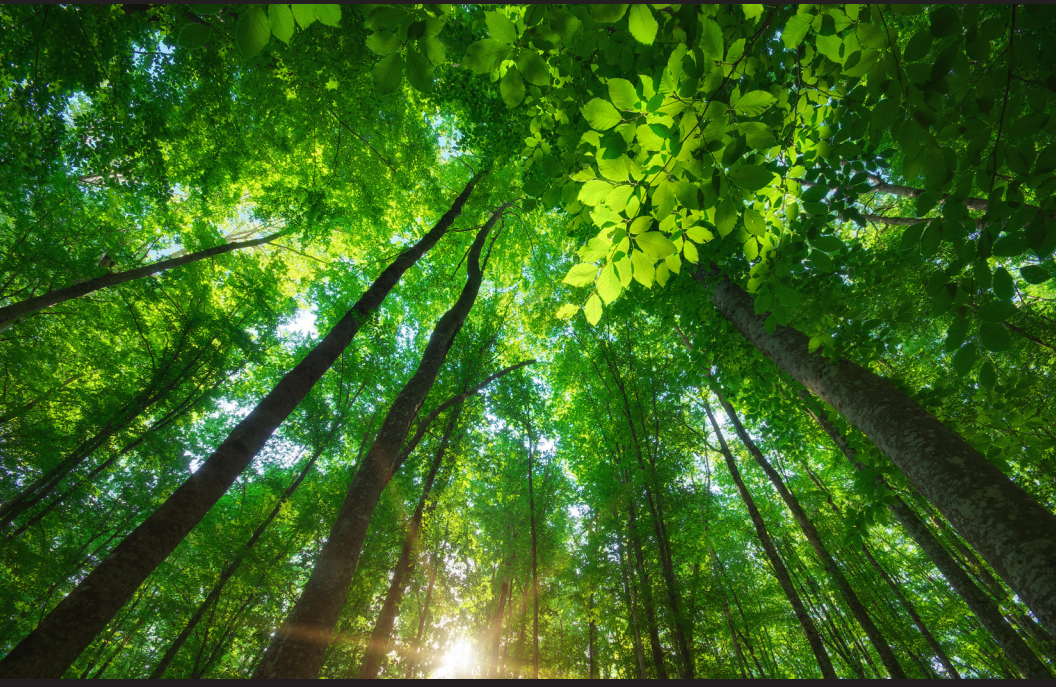


YOUR GUIDE TO MINDFULNESS



BECAUSE
OF YOU 

MOUNT CARMEL
Healthy Living Center

Mount Carmel's Healthy Living Center is a community health and wellness center that offers free programs and services aimed at preventing and managing chronic medical conditions, encouraging healthy habits and promoting wellness.

The reflections and activities in this book are inspired from the variety of stress management and wellness programs offered at the Healthy Living Center. It is our goal that we might be able to provide additional opportunities for you to practice some of the strategies we teach at home or wherever you are outside of the center!

The programs and services provided at the Healthy Living Center are funded through generous donations to the Mount Carmel Foundation. If you are considering a donation go to mountcarmelfoundation.org and click on Donate. Please refer to the Healthy Living Center fund in the Designation space. Thank you!

CONTACT US

To learn more about the Healthy Living Center or to take advantage of our free community health and wellness programs you can:

- Visit us online at mountcarmelhealth.com/hlc
- Email us at healthylivingcenter@mchs.com
- Call us on our mainline at **614-234-4660**

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Section One: Meditation

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

Meditation is a specific technique for calming the mind and relaxing the body. The practice invites you to simply notice your thoughts and physical body without judgment. Meditation is a skill, just like any other activity. It requires practice and is not something that will be easy the first time. However, with some time and practice, you will begin to see the benefit of meditating regularly.

BENEFITS OF MEDITATION

Meditation offers a ton of benefits for your body, mind, and spirit by creating space and peace. It has also been proven to **make you an overall happier person and reduce both depression and anxiety.**

*“In the end, just three things matter: How well we have lived.
How well we have loved. How well we have learned to let go.”*

— Jack Kornfield

MEDITATION EXERCISE 1 - FOCUSED MEDITATION

1. Find a quiet and comfortable space or room where you won't be too disrupted.
2. Choose something to focus on. This could be following your breath or repeating a single word or mantra.
3. Softly close your eyes or allow your gaze to focus on one specific thing.
4. For this meditation, you will simply refocus your awareness on the chosen object of attention each time you notice your mind wandering. Rather than pursuing random thoughts, you simply let them go. Through this process, your ability to concentrate improves.
5. Allow yourself to focus on your chosen object for a few minutes or longer.
6. When you are complete, gently open your eyes, take a deep breath in and out. Give yourself a few moments to notice how you feel now that you have completed your meditation.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 2 - BODY SCAN

1. Find a quiet and comfortable space or room when you won't be too disrupted.
2. Bring yourself to a comfortable position for your body when you can sit or lie for a short period of time.
3. Softly close your eyes or allow your gaze to focus on one specific thing.
4. Starting with your feet, begin to draw your awareness to your physical body.
5. Draw your attention from your toes, to your feet, lower legs, upper legs, hips, stomach, low back, upper back, chest, arms, hands, fingers, neck, head, face muscles, ears, head.
6. As you scan, move slowly through each body part, giving yourself a few moments to notice how that part of the body physically feels. See if you can relax the parts of the body where you feel tense.
7. Once you scan the body and relax any areas, draw your awareness to your breath. Keep your attention on your relaxed body and breath.
8. Refocus your awareness on the chosen object of attention each time you notice your mind wandering. Rather than pursuing random thoughts, you simply let them go.
9. When you are complete, gently open your eyes, take a deep breath in and out. Give yourself a few moments to notice how you feel now that you have completed your meditation.

MEDITATION EXERCISE 3 - LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

A loving-kindness practice focuses on unconditional and inclusive love. The type of love that has no conditions. This is a meditation of care, concern, tenderness, loving kindness, friendship. A feeling of warmth for oneself and others. The practice is the softening of the mind and heart, an opening to deeper levels of the feeling of kindness and love.

Find a comfortable seat. Begin to focus on your chest area and your breath. Breathe in and out from that area, as if you are breathing from the heart center. Draw your awareness to the sensations at your heart center.

Breathing in and out through your nose, begin by generating a kind feeling toward yourself. Feel any areas of **mental blockage** or **numbness, self-judgment, self-hatred**. Then drop beneath that to the place where we care for ourselves, where we want strength and health and safety for ourselves.

Continuing to breathe in and out, say the following phrase to yourself several times:

“May I be free from inner and outer harm and danger.

May I be safe and protected.

May I be free of mental suffering or distress.

May I be happy.

May I be free of physical pain and suffering.

May I be healthy and strong.

May I be able to live in this world happily, peacefully, joyfully, with ease.”



Next, think of a person who brings who gives you a feeling of **pure unconditional loving kindness**. The type of love that does not depend on getting anything back. Repeat the phrases for this person:

“May he/she be protected free from inner and outer harm and danger.

May he/she be safe and protected.

May he/she be free of mental suffering or distress.

May he/she be happy.

May he/she be free of physical pain and suffering.

May he/she be healthy and strong.

May he/she be able to live in this world happily, peacefully, joyfully, with ease.”

After feeling strong **unconditional love** for the benefactor, move to a person you regard as a dear friend and repeat the phrases again, breathing in and out of your heart center.

Now move to a neutral person, someone for whom you **feel neither strong like nor dislike**. As you repeat the above phrases toward this person, allow yourself to feel tenderness, loving care for their welfare.

Now move to someone you have hostile feelings or resentments towards. Repeat the following phrases for this person.

“To the best of my ability I wish that you may be free from inner and outer harm and danger.

May you be safe and protected.

May you be free of mental suffering or distress.

May you be happy.

May you be free of physical pain and suffering.

May you be healthy and strong.

May you be able to live in this world happily, peacefully, joyfully, with ease.”

If you begin to feel ill will toward this person, return to the person you chose who you have unconditional love toward. Let the loving kindness arise again. Then return to this person. Let the phrases spread through your whole body, mind, and heart.

After the difficult person, radiate loving kindness out to all beings. Stay in touch with the ember of warm, tender loving-kindness at the center of your being, and begin to visualize or engender a felt sense of all living beings. The traditional phrases are these:

“May all beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.

May all living beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.

May all breathing beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.

May all individuals be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.

May all beings in existence be safe, happy, healthy,
live joyously.”

Take a **deep breath in**. And **breathe out**. And another **deep breath in** and **let it go**. Notice the state of your mind and how you feel after this meditation. When you're ready, you may **open your eyes**.

Adapted from: <https://www.gaiam.com/blogs/discover/meditation-101-techniques-benefits-and-a-beginner-s-how-to>

MEDITATION TIP

Since focusing the mind is challenging, a good place to start with meditation exercises would be to practice each of them for a few minutes once a day and then build up to longer periods of time as you feel more comfortable.

*“The mind is just like a muscle –
the more you exercise it, the stronger it gets
and the more it can expand.”*

— Idowu Koyenikan

Section Two: Mindfulness

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is a specific type of meditation. It is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are, what we're doing and what we feel, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. (Mindful.org)

BENEFITS OF MINDFULNESS

Benefits of mindfulness includes reducing stress, increased focused, improved emotional regulation, and improved overall physical well-being.

“I don't have to chase extraordinary moments to find happiness – it's right in front of me if I'm paying attention and practicing gratitude.”

— Brene' Brown

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE 1 - OBSERVE THE PRESENT MOMENT

This is a great first mindfulness exercise if you are new to the practice.

1. You can practice this exercise anywhere. All you need is a few minutes of free time.
2. Observe the present moment as it is.
 - a. What do you notice?
 - b. What do you hear?
 - c. How do you feel?
 - d. What thoughts are coming up in your head?
 - e. Without judgment, allow yourself to take in all that you notice in the present moment.
3. Let judgments pass. When you notice yourself making judgments about what you observe in the present moment, practice simply acknowledging what thoughts are coming up and then letting them pass.
4. Practice being mindful for a few minutes before continuing on in your day.

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE 2 - NOTICING NATURE

The exercise is designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, something that is easily missed when we are rushing around in the car or hopping on and off trains on the way to work.

1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.
2. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows.
3. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time.
4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence. What is its shape? What does it feel like? What color is it? What does it smell like?
5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

MINDFULNESS EXERCISE 3 - EATING EXERCISE

Note: requires use of raisins; other types of foods can be substituted such as other fruit, popcorn, peanuts.

You can practice this exercise with any of your senses in place of food (feel, touch, see, hear).

Find a comfortable seated position. Come into the present moment by taking a few breaths, noticing how you feel physically.

Place a few raisins in your hand. Notice the impulse you might have to pop them all in your mouth at once and right away.

Look at the raisins, examining them with curiosity as if you've never seen one before.

Notice how they feel in your hand - the texture, shape and weight. You may want to close your eyes while doing this.

Notice the color of the raisins and if they have any unique features.

Imagine where the raisins came from, how they started as grapes on the vine. Picture the workers on the farm harvesting the grapes and another set of workers transporting the raisins to the store.

Slowly bring one raisin to your nose to see what it smells like. Notice how naturally your arm moves to do this.

Continue to notice any thoughts of like or dislike you might have of as you observe the raisin. Notice whether you're anticipating what it will taste like. Perhaps you're starting to salivate or feeling an impulse to put the raisin into your mouth right away.

Ever so slowly, place the raisin in your mouth, without biting into it. Explore what it feels like in your mouth, notice what your tongue is doing. Keep it in your mouth without chewing for at least 10 seconds. Notice what it's like to take this time before eating the raisin.

When you are ready, slowly and softly bite into the raisin, taking one or two bites.

Without swallowing, notice what it tastes like, how its flavor and texture changes as you chew. Notice your natural impulse to swallow it.

When you are ready, swallow the raisin.

Sit quietly and notice what you are feeling.

Continue with this practice as you continue eating your raisins or other chosen snack.

Adapted from <https://healthypsych.com/mindful-eating-exercise/>



BENEFITS OF MINDFUL EATING

Being mindful when eating food can be helpful in many ways, including:

- Decreasing uncontrollable eating and/or overeating.
- Being more aware of eating what foods support your body and what does not.
- Increasing awareness of food choices
- Increasing the chance of selecting healthy food that provides nutrition.
- Increasing enjoyment of food and meals as you eat them.
- Providing an opportunity to strengthen the power of presence when eating.
- Recognizing when you have had enough food to “fuel” your body.

MINDFUL EXERCISE 4 - BREATHING TO RELAX

1. Take a deep breath in for 6 seconds
2. Hold the breath for 2 seconds
3. Let the breath out for 8 seconds
4. Repeat

This is a perfect exercise for whenever you are feeling nervous or anxious.

MINDFULNESS PRACTICE TIPS:

1. Since being fully present can be challenging, a good place to start would be to practice these exercises a few minutes each and then build up to longer periods of time.
2. After making time to specifically practice these mindfulness exercises, can you try applying the same approach to mindfulness as you go about your day when interacting in activities and with other people? Notice moments when you want to react to what comes up and if you can soften your reaction.
3. Be kind to yourself. Try not to judge whatever thoughts pop into your head. Instead, practice noticing when your mind has wandered off, and coming back to the present moment.

Allowing your breath to move at a slow and steady breath offers deep focus and relaxing sense of breathing. A very relaxed person breathes for about seven breaths per minute.

— Tiddy Rowan

MINDFULNESS TIP:

Recognize that thoughts are simply thoughts; you don't need to believe them or react to them.

“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky.
Conscious breathing is my anchor.”

—Thich Nhat Han

Section Three: Reflections

WHY REFLECT?

Reading and writing reflections allows us to become aware of our own values and the values of the world. It gives you time to pause and think about what matters most to you in your life.

BENEFITS OF REFLECTION:

The practice of reflection allows us to foster a deep connection to others as well as ourselves.

“Let yourself be silently drawn by the stronger pulls of what you really love.”

- Rumi

Our Deepest Fear

By Marianne Williamson

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves,
who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?
Actually, who are you not to be?
You are a child of God.

Your playing small does not serve the world.
There's nothing enlightened about shrinking
so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are all meant to shine, as children do.
We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.
It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone.

And as we let our own light shine,
we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.
As we're liberated from our own fear,
our presence automatically liberates others.

Anyway

Mother Teresa

People are often unreasonable,
irrational, and self-centered. *Forgive them anyway.*

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish,
ulterior motives. *Be kind anyway.*

If you are successful, you will win some
unfaithful friends and some genuine enemies.

Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and sincere people may deceive you.

Be honest and sincere anyway.

What you spend years creating, others could destroy overnight.

Create anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, some may be jealous.

Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, will often be forgotten.

Do good anyway.

Give the best you have, and it will never be enough.

Give your best anyway.

In the final analysis, it is between you and God.

It was never between you and them anyway.

When Your World Moves Too Fast

Christy Ann Martine

When your world moves too fast
and you lose yourself in the chaos,

introduce yourself

to each color of the sunset.

Reacquaint yourself with the earth

beneath your feet.

Thank the air that surrounds you

with every breath you take.

Find yourself in the appreciation of life.

What I have Learned

Maya Angelou

“I’ve learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.

I’ve learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way he/she handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights.

I’ve learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you’ll miss them when they’re gone from your life.

I’ve learned that making a “living” is not the same thing as making a “life.” I’ve learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance.

I’ve learned that you shouldn’t go through life with a catcher’s mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back.

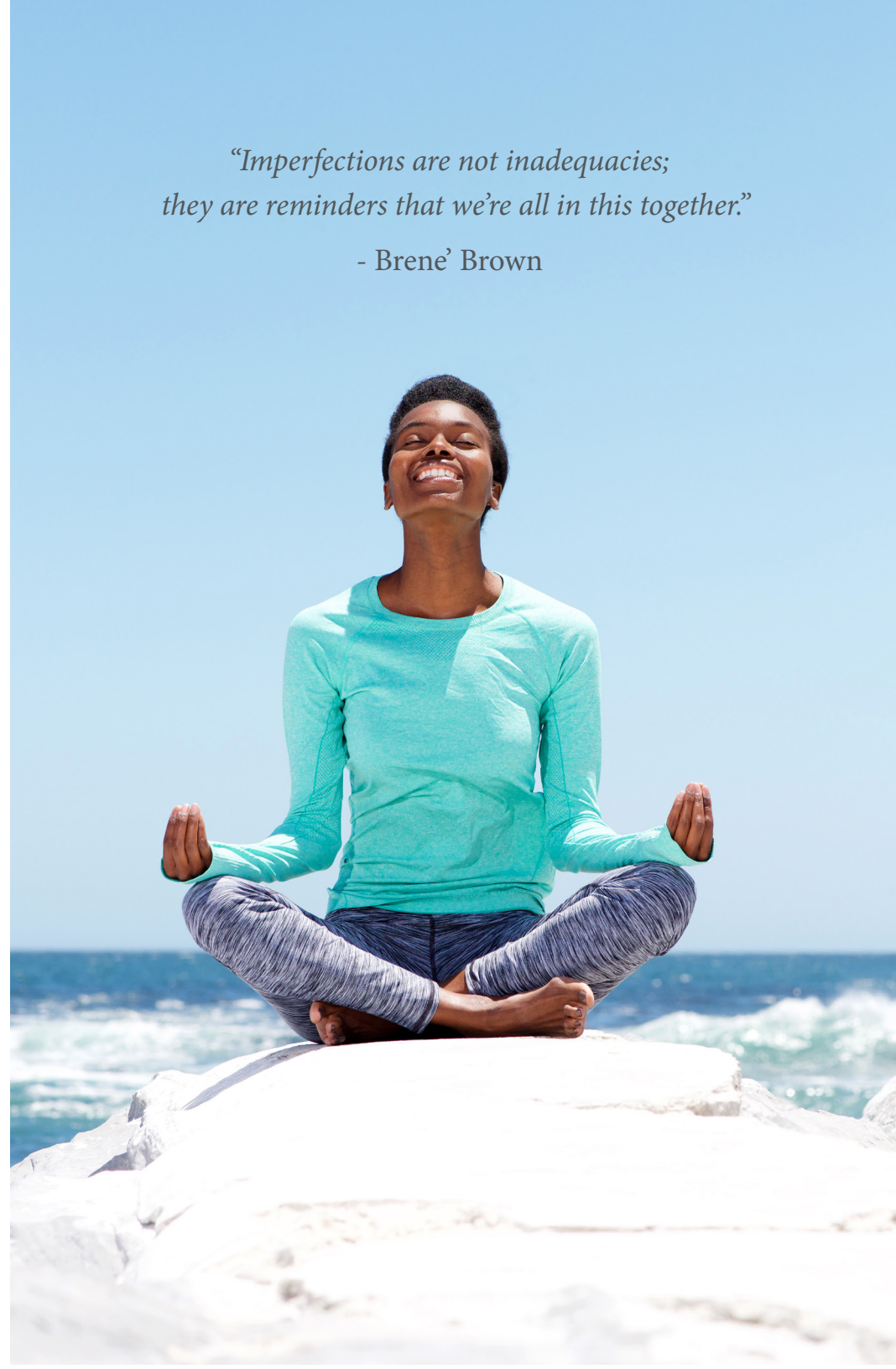
I’ve learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision. I’ve learned that even when I have pains, I don’t have to be one.

I’ve learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back.

I’ve learned that I still have a lot to learn. I’ve learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

*“Imperfections are not inadequacies;
they are reminders that we’re all in this together.”*

- Brené Brown



G.L.A.D. TECHNIQUE

This technique is designed to help you appreciate the good things in your life. It only takes a few minutes and can be practiced daily.

G One thing you are **grateful** for today

My breath, the shoes on my feet, a good friend, water you drink.

L One new thing you **learned** today

Opening yourself to all there is to learn helps you see that each day brings opportunity to learn many things.

A One small **accomplishment**

This can be as simple as an ordinary act of self-care you did for yourself or others.

Getting out of bed, walking around the block, getting enough sleep, eating a healthy snack.

D One **delightful** thing that touched you today

Anything that made you smile, laugh, brought you joy or was pleasing to your senses.

Noticing flowers, tasting something delicious, hearing your favorite song.

Adapted from The Mindfulness Toolbox by Donald Altman

Self-Care Bingo

Use this tool in a way that works best for you. You could play this with a friend or on your own. Perhaps, choose three items to focus on for the next week!

Meditate for 5 minutes	Write in a journal	Stretch for 5 minutes	Make time for the things that make you feel whole	List three good things that went well this week
Talk to family or friends	Listen to music	Take time to relax	List 5 things you love & appreciate about yourself	Spend time in nature
Eat healthy foods	Let yourself feel whatever you are feeling	FREE	Interrupt your own inner critic	Appreciate something that you find beautiful
Take a break	Be patient with yourself	Remind yourself of your strengths	Write a list of what you are grateful for	Practice what self-care looks like for you
Read Poetry or books	Use a free meditation app	Go on a walk outside	Pay attention to your inner child	Practice pausing before reacting

Section 5: Mindfulness Resources

Take your mindfulness further: Mindfulness and meditation are more popular than ever these days. Take your practice further with the following resources and don't be afraid to do your own research, whether it be in your community or online.

“Alone, we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

– Helen Keller

Mindfulness and Meditation Resources.

Apps available to download on your smart phone or device:



Insight Timer (free)

insighttimer.com



Headspace (subscription)

headspace.com



10% Happier (subscription)

10percenthappier.com



White Noise (free, fee versions)

tmssoft.com/white-noise



Motivation Quotes (free)

Daily quote, available wherever you get your apps

Books Related To Mindfulness And Meditation

- *10% Happier by Dan Harris (app, podcast)*
- *Happiness the Mindful Way by Ken Verni*
- *Modern Mindfulness by Rohan Gunatillake*
- *The Power of Habit by Charles Duhigg*
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are by Jon Kabat-Zinn*

