

CHAPTER 5

Mindfulness to Emotion

What is this thing called mindfulness? It is a practice of being awake, of participating in your life, of learning to inhabit your life. It is also a practice of becoming more intentional with your actions. This combines two vital aspects of mindfulness: attention and intention. With respect to emotion it's about becoming more mindful to—aware of—the emotions you experience, as you're experiencing them.

Mindfulness is something of a paradox. It is both easy and difficult. It is easy thanks to the fact that you have all the necessary equipment with you wherever you go and nearly every situation in life presents you with an opportunity to practice. It's hard because so much of our world and our habits militate against it.

Believe it or not, this skill of mindfulness is a big help for sensitive people. Much of the psychological data and literature on emotional intelligence strongly suggests a relationship connecting awareness to emotion regulation. In DBT, the concept of mindfulness is borrowed from traditional meditation practices, but it isn't exactly meditation. You don't have to sit in the lotus position, or close your eyes, or fast, or chant. There may be a time and place for those more formal practices, and I suggest you consider them. But right now, you can practice mindfulness skills in your everyday life that can be very helpful in regulating emotion.

The Nature of Mindfulness

Let me start by making some important clarifications about the practice of mindfulness, as I understand it.

Mindfulness is:

- Becoming more *aware*
- Becoming more *intentional*
- Becoming more *participatory* in your own life and experiences
- Becoming more *present* and *alive* in each moment you live

Mindfulness is *not* (necessarily):

- Relaxation (although you might experience this)
- Navel-gazing or escape from reality
- "Getting it all together"
- Being passive or non-emotional

Mindfulness has a passive quality, but it helps you become more engaged with your own life, with your own experiences, and can greatly enrich your life. It isn't some sort of mental trick, nor it is "positive thinking." As Jon Kabat-Zinn (1994) writes: "We can easily become a prisoner of so-called positive thinking. It too can be confining, fragmented, inaccurate, illusory, self-serving and wrong" (95). Mindfulness is about letting go of preconceived notions about self, others, and reality itself. Through its practice you can become increasingly perceptive of things as they are, and more aware of your biases without needing to act in every instance.

In DBT, mindfulness is called *core mindfulness* since it is the core, the hub, around which all the other skills center, intersect, and interrelate. Mindfulness will open the door to other practices such as acceptance and willingness, which I will touch on in later chapters.

The "What" Skills of Mindfulness

Marsha Linehan (1993) writes about "what" and "how" skills of mindfulness. Let's start with the "what" skills.

Observe

Begin by just *noticing* your environment, thoughts, feelings, emotions, and experiences without reacting to them, without judging them. Specifically with your emotions:

- Observe the emotion that you are feeling.
- Just see what is there before you, neither adding to it, nor trying to change it immediately.

- Try to not react to the experience of your emotions. Say to yourself, "I notice that I feel joy/sorrow/love."
- As your thoughts and feelings come and go, slipping in and out, let them. Control your attention, but not what you see. Push nothing away, cling to nothing.
- Be alert to all that comes your way, to every thought and feeling that comes to you.
- Pay attention to the input from your five senses: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

Describe

Now that you have practiced observing, it's time to use words to describe your emotions. Stay descriptive, keeping it all very simple. Don't be troubled if you have difficulty with this at first. If your emotional role models have taught you to ignore or belittle your emotions, you may be very well practiced at being the opposite of attentive and mindful to your own experience.

You can also try some practice statements if you have trouble finding your own voice at first. For example, if this exercise feels unnatural to you, start out by saying to yourself, "I'm noticing that I feel self-conscious right now." If pinning down your thoughts is frustrating to you, say, "My thoughts are coming very quickly just now." Finding your own voice will get easier with practice.

Participate

As a practice to repeat over and over, mindfulness helps you increase the degree to which you participate in your own life and experiences. Through mindfulness you can fully engage in every experience without loving or hating it. Simply participate in each moment as it comes, one moment, then another, staying in the *now* if the moment calls for you to be here now. If you need to plan for your future, then fully participate in planning for your future. Let yourself be a part of what is happening to you without obsessing over it or being overly self-conscious.

Let go of worry thoughts such as "How do I look to others?" or "Am I doing it as well as so-and-so?" Don't focus on concerns about perfection or on performing for others. Give your full attention to the experience here and now. Think of Olympic athletes, who seem so absorbed with their sport or performance, appearing unaware that the world is watching them. They give themselves fully to what they are doing at that moment; they are in their experience.

The "How" Skills of Mindfulness

Now let's look at the ways you practice mindfulness. This involves developing and using "how" skills (Linehan 1993).

Nonjudgmentally

- See what is actually there—not “shoulds,” “musts,” the good or right, or the bad or wrong.
- Take your emotions for what they are. Simply accept them as they come.
- Regardless of whether you might consider an emotion to be “good” or “bad,” make an effort to look at it without imposing a value upon it.
- The habit of judging is tough to break. Don't be too hard on yourself if it takes time for you to look at your emotions differently.

One-Mindfully

- Focus on one activity, thought, or feeling. It doesn't matter what you are doing as long as you devote yourself entirely to that pursuit. Everyday actions and emotions provide excellent opportunities for the practice of mindfulness.
- Being mindful is not easy, so give yourself a chance and don't give up too soon. When competing thoughts or emotions intrude, gently push them away and return to the subject of your mindfulness exercise. The more often you practice, the more natural mindfulness will feel.

Effectively

- Consider how you want to change and set concrete goals. Keep those goals in view and take actions that will help you to reach them.
- Focus on your current situation—not on what might happen, what you wish would happen, or what you think should happen. The big lesson of mindfulness is that the thing that *is* happening is all that matters.
- Do your best to handle the things that come your way, using your skills wisely and giving each activity your best shot.
- Acting out of anger or doing things just to make a point only hurts you in the end. Holding grudges and dwelling on others' misdeeds, though it may seem satisfying in the moment, will work against you in the long run.

Naming and Describing Your Emotions

Emotion researchers believe that verbalizing emotion is part and parcel of regulating emotions. People who can identify their emotion (be aware) and describe it in a manner that is meaningful to them seem to be better at more quickly reducing negative emotion and stress, and generally regulating their emotions.

As Linehan (1993b) says: "By learning to observe your emotions, you learn to separate from (not identified as) your emotions and at one with your emotions. In order to control, you must be separate from your emotions so that you can think and use coping strategies. But you also need to be one with your emotions, in the sense that you identify them as part of yourself and not something outside you" (89).

To summarize, the rationale applying mindfulness to your emotions includes:

- Learning to be separate from your emotions
- Becoming one with your emotions
- Better controlling your emotions with coping skills (effectiveness)

Naturally, it can be hard to identify and even express an emotion if you lack the words to describe it. To help you build a vocabulary for naming your emotions, see the "Emotion Thesaurus" you'll find in an appendix at the end of this book. Spend some time going over the thesaurus, looking at various synonyms for emotion words. When you see a word that you can identify with, one that really fits with something you have felt before, check the box next to that word. And since I won't necessarily have all of the words that you might identify with, I have left a space where you can add words you might think of. You will also notice that I have added an etymological touch the thesaurus to show where our words come from, as this helps to get the force of a word as it tries to convey emotion. When you have read the thesaurus, you should be better equipped to conduct the mindfulness to emotion exercises.

Beginning Mindfulness to Emotion

Here are a few examples of ways to develop and articulate mindfulness. You will soon develop your own, of course.

When you feel angry

- "I notice that my jaw is clenched ... my hands are balled into fists."
- "I observe that I am angry ... I notice that I feel an urge to stomp my feet."
- "I notice that I feel anger toward so-and-so." (Fill in person's name.)

When you feel sad

- "I notice that I am avoiding others."
- "I observe that I feel empty and drained ... I notice that I am losing energy."

When you feel joyful

- "I observe that I feel like jumping up and down ... I observe that I am smiling"
- "I observe I feel energetic ... I notice that I have an urge to laugh."

When you feel happy

- "I notice that I am laughing ... I observe that I feel energized."
- "I notice a sensation of strength ... I observe that I feel centered."

When you feel shame

- "I observe that I am experiencing shame . . . I notice the urge to avoid the person I disappointed."
- "I observe the thought that 'I hate my guts' . . . I notice the desire to apologize."

Now that you have read over these examples, put this book down, sit upright, close your eyes (after you're done reading these instructions), and take one gentle breath. Observe your current thoughts and emotions. What do you notice? Describe what you notice, avoiding judgments about the goodness or badness of what you feel or think. Stay descriptive. When you have finished this basic practice, move on to the following exercise.

A Week of Observing and Describing Emotions

Use the following worksheet to practice observing and describing your emotions. Remember, avoid judgments about the rightness or wrongness of a situation, stick to the facts, stay in the moment that you feel your emotions. They won't kill you, no matter how awful they feel. The following is an example of how to use the mindfulness record. Even if you only practice your mindfulness skills for ten seconds, make a record of that practice, since that will be ten seconds more than you practiced it before picking up this workbook. Be mindful to the full system of emotion, anything that indicates to you that you feel a certain emotion. Make a note about any challenges or distractions you faced during your practice. Make copies of the worksheet, as many as you need.

Observing and Describing Emotions (Example)			
Day	Emotion	Observe and Describe Statement	Challenges and Distractions
Mon	Anger	I notice that I am mildly annoyed	Thoughts: this shouldn't happen
Tue	Joy	I notice that joy has filled me	Worried about joy ending
Wed	Fear	I notice butterflies in my stomach	Discomfort with fear and tension
Thu	Anger	I notice that my jaw is clenched	Self-righteousness, desire for vengeance
Fri	Attraction	Heart is pounding, I notice that I have the thought, "I want to kiss my date."	Thoughts about past rejection
Sat			
Sun			

Observing and Describing Emotions			
Day	Emotion	Observe and Describe Statement	Challenges and Distractions
Mon			
Tue			
Wed			
Thu			
Fri			
Sat			
Sun			

Mindfulness to Activity Exercises

Read through the following exercises to become familiar with them, then try out the ones that seem most appropriate for you. Follow the directions closely. Some of the exercises will seem somewhat meditative. They will require that you find a quiet place to withdraw to for practice. Other exercises are designed for use in situations where you find yourself being quite active, such as at parties, work, class, on dates, or whatever. Mindfulness is about getting engaged with your life, not becoming a recluse or mystic. Mindfulness is the practice of living more fully and more awake. At the end of each exercise, note any distractions or judgments that came to mind and what you did to go back to the exercise.

These exercises are designed to help you develop basic skills in mindfulness, and may require some time alone. The first group of exercises is built around bringing mindfulness to such everyday activities as eating, driving, shaving, etc. The second group does the same for specific emotions as they come up, such as love, fear, guilt, etc. The exercises are self-contained and carefully structured. (You may find their structure off-putting at first, but surprisingly comfortable later on.) They are certainly formal—but you don't need to rent a tuxedo to do them.

Notes on Mindfulness to Activity

Here is a series of mindfulness exercises you can incorporate into your daily life. For each exercise in this section, write down your thoughts and reactions on the following worksheet. Make as many copies as you need for all of the exercises and any other mindfulness practices you think of and incorporate in your daily life.

What obstacles did you face in doing this exercise? _____

Did your mind wander from the exercise? _____

If your mind did wander, how did you come back to the exercise? _____

If you noticed any judgments about yourself or the exercise, what were they? _____

Mindfulness to Your Body

Lie down on your bed, the floor, or a couch. Take a moment to get comfortable. Lie on your back with your arms slightly away from your body. Take one gentle breath in through your nose, and let it out through your mouth. Simply notice your breath, noticing your belly rise and fall. Close your eyes, bringing your full attention to your body.

Notice how the bed, floor, or couch feels under your body. Is it firm? Is it soft? Are you lying on a smooth sheet or blanket, a coarse rug, or a cool hardwood floor? Give your full attention to the sensations that come to your body, not ignoring anything. What do you notice about how you're supported by what you're lying down on? Stay with the sensations related to lying down, don't let your thoughts wander away from this moment. If the floor feels hard, say to yourself, "I notice the floor feels hard."

Notice where your arms are, what your legs feel, what position your hands are in. If you find yourself judging this exercise, let go of the judgment and come back to this moment; simply notice your judgments and come back to feeling your body stretched out over the bed, floor, or couch. Notice what is happening *now*, not what you wish was happening, or what might happen. If your mind drifts away from this moment, gently bring your attention back to your body and what you're laying on. Bring your attention back again and again and again, as often as you have to during this exercise.

Rationale: Being aware of your body can help you to know when you should seek medical care. It can also help you to rest more fully when you want to relax, by letting go of extraneous thoughts and worries and activities that get in the way of something as simple as laying down.

Mindfulness in the Shower

Start a shower, making the water a pleasantly warm temperature. Getting under the spray of the shower, close your eyes, take in a gentle, centering breath. Focusing just on you feel. Notice the warmth of the water and steam. Be aware of how your body might relax, your muscles softening. Notice your sense of feel, your skin. How is it feeling? What are the smells? Is it just water, or soap, body scrub, or the scent of shampoo?

Keep your mind here in this moment. Live in the shower, just live in this moment. If you begin to think about what happens after the shower, let those thoughts about the future go and come back to this moment, come back to the experience of the shower, experience only the shower. Be fully alive and aware of the shower. If your mind wanders, simply notice that you have wandered, pause, and take a gentle breath to bring your attention back to the shower. If you notice that you're making judgments about your body, the shower, or the exercise, simply notice your judgments, letting them go, come back to this moment. Be in the shower. Practice this for five to ten minutes.

Rationale: As with de-cluttering your rest, you can de-clutter a moment such as a shower so that you can more fully enjoy the experience of the shower or the bath. Mindful showering or bathing brings fullness, richness, to the experience and may help you to increase pleasant experiences. And it is another regular activity that you likely participate in on a daily basis, giving you a chance to more regularly practice mindfulness.

Mindfulness to Shaving

Prepare for your shave. Put out your razor, shaving cream, skin conditioner, whatever you need to shave. Take a gentle, centering breath to bring your attention to this

moment, to this practice. As you begin to apply shaving cream or water, notice the sensations that come through your touch, be aware of tactile messages, the feeling of the shaving gel or cream. Notice how these feel on your face or your legs. Be aware of the smells of the gels and creams, the way your skin reacts to warm water. Notice how the razor removes your stubble. If you make a nick or cut here or there, don't judge this event as bad or awful or try to bring it to an end. Simply notice what is happening, do only what is needed. Start to do what is needed by beginning with acceptance of what is, not dwelling on what "should be." As you pull the razor across your legs or face, be very intentional about where the razor goes, be in control of your shaving. Don't attempt to do more than shave. Give your full attention to all that you notice about the shaving, simply describing the experience and all the sensations, being mindful to the experiences of your body.

Rationale: Shaving is a routine activity for most of us, so it provides a chance for mindfulness practice. One becomes practiced at being present and accepting—and of course you may find that when you are intentional about preparation and shaving techniques you suffer fewer nicks and cuts. For those who don't like their faces or bodies, this exercise can be a practice of simple acceptance. If you tend to get very angry when nick yourself as you're getting ready for work, this practice can help you to notice that emotion, perhaps tone it down a bit by accepting this as only *happening*, rather than *happening to you*.

Mindfulness during Exercise

The next time you exercise, be present with your body while you run, stretch, lift weights, or whatever. As you start your exercise, take a moment to clear your mind of anything that isn't essential to your workout. Take a gentle, centering breath, giving your full attention to your breath in order to come to the place you are, being very much aware of your body. If you're running know that you're running, observe and describe, saying to yourself, "I am running . . . I notice my leg muscles flexing and contracting . . . I notice my heart beating faster . . . I notice my breath coming in and out, in and out . . . I notice my breath speeding up . . ." and so on.

If you're lifting weights, pay attention to your form. Be very deliberate and intentional. Notice the feel of the bar in your hand. As you curl the weight, notice your biceps contract. Practice describing the experience of exercise, "I notice my muscles becoming warm . . . I notice that my muscles are becoming tired." If you become distracted by thoughts that you wish to stop, simply notice those thoughts and describe them to yourself, "A thought that I want to quit exercising just entered my mind." Then pause, take in a gentle breath, and bring your attention back to your body and to the exercise. Keep yourself in the present, keep yourself in the exercise, being at home in your body.

Rationale: Being attentive to the sensations of your body during exercise can help you to avoid injury by improving your form. Taking the time to stretch before and after exercise also helps you focus on bodily sensations. Many top athletes and athletic trainers talk about noticing form and letting go of extraneous thoughts during training as the road to better and safer gains.

Mindfulness while Eating

Try this at your very next meal or snack. You can even practice mindful eating without others knowing about it, so if you would like to try it alone first, please do. Sit down to eat and look at your food. Make sure that you're sitting upright, attentive yet comfortable. Don't slouch or hunch over. Take in a gentle centering breath, and bring your full attention to where you are. Take a moment to look over the food, noticing everything about its presentation. Take in the smells of whatever it is that you're eating. Don't just gob the food into your mouth, choking it down. As you pick up your food, by hand or by utensil, take moment to notice its shape, texture, and color. If you're eating finger foods, notice how the food feels in your hands. Is it warm? Is it cold? Is it brown or yellow, or bright red? Let the aroma filter in through your nostrils. Notice your nostrils opening to the smell.

As you take your first bite, begin to chew very slowly, not letting yourself take another bite until you're finished with the first. Chewing intentionally and slowly, make sure that you're only eating. Don't read a book or the paper. Don't look over to-do lists or work-related items. Simply eat. Be attentive only to the activity of eating. If you notice that you begin to work or read while you're eating, simply note that you have begun to do two things instead of just one. Put aside all things unnecessary to eating. If you notice your mind drifting to what will happen at the end of the meal, or if you become focused on how you wish you had a longer meal time, pause, take a centering breath, bring yourself back to eating, one bite at a time, savoring every morsel, being present for every moment of the meal.

Notice what you experience as you eat. Which taste buds water, when you begin to feel satisfied, if you start to feel full or bloated, and what emotions you feel while you eat. Notice what is going on in this moment, and only this moment. Let go of distractions, hurry, or judgments about time, eating habits, and so on.

Rationale: Many of us eat impulsively, eating too much or too little. Mindfulness practice can help you to know what you're eating and when you're eating. It can also help you to truly enjoy what you eat. After all, you aren't just an animal who needs to snarf any old thing down your gullet. You're a human being with the capacity for enjoyment. One final reason for this practice is the fact that many people begin to choke or have their airway obstructed because they didn't chew their food well enough, or they were talking with their mouth full. This practice could well keep you from becoming a choking victim.

Mindfulness to Objects

Taking a few minutes, sit in a chair, upright and attentive but not tense. Placing your hands on your knees, make sure that you're in a symmetrical, balanced, and comfortable position. Once situated, breathe gently in through your nose and out through your mouth, focusing only on your breath. Being centered, look around the room, notice what's in the room with you. Describe to yourself what you see: clocks, chairs, or paintings, whatever is there without adding to it. Don't judge what you see as either pretty or ugly. Stay away from thoughts such as, "My God, why did we buy *that* thing?" If you notice that you're making judgments, let go of your judgments, take another centering

breath, come back to the room, and begin again. If you notice your thoughts wandering to tasks or people outside of the room, let go of them and take another centering breath, giving your full attention to where you are at this moment. Stay in this room, be here, simply notice.

Rationale: This practice can help you to become more aware of your environment. Many accidents happen because people aren't paying attention. This can save you from tripping over wires or skateboards, or slipping on banana peels. People who are more aware of their surroundings are less likely to be victims of assault or muggings because they appear alert and confident, and not as easy to surprise or overpower. On the whole the practice helps you to become more alive in your moment-to-moment experience. You become a participant in your own life.

If you're a person who tends to dissociate as a reaction to stress, focusing on objects in your environment can help you to stave off dissociation when you need to be alert and present. That way, you can engage even in stressful situations and stay on top of more of your day-to-day business, while avoiding the sense of being buried.

Mindfulness to Driving

During your next driving trip or commute, do the following. Be fully alert to the fact that you're driving. Before you pull out of your driveway say to yourself, "I am only driving." As you begin to drive to your destination feel the steering wheel in your hands, feel your feet on the gas and brake pedals. Be alert to the other cars on the road. Notice where they are and what they are doing. Don't think about being at work, or at school, or at home. Simply give your full attention to driving. If you notice your thoughts drifting to your destination, or judgments about the other drivers, notice that you have drifted from your practice. Let go of thinking about where you're going since you know where you're going already. Let go of judgments about other drivers. Come back to the present. As you notice emotions arise, just note their presence, not judging them as good or bad. Say, "I notice that anger has just welled up," letting go of any thoughts of driving aggressively or hurriedly, and bring your attention back to driving. Continue to do this over and over and as often as you drive.

Rationale: Being more present and alert as a driver will cut your risk of accidents. If you're quick to get angry when driving, this exercise can help you to simply acknowledge your emotion, without necessarily acting on your impulses or judgments. It can help you to become less impulsive, more intentional, and more tolerant of your emotion.

Mindfulness to Emotion Exercises

Take some time to familiarize yourself with the following exercises. Get a feel for the format as a guide for you to begin your practice of simply noticing your emotions. The more familiar you are with these, the more likely you will remember to practice your observing and describing skills. As I've said, the skill of identifying and labeling your emotions is one of those skills that many emotion researchers agree helps individuals in regulating their emotions.

Mindfulness to Joy

Observe, simply noticing the emotion of joy as it comes. Be attentive to the emotion, neither trying to push it away nor trying to cling to it. Just let the joy come and go naturally.

Describe, putting words on your joy. When joy rises up, say to yourself, "the emotion of joy has just lifted me up," and describe the experience of joy, "I feel light and energetic," or "I feel strong, or connected, or hopeful."

Participate. Fully participate in what is happening, and fully experience your joy. Let go of any ruminating or worry thoughts about when the joy will end. Live presently with your joy while it lasts. As you participate, become one with your joy, become one with the situation, not leaving it mentally. Act intuitively and do only what the situation calls for.

Take a nonjudgmental stance. See only the facts and focus on what is present, not on what you think *should*, *must*, or *ought* to be going on. Accept your emotion. If you find yourself judging this situation or the emotion, let go of your judging and gently come back to a nonjudgmental stance.

One-mindfully give your full attention simply to the emotion of joy. Feeling joy, just experience joy, not the joy-related sensations and thoughts that may come. Concentrate your mind to make sure you are only doing one thing, and if you notice that you have begun to do two or more activities, simply return to your one activity. Let go of anything that distracts you from your joy or from this moment.

Effectively focus on what works in the situation. Do only what the situation calls for. Don't get hung up on *right versus wrong* or *fair versus unfair* or *should versus should not*. Just do the best you can, keeping your goals in mind. Remember your goals and stay grounded.

Rationale: Sometimes you can cut short moments of joy by getting stuck on thoughts about not deserving to feel joy, or telling yourself, "What's the point of getting into it? It's just going to end." By training your attention on the experience of joy—and letting it come naturally and not pushing it away—you may become more aware of moments in your life when you experience joy, and with increased awareness you can enrich your life by participating in these experiences when they come, and let joy be unfettered by worry or our chattering "monkey mind." Medically speaking, the experience of joy has the potential to help make you more resilient and resistant to the effects of stress. And you'll have more fun in life.

Mindfulness to Anger

Observe, simply noticing the emotion of anger as it comes. Be attentive to the emotion, neither trying to push it away nor trying to cling to it. Just let anger come and go naturally.

Describe, putting words on your anger. When anger rises up, say to yourself, "the emotion of anger has just come alive," or "I notice that I'm agitated," and describe the experience of anger, "I feel tense and aggressive," or "I feel strong, powerful, and hostile."

Participate. Fully participate in what is happening, and fully experience your anger. Let go of any ruminating or worry thoughts about whether or not it's okay to be angry. Live presently with your anger while it lasts. Continue to participate in the moment with your anger, become one with the situation, not leaving it mentally. Act intuitively and do only what the situation calls for.

Take a nonjudgmental stance. See only the facts and focus on what is present, not on what you think *should, must, or ought* to be going on. Accept your anger, judging it as neither good or bad, but simply as an emotion that is present. If you find yourself judging this situation or the emotion, let go of your judging and gently come back to a nonjudgmental stance.

One-mindfully give your full attention simply to the emotion of anger. Feeling anger, just experience anger, note all the anger-related sensations and thoughts as they come. Concentrate your mind to make sure you are only doing one thing, and if you notice that you have begun to do two or more activities, simply return to your one activity. Let go of anything that distracts you from this moment. Tolerate your anger. Notice what your anger is telling you, or motivating you toward.

Effectively focus on what works in the situation. Do only what the situation calls for. Don't get hung up on *right versus wrong* or *fair versus unfair* or *should versus should not*. Just do the best you can, keeping your goals in mind. Remember your goals and stay grounded. Don't invalidate your anger as silly or immature, nor as license to really let so-and-so have it. Let go of useless anger and self-righteousness, which will only hurt you.

Rationale: Anger is a troublesome emotion that can lead to everything from unmeant words to crimes of passion. Anger is important, and can motivate you to overcome obstacles, but anger unchecked can lead to impulsive behaviors. In your practice of being mindful to anger you can simply notice its presence, validate it without necessarily acting on it, or be intentional about your anger-based actions. Also, in being aware of anger you will become more skilled at regulating anger, and if you have problems with chronic anger, you can reduce your risk of stress-related illnesses.

Mindfulness to Your Other Emotions

Now that you understand the pattern of the exercise, try the same steps on the other dominant emotions, paying special attention to those that come up most powerfully for you. Here are rationales for love, interest, fear, guilt, and sadness.

Mindfulness to Love

Love as an emotion ranges from that infatuation with a certain someone to a sense of dedication to a person such as a spouse or friend. Love can motivate us to join in

relationships with others. Sometimes when you feel love for someone, you may invalidate your feeling for that person by saying, "What's the use, everyone has crapped all over me. They probably will, too" or "My relationships never work out." Even in the cases where the other party, romantic or platonic, doesn't reciprocate, you don't need to enter emotional suffering. If the relationship isn't working out, wait to pronounce it dead when it actually becomes dead, but not sooner. Besides, these thoughts can lead you into secondary emotional responses, derailing you from the present experience of love, and derailing you from moving toward the development of new relationships or the enhancement of existing relationships.

Mindfulness to Interest

One way to develop self-mastery is by participating in learning, whether in formal educational settings, workshops, free lectures, or your own personal research on the Internet or in a local library. Interest can lead you to master a subject in which you can find immeasurable joy, or develop an expertise to take pride in. Interest leads us to find out about people around us and can lead to new relationships or the deepening of existing relationships.

Let go of judgments such as "My ideas are stupid," or "Where am I going with this anyway? No one else cares." Even if others don't care (which they may or may not; you can't be sure), there is your enjoyment and intellectual and social development to pursue, so again, mindfulness can help you cultivate more of what you want in your life, and help you become more self-validating of your interests. Building interests often leads to more enjoyment, potential employment and recognition, and may help in discovering a solution to a problem.

Mindfulness to Fear

Fear gives us important information about situations, perhaps alerting us to real danger, or even social danger. Fear can tell us to stay out of the cars of drunk drivers, avoid foaming doggies, not walk into dark alleys, and so forth. If you judge your fear as weak or pathetic, remember that is your judgment about your fear and not simply fear as an adaptive, primary emotion. Also, if fear becomes all encompassing, it can lead to a number of avoidant behaviors that can wreck your quality of life. People who have been humiliated in social settings may begin by avoiding parties and end up avoiding going out at all or developing agoraphobia. There are many situations in which fear can help us to be careful, but we still need to engage in life.

Mindfulness to Guilt

Why on earth would I want to notice the feeling of guilt? Isn't self-help and therapy about getting over guilt? The answer is both yes and no. There are many writers and experts who divide shame into various categories. Some distinguish between healthy shame and toxic shame, and others talk about shame versus guilt. In the latter case shame is the "bad" emotion and guilt is an appropriate response to actual wrongs. In DBT we talk about *wise mind guilt*, which is close to the idea of guilt that corresponds to actual wrongs against others or your own principals.

Like the other emotions, guilt can alert you to wrongs that you have committed, and prompt you to repair relationships by saying you're sorry or gift-giving—whatever penance would be effective to right the wrong. Guilt is painful and can be a clarion call that we need to change our behaviors. Guilt is usually tied in with social situations. By being mindful to your guilt, you may also discover that you have an over-generalized guilt response in situations that don't call for shame. Simply by noting your shame without judging it, you can engage with others and your life with a growing sense of overcoming a debilitating shame.

Mindfulness to Sadness

Sadness alerts you to loss, and can help tell you what is important to you: your reputation, your family, your pets, or your children. Simply noting your sadness without judging it, you can act as needed, effectively. Perhaps what's effective is temporarily withdrawing from the company of others when your energy is low, or crying on the shoulder of another you can bond with them. Sadness can alert others around you that you need support and care, eliciting help and comfort. Sadness can also alert you to change behaviors about yourself that prompt sadness, say for example by acting in accordance with your personal values, thus helping you to build a sense of integrity.

Keeping a Mindfulness Diary

To keep track of your practice, make copies of the diary card below. Carry it with you in a notebook, put it on your fridge, tape it to your dashboard in your car, or carry it in your purse. Whenever you feel like doing a mindfulness exercise, it will be there to help you. The idea behind the card is to help you increase the regularity of your practice, and thereby become more skillful.

On the days that you practice each mindfulness skill (e.g., observe and describe) or specific practice (e.g., mindful driving), circle the corresponding day on the card. As you find yourself trying to increase your practice of mindfulness don't get hung up on whether you did it "completely" or "professionally." If you practice one of the skills for two seconds, then circle that day, since that was probably two seconds more than you have practiced previously. At the bottom there is a place to jot notes regarding obstacles, so that you can become more aware of obstacles to practicing your new mindfulness skills.

Mindfulness Diary Card

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Observe	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Describe	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Nonjudgmental	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
One-Mindfully	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Participate	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Effectiveness	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Mindful to emotion	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Mindful to eating	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Mindful to driving	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Mindful to exercise	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Other	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun

Obstacles to mindfulness practice: (Forgetting? Didn't understand skill? Became judgmental? Didn't have card? Others?)