

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



Mindfulness is not a magic fix. It requires a sense of curiosity, realistic expectations, an ongoing commitment and discipline.
Willim Kuyken, PhD.

A Mindfulness Road Map for Everyday Living.

Over the next few meetings, we're going to consider the tools we use to help us build our parachute, think of it as your Mindfulness Toolbox. I thought I'd design a map with prompts to assist you but remember I've built this around my own personal mindfulness toolbox which comes from my own experience of life and my needs to navigate the chaos of the internal and external world around me, yours might be similar or totally different to mine, so open your mind and experiment with your experiences and needs.

The map is my metaphorical toolbox, but I also have an actual toolbox, it's a room with all my precious mementos in it that I've collected over the years. It includes candles, aromatherapy diffusers and oils, my books relevant to my personal growth, crystals, various types of cards that I use to set my intentions... you get the idea. I have various little rituals to compliment my meditations.

The power of the toolbox is that if we practice consistently, even if it's only ten minutes each day, our mind will be strong, and our equilibrium balanced for the difficult times that ultimately turn up when we least expect them.

Give yourself the gift of time and space, for a part of each day, short or long, step off the treadmill of your "to do" list, move out of auto pilot, blow your thoughts and distractions into the ether, breathe and

You could consider if perhaps mindfulness isn't really a road that we travel along, with a beginning, and an end. I've always considered my journey to be scattered with a stream of little "light-bulb moments" that gradually appear along the way. I think of them a landmark or a fork in the road, often there's a choice, which fork do we take? Sometimes they can be so small that we miss the turning all together.

We notice that we didn't react as quickly as we might have done. We listen to someone without immediately thinking about what we're going to say next. We catch ourselves worrying about something that hasn't happened yet — and gently come back to the present.

*And then, perhaps weeks or months later, something happens and we suddenly think:
"Ah... I understand that now." 💡*

We may not even realise that our mindfulness practice is changing us until one of those moments creeps up on us. We become a little more aware. A little more accepting. A little kinder to ourselves. Perhaps a little better at letting things be. And sometimes, a little better at seeing that we actually have a choice in how we respond.

But mindfulness isn't a straight line. There will be days when we seem to have forgotten everything we've learnt. We'll become impatient, distracted, irritated or caught up in our thoughts. We may react in exactly the way we thought we'd moved beyond.

That's not failure — that's being human.

Sometimes we take a few steps backwards. Sometimes we simply wander off the path altogether. The important thing is that another light-bulb moment may be waiting for us when we're ready to notice it.

Perhaps the real growth isn't about becoming permanently calm or "better" at mindfulness. Perhaps it's simply about *noticing more often*. And one day we look back and realise that, almost without noticing, we've travelled quite a long way.

There are no shortcuts. And no one else can walk the road for us, but many will walk beside us, sometimes we might not even realise the gift some have given us until a long time later.

But we don't have to walk it perfectly either. We just keep noticing the little lights along the way. 💡

Consider my choices for my toolbox, we'll discuss them in order, maybe three each meeting.

I'd like you to ask yourself what your toolbox would like it? What would you add, subtract or structure your toolbox in a totally different way?

Mindfulness Road Map for Everyday Living

Different paths • Same journey
A little more presence • A lot more life

The destination is
the journey itself

A little more awake
to the life we're
actually living.

1 Awareness

What am I noticing?

Bring attention to the senses:



See



Hear



Feel



Taste



Smell

Come out of autopilot
and back into the present moment.

2 Choice

Do I need to react,
or can I respond?

Create a little space
between what happens
and what we do next.

REACT

RESPOND

3 Acceptance

Can I allow this moment
to be as it is?

Not liking something isn't required.
Acceptance simply means
recognising "this is what is
happening right now."

4 Your Mindfulness Toolbox

Choose what fits the moment:

- ♥ Mindful breathing
- ♥ Grounding through the senses
- ♥ RAIN
- ♥ Walking meditation
- ♥ Listening
- ♥ Noticing thoughts
- ♥ Gratitude
- ♥ Self-kindness
- ♥ A mindful pause



5 Connection

How am I relating to myself
and others?

Listen more deeply. Notice
another person's perspective.
Practise empathy and kindness
— without needing to fix
everything.

6 Letting Go

What can I put down?

Notice when we're holding
onto yesterday, rehearsing
tomorrow or trying to control
what isn't ours to control.

YESTERDAY

TOMORROW

CONTROL

Let go

START HERE
Arrive

Where am I right now?

Pause. Breathe. Notice
what is happening in your
body, thoughts and emotions
— without needing to
change anything.

7 Appreciation

What's here that I might
otherwise miss?

Small things count: sunlight,
birdsong, a cup of tea, laughter,
someone's kindness, the feeling
of feet on the ground.



There are no short cuts,
and no one else can walk
the road for us.



RAIN

I've mention RAIN as being part of my Mindfulness Toolbox, so here's a brief explanation of its origins...

"RAIN was developed by Michele McDonald and adapted and popularised by Tara Brach."

You can find Tara's own explanation and guided resources on her [official RAIN resources page](#).

Tara also describes an optional stage called "After the RAIN", where you rest in awareness.

After the Rain — A Moment to Rest

And now, having recognised, allowed, investigated and nurtured what is here, we can simply rest in the moment. There is nothing more we need to do, nothing to fix and nowhere else we need to be. Like the sky after a shower, we can allow a little space for calm, clarity and ease to emerge naturally. We may still have clouds, but we can begin to notice the openness beyond them. Take a gentle breath, feel the support beneath you and give yourself permission to simply be. This is your moment to rest, reconnect and remember that you are more than whatever you are feeling right now.

I've put the posters on separate pages so that you can print them out if you want.

The RAIN Practice

A simple way to be with whatever arises

The RAIN practice was developed by Tara Brach, a psychologist, teacher and mindfulness practitioner, as a way to meet difficult emotions with kindness, awareness and greater ease.

"You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf."

JON KABAT-ZINN



Recognise

Notice what's here, with kindness and curiosity.

The first step is to simply notice what's happening — in your body, your mind and your emotions. You don't have to change anything, just be aware.

In practice:

- Notice the emotion (e.g. anxiety, sadness, anger).
- Notice where you feel it in your body.
- Acknowledge what's happening without judging it.
- You might simply say to yourself, "Ah, there it is."



Allow

Give it space, without trying to push it away or fix it.

Instead of fighting what we're feeling, we allow it to be there. This doesn't mean we like it — it means we stop resisting it. Feelings pass, and we can ride the wave with a little more ease.

In practice:

- Take a breath and soften.
- Let the feeling be there, just as it is.
- Notice any urge to push it away, change it or escape it.
- Remind yourself: "It's OK to feel this."



Investigate

Be curious, not critical.

With a gentle, open mind, we can explore what's really going on. What do you need? What is this feeling trying to tell you? This builds self-awareness and helps us respond rather than react.

In practice:

- Ask yourself: What am I feeling? What do I need right now?
- Notice any thoughts and stories that arise.
- Be curious, not judgemental.
- See if there's a lesson or a message in the moment.



Nurture

Offer yourself kindness and care.

The final step is to respond with kindness — to yourself and to others. You might choose to take a little action, rest, or simply be gentle with yourself. Nurture helps us feel more grounded and open-hearted.

In practice:

- Place a hand on your heart or take a soothing breath.
- Say something kind to yourself.
- Choose a small act of self-care (e.g. rest, a drink, a walk, or reach out to someone you trust).
- Let go of what you can't control, and return to what matters.

RAIN won't make everything perfect...
but it can help you feel more grounded,
more present and more you.



Mindfulness isn't about
never feeling difficult
emotions — it's about
learning to be with them.

