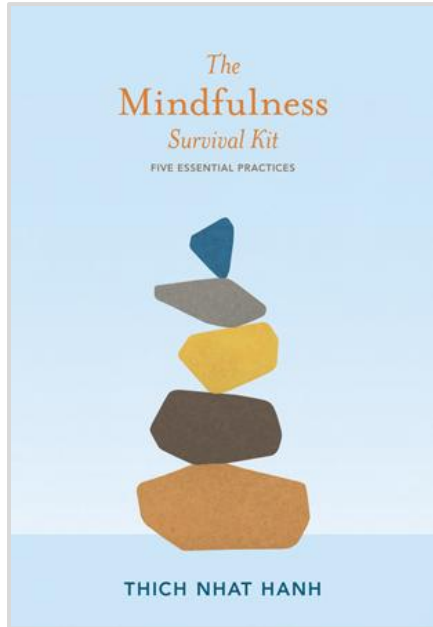


A collection of vintage tools including a hammer, pickaxe, shovel, and gloves on a wooden surface. The tools are arranged on a dark wooden background, with a metal cup filled with coffee in the bottom right corner.

The Mindfulness Survival Kit: Reader's Guide

for the Reading Peace Book Club

Proposed Reading Schedule



- **Week 1: Ch. 1 & 2**, Introduction and Overview of Five Mindfulness Trainings
- **Week 2: Ch. 3 & 4**, Reverence for Life and True Happiness
- **Week 3: Ch. 5 – 8**, True Love, Deep Listening and Loving Speech, and Nourishment
- **Week 4: Part Two**, Comparison of Ethical Traditions (Advanced) *OR* Catch-up Reading

Chapter 1 & 2

A scenic landscape featuring a calm body of water in the foreground, partially obscured by a thick layer of mist. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding forest. On the left, a dense cluster of evergreen trees stands prominently. In the background, a long, low line of trees stretches across the horizon, with a small mountain peak visible in the distance under a clear blue sky with scattered, light-colored clouds.

Reflections

1. The book's title is *The Mindfulness Survival Kit*. Besides the five practices outlined in these introductory chapters, what else would you include in your own personal mindfulness survival kit, be they objects, practices, books, etc.? Be creative!
2. We are all works in progress. Of the Five Mindfulness Trainings, which one do you think you need to work on the most? What makes you feel that way?
3. Pick one of the Five Mindfulness Trainings to practice this week with loving intention. Write it down, and put it in your pocket, purse, wallet, or even on a wall behind your work desk.

You are already well on your way to ease your own suffering and the suffering of those around you. *Thank you.*

Food for Thought

“Mindfulness is the awareness of what is going on in us and around us in the present moment. It requires stopping, looking deeply, and recognizing both the uniqueness of the moment and its connection to everything that has gone on before and will go on in the future.” pg. 9

“Suffering has many faces. If we discover the roots of one suffering, we are at the same time discovering the roots of other[s].” pg. 16-7

*“Interbeing describes the awareness that all human beings and all phenomena are intricately connected to each other and interdependent.”
pg. 19*

“The Five Mindfulness Trainings are called trainings because they are something to practice each day, not something we’re expected to do perfectly all the time.” pg. 23

From the Reading Peace Book Club



In my own mindfulness survival kit, I would include:

1. **Body-scan meditation:** This is a meditation I learned from Thay's book, *Fear*. Essentially, you relax by focusing on one part of the body at a time, noticing the tension there and allowing it to relax. I love doing this before bed, and I've found it's making me love and care for myself more over time!

2. **Gratitude Journal:** I love starting my days by listing what I am grateful for. Sometimes, it gets repetitive (especially when I've just woken up), but it's a great way to start my day seeing all of the wonderful things in my life. I also try to list the best parts of my day at night, so I can reflect on all the wonderful things that have happened!

3. **Accomplishment list:** This practice helps me when I'm feeling down about myself. I write down anything I feel is an accomplishment of mine, no matter how small. This way, I can see all the good things I do, and if I'm ever feeling down, I have proof that I do worthwhile things. This list really isn't about bragging right or anything like that, just a reminder for myself that I have positive qualities and do positive things.

– Alexa

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Chapter 3 & 4

Reflections

1. Map out a path, whether short or long, to walk in complete mindfulness. This path can be from your front door to the bus stop, your office door to the restroom, or from the parking lot to the store. On this path, kiss the earth with your feet and feel the negativity seep down into the earth with each step.

Describe what your path is. Isn't it lovely to walk together?

2. When strong negative emotions overtake you, think about the different things you are thankful for, and write them down. You can keep this list to yourself, or you may share them with friends and loved ones.
3. We live in a consumer society. Brainstorm ideas on how we can practice the First and Second Mindfulness Trainings (Reverence for Life & True Happiness) in this context.

Food for Thought

“You’re working toward less suffering. It’s not that there’s no suffering. But you choose the way to minimize the suffering. We can reduce the suffering a little bit every time we act, every time we eat, every day.” p. 36

“Prayer or good intention is not enough to change an angry or violent situation. The First Mindfulness Training is a reminder that you have to practice, to train yourself to lesson violence through understanding.” p.40

“We can go back to the Earth as we walk. The Earth is our mother and a solid place of refuge. When we feel overwhelmed by hatred or anger and we want to do harm to ourselves or to others we should walk on Mother Earth and ask her to receive and embrace all our negative energy... She is willing to receive everything — beautiful and sweet-smelling things but also whatever is foul-smelling and impure.” p.44.

“If you haven’t been able to be happy, maybe it’s because you’re holding firmly to your idea of happiness.” p.54

“What makes us truly happy can’t be found in the marketplace.” p. 59

From the Reading Peace Book Club

I live very close to a large city. Though a suburb, it is still city-like. Not too many trees, mostly sidewalk. It is still nice to walk, but at times, I find it difficult to walk mindfully.

On Saturday, I decided to visit a park that my family used to picnic in frequently when I was a child. As soon as I walked into the park, I immediately felt the tension leave my shoulders. It smelled exactly as I remembered. Damp earth, green, and lush. There's a creek that runs through the center and it was making its very beautiful, musical sound.

The red, yellow, and orange leaves were falling off the trees in a constant shower. Though overgrown in parts, I was able to find the tree where my father had carved his initials and mine. This was truly the first time I felt all the negativity seep down into the earth. Taking in all the beauty and walking mindfully. I plan on visiting there again soon.

— Paula

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Chapters 5-8



Reflections

1. Let's try practicing True Love, the Third Mindfulness Training. Whenever you are walking outside on a city sidewalk or at the park, practice true love by wishing all beings you encounter loving-kindness along the way (*maitri* in Sanskrit, *metta* in Pali).

Random passersby? Silently wish them well. A little squirrel running in fear from you? Wish it well. A flower growing between the cracks of the sidewalk? Wish it well.

Notice how good it feels to practice loving-kindness!

2. Next time someone provokes you in a negative way or you have negative thoughts about someone, immediately think of at least one way you've benefited from that person.
3. Notice your tendency to want to interrupt when a person is speaking to you —oftentimes we look at our phones, or try to interject. Let your interlocutor finish speaking, then respond.
4. Take one moment each day to eat something in complete mindfulness, practicing the Fifth Mindfulness Training. It can be an entire meal, or even a single thing, such as a cookie. Savor each bite and think about what went into the food you are eating: the soil from which it came from, the laborer that harvested the ingredients, the sun and the rain —the entire universe makes your life possible. What a miracle life is!

Food for Thought

“You don’t need another person in order to practice love. You practice love on yourself first. And when you succeed, loving another person becomes something very natural. It’s like a lamp that shines and makes many people happy. Your presence in the world becomes very important, because your presence is the presence of love.” p.73

“It’s helpful if, before speaking, you’ve practiced being able to listen well. You can begin to practice this on your own by listening to yourself in your meditation.” p. 80-1

“We have to tell the truth in such a way that it benefits others, the world, and ourselves. When we tell the truth, we do so with compassion; we speak in such a way that the hearer can accept what we’re saying.” p.85

“Our consciousness consumes our thoughts and feelings and the environments in which we spend time. We need to be aware of what we’re feeding our consciousness. Consciousness can consume the good things it contains, or it can consume the things that aren’t so good.” p. 110

From the Reading Peace Book Club

A black and white photograph of a stone wall with a person sitting on a ledge. The wall is made of large, rectangular stone blocks. A person is sitting on a ledge on the right side of the wall. The background is a dark, textured wall.

I really appreciated the reminder to speak truth skillfully in order to behave wholesomely and helpfully. On the occasions when I feel like offering an unskillful "truth" (less frequently now, I'm relieved to say), I can stop and ask myself what it is that I really want to say. It usually has to do with my own hurt feelings. The urge to speak isn't so strong then. :)

I love the 6th Mantra (p. 98). "You're partly right." It's genius and accurate no matter what it's said in response to. It's a great way to acknowledge the truth in what someone says without getting all proud or feeling unworthy. Thank you so much for this, dear Thay.

— Elaine

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Part 2

Reflections

1. We've reached the end of the *Mindfulness Survival Kit*, but not the end of our practice. The last section on ethics, as difficult it may be to understand at first, signifies this truth. The Five Mindfulness Trainings represent five cornerstones of an applied ethics for our time. They are not commands nor are they laws to obey in perfection.

Like a compass, they orient us towards living a happy, ethical life.

2. What stands out as your favorite passage? Write it down, tweet it, or use it as a Facebook status.
3. Your practice is like a single candle which burns brightly by itself, and yet it can also be used to light other candles without diminishing your own flame, with no extra effort.

Thank you for reading along and practicing with us. You are not only helping yourself, but all beings around you.

Food for Thought

“Our ethic needs to be an ethic without dogmas, without views. No one imposes the trainings on us, no one is asking us to practice. We ourselves can see based on our own insight and experience that it is our path of joy, compassion, and love.” p. 127-8

“We can begin practicing at any time. Yesterday, we may have produced an unkind thought. Today, we can produce another thought that can modify and transform the thought produced yesterday.” p.130

“The Buddha was very pragmatic. He said: ‘You do not need to ask questions about what happens after death, how the universe began, when it will end and so on. Bring your mind back to the real situation in which you’re living. You have to recognize the suffering that is, discover its cause, and then find a way out of it.’” p. 188

“If we study the mindfulness trainings properly and deeply, the more we study the more interesting and deep they become.” p. 191

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Guide by Jason Kim for Parallax Press
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