

Introduction to Mindfulness Awareness, Internal Dialogue, and the Path to Values-Based Living

Before we begin, I want to start by saying that there is no right or wrong way to practice mindfulness. If you currently have a daily routine that works for you, this is not meant as a judgment or a criticism of that practice. In fact, quite the opposite, if you have something that works, and it's effective for you to live the life you want to live, keep doing it. What we are looking at in this article is the way we integrate a mindfulness practice, based in the philosophy of a DBT approach, to build awareness for our stories. Those internal narratives about the world we live in that are constantly shaping the way we cope with life.

Mindfulness is where recovery begins. It's a part of the foundation we put into place to live a values-based life. Not because we're trying to find that breakthrough moment that changes our entire perspective. Or because we're trying to create the perfect plan and be the perfect person. It's because we have to build our capacity to sit with the simple, uncomfortable work of paying attention. If we can't see what's happening in our system, we can't change it. If we're not aware of the thoughts, emotions, urges, or protective parts that are driving our behaviour, we'll keep reacting from the same patterns that have held us back for years.

This is the introduction to how mindfulness works in our recovery model. You'll learn the three internal states of mind, the core What and How Skills of mindfulness, how to apply mindfulness to both the internal and external experience, and how we use it to build behavioural change. Every section you'll read here is the foundation for what comes next. Each will be expanded in its own dedicated article. This is where it all starts.

Why We Practice Mindfulness Awareness Creates Choice

You can't change what you won't face. You can't fix a behaviour you don't even know is happening. And you can't act differently if you're still blending with the parts of you that want to avoid, shut down, lash out, or escape.

Mindfulness helps us stop long enough to actually see what's going on. It gives us access to our internal system, what we're thinking, what we're feeling, what we're noticing in our body, and which part of us is trying to take control. When we practice mindfulness internally, we create just enough space to unblend from those parts. That space lets us make a different choice. That space is where recovery lives.

We also practice mindfulness externally. Because if we don't take a moment to look at what's really happening around us, we'll start reacting to our own stories instead of the actual situation. Mindfulness helps us sort out the difference between how we feel and what we know. Not to dismiss the emotion, but to avoid building a narrative around it that pulls us away from reality and into old patterns. We honour the feeling, and we still check the facts. That's how we lead ourselves forward.

The Three States of Mind Emotion, Reason, and Wise Mind

Before we can lead ourselves, we need to know who's running the show. Most people don't stop to ask what mode they're in, they just react. But in recovery, that kind of autopilot doesn't cut it. We need to become aware of the different states of mind that drive our behaviour so we can interrupt the cycle, unblend from the parts that take over, and return to a grounded place of internal leadership.

In our model, we work with three core states of mind: Emotion Mind, Reason Mind, and Wise Mind. Each one plays a role in how we think, feel, and act. None of them are inherently good or bad. But if we don't know which one we're operating from, we lose access to choice. This is where mindfulness comes in, it helps us identify the state we're in and make the shift toward what actually works.

Emotion Mind The Domain of Reactivity, Urgency, and Emotional Hijack

Emotion Mind is where our reactive parts live. It's fast, intense, and usually shows up when our system feels emotionally threatened. In Emotion Mind, everything feels like it needs to be fixed right now. There's no room for reflection. The priority is relief. Urges take over. Emotions aren't just strong; they are what we become in that moment.

This is where the Angry Child, Impulsive Child, Detached Self Soother, and Avoidant Protector tend to lead the personality system. The Angry Child lashes out, desperate to push the pain away. The Impulsive Child responds without thought for the consequence. The Detached Self Soother looks for immediate gratification, a drink, a scroll, a distraction, anything to make it stop. The Avoidant Protector might pull back entirely, shutting down emotions to avoid being overwhelmed.

In Emotion Mind, the goal is to escape discomfort. It's not about what works long-term, it's about what feels tolerable right now. And while this state is natural and human, it's rarely a good place to make decisions from. We don't see clearly. We're not connected to our values. We're just reacting from the intensity of the moment.

This doesn't mean we demonize Emotion Mind. These parts are trying to help in the only way they know how. But staying stuck here means living from one crisis to the next. Recovery starts when we recognize Emotion Mind for what it is, a signal that something in our system needs attention, not a green light to act on impulse.

Reason Mind The Domain of Control, Knowing, and Emotional Disconnection

Reason Mind is the flip side of the coin. It's calm, logical, and measured, but not in a way that invites connection. It distances us from feeling, it lacks empathy, compassion, and understanding. Reason Mind is where the "knowing" parts show up, the ones that say, "You should already have this figured out." These parts dismiss emotion altogether. They rely on performance, problem-solving, and intellectual control.



This is where the Perfectionistic Overcompensator, Detached Protector, and Internal Critics often take the lead. The Perfectionist pushes us to stay on top of everything, avoid failure, and never show weakness. The Detached Protector shuts down feelings entirely, keeping us focused on tasks and responsibilities. The Critics chime in with, “You should know better,” or “Stop being so sensitive,” or “This is just the way life is.”

On the surface, Reason Mind might look productive. We get things done. We keep moving. But underneath, we’re emotionally cut off. We stop listening to what’s happening in the system. We ignore the emotional data that’s trying to tell us something real. We invalidate the parts of our personality that are having emotional experiences.

Reason Mind is often reinforced by culture, systems, and past environments that rewarded detachment, and pushing through. But ignoring emotional states and living here too long can lead to physical and mental burnout, loneliness, and a sense of disconnection from ourselves. Just like Emotion Mind, it’s not wrong, it’s just incomplete.

Wise Mind

The Interface Between Reaction and Reason

Wise Mind is the connection point. It’s not a better state; it’s a balanced one. It’s where we bring the data from Reason Mind and the signals from Emotion Mind together and let something deeper lead.

Wise Mind is where we access Self Energy, the innate presence we were born with before our protective modes were formed. It’s not a part. It’s not another internal voice we have to manage. It’s the grounded, quiet leadership that lives underneath the chaos of emotion and the rigidity of reason. It’s the clarity we return to when we’re no longer being run by urgency or detachment. It’s the internal compass that points us toward the life we want to live, not because someone told us to, but because something inside us knows it matters.

In Wise Mind, we feel what’s happening without being overwhelmed by it, and we acknowledge what’s true without shutting down what’s hard. We act from intention, not reaction. From integrity, not impulse. Wise Mind is the space where Self Energy leads.

This is the essence of Dialectical Thinking. Wise Mind is the space where our values live, not imposed, but remembered. Where beliefs guide behaviour, not because we’re performing, but because we’re living from who we truly are. It’s the place where parts can speak without taking control. And it’s the place where Self Energy, not a part, but the core of who we are, leads the system with clarity, courage, and compassion.

Wise Mind doesn’t arrive automatically. We have to return to it. That’s what the practice is. That’s why we build skills that help us unblend, slow down, and listen to what’s happening before we act.

Returning to Wise Mind The Role of Mindfulness in State Awareness

Mindfulness is what helps us notice which state we're in. It gives us the pause we need to ask the questions: Am I reacting from urgency? Am I ignoring how I feel and just trying to push through? Or am I grounded enough to lead myself right now?

Once we know, we can shift. Not by force, but by practice. We can observe the part that's activated, describe what's happening, and stay one-mindfully with the discomfort until Wise Mind comes online. That's when we choose what works. That's when we act in alignment. That's when we lead ourselves.

We'll explore each of these states, how they show up, how they interact, and how we shift between them, in more detail in future articles. For now, what matters most is this: we all move between these states. And we're not trying to get rid of any of them. We're just learning to notice when we're stuck, and building the skills to come home to ourselves.

The What Skills Observe, Describe, and Participate

Understanding the different states of mind, Emotion, Reason, and Wise, doesn't mean we automatically know how to shift between them. Insight isn't enough. We need a process. A clear set of steps that help us enter a Wise Mind state on purpose. That's where the DBT What Skills come in: Observe, Describe, and Participate. These aren't just abstract ideas. They're practical, repeatable behaviours we can use to stay present, unblend from our parts, and take action that aligns with our values.

Observe

We start with observation. Internally, this means noticing what's happening in our system, our thoughts, emotions, body sensations, and urges, without immediately reacting to them. We create space. We slow things down just long enough to witness what's unfolding without trying to fix, avoid, or change it.

We also learn to notice which part is active. Is it the Critic? The Impulsive Child? The Avoidant Protector? We don't argue with it or try to force it into silence. We just name it. That naming is what helps us unblend. By using the language of parts, we begin to create internal separation. We recognize that this feeling, this urge, this thought, it's not all of us. It's a part of us. And when we can see the part, we can start leading it.

Observation isn't just an internal skill. We apply it externally, too. We pay attention to what's actually happening, not what we assume is happening. What did the person say? What did they do? What's factual and observable? This is how we step back from the emotional charge of a moment and start seeing the situation more clearly, with less distortion from activated parts.

Describe

Once we've observed, we move into describing. This is where we give language to what we've noticed, clearly, simply, and without embellishment. We don't use dramatic storytelling. We don't add meaning that isn't there. We just name the facts of the internal experience.

"I'm noticing there's a part of me that's bringing tightness in my chest."

"I'm noticing there's a part of me that feels really sad."

"I can feel my Avoidant Protector trying to shut this down."

"There's a part of me thinking I've already messed this up."

By describing what's happening, we stay grounded. We create order in the system. And we make it easier to step into Wise Mind, because we're no longer drowning in the experience, we're standing beside it, noticing it with clarity.

Externally, the same principle applies. Saying, "I noticed my friend didn't respond to my message," is very different from, "They don't care about me, so I don't care about them." One is a fact. The other is a story, likely coming from a reactive part. Describing helps us stay accountable for our experience, without projecting blame onto others or abandoning what we feel. It keeps us connected to what's real.

Participate

And finally, we participate. This is where we stop just watching and start engaging. We re-enter the moment on purpose, not from a place of protection, but from a place of intention. We take action that reflects our values, not just our discomfort. We do the next right thing, not the thing that numbs, distracts, or soothes for five minutes, but the thing that actually helps us become who we're trying to be.

Participating is where change starts to stick. It's how we take all the inner work we've done, everything we've observed and described, and actually put it into motion. Not perfectly. Not all at once. But one decision at a time.

The How Skills One-Mindfully, Non-Judgmentally, and Effectively

If the What Skills teach us what to do when we're practicing mindfulness, the How Skills shape how we do it. This is the attitude, tone, and intention behind the action. This way of being is what determines whether we're just going through the motions or actually creating change.

Understanding a part is one thing. Noticing an urge is important. But how we show up to that moment, how we relate to what we find, makes all the difference.

One-Mindfully

One-Mindful practice means we stay with one thing at a time. Fully. No multitasking. No background noise. If we're brushing our teeth, we're brushing our teeth, not doom-scrolling or mentally preparing a conversation we haven't had yet. If we're checking in with an activated part, we're not also trying to fix it, quiet it, or plan what to do next. We're staying with the experience. We're letting it be what it is. And we're doing that on purpose.

This skill trains the system to stop running from discomfort. Most of us have spent years learning to check out, numb, distract, or power through. One-Mindfulness interrupts that reflex. It slows things down. It teaches us how to stay with ourselves, especially when the urge is to run.

This doesn't need to be complicated. It might mean doing the dishes with full attention. Walking without headphones. Listening to a part of ourselves speak without jumping in to manage it. The task doesn't matter. The focus does.

Non-Judgmentally

This is where most people slip. We notice what's happening, and then we attack it. "This feeling is stupid." "That thought means I'm a mess." "I should know better than to be like this."

Non-judgmental practice stops that cycle. We drop the evaluations. We stop labeling the experience as good or bad, right or wrong. We just name it. "There's anxiety here." "That thought showed up again." "This part is trying to help, even if it's doing it badly."

When we remove judgment, we make space for parts of the system to speak without fear of being shut down. That's when we actually start to understand what's going on underneath. That's when our system begins to trust us. Because we're not meeting it with criticism, we're meeting it with presence.

Non-judgment isn't about pretending everything's okay. It's about being honest without being cruel. We name what's happening, and we do it without turning ourselves into the enemy.

Effectively

Effectiveness is where mindfulness turns into action. It's the skill that keeps us grounded in what works, not what relieves pain the fastest, not what proves a point, not what protects our pride.

To act effectively is to ask: What helps me take a step toward the life I want to live? It means responding from Wise Mind, even if our parts are screaming for relief, validation, or revenge. It means choosing alignment over impulse.

Effective action doesn't always feel good. It often feels boring, vulnerable, slow, or unfamiliar. But it works. Because it's based in values, not reactivity. And when we make decisions that are values-based, not pain-based, we start to rebuild trust with ourselves.

This is where recovery lives: not in doing what's easy, but in doing what matters.

From Unblending to Action Building the Full Process of Internal Leadership

When we combine the What and How Skills, we're not just learning how to stay present, we're building a structured, step-by-step process for interrupting reactivity and moving toward values-based action. This process is what turns insight into change. And at the centre of it is one key idea: we have to unblend from the parts of us that are trying to run the show.

Unblending means creating just enough space from the emotion, the urge, or the thought that we don't immediately act on it. It's the same thing many therapies refer to as cognitive defusion. Whether we're talking about unblending in parts language or defusing from a thought or emotion, we're talking about the same thing: the ability to say, "This is part of my experience, but it's not all of me, and I get to choose how to respond."

But here's the important part: this process doesn't begin in the abstract. It starts in the body. It begins the moment we notice distress, that slight tightening in the chest, the rise of a familiar thought, the urge to say something sharp, shut down, or check out. That moment is the activation point. And it's also the opportunity.

Step One: The Pause

Everything starts with a pause. Not a hesitation, not avoidance, but an intentional moment of awareness. This is the DBT STOP skill in action. At *The Liberation Place*, we view the STOP Skill as the single most important skill we teach. It's the one thing we do that gives us access to every other skill. Without STOP, nothing else has space to work. No mindfulness. No unblending. No values-based action. Only reaction.

STOP stands for:

- Stop what you're doing, don't react
- Take a Step Back & Take a Deep Breath
- Observe what's happening inside and out
- Proceed mindfully and with values-based intention

The T is double layered for a reason. Taking a step back creates distance between us and the moment. Taking a deep breath regulates our nervous system just enough to stay present. This is our first act of leadership. We breathe. We create space. We interrupt the loop. We say: I'm not going to let this part take over, not yet. I'm going to lead.

STOP is more than a grounding exercise, it's the gateway into every other process we use. It's how we slow things down enough to access Wise Mind, notice which mode is active, and make a different choice. It gives us just enough space to witness what's happening instead of collapsing into it.



This is where we check in:

- What emotion is here?
- What thoughts just showed up?
- What part of me is trying to take the wheel?
- What am I noticing in my body?
- What is actually happening around me, not my assumptions, not the story, but the facts?

This is the moment where internal mindfulness meets external awareness. It's how we move from autopilot to intention. From urgency to leadership.

This step alone is a game-changer. Because when we STOP, when we interrupt the automatic response with breath, space, and observation, we regain the ability to choose. And that's where recovery lives.

Step Two: Describing and Unblending

Once we've noticed what's happening, we give it language. We describe the internal experience as clearly and simply as possible. Not to fix it. Not to escape it. But to unblend from it.

This is where cognitive defusion, or unblending, begins. We say, "I'm noticing there's a part of me that feels overwhelmed." Or "I'm noticing the inner Critic is activated." Or "I'm noticing an urge in my chest to shut this conversation down." By naming what we notice as a part, we separate from it just enough to stop it from driving the behaviour.

The moment we can describe what's happening in our system without collapsing into it or shaming it, we're making our way back into Wise Mind territory. That's the goal, not perfection, but access to the part of us that can respond with clarity.

Step Three: Staying With It

Now we stay with the experience. One-Mindfully. Non-Judgmentally.

We don't rush to fix it, shut it down, or move on. We let it be what it is, and we stay grounded in the moment. We breathe. We notice the urge to escape, and we don't follow it. We let Wise Mind come online.

This is where emotional endurance gets built. This is where our nervous system learns that it doesn't need to shut down every time a difficult part gets activated. We're training the muscle of self-leadership by doing the one thing that most parts have never seen us do: stay present with discomfort.

Step Four: Choosing How to Participate Turning Awareness Into Values-Based Action

Once we've observed what's happening, described it clearly, and stayed with it non-judgmentally, we're ready to act. But the kind of action we're looking for here isn't reactive. We're not trying to push away discomfort, prove a point, or rush toward a fix. We're not giving our power over to the part that wants immediate relief.

We're choosing to act from a different place, a place of values, not urgency.

This is where the RAAVEN process becomes essential. RAAVEN is how we work with the part that's been activated. Instead of letting it dictate what we do next, we pause and lead it through a conversation. We don't silence it. We guide it.

The RAAVEN Process in Action

We begin by **R**ecognizing what's happening in our system. We don't need to get specific about which part it is, that can sometimes create confusion or pull us into overthinking. Instead, we focus on what we can actually observe. Is there a feeling present? A thought that just showed up? A physical sensation or urge? Whatever we notice, we name it gently and without judgment. Recognition is about awareness, not diagnosis. We start by describing what we see, so we can begin to relate to the experience rather than react from it.

Then we **A**cknowledge what it's feeling. We don't skip this step. We take a moment to sit with the emotion that's present, fear, frustration, shame, urgency, and let that part know we're listening. This is about emotional honesty, not intellectual understanding.

Next, we **A**ppreciate the purpose this part is trying to serve. Even if its behaviour is unhelpful, its intention usually makes sense. Maybe it's trying to keep us safe. Maybe it's protecting us from rejection. Maybe it just wants to avoid another mistake. When we appreciate the role it's playing, the system starts to soften.

We then **V**alidate that it makes sense this part showed up. Of course it did. Based on our history, our schemas, and the story the system is telling, this part believes it's needed. Validation doesn't mean we let the part lead. It means we honour why it's here.

Then we **E**ducate the part on what actually matters right now. This is where Wise Mind steps in. We remind the part that while its job used to be essential, we're in a different moment now. We reconnect to our values and beliefs, and we let the part know what we're working toward. This is about redirecting—not shutting down.

And finally, we **N**egotiate a new action. One that honours the emotion but follows the value. We ask the part to let us take the lead, not to silence it, but to act in a way that reflects the life we want to live. This is how we begin shifting from impulse to integrity.

A Real Example

Let's say you're in a conversation with someone you care about, and they say something that triggers an old wound. Immediately, you feel a surge of defensiveness and the urge to shut the conversation down. You recognize that your Avoidant Protector has come online by the fact your system has entered into distress.

You pause. You take a breath. And you begin the process.

You Recognize that there's a part with an urge to shut the conversation down.

You Acknowledge that it's feeling anxious and overwhelmed.

You Appreciate that it's trying to keep you from getting hurt or misunderstood.

You Validate that this makes total sense, this part has had to manage emotionally risky situations before, and it's doing what it knows. Then, you Educate the part by reminding it that you're in a different place now. You're not stuck in the past. You're trying to build relationships based on honesty and openness.

And finally, you Negotiate: "Let me try something different this time. I'm not going to shut this down. I'm going to stay present, take a breath, and speak from the part of me that wants connection, not just safety."

Now, instead of avoiding the discomfort or letting it take over, you participate in the conversation with intention. You might say something like, "That was hard to hear, and I felt myself wanting to pull away. But I want to stay here with you and talk it through." That's a values-based action. That's recovery in motion.

Leading, Not Silencing

RAAVEN is not about pushing away the part. It's not about denying the feeling or telling yourself you should be past this by now. It's about choosing to lead, even while the part is still present. It's about using what the part is showing you to make a decision that reflects your integrity, not your fear.

This is how we take the emotional energy that usually gets channelled into protection, avoidance, or impulsivity, and we use it for something that actually matters. Something that builds the life we want to live.

And Then We Repeat Practice, Practice, Practice

This work is not about getting it perfect. It's not about doing it right every time. It's not about checking a box and moving on. It's about building a new default. Slowly. Consistently. One mindful moment at a time.



The process, pause, observe, describe, stay, and participate, isn't something we do once and graduate from. It's something we return to again and again until it becomes how we live. And the only way it becomes how we live is through practice. Real, repeated, uncomfortable, boring, beautiful, relentless practice.

We don't wait for a crisis to start. We practice in small moments, when we're brushing our teeth, answering a text, feeling a flicker of irritation. We practice noticing the inner critic when it whispers, not just when it screams. We practice staying with the discomfort of loneliness before it spirals into impulsive action. We practice unblending in the everyday, so we're prepared when it matters most. When we think we've practiced enough? We practice some more.

Because recovery isn't something that happens from knowing. It happens from doing. Over and over. Until the system learns that it doesn't need to collapse into protection. Until the parts learn that they don't have to fight for control. Until we trust ourselves enough to lead.

This is how we create space between the trigger and the response. This is how we interrupt the old cycle of reaction and replace it with reflection. This is how we shift from blending with our pain to leading with our values. Not through theory. Not through insight alone. But through thousands of repetitions that retrain our nervous system and rewire our habits.

It's not mystical. It's not abstract. It's a process. A learnable, repeatable, deeply human process. And with practice, it becomes the new normal.

Not a performance. Not a quick fix. But a way of living.

Daily Integration From Theory to Lifestyle

Mindfulness is not just a tool we pull out when things go sideways. If we only reach for it when we're in emotional freefall, it's already too late. We won't have the muscle built. We won't have the process wired in. We'll be trying to apply a skill we never practiced in a moment when we can barely think straight.

That's why mindfulness needs to become part of our daily routine, not as something we occasionally remember, but as a lifestyle we're committed to living. Practice is not just preparation for crisis. It is the work. It's how we build a nervous system that can stay present when things get hard, and a mind that can lead when parts want to take over.

Here's what that actually looks like, day to day.

The Morning Check-In Begin the Day in Awareness, Not Autopilot

Each morning, we take a few minutes to check in, not out of obligation, but because how we start the day shapes how we move through it. This isn't about waking up and instantly diving into to-do lists or getting lost in the scroll. It's about taking a moment to land in your body and your system before the outside world starts making demands.

We ask ourselves:

- What am I thinking about this morning?
- What emotions are present, even if they're subtle?
- What sensations do I feel in my body, tension, heaviness, restlessness, calm?
- Which part of me seems most active right now? Is the Critic already online? Is the Avoidant Protector resisting the day before it begins? Is the Vulnerable Child carrying fear or sadness?
- What's one value I want to act on today? Not five. Not a perfect day. Just one value-driven action that would help me live the life I want to live.

This morning check-in helps us unblend before the day even begins. It helps us identify what's stirring in the system and commit to leading ourselves from Wise Mind. Even if that leadership is as simple as drinking water when we don't feel like it, or showing up to work with more patience than we did yesterday.

The Evening Reflection **End the Day With Accountability and Self-Compassion**

At the end of the day, we return to the practice, this time to reflect. This is not about judging how well we did or didn't perform. It's about looking at our day through the lens of awareness and growth.

We ask:

- What challenged me today? What moment activated a part? What story got triggered?
- What did I learn about myself in that moment? Not just what happened, but what it revealed about how my system responds to stress, rejection, shame, boredom, or discomfort.
- Where did I show up in alignment with my values? No matter how small. A kind word. A pause before reacting. A choice to rest instead of push.
- Where did I fall into an old pattern? And can I reflect on that without judgment, just clarity.
- What helped ground me today? Was it a moment of stillness? A breath? A friend?
- What am I grateful for, not in a performative sense, but in a way that reconnects me to what matters? What part of me took action that helped me to be who I want to be?

Evening reflection is how we close the loop. It's how we learn from the day without letting the system collapse into shame. We don't need a perfect track record. We just need honesty and repetition. That's what creates behavioural momentum.



One-Mindful Practice (Every Single Day) Build the Muscle of Presence in the Ordinary

Each day, we choose one task to do One-Mindfully. Just one. It could be brushing your teeth. Taking a shower. Making tea. Walking the dog. Doing the dishes. Driving to work. Sitting in silence. The task doesn't matter. What matters is that we use it as a training ground for attention.

We bring our full presence to the task. We feel the water. Taste the tea. Hear the sounds. Notice our breath. Notice when the mind starts to drift. And when it does (because it will), we gently return. Not because the moment is special. But because we decided: this is the moment I'm choosing to stay in.

Most people, especially when we're just starting, can't keep their attention focused for more than a few seconds before something pulls them away. A thought. An emotion. A sensation. A memory. A part of the system that wants to distract, protect, fix, or avoid. That's not a failure. It's not a character flaw, or a personality defect, It's just how the system was trained.

We've spent years scanning for threat, anticipating problems, and reacting to discomfort as fast as possible. So the idea of just being present, of noticing what's happening in our system without doing something about it, can feel nearly impossible at first.

That's why One-Mindfulness matters. It's not about forcing peace. It's about training presence. Just like going to the gym strengthens our body, One-Mindful practice strengthens our capacity to stay in the moment, even when parts want to run.

And with repetition, something begins to shift. We build the skill of noticing we've drifted and gently returning. That return is the work. That's how we build presence. That's how we train internal leadership.

One-Mindfulness doesn't exist to create calm. It exists to build clarity. It teaches the system how to tolerate stillness, stay with discomfort, and return, again and again, to what's happening right now.

And over time, that presence starts to carry into the harder moments. The ones where we want to shut down, speed up, check out, or blow up. If we've built the habit of returning to the moment when nothing was at stake, we're far more likely to return to it when everything is.

What It Looks Like Over Time From Forced Effort to Internal Rhythm

In the beginning, the mindfulness practice might feel clunky. Mechanical. Awkward. Like you're performing some routine you don't fully believe in yet. That's normal. That's how every skill begins, through repetition, not revelation. We don't start with ease. We don't start with insight that changes everything. We start with effort. With doing it before it feels natural. With showing up even when part of us doesn't want to.



Some mornings, your check-in will feel grounding, like you're reconnecting with something important. Other mornings, it'll feel like going through the motions, rushed, distracted, or numb. On days like this, try to take an opposite action to what the feelings are telling you to do, and just do your mindfulness practice anyway.

Some nights, you'll forget your reflection entirely. That's ok, it doesn't mean you're a failure, and this will never work for you. Start again the next night.

Some One-Mindful tasks will feel peaceful or powerful. Others will feel pointless, flat, or like your mind won't stop wandering. That's okay. We don't practice mindfulness to feel something. We practice it to *build something*. Structure. Clarity. Self-leadership.

We're laying tracks for a way of living that doesn't fall apart the moment discomfort shows up. And we're teaching our system that presence is something we can return to, not just when things are calm, but especially when they're not.

In the beginning, you might wonder if it's working. You might not notice a shift right away. You might feel like nothing is changing. But this isn't about instant gratification. It's not about emotional payoff. It's about consistency. What matters is not how "well" you practice, it's that you *keep practicing*.

Because over time, something begins to shift. We start catching reactive parts a few seconds sooner. We start noticing that you're in Emotion Mind before you lash out or shut down. We begin pausing naturally, without needing to remember the acronym. We start acting from values without the same inner war.

Eventually, what once felt like forced effort becomes quiet rhythm. It's not that the discomfort disappears, it's that our ability to stay with it gets stronger. Our system learns that it can handle being seen. That it doesn't need to be rushed, fixed, or silenced. In that space, Self Energy gets stronger. Wise Mind gets louder. And leadership becomes our new normal.

Mindfulness isn't an emergency tool. It's a daily workout for the system. A behavioural rehearsal for living the life you want to live, even when it's hard. The more we practice, the stronger we get. Not overnight. But over time. That's the rhythm we're building. That's what makes it real.

Final Thoughts This Is Where It Starts

Mindfulness isn't about feeling peaceful. It's not about sitting still with your eyes closed or trying to look like you've got it all together. It's not about controlling your mind or chasing calm. It's about getting honest. With ourselves. With what's really happening inside our system, and around us in the moment.

Mindfulness is the act of choosing not to run. Not to numb. Not to hide. It's the willingness to sit, stay, and pay attention, even when it's uncomfortable. Especially when it's uncomfortable. It's the skill of creating just enough space between what we feel and what we do. To know that we can actually lead ourselves, not from reaction, but from intention.



That space, that breath between experience and response, that's where we take our lives back. That's where all of this begins. If we can't see what's happening inside us, we can't shift it. If we're constantly blending with our parts, buying into every thought, reacting from every feeling, or avoiding what we don't want to feel, then we're not leading, we're surviving. And we've survived long enough. We're here to do something different.

This is the foundation. The beginning of everything that follows.

We don't need to be calm.

We don't need to be perfect.

We don't need to have it all figured out.

We just need to be *present*. Willing. Open enough to stay with ourselves, even when we want to run.

This is how we stop reacting.

This is how we start choosing.

This is how we begin to live the life we actually want to live.

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