



What is Mindfulness Meditation?

It is you and me; it is us! Our inner journey, our busyness, our effort, nobody can do it for us.

Meditation is a way of connecting with our inner wisdom and compassion, while learning to understand and work with our thoughts, feelings and habits.

Mindfulness meditation is an **inner journey** — time spent with ourselves, getting to know the “us” beneath our habits, opinions, reactions and ways of thinking.

We are surrounded every day by an endless flow of things we hear, see, read and experience. We naturally filter much of this information according to what fits our existing beliefs and our image of ourselves. Sometimes it is useful to step back and take a wider view. We may then notice possibilities we had previously overlooked and begin to live more authentically.

Mindfulness can help us recognise some of our deeply established habits of thinking and feeling. It teaches us to pause, observe and choose how we respond rather than automatically reacting.

Getting to Know Ourselves

Many of us keep ourselves constantly busy, leaving little time for quiet reflection. Sometimes being busy can even help us avoid uncomfortable thoughts or feelings.

A simple mindfulness practice is to check in with ourselves when we wake up. How am I feeling today? What sort of night have I had? Am I calm, happy, anxious, sad or simply tired?

If you wake up feeling that you have got out of the wrong side of the bed, close your eyes, take a few deep breaths and **get out of your head and into your day. Count your blessings:**

- You have a bed to rest in.
- You have a home.
- You have warm clothes.
- You have food to eat.

Many people do not have these things. Remember that, **so long as you are breathing, there is more right with you than there is wrong.**

And if you wake up happy and full of the joys of spring — be grateful for that too!

You Are Not Your Thoughts

One of the most important things mindfulness teaches us is that **we are not our thoughts.**

Think of your thoughts as clouds passing across the sky. Some are light and wispy and disappear quickly. Others are darker and heavier, perhaps connected to anger, fear, anxiety or old memories. But however convincing they may feel, they are still thoughts — they are not facts, and they are not who we are.

We can learn to observe our thoughts without becoming caught up in their story.

For example, you may have the thought: *"I'm not good with people."* Instead of accepting this as a fact, mindfulness allows you to notice: *"I'm having the thought that I'm not good with people."* That small change creates a little space between **you** and the thought. With practice, its power over you can begin to weaken.

Breaking the Thought Chain

When we meditate, thoughts will inevitably arise. One thought can quickly lead to another, and before we know it, we have followed a whole story.

Perhaps you remember that you have been invited to dinner next week. You start wondering whether you want to go, then whether you'll feel like going, then what might happen if you don't go — and suddenly your mind is running through endless possibilities.

This is **following the thought thread mindlessly**.

Mindfulness is recognising the thought thread early and gently stepping away from it.

Notice the thought. Acknowledge it without judgement. Then return your attention to your breath.

You haven't failed because your mind wandered. **The moment you notice that your mind has wandered is itself a moment of mindfulness.**

Try this simple example: think of an elephant. Now try very hard *not* to think about it. It's almost impossible! Thoughts cannot simply be forced away. Instead, gently move your attention somewhere else — perhaps to the feeling of your toes or your breath — and the elephant will eventually disappear by itself.

Mindfulness Meditation in Practice

Mindfulness is about becoming aware of the present moment and accepting what is here, without constantly trying to change or control it.

It is about letting go of judgement and preconceptions, and approaching ourselves with patience, kindness and curiosity.

A Short Meditation on the Breath

- Find a quiet, comfortable place where you can sit or lie down.
- Allow your posture to be relaxed but dignified.
- Take a moment to set an intention. What would you like from this time — peace, insight, relaxation or simply a few quiet moments?
- Gently close your eyes or soften your gaze.
- Take a few slow, deep breaths. As you breathe in, notice the breath; as you breathe out, allow some of the day's busyness to soften.
- Bring your attention to your breath. Notice the movement of your body, the air entering and leaving your nostrils, or whatever feels most natural.
- Your mind **will** wander. When you notice this, simply acknowledge it and gently return your attention to your breath.
- Begin with around 10 minutes and gradually increase the time if you wish.
- When you are ready, slowly bring your attention back to the room, open your eyes and gently stretch.

There is no need to achieve anything. **The practice is simply noticing and returning.**

A Short Body Scan

Bring your attention to your body and notice the sensations without trying to change them.

Notice your feet on the floor; your legs against the chair; your back; your stomach; your hands and arms; your shoulders; your neck and throat; your jaw and face.

Wherever you notice tension, see if you can soften around it.

Take a slow breath and become aware of your whole body sitting or lying here.

Then, when you are ready, open your eyes.

Everyday Mindfulness

Mindfulness doesn't have to happen only when we are sitting down to meditate. We can practise it throughout the day.

Try giving your full attention to ordinary activities:

Showering • Cleaning your teeth • Drinking • Walking • Cooking • Gardening • Having a cup of tea or coffee

Notice what you are doing, rather than automatically rushing through it while your mind is somewhere else.

It is perfectly natural to go into “autopilot” sometimes. The important thing is to **notice when you have drifted away and gently return to the present.**

If you feel anxious or stressed, pause and take a few slow breaths. Give yourself a moment before reacting.

Be kind to yourself. Nobody is perfect — we are all human. Mindfulness is not about becoming a different person; it is about getting to know and accept the person you already are.

Some Benefits of Mindfulness

Regular mindfulness practice may help us to:

- Become more aware of our thoughts and feelings
- Reduce stress and tension
- Improve concentration and focus
- Respond rather than automatically react
- Develop greater self-compassion
- Improve our relationships and connections with others
- Create a greater sense of balance and wellbeing

There is no “wrong” way to practise mindfulness. You might meditate alone or in a group, practise through yoga or Qigong, walk mindfully, enjoy a favourite hobby, or simply sit quietly with a cup of tea and watch the world go by.

The important thing is to be present for the life you are actually living.

Finding Meditations

There are many free mindfulness meditations available online. Bangor University's **Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice** provides a selection of guided meditations, including some in Welsh:

[Bangor University – Centre for Mindfulness](#)

The Story of the Two Wolves



An old Cherokee Indian chief was teaching his grandson about life.

“A fight is going on inside me,” he told the young boy, “A fight between two wolves. One is evil, full of anger, sorrow, regret, greed, self-pity and false pride.

The other is good, full of joy, peace, love, humility, kindness and faith.”

“This same fight is going on inside of you, grandson...and inside of every other person on the face of this earth.”

The grandson ponders this for a moment and then asks, “Grandfather, which wolf will win?”

The old man smiled and simply said, “**The one you feed.**”

Perhaps that is one of the simplest ways to think about mindfulness. We cannot always choose the thoughts that appear in our minds, but we can become more aware of which thoughts we give our attention to — and, with practice, learn to choose what we feed.

Where the Mind Meets the Sea

Upon the shore where golden sands
Meet waves that softly rise and fall,
I pause and breathe, and simply be,
No need to hurry, chase, or call.

Behind me, dunes in gentle curves
Stand quietly beneath the sky,
And like those dunes, I learn to bend,
To let the passing moments fly.

With every breath, I come back home,
To now, to here, to what is real;
I notice life, I taste, I hear,
And give myself the time to feel.

The sea reminds me: life will change,
The tide will turn, the winds will blow;
But when I meet each day with care,
I find a calmer way to grow.

Enjoy your mindfulness journey.