

THE MINDFULNESS AT WORK POCKETBOOK

By Margaret Chapman-Clarke

Drawings by Phil Hailstone

"This informative Pocketbook is packed full of wisdom and knowledge about mindfulness with easy-to-follow practical steps and exercises. It is a real gem that can enlighten your work and entire life!"

Dr Ho Law, Director, Empsy Ltd

"Engaging, inspiring, informative and highly practical, this is a timely must-read for anyone considering developing a mindful workplace. And for those with no plans to do so - but be warned, you will be converted and lives will be transformed! My wish is for every workplace to have a well-thumbed copy of this book and to follow Margaret's simple yet powerful guidance- what a happy, productive, compassionate, ethical world we would live and work in."

Liz Hall, mindfulness teacher, editor of *Coaching at Work* and *Coaching in Times of Crisis and Transformation*, and author of *Mindful Coaching*

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MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS



ORIGINS

Jon Kabat-Zinn's mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programme was developed at the Medical Centre at the University of Massachusetts, to help patients with chronic pain. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have since been adapted and applied in a range of contexts beyond health, such as schools, higher education, government, the military and business.

The original MBI was not prescriptive, but designed to be flexible and capable of being tailored to suit different client groups for different purposes and in different contexts. Which is just like any developmental intervention that is prepared for organisations. What is different with mindfulness is that the change starts from within, ie experienced through practice.

MBIs don't come with a standard manual but over time a common format has emerged. Programmes are typically based on 8 x 2.5 hour sessions and incorporate home practice. Sometimes the MBI might include a full day of practice in the middle of the eight weeks.

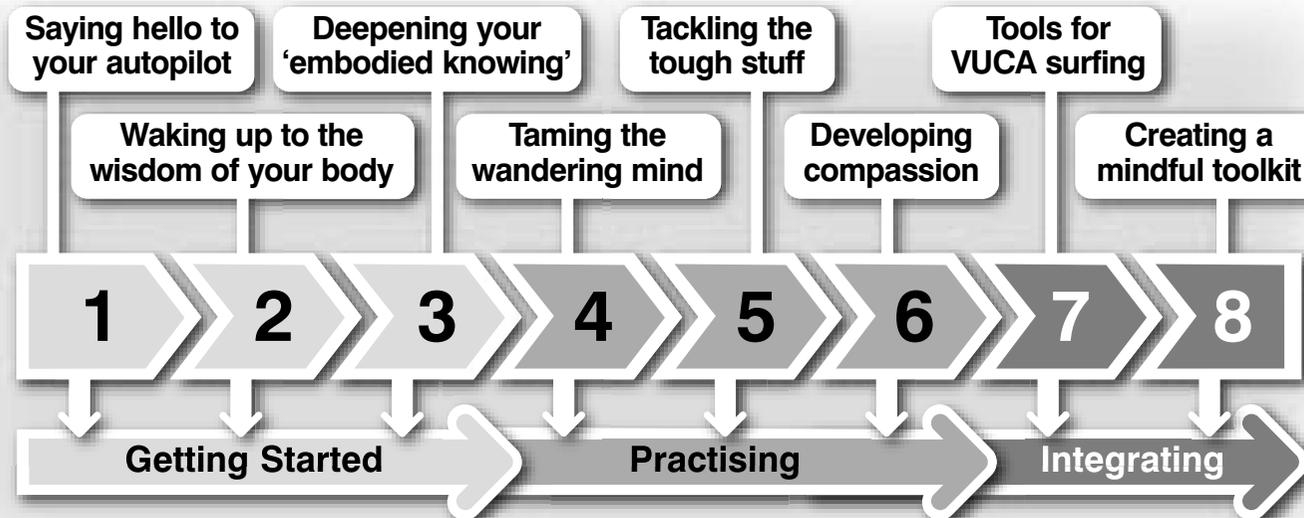
The eight-week duration is aimed at achieving optimal outcomes, ie to develop, hone and then deepen our capacity to become mindful of our thoughts, feelings and bodily sensations. As with any skill, the more we practise, the greater the benefits (practice makes perfect!).

MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS



THE MODEL

As the model shows, there are eight steps grouped into a developmental pathway:
Weeks 1 to 3 are about getting started; Weeks 4 to 6 enable you to practise the skills;
Weeks 7 & 8 are about integration, a way of living mindfully.



MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS



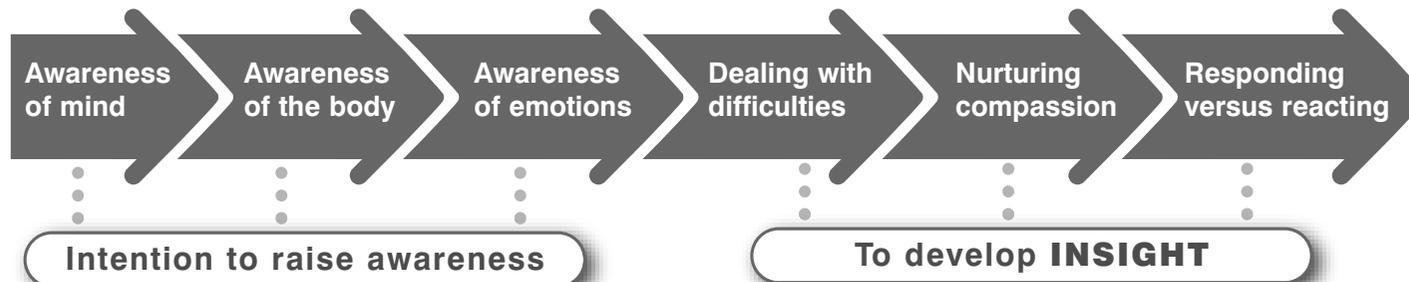
STAGES IN THE JOURNEY

THE MBI DEVELOPMENTAL PATHWAY

It is important to think of the eight steps (eight weeks) as a developmental journey. Like any new skill, this is cultivated over time. Think of the mindfulness-based intervention (MBI) as opening a doorway to mindfulness where the expressed intentions are to:

- Raise awareness; and then
- Develop insight; in order to
- Make choices, to respond rather than react

These are the stages in your journey:



MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS

INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS



Each session is facilitator-led and usually comprises:

- Didactic piece: Introduction to the mindfulness skill (the element of awareness). In the context of organisations, the didactic piece is usually greater than for clinically-based MBIs. People at work usually want more explicit links made between the 'so what' of paying attention to their breath, and relevance to the workplace
- Guided inquiry, reflections on the experience – mirroring Kolb's learning cycle
- Formal and informal personal (home) exercises, to practise the skills
- An accompanying workbook / MP3 audio or CDs that support personal (home) practice. (See the Mindfulness at Work product page on Management Pocketbooks website for links)

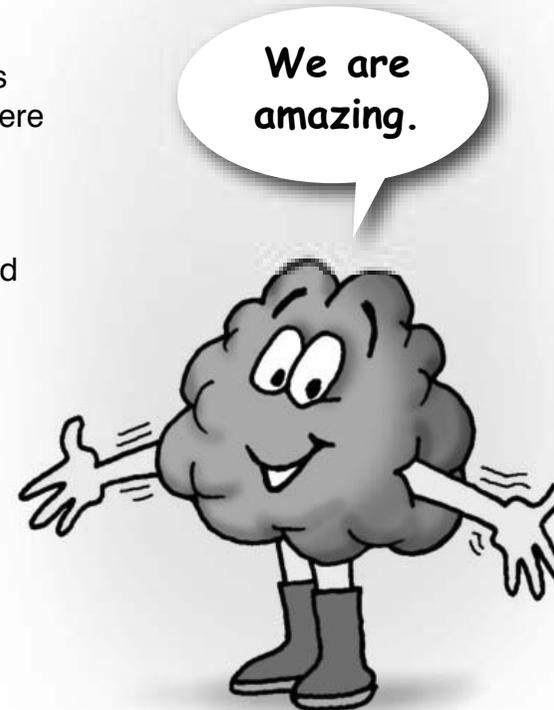
MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS



HOW MUCH PRACTICE?

How much mindfulness practice is enough? This is one of the most frequently asked questions and there is no shared consensus. The research has not yet definitively ruled on how much is enough. Nonetheless, common sense suggests that the more we practise any skill, the better we will be and the more benefits we will experience.

In terms of mindfulness, brain imaging techniques allow us to see changes in the brain, and we now know that with regular practice mindfulness does increase the brain's capacity to fire-off new neural pathways. As neuroscientist researchers Christina Congleton, Britta Hölzel and Sara Lazar assert in the Harvard Business Review, *'Mindfulness can literally change your brain'*.



MINDFULNESS IN EIGHT STEPS



HOW MUCH PRACTICE?

Even a little practice makes a difference. In an introductory workshop with teachers in further education, I observed how one, falling asleep during a simple ‘3-minute breathing space’, discovered how rarely she just stopped and took time for herself.



And even engaging in the short **STOP** exercise (page 12), clients report that this *calms the mind and clears a space.*

Simply stopping, taking a breath, observing and then proceeding, makes a difference. Naturally, because it interrupts the auto-pilot – and the ‘rush’ that we feel in the face of a real or imagined threat.

About the Author

Margaret Chapman-Clarke, BA (Hons), BSc (Hons), PG.Cert, PPH, AdvDipEdn, DipCBT (Oxon), MSc, MEd.; Chartered & Registered Practitioner Psychologist (Occupational) (HCPC), Associate Fellow (BPS); Chartered Scientist; Chartered Fellow, CIPD; Registered Psychotherapeutic Counsellor, MBACP, Mindfulness Researcher & Teacher



Margaret is one of the first applied psychologists in the UK to research, write about and develop EQ in the workplace. She has presented her work nationally and internationally and has continuously asked the question, 'How do you develop emotional intelligence?' This curiosity led her to explore the role of mindfulness and is the focus of her doctoral work. This study explores the impact of mindfulness training on advanced coaches. Some of the ideas explored in the MICR (mindfulness-in-coaching research) are captured here and also in a book chapter 'Coaching for Compassionate Resilience through Creative Methods' (in Hall, 2015, see further reading).

Margaret was an invited speaker at the inaugural UK conference on mindfulness in the workplace in 2012. She designed and facilitated the first 'Organisational Applications of Mindfulness' for the BPS and served as a trustee of the Oxford Mindfulness Centre (OMC) before stepping down to focus on research and writing. She is a regular guest speaker and is consulted by coaches wanting to specialise in EQ and mindfulness; she also serves on the editorial boards for three coaching publications. She's an external examiner on the psychological interventions in coaching at the University of East London and has a private practice in Yorkshire.

Contact

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