

Mindfulness
For Everyday Living
YMCA.
1st and 3rd Tuesdays
13:30 – 15:30



Mindfulness is deep work that challenges your natural way of thinking.

This week I've decided to pose a question for a change and see where it takes us.

Could We Develop Auto-Mindfulness?

We often talk and possibly think about mindfulness as something we should remember to do. But could mindfulness become a more automatic response in our daily lives, almost like a habit of awareness?

Possibly think of it as Autopilot (automatic responses) versus Auto mindfulness (awareness) is like this:

- **Autopilot** = the state of moving through daily life without conscious intention, awareness, or emotional engagement. It means acting on habit, where the brain prioritises routine over presence.
- **Auto Mindfulness** = the practice of intentionally engaging with routine tasks while maintaining awareness of the present moment, rather than zoning out. It involves using the efficiency of habitual actions (the "autopilot") while deliberately bringing conscious attention to sensory perceptions and actions, preventing the days from blending together.

For those of us that drive, do you remember when we were learning and it took all of our concentration to just learn to manoeuvre the gears and pedals, but gradually we could do it all without really thinking about it, and later it became quite natural and we could even hold a conversation while we were driving!

Could we develop mindfulness in a similar way – not forced, but just more readily available?

I gently invite you to think about what this means to you, here's a few possible suggestions, but there's many more:

- Do you experience moments of sudden presence?
- Can you think of habits that support calm awareness?
- Consider whether mindfulness can become part of our character rather than just an exercise.

Here's a few examples of Autopilot:

- Driving a familiar route and hardly remembering the journey.
- Making tea while thinking about anything other than the act of just making the tea.
- Reacting out of habit.

Autopilot is a very useful tool for routine tasks, but mindfulness invites us to notice when we are living on autopilot, and we have the choice to gently return to present awareness.

There are no right or wrong answers — my intention is using this as an exploration of our different experiences of awareness and habits of everyday living.

Jon Kabat Zinn tells us: "Mindfulness wakes you up to the fact that our lives unfold only in moments. If we are not fully present for many of those moments, we may not only miss what is most valuable in our lives but also fail to realise the richness and the depth of our possibilities for growth and transformation."

- 🌱 "The best way to capture moments is to pay attention. This is how we cultivate mindfulness."
- 🌱 "Life isn't missed in years—it's missed in seconds of distraction."
- 🌱 "The little things? The little moments? They aren't little."

The context of these quotes taken from his book "Wherever You Go, There You Are. Mindfulness Meditation for everyday life". Is to emphasise that because life is only lived in the present moment, constantly being distracted from the present moment or waiting for a "better" future causes us to miss a great portion of our life.

So over to you. What do you think, could you develop Auto-Mindfulness? would you want to?

Reading a poem mindfully means slowing down enough to notice not just *what* the poem says, but how it feels, sounds, moves, and changes your attention as you read. Read the poem straight through. Don't try to "solve" it. Just notice your first impressions:

Notice your own reactions

Reading poems Mindfully and from the heart, includes awareness of yourself:

- What emotions arise?
- Do certain lines remind you of memories or sensations?
- Does the poem make you physically feel anything — stillness, discomfort, warmth?

You don't need the "correct" interpretation for Mindfulness Poetry Reading.

Allow uncertainty

Poems often work through ambiguity. You do not have to pin down a single meaning. Sometimes the experience of the poem is more important than extracting a message, mindful reading might involve lingering over rhythm, silence, fragmentation, or emotional atmosphere rather than rushing to literary analysis. Read them three times.

A useful question to hold in mind is: "What are these poems asking me to notice?"

Just this breath, by Danna Faulds:

"Settle in the here and now.
Reach down into the centre
where the world is not spinning
and drink this holy peace.

Feel relief flood into every
cell. Nothing to do. Nothing
to be but what you are already.
Nothing to receive but what
flows effortlessly from the
mystery into form.

Nothing to run from or run
toward. Just this breath,
Awareness knowing itself as
embodiment. Just this breath,
awareness waking up to truth."

Just For Now, by Danna Faulds:

Just for now, *Without asking how, Let
yourself sink into stillness.*

Just for now, *lay down the weight You so
patiently bear upon your shoulders. Feel
the earth receive you, And the infinite
expanse of the sky grow even wider, As
your awareness reaches up to meet it.*

Just for now, *Allow a wave of breath to
enliven your experience.*

*Breathe out whatever blocks you from the
truth.*

Just for now, *Be boundless, free, With
awakened energy tingling in your hands
and feet. Drink in the possibility, Of being
who and what you really are, So fully alive
that the world looks different, Newly born
and vibrant, **Just for now.***

The Habit of Now

It starts not with a roar, but with a breath,
A gentle halt to "later" and to "when."
To break the cycle of distraction's death,
And enter this familiar moment—then.
The habit of now is to stand and see,
The cup, the chair, the sky's unedited view.
To cease the striving of who I should be,
And embrace the raw reality of you.
It's the quiet anchoring of drifting mind,
When thoughts of past or future pull away.
A soft return, a loving grace to find,
Right here, within the centre of the day.
No magic required, no special place,
Just the sacred rhythm of the heart's return.
To trust the stillness, to accept the space,
And live the lesson I am here to learn.

(Anonymous) – from Jeff