

MF3 Course Preparation Checklist

Check off all tasks as you complete them. **Please make sure to do all tasks marked in bold below.** Estimated times to do certain activities are in parenthesis. Links to all articles, videos, and handouts can be found at BoundlessLoveProject.org/mf3prep.

- 1. Invite your family and friends to join you.
- 2. Get the following supplies for the course, and bring them to class.**
 - Folder**
 - Journal or notebook**
 - Pen or pencil**
- 3. Download, print, and bring to class the following items.**
 - Handouts (access at BoundlessLoveProject.org/mf3prep)**
 - Slogan card**
- 4. Bookmark, or learn how to access, the Mindfulness Fundamentals 3.0 web page.**
- 5. Read: Tips for Attending Class (3 min)**
- 6. Read: Learn Common Zoom Skills & How to Format Your Name for Class (8 min)** **This task may be skipped by people taking the course in a self-study manner, without the benefit of the instructor.*
- 7. Watch and Read: Six Meditation Postures to Explore (12 min)
- 8. Practice Your Chosen Flashback-Halting Protocol (variable)
- 9. Read: Journaling for Personal Growth (7 min)
- 10. Read and Journal: Tips to Support Your Wellbeing and Manage Your Time
 - Part 1 Reading (12 min)
 - Part 1 Journal Activity (10-20 min)
 - Part 2 Reading (5 min)
 - Part 2 Journal Activity (10-20 min)
- 11. Read: What is Community Heart Share? (8 min)

Once you have completed these, you are ready for the course! 😊

The Flashback-Halting Protocol

The flashback-halting protocol is taken from trauma specialist Babette Rothschild's book, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment*. It utilizes *dual awareness* – a skill mindfulness helps develop – where we notice the difference between our *mental experiences* (the thoughts, images, sounds, and feelings of the flashback) and our *sensory experiences* (seeing and hearing the safe environment we are in). This usually halts traumatic flashbacks quite rapidly.

If you have risk factors for experiencing a flashback while meditating, we encourage you to always meditate in a safe place and review this guide before meditating. For more info on flashback risk factors, meditating safely, and a video guide to practicing this technique, visit: BoundlessLoveProject.org/advisory.

HOW DO I DO THE FLASHBACK-HALTING PROTOCOL?

Say the following sentences filling in the blanks by following the instructions in parenthesis:

- Right now I am feeling _____ , (*name the current emotion, usually fear*)
- and I am sensing in my body _____ , (*describe current bodily sensations in detail*)
- because I am remembering _____ . (*name the trauma by title, only — no details*)
- And, at the same time, I am looking around where I am now in _____ (*say the year*),
- here _____ , (*name the place where you are*)
- and I can see _____ , (*describe some of the things that you see right now, in this place*),
- and so I know _____ , (*name the trauma again*)
- is not happening now/anymore.



The 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Grounding Exercise

This technique will take you through your five senses to help remind you of the present moment. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations, and can also be used to stop flashbacks while meditating.

If you have risk factors for experiencing a flashback while meditating, we encourage you to always meditate in a safe place and review this guide before meditating. For more info on flashback risk factors, meditating safely, and a video guide to practicing this technique, visit: BoundlessLoveProject.org/advisory.

How do I do the 5,4,3,2,1 grounding exercise?

To begin, take a slow belly breath.

5 - LOOK: Look around and name out loud 5 things you can see. For example, you could say, “I see books, I see a window, and through the window I see sunshine, clouds, and a tree.”

4 - FEEL: Feel inside the body and name out loud 4 things you can feel. “I can feel an ache in my lower back, energy in my hands and feet, pressure where my seat contacts the chair, and pressure where my shoes touch my feet.”

3 - LISTEN: Listen for sounds and name 3 things you can hear out loud. “I hear a bird singing outside, far away traffic, and a gurgling in my stomach.”

2 - SMELL: Smell what you can smell and name 2 smells out loud. If you can't smell anything, then name 2 of your favorite smells. “I enjoy the smells of vanilla and peppermint.”

1 - TASTE: Taste what you can taste and name 1 taste out loud. If you can't taste anything, then name 1 of your favorite tastes. “I enjoy the taste of blueberries.”

Take another slow belly breath to end.

MF3 Class 1 Mindfulness Mission Checklist

Check off all tasks as you complete them.
Please make sure to do all tasks marked in bold below.

Links to all handouts, videos, and the full assignment details can be found at BoundlessLoveProject.org/mf3c1

WEEKLY REPORTS

Please submit your Weekly Report on Monday, at: BoundlessLoveProject.org/weekly-report

DAY 1 (THE FIRST DAY AFTER CLASS)

- 1. Download the handouts and print them.**
- 2. Do the Creating a Daily Meditation Practice journal activity (10-15 min).**
- 3. Email your answer to number 4 in the journaling activity to the teacher.**
- 4. Read the Tips for Using Your Tracking Log” handout (3 min).**
- 5. Read the How to Do the Intention-Setting Practice handout (5 min).**
- 6. Skim the Class 1 Intention Setting handout to check the appropriate check-boxes and personalize it appropriately. (5 min).**
- 7. Print, cut out, and hang gratitude slogans in high visibility areas where you live and work.**

DAY 2

8. Start your daily meditation, intention setting, and gratitude practice (10 min).

***After you start these practices, you will need to answer the question on your Creating a Daily Meditation Practice handout under the Problem Solving heading on any days you miss your meditation or intention-setting practices.**

9. Read the Appreciation Practice handout (7 min).

DAY 3

10. Read the Tips for Meditating handout (8 min).

DAY 4

11. Read the Mindful Pause handout (3 min).

12. Read the Gratitude Groups handout (4 min).

DAY 5

13. Watch How to Be More Positive with Dr. Barbara Fredrickson (3 min).

Watch the video at:
<https://www.boundlessloveproject.org/news/be-genuine>

Here already? Then you're all done! Congrats! 😊



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Community Where All Life Thrives*
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Creating A Daily Meditation Practice

To help your meditation and intention-setting practices succeed, answer the following questions in your journal:

1. What benefits from meditation would I like to enjoy? List as many as you can think of, and be as specific as possible.
2. When and where you will do your meditation and intention-setting practice each day?

Try to do these practices as one of the first things you do in the morning, or as early in your day as possible. Then pick a place to do them that is easily accessible and free of distractions and interruptions. If possible, do the intention-setting practice in front of a mirror.

Behavioral researchers have found that using an established daily habit to trigger when to do a new behavior significantly increases the likelihood of adopting the new habit. So, do your morning meditation before or after an already established daily habit. For example, "I will meditate before I eat breakfast." Or, "I will meditate after drinking my morning glass of water."

3. Once you have a time and a place decided, write down what you will do to make the location easy to access, and limit distractions and interruptions.

For example: what can you do to ensure the space where you meditate allows you immediate access? Do you need to set an intention to not put clothes, jackets, backpacks, or other items there? What else?

To limit distractions, will you share with the people you live with your plans and ask they not disturb you when you are practicing?

If you have animal companions, what will be the best way to keep them from distracting you? Will you close doors to keep them out of the room? Or will they distract you less if they are in the room with you? You may need to experiment with this to find out.

What else can you do to help limit distractions when practicing? Turn off your cell phone? Turn off the ringer of your land line? Turn off any alarm clocks that may ring at this time?

If you find it hard to make the places you chose accessible or free of distraction, consider choosing another place that might be better.

4. Given your answers above, create a specific intention for your practice.

Make sure your intention: clearly defines the behavior, names where they will be done, names

the daily habit that triggers them, and includes the accountability of immediately recording them in your meditation log.

Here is a sample intention which you may model yours after:

I will do a 5-minute meditation practice every day on the floor of my bedroom after drinking my morning glass of water. Then I will do my intention-setting practice in the bathroom looking at myself in the mirror. Finally, I will record them both in my meditation log.

5. You oversleep your alarm, an emergency grabs your attention, or something else prevents you from following your intention. What is your plan B? Create a fallback intention.

If I am unable to follow my original intention, then, on days I am at the office, before eating lunch I will do a 5-minute meditation at my work desk, and do my intention-setting in my car. If at home, I will do them in the usual place before I eat lunch.

Whenever something prevents you from doing your daily practices at the usual time and place, do your best to still get them in sometime during the day.

Problem Solving

Starting new habits take patience, persistence, and effort. As you test drive your intentions, unexpected situations may arise that sabotage them.

On days when you don't practice, answer the following questions in your journal:

1. What prevented me from successfully completing my intentions?
2. What can I do to prevent this situation from happening in the future?
3. If I can't prevent this situation from arising, what can I do to not let it derail me from completing my intention?
4. Is my intention good as is, or would it better serve me to adjust it?

If your intention falls flat day after day, feel free to alter it until it works for you. If it makes sense change the location, triggering habit, or other aspects of it until you create one that helps you succeed.



Tracking Log

What pleasant feelings do I feel while meditating?
 What am I learning from these practices? What small
 benefits and gains have I noticed in my life since
 starting these practices? Jot the answers below.

Month: _____ Year: _____

Date	Med	IS	Ap	Inv	Insights and Moment-to-Moment Benefits
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Tips for Using Your Tracking Log

Use your log to track your progress with your meditation (**Med**), intention-setting (**IS**), appreciation (**Ap**), and investigation (**Inv**) practices. You will share this data in your weekly report to the teacher, so do your best to keep accurate records.

After you finish your daily **meditation practice**, write the number of minutes that you meditated in the **Med** column for that day. If you do more than one meditation per day, separate them with a comma. After completing your **intention-setting practice**, put a check in the **IS** column for that day. After every **Investigation** you do, put a line in the **Inv** column. Develop the habit of completing this form immediately after doing the above three practices, to help you maintain accurate results.

For your **appreciation practice**, keep track of how many times you give thanks each day, and at the end of the day, or the next morning when you do your meditation and intention setting, put the number in the **Ap** column.

There are three kinds of **moment-to-moment insights and benefits** to notice and log:

1. Pleasant experiences while meditating. If you feel any moments of peace, calm, relaxation, joy, or other pleasant states while meditating, note them in the benefits column.

2. Insights gained from meditating or mindfulness. For example, say during a meditation you notice that your mind is racing and that you can't stop it, and it really hits you on

a felt level that: "I don't control my own thoughts." That is an important insight, so write it down.

3. Small, incremental improvements in your daily life. This includes any time you are slightly more mindful, skillful, or able to experience something with more joy, ease, or peace than usual. Let's say you tend to get stressed while commuting to and from work, but one day you notice you are slightly less stressed and more peaceful. This slight improvement would be a benefit to note.

When starting these practices, please don't expect life-changing, dramatic, or permanent benefits. They will come in time with regular, daily practice. Be patient. Do the work. Allow the practices to positively change you according to their own timeline. Don't be greedy for dramatic results, and do look for small, incremental benefits in individual *moments*.

Every-time you fill out this form ask yourself, questions such as: What pleasant feelings did I feel while meditating? What am I learning from these practices? What small benefits and gains have I noticed in my life since starting these practices? Then jot your answers down in the **Insights and Benefits** column, or in your journal, if you need more space.

Here is an example of what the form might look like for someone who did three meditations, their intention-setting practice, gave thanks 15 times, and did three investigations on the 1st of the month.

Date	Med	IS	Ap	Inv	Insights and Moment-to-Moment Benefits
1	5, 5, 30	✓	15		<i>Calm, peace, joy, love. Everything changes. Was more patient with my spouse yesterday.</i>

Be sure to log practices you missed. If you did not meditate, complete your intention setting, do any investigations, or (and I cringe just to think about it) give thanks ☺, signify that by putting a zero in the box, as was done here for investigations:

Date	Med	IS	Ap	Inv	Insights and Moment-to-Moment Benefits
1	5	✓	8	0	<i>Deeply relaxing. I learned that I am not my feelings. Was more mindful and loving with my friend's kids.</i>

Enjoy tracking your efforts and noticing the relational pleasures (such as mindfulness, stability, focus, peace, compassion, joy, kindness, and so on), resilience, and other benefits these practices bring you!

How to Do the Intention-Setting Practice

Purpose

Starting new habits can be hard. This daily intention-setting practice aims to help you integrate new mindfulness practices into your life by reminding you what they are, your reasons for doing them, and, at times, how to implement them.

A second purpose of this practice is to help you learn key ideas of the course. Regular repetition, coupled with noticing the ideas at play in your own life, will help you learn them much faster.

Many people find this practice helps them start their day off on the right foot with inspiration, curiosity, hope, and energy. If this is not the case for you, notice why and share this information with the teacher in your weekly report.

Top Tips for How to Do the Practice

- Do this activity as early in the day as possible, right before or after meditating.
- Read the intentions out loud using a confident, kind, and powerful voice. If able, do this practice in a secluded place where others cannot hear you. If reading out loud makes you self-conscious, then mask your words with some background noise such as music or a bathroom fan.
- If able, read while standing. Whether sitting or standing, have your posture be upright, strong, and energetic. Keep your head held high.
- Read these intentions mindfully with understanding of what you read and with feeling. Aim to feel joy, hope, courage, and resolve to do the practices.

- If helpful, look at yourself in a mirror when you read them.
- Aim to memorize these intentions within one to three weeks of using them.
- Each new section has a heading in bold like this: **I choose to meditate (3)**. The number in parenthesis is how many times to read that section out loud.
- Between sections, take a one-breath-cycle (breath in, then out) mindful pause. That means if you are able and it seems wise, place the hands on the heart and belly and close the eyes. Then focus your attention on the breath as you breathe slowly, deeply, and effortlessly in, and then out. For more details on the mindful pause practice, refer to its handout.

The Tiers of Engagement

We recognize that people often come to this course from busy and challenging lives. To accommodate this, we have three tiers of participation to help people increase or decrease their investment as needed.

Sitters: Commit to watching the talks and joining a gratitude group.

Walkers: Commit to investing about 15 minutes a day towards dedicated practice. This includes the daily meditation, intention-setting, and gratitude group practices.

Dancers: Commit to investing 15 - 40 minutes a day towards dedicated practice and doing the full mindfulness missions.

We strongly encourage people to participate as fully as possible. The more



you participate, the more benefits you will receive from this course.

Our goal is to help you live with more love, wisdom, courage, and joy. We do this by helping you live from **mindfulness (nonconceptual) consciousness** rather than **ordinary (conceptual) consciousness**. Participants who only listen to the talks, remain in ordinary consciousness, and this will limit the benefits they receive from the course.

The practices that walkers and dancers do will help them discover many new insights that will help them live with more love, wisdom, courage, and joy. So do your best to participate as fully as possible, so you may reap the full rewards of the course.

Navigating the Formatting

This info helps you understand how to read and navigate each class's intention-setting handout.

Bold Print (3) = Section headers are in bold. If not italicized, read them out loud. The number in parenthesis behind the header is how many times to read that section before doing the mindful pause and moving on to the next one.

~~W~~ = Walkers may skip reading this section if they choose to.

Italicized print = Instructions, clarifying info, and reference info are in italics. This does not need to be read out loud. Just skip to the next non-italicized info.

(words in parenthesis followed by a blank line) _____ = Read the words in parenthesis out loud, or personalize the intention by writing words on the blank line

that speak more to your heart, and reading those words instead.

= Check box. Put a check mark in all of the boxes that you intend to do, and read those that you check. You can also check blank lines and fill them in with other ideas of your own that are not offered in the text.

[Blank] = Read this out loud as a placeholder for another word -- such as an emotion you feel -- that you might use when actually doing the practice.

* *Take a mindful pause* * = Take a one-breath-long mindful pause after reading each section.

Personalizing These Intentions

When you get your intention-setting practice for the class, quickly skim it to see if there are any check boxes. Read that section, and check the boxes that make sense for you. Then when you read through it, only read those boxes you checked.

Also, skim through it for any lines where you can personalize the practice. Where it makes sense, personalize them.

Where text is provided in parenthesis, feel free to read that for as long as you want until it becomes clear to you how you want to personalize it. Then personalize it with words that more genuinely speak to your heart and read those words instead of what is in the parenthesis.

It is fine to not personalize the text. We give this option to help you make it more your own, and more meaningful for you, but it is not necessary.



Start Celebrating

It's important to celebrate the little things. Professional athletes often celebrate their well-done plays with a celebratory movement – like pumping their fist and saying “yeah.”

If you have a celebratory move, great! If you don't have one, create a gesture that feels genuinely celebratory for you: clapping or rubbing your hands, squeezing your arm, making a fist, rubbing your head, etc.

Use your move throughout your day to celebrate the little wins and victories, like completing your intention setting for the day.

Best Wishes!

We wish you much success in using this intention-setting practice to help you integrate meditation, gratitude, and other helpful practices and ideas into your life.

Save these instructions and refer to them if you ever have questions on how to do your intention-setting practice. If they don't address your concerns, please email the teacher and ask for what you need. Thank you.

Wishing you boundless love, peace, joy, and success!



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Intention Setting for Class 1: The Secret to Abundance, Resilience, and Joy is Gratitude

I choose to thrive (1)

If it serves you, write an address to the Higher Power of your understanding on the blank line below, i.e. Dear Great Spirit, Dear God, etc.

May the forces of Truth, Light, and Love guide me away from the darkness and into the light.

May I mindfully notice more clearly and deeply what contributes to my wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. May I notice and take advantage of the resources, support, and wisdom at my disposal to live more wisely and kindly. May I take what I learn and apply it to my life so that I may thrive.

** Mindful pause **

I choose to meditate (3)

I don't have to meditate, but I choose to meditate so I can live with more (love, wisdom, ease, courage, and joy.)

** Mindful pause **

I choose to develop mindfulness (1)

When I meditate, I develop **mindfulness** which allows me to kindly and objectively observe things with detachment.

Mindfulness is a safe, relational pleasure that feels easeful, content, and aware. Mindfulness helps me become the master of my thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, instead of being ruled by them.

** Mindful pause **



I choose to develop concentration (1)

When I meditate, I develop **concentration** which allows me to consciously choose the focus of my attention. Concentration is a safe, relational pleasure that feels stable, balanced, calm, and focused. Concentration allows me to overcome the mind's negativity bias and live with gratitude.

** Mindful pause **

The next two sections are for you to reference when you would like to review relational pleasures, the negativity bias, and gratitude. On days when you have more time, you may read them out loud if you like, but they will make your intention-setting practice longer than 5 minutes.

I choose to take refuge in relational pleasures (1)

*I can enjoy, appreciate, and delight in **sense pleasures** as long as I remain unattached, unaddicted, and not dependent on them for my happiness.*

*When times are tough, it is best to take refuge in **relational pleasures**.*

Relational pleasures arise from how I relate to what I experience, not the experience itself. Wisdom teachers tell us relational pleasures are completely safe and with practice, we can experience them at all times and in all situations.

Mindfulness, concentration, and gratitude are safe, relational pleasures that I can take refuge in when times are tough.

** Mindful pause **

I choose to notice what's good (1)

*My mind's **negativity bias** keeps me focused on what is frightening, stressful, and problematic. By committing to gratitude, I can change this mental bias.*

A gratitude mindset constantly asks, "what can I appreciate right now?" It notices who or what is good, helpful, supportive, beautiful, kind, skillful, and wonderful in every situation, and then gives thanks.

When I give thanks, it is important that I do so in a quality manner. This means my thanks will be slow, patient, and soothing. I will really try to feel and savor the pleasant feelings of gratitude.



When I savor pleasant relational pleasures, this makes me more resilient by helping me access my inner resources such as (wisdom, hope, creativity, and kindness).

** Mindful pause **

**I choose an attitude of gratitude
(3)**

I could focus on what's negative, but I choose to live with an attitude of gratitude so I can experience more (abundance, resilience, joy, connection, and wisdom).

** Mindful pause **



I will give thanks 15 times today (1)

I set a firm intention to give thanks

(15) _____ or more times today.

To do this, I intend to give thanks:
[check and read all you plan to do.]

- First thing when I wake up.
- Whenever my timer goes off. *[Set your phone or watch timer to go off every hour, or at an interval of your choosing, throughout the day to remind you to give thanks.]*
- Before meals.
- When I message my gratitude partners.
- When I see either of my gratitude slogans.
- When being skillful.
- Before, during, or after socializing with family or friends.
- When smelling, tasting, hearing, or seeing something delightful.
- When starting a task.
- While doing a task.

- After finishing a task.
- When celebrating victories, be they small, medium, or large.
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- Before going to bed at night.
- Whenever else I remember to.

** Mindful Pause **

You're done for today! Give thanks and celebrate with your celebratory move.

Now mark in your log that you completed this activity. Great job!

Your success will be tied to your kind, patient, and joyful effort, and I am rooting for you!



Tips for Meditating

This article gives you tips to help your meditation practice be as beneficial as possible.

Meditation Basics

• There is no such thing as a bad meditation.

Either you enjoy the peace and stability of mindfulness and concentration, or you notice what gets in the way of that tranquility (spoiler alert: it's believing or identifying with falsehoods. Haha!) Trust that every time you meditate, you make gains – even if you felt tired, unfocused, distracted, or agitated during the meditation. It's similar with physical workouts. You will not bring your peak performance to every workout, but every workout helps you make gains.

• **Be patient for results.** The benefits of meditation will show up in your daily life, more so than in your practice. When you meditate regularly, you will find yourself becoming more patient, loving, compassionate, joyful, courageous, wise, peaceful, and focused, among other things. Such changes will often be gradual rather than sudden, so it is best to measure your progress in 6-month or one-year intervals. These are long-enough periods of time to really see clear progress in how meditation has improved your life and made you more joyful, wise, and resilient.

Once you are able to consistently meditate for five-minutes, four or five times a week, add one minute a week to your meditation session until you are meditating twenty or more minutes per session. As you experience the numerous benefits of meditation, you will come to appreciate these twenty-minutes a day as the best investment of your time for creating a joyful, fulfilling, and rewarding life.

• **Know your anchor.** All the meditations we teach have an anchor. An **anchor** is the form (or formlessness) where you intend to hold your attention during the meditation. Common anchors are: sensations of the breath, sensations throughout the body, sounds heard, sensations in the heart space, present moment awareness (also called “bare awareness”) where you notice everything that arises in your awareness including all five senses as well as mental objects like thoughts, moods, and mental states, or the formlessness behind and within all forms.

Before You Begin

• Meditate in a location where you feel safe.

Meditation helps us explore deep states of relaxation, and these are not attainable when we don't feel safe. You also want to feel safe enough that you can close your eyes for the duration of the meditation without worrying about your safety.

• **Get comfortable while remaining alert.** Find a position that you can comfortably hold for 30 minutes. You can sit in a chair, on a meditation cushion, or lie on the floor. Tips to get comfortable include:

1. Remove your eyeglasses.
2. If seated in a chair, uncross your legs and keep both feet flat on the floor.
3. If sitting, maintain a balanced, upright posture.
4. If you suffer from chronic pain, when seated, use a backrest, and whether seated or lying, use as many cushions, pillows, and blankets as you need to be comfortable.

Tips to remain alert include:

1. Only lie down if you are energetic enough that you won't fall asleep.
2. When seated, don't use a backrest. Gently elongate and stack your spine so your torso and head are balanced and little effort is needed to hold them upright.
3. If tired, keep eyes partly open and looking in a relaxed, unfocused gaze at something soothing about 5 to 8 feet in front of you.

• **Know the flashback-halting protocol or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding technique.** It is rare, but some people with traumatic pasts may experience flashbacks during meditation. If during a meditation you start to experience something too disturbing to compassionately hold, then stop meditating and do one of these practices.

If you are at risk for this, review your preferred technique before your meditation and keep the instructions close at hand. Find the flashback risk factors, protocols, and more info on preventing flashbacks at BoundlessLoveProject.org/advisory.

During the Meditation

• **Dedicate your meditations to cultivating love and goodwill for all life.** Setting loving intentions for all we do is one of the skills that meditation teaches us. We ritualize this loving intention setting through some opening words that reminds us that meditation is an act of love and service for ourselves and all life. During these words gently rest your awareness



on your heart area and try to feel the meaning behind the words.

- **Maintain a full sense of freedom during meditation.** Consider the instructions to be gentle invitations. Only follow those instructions that feel safe, seem helpful, and align with your inner wisdom. If any instruction or comment is unhelpful, or does not apply to you, then compassionately ignore it.

- **If you ever start to feel a flashback arising, then stop meditating and do the flashback-halting protocol or 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 grounding technique.**

Then get up and do whatever you need to do to feel safe and in control. Do not worry about interrupting other meditators. We will be happy you are taking care of yourself, and support you in doing this.

- **Try to remain still.** Lovingly do your best to remain as still as possible. Remaining still will help the mind become calmer and more focused. When you would like to move, do your best to move slowly and mindfully.

- **Close your eyes.** If you are in no danger of falling asleep, and you feel safe enough to do so, kindly close your eyes so you can focus your attention inward. If you feel tired and at risk for falling asleep, it may be helpful to keep your eyes partly open. Look with a relaxed, unfocused gaze at something soothing (candle, crystal, picture of a sunset, etc.), while holding the head upright in a balanced, comfortable posture.

- **Practice gratitude and kindness as you return to the anchor.** When you notice your attention has wandered away from the anchor, give thanks for the mindfulness that sees attention has wandered away. You can do this by silently thinking a short phrase such as: "Way to go, buddy." "Nice job, dear." "Good work, darling." "Thank you, love." Or similar. Ensure the tone of the thought is as friendly, kind, and warm as the words used. Do your best to feel the appreciation, joy, and love behind the words as you think them. After celebrating, calmly return your attention to the anchor.

- **Be mindful of mindfulness.** When mindful, you can see thoughts, emotions, and sensations arise without identifying with them, taking them personally, or believing the thoughts. Pay attention to that experience of mindfulness and try to live with mindfulness more and more in your daily life.

- **Practice peace and equanimity and letting go of craving and aversion.** During meditation, allow everything to be as it is. Kindly let go of the need to

do, achieve, or accomplish anything, including the need to do the meditation correctly. Gently do your best to follow the instructions, while also allowing whatever thoughts, feelings, and sensations arise to arise. For example, if judgmental thoughts arise about meditation, then let them come, let them be, and let them go. Don't identify with them, believe them, or engage with them. Don't resist them, try to push them away, or berate yourself for thinking them. That is all craving and aversion. Instead, mindfully and compassionately notice them, then calmly and kindly return your attention to the meditation anchor.

- **Practice being relaxed and mindful.** If stress, struggle, worry, or anxiety arise while meditating, try relaxing your effort so you can meditate with more ease and effortlessness. Whenever you notice stress or tension in a part of the body, kindly invite that part of the body to relax and soften as you exhale. The parts may relax a bit and tense up again mere seconds later. Lovingly and persistently invite them to relax whenever you notice they are tense again.

- **Practice love, compassion, and forgiveness for yourself and others.** Never judge or berate yourself for the mind and body's inability to follow the meditation instructions. You don't have full control over the body and mind, so please don't take their behavior personally. If judgmental thoughts arise, simply notice them. Don't identify with them, believe them, or resist them. Instead, simply return your attention to the anchor. After the meditation, mindfully investigate the judgments to see how they are unkind, untrue, and unhelpful. Then respond to those thoughts with a loving and wise response that is kind, true, and helpful.

- **Practice Generosity.** Being generous helps us recognize the abundance in our lives while benefiting others. Because meditating brings us many benefits, we practice generosity by energetically sharing those benefits with all beings and life forms at the end of the meditation. This gratitude practice is ritualized in some closing words called "the sharing of the merits." When these words are spoken gently rest your awareness on the heart area and try to feel the meaning behind the words, or if you feel pleasant feelings, invite them to energetically radiate from your heart directly to all beings and life forms.

That's enough to get you started. Thank you for loving yourself enough to give meditation a try. We wish you all the best!



Appreciate Practice

Why Practice Appreciation?

Being thankful is a simple practice that is easy to learn, can be done anywhere, and has wide-ranging benefits.

By encouraging ourselves to see all that is worthy of appreciation, our appreciation practice challenges our mind's **negativity bias** (its tendency to focus on what is dangerous, problematic, and threatening).

Appreciation helps us feel joy, and this joy helps us access more internal resources like creativity, inspiration, and energy.

These resources help us respond more skillfully to our situation, benefiting ourselves and all life.

Appreciation also helps us counter numerous falsehoods including judgment, craving, aversion, and self-view by reminding us that everything in our life is a gift, and encouraging us to see what is beautiful, wonderful, and skillful in all beings, life forms, and situations.

Not only is appreciation pleasurable, but it is a relational pleasure – meaning the pleasure does not depend on sense gratification, there is no danger in it, and it is available to us at all times and in all situations. As we mature in mindfulness, we use relational pleasures, like the joy of appreciation, to boost our mood and overcome addictive habits.

Finally, what we appreciate, appreciates. The more we practice seeing the world through the eyes of appreciation, the easier it becomes to appreciate everything and recognize our interdependence. This helps us recognize the abundance, support, and love that has always been in our lives, but has

frequently been ignored or taken for granted.

Offer Words of Thanks

Appreciation practice involves silently giving words of gratitude silently in your head, to those life forms who enrich your life, or to the Higher Power of your understanding (be that the Universe, Source, Life, Creator, God, or another name of your choosing). You can literally just repeat, “Thank you, thank you, thank you,” to get started.

Offer your words of thanks in a calm, patient, soothing manner. List what you are genuinely grateful for, using the, “Thank you for...” format. For example: Thank you for health. Thank you for family. Thank you for love. Feel free to be specific and detailed in your thanks. For example: Thank you for having my uncle recover from his cancer diagnosis.

What you can be grateful for is infinite. However, if new to the practice, try doing the longer gratitude meditations found on our website at www.BoundlessLoveProject.org/guided-meditations#joy. This will give you ideas on what to be grateful for and also help you feel the feelings of gratitude.

Feel the Feeling of Gratitude

It is key that your gratitude be genuine and heartfelt, and that you feel the feelings of gratitude. You will know your appreciation is genuine when you feel the pleasant feelings of gratitude in your heart space – the area in your chest in and around where the heart resides.

So, as you give thanks, rest your awareness on your heart space



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In the beginning, you may not feel the pleasure of gratitude, just keep offering your thanks with words and resting your awareness on your heart space. Answer the question: What can I appreciate right now?

To focus on the feeling, you may find it helpful to still the body and close the eyes. As you get more proficient at giving thanks, you will be able to feel gratitude with your eyes open and while moving.

Once you start feeling the pleasure of gratitude when you give thanks, you want to savor that pleasure for 20 seconds or more to fully gather your inner resources. During this time, keep giving thanks while feeling the relational pleasure of gratitude.

Advanced Appreciation

As your appreciation practice grows, you want to start seeing what is beautiful, wonderful, and skillful in difficult situations too. Start with easier difficult situations and gradually build up to more and more challenging difficult situations. Helpful questions to ask of these times include:

- Where is the gift in this?
- What beautiful qualities does this help me develop?
- What liberating insights does this remind me to embrace?

For example, relationship problems often invite us to be more vulnerable, courageous, and selfless; and reminds us that all life has inherent value. Failures and embarrassment invite us to be humble and selfless, and reminds us that the now is all there is, so we need not dwell in the past.

When to Practice Appreciation?

Aim to give thanks fifteen or more times a day. Each time, it can take less than a minute to give thanks, feel gratitude, and savor that feeling for 20 seconds or more. You can offer appreciation anywhere, at any time, but common times to give thanks include:

- First thing upon waking.
- Before meals.
- When mentally or emotionally down.
- When we, or someone else, learns good news, makes progress towards a goal, or achieves success.
- When enjoying the beauty of nature.
- Last thing before sleeping.

Establishing an Appreciate Practice

To develop the practice of giving thanks, set an alarm on your watch, phone, or another device to ring every hour or so. Aim to give thanks *on your own* each hour before the alarm goes off. But if you forget to do that, then when the alarm goes off, stop what you are doing and give thanks.

Do this for one or two weeks, or for as long as it takes to establish a practice where you give thanks 15 or more times a day, without prompting from the alarm.

Use Intention Setting

Starting a new practice can be hard. Some find it helpful to remind themselves of their specific, measurable, loving intentions, and the reasons they are committed to them, during their morning routine. For example, one might repeat this, or a similar intention, three times each morning:

“I could focus on what’s negative, but I choose to give thanks so I can live with

more joy, laughter, creativity, play, and abundance. Out of love for myself and all life, I will give thanks 15 or more times today.”

Using Visual Cues

Some find visual cues helpful in establishing new practices. Hang a slogan such as “I choose an attitude of gratitude” or “What can I appreciate right now?” in your bathroom, your cubicle at work, or another place where you will see it frequently throughout the day. Then read it when you see it, and let it remind you to give thanks.

Of these helpful suggestions on implementing an appreciate practice in your life, use what works for you.

Gratitude Groups

Another way to support your appreciation practice is to create, or become a part of, a gratitude group. Gratitude groups are a fun and supportive way to make giving thanks social. Learn more at: www.BoundlessLoveProject.org/news/gratitude-partners.

Appreciate as Part of BATLADI

When offering gratitude as part of BATLADI, all of the above remains true. Because we often do BATLADI when experiencing difficulties, possible options for gratitude include:

- Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.
- Thank you for mindfulness.
- Thank you for gratitude.
- Thank you for helping me use this difficulty for my inner growth.
- Thank you for problems which help me see where I still cling to falsehoods.
- Thank you for having me remember to respond to my difficulties with mindfulness.

- Anything else that is genuine for you in the moment.

Try to feel appreciation and savor that feeling for 20 seconds before continuing BATLADI. You may find the mindful pause and appreciation removes the need to do the rest of BATLADI. At other times, they will have helped settle the disturbing thoughts and emotions enough to see more clearly what is arising in your present experience. Either way, they help return you to your power, love, and wisdom.

Be Patient with This Practice

Once you consistently give thanks 15 or more times a day, then from that point, do the practice for three to six months before evaluating how useful and beneficial it is for you. The longer you use the practice, the more you will come to appreciate the benefits, wisdom, and joy it provides. Give it the time it needs to work its magic on you, before evaluating it. Most people find this practice to be an integral part of their living with more love, wisdom, courage, and joy.



The Mindful Pause Practice

Why Do Mindful Pauses?

Mindful pauses help us calm and soothe our mind and body whenever we do them. A mindful pause is a short, portable, meditation that helps us access our mindfulness and concentration, which give us more freedom of choice during challenging situations.

How Does One Do a Mindful Pause?

1. If able, kindly place your hands on your heart and belly.

To take a mindful pause, lovingly place one hand on your heart and another on your belly in a way that feels good. It may help to rub them in little circles, apply more or less pressure, or move them in another way that feels good to you.

The pressure and pleasantness of your touch will help both areas relax, allowing your breaths to be deeper and longer, and your heart to be warmer and more open.

In daily life, there may be times when you'll want to take a mindful pause, but positioning the hands like this is not feasible -- like when driving a car. Only use the hand placement when it is safe and it makes sense to do so.

2. If it is safe and wise to do so, close your eyes.

Closing your eyes helps you turn your attention inward. Just as with the hands, if the situation does not allow for it -- like when driving -- keep your eyes open.

3. Rest your awareness on the sensations of breathing for 10 or more slow, deep belly breath cycles.

Gently place all (or most) of your attention on feeling the subtle sensations of the breath as it moves in and out of the body -- exactly as we learn to do in breath meditation.

Consciously breathe into the belly, and slow your breathing down. The hand placement helps you gauge whether your breathing is predominantly in your chest, (not ideal), or your

belly (preferred). Belly breathing helps soothe, relax, and calm the nervous system.

Breathe like this until the body and mind have calmed down and you feel more resourced to skillfully respond to your situation. When learning this technique, aim to breathe like this for 10 or more breath cycles.

How do I incorporate this practice into my life?

Each morning, set an intention to do three or more mindful pauses a day.

Put the slogan "Breathe" in places where you will see it throughout the day. Let it remind you to take a mindful pause.

Each day, pay attention to how this practice benefits you when you remember to do it.

When to do Mindful Pauses?

Good times to take a mindful pause include:

- When you see the slogan "Breathe."
- Whenever one of the three falsehood alarms goes off. They are:
 - 1) seeing a falsehood in the mind,
 - 2) feeling an afflictive emotion in the body, or
 - 3) feeling a behavior impulse to do something unskillful.
- While waiting (in line, on a phone, etc.)
- Whenever enjoying nature.
- When listening to others.
- Whenever someone else is emotionally triggered.
- Whenever you remember to do it.

What are the benefits of this practice?

Many people who regularly use the mindful pause find they live with less stress and anxiety, and more peace, serenity, patience, and joy.

But don't take their word for it, find out for yourself! Do this practice for 3 to 6 months before evaluating it. It takes time to create new habits and rewire our brains. Be patient to see the results. In the meantime, do the practice as best you can, and notice how it benefits you.



Gratitude Groups: A Fun, Easy, Social Gratitude Practice

Gratitude becomes a practice when we take simple actions that help remind us of our intention to be grateful on a daily basis. Examples of gratitude practices include: morning gratitude intention setting, gratitude meditations, and reviewing the slogan, "What can I appreciate right now?" multiple times a day to remind you to be thankful.

Another gratitude practice is having gratitude partners. It works like this: find one or more friends and send each other one message a day containing three or more gratitudes. This turns our gratitude practice into a social and community-building activity where we can learn from, support, and connect with each other.

Benefits of the Gratitude Partner Practice

Some of the benefits we may find with gratitude partners include:

- **Seeing New Reasons for Gratitude.** Our gratitude partners may be thankful for things or situations that we would never have thought to be thankful for. This may inspire us to reevaluate these things and start seeing what is beautiful, beneficial, and wonderful in them as well.
- **Cultivating Appreciative Joy.** In addition to the joy we get from our gratitude, we may practice being joyful at our partner's successes and good fortunes.
- **Deepening Our Relationships.** To share what you appreciate often requires vulnerability and trust, which helps us strengthen our relationships with one another.
- **Accountability.** Let's face it, doing the practice with others inspires us to do it, because of our commitment to our partners and the joy of doing it together.

The Gratitude Partner Practice

• **Once a day, send a group message to your gratitude partners sharing three or more things that you were thankful for that day.** You can address the Higher Power of your understanding with a "Thank you" or to a being by naming them as in: "Thank you trees for your beauty and shade." Here's a sample message:

Thank you for the ability to do my best and be flexible when things are not as expected. Thank you grandma for your courage to vocalize your appreciation and your strength that allows you to be vulnerable.

If you forget to send your text on one day, please send it early the next morning, or at your next opportunity. Then send one later in the day for that day.

- **As you write the text, try to feel the pleasant sensations of gratitude in your body and SAVOR THAT FEELING.** It may take time to be able to generate and know this feeling of gratitude, so whenever it arises, savor its pleasantness for at least 20 seconds. This will help your brain recognize the importance of heart-felt gratitude, making gratitude arise more easily in the future.
- **Read the gratitude messages that your gratitude partners send you and practice sympathetic joy.** Practice being happy for their happiness. After reading their texts, think to yourself, "May your joy/success/love/happiness/whatever-is-appropriate continue, increase, and never end!" or "I am happy that you're happy." Try to feel the joy in your body as you do this.
- **It is not required to respond to your partners' texts.** You may respond to each of their texts with supportive and encouraging messages or emojis, but responses are not required. We want this activity to be as simple and effortless as possible so that even very busy people can participate.
- **Practice equanimity relating to your partner's participation.** If a gratitude partner does not text for a day or two, energetically send them loving-kindness. If it helps, think "May you be peaceful and happy," "May you resolve all conflicts with love and ease," or similar blessings. Try to generate and feel love in your heart and radiate it out to them. People get busy and forget. No big deal. Be content to just keep texting your daily gratitude message, and allow them to walk their own path. Do not harass, pester, or shame your partners into sending their gratitude messages daily. Trust that they are reading yours and that they will start up again when they are able. Of course, if you haven't heard from them in five days or so, feel free to send them an "Everything all right?" message to check in.

• **Be genuine, heartfelt, and honest in what you send.** If you are genuinely appreciative of the same things, day after day, that's fine. In this practice, honesty and genuineness are priorities, uniqueness is not.

• **Do this practice for 3 to 6 months before evaluating it.** It takes time to create a new habit and rewire our brains. Be patient to see the results. In the meantime, do the practice as best you can.

Wishing you boundless success and joy!

