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introduction

How important is a minute? How many minutes did you really pay attention to today, even before reading this? Did the little in-between moments slip by unnoticed because you were caught in distraction? Or, were your minutes populated by thoughts of worrisome stories or fears? Did you ever stop to think how a single minute, *this very next minute*, holds the potential to change the direction of your thoughts, your life? How this next 60 seconds can act as a storehouse of resilience to help you bounce back from daily challenges, difficulties, and hardships?

No one is immune from life's many obstacles. To live with a human body and a human mind means having to confront grief, loss, disappointment, frustration, and even illusion. Fortunately, that is only part of the story. While you cannot control the cards you are dealt your in life, you can decide how to best play your hand—in this upcoming minute. It is this truth that is fortifying and encouraging.

How you respond to life's stumbling blocks and hurdles right here, right now, in the next 60 seconds, can make all the difference.

To explore if there might be a better way, take a moment to ask yourself the following:

Has my mental treadmill of worries or rumination ever really solved anything for me?

Have I felt true contentment, clarity, happiness, and optimism when I'm not present, but stuck in thoughts about the past or future?

There is a more life-enhancing way. It is an approach that reduces needless suffering by harnessing the power of mindfulness, attention, and the daily resilience practices in this book. That is why *101 Mindful Ways to Build Resilience* is based upon the following idea—

Where and how you use your awareness in this next minute determines the very quality of your life—your ability to live joyfully, to accept the present conditions of the precious life you have, and to bounce back from life's most challenging obstacles.

In one minute you can utilize the astounding power of your attention to sharpen your focus in new ways that bring contentment, clarity, happiness, and optimism—in other words, the core foundations of resilience. The mindfulness experiences in



calm

Resilience would be nearly impossible if you were constantly upset, irritated, irrational, and beset by a host of negative feelings. Calm is the magic elixir that brings you to a place of balance, harmony, and peace. It is from this emotionally centered point of view that you are more prepared and capable of making compassionate, caring, and sensible choices for yourself and others.

reboot your brain with this precious breath



Anytime that you are emotionally triggered, reactive, or defensive, the part of your brain that does the thinking, judging, analyzing, and decision-making actually goes offline—it's like losing your Internet connection or having your computer's hard drive fail. Fortunately, you don't need to wait for a computer tech. You only need to take a long, slow breath that calms and relaxes the body and reboots your thinking brain.

HOW

1. Find a quiet place where you can sit undisturbed. Settle into your chair. Feel your feet on the floor and your body contacting the chair.
2. Assume an erect and dignified, but relaxed posture as you bring awareness to your breath. Get curious about each in-breath and out-breath, realizing that no two breaths are alike.
3. Visualize your belly or abdominal area like a balloon. Inhaling, picture the balloon expanding as it fills up. If you've been holding the stomach in, give yourself permission to let the muscles relax so it can soften and move.
4. Exhale slowly, letting the breath go out for a count of three or four. You don't have to count it, but just feel the slow release of air. If the stomach area is not moving, move your arms behind your back and clasp your hands together. This position opens the rib cage to make belly breathing easier.

WHEN

Practice anytime you feel upset, triggered by a craving, or reactive. If possible, separate physically from what is causing you to be reactive. After calming down, use your thinking brain to respond differently. Continue to breathe as often as needed—one minute at a time.



palm the present

In his essay *Walking*, Henry David Thoreau wrote that while he was making his way around Walden Pond, "...The thought of some work will run in my head, and I am not where my body is....What business have I in the woods if I am thinking of something out of the woods?" And he didn't have a cell phone to distract him. That's why, when we're lost in thought, a good way to find ourselves is to simply "return to our senses" via the body.

HOW

1. Begin sitting or standing. After settling in, raise your hands in front of your chest, with hands about a foot apart.
2. Slowly bring your hands together, pausing the moment you sense any heat, warmth, energy, or pressure.
3. Continue to bring the hands together until the fingertips lightly touch.
4. Bring the hands closer until the palms touch. Notice how the fingers straighten and how the hands make contact.
5. Raise your elbows up and press your palms together fairly hard for the count of five (less if you feel pain).
6. Lower the elbows and relax the shoulders to let go of the tension. Open your hands as you let the arms come down to rest onto your legs.
7. Imagine breathing into the body where any tension remains. Exhale the tension out with the breath—picturing it draining out down the legs and out the bottom of your feet and back into the Earth for recycling.

WHEN

Use this to get centered anytime you feel overwhelmed, stressed, distracted, or lost in negative thinking.

this soothing moment



Negativity and anxiety and reactivity are like filters that block out the light. Let's remove these shades by noticing one soothing thing in the next minute. This practice shifts awareness and changes how your brain pays attention because it takes you off autopilot and gently guides you to enter this moment in a safe and soothing way. Do this portable exercise anywhere, sitting or standing, at home or at work, while walking or driving your car, or in your backyard.

HOW

1. Broaden your gaze and sensitivity. Imagine that you could be aware of everything all around you using your senses.
2. For the next minute, tune in to all the smallest details of colors, sounds, shapes, textures, temperature, people, and natural or man-made objects in your surroundings.
3. Find one soothing thing. This might be a favorite color, the sense of safety you feel, the comfortable ambient temperature, or even a memory that comes from noticing something that is soothing to you. If you find more than one thing and that's okay, too.
4. Allow yourself to savor this soothing thing in great detail for another minute.
5. Take a mental snapshot or use your phone to take an actual photo that you can save in a 'soothing moments' file.

WHEN

Notice one soothing thing each time you pass through a doorway and enter a new space. Use this practice when you are dwelling on negative thoughts. Keep a one-minute soothing moments file or journal, so you can review these moments and share them with others.



calibrate and tame your emotions

Have your emotions ever gotten the best of you? It happens. Yes, we need our emotions—but when reactive emotions are allowed to run the show, we can be left feeling drained, as well as behave in ways that we may later regret. This practice helps you *name the emotion in order to tame the emotion*.

HOW

1. Physically separate yourself, if necessary, from the stress or situation that is producing your high level of emotional reactivity. Go to a neutral corner—meaning find a place of silence where you can be alone for a minute or so.
2. Take three calming breaths.
3. Name the primary emotion that you are feeling. The process of naming the emotion—anger, frustration, sadness, etc.—forces you to use the thinking brain.
4. Name other emotions that are also present, such as hurt, loneliness, or disappointment, and so on. Multiple emotions are often present, so take your time and name them all.
5. Where in the body do you sense the emotion(s)? The gut, the heart area, the shoulders, etc.?
6. Now, consider how you can respond differently in the future to the situation or event that triggered your emotion. By naming the emotion, you paused to observe and constructively distance from it—instead of simply reacting. Congratulations on deepening your understanding and changing your relationship to the emotion.

WHEN

Use this practice anytime you feel overwhelmed, stressed out, or reactive. Name the emotion when you first begin to sense it. This will help you calibrate and tame emotions—even those strongly ingrained ones—more quickly and effectively.

tone up your vagus nerve



Did you know that you have a built-in nerve whose purpose it is to regulate and relax you? The vagus nerve is the longest cranial nerve. This vital nerve pathway traverses the inside of the spine as it links up the brain with the heart and the gut. Here's a simple, ancient practice for observing the breath that activates the vagus nerve in order to relax the body and brain as it buffers you from stress. This technique is taught to Navy SEALs to help them focus and stay calm during challenging missions.

HOW

1. Bring the palms of your hands together in front of your chest
2. Spend a few moments noticing the warmth between your palms to get centered.
3. Inhale and fill your belly with air as you simultaneously move both arms outwards—as if you were opening up an accordion.
4. When your arms are spread fully outwards, hold the breath for the count of two.
5. Exhale slowly while counting to four and moving your arms inward until your palms come back together. Make sure you let out all the air.
6. Repeat this breathing practice 3-5 times at a sitting, standing, or lying down.

WHEN

Consider using this simple, yet powerful, calming practice anytime you feel stressed or overwhelmed. It is also an excellent way to counter anxiety—such as prior to a stressful business meeting, appointment, exam, or driving on a congested freeway (use it before driving). It's also ideal for calming down *after* a stressful experience.



morning blessing

Morning is a special time, a sacred time in the sense that it harkens our return to the world of daily activity. But waking up in the morning is more than just being conscious and cognitively awake. Awakening is a metaphor for how you wake up to appreciating each new day in a meaningful, playful, creative, and thoughtful way.

HOW

1. Create a morning blessing. A special morning blessing of thanks and gratitude can be stated or written in the morning, or created in advance. This blessing will help you shift into a place of ease and grace.
2. For your blessing, focus on a single and simple gratitude—such as appreciating your body, the warm bed that you slept on, the fresh water that brings you life and health, and the relationships that bring joy.
3. Make a point of appreciating one new thing each morning.
4. No gratitude is too small or simple.
5. Have your morning blessing at your bedside or someplace you will remember it. You can even tape it to the bathroom mirror.
6. At some point in the morning, repeat your blessing and notice how it changes your day and makes you feel.

WHEN

Save your morning blessings so you can look back over them. Mentally repeat your blessing throughout the morning. You may even expand your awareness of gratitude. In this way, you open up to the good and decent things in your life, as well as increase your ability to stay connected to thankfulness.

daily intention setting



Each day most of us act upon hundreds of unconscious intentions, often mindlessly and without a second thought. In contrast, a consciously thought out intention aligns you with your deepest values. It helps you *show up* in a way that makes even your smallest actions count. A guiding intention invites a sense of order and calm into your day—and life.

HOW

1. Start with a daily intention that is small and simple. This could be your intention to treat others with respect and kindness, to be more compassionate, honest, or more peaceful and less reactive when encountering triggering events or persons during your day.
2. State your intentions in the positive, not the negative. A daily intention can focus on almost anything, from a significant relationship to your role at the workplace. An example is, "May I act with respect and integrity in the workplace, and my intention is to meet my deadlines and perform to my best ability with a positive attitude."
3. Write down your daily intention and carry it with you. Take as much time as you need to reflect upon your deeper intentions. Each need only be a sentence or two long.
4. Look at your intention throughout the day so it informs how you speak and act.

WHEN

Find a quiet place to state your daily intention. Take a minute or two to let it seep into your being. Set the same intention over the period of a week to allow it to take hold. And of course, feel free to rewrite any intention as needed.



evening blessing

While a morning blessing greets the day, an evening blessing brings you a sense of closure. This is an important opportunity to reflect on the day. Your evening blessing is like the gift that you wrap up and give yourself each night as you leave the world of action and enter the world of rest and repose.

HOW

1. Think back over your day. Recall one unexpected positive event or response from another for which you are thankful.
2. There are no unimportant moments; even a smile from a stranger is a kindness for which you could be grateful. Let yourself remember all those little moments that you savored and appreciated. How wonderful!
3. Notice all that is present in your life—even those things you normally take for granted. State your gratitude for that which this day has provided.
4. End your blessing by sending your wish for rest, peace, love, and wellness to others. Include family and friends, and even those people you know only as acquaintances. If you want, expand your blessing to include all beings.

WHEN

Think of your evening blessing as a ritual that soothes and prepares you for sleep and rejuvenation. Because rituals bring a sense of order and calm into our lives, repeat your blessing at the same time each night in a way that lets you be fully present. This might mean lighting a candle, lowering the lights, taking a long breath, or placing your palms over your heart center. Consider sharing this special moment of daily closure with another.

sleep ritual



One of the best ways to repair and renew the body and brain after a long day is to get a good night's sleep. For example, daytime learning gets consolidated into long-term memory while sleeping. It is while sleeping that toxic wastes are removed from the brain—a recently discovered process important for brain health. A sleep ritual can help you achieve a peaceful slumber.

HOW

1. Set a time for sleep. Go to bed at the same time each night—even during weekends—because you are training your body's sleep clock.
2. Prepare for sleep *an hour before* your bedtime. Design your ritual to create a soothing and calming entry to sleep. Change into comfortable clothes, listen to soft music, savor a cup of non-caffeinated tea, light a candle, read something enjoyable, or take a calming hot bath.
3. Power off the TV, computer, and tablets. That's because the electroluminescent light from these devices can delay production of the hormone melatonin—which makes you feel drowsy and sets the body's sleep clock—by up to an hour or more.
4. Remove or reduce sources of light from your bedroom.
5. Mentally let go of any to-do list or things you may be thinking about. It may help to write these down or visualize putting them into a lock-box where they will be kept safe until morning.

WHEN

The key to making a sleep ritual effective is consistency and repetition. If you've had trouble sleeping, give yourself time to let this work. Even if it takes a month or longer, your body will eventually get the message.