

The image features two women in silhouette, performing a yoga pose (Warrior II) on a grassy bank. They are positioned against a sunset sky with soft, horizontal clouds. The scene is reflected in a calm body of water in the foreground. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

# Mindfulness

by Marie Marie Angeline



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# INTRODUCTION

Do you feel stressed? Overworked? Are you so busy that you rarely find time to rest? Do you put aside your own needs in order to respond to all the tasks that are required of you? Perhaps you are so used to focus on your responsibilities that you are not even aware of what your own needs may be?

Imagine driving your car at high speed on the motorway. How long would you last without a decent break? Without refueling?

If you keep going, you may think you are achieving better results but what toll is it taking on your body?

The practice of Mindfulness is like servicing your inner self.

Stress can creep on you with debilitating effect on your mood, performance, productivity, concentration and ability to focus and you may experience headaches, sleeplessness, low energy, frequent colds and flus, or general unhappiness.

In order to achieve better results, it is crucial to allow yourself to step out from the merry-go-round, extract yourself from our daily routine and reconnect with your inner self. This practice will assist in clearing your mind, improving your focus and concentration and your ability to find effective, energy saving ways to deal with your daily tasks.

The greater the demand is on our own energy, the greater the needs for us to take time for this practice in order to remain calm and focused.

Our mind can lead us on a crazy goose chase at times but our body never lies. Connecting within through the practice of mindfulness helps us to connect with our own inner wisdom, our own inner truth and we feel better equipped to address the challenges of our everyday life.

It helps us to focus on what our own needs are, how we can best handle our responsibilities while maintaining a sense of balance and equilibrium.

How can we tear ourselves away from old patterns and find a new way to be, tap into inner resources and turn our constant state of doing into a state of well-being?

How can we alter the chemistry of our brain without the use of mind altering substances? By listening inwards. Deeply. Consistently. With a great deal of gentleness and compassion.

This is how we gradually find solace as we break out of the mold and embrace the path of mindfulness.

It can be challenging to keep smiling when circumstances do not smile back. But if you can remain positive in spite of external circumstances, allow yourself to withdraw inwards without feeling overwhelmed and become a witness to your own inner world, there truly are some valuable insights to be gained and then you often find that somehow the universe responds to you in a more supportive way.

The practice of Mindfulness can assist in increasing your motivation and ability to focus, improve your concentration and stamina, help you keep in shape physically, mentally and emotionally, decrease anxiety and stress levels within yourself, improve your lifestyle behaviour and create a feel good factor within yourself.

The first step is to become more aware of your physical body and practice some breathing and relaxation techniques that will enable you to move from the business of your mind to a greater awareness of your body and breath. You then learn to really feel what it is like inside your body and as you scan your body, you become aware of which parts of you specifically hold on to tension. As you focus on the parts of you that feel tight or tense, you give permission for the tension to leave your body.

Your state of mind is always a personal choice. Today you can make a new decision for yourself, you can decide that no matter what happens, you are going to focus on the positive aspect of the situation, and you can give yourself permission to laugh compassionately at yourself as you are fighting off the old reflexes of stressing over things. At the same time, if there is something in your life that feels outdated, that has run its course and is no longer benefiting you, you have the power to move on.

Every day brings countless blessings. The trick is to stay present and focus on the new possibilities that emerge when you stop fighting, when you accept what is and are prepared to put your energy into what it is your heart really calls you to do.

The path of Mindfulness is a joyful path filled with abundance and new discoveries. Practicing Mindfulness will enable you to maintain a positive outlook on life and to connect with each other in a healthy way.



# MORNING PRACTICE

As you awaken in the morning,

- Give yourself time to gather yourself in your body, to connect with your breath, to watch its rise and fall. This can be done in bed. As you breathe in, simply say to yourself: I am breathing in and as you breathe out, simply say to yourself: I am breathing out.

Are you breathing through your nose? Through your mouth? Both?

Gradually, allow your breathing to lengthen and soften, allowing as much oxygen as possible into your lungs, breathing in a new day filled with new energy, new possibilities...

- Turn your attention to your whole body and observe how it feels. Allow some gentle movements to emerge naturally and give these your full attention.

Begin by wiggling your fingers. Make fists with your hands and then stretch your palms. Flex and rotate your wrists. Bend and stretch your elbows.

Lift your shoulders up and down. Forward and back. Circle your shoulders up and back, down and forward and then back and up, forward and down.

Let your head roll gently from side to side.

Wriggle your toes, flex and rotate your ankles, bend and stretch your knees, gently sway your hips from side to side.

Then stretch your arms over your head and stretch your whole body. How does it feel?

- Don't allow your mind to distract you. Bring your full focus to the breath flowing in and out of your body. How deep is your breath?

Are you breathing into your throat? Into your chest? Into your abdomen?

Is your in-breath longer than the out-breath? Are they equal? Is the out-breath longer than the in-breath?

How does your body respond to your breath? Can you feel the rise and fall of your breath in your chest? Is your abdomen moving when you breathe?

Is the breath flowing easily, effortlessly or does it feel constricted in some way?

- Does any part of your body feel a little tender or constricted? Can you bring the breath to this part of your body? As you focus the breath in the area that feels tender or constricted, how does it feel?

Imagine the breath as a laser beam which has the power to dissolve any tightness, any tension, any pain and release it from your body. Continue this practice for a few breaths. Is the constriction or the discomfort dissipating?

- As you get ready to get up, allow your body to tell you how it wants to stretch, being very gentle and attentive to all parts and particularly those in need of extra TLC...

Roll onto your side and swing your legs out of the bed then use your hands to support yourself and you move into sitting before stepping onto your feet to start a brand new day.

Let go of what happened yesterday and what may or may not happen tomorrow. Embrace the present moment. It is filled with magic and mystery.

- As you step into the shower, allow your skin to feel the warm water, its cleansing and purifying effect on your energy.

You can imagine the shower cleansing away any tension from your body, any anxiety from your mind, and make it your intention to allow whatever residues from previous experiences to go down the drain.

Remain in the shower until you feel totally refreshed and re-energised.

- In choosing your clothes for the day, select the colours that compliment how you feel in this moment, and the outfit that makes you feel positive and oozing with self-confidence.

Trust your instinct. Each colour has a vibration. Some are energising, others are calming. Make sure you feel comfortable in what you wear.

- Choose to have for breakfast food that is high on energy and natural vitamins. Sit down and take your time, thoroughly enjoying each mouthful. What does it taste like? Do you feel nourished? Do this for each meal of the day.





## DURING YOUR DAILY ACTIVITIES

- As you go about your day, bring your full attention and awareness to the task at hand.
- Allow yourself to really listen to what other people are saying and how this makes you feel. Your mindfulness practice will enable you to remain present as respond to them and to do so with a non-judgemental attitude.
- Take time out during the day for a leisurely walk somewhere where you can connect with nature and give yourself breathing space. This could simply be the nearest green area to where you spend your day and if all you can spare is a few minutes, do it anyway.

Observe your surroundings: colours, sounds, scents... How does your foot feel when it touches the ground? Which muscles are engaged in this action? If you return each day to the same place in nature, observe any changes in your surroundings. Feel the rays of sun or the breeze onto your skin.



## EVENING PRACTICE

- As you prepare for the night, release any worries or anxiety about the day that is ending and the one ahead of you tomorrow. Let go of all that has happened, all you wish hadn't happened, all that may or may not happen tomorrow or over the next few days....

Focus on the natural rhythm of your breathing. Breathing in peace and breathing out any worries, anxiety, pain or confusion. Each out-breath, a letting go. A letting go into the energy of peace....

- Make yourself comfortable and scan your whole body, giving each body part full permission to release, relax and let go, starting with you feet.

Bring your full attention to the sole of your feet and allow each toe to relax, one by one, the sole of your feet, the top of your feet, your heels, ankles, calves and chins, all the way to just below your knees.

Bring your full attention to your knees and give them permission to melt and soften. Your knees are letting go, getting really soft, really relaxed. As your knees are letting go, you too are letting go.

Moving through the knees onto your thighs, softening and releasing all the way to your hips and release both legs from the hip joints. Both legs now from your toes to your hips are totally relaxed, totally at ease.

Bring your attention to your spine starting at your coccyx and moving up one vertebrae at the time through your sacrum and lumbar spine and release your lower back completely. Allow the right side of your lower back to stretch to the right and the left side of your lower back to stretch to the left.

Moving up vertebrae by vertebrae through the thoracic spine feeling the stretch of your back right and left of your spine, creating space between your shoulder blades. Your right shoulder stretching to the right and your left shoulder stretching to the left.

Bring your full attention to your right shoulder now and let it soften and melt completely. Your right shoulder is letting go, feeling really heavy, really relax.



Sliding down along the upper arm, all the way to your elbow, through your elbow into your forearm, wrist, back of the hand, palm of the hand, thumb, index finger, middle finger, ring finger, little finger. All the fingers from your right hand soft and relaxed.

Moving back along the right arm from your finger tips to your shoulder and then across the left shoulder.

Bring your full attention to your left shoulder. Your left shoulder is letting go, feeling really heavy, really relax.

Sliding down along the upper arm, all the way to your elbow, Through your elbow into your forearm, wrist, back of the hand, palm of the hand, thumb, index finger, middle finger, ring finger, little finger. All the fingers from your left hand soft and relaxed.

Moving back along the left arm from your finger tips to your shoulder and into your neck. Letting go of any tension in your neck, the back of your head.

Go right inside your brain and let go of any thoughts. Let all these thoughts floating away from you and tell yourself "I will deal with this later" and let it all go. Let it all go. Let it all go.

Soften the root of your hair and slide onto your forehead, widening and softening the space just above and between your eyebrows. Allow your eyes to relax into their sockets, turning your gaze away from the external world and into your own internal world.

Soften your two ears, your nose, your cheeks, your chin. Part your lips slightly as if you were holding a grain of rice between your lips. Soften your tongue, your teeths, your jaws.

Feel the softness of your breath flowing in and out through your nostrils, through your lips. You can nearly taste the breath. Feel it coming down your throat, softening your vocal cords, your voice box.

Allow as much oxygen as possible into your lungs. Feel your chest rising and falling as you breathe. Can you feel your heartbeat? Does your chest feel tight or soft? Does your heart feel numb or vibrant?

Allow the breath to move deeper inside your body, gently massaging all your internal organs with the breath, releasing any tension that may have lodged into your digestive system. Each outbreath, a letting go.

Feel the breath moving fully into your abdomen. As you breathe in, your abdomen expands and as you breathe out, your navel moves towards your spine.

Go to the very end of each out-breath, releasing all the stale breath, the stale energy. Take your time. Some areas may need plenty of breath....

• Finally let your body gently slip into a restful sleep by keeping your full focus on your breathing, repeating to yourself: "Breathing in I calm my whole body, breathing out I calm my whole body..."



## CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed this Mindfulness practice. Let me know how you get on!  
I look forward to hear how mindfulness brought positive changes in your daily life.  
May you be well, happy and filled with peace and serenity.

Namaste  
Marie Angeline