

Welcome to Mindful Mamas

- Your Counselor: **Ali Chambers, MA, LMFT**
- Phone Number: **858-519-1602** or send message to Alison Chambers via kp.org
- We will use the same classroom link every week. Use directions below for finding link to click into class.
- Meet weekly for 1.5 hours for 4 weeks.
- Please try to join class 10 minutes before start time. Better to join class late than not at all. 😊
- This is a commitment to yourself and your family.
- Try to join class in a quiet space if possible.
- Ensure that you have a comfortable place to sit (e.g. comfortable chair, floor/yoga mat, or bed).
- Take care of yourself! If you need to step away for any reason, feel free to do so.
- Remember this all about self-care, which will help you be a good mama!



Online Workbook and Guided Audio Practices

- The link into your virtual classroom, program materials, and practice guided meditations are on the "Bookshelf" on positivechoice.org
- Click on Bookshelf purple button
- Scroll down and click on Mindful Mamas book
- Click on room 1 to enter classroom each week.
- Materials include a workbook and guided audio practices for you to use and practice between meetings.
- We will be referring to the workbook each week in class. You can print the workbook out or reference the online copy during class.

What is Mindful Motherhood?

Mindfulness is paying attention with flexibility, openness, and curiosity. It is an awareness process and not a thinking process. Mindfulness is about being able to consciously direct, broaden, or focus on different aspects of your experience. You can learn to direct your attention to the *here and now*... paying attention in the present moment to what you notice, what you hear, what you sense, what you feel and think, and allowing yourself to make values-based decisions based on your *experience* rather than just on your mental chatter. This process allows you to experience the reality of each moment rather than living according to the past and future oriented mind.



“Mindfulness means paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose in the present moment nonjudgmentally.”

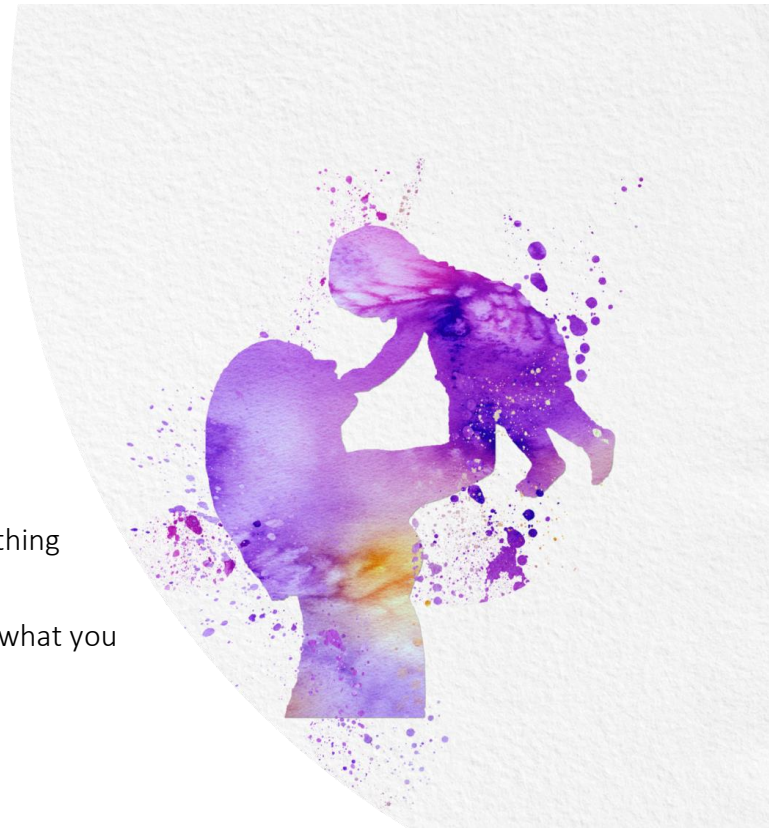
– Jon Kabat-Zinn



- It's NOT another goal you must achieve to be a good mom!
- It's NOT about being calm, cool, and collected all the time in the face of anything.
- It IS being present in your body and connected with your baby... being aware of your experience moment by moment without pushing it away, trying to make it stay, or judging it as good or bad.
- It IS meeting each situation as it is, approaching it with curiosity and compassion.
- It IS doing your best to approach experiences with an open mind and open heart, whether they are internal thoughts, feelings, or body sensations or external like relationships, work situations, or in the environment.
- Simply BEING with whatever is happening, no matter what it is – simple, but not easy...
- Reducing the judging thoughts and anxiety provoking stories that often ratchet up discomfort.
- By accepting a situation or feelings as they are, rather than resisting or struggling against them, we can reduce a lot of unnecessary suffering.

Signs that mindfulness may be helpful in your life:

1. Find yourself breaking things, spilling things, clumsiness, accidents because of carelessness, inattention or thinking about something else.
2. Failing to notice subtle or not-so-subtle feelings of physical discomfort, pain, tension etc.
3. Forgetting someone's name as soon as you hear it.
4. Listening to someone with one ear while doing something else at the same time.
5. Getting so focused on goals that you lose touch with what you are doing right now.
6. Getting lost in your thoughts and feelings.
7. Being preoccupied with the future or the past.
8. Eating without being aware of eating.
9. Having periods of time where you have difficulty remembering the details of what happened — running on autopilot.
10. Reacting emotionally in certain ways— feeling like an emotion just came out of nowhere.
11. Daydreaming or thinking of other things when doing chores.
12. Doing several things at once rather than focusing on one thing at a time.
13. Distracting yourself with things like eating, alcohol, pornography, drugs, work.



Why is mindfulness important in terms of wellbeing and overall health?

1. Prevents living on auto pilot.
2. Increases the richness of your life.
3. Reduces stress and increases clarity.
4. Separates you from the chatter in your mind and allows you to make healthy, clear, and value-based decisions.
5. Allows you to truly be present to experience your life.
6. Reminds you that you have the power to choose in the moment despite what your mind says.
7. Your mind might try to talk you into making poor nutrition choices, but you can be aware of it when it happens and acknowledge that it is just a thought without power unless you listen to it.
 - Although you can't stop your mind from bringing up painful memories or telling scary stories about the future, you can learn to let those thoughts come and go instead of latching on to them.
 - This allows you the freedom to make choices you feel good about in the moment, rather than choosing mindlessly with regret.



Intention — Attention — Attitudes

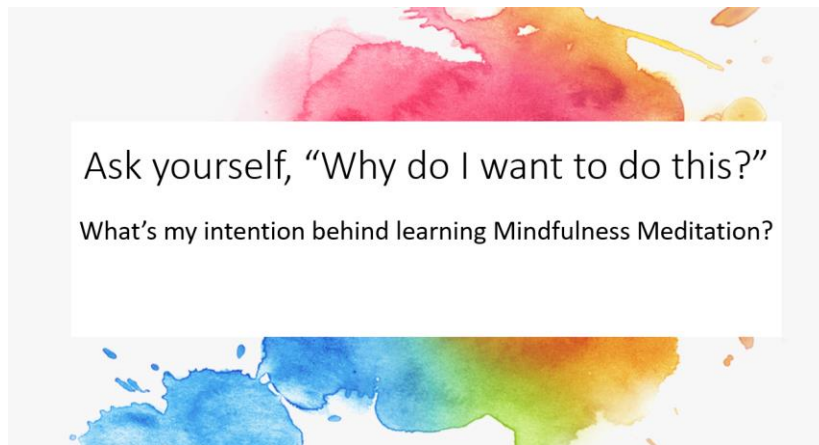


Intention

A direction rather than a destination.

- Example: getting rid of anxiety versus feeling stronger in my life.
"I intend to learn to notice when I experience stress symptoms and let them go."

"I intend to open myself up to a new way of thinking to improve my life."



Attention

- This is the most obvious element of Mindfulness Practice.
- You must pay attention before anything else can happen.

Attitudes

- Attitude is crucial when beginning a Mindfulness Practice.
- We encourage an attitude of non-judgement, flexibility, and acceptance of your limitations and the conditions around you.

HELPFUL ATTITUDES

Non-judgement: Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming a gentle stance of impartial witness to your own experience. This requires that you become aware of the constant stream of evaluative and judgmental thoughts you have and then try to step back. With a non-judging mind, things are neither *good* nor *bad*, but simply the way they are.

Patience: Patience demonstrates that you understand and accept that things have their own schedule for unfolding. People tend to be particularly impatient with themselves, expecting that they *should* be able to calm the mind, stop the thoughts, or get over whatever's upsetting them. Nature has a *mind of its own* and patience allows you to simply observe the unfolding of the process over time.

Beginners' Mind: To see the richness of the present moment, it helps to cultivate a mind that's willing and able to see everything as if for the very first time. If you think you know it all, then there's nothing left to discover. With beginners' mind, the joys of the world as they unfold around us become new again, as if we were all children, freed from our old expectations.

Trust: Living in a world of experts can lead you to begin doubting yourself. Innately you are the best expert on you; for matters of personal growth, it's far better to be open to your own feelings and intuition than to get caught up in outside authorities. In mindfulness practice if something doesn't feel right to you, pay attention, and examine your feelings. Trust your intuition and your own basic wisdom, goodness, and ability to work through challenges.

Non-striving: Mindfulness is different from other human activity; we do it not with a goal or destination in mind, but rather with a mind toward simply being, not doing. There's no goal other than for you to be conscious of yourself as you are. The paradoxical aspect of mindfulness practice is that only by truly letting go of striving toward a goal or outcome will you potentially reach that outcome.

"Mindfulness
is simply being aware of what
is happening right now
without wishing it were
different.

Enjoying the pleasant without
holding on when it changes.
(which it will)

Being with the unpleasant
without fearing it will always
be this way.
(which it won't)"

- James Baraz



Acceptance: Acceptance involves seeing things as they are. You may not like it, but if that's the way things are, so they are. Acknowledging the truth of your life is the first in any genuine process of change. Through acceptance, you cease struggling to change things that are beyond your ability to control, and you free yourself from the weight of denial.

Letting Go: Letting go — also known as *nonattachment* — is fundamental to mindfulness practice. It involves recognizing and welcoming the ever-changing nature of experience. The human tendency to hold on to some parts of our experience and reject others is a root cause of suffering and distress. Letting go allows us to live in greater harmony with inevitable change.

SIMPLE WAYS TO GET PRESENT

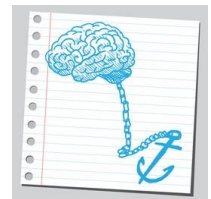
Take Ten Breaths:

1. Take ten slow, deep breaths. Focus on breathing out as slowly as possible until the lungs are completely empty—and then allow them to refill by themselves.
2. Notice the sensations of your lungs emptying. Notice them refilling. Notice your rib cage rising and falling. Notice the gentle rise and fall of your shoulders.
3. See if you can let your thoughts come and go as if they're just passing cars, driving past outside your house.
4. Expand your awareness: simultaneously notice your breathing and your body. Then look around the room and notice what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and feel.



Drop Anchor:

1. Plant your feet into the floor.
2. Push them down—notice the floor beneath you, supporting you.
3. Notice the muscle tension in your legs as you push your feet down.
4. Relax your entire body—becoming aware of the pull of gravity through your head, shoulders, arms, hands, spine, abdomen, legs, and feet.
5. Now look around and notice what you can see and hear around you. Notice where you are and what you're doing.



Engage Your Senses:

1. Pause for a moment.
2. Look around and notice five things that you can see.
3. Listen carefully and notice five things that you can hear.
4. Notice five things that you can feel in contact with your body (for example, your watch against your wrist, your clothes against your skin, the air on your face, your feet upon the floor, your back against the chair).
5. Practice this expanded sense of awareness throughout the day.



TIPS FOR EVERYDAY MINDFULNESS

- When you first awake in the morning, before you get out of bed, observe five mindful breaths.
- Notice changes in your posture. Be aware of how your body and mind feel when you move from lying down to sitting, to standing, to walking. Notice each time you make a transition from one posture to the next.
- Whenever you hear a phone ring, a bird sing, a train pass by, laughter, a car horn, the wind, the sound of a door closing—use any sound as the bell of mindfulness. Really listen and be present and awake.
- Throughout the day, take a few moments to bring your attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.
- Whenever you eat or drink something, take a minute to breathe. Pay attention as you eat, consciously consuming this food for your physical health. Bring awareness to seeing your food, smelling your food, tasting your food, chewing your food, and swallowing your food.
- Notice your body as you walk or stand. Take a moment to notice your posture. Pay attention to the contact of your feet with the ground under them. Feel the air on your face, arms, legs, as you walk. Are you rushing?
- Bring awareness to listening and talking. Can you listen without agreeing or disagreeing, liking or disliking, or planning what you will say when it is your turn? When talking, can you just say what you need to say without overstating or understating? Can you notice how your mind and body feel?
- Whenever you wait in a line, use this time to notice standing and breathing. Feel the contact of your feet with the floor and how your body feels. Bring attention to the rise and fall of your abdomen. Are you feeling impatient? What else do you notice?
- Be aware of any points of tightness in your body throughout the day. See if you can breathe into them and, as you exhale, let go of excess tension. Is tension stored anywhere in your body? For example, your neck, shoulders, stomach, jaw, or lower back? If possible, stretch once a day.
- Focus attention on your daily activities such as brushing your teeth, washing up, brushing your hair, putting on your shoes, doing your job. Bring mindfulness to each activity.
- Use your five senses to draw your attention into the present. What can you notice with each of your senses?
- Before you go to sleep at night, take a few minutes to bring attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.

TIPS FOR SUSTAINING DAILY MINDFULNESS PRACTICE

- **Do some practice, no matter how brief, every day:**
Practicing mindfulness every day is a very important way to keep mindfulness fresh, available, and ready for you when you need it the most.
- **If possible, practice at the same time, in the same place, each day:**
That way mindfulness gets built into the very fabric of your daily routine. Then, just as with brushing your teeth, you don't have to ponder whether to do it or not — you do it because that's what you always do at that point in your routine.
- **View practice like caring for a plant:**
Give it a little water each day rather than a bucketful every month. Just as with a plant, nurturing your practice with consistent care and attention will allow it to grow and its natural potential to unfold.
- **View practice as a way to nourish yourself, rather than another thing on your *to-do* list:**
Remember that practice won't always feel nourishing. As much as you can, let the practice be as it is, letting go of your ideas of how it should be.
- **Explore ways to inspire and re-inspire yourself to practice:**
Read this workbook from time to time. Read other related books or listen to talks and guided meditations on the internet.
- **Explore ways to practice with other people:**
Practicing regularly with others is one of the most powerful ways to keep your practice vital and alive. Everyone can benefit from a mindfulness *buddy* with whom to practice and share experiences with from time to time. Even if it's only one person, joining with others to practice is hugely, and often surprisingly, supportive.
- **Remember, you can always begin again:**
The essence of mindfulness practice is letting go of the past and starting afresh in each new moment (as you have already practiced many times coming back to the breath when the mind has wandered). In the same way, if you find that you haven't practiced for a while, rather than criticizing yourself or ruminating about why, just begin again, right there and then by taking five mindful breaths.
- **Seek out additional resources that will help to guide and motivate you:**
Helpful websites for mindfulness:
 - mindfulnessexercises.com/
 - freemindfulness.org/home
 - mindful.org/**Helpful mindfulness apps for your smartphone:**
 - Calm app is free for KP members: kp.org/selfcareapps, non-members may purchase Calm in app store.
 - Headspace
 - 10% Happier

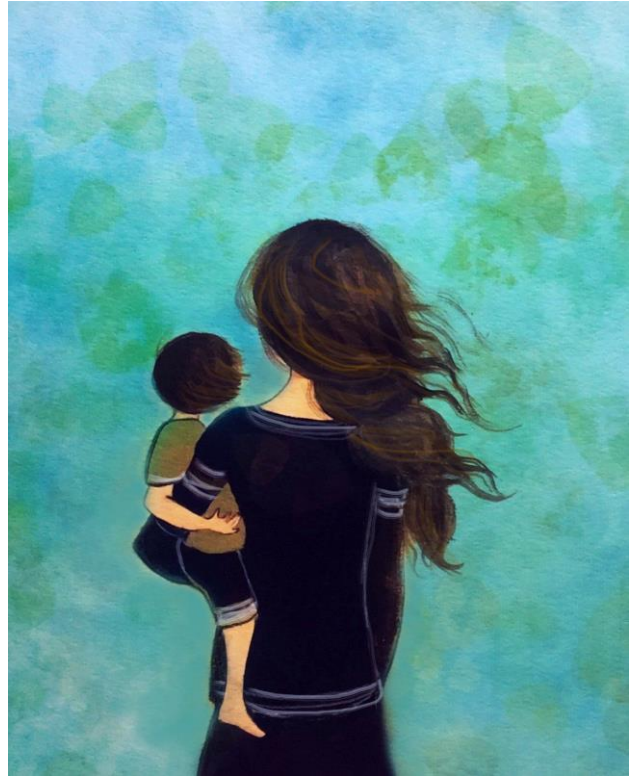


QUICK MINDFUL MAMA MOMENTS

Excerpted from Mindful Motherhood by
Cassandra Vieten, Ph.D.

Here are a few things you can do in any moment of your day, no matter what is going on, to cultivate mindful awareness:

- Find the place in your body where you can most strongly feel your breath moving in and out. Whether this is around your nostrils, in your chest, or in your belly, bring your awareness to this spot for ten full breaths. This brings you into your body and into the present moment.
- If you are pregnant, feel this breathing as though you can sense the oxygen in your blood moving through the placenta and into your baby. If you have an infant, hold your baby against your body so that you can feel each other breathing. Focus on that place for 10 breaths.
- Focus intensely on the place where the breath stops going out and starts going in, and then on the very end of the in-breath and the beginning of the out-breath. Let those two spots, those little moments when you are neither breathing in nor breathing out, be the focus of your attention for about 60 seconds.
- Bring your attention to the palms of your hands and the soles of your feet for 10 breaths. This grounds your attention when it is flying all over the place or when you are really agitated.
- The following is not traditional mindfulness. But it can be helpful if you feel as though you are too agitated to bring mindful awareness to a situation, or if you feel like your behavior might be difficult to manage:

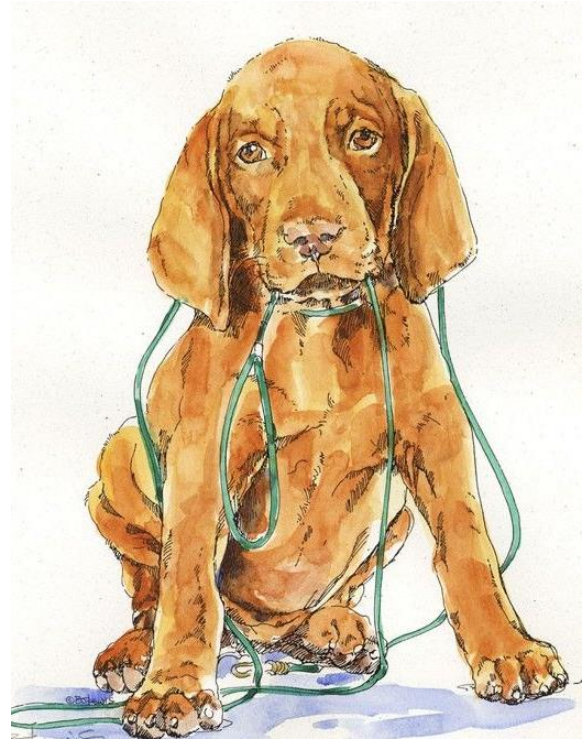


- Find a word or phrase that is deeply calming, emotionally nourishing, or sacred to you. For some, the words “love” or “peace” are good. For millennia, people around the world have used the word “Om,” which is simply the universal sound that represents the source of all that is. Even a phrase like “Be still” or “Be well” will work. Just breathe in through your nose and say this word or phrase on the out-breath, either out loud or in your mind, until your attention feels a bit more stable.

The Importance of HOME Practice:

Mindfulness takes consistent practice and gentle self-support. Each time you practice Intention try to gently remind yourself to come back to the present moment when you notice your mind has distracted you. Our minds are designed to problem solve, plan, and chatter. When they attempt to *hook* us during practice, they are merely doing their job. Our job then is to practice guiding our attention where it serves us the most rather than simply following what our mind suggests.

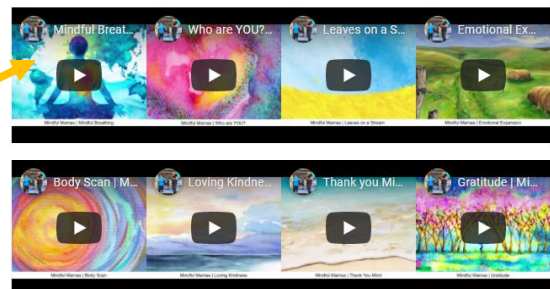
Many times, what our mind is offering is not reality, and it does not serve us to listen. Through the ongoing practice of mindfulness, we are given a choice in the moment to observe what the mind is offering and decide whether it is helpful to listen.



Practice, patience, and self-kindness are key!

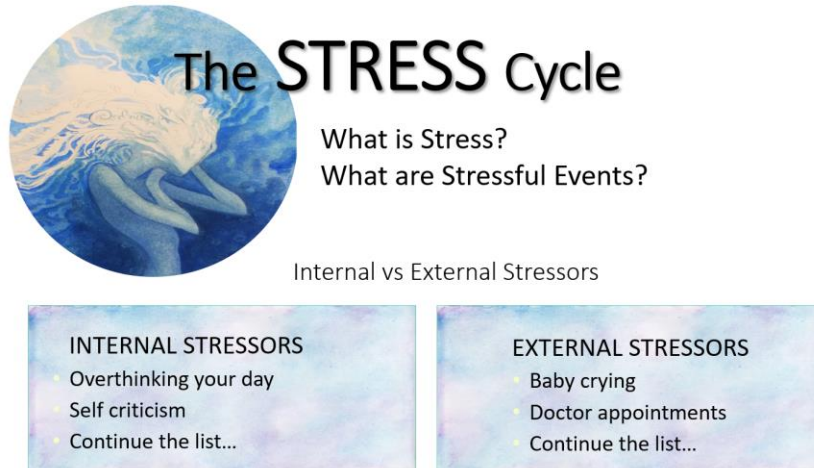
Home Practice this week...

- This week practice being mindful at least once a day, especially if you notice your stress level begins to increase.
- Each day this week do the Mindful Breathing Practice on the Positive Choice website. You'll find practice videos online at positivechoice.org/mindful-mamas
- Be gentle with yourself. Do the best you can and don't stress about it!



Session #2

Mindful Coping



“Meditation practice isn’t about trying to throw ourselves away and become something better. It’s about befriending who we already are.” - Pema Chodron

What is in My Control?

Stressors I CANNOT Change weather, baby waking up at night, etc.

Stressors I CAN Change...what I say to myself, overscheduling, etc.

Circle of Awareness

- Notice choice points all around.
- Who is making the choices?
- Where could you interrupt the cycle?
- Where could you bring Mindfulness into your stress **RESPONSE?**

We learn to observe our **Habitual REACTIONS**.

We have a **Choice**.

We can **RESPOND Mindfully** rather than **REACT**.

We live according to the thoughts and stories we tell ourselves... Whether they are based in reality or not.
Just because you think something doesn't mean it's true.



With Awareness...

We learn to observe our **Habitual REACTIONS**.
We have a **Choice**.

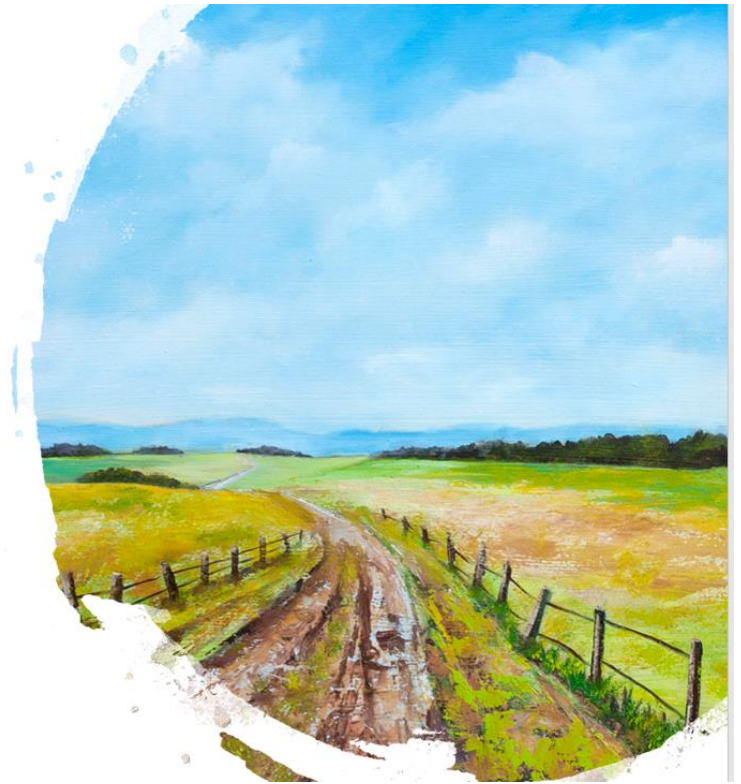
We can **RESPOND Mindfully** rather than **REACT**.
We live according to the thoughts and stories we tell ourselves... Whether they are based in reality or not.
Just because you think something doesn't mean it's true.

- Can you control thoughts or feelings from starting? No!
- You experience 60,000 thoughts per day, and most of them are the same thoughts that you had yesterday.
- It's counterproductive to struggle to eliminate, reduce, or change spontaneous thoughts or emotions.

For example, **DO NOT** think about a red car!
What do you notice happening?

- The mind has a built-in negative thinking bias, and we can often be misled by our thinking.
- The mind is like Velcro to the negative and Teflon to the positive.

Let's look at how your thoughts can help you or hurt you.



PITFALLS IN THINKING

Labeling or Stereotyping: Seeing people or situations as fixed and unchanging and ignoring other aspects or possibilities; for example, “This baby is never going to sleep through the night.”

Jumping to Conclusions: Making an interpretation in the absence of clear evidence to support it; for example, when your partner fails to respond to the baby crying, you conclude, “*They don’t care about how tired I am*”; or when a friend comments on your pregnancy, you determine “*She thinks I am getting too fat.*”

Magnification (Catastrophizing) and Minimization: Exaggerating the importance or likelihood of something seen as negative or minimizing the importance or likelihood of something seen as positive; for example, “*It’s terrible and unbearable that my doctor told me the baby is breech or My baby cries a lot... I must be a bad Mom.*”

Emotional Reasoning: Believing that it must be true because you feel it or fear it; for example, your partner comes home from work and spends only a few moments with you before going to the gym, so you think, “*He/she probably wants to get away from me because I’m so unattractive now that I’m pregnant.*”

Mental Filters: Picking out a limited aspect of a situation or experience and allowing it to color your perception of the whole event; for example, you have a hard time finding parking at the hospital, so “*The hospital is a horrible place.*”

All-or-Nothing Thinking: Seeing everything in black-and-white categories; for example, your spouse doesn’t help you clean up after dinner, so you declare, “*I do everything around here. You don’t care about me at all!*” or you receive an unwelcome test result, so you think, “*Nothing ever goes right for me!*”



Fortune Telling: You believe everything that your mind predicts as reality despite lack of evidence; for example, you have a day when you don’t feel your baby moving and you think, “*My baby must not be okay.*”

Personalization: Interpreting an event as being about you when there are many other plausible causes or interpretations; for example, someone you know initially walks in your direction but, after getting closer, suddenly turns and walks the other way, so you think, “*That person dislikes me and was trying to avoid me.*”

Perfectionism: Thinking that you *must* or *should* behave in or feel a certain way or else! —often combined with an unrealistic conclusion regarding the consequences of failing to do it; for example, “*I must be a perfect mother, and never get angry with my child, or else I will ruin them.*” “*I must be a good patient, or my doctor won’t give me the attention I need.*” “*I must keep appearances, or others will see my imperfections and reject me.*”

It is helpful to be mindfully aware of what your mind is offering you and then to get some

S P A C E

or perspective which will allow you to make conscious choices in the moment.

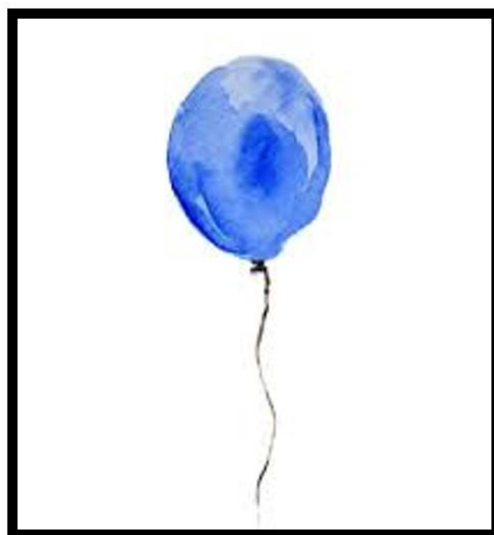
When you have a big thought, feeling, or sensation, it can be like blowing up a balloon in a small box. It takes up all the space. There is no room around it at all.

Mindfulness doesn't make the balloon disappear. It works towards making the box the size of a large room. There is space around the balloon so you can both experience it and observe it. You can notice other aspects of your experience, some of which may be pleasant, calming, comforting, neutral, etc.

Small Box



Large Room



Working with Difficult Thoughts Worksheet

1. What is the thought/belief?

2. How does this thought/belief make me feel?

3. On a scale of 1 to 10 (1= don't believe it, 10= it is very true), how strongly do I believe this thought/belief?

4. Am I 100% sure that this thought/belief is true?

5. What is the evidence that this is true?

6. What are the other possibilities?

7. On a scale of 1 to 10, how strongly do I believe the thought/belief now?

8. Alternative New Thought/Belief:

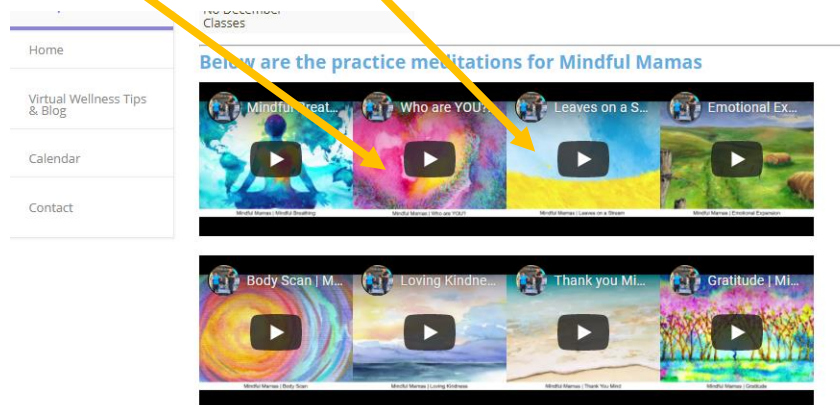
Changes in Self-Image and Identity

- Changes in visual and physical appearance.
- Changes in identity – who you are.
- It's amazing how much your sense of yourself can change as you become a mother.
- This includes a lot of letting go... a former sense of self, relationship dynamics, how you spend your time... etc.



Home Practice

- This week practice Mindfulness, Breathing, Detachment from thoughts including:
"I'm having the thought that..."
- Be gentle with yourself. Do the best you can and don't stress about it!
- Practice Who are You? and Leaves on a Stream Guided Audios on positivechoice.org/mindful-mamas



Session #3

Mindful Acceptance

“**Mindfulness** is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different. Enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes. (which it will) Being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way. (which it won’t)”

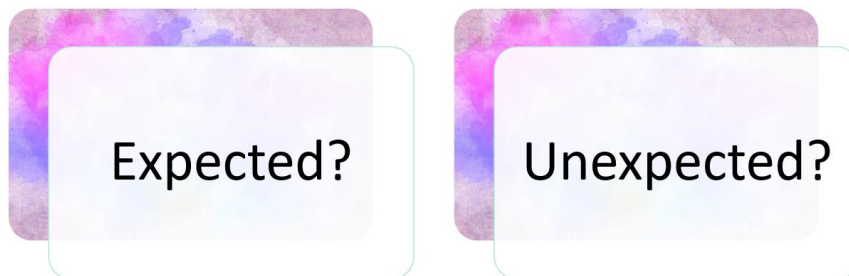
James Baraz



Acceptance of Emotions

- What do normal healthy emotions look like?
- In our culture health and happiness are considered the “normal” states of the human experience.
- Distressing thoughts, feelings, memories, or physical sensations have become “symptoms” and signs of disorder and disease.
- The idea that uncomfortable emotion is “negative” is learned from a young age. Often parents ask children to inhibit or change their emotions.
- Even babies are evaluated based on how little they express negative affect.
- Your emotions are normal!

What emotions have you experienced since becoming pregnant? Becoming a mom?



The Counterproductive Struggle to Eliminate, Reduce, or Change Emotions

Sometimes people feel the need to get rid of their anxiety, sadness, or grief as if it is something that needs to be fixed... as if it can be fixed.

- I will give you a million dollars if you can feel the most joy you’ve ever experienced right now! Can you do it?
- Or if I hooked you up to a lie detector, do you think you could control your anxiety?
- What if I placed a wrecking ball just above your head to make sure that you keep your anxiety under control?
Could you do it?

BE AWARE of and allow ...S P A C E... for your feelings.

Emotional Expansion



OBSERVE — Notice the feeling. Observe the feeling closely, as if you're a curious scientist who has never encountered anything like this before. Notice where it is. Notice where it's most intense.

BREATHE — Notice the feeling and gently breathe into it.

EXPAND — Notice the feeling and see if you can just open up around it a little — give it some space.

ALLOW — Even though you don't like this feeling, see if you can just let it sit there for a moment. You don't have to like it — just allow it to be there.

NORMALIZE — Recognize that it's normal and natural to have painful feelings — that this is an inevitable part of being human. This feeling tells you valuable information: that you're human, that things in your life matter. This is what we humans feel when there's a gap between what we want and what we've got — the bigger the gap, the bigger the feeling.

SHOW SELF COMPASSION — Be kind and caring towards yourself, place a hand where you feel this most intensely and see if you can open up around it.

EXPAND AWARENESS — Notice the feeling. Also notice your breathing ... and notice your body. Also notice the room around you. Notice there's a lot going on. There's a feeling inside a body, inside a room, inside a world full of opportunity. You have the opportunity to make room for your feelings and continue to move towards what makes life meaningful for you

Emotions are Normal

- The human experience involves a wide range of feelings.
- Throughout life we experience many changes in lifestyle, routines, our bodies.
- Loss is a universal human experience... some huge, some subtle.
- We are taught to appear strong for fear of feeling inept or inadequate.
- Ultimately this imprisons us in our own suffering.



Being a new mom often involves a wide range of feelings...

Many new moms experience...

- Loss of familiar comfort and coping strategies
- Changes of the body
- Relationships may change
- Loss of sleep, familiar lifestyle, and routines
- Loss of independence
- Some losses are huge while others are subtle.
- Even though having children may be desired, there may be other feelings of loss.



There is nothing to be ashamed of when we cry or display fear,
anxiety, worry, or any other emotions.
It is not good or bad.
It is human.
Let it be.

Food for Thought

- How can mindfulness help you recognize emotions?
- How can acceptance of emotions help you as a mom?

**IN CASE YOU
DIDN'T KNOW...**

We feel feelings in the **body**.

We think thoughts in the **head**.



Awareness of Your Body

Your body holds much of your stress that results from your thoughts and emotions, yet many of us are unaware of what is happening with our body.

We feel feelings in the body. We think thoughts in the head.

Feelings can manifest in sensation in ANY part of the body. By noticing what you feel in your body, you can connect those feelings with your emotions.

For example:

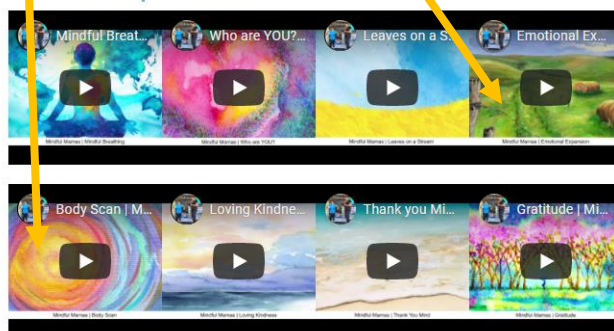
- tightness in the stomach could signal anxiety
- diarrhea could signal fear
- flushed cheeks could signal shame
- clenched jaw could signal anger
- warmth in the chest could signal love
- a smile on the face could signal happiness
- erect posture could signal confidence
- slow steady breathing could signal contentment



Home Practice this week...

- Be gentle with yourself. Do the best you can and don't stress about it!
- This week practice Body Scan and Emotional Expansion Guided Audios on the positivechoice.org/mindful-mamas

Below are the practice meditations for Mindful Mamas



Session #4

Self-Compassion

“Self-Compassion is simply giving the same kindness to ourselves that we would give to others.” - Christopher Germer



The Problem

- There is almost no one whom we treat as badly as ourselves.
- Women are bombarded with messages to live up to expectations such as:
be thin, fit, fashionable, interesting, smart, successful, sexy...
- As a result, insecurity, anxiety, and depression are incredibly common, mostly due to self judgement.

The Solution

- We need to step away from labeling ourselves as “good” or “bad.”
- Treat ourselves with the same kindness, caring, and compassion we would show a good friend or even a stranger.
- “Love thy neighbor as thyself” includes loving yourself.

What is Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion is being warm and understanding toward yourself when you suffer, fail, or feel inadequate, rather than ignoring your pain or beating yourself up with self-criticism.
- Research shows that self-compassion is a powerful way to achieve emotional wellbeing and contentment in our lives.
- Life difficulties and imperfections are inevitable, so it is important to be gentle and support oneself during these times.

Three Elements of Self-Compassion

1. **Self-kindness:** Be gentle and understanding with ourselves rather than harshly critical and judgemental.
2. **Common Humanity:** Feel connected with others in the experience of life rather than feeling isolated and alienated by our own suffering.
3. **Mindfulness:** Hold our experience in balanced awareness.

Connecting with Our Inner Soother

We have an inner critic that can say mean and negative things about ourselves in a hostile way, but we also have an **inner soother** (a compassionate part within us) that has the ability to soothe ourselves by saying accepting things in a warm and compassionate way.

Examples: “I am here for you.” “I am taking care of you.” “you are OK.” “You are safe, and you are loved.”

Sometimes the inner critic is trying to keep you safe or help you improve but does so in a harsh and judgmental way that is not helpful. The inner soother can reframe that message.

The Way Out

- The best way to counteract self-criticism is to understand it, have compassion for it, and then replace it with a kinder response.
- It is important for us to see our psychological patterns clearly and it's equally important that we do not judge ourselves for them.
- Recognize that everyone has times when they blow it, and treat ourselves kindly.
- Go with the flow of life and use self-compassion to support ourselves through turbulent times.
- Changing critical self-talk is one of the most important ways we can be kind to ourselves.
- Reframe our inner dialogue to express empathy for our basic human needs.
- Validate and listen to what we really need in the moment and express empathy rather than condemnation.



How can you incorporate Self Compassion into daily life?

When would self-compassion be particularly applicable in your life?

For example: you lost your patience, you feel irritable, you'd like to run away, you're afraid, you feel inadequate, you're tired...

what else...?

- *How can **self-compassion** support you as a mom and caring for your family?*



"What's NOT wrong?

Notice it.

Take it in.

Allow yourself to be filled."

Geneen Roth

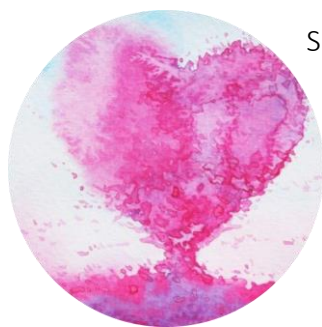
When we focus on what's right in our lives it is nourishing, filling, and comforting.

Gratitude

Take a few minutes to create a list of things you are grateful for today.



Take Home Message



See if you can guide your attention towards the small victories in each day and be present for the gratitude in that moment



“Mindfulness isn’t difficult, we just need to remember to do it.”

Sharon Salzberg

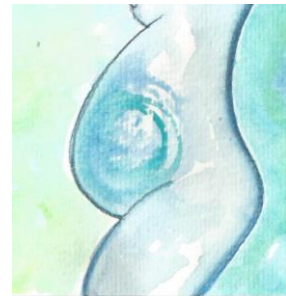


“As long as we love, we are going to be okay.”

- Shannon Happe

After Program Practice

- Keep practicing the skills you have learned.
- Continue practicing with the guided meditations we did in class that may be found on: [PositiveChoice.org/mindful mama](https://PositiveChoice.org/mindful%20mama)
- Be gentle with yourself. Do the best you can and don't stress about it!



THANK YOU!