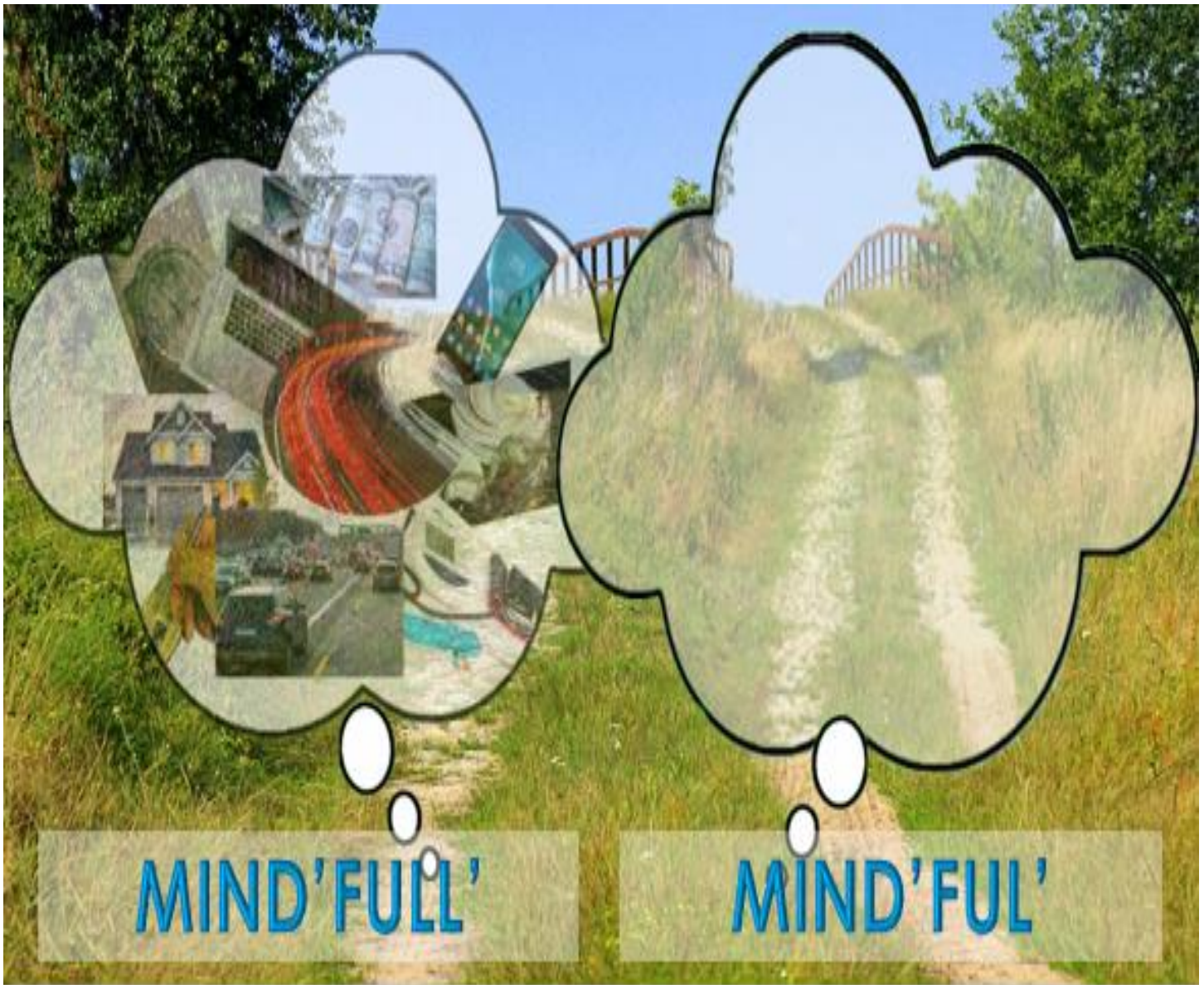


# MINDFULNESS



## OVERVIEW

### Preview/Review

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# Mindfulness Described: the opposite of “wandering mind”; “autopilot”; or mindlessness.

When was the last time you drove your car (or rode as a passenger) and only after arriving at your intended destination realizing that you didn't remember most of what occurred during the trip? Have you ever sat down with a snack and looked down to find you had nothing left except an empty container; with little memory of eating it, without even tasting it? Most of us have. In fact, these examples of mindlessness (as shown by the research mentioned above) are our most common state of awareness about 47% of the time.

As busy and interconnected the world we live in has become, it is easy to understand why we give ourselves over to autopilot so much of our time. We tend to get lost in the struggle of “doing” “getting things done” “accomplishing” in autopilot, instead of really “living”. Whenever we give our control over to autopilot our attention is focused in our wandering minds, therefore we are not truly “present” in our own lives. When we live our lives this way it is common to miss seeing the beauty of life, and even fail to notice the messages our bodies are sending to us. When we're on autopilot our attention is being swept along by a never ending current of thought processes, often getting stuck in automatic conditioned ways of thinking and living that could even be harmful to ourselves or others.

Jon Kabat Zinn defines mindfulness as:

*“Paying attention;  
On purpose,  
in the present moment, and  
non-judgmentally.”*

**Paying attention;** Wake up, step out of the current of automatic thoughts and behaviors. Notice, focus on, and be aware of your surroundings, thoughts, feelings, sensations and actions.

**1) On purpose,** Paying attention mindfully means to take control “of the steering wheel” of your mind. Mindfulness is the conscious and deliberate focus on the direction of our attention. It is the act of placing our focus of attention where we choose the focus to be. When we are conscious participants of our attentions focus, we live more consciously, or in other words more awake. We are more fully ourselves when we are consciously aware of ourselves and our surroundings.

**2) In the present moment,** Paying attention mindfully means that we are completely engaged in experiencing the present moment. In the present moment equals in the “here and now”. We can't be ruminating in the past if we are focused on the now. We can't worry about the future if we are focused on the now. The “here and now” is what is; the reality of the moment. It requires that we let go of the tension we feel by wanting things to be different, or constantly wanting more. It means for that moment we accept the “here and now” just as it is.

**3) Non-Judgmentally** Paying attention mindfully means that we are just noticing, paying attention to, and experiencing our thoughts, feelings, or sensations. We avoid judging or labeling them in any way and without automatically believing them or taking them personally. When practicing mindfulness, we do not aim to control or stop them from arising. By simply observing we can become a watcher of our sense perceptions, emotions, and thoughts as they occur without being swept away in their current. This decreases the likelihood that we will automatically think and act in our old habitual manners. We will find we have more freedom of choice in our lives.

# “What” and “How” Skills of Mindfulness

The mindfulness module forms the foundation for the remaining three DBT modules.

## “What” Skills

**Mindfulness “What” Skills** are exactly as they sound. What I do to be mindful: The three “what” skills are observing, describing, and participating.

**OBSERVE:** It is necessary that we learn how to observe without judgment or attachment.

*Observation* is not about acting on what we observe. We observe to collect data - to learn something from what is observed. We want to know how we personally respond or react to specific events in our lives. We simply take a step back and begin observing, or attending events, our thoughts, and our feelings (doing nothing to try to change them).

- Pay attention to the present moment, *on purpose*.
- Be the director of your attention; *control where you focus* your attention but not what you see.
- Don't push anything away; Don't try to hold onto anything. **Just let what is - be.**
- Observe both outside yourself and inside yourself.

*Observing* through the five senses (*sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch*) is **noticing** the direct sensory experience. What physical sensations are coming through your *eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin*? What do you *see, hear, smell, taste, and feel*? With each additional sense involved in your experience, paying attention to that experience becomes a little easier.

*Remain alert to everything that enters your experience.* You may notice thoughts drifting into your mind. Allow your thoughts to come and go (as they all will). Compare your thoughts to clouds in the sky. They drift into sight but drift right back out of sight again. *Step inside yourself and simply observe. Observing our thoughts in this manner can help us to be more objective about our thoughts.* When we are not being observant, we tend to feel enslaved to any thought that enters our mind at any time.

Observe your emotional state. Simply notice what you are feeling. When you are observing emotions, keep a little space between yourself and your emotion. Simple be aware that the emotion is part of your experience, *without judging it or attempting to change it.*

**DISCRIBE:** Describe both your internal and external experience just as it is.

The hard part of the *describe skill* is to stick to the facts *without* adding your own commentary. Describe the “*who, what, when and where*” (facts) of what observed. When you describe, you will want to define (label) what you are describing; *a sensation is just a sensation, a thought is just a thought, an emotion is just an emotion, and an action is just an action, without adding your personal:* Assumptions, Interpretations, Opinions, Concepts, Judgements, or Value Labels.

*Whatever the sensation is - it is important that you put it into words. Paying attention to what your body is feeling is needed for other DBT skills too.*

**PARTICIPATE:** Fully participate in the present moment. Let go of self-consciousness and hesitation.

Participating means that you enter into your experience throwing yourself into it one hundred percent. It is being fully engaged in whatever you are doing in that moment. Let yourself become one with your experience - being a part of whatever is happening. Let go of the past and the future - and be only in the present. Don't over-think or second-guess how you participate. Simply do it.

Give yourself wholly to your experience - be a part of it, while avoiding judgement of what you are experiencing. Remember to stay present (in the here and now), without pushing the experience away or attempting to cling to it. Avoid questioning how well you are practicing the Mindfulness skills. If you notice your mind is wandering off, getting caught up in thoughts and emotions - or resisting your chosen direction of attention, gently engage in the act of refocusing the mind.



# “How” Skills

The Mindfulness - **“HOW”** skills - explain how we do the **“WHAT”** skills. We do the **“WHAT”** skills:

## **NONJUDGMENTALLY:**

Without judgment or attachment.

Mindfulness is being aware of the mind's tendency to automatically judge - but being willing to take on fresh perspectives. It is about changing your relationship with judgements as they occur. It means looking past those automatic classifications, reminding yourself that judgements are simply temporary thoughts. The mindful non-judgmental stance is being aware that you don't need to follow them or be swept away by judgements just because they enter your mind. Attempting to let go of judgmentalness does not mean that we are agreeing to “approve” of things that violate our true values. Non-judgmental does not equate to approval. Being non-judgmental simply means that we are letting ourselves move into a place of emotional stillness brought about by acceptance of what is.

When you adopt the mindfulness attitude of non-judgement, the need to do something about the present moment ceases. You do not need to reach for more than what is in the present moment. You do not need to resist what exists in the present moment. You also do not need to ignore the experience of the present moment.

## **ONE-MINDFULLY:**

Actively focusing on one thing at a time.

One-Mindfully is the opposite of multitasking, or switch-tasking. It is doing a single thing in a single moment, with dedicated total attention to only that one single task, activity or thought. One-Mindfulness requires being fully present in the current moment without ruminating the past or thinking about the future, rather giving your full focus to what you are doing in this moment.

To practice One-Mindfulness, we do not need to change the activities we engage in, we simply need to change our busy state of mind which leaves us feeling exhausted, frustrated, or overwhelmed by the demands of life. “We don't need to change what we do - but rather how we do it.”

We can even worry One-Mindfully. Just make sure to pause everything else going on and focus on your worry and give yourself time to think about what is causing that worry. Then put the task of worrying away, and begin a new task giving that one your full attention.

## **EFFECTIVELY:**

Keeping an eye focused on your objectives in the situation then doing what is necessary to achieve them.

To practice mindfulness effectively means that we are actively applying the mindfulness concepts. It requires the continued learning and practicing of those skills. Effectiveness in mindfulness become apparent as we notice the strengthening of our mindfulness muscles as we progress.

To practice mindfulness effectively means becoming aware of the space between our emotions, thoughts and actions. Effectiveness in mindfulness become apparent as we become less impulsive due to realizing that we can feel and think without needing to react to it. It means we are actively reducing our judgements of ourselves, others, situations, thoughts, and emotions. Effectiveness in mindfulness becomes apparent as we let go of judgements that have been holding us back from living life to the fullest. and we see an increased sense of compassion within ourselves.

To practice mindfulness effectively means we go back to deliberate focus of our minds when we notice that they have begun to wander. Effectiveness in mindfulness becomes apparent as we realize that we are becoming resilient to mind wandering, and we notice that we are spending less time ruminating and worrying.

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# STATES OF MIND / WISEMIND

The Wise Mind Skill is especially helpful to those who have been taught through conditioning to ignore and invalidate their emotions, thoughts, and experiences. Just as one is taught to ignore, they can relearn how to get in touch with, and listen to their own intuition and inner wisdom.

It is a natural human tendency to attempt to operate through the process either of pure logic or pure emotion at any given time, because the two ways of reasoning frequently appear to be in conflict with each other. Both states of mind serve such important purposes - with neither being “good” or “bad”, yet each has its specific time and place. *The logical reasonable state of mind* and *the emotional state of mind* are extremes and therefore are usually only effective in extreme situations. In the majority of life’s circumstances, attempting to apply the either/or states of mind is not only ineffective, but usually will lead to making a lot of poor decisions and creating an added weight of emotional suffering.

## REASONABLE MIND:

*Reasonable Mind* is sometimes, or by some, called ‘Logic Mind’ or ‘Rational Mind’. Those alternative titles also fit as an apt description for this state of mind. It is the non-emotional, ‘cool’ portion of our mind. An applicable way to imagine this aspect of our mind is to picture it as our internal ‘*professor*’, who attempts to explain and rationalize everything to us.

For those who are Star Trek fans, only need to look to the Vulcans - specifically Spock, to see this mind state in full action. He has learned to suppress all of his emotions, in favor of pure logic.

## EMOTION MIND:

Emotion Mind could be thought of as the state of mind that runs wild, without thought about the possible consequences. In this state of mind our emotions run the show, and emotions are the drive behind our decisions and actions. In Emotion Mind we may be aware of the facts, but due to our current emotional state, we may find that we ignore the facts as they are. In Emotion Mind we tend to distort or exaggerate facts to fit the emotion. This tendency makes it difficult to view our situation rationally, objectively, or factually. Since emotions are in the driver’s seat, and frequently the engine is in overdrive, this state of mind is commonly referred to as being the ‘hot’ portion of our mind.

Going back to our Star Trek personalities as examples of the states of mind - Dr. McCoy (Bones) is a good example of someone who frequently acts in Emotional Mind. He is quick to make hasty decisions based solely on his emotions, without thinking about any of the other factors involved

## WISE MIND:

Wise Mind is frequently described as; the meeting of Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind. As previously discussed - often Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind are polar opposites. Wise Mind seeks to bridge the gap that separates the two - while encouraging a sense of harmony and acceptance.

Wise Mind would be that center space where Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind not only meet one another - but overlap in the middle (the middle way, the middle path). It is the combining, synthesis, blending, unifying, fusing, integrating, and balancing of the two separate states of mind to form an entirely new state of mind. In Wise Mind it is possible to honor and accept our emotions while taking the facts into account. Wise Mind seeks the most effective balance of emotion and logic to help us weigh our options as we identify solutions and problem solve. This in turn can lead one to act in a rational manner that will help to accomplish goals while still acknowledging and respecting our feelings.

Once again, if we return to our Star Trek personalities as examples of the states of mind - Captain Kirk is an example of someone who usually acts in Wise Mind. He is able to bring together the best of Reasonable Mind and Emotional Mind making it possible for him to grasp the bigger picture, rather than just its parts, considering many different perspectives of a situation

# MODES OF MIND /DOING, BEING AND WISE MIND

The modes of mind may be easier to understand if considered in comparison to the gears of a car. Just as each automobile gear is used for one specific purpose (starting, idling, backing, accelerating, etc.) each mode of mind has its own unique characteristics and purpose that it serves. As our actions change, the underlying mode of mind simultaneously shifts gears; followed by a continuous series of switching gears as we navigate our day. Mindfulness training can help a person recognize and become more aware of which mode of mind is “in gear” at any given moment. When we become aware that we are not in the most helpful mode of mind for a specific situation, *with practice*, we can skillfully disengage from the “*unhelpful*” and engage in a more helpful mode.

## DOING MIND:

Many people are most comfortable in doing mind because that is the mind mode that we are most familiar with. It appears so exciting and attractive to continually work towards achievements, along with the vitalizing rewards of recognition for our accomplishment once a goal is met. It can be difficult to give that up, even for short periods of time. Recognition can make us feel good (temporarily) about ourselves and offers a fleeting moment of happiness. Happiness is something that happens to us, that is dependent on external circumstances. Unfortunately, happiness is transitory, visiting for only brief periods because it is not within our power to cultivate our own state of happiness.

*Doing Mind is focused on decreasing the distance between the way things are right now and where we desire them to be.* As already discussed, there is a time and place for doing mind. In order to achieve its goals, doing mind has to think about the current state (ex. I would like to have a cup of coffee). No matter how long we stay in Being Mind and focus that we have this desire, we will get no closer to filling that desire. Doing Mind acknowledges the desire of the current moment, accepts that it feels this desire or need, then takes steps required to move closer to where you are right now and where you desire to be.

## BEING MIND:

Being Mind is when we become so focused on experiencing the present moment, that we entirely lose ourselves in simply experiencing. When we are this absorbed in the present, we can no longer live in the past or future. We may think about them, but from a distance - allowing those thoughts to come and go without getting caught up in their content. With the “nothing to do, nowhere to go” stance of Being Mind, we are free to be fully present. This allows us to be aware of the here and now - totally focused on the moment-by-moment experience. Taking this stance does not mean that we literally “do nothing” or “go nowhere”. It means that rather than doing whatever we are doing simply to accomplish something, or reach a destination, we are so engrossed in the experience that we do it just for the sake of the experience. If we are walking, we need to take the focus off of our desired destination, or the benefits of the exercising involved, and focus on what we are doing. We are walking! Why we are is not important to Being Mind, simply that we are doing it, and actively participating in the action.

## WISE MIND:

We can easily recognize the usefulness of both Being Mind and Doing Mind. They each are useful in different ways; for different tasks and at different times. Without aspects of both Being Mind and Doing Mind it would be impossible to live a balanced life. The danger with these two mind modes is when we over-identify with one mode over the other, or when we attempt to apply the wrong mode for a specific situation. *If we let go of balance*, we start seeing reality from the extreme perspective of the mode of mind we have most closely identified with. When we “walk the Middle Path” between Being Mind and Doing Mind we are able to find the balance between the two modes of mind.

# THE MIDDLE PATH

The Middle Path is about balance. It is the release from our polarized, total black and white way of thinking. This kind of thinking is especially common with emotionally sensitive people -but all of the human race struggles to some degree with polarization.

*“Some people will follow their minds without listening to their hearts, and others will follow their hearts without listening to their minds. This is why reason exists, for there to be balance between the heart and mind. We were not meant to follow the mind and ignore the heart. Instead, we were meant to follow the heart over the mind, but without completely abandoning logic. The middle way is the preferred way, and this path simply means to allow your heart to drive you, but do not forget to balance reason with your conscience.*

~ Suzy Kassem

Events in our lives are normally not all positive or all negative in their repercussions. When we think in polarized terms (all or nothing, black or white, good or bad) we focus on one extreme or the other. When we focus on only what we deem positive or what we deem negative, we limit our emotional and cognitive flexibility.

To continue walking the Middle Path, we must remember that often there are both negative and positive consequences as a result of the same event. Think about how often we hear the phrase, “Be careful what you wish for?”. We can’t know in advance the repercussions if our wish came true. *“Who knows what is good or bad? We shall see.”* Only time can tell.

The Middle Path can help us change our perceptions, releasing us from thinking in extremes. Realizing that nothing is all good or all bad can decrease suffering.

**Finding Wise Mind is another way that we can walk the Middle Path.** Remember: Wise Mind is frequent described as the meeting of Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind. As previously discussed, Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind are often polar opposites. Wise Mind seeks to bridge the gap that separates the two - while encouraging a sense of harmony and acceptance.

Wise Mind would be that center space where Reasonable Mind and Emotion Mind not only meet one another but overlap in the middle (the middle way, the middle path). It is the combining, synthesis, blending, unifying, fusing, integrating, and balancing of the two separate states of mind to form an entirely new state of mind.

In Wise Mind it is possible to honor and accept our emotions while taking the facts into account. *Wise Mind seeks the most effective balance of emotion and logic to help us weigh our options as we identify solutions and problem solve.* This in turn can lead one to act in a rational manner that will help to accomplish goals while still acknowledging and respecting our feelings.

## **BALANCE:**

*If you are out of balance in one area of your life; you are out of balance.* Relate to your life as a whole - which it is, with all the individual areas working side by side in unison. Balance in life is like the domino effect. If you lose balance in one “domino” (area of your life) it will throw the other “dominos” (areas) out of balance too.

Many people excessively concentrate so much of their energies onto one area of their lives that they ignore many of the other aspects of the whole. It is a universal principles that this will eventually catch up with them. This type of imbalance ultimate will lead to emotional instability or illness.

# LOCATING MORE INDEPTH MINDFULNESS INFORMATION

Because Mindfulness is the base of DBT, there will be times in other modules that you may desire more information on specific mindfulness skills than the basics offered in this preview. This page should help you locate any of the topics you might want.

## **1-1 INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-intro-to-mindfulness.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/zapc-MMA-eE>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-2 'WHAT' SKILLS** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-2-what-skills.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/-lqRpEQPk-4>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-3 "HOW" SKILLS PART 1 ONE-MINDFULLY** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-3-how-skills-pt-1-one-mindfully.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/osZ7VP-qCqk>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-4 "HOW" SKILLS PART 2 NON-JUDGMENTALLY, EFFECTIVELY** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-4-how-skills-pt-2-non-judgmentally-effectively.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/Pz1y9t1kyNk>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-5 WISE MIND** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-5-wise-mind.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/4vYK30wk5oo>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-6 DOING MIND AND BEING MIND** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-6-beingdoing-mind.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/dNLJmRho3cg>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

## **1-7 THE MIDDLE PATH** (website link)

<https://peerguideddbtlessons.weebly.com/1-7-the-middle-path.html>

**YouTube Video** <https://youtu.be/j7CusPz-EEo>

**PDF LESSON MATERIALS** Etsy/ [TheMiddlePathDBT](#)

This list can also be located in the lesson group files.



# MINDFULNESS OVERVIEW

## NEW MEMBER PREVIEW WORKSHEET

1) Please locate three of our Mindfulness Youtube Videos, then like them.

Which three different videos did you like? (From the list above)

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2) Please locate two of our Mindfulness Lessons (From the list above), then describe something listed on those pages.

Which two lessons did you search for? What can you describe from that page?

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# MINDFULNESS OVERVIEW

## RETURNEE REVIEW WORKSHEET

1) What is something you have gained through your mindfulness practice? \_\_\_\_\_

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2) Which skill did you have the hardest time practicing? \_\_\_\_\_

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3) What is something you have incorporated into your daily life to remind you to practice mindfulness? \_\_\_\_\_

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4) What encouraging tips would you pass on to those new to mindfulness? \_\_\_\_\_

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