

Overview of Workshop 2

- Review of Week 1
- Cultivating focus
- Connecting with purpose
- Bringing mindfulness to a stressor
- Reconnecting with mindfulness during a busy day

Review of the First Week

What worked well for you in the first week? What did you learn from your experience?



Brief Mindfulness

Rapid stress reduction; enjoyable high performance

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Waking to Experience: Magic Moments

What are we aiming for in mindfulness?

Firstly, to "wake up" to our experience, so we can really enjoy it. (After all, what's the alternative? Live in a past you can't change? Live in a future that isn't here yet - and miss it when it comes??)

Secondly, to act in line with our intentions, with the purpose and values that we choose for our lives.

So the moments to *really* value are the moments when we do wake up to our experience and when we recollect our intentions. These are "Magic Moments."

Cultivating a Relaxed and Positive Focus

Remember: the mind is naturally curious. It responds to stimulus – that's what keeps us alive!

Thoughts keep arising in the mind - don't criticise yourself for that – it's just what minds do!

Instead, enjoy the magic moments when you wake up to your experience – *whatever it is*. I can't emphasise that enough – *whenever* you wake up to experience in the here and now, that's magic! Coming alive to your experience in the moment is progress, the best kind of progress in mindfulness, so enjoy it and make the most of it.

Now you could try to simply enjoy being present with whatever arises in your awareness. But that's surprisingly hard to do. In fact, it's incredibly hard – it's one of the most advanced meditation practices there is. Without considerable reserves of mindfulness, you quickly get lost in the stream of thoughts.

It makes it easier to have a focus. It's like having a buoy bobbing around in the sea – it gives you something to navigate by, instead of just being lost in all the waves.

Also, you might actually want to have a focus! If you've got some work to do or you want to enjoy the company of a loved one, then a mind wandering far and wide isn't very helpful. Whether you want to be effective, to enjoy yourself, or both, it's much more helpful to have a relaxed and positive focus.

The way to cultivate a relaxed and positive focus is very gently and with a great deal of patience.

Say you're doing a body scan. When you notice that your attention has wandered away from your body sensations, you might be tempted to criticise yourself. You might think something has gone wrong.



But nothing's gone wrong – that's simply what minds do.

And something's gone right – you've noticed! That means you've “woken up” to your experience in the moment, and you've remembered your intention to do a body scan.

So actually it's time to celebrate – congratulate yourself for noticing! That might feel strange at first, but it's crucial. Keep on congratulating yourself until you really *feel* that this is a moment of success, not failure.

Then, it's good to briefly notice what it is that's captured your attention, before allowing it to fade into the background of awareness, as you bring your body sensations to the fore once more.

To summarise:

1. When you notice your mind has wandered from your chosen focus,
2. Congratulate yourself for noticing,
3. Briefly note what has captured your attention,
4. ... and allow it to fade into the background, as you....
5. Bring your body sensations into the foreground of your attention

“Reconnect”

The Reconnect is way to re-activate mindfulness in 30 seconds or less. You don't need to close your eyes or change your posture.

Guide yourself through the Reconnect sequence by saying the instructions to yourself in your mind:

- Notice your feet
- Notice the position of your legs
- Notice the depth of your breathing
- Notice the sensations in your shoulders
- Notice what you can feel at your fingertips
- Notice how your head is balanced on your neck and spine
- Notice the feelings at the centre of your chest

Drop in the question:

- What's my purpose now?



“What’s My Purpose Now?”

big	<i>bring more happiness to the world</i>	<i>beauty</i>
small	<i>finish this email</i>	<i>enjoy the fresh air</i>
	functional	non-functional

When we ask the "What's my purpose now?" question, the idea is to be open to whatever response we get - which might be no response at all. If a response does come, it can be in many different forms - it might be a clear thought, a subtle image, a feeling or an intuition. All of these responses or non-responses are equally valid.

The “Purpose” that we’re referring to here can be big or small, and it can be functional or non-functional – see the table above.

Most people, most of the time, get quite everyday responses to the “What’s my purpose now?” question – that’s the lower row of the grid.

They can be functional (“drive to work”, “finish this email”, “get a good outcome from this meeting” etc) or non-functional (“enjoy the fresh air”, “spend time with John”, “notice the flowers,” etc). Both have their place.

Sometimes, you may get answers that point to a bigger sense of purpose. Don't expect these very often, and don't try to force them - but when they come, of course they are well worth paying attention to. Once again, these can be functional or non-functional. At this level, the "functional" ones tend to be about the sort of contribute we want to make - which is how we get satisfaction in life - and the non-functional ones tend to be more receptive and even harder to explain! But they can also be very clearly about what life is all about - connection with others, love, beauty and so on.

So - in essence, it's about simply accepting and appreciating whatever answers do or don't come. But I hope the map gives you an idea of the range of possibilities - and the value of the small and everyday being as much as the big and highly significant.



Bringing Brief Mindfulness to a Stressor

In this exercise, we'll bring Brief Mindfulness to bear on a stressor, and see what the effect is. I suggest choosing a stressor that's fairly significant – no so big you'll be overwhelmed, but not so small you won't notice the difference.

If you're doing this in a face-to-face class, I'll have given you a copy of the worksheet. But if you're working on-line, or you want to repeat the exercise, download the worksheet from the course resources page (<http://www.briefmindfulness.com/on-line/resources/>), and print it out.

Fold the worksheet in half along the dotted line, and place it in front of you with "Start Here" in the top left corner.

Having chosen your stressor, go through the following steps:

Step 1: Title, thoughts and feelings

- What would be a good name for the issue? Write it on the line
- Write down the first 5 thoughts that come into your head
- Write down 3 or 4 words that describe your emotions

Step 2: Reconnect

- Now put your pen down, Turn the paper over and do a "Reconnect."

Step 3: Title thoughts and feelings

- Write the name of this issue now? (It's usually the same as before, but sometimes a new name seems to fit better. Write down whatever seems most appropriate.)
- As before, write down the first 5 thoughts that come into your head..
- ...and 3 or 4 words that describe your emotions

Open the paper up. What's differences do you notice? How do you feel about the issue now?



Planning Your Week 2 Activities

Regular Opportunities to Reconnect

When will you Reconnect? (Choose 2 specific occasions for each day)

- 1.
- 2.

How will you remind yourself?

Early Signs of Stress – Prompts to Reconnect

Choose 2 (early) Signs of Stress that will tell you that you need to Reconnect:

- 3.
- 4.

12 Minute Body Scan

When will you do your 12 Minute Body Scan each day?

How will you remind yourself?



Week 2 Diary

	10 min Body Scan		Reconnect x4	
	When did you do it?	Notes (how did it go? What did you learn?)	When did you do it?	Notes (how did it go? What did you learn? etc)
Monday	<i>In the class!</i>		<i>In the class!</i>	
Tuesday				
Wednesday				
Thursday				
Friday				
Saturday				
Sunday				
Monday				

