

***THE
MINDFUL
COMPANION***

***TOP MINDFULNESS QUOTES AND HOW
THEY CAN SUPPORT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH***

BY

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Introduction

Welcome to *The Mindfulness Companion* EBook!

This EBook has been created to give you access to wisdom and insights that leaders have gleaned over their lives to deal more effectively with difficult thoughts and emotions that can keep you feeling stuck in everyday life. Unknowingly, most of us struggle with habitual styles of thinking and dealing with negative emotions that only end up exacerbating our perceptions of pain and stress. This cycle takes us farther away from living the lives we want to live.

Based on thousands of years of wisdom combined with modern psychological research, this EBook offers explorations of quotes that illuminate effective ways to relate to pain and stress. Mindfulness teaches that there are two things you can never get away from in life...pain and stress. However, how you choose to relate to these two things determines how much you suffer from them. In other words, in reading and working with some of the quotes in this EBook, you can unearth your own insights and learn to “come to terms with the way things are,” tapping into your deep reservoir of inner strength and beginning the process of healing with equanimity and a peaceful heart.

As an introductory quote, the Philosopher, Abraham Joshua Heschel provides us with the quote, “Life is routine, and routine is resistance to wonder.” Through the practice of mindfulness you can become aware of, and break free from old styles of being and doing. You can learn to widen your lens and begin to see parts of life and yourself that you never knew were there before. Widening your perspective allows you to drink from the deep well of life and see that what was once unconsciously routine, now becomes wonderful, and what was once an emotional wound, now becomes sacred ground.

I would like to offer some suggestions for how to use this educational and interactive EBook. Read chapter 2 first as this gives you a foundation in mindfulness. Chapter 3 through 8 primes the pump for your own work by offering explorations of key quotes from leaders such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Pema Chodron and more. Chapter 9 allows you to delve deeper, exploring what other key quotes mean to you, providing you the space to write them out for yourself. Chapter 10 is simply a list of additional quotes that you may find meaningful. Chapter 11 provides important resources for you to go further in cultivating Mindful Living.

Ultimately of course, it will be up to you and your own knowing and intuition to work with the quotes in a way that feels right for you.

To go further, check out our other offerings such as the psychoeducational and experiential CDs and EBooks, [*Mindful Solutions for Stress, Anxiety, and Depression*](#), [*Mindful Solutions for Addiction and Relapse Prevention*](#), and [*Mindful Solutions for Success and Stress Reduction at Work*](#). You can [click here to see the EBooks.](#)

May your practice lead to you feeling safe, happy, healthy, and at peace.

Chapter One:

What is Mindfulness?

What is mindfulness? Mindfulness is the ability to cultivate awareness of the present moment while putting aside our lenses of judgment. It is being in connection with the direct experience of the present moment, the here and now. You may be able to connect with the example of your minds feeling out of control at times, or your emotions feeling imbalanced. The practice of mindfulness offers us the unique strength of learning how to control our own minds, instead of our minds controlling us. Today, thanks in large part to research by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues; mindfulness training is being used by hundreds of hospitals around the country dealing with issues such as chronic pain, anxiety, depression, insomnia, and more.

In an age where life seems to be accelerating, stress naturally seems to be increasing, and your attention can often be in multiple places at once, it is easy for your mood to gravitate toward depression and anxiety. I've worked with hundreds of individuals who attest to the idea that throughout the day our minds tend to venture backwards into grievances of the past or forwards to worries of the future. Now there is nothing inherently wrong with making other plans or carrying on about grievances or worries, except when you're not consciously choosing to do it and therefore, not in control of your own mind. When you're not choosing to

think about these things they can often feel like unwanted guests that you can't seem to get away from which feeds into symptoms and emotions of stress, sadness, frustration, irritation, shame, or guilt. The inability to concentrate can create problems in relationships, work, and in general enjoyment of life. In practicing mindfulness you learn to become aware when the mind is ruminating about the past or future without your permission, and then to gently bring it back to what you choose to focus on, giving the control back to *you*, making *you* more effective in your day to day life. Ultimately giving you the ability to live the life you *want* to live.

Mindfulness can also be seen as a *way of life* and can be practiced in two ways: informally and formally. In doing formal practice, you intentionally set time aside to sit, stand, or lie down and focus on breathing, or sensations in the body, thoughts, emotions, or any other object of awareness.

The informal practices involve weaving mindfulness into your everyday life. This simply means being consciously present when doing any of the activities that you normally do. For example, how often are you in the shower only to be thinking or worrying about all the things that need to get done that day? Or how often are you eating a meal only to find that you're almost done and have not even tasted the food yet? Or how often do you find your mind drifting while a friend is talking only to find the next line

coming from his or her mouth to be “are you listening to me”? There is some truth to the Beatle’s line “life is what happens while we’re busy making other plans.” In practicing informally you begin to step into the direct experience of your life and choose the plans you want to make, moment to moment.

Dr. Richie Davidson, a neuroscientist at the University of Wisconsin, has conducted research with brain imaging technology that suggests that each of us has a “natural” set point for good and bad moods. He was able to show that people who are naturally calmer and happier show more activity on the left side of the brain versus the right. He also found that people who show more activity on the right side tend to exhibit more feelings of sadness, worry, and anxiety.

In a follow up study exploring the effects of mindfulness meditation, he found that after practicing people tended to shift activity from the right side of the brain, the negative emotion area, to the left side of the brain, the positive emotion area. After the study, participants also reported feeling improved mood, more energized, and less anxious. Additionally, participants realized positive effects on their immune systems measured by a reduction in flu antibodies in their blood stream after receiving a flu shot.

This is just one example of a robust amount of research being conducted that points to the physical and mental benefits of practicing mindfulness in daily life. Mindfulness allows you to take a step out of the storm that may be occurring in your mind and body and make healthier decisions for yourself that guide you away from stress and into well-being.

In doing mindfulness practices you begin to learn how to slow time down, acknowledging your habitual patterns of the mind and your every day activity that no longer serves you. You can become less critical of yourself and more aware of and in control of your mental ruminations as you guide yourself into the present moment. You can learn to have warmth and compassion for yourself and most of all you can begin to become deeply in touch with what makes life worth living.

Chapter Two:

Pema Chodron on Difficult People

"If we learn to open our hearts, anyone, including the people who drive us crazy, can be our teacher."

Sure, it's happened to me. I was driving on the road enroute to the office to see a patient and it seemed like everyone on the road was fleeing from some oncoming catastrophe that was about to hit at any moment (including me). One guy sped by me, cutting me off and was inches away from hitting me. "Hey," I yelled hoping this guy gets in an accident to teach him a lesson. I felt the anger burning in my heart and mind.

I noticed my muscles tense and my hands white knuckling it on the steering wheel. "Wait a minute," I thought "I don't know this guy; I don't know the issues he's dealing with right now. He's obviously in a place of unawareness or maybe even anxiousness. Maybe he actually is running or going to some catastrophe."

I began to wish him well, safe from harm and from accident. I knew that if he actually was well, he wouldn't be driving that recklessly and everyone, including him, would be safer on the road. So I had no qualms about wishing him well.

In this way, this man became my teacher, helping me understand that I don't need to react so aggressively in my mind (or my behaviors). I can acknowledge my anger and still try and put myself in another's shoes for the purpose of gaining perspective. It even helps me to wish another well as I know there are so many in pain and who are suffering and it's often from a place of auto-pilot and unawareness where unskillful actions arise.

I could have easily been "driven crazy" from this man's actions. But instead he became a teacher for me.

In some instances of abuse and trauma, this may be a very difficult practice to do. That is ok; we don't need to do it with the most difficult people in our lives. We can start with people who are little less triggering.

Who in your life drives you bananas? Can you put yourself in their shoes, seeing their pain, and begin wishing the well (knowing that if they were well then that would benefit you and many others?) What does this teach you about yourself?

Chapter Three:

Walter Landor on Happiness

“As soon as we wish to be happier, we are no longer happy.”

How true this is. We are a culture driven by the motto, more is better. If we turn on the television or glance over at the magazines at the checkout line in any grocery store, we see the sensational “bling” and the “more” we are looking for. Our minds automatically say, “If I just had a bigger house, a partner, more money, a snowcone, etc... then I’d be happy.”

Author and renowned mindfulness teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh says, “There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way.”

Landor’s quote echoes a millennia of teachings that say, as soon as we are reaching or grasping for something that is outside of this present moment, we get the sense that what we are or have is less than adequate in this moment. Our contentment drifts away and so does the potential for happiness right now.

For example, we could be feeling quite content in the moment and then see the car we’ve been wanting drive by with the thought, “Ahh, I’d feel better if I had that car.” Immediately, we are no longer content with the way things are. Our situation hasn’t changed at all, just a thought of “wanting

or needing more” than we current have has drifted into our minds, followed by feelings of discontent.

What to do: With an attitude of curiosity and nonjudgment, we can notice when this is happening and recognize it as a habitual reaction our minds get caught up in. We can also notice the feeling that comes along with it (i.e, despair) and if possible. This is the conditioned interaction between your thoughts, emotions, and body.

You don't have to buy into it, but just become aware of it. When you're aware of it, you can bring yourself back to the now and recognize that you likely have all you need and in fact, you are likely better off than most on this planet.

Then: Choose to list 5 things you are grateful for in your life in that moment. See what happens. You may not be aware enough to do this each time, but beginning to plant this seed can pave a path toward greater freedom and happiness.

Chapter Four:

Rumi on Auto-Pilot

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you.

Don't go back to sleep.

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep.

People are going back and forth across the door sill

Where the two worlds touch.

The door is round and open.

Don't go back to sleep.

With the beginning of the week comes an opportunity (which is really available to us at any moment) to recognize that we may be starting the week off from a place of auto-pilot, falling into the same old habitual styles of thinking and behavior that we're really wanting to change. This might mean engaging in habits that don't serve your health and well-being (e.g., drinking/eating too much, isolating, too much TV) or with habitual ways of thinking (e.g., negative self talk).

Rumi reminds us that "the breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you. Don't go back to sleep." This reminds us that right from the morning time, we can

break out of our habitual tendencies and become present. We don't need to fall back into the "same old, same old."

What is it that you really want? Re-mind yourself of it and "don't go back to sleep."

However, he notes how it is very subtle, we touch the ability to change, going "back and forth across the doorsill."

He reminds us that the doorsill is there, it's "round and open," deep down we can feel it and may have even tasted it.

Sometimes it takes a reminder like this, to put us into a place where we can see the doorsill, see the hope, to make a change. When we have the experience of making the change, this allows us to trust ourselves that we can indeed do it. We'll still cross back and forth across the doorsill from time to time, but over time, with practice, we'll be more awake and cross over less and less.

Give yourself the gift of crossing the doorsill and not "going back to sleep."

Chapter Five:

Thich Nhat Hanh on Happiness

There is no way to happiness, happiness is the way.

It can sometimes seem like we are on a lifetime quest to achieve happiness. “Once I find my soul mate, then I’ll be happy” or “If I get that promotion, then I’ll be happy” or “Once I’m making this or that income, then I’ll be happy.” Woven within the mere thought itself is a sense of being “less than” you want to be and therefore makes you less happy than you were before that thought even arrived.

Some might argue that it’s not the conditions of our lives that make us happy (although some can certainly help at times), it’s the way we relate to ourselves and our lives that provide the happiness. It’s the way we walk through life.

In other words, we’re always practicing something. If we spend our time wrestling with negative, excessive worrying, or hopeless thoughts, we’re practicing *unhappiness*. If we spend our time noticing and acknowledging these unhelpful habits of the mind, without judgment, we can then choose to turn our attention to matters that walk in line with greater happiness and sense of peace.

In the realm of behavioral therapy, a therapist might say, “what would you be *doing* differently if you were happy?” Some people might answer, “I’d be smiling more” or “I’d be riding my bike” or “I’d be spending giving more to others.” Then the response from the therapist would be, “now let’s put these into action.”

Sometimes we need to put our feet in front of our heads and then our thoughts and emotions will follow. We don’t have to climb Mount Everest, but if all you can do is take even one step in that direction, it can make a difference.

Try: What would you do if you were happy or what have you done when you’ve been happy? Write these things down and begin practicing them. Don’t take my word for it, try it yourself and see what happens.

Chapter Six:

An Ancient Saying on Difficult Emotions

Can you keep your heart open in hell?

In my own life I have always felt stories and metaphors with morals have been powerful in helping me really *get* a message on a deeper level. This is no secret, that's why *Chicken Soup for the Soul* and *Aesop's Fables* have been so enduringly popular. There is something about them that seem to hit us on an emotional level where their messages really stick. When I was starting out as a Psychologist I set up times with leading therapists to glean their wisdom to support me in really getting started on the right foot. I asked one therapist the question, "In your time as a therapist, what has been one of the greatest things you've learned?" He looked up and began to think. After a few moments, he looked back in my eyes and said, "While people may come in to see me once a week or so, the real therapy happens in their daily lives. I could spend an entire session with a couple trying to explain and enact the therapeutic concept of remaining present, empathic, and compassionate to the other even during difficult times and while this may support them in the moment, the message may or may not stick with them throughout the week where the real therapy occurs. But, if I ask 'Can you keep your heart open in hell', this may really stay with them and they

are more likely to be able to grab it when difficulty arises. If they use it during difficult times that is when change really happens.

“Can you keep your heart open in hell” to me, says, in those moments when we are wrought by our habits that keep us stuck in perpetual avoidance of what’s uncomfortable or foreign, can we stay with that discomfort and open up to ourselves or another with a sense of compassion and love. What difference would this make? Yes, what difference would it make if we were able to put ourselves in another shoes a bit more often instead of reacting with defensiveness or attacks? What difference would it make if we were able to sit with the sadness or fear, sending ourselves [loving kindness](#), instead of reaching for that next piece of chocolate cake, ice cream, or substance of choice? What difference would it make if we actually allowed ourselves to love or be loved, instead of constantly keeping all feelings at bay in order just to feel a false sense of *safety*?

The effectiveness of these words hits me on a fundamental level as someone who has been on both sides of the couch. How can we get in touch with our hearts a bit more, especially in the midst of our most difficult moments?

Attitudes to cultivate to keep our hearts open in hell:

Allowing the words and attitudes of acknowledging, allowing, letting be, non-judgment, non-striving, compassion, and empathy to pervade our minds during these times can be an enormous help during difficult times.

Learning to keep our hearts open in hell may just be what is necessary to break free from our habitual patterns that bind us, and into the lives we want.

Are there any stories that have touched you or influenced you?

Chapter Seven:
Jon Kabat-Zinn on Change

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

In everyday life we are guaranteed to have things rise and fall all the time. At one point someone we know is having a baby and close to the same time someone is passing away. Someone is getting married, while another couple is getting a divorce. During a certain phase of life this may seem like the worst time that will ever be and two months later something wonderful happens.

Everyone has ups and downs, sometimes seemingly more extreme than others. To make this more specific to mental health issues. If someone is struggling with Panic Disorder, the panic attacks have an initial lift of the wave, peak, and then eventually come down. Cravings and urges for addictive behaviors follow the same course as well as compulsions for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Those struggling with bipolar disorder certainly understand the rise and fall of these waves.

The distress comes up as waves of sensations coming and going. Our work is to learn how to surf them so that we come to acknowledge the wave when it is there, become present to it, and now have the choice to get on the board and ride it out with a greater sense of ease and grace.

The late Richard Carlson, author of *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff and it's all Small Stuff*, had a chapter that I always appreciate that was titled "Be Grateful for the Good Times and Graceful during the more Difficult Times." In *The Prophet*, Kahlil Gibran speaks about how all our emotions are always present, it's just that when depression is there, happiness is slumbering and when happiness is there, depression is slumbering.

Life seems to have the element of rising and falling like waves in the ocean. One way to learn how to surf is by engaging in mindfulness practices. You can do a number of things to learn more about this and integrate it more into your daily life.

1. Stay tuned and look at past posts of the [Mindfulness & Psychotherapy Blog](#)
2. Google Mindfulness programs in your area and attend to check them out
3. Purchase [Guided Mindfulness Meditation CDs](#) or programs
4. Follow the [Mindful Living twitter feed](#)
5. Go onto Youtube and see what guided practices they have there to follow, but look up the person to see if this is someone you want to receive guidance from.

What helps you to surf the inevitable tides of life?

Chapter Eight:

Quotes for You to Work With

Sometimes writing about what quotes mean to you can be a very good practice to integrate them into your own life. The following is a list of quotes by esteemed leaders such as the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh, Pema Chodron, Joseph Goldstein, and others. Underneath each quote, take a moment and write about what it means to you in daily life. If you like, email them to me and if you give me permission, they may just become a blog on Psychcentral.com's *Mondays Mindful Quote*. .

Chapter 9

Other Quotes You May Resonate With

Here are some other quotes that you resonate with?

Half an hour of meditation each day is essential, except when you are busy. Then a full hour is needed. ~Saint Francis de Sales

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. ~ Albert Einstein

I thank God for my handicaps, for through them I have found myself, my work, my God. ~ Helen Keller

Not a day passes over the earth, but men and women of note do great deeds, speak great words and suffer noble sorrows. ~ Charles Reade

A billion stars go spinning through the night, blazing high above your head. But in you is the presence that will be, when all the stars are dead.

~Rainer Maria Rilke

Man is unhappy because he does not know he is happy. It's only that. That's all, that is all! If one finds out, one will become happy at once, that minute.

~(Dostoevsky, The Possessed)

Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. ~Mark Twain

The irrationality of a thing is no argument against it's existence, but rather a condition of it. ~Friedrich Nietzsche

*All credibility, all good conscience, all evidence of truth, come only from the senses.
~Friedrich Nietzsche*

We must become the change we want to see. ~Ghandi

*No matter how far you have gone down the wrong road, turn back. ~Turkish
Proverb*

Chapter 10

About the Author and Further Resources

Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D. is in private practice in West Los Angeles and co-author of *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*, Foreword by Jon Kabat-Zinn (New Harbinger, February 2010). He synthesizes the pearls of traditional psychotherapy with a progressive integration of mindfulness to achieve mental and emotional healing. He contends that we have the power to transform our traumas and habitual patterns that keep us stuck in perpetual stress, anxiety, depression, or addiction and step into greater freedom and peace. He offers practical strategies to calm our anxious minds, transform negative emotions and facilitate greater self acceptance, freedom and inner peace.

Dr. Goldstein, who comes from a family of psychologists, advocates that mental health comes from an approach that looks at all aspects of the self - physical, mental, emotional, and even spiritual.

As a licensed Psychologist, he teaches mindfulness-based programs on his own and through [InsightLA](#). He has spoken at UCLA Semel Institute and Anxiety Disorder Clinic, The UCLA Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Conference headlining Thich Nhat Hanh, Jack Kornfield, and Dr. Daniel Siegel, University of Washington, among others, and is the author of the popular [Mindfulness and Psychotherapy blog on Psychcentral.com](#) and

Mentalhelp.net. He has been published in *The Journal of Clinical Psychology* and quoted in the New York Daily News, Reuters, NPR, UCLA Today, and The Week Magazine.

In his new book, *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook* (New Harbinger, February 2010), he and Bob Stahl, Ph.D. offer professionals and lay people a book that takes them step-by-step through the clinically proven program *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction* and provide over 8.5 hours of audio for guided meditation practice to support the transformation of stress, pain, and illness into greater awareness, freedom, and peace. His previous popular CDs include *Mindful Solutions for Stress, Anxiety, and Depression*, *Mindful Solutions for Addiction and Relapse Prevention*, *Mindful Solutions for Success and Stress Reduction at work*, *Mindful Solutions for Adults with ADD/ADHD* (coming soon - produced in collaboration with Lidia Zylowska M.D.) and an online multimedia program, *Mindfulness, Anxiety, and Stress*.

He currently offers individual and group psychotherapy in the West Los Angeles area and also offers mindfulness coaching via phone.

Click here to contact us.