

**THE POWER OF ENHANCED AWARENESS:  
Mindfulness Training and Practice**

**MITRE Spring 2021**

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## **Presenter Background**

Brenda Fingold, JD, MA, has been teaching mindfulness and well-being strategies for two decades. She is a Certified Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Teacher and has directed workplace and leadership education programs at the Mindfulness Center at Brown University School of Public Health and the Center for Mindfulness at University of Massachusetts Medical School. Brenda is on the board of the Mindfulness in Law Society and is co-chair of the New England Chapter.

A graduate of New York University School of Law, Brenda spent 17 years at the Boston law firm of Hale and Dorr (now Wilmerhale), where she was a litigator and the partner responsible for training and professional development. She is a co-founder and former chair of the Professional Development Consortium, a national training organization, and for many years was an Instructor at Boston University School of Law.

Brenda teaches mindfulness and mindfulness as a way to enhance focus, resilience, well-being, leadership excellence and the ability to skillfully respond to challenge and change. She works with businesses and legal organizations and in education, government and non-profit organizations. Brenda's work in the fast-paced and demanding world of a large professional services firm coupled with her equal years of immersion in the science and practice of mindfulness give her a unique breadth and depth of wisdom and experience to guide individuals in integrating mindfulness into their work and lives.

For more information and resources, please go to:

[Brendafingold.com](http://Brendafingold.com)

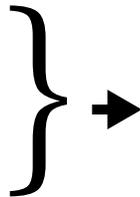
# MINDFULNESS

- One Practice**
- Paying Attention
  - On Purpose
  - In the Present Moment
  - In a Particular Way (with curiosity and non-judgment)

## Many Reasons to Develop this Innate Capacity

### Work Quality and Experience

- easily distracted
- feeling stuck
- trouble thinking clearly
- worn down by tension
- difficulty making decisions
- irritable and easily annoyed
- overwhelmed

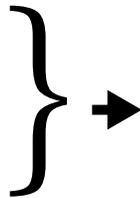


### Mindfulness Can Increase

- focus
- calmness
- flexible thinking
- emotional regulation
- creativity/innovation
- memory
- communication skill
- leadership presence

### Physical Health

- high blood pressure
- difficulty sleeping
- chronic pain
- heart disease
- skin disorders
- diabetes
- headaches

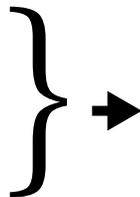


### Mindfulness Can Increase

- overall health and reduce medical symptoms

### Well-Being

- stress
- low mood/depression
- anxiety
- feeling “just not right”
- out of balance
- disconnected
- exhausted



### Mindfulness Can Increase

- resilience
- stress hardiness
- happiness
- sense of balance
- engagement with life

**What's Your Reason?**

## **The Mindful Check In**

### **Step One - Become aware of your experience right now**

Bring your awareness to what is happening right now for you, going through each of the following one step at a time. This can be done in 3 minutes or less.

- What sensations do you notice in your body? You might scan your body to pick up on any tightness or tension or areas of comfort.
- What thoughts are going through your mind? Acknowledging the nature or content of thoughts without getting caught up in the thoughts themselves.
- What feelings are here? Turning toward any emotional discomfort or unpleasant feelings and acknowledging their presence, without needing to do anything about them.

### **Step Two – Gather Your Attention**

Bring your focus to the physical experience of breathing or to any anchor that supports your becoming focused (feet, hands, body in chair). Whenever your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the breath.

### **Step Three – Expand Your Awareness**

Now expand the field of your awareness to become aware of the body as whole, sitting and breathing, from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, your posture, facial expression, places where your body meets the floor or the chair. Then expand your awareness even further outward, to include the feel of the air in the room and the space around you.

As best you can, bring this expanded and more spacious awareness into the next moments of your day.

## **Benefits of the Mindful Check In**

This is a very useful practice to use from time to time throughout the day to reconnect with, reboot and rebalance the body and mind. It is also a strategic practice that moves attention in specific ways to get unstuck from unhelpful thought patterns and automatic routines. The attention moves from wide to narrow to wide, like an hourglass, and allows for changes in perception. This movement of attention is very important because when we are lost in thoughts, worrying, caught up in automatic pilot routines, multitasking or experiencing stress reactivity, our attention is often not really available to us and we are unable to consciously and skillfully choose how we want to respond to what is arising in our life moment to moment. This practice brings us back into a direct experience of the present moment, with all of the information, wisdom and resources available in that state of being.

## **The Practice of Mindful Walking**

*“Do not underestimate the power that comes to you from feeling  
the simple movements of your body throughout the day. ~ Joseph Goldstein, Insight Meditation*

Mindful walking can be a formal practice that is just as potent as sitting meditation in cultivating awareness. It can also be a key to expanding awareness from formal meditation to living mindfully day to day. There are many ways to practice mindful walking. Below are some forms to explore.

### **Formal Mindful Walking Practice**

Find a place where you can walk back and forth slowly for about 6 – 10 steps. Take a moment to close your eyes and feel your feet on the floor. You might even begin with a short body scan. As your awareness comes back into your feet, shift your weight back and forth from one foot to the other, feeling the pressure and lightness and whatever other sensations arise. Then begin to walk with small steps. As you move each foot, bring full awareness to the soles of your feet. After a while, you might expand your awareness to the stages of walking – lifting, stepping and placing one foot and then the other. Feel and engage fully with the experience of walking. When you get to the end of your walking path, pause briefly, turn around, and bring full awareness to your next steps. Walk at whatever speed keeps you most present.

As you walk, let the thoughts and images that arise remain in the background. If you find yourself lost in a thought or emotion, just stop and bring your awareness back to your breath or feet and then resume walking. Remember that the practice is not about stopping thoughts, but about noticing when you’ve been carried away and coming back to the present moment.

### **Informal Walking Practices**

Integrating short moments of mindful walking throughout your day is a powerful way of strengthening the muscle of mindfulness. It is also a useful tool for slowing down a racing mind or body and can be used as a transition practice to help you let go of what just happened so that you can be more fully present for the next moment.

Any time you find yourself walking is a good time to practice mindfulness. For a casual walking practice, choose a place to walk where there won’t be too many distractions and starts and stops. Begin walking and focus all your attention on what you are doing, noticing sensations as they arise. You can bring your attention to the soles of your feet, legs or body as a whole. When you find yourself drifting away from your focus, simply notice where your mind has gone and return to the walking. If you are just learning this practice, you might choose to rest attention simply on feeling the sensations of the body in motion or, if you are walking in nature, you might focus on what you are seeing, hearing, smelling or feeling.

You can also practice bringing mindfulness to the walking you do as you go about your life. Notice how often you are actually present for the experience of walking and how often you are lost in thought. Commit to walking up or down stairs mindfully or walking through the halls at work with awareness that you are walking. Bringing present moment awareness to walking during routine tasks and errands short-circuits the automatic pilot mode and can make our routine experiences more interesting and leave us calmer, less exhausted and even happier, as reported in research on the connection between focus and happiness. You might choose one walking activity that you do every day and “staple” your mindfulness practice to it, such as being fully aware of the first 10 steps you take when you walk to get coffee, go to the rest room, walk into your building, etc.

## **MINDFULNESS PRACTICES FOR THE WORKDAY**

“Short practices many times a day” is a useful way to think of cultivating mindfulness. Take a look at the suggestions below and choose one or two to integrate into your day. If they don’t work well, choose another or find your own way to bring mindfulness practice into your life. Note that all of the informal practices described below will be significantly easier and arise more spontaneously if you are also strengthening your capacity for mindfulness through a daily formal mindfulness practice.

1. As you awaken in the morning, bring your attention to your breathing. Instead of letting your mind spin off into yesterday or today, or jumping out of bed and into your to-do list, focus on your breath as it moves in and out of your body. When you pay attention to the breath, it takes you out of churning thoughts and worries and into your body where you can access resources for coping and creating well-being.
2. Once you get to your office, take a moment to “just be.” Become aware of your breath, the feel of the chair and your feet on the floor and perhaps even name your intention for how you want to experience the day (not what you want to get done.)
3. Come to your senses regularly – what do you hear, see, feel, smell and taste? The senses are a doorway to the present moment and are always available for calming, regrouping and accessing your innate wisdom to determine in any moment, “what’s called for now?”
4. STAPLE IT - Choose something you do every day and staple your mindfulness practice to it so that every time you do it, you strengthen your ability to direct and sustain focused awareness. Examples include becoming fully present for the moment before you press send on an email, every time you sit in a chair, walk up or down stairs, pick up the phone, make a transition from one task to another, open a door, while eating or taking the first few sips of a beverage, or as you boot up your computer in the morning and shut it down at the end of the day.
5. STOP – as soon as you notice a stress warning signal and bring awareness to your breath, sensations, thoughts, feelings and urges, without getting caught up in them. Over time you may begin to notice how automatic those reactions are and, with practice, you will begin to notice that you are responding in new ways to what is arising rather than being driven by stress reactivity.
6. Find two places in your day to integrate a mindful pause, a moment in your day when you choose to step out of the autopilot quality of the day and bring your attention to the present moment and your breath and body. Afterwards, with distractions lessened, you may be able to see more clearly what is here in this moment and move into the next moment more strategically and with more awareness, energy and calm. This pause may be one minute or three to ten. Set a calendar reminder or find another way to remember your intention.
7. “Center Before You Enter.” Before going into a meeting, having a conversation or even answering the phone – take a few breaths, feel your feet on the floor and check in with yourself. Then, as best as you can, purposely set aside what you have been thinking about (the past) and what you are going to do next (the future). In this way, you bring your whole self to the conversation. From this present place, you will be able to focus on what is important, see and hear more clearly what is arising, access more knowledge, creativity and options and be able to make more skillful choices.

8. Commit to a “Transition Practice” – each time you make a transition from one activity to the next, stop and check in with yourself. Learn to pause in the midst of life.
9. Intentionally walk down the hall mindfully every so often during the day by bringing full attention to the soles of your feet as they meet the floor. This simple practice will build the muscle of mindfulness, bring you into the present moment, settle any scattered energy and slow down the frenetic mental and physical pace that so often takes over.
10. When you are in a meeting, notice the wandering mind and practice gently but firmly bringing it back to your breath and what is being communicated. Choose to purposely listen with curiosity and non-judgment, the qualities that are attributes of mindfulness.
11. Mindful listening – How does it feel when someone is totally present for you in an interaction? When they’re not? Every time you interact with someone you can practice being fully present. What is it like to listen to another without planning what you’re going to say, evaluating what he or she is saying, wondering what he or she thinks of you or trying to control the situation (the way we often listen when someone is speaking).
12. Mindful speaking - how does it feel to pause and take a breath before speaking and stay connected to your posture, tone, content and body while you speak? In this pause, you might bring mindfulness awareness to what you are about to say by asking yourself the following four questions: Is it true? Is it beneficial? Is this the right time to say it? Is it respectful? If you are unsure of any of the above, consider not speaking it.
13. Integrate a short body scan and/or a few minutes of mindful stretching into your day.
14. Notice if you are multi-tasking. It often happens without our being aware it has happened. We start a project, hear the sound of an incoming email or text or see a document on the desk and redirect our focus. “Continuous partial attention” has a significant impact on effectiveness, efficiency and well-being. Mindful-task instead of multi-task - Choose one thing to focus on and eliminate as many opportunities for distraction until you complete the task.
15. Bring awareness to negative thoughts whenever you notice them and strengthen the capacity to intervene in them as soon as they arise. Get familiar with your mental habits and repetitive stories (I’ll never have enough time, I’m not good enough, this always happens to me, etc.) and recognize the running commentaries that loop around in our heads. Do you really have to engage with and believe all of what it says in there?

## Mindful Meeting Practices

- **“Center Before You Enter”**- Check in with yourself before the meeting. What’s going on for you? Are you anxious or tired, having a rough day, in pain, frustrated with one of the participants? Are you carrying baggage from a prior exchange that could impact your engagement in this meeting? Intentionally choose to attend to the direct experience of the present moment. Perhaps set an intention for how you want to “be” in the meeting.
- **Consider starting the meeting with a short mindfulness practice** – Your body is here, their bodies are here, but is anyone actually in the meeting? If you are the leader, considering taking a minute or two for everyone to settle and experience a sense of having arrived.
- **Practice Mindful Listening** – Meetings are a great opportunity for mindful listening practice. Every time you notice your attention has wandered, firmly bring it back to the present. Just like in meditation. Listen for all relevant information: take in the words, tone, posture, and facial expressions of the speaker. Sense the felt meaning in what they are saying. Listen deeply to what is arising in your mind and body as it too is relevant information.
- **Embody curiosity, non-judgment and open-mindedness** – Watch for the human tendency to “pre-judge.” When you notice you have jumped to an answer or reacted to a question, reorient to the intention to be curious. Remember the role of perception in what we see or do not see. Try to lean into what is being said with a willingness to be changed.
- **Practice Mindful Speaking** – is it true; is it helpful; is it timely; is it respectful? Feel into your own posture and expressions, knowing that they “speak” as well.
- **Create space for a mindful pause** - when it feels appropriate for the best result. The easiest thing to do is what you’ve done before. Can you stand inside the tension or discomfort of not knowing for moment or two. In that space, the answer to what’s called for now often emerges. When charged with making a good decision, we need to clearly see what is, rather than what we think is so or how it’s always been or we wish it were.
- **Practice choosing a response rather than reacting on automatic pilot** –It is likely that there will be times you will be irritated, stressed or defensive. Can you notice when you’ve been triggered and actually feel the wave of sensations/thoughts/emotions moving through you. Use the opportunity to practice noticing thoughts as thoughts and feelings as feelings. With this awareness, you might more clearly see options for skillful responding. Use the STOP Practice.
- **Stay connected to the breath and body** – No matter where the mind has gone, the breath and body are always in the present moment. Practice maintaining some felt sense of the body or breath even as you focus outward. This will help to keep your pre-frontal cortex online so you can offer your best focus, executive function, perspective taking and clear thinking.
- **Check in with yourself from time to time** – allowing you to better self-regulate, align with your intentions and intervene if an inner storm starts to brew.

## MINDFULNESS RESOURCES

### Audio, Video, Web

Brenda Fingold short guided mindfulness recordings - go to [brendafingold.com/materials/workplace](http://brendafingold.com/materials/workplace). Password is Mindfulness

UMass Center for Mindfulness, Brown Mindfulness Center and others offer free guided online mindfulness practices. Brenda's Mindful Pause at Brown is Tuesdays from 11:45am - 12:00pm EST (Check out Brown's community practices on the website)

PBS/WGBH Public Television production: Mindfulness Goes Mainstream – available online

The Connection: Mind Your Body - a 73 minute documentary featuring leading experts in mind body medicine talking about the power to change your mind and change your health. [www.theconnection.tv](http://www.theconnection.tv)

Sounds True ([soundstrue.com](http://soundstrue.com)) offers mindfulness resources and Dharma Seed ([dharmaseed.org](http://dharmaseed.org)) offers talks and podcasts from many mindfulness teachers.

NPR broadcast: The Science of Mindfulness (January 27, 2014) (25 min.) (Search the web for this excellent overview of mindfulness with Jon Kabat-Zinn.)

### Apps

10% Happier: Meditation for Fidgety Skeptics –ABC news anchor Dan Harris teams up with well-respected meditation teachers to offer daily short lessons and guided meditations.

Insight Timer, Calm, Headspace – find one you like.

Eat Right Now – 28 day program using mindfulness techniques and the latest science on habit change to become more mindful of eating habits.

Unwinding Anxiety – This course integrates mindful practices with the science behind the mind's habit loops. Using a mobile app, you'll have daily access to tips, feedback, tools and support from a community of professionals and peers.

Jon Kabat Zinn – Series 1 contains guided meditations from the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program; Series 2 contains sitting and lying down meditations of various lengths.

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Anything by Jon Kabat-Zinn, Tara Brach, Pema Chodron, Joseph Goldstein, Jack Kornfield, Thich, Nhat Hanh, Brene Brown and others that call to you.

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind To Face Stress, Pain and Illness, Jon Kabat-Zinn (Revised Ed. 2013) (The MBSR curriculum in depth)

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World, Williams and Penman (2011)

Mindful Work: How Meditation is Changing Business from the Inside Out, Gelles (2015)

Finding the Space to Lead: A Practical Guide to Mindful Leadership, Janice Marturano (2014)

10% Happier, Dan Harris (2014)

Bouncing Back: Rewiring your Brain for Maximum Resilience and Well-Being, Graham (2013)

Meditation is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and Why it is so Important, Kabat-Zinn (2018)

Falling Awake: How to Practice Mindfulness in Everyday Life, Jon Kabat-Zinn (2018)

The Healing Power of Mindfulness: A New Way of Being, Jon Kabat-Zinn (2018)

Mindfulness for All: The Wisdom to Transform the World, Jon Kabat-Zinn (2019)

A Mindfulness Based-Stress Reduction Workbook, Stahl and Goldstein (includes 21 guided meditations) (2010)

The Mindful Way Workbook: An 8-week Program to Free Yourself from Depression and Emotional Distress, Teasdale, (Includes MP3 CD and downloads of guided meditations) (2014)

A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook for Anxiety, Stahl, Meleo-Meyer and Koerbel, senior faculty with the Mindfulness Center at Brown. (Includes 24 downloadable guided meditations) (2014)

The Inner Advantage: Applying Mindfulness in Business and Law - and Everywhere Else, Patton Hyman (2016)

Self-Compassion: The Proven Power of Being Kind to Yourself, Kristin Neff (2015)

The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming our Communities Through Mindfulness, Rhonda Magee (2019)

My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathways to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies, Resmaa Menakem (2017)

Everyday Blessings: The Inner Work of Mindful Parenting, Myla and Jon Kabat-Zinn

Good Morning, I Love You, Mindfulness + Self-Compassion Practice to Rewire Your Brain for Calm, Clarity and Joy, Shauna Shapiro (2020)

Finding the Deep River Within: A Woman's Guide to Recovering Balance and Meaning in Everyday Life, Abby Seixas (2006)

**Articles and Other Publications** All of the following materials are available online

[American Mindfulness Research Association](#) – Database mindfulness research. [goamra.org](http://goamra.org)

[Mindfulness Can Literally Change Your Brain](#), Harvard Business Review (1/8/15)

[Spending 10 Minutes a Day on Mindfulness Subtly Changes the Way You React to Everything](#), Harvard Business Review (1/18/17)

[The Making of a Corporate Athlete](#), Loehr and Schwartz, Harvard Business Review (2001)

[Mindfulness Moderates the Relationship Between Perceived Discrimination and Depressive Symptoms](#), research paper from Duke University and UNC (2014)

[Mindfulness in the Heat of Conflict: Taking STOCK](#), Riskin and Wohl, Harvard Negotiation Law Review Vol. 20:121 (2015)

[In the Moment: The Effect of Mindfulness on Ethical Decision Making](#), Ruedy and Schweitzer, Journal of Business Ethics, 95:73-87 (2010)

[Improving Decision Making Through Mindfulness](#), Karelaia and Reb in Reb. And Atkins, eds., Mindfulness in Organizations, pp. 163 – 189 (2015)

[Contemplating Mindfulness at Work: An Integrative Review](#), Good et. al., Journal of Management (2015)

[How Mindfulness Can Help Manage Work Stress](#), Mindful Leader (2020)

[Navigating the Full Catastrophe with Mindfulness](#), Trial Magazine (2020) [brendafingold.com/resources](http://brendafingold.com/resources)

Brenda's articles on mindfulness can be found at [brendafingold.com](http://brendafingold.com)

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## Guided Mindfulness Practices for Workplace Mindfulness Programs

Go to the website below for recordings of guided mindfulness practices of various lengths, including breath meditation, body scan, come to your senses, mindful chair yoga, mindful check in, and others.

**<https://brendafingold.com/materials/workplace/>**

Password is: Mindfulness (*note the capital M*)

You can save this page to the home page of your phone so that it looks and operates like an App. This makes it very easy to access the guided meditations. Below are instructions for doing this.

On an iPhone, go to the icons on the bottom of the screen and press the box with the up arrow to forward the page. Then look for the icon that says "add to home screen".

On an Android OS (operating system), click on the row of 3 dots in the upper right hand corner of the screen. Select "Add to Home Page" from the dropdown menu.

If you have any questions or difficulty in accessing the recordings, please contact:

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