience itself.

Consider a glass. A glass can break, as hard materials do. When we cling to the idea that it should not break, we add disappointment and more hardship to what has happened. This applies beyond objects to our work, the people we love, and the identities we want to keep.

Our assumptions and associations have become part of our programming. They intend to explain a situation and tell us how we should feel about it. We often accept our explanations simply because they occurred to us.

It's very helpful to tease this out for yourself. For your practice today, notice a small moment of disappointment or irritation. Separate what you directly observed from what you concluded about it. Figure out what meaning you gave the situation. Ask yourself, is it really true? For sure, for sure true?

Of course, don't dismiss your experience or force a more pleasant interpretation. Just examine what about the situation you know, what part you assume, and return to that important goal of well-being for yourself and all involved.

Keep in mind a question: Am I seeing what is happening, or reacting to an unexamined meaning I have given it?

Tomorrow, we will try a short practice that can help you notice this throughout your day.

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DAY 3 OF 5

A breath before the next action

Hello Friend,

It's day 3. I hope you're enjoying these lessons. We only have 2 more to go after this.

Have you noticed how quickly one thought can lead to another and a feeling can turn into an action?

I've found a simple, quick practice called "STOP" really effective. It's a brief meditation in action. It gives you an opportunity to interrupt the physical or mental cascade of mindlessness and living on autopilot.

S — Stop the activity or the reaction for a moment.

T — Take a breath. (Try to remember this; it's about "b", the breath.)

O — Observe. Notice your internal and external experience: feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations, and what is happening around you.

P — Proceed with kindness. Try to be more understanding and approach your next action with a kinder attitude.

That last step matters. We are developing a way of relating to experience that can improve how we act—not merely stopping for a moment and continuing with the same attitude. Remember the goal of being well.

For today, practice STOP before entering a meeting or responding in a conversation. Observe what is actually present, go back to the previous lesson on noticing the meanings you give things, then consider what proceeding with kindness would look like in that situation. You may find kinder words, a kinder tone, or decide to wait before speaking.

Keep in mind a question: How did I benefit from the quick STOP in a way I might otherwise have missed?

Don't judge the practice by whether you became calm immediately. Notice how it went and give yourself credit for practicing.

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DAY 4 OF 5

Understand your feelings are not your identity

Hello Friend,

Let's talk about feelings today. Emotion, which is energy-in-motion, becomes a feeling when felt in the body. Emotions or feelings influence how we perceive a situation. Just like meanings we give to each experience, our feelings, especially when intense, could make our interpreted narratives seem convincing.

Interestingly, one of the doorways through which we enter a mindful state is our feelings. You can develop awareness of the emotion, how you experience it in your body, and its influence on your conclusions. You would also investigate the changes in your body. When you notice that feelings don't remain exactly the same, you may realize they cannot define the entirety of you—or a person you find difficult.

Check this out today. Think of something only mildly agitating, not your most difficult experience.

Recognize the emotion, mood, or attitude that accompanies this memory or situation. Is there irritation, sadness, frustration, or something harder to name? It is fine if it feels complex.

Search and see whether you can feel this emotion somewhere in your body. Do the STOP practice. Take a breath or two and see if the feeling's intensity or quality stays the same.

Then ask: Is this feeling all there is to me? Is this all there is to the other person? From what other angle can I see the situation?

This practice includes care for yourself. If it becomes too much, pull back. Kindness does not require you to abandon healthy boundaries.

A question to carry with you: What needs tending to with ease and intention?

With kindness,
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DAY 5 OF 5

Make every relationship count

Hello Friend,

We're never silent, really. Aside from interacting with others, our minds are constantly talking to us. It's happening even when someone speaks and we supposedly listen. Think of it, when you listen, are you hearing their message, preparing your response, remembering your own experience, or deciding whether you agree? All of this prevents us from connecting and getting to the core of what needs attention in communication.

Well, mindfulness can really help. We can develop mindful communication by recognizing these habits and practicing core-message listening.

Try this today. In a suitable conversation, stay connected to your body as you listen. Treat the person in front of you as if they are the most important person in your life. Why? Because they are the person in front of you. In your next conversation, the person in front of you becomes the most important person.

As you listen, you may feel the impulse to interrupt. Gently breathe and do not act on it. Allow that impulse to pass. When your mind wanders or remembers something else, come back to your body and listening to this most important person in your life.

Before launching into your own story, acknowledge their message. By acknowledging their message, you show how your response is related to their statements.

When it is your turn to speak, breathe, relax your shoulders, and stay connected to the person listening. Notice whether they are with you, as of course, their mind wanders too. You can gently check with them to see if they are with you.

An awareness to carry with you: Register the changes when you give someone your attention without immediately adding your own story. If the impact is negative, it may not have to do with being present, but the triggers that come from feelings. So, be patient and listen with care.

These five days are a beginning. Mindfulness develops through practice in the life we already have. The interest and determination to create well-being and harmony within ourselves and for the world can improve all aspects of our lives.

Summarize the practices from these lessons and put them somewhere you can be reminded of. If you would like support in developing these and other qualities and skills, explore Perfectly Here's current learning opportunities.

Thank you for practicing with me.

With kindness,
Manijeh
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