

# One Thing at a Time

## Mindfulness Worksheet

Date / Time:

So far today, have you brought kind awareness to your:

Thoughts?  Heart?  Body?  None

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



### PURPOSE/EFFECT

There's a saying: "If you want to dig a well, you can make 100 holes one foot deep or one hole 100 feet deep. Where are you most likely to find water?"

A lot of our lives are like that. We have endless to-do lists and multi-task to get ourselves through the day.

That is OK once in a while, but a routine of running from one thing to the next takes its toll on our peace of mind. We can't go very deep into any one thing. We won't find water.

You can use this simple practice anywhere you have a couple of minutes. It will help you shift from the stressful place of multi-tasking to a more peaceful place of doing just one thing. And once you learn the practice, you can use it as a mindfulness tool with anything you do during your day.

### SUMMARY

Pause twice during your day and practice doing one thing for three to five minutes.

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### INSTRUCTIONS

#### ■ CHOOSE WHEN TO PRACTICE

Think about what you usually do in your day. Are there times or situations where you tend to get a bit overwhelmed or busy mentally? Those may be your best times to try this practice. If nothing special comes to mind, do it any time. You can give it a try before you get out of bed in the morning or before you go to sleep at night.

#### ■ HERE'S YOUR ONE THING TO DO

For this practice, you're going to focus on one thing: you can choose either the sensations of your breath or a word or phrase.

If you'd like to use your breath, choose the place where you feel the breath most easily: it might be at the tip of your nostrils, the rising and falling of your belly, or your chest expanding and contracting.

If you'd like to use a word or phrase, you can use anything that gives you a calm or grounded feeling, like the word "peace" or "happy" or "silence."

It doesn't matter which you choose, only that you stay with your chosen focus for the length of the meditation. It can be tempting to switch from one focus to another, if you're feeling stressed or a bit anxious. When you stay with one focus, you'll get more benefit from the practice.

#### ■ TAKE A MINUTE TO GET SETTLED AND COMFORTABLE

Sit in a way that's comfortable for you and take a few deep breaths. When you really relax your body, you set all kinds of healthy and healing body processes in motion. Some of the emotion and negativity that we store through physical tension can start to dissolve. You signal the "rejuvenate and heal" part of your brain to send stress-reducing chemicals throughout your body and mind.

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### FOCUS ON YOUR ONE THING

Once you're comfortable, bring your attention to your focus.

For your breath, pay attention to the physical sensations of breathing, like coolness or warmth, pressure, or rising and falling. Really feel the sensations. Whenever you notice your attention has shifted to something else, like thoughts about your breath, or a feeling of sadness or frustration, or a pain in your back, the practice is to gently bring your attention back to the physical sensations of your breath.

For your word or phrase, the practice is the same. Repeat the word to yourself silently, doing your best to feel how peace feels, or whatever your word may be. And when you realize you've drifted away, congratulate yourself for noticing, and come back to repeating and feeling the meaning of the word.

Pay attention to your focus as closely as you can and in as sustained a way as you can, so you notice when you move to something else. If you notice right away or two minutes later, it's all ok. The practice is the same: gently come back to your focus and start again. Doing one thing at a time.

### KINDNESS IS ESSENTIAL

Most of us feel we've "done it wrong" when we lose our focus. Or we think we "just can't meditate." That's just a misunderstanding. Becoming distracted is part of the practice, not a problem.

Meditation gives you a window into how your mind works, maybe in a way you've never seen it before. If your mind jumps from one thing to another in meditation, that's because it usually operates that way.

When you do this practice, you'll learn more about your mind and how it feels to be mentally scattered or mentally focused. The key to letting that focus grow is kindness. If you criticize yourself when you lose your focus, you'll create a little war inside. And who would want to meditate if that's what it's about.

You're practicing stopping the war, by doing just one thing: noticing what happens and kindly bringing your attention back to what you want to focus on. And stopping the war feels really good. You'll be able to go beyond the surface of what matters to you and go deep.

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### REFLECTIONS

Could you feel a difference between a moment of focus and one of busyness?

Were you able to be kind to yourself during the practice?

Are there other things you do every day that could be your focus of doing just one thing?

