Definition: Mindfulness is learning to awaken to the present moment as it is, with compassion and without judgment. It also involves being present and aware of things as they are and responding to conditions mindfully / intentionally rather than reacting impulsively.

1. **Intention:** Suggested intention for Mindful Living
   - **At least do no harm – to self or others.** Begin each day with this intention. At end of day, look back and gently ask whether you lived by this intention. Be non judgmental and compassionate with yourself if you were unkind to yourself or another. Begin again, and again - compassionately.....

2. **Breather:** 1-3 minutes
   Quiet yourself and find the breath as it enters and leaves the body. Breathe consciously for a minute or two, observing: in … and out … Allow the breath to bring you to a place of quiet within. Gently, come back to the surface.

   This is a simple way of:
   - A. Letting go of stress
   - B. Preparing to work with difficult patron, speak at a meeting
   - C. Learning not to identify with the “stuff” in your mind and your heart
   - D. Connecting with a place of wholeness deep within; your true Self
   - E. Being compassionate and respectful toward yourself.

3. **BODY SCAN**
   Sit or lie comfortably. Close your eyes. Breathe in and out and allow your body to relax. **Pay close attention to how the body part feels.**

   - A. Breathe slowly into each body part and soften around it just as it is.
   - B. If there is a part of your body that is stressed, sick, or in pain; soften around the pain. Breathe gently and compassionately into the pain, stress or fatigue.
   - C. Scan feet, legs, knees, hips the parts of the face and so on up to the parts of the face and the scalp.
D. Breathing in, soften around any pain or stress, fear. Breathing out, let go of worry, stress and fear, without judgment.
E. Where do you hold stress in your body? Breathing in, send relaxation and compassion into that area; breathing out, soften around the stress.
F. Notice whether your body is fatigued and needs rest.
G. Be mindful of how your body feels after eating and drinking and act accordingly to support your own wellbeing.
H. Be grateful for parts of your body that feel whole and alive.
I. Resolve to care for your body.
J. Rise slowly and carry the calm and appreciation for your body into your next activity.

(Can be a 15 minute formal meditation on the body or a brief check-in w/ body.)

4. **Be mindful of how you are feeling emotionally.** Notice when you are happy or sad and ask yourself what you can do to help create more happy moments, to work positively with sad moments. Ex: to grieve a loss in a healthy and honest way. When you are aware of being crabby or critical, remember your intention so you won’t hurt yourself or others.

5. **Kindness Meditation:**
   1. Be Kind first toward our selves.
      A. Why? Research results give us several reasons including:
         1. Less depression
         2. More optimism
         3. Greater happiness
         4. Greater feeling of self-worth
         5. Better health
      B. How?
         1. When you feel crabby, dumb, less than, lonesome, sad, unloved, unsuccessful:
            A. Say inwardly: May I, and all who feel dumb or crabby today, be happy and peaceful, strong and healthy, safe from inner and outer harm, may my heart be filled with joy or some portion of this that works for you. Or, use your own phrase.
            B. Doing this:
               1. Makes me learn kindness toward myself.
2. Helps me learn that my life, like everyone else’s, is not perfect.
3. Reminds me that I am worthwhile, even though I am not perfect.
4. Connects me to the needs of the human family.
5. Makes me healthier physically + emotionally

2. Be inwardly kind toward our loved ones by saying inwardly and privately: “May he or she, be happy and peaceful, strong and healthy, safe from inner and outer harm, may his or her heart be filled with joy” or some wording that works for you. Important to say these phrases without trying to change people. We change our own hearts.

3. Be inwardly kind toward people we hardly know, like people in the staff lounge, people we pass in the library, or in traffic, people who work in the supermarket, our neighbors. “May they be happy and peaceful, strong and healthy, safe from inner and outer harm, may their heart(s) be filled with joy”. (or some other wording that works for you)

4. Be inwardly kind toward people who are difficult in our lives.

   Ex: My brother whom I care about even though he annoys me, my colleague who is sometimes crabby, my boss with whom I sometimes disagree, people who talk too much. “May he or she be happy, strong and healthy.” (No effort to change others. We work to keep our own hearts open and kind.)

**Important: Use the Kindness Practice for annoying people only if you feel safe doing it. For deep hurts, other support might be needed.**

Don’t forget. Begin with kindness toward yourself. It’s very different from “I’m not good enough, smart enough, loved enough” kind of thinking. Kindness toward self makes us emotionally stronger. “May I be happy even though I’m crabby today.” Or, “May I and all who are crabby today be happy and peaceful.”

**6. Communicating assertively** without harming self or others. Become aware of whether your usual communication style is passive, aggressive or assertive. Try to say what needs to be said mindfully, expressing yourself honestly, but without harming self or others. Be assertive without harming self or others.
7. **Staying in Don’t Know Mind**, i.e., not making up stories and believing them. Ex: Nancy’s friend wasn’t in touch with her for 2 weeks. She speculated about what was wrong between them. Pat’s daughter had given birth and Pat had been away helping. Making up stories and believing them can cause pain and affect relationships.

8. **Gratitude** Be mindful of blessings, abundance, conveniences in your life. Express gratitude daily. Occasionally make a list of things that make you grateful beginning with the socks on your feet. Take nothing for granted.

9. **Eating Meditation:**
   A. Develop the practice over time. Suggested stages follow.
   B. Eat a snack or solitary meal slowly and deliberately, aware of taste and texture as you chew. Allow the power of savoring each food to reveal itself.
   C. Develop a deep sense of deep gratitude for all that you consume – take no nourishment for granted ...
   D. Call to mind all that is responsible for bringing this nourishment to you - natural forces such as the earth, the sun, the rain, etc. - people, for example, the farmer, harvester, trucker, supermarket personnel. Feel your interconnectedness with all that is responsible for bringing you nourishment.
   E. While eating with this deep mindfulness, gratitude and interconnectedness, begin gently inquiring, “Is this food or drink appropriate for me; and if so, how much?”

10. **Walking Meditation:** This can be done in different ways. For now, bring your attention to the feeling of your feet walking. Walk quietly, slow or fast, and focus on the feeling of the soles of your feet stepping on the good earth, left, right. Coordinate your breathing with your stepping. Ex: 2 breaths on the in breath, 2 on the out breath (or your own rhythm). Try this for 5 minutes, then 10 and on. As thoughts or feelings come up, recognize them, don’t push them away, but for this time, gently, and without judgment, return to awareness of the breath and of your feet walking.

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