

Jim Lucas

*Lesson 3:*  
**Take Notice**

5 Daily Helpers

# How Being More Aware and Taking Notice can Transform your Brain

Well done....you've made it to one of the most important elements of taking this course....**taking action!**

## **What is it to NOT notice?**

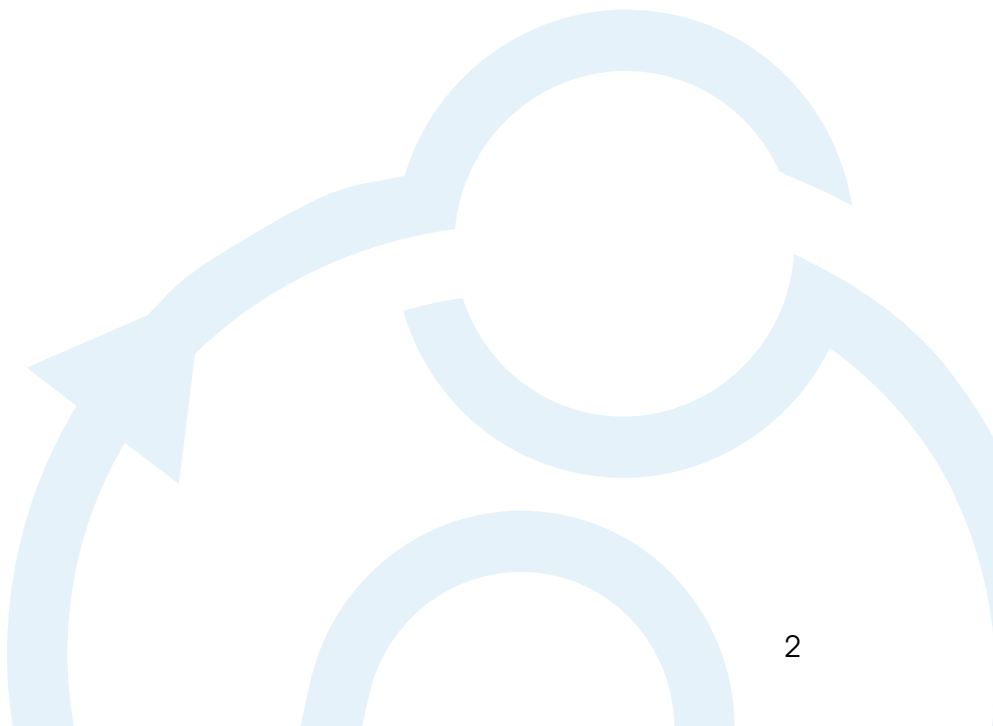
You can worry more than you need to. You can dwell on past events more than you need to.

Noticing is a tool to help you spend less time in your head and more time practicing focus, slowing down and improving your concentration.

In this worksheet, you'll explore what gets in the way of you practicing mindfulness exercises. **No only that, you get to decide whether you are ready.**

## Your Next Steps:

- Print this worksheet and complete it. Or you can write out the exercise in a different document. Sometimes I like writing out with a pen on paper to look after my brain and my eyes.
- If you've skipped any of the previous worksheets, I recommend you go back and complete those first. You may be eager to move forwards quickly, but it is important to follow the steps laid out in the course.
- These completed worksheets will serve as your new toolbox for stress management. Keep them together and keep them safe.



**STEP 1: Which of the following effects have you noticed happen in your mind when it is busy?** (circle all that apply)

Worrying about the future

Worrying about your health

Worrying about bad things happening to people you care about

Worrying about losing your job, home, money

Worrying about failing, being 'found-out', getting reprimanded

Worry about upsetting people

Dwelling on past events recent or long-ago

Mulling over conversations that either hurt or anger you

Judging, blaming or criticising your own behaviour

Feeling resentful about what you've had to do or what others' haven't done

Feeling frustrated or hopeless about getting stuck in unhelpful habits

Generally getting lost in thought, which stops you from connecting with people or getting stuff done

**STEP 2: Mindful-action i.e. meditation and doing things with greater awareness helps significantly, but what reasons does your mind throw up to not practice mindfulness?** (circle all that apply)

"I don't have enough time"

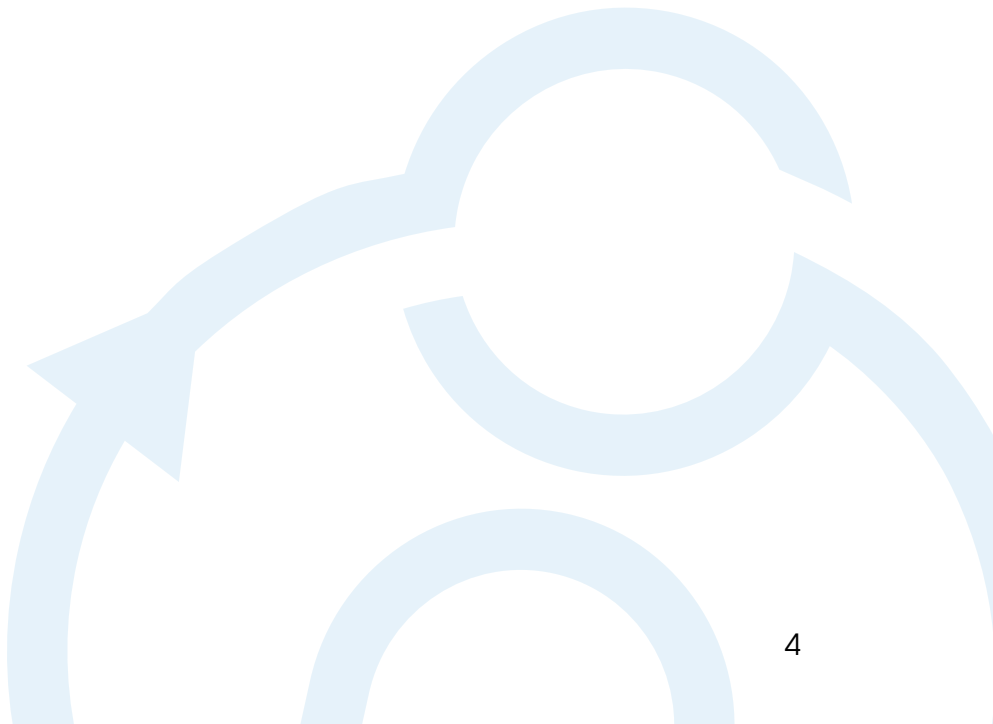
"I've tried it before and I wasn't any good at it"

"Just because its trendy, it doesn't mean it works"

"I don't need to do it"

"My head is too busy"

Others:



### **STEP 3: Finding simple solutions**

i) "*Not having enough time*" - There are two ways I can think of to solve the problem of not having enough time to do mindful-action. The first is to do what you already do, just with more awareness and intention.

There are so many activities in your day that you can do more mindfully e.g. brushing your teeth, eating, drinking, walking down the stairs, walking outside, getting dressed, taking a shower etc. You don't need any more time, because you already do them.

Awareness means you focus on your senses, your body, your breathing and your mind. You observe these parts curiously.

Intentionally means you are choosing to notice these happenings instead of your mind just wandering to them.

The second way is to take out something you spend your time doing that is less important or enjoyable. Then replace that time with doing a mindful exercise.

ii) "*I've tried it before and I wasn't any good at it*" - People often trip up with this thought...why you may ask? The reason is that it is easy to set off with the wrong expectation. People hope that they can clear their minds and stop them from wandering. But in reality what they discover is that they cannot.

But what if I told you that the aim is not to stop your mind from wandering, but it is to catch it when it does? So, if you notice your mind wandering, then its job done. You've succeeded.

Try telling yourself "well done" when you notice your mind has wandered in response to feeling frustrated or disappointed.

iii) "just because its trendy, doesn't mean it works" - That's a valid point. And you'd be right...mindfulness is very popular right now. And, it isn't the solution to everything.

And, yet, the ability to notice, to be an observer and to take a step back from your own mind, is a powerful tool. It gives you something essential...the building blocks for successfully implementing other skills in your life.

For example, you can't break unhelpful habits if you don't notice you are doing them. You can't stop withdrawing from your loved ones if you aren't aware that you are doing so. You can't stop criticising your children if you don't notice you are doing it. And, I don't mean after its happened. I mean during. Mindful awareness is what you need to stop yourself and train yourself to do something different in the moment.

**Can you think of any other solutions that will help you to overcome the barriers to practicing mindfulness?**

#### **STEP 4: Start Small**

Set out today or tomorrow to do one small mindful action. Choose one thing you can do today and then choose one small thing you can do tomorrow.

Let go of your mind's unhelpful evaluations and judgements. Its not in your control what your mind does. *Its the effort that counts!*



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