



## Introduction to Mindfulness

When we practise mindfulness meditation, we learn to be aware of the thoughts and stories we are focusing on. Past or future thinking may bring anxious feelings, regrets, or pleasant memories. When we know what we are thinking or feeling, we can choose what to do next, continue to be lost in thought or come back to the present moment, feeling breath or body sensations or listening to sounds.

### Practices we covered:

Awareness of breath and body

Mindful movement

Taking in the good

### Resources

**Soundcloud:** Mindfulness With Fiona. I have a number of guided meditations recorded here. <https://soundcloud.com/user-365495052>.

**App:** Insight timer, lots of free guided meditations.

**Youtube:** Lots of free guided meditations. Jon Kabat Zinn, Tara Brach

### **Books:**

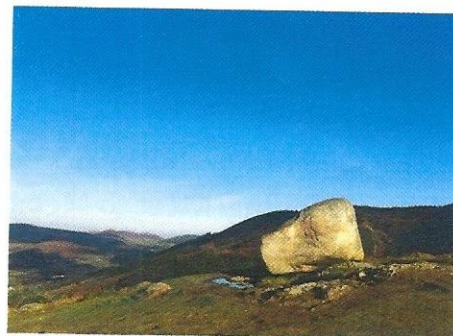
Mindfulness: A practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world by Mark Williams and Danny Penman

Make Peace with your Mind by Mark Coleman

Hard wiring Happiness by Rick Hanson

**Taking in the good.** Pleasant past/current experiences can be used as a meditation focus – if we re-live these, in our mind and body, then we can help rewire our brains for happiness. Rick Hanson has devised a practice called **HEAL**. **H**ave/remember a good experience. **E**nrich it- fill in as much detail as possible and experience it in the body (for 10 to 20 seconds). **A**bsorb it (visualise the experience sinking into the body like white light, or warm water) **L**ink positive and negative material (optional).

We have around 50,000 thoughts a day. 98% are the same as yesterday and 80% are negative. We don't have to believe them all! And we don't have to get lost in them either.





### Breathing Space.

Take a moment to change your position so that you are no longer in automatic pilot.

Check in to feel sensations in your body, notice what types of thoughts are here and any emotions present.

Narrow your focus to feel your breath coming and going for 3 or 4 breaths. (you can put your hand on your tummy or chest if this helps.)

Now bring your attention back out again to feel your whole body breathing and check in again for thoughts emotions and sensations you can feel.

If you need to, take some action to look after yourself. e.g. some more deep breaths, go outside, a face massage or a few stretches to relieve tension.

The body can react to stressful thoughts like real physical threats. Slow breathing will calm down the heart rate and help the body know that it is safe. This removes tension in the body that is increasing our pain or limiting our potential. Try breathing in, for a count of 3, and out, for a count of 6



“When we commit ourselves to paying attention in an open way, without falling prey to our own likes and dislikes, opinions and prejudices, projections and expectations, new possibilities open up and we have a chance to free ourselves from the straitjacket of unconsciousness.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn

Contact me if you are interested in attending any of the following mindful meditation courses or groups: 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction course. 4-week mindful meditation course. 8 week Mindfulness for Cancer survivors and their Supporters. Monthly Meet to Meditate group. Weekly meditation group on zoom.