

Mindfulness Playbook



Partners_{in}
Mindful Living

Robyn Norman

Dear Partner in Mindful Living,

Everybody's talking about mindfulness. But here's the thing—I wonder how many people actually practice it and integrate it into their lives?

The Mindfulness Playbook offers a collection of slogans that arose organically from years of watching how minds work and noticing some of the ways thoughts can trip us up.

They are a playful way to encourage your mind to serve you, rather than lead you around by the nose, as it may sometimes do.

I'll give you some practice ideas for each slogan. Better yet, come up with your own creative ideas for how to use them in the ways that will be most meaningful to you.

Much love,

Robyn

You can't know
what you don't know
before you know it,
so give yourself a break!



Practice Ideas

Think of something you've said to yourself a million times that starts with 'I should have...', or 'he/she/it should have...', something that every time you think about it you take a proverbial stick and beat yourself up for what you call your, or someone else's, 'stupidity'.

Explore how a different perspective might free up time and creative energy that has been wasted on arguing with reality. Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

When you feel uncomfortable, bring curiosity to whatever you're uncomfortable with, and see if it becomes a different experience.



Practice Ideas

Start small. The next time you have an itch, don't scratch it. See how long it lasts before it goes away or you forget about it. Get curious. Lean into it, really notice how it feels to not scratch an itch.

Once you've mastered the itch, try leaning into a headache or a feeling of discomfort anywhere in your body. Gently place your attention on the sensations. Soften and relax your body, especially the space around the sensations.

I encourage you to call what you experience a sensation rather than 'discomfort' or 'pain'. Does it shift? Get stronger or weaker? Change 'color' or texture? Have a temperature? Come and go? See what, if anything, you discover when you are curious rather than trying to get rid of something. Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

Ask for what you want;
sometimes it is that simple.



Practice Ideas

Notice the next time you hear yourself wishing someone would read your mind and give you what you want.

Instead of wishing, ask for what you want. Let no be an acceptable response.

No doesn't mean you're not loved. It means someone is not going to fulfill this particular want at this time. When you respect someone's no, you are free to find the person who will gladly give you what you want, or you'll give it to yourself, or you'll figure out that maybe you didn't want it as much as you thought you did.

An interesting outcome of getting good at accepting someone else's no is that you will likely get better at saying no yourself!

What's your relationship with 'no', either accepting or offering it? Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

Thoughts are just a bunch of words strung together; the only meaning they have is the meaning you give them.



Practice Ideas

Pay attention to your conversation. Notice when you offer an opinion or state a belief like it's a fact. Then ask yourself if it's really a fact, or simply an idea.

Pay attention to how intensely you hold onto some of your opinions. For example:

- People shouldn't be selfish.
- The world is less safe than it used to be.
- I'm too old to start something new.
- I'm not smart enough to create anything great.

Are those facts or ideas? Facts don't usually generate a lot of emotions or resistance. Opinions do. How does resistance affect your relationships?

What might happen if you loosened your hold on your opinions just a bit? Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

Do you have a story about yourself you'd like to change? Instead of lying in the bed you made, make it over !



Practice Ideas

Do a 'brain dump' of every single thing you want or wish you had. Everything—no editing or shaming or rationalizing yourself out of it with logic. Just get them all on paper.

Next, cross out the things that are likely not going to happen for you in this lifetime – like a trip to mars or being a brain surgeon if you have no hands.

Prioritize what's left by the intensity of your want.

Pick one. Investigate what it would take to satisfy that want. Identify one small first step and act on it. See what happens. How does it feel? Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

There is a world of people just waiting to support you.
Are you ready to let them in?



Practice Ideas

Make a list of things you've been putting off because you need help. Rank them in the order of immediate need toward the top and 'it would be nice down the road' toward the bottom.

You may be surprised that most of your wants are quite small and easy to satisfy. Pick one.

Make a list of five people who might be willing to help. If all five give you a no (which is highly unlikely), give it some time and pick another want. Ask again. If they all say no again, consider widening your circle of friends. Or looking at how available you've been to support them.

Most of us very much want to help. And we'd like you to give us more than one chance! What is this bringing up for you? Write about it.

Your Ideas & Notes

Pause.
Breathe all the way out.
Notice your story.
Soften your body.



This is the saying that started it all. I call it the green card. When I worked with people who immigrated to the US, I learned that the green card represents freedom to them. This card represents freedom to me.

Practice Ideas

Use throughout your day to calm down or to simply give your mind and body a break.

Pause – means just that. Stop whatever you're doing so that you can check in with yourself before your next action...

Breathe – Breathe all the way out -- put your attention on your next outbreath. Gently let all the air out and then let the in breath take care of itself. Do it a couple times. That will ground and center you, so that you can...

Notice your story – whatever you're thinking, notice and allow it. Painful, proud, sad, happy, resentful thoughts – notice them and then...

Soften your body – put your attention on noticing the physical sensations in your body, dropping your shoulders, relaxing your forehead, jaw, throat, tongue, belly - anything that's tight and tense and closed.

Play with it. Don't work on it.

You'll know you're playing when it feels like a gentle process, each step flowing into the next. You'll know you're working when you forget a step and tell yourself you did it wrong.

You can't do it wrong. It's play!

Pause.
Breath all the way out.
Notice your story.
Soften your body.



Your Ideas & Notes

Final Thoughts

I want to sincerely thank you for your practice. I believe we change the world as we become more mindful of how powerful every thought can be – for good or ill.

The Partners in Mindful Living website is home to many other resources:

- [Audiorecordings](#) of simple breath and body scan meditations
- [Inklings](#), thoughts by some brilliant thinkers
- [Links](#) to interesting and creative sites, blogs and articles we have run across
- [Books and other resources](#) to jumpstart your practice or support your existing one.

If you have comments or questions, please get in touch.

It is my absolute pleasure to answer all emails.

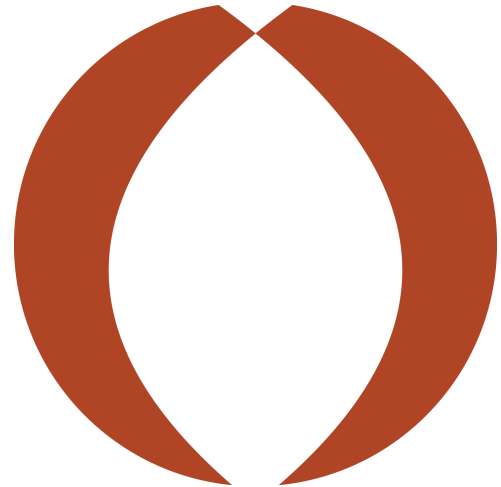
Finally, if you're not already subscribed to Seedlings, my bi-weekly mindfulness blog, [you can sign up here](#).

I promise all you'll get is the blog and maybe a very, very occasional announcement.

Again, thank you for your practice. You make a difference.

Much Love,

Robyn



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in
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