

THE MINDFUL RESET

A Guide for a Calmer You

WELCOME!

Thank you for downloading *The Mindful Reset*, a guide for a calmer you.

Mindfulness is a scientifically proven method for learning to manage stress and challenging situations and emotions.

In this ebook, you'll find practical tips and exercises for integrating mindfulness into your day-to-day life.

Because mindfulness might sound like an easy fix, but actually doing it is much more challenging.

The real difficulty lies in finding space for mindfulness in everyday life, especially when stress, distractions, or difficult emotions make staying present a struggle.



Mila de Koning

Personally, mindfulness has brought me greater peace and relaxation in my often hectic life.

Where I once felt overwhelmed and caught between work, family, household duties, and being a good friend, I am now more aware of the peaceful moments throughout my day, the ones I intentionally create. I am fully present in everything I do.

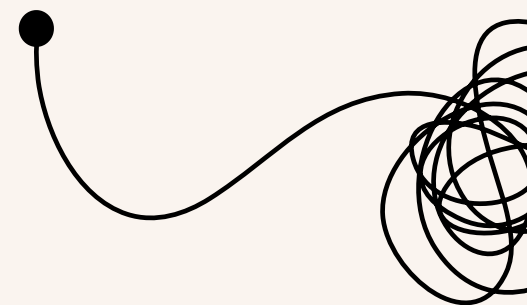
This allows me to enjoy life fully and carry a sense of calm amid the hustle and bustle. I see mindfulness as a precious gift. And the best part is: it's something you can give to yourself by simply applying these practices today.

Have fun!

Sincerely,

Mila de Koning

Certified MSC teacher (trainer) and founder The Self-Compassion Academy



A REMINDER BEFORE WE START

Integrating mindfulness into your life takes time and commitment. That's a fact. Simply reading this guide won't automatically make you more mindful. You'll need to do more than just read. You'll have to actively practice and apply the tips and exercises. And who knows, this guide might be the first step toward joining a mindfulness course.

The key to all exercises is your dedication. Appreciate yourself for taking the time to practice. The exercises are designed so that the benefits will come gradually and naturally.

There is no right or wrong way to do them, you don't need to achieve anything, go anywhere, or feel different than you do now. The very act of practicing is enough.

Value every moment you notice yourself engaging with mindfulness. These moments often come unexpectedly. You can see mindfulness as fitness training for the mind.

By practicing every day, you're strengthening your attention muscle.



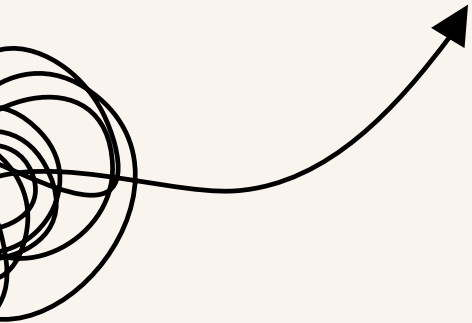
IN THIS GUIDE

Step 1. Breaking free from autopilot

Step 2. Seeing differently opens new possibilities

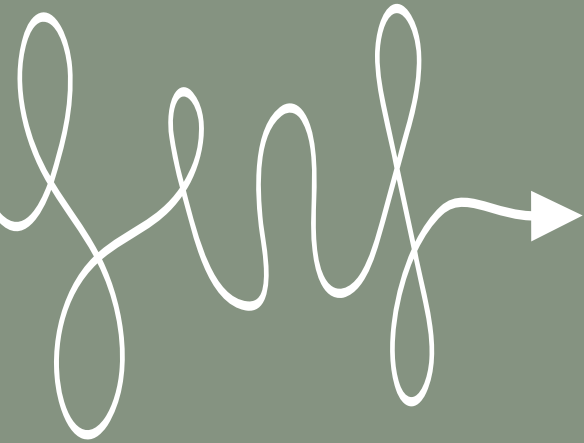
Step 3: What you focus on, grows

Step 4. Create your own 'attention schedule'



STEP 1.

BREAKING FREE FROM AUTOPILOT



Has it ever happened to you? You got on your bike or in the car and covered quite a distance without really being “present”? And when you arrived at your destination, you suddenly realized you missed large parts of the journey?

Living on autopilot can sometimes be useful. For example, you did stop at all the red lights, and while your mind was busy with other things, you still obeyed the traffic rules.

However, a major downside of operating on autopilot is that you have little control over your (inner) life because you’re not fully “present” when it happens.

“Small moments of happiness are often overlooked when we are consumed by our own thoughts”

On autopilot, your thoughts may follow ingrained patterns that can lead to stress, anxiety, and restlessness.

Besides, when you operate on autopilot, you miss out on a lot of small moments of happiness, which means you enjoy life less.

The shining sun, the green fields, the funny car sticker on the vehicle in front of you, these are often overlooked when we are consumed by our own thoughts.

Breaking free from autopilot helps you gain more control over your (inner) life and enables you to live in a healthy, stress-resilient, and mentally fit way.

The following exercises assist you in breaking free from autopilot and bringing more attention to your daily activities. By practicing the following exercises, you effectively train your attention muscle.

1. **Pay full attention to one routine activity**

Choose one daily routine activity and do it with full attention instead of on autopilot. For example, brushing your teeth. Your task is to fully notice what you are doing while you do it. This trains your mind to stay present in the moment.

Other routine activities could be: eating a sandwich, showering, combing your hair, washing dishes, or taking your bike out of the shed.

You may notice that your mind starts to wander many times while doing this exercise. That's perfectly normal. That's just how the mind works. You cannot prevent it. What you can do is train your attention and learn to notice when your mind wanders. So, every time you notice your mind is busy with other things, gently but firmly bring your attention back. This is how you train yourself.

2. **Take three mindful breaths**

2.

Set an alarm on your phone for three random times during the day. When it goes off, pause whatever you're doing and take a moment to focus completely on three breaths. Sit or stand comfortably and simply notice how your breath moves in and out of your body. Follow this flow with your full attention.

There's no need to change your breathing. It might be quick and shallow or slow and relaxed, and that's perfectly fine. The point is to let your attention rest on your breath. This simple practice strengthens your attention muscle and helps calm your body and mind.



3.

3. **Do one activity with full attention**

Choose one activity each day to do mindfully. Possible activities include ironing, vacuuming or other household chores, eating, cycling to work, or doing the groceries.

Before you start, take a brief moment to remind yourself of your intention to do this activity with full attention. Whenever you notice your mind wandering during the activity, gently bring your focus back to what you're doing.



4. Walking with awareness

Once a day, walk a specific, familiar distance with full awareness. Preferably a route you take every day, such as to the toilet, the bus stop, or your children's school. Linking this exercise to a regular walk helps you remember it.

Walking mindfully means being fully aware of walking while you walk. Let your attention rest in the movement of each step. Notice how your foot lifts off the ground and makes contact again.

STEP 2.

SEEING DIFFERENTLY OPENS NEW POSSIBILITIES

Have you ever walked through a park with a two-year-old? There's no rushing then. A toddler experiences the world with fresh eyes. A twig, a leaf, a little creature, each gets their full attention. And the next one too. Again and again, the child marvels.

The child understands something we adults have forgotten: nothing is ever exactly the same. Everything is always changing, even if just slightly, but you have to be willing to notice. As adults, we no longer see the differences; we think we've seen it all. We see things as we think they are, not as they truly are.

With our experienced gaze, we overlook details and have lost our curiosity. Where a child still sees endless possibilities, we often see limitations.

“When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at begin to change”

The world is as wide as your field of vision. By approaching it with renewed curiosity and seeing things with fresh eyes, you practice the same openness you had as a two-year-old, but with the wisdom of experience.

Seeing differently creates new possibilities. When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at begin to change. The following exercises help you to open up your point of view.

5. **Learn to see with fresh eyes**

Before you eat an apple (or anything else), take a moment to really look at it before taking a bite. Look at it as if you've never seen an apple before, which, in truth, you haven't.

Remember the wisdom of a two-year-old: nothing is ever exactly the same. This apple is different from every apple you've ever seen.

Experience the apple with all your senses before tasting it. Look at it from all sides; notice the texture and colour.

Does it shine, or is it matte? Pay attention to its shape. Then feel the apple with your fingers, the skin, its surface. Is it soft or firm, warm or cool, rough or smooth?

There are countless things to notice about an ordinary apple. You can also smell it and become aware of its scent.

Notice whether that smell has any effect on you. You can use this exercise to explore many different things with full attention. Food works well, but it doesn't have to be edible. You could look closely at a pen, a flower, or your pet. The possibilities are endless.



Seeing clearly

6.

Do you recognize those moments when you catch yourself thinking, "Here we go again," or "This always happens."? We have these thoughts when a situation reminds us of something we've experienced before.

Our minds instantly categorize what's happening, and we assume we already know how it will unfold. In that moment, we stop seeing clearly.

You can use these thoughts as reminders to look with fresh eyes. As soon as you notice these thoughts, take three mindful breaths as described in step one. Then, look at the situation again, with clarity.

That means letting go of previous experiences and judgments, and being fully present in the moment. And keep in mind the two-year-old: nothing is ever exactly the same.



STEP 3.

WHAT YOU FOCUS ON, GROWS

Negative experiences leave a stronger mark than positive ones. Evolutionarily, our brains are wired to remember negative experiences more vividly. For the survival of our species, it was crucial to store these experiences so we could avoid them in the future.

It's characteristic of our brains to detect negative information faster than positive. In a way, our brains act like Velcro when it comes to negative experiences.

The good news is that we can direct our attention. Even when several enjoyable activities are ahead, our minds tend to fixate on that one unpleasant task or appointment.

That's normal, our minds are built that way. But attention can help break this pattern.

“Negative experiences leave a stronger mark than positive ones”

7.

Focus on what you enjoy and practice gratitude

Give your full attention to things you enjoy. Do it consciously, bring your mind fully into the experience. You'll likely find you enjoy it more, leaving less room for what's unpleasant.

During stressful or busy periods, it's easy to get absorbed by your to do's and packed schedule, leaving little room to notice what's good. Feeling grateful can be harder when caught up in the chaos of daily life.

At the end of each day, write down things you're grateful for. They can be small (e.g., feeling the sun on your skin) or big (e.g., that you and your loved ones are safe and have a roof over your heads).



STEP 4.

CREATE YOUR OWN 'ATTENTION SCHEDULE'

Consider making a personal mindfulness schedule. A few fixed moments of awareness built into your day.

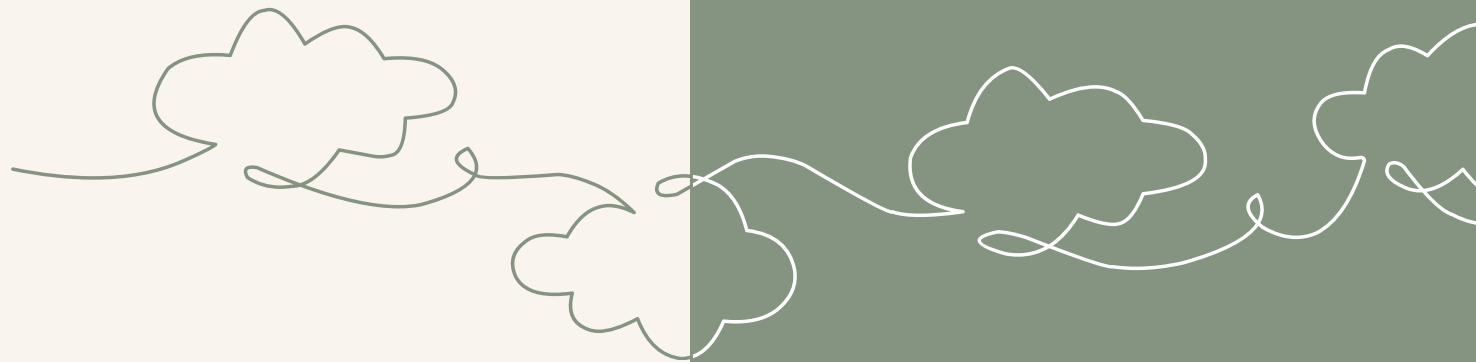
You might prefer to start your morning by showering mindfully, walk the stairs at work with awareness, or take a short breathing pause each time the phone rings before you answer.

“By linking mindful moments to daily routines, you make it easier to remember them”

By linking mindful moments to daily routines, you make it easier to remember them. Even on days when life feels like a whirlwind, these built-in pauses help you slow down for a moment.

In the middle of the day's rush, they create inner calm and space. These moments have proven invaluable to me in handling everyday stress. Simple, yet so effective.

Mindfulness teaches us that real change begins with small things.



A CALMER YOU ISN'T BUILT IN A DAY

Give yourself time to apply these tips and be kind to yourself. The exercises are not a competition. Let go of concepts like success, failure, or trying to relax. Approach these exercises with a curious, open, and gentle attitude. There is no right or wrong way to do the exercise. By practicing consistently, you work toward better balance and a less stressful life.

WANT MORE MINDFULNESS IN YOUR DAY?

Thanks for reading *The Mindful Reset*, a guide for a calmer you.

Do you want to welcome even more mindfulness in your day? There are plenty of options to continue your adventure:

[Read more science-backed tips and articles ↗](#)

[Join our weekly practice sessions ↗](#)

[Grow inner strength with one of our courses ↗](#)

[Become a MSC teacher ↗](#)

And don't forget to join us here:

