

MINDFULNESS IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

Practice Journal - Week 1

The first invitation this week is to do two short practices on six days out of seven.

If possible, once each day, do a simple body scan. Two short, guided practices are available on the Resources Page of micl.online (each about 10 or 15 minutes long). Also on the Resources Page are some longer guided sessions from a range of teachers. If possible, at least once, try for one of the longer sessions (30 minutes or so). Many people find that they enjoy longer practices more than shorter ones.

Also, each day, if possible, do a simple 'Loving-kindness practice'. Find a simple version (about 14 minutes) on the micl.online Resources Page. (If you want to skip the introduction and jump through to the guided practice, start at 3 mins 40 seconds.)

A Note: Don't expect to feel anything special during these practices. Also, odd though it may sound, don't try to do them very well. Simply let your experience be your experience. Again, it may sound odd, but generally ease away from all evaluation, 'This went well', 'That didn't', and so on. We are not very good at these evaluations. We're bound to make them: but the suggestion is not to take them too seriously, not to get stuck in them. Ask yourself, what makes me think I know how things ought to be? After all, isn't it one of the consequences of the Fall that we're mistaken in our beliefs about how the world should be and what's good for us? (See Genesis 3). Having said that, it's perfectly ok to say (or to think) 'I enjoyed that, or 'I didn't enjoy that.' For to say (or think) these things is simply to be honest, and honesty is always good. But that's different from evaluation; when we're evaluating or passing judgement, we are moving towards ideas about how things *ought* to be — that's not so helpful.

The second invitation: Use the practice journal (side 2 of this document) after each practice. Either type into the docx version or print it off the pdf and write by hand. The journal is just for you. It won't be shared. ***Most people find that writing things down really does help.*** In the comment field, put just a few words to remind you of your impressions of what came up — how it felt, what you noticed in terms of physical sensations, emotions, thoughts, etc. ***It's best, if possible, to write the comments straight after the practice. It will be hard to reconstruct things later and much less helpful.***

The third invitation. Try this simple exercise every day for a few minutes (maybe no more than three or four). Walk around your house barefoot and just experience that. Probably you'll notice different textures, warm and cold surfaces, movements and sensations in your feet and your toes. See what come up for you. You may be surprised how much you notice. Adopt an attitude of kindly curiosity. Imagine you've been bed bound for weeks or that for a few months you've been without sensations in your feet.

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For next week. One of the things in our Week Two session is a short 'mindful eating' practice. It's the 'Raisin Practice' and is included in almost all introductory mindfulness courses. For this you'll need something small and simple to eat. A raisin would be a favorite, but you might use some other dried fruit, or even something like a square of chocolate. (One of the Oxford University professors who suggests chocolate. That might say more about him than about anything else!)

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A reminder:

Be content to do what you can, when you can, as you can — but be quietly optimistic.

THE PRACTICE JOURNAL: WEEK 1

Day, date, time, and
What I did.

Body Scan, Loving-kindness and Barefoot Walking.
What I noticed (in body, mind, emotions ...):

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7 (Day 7 is optional)	

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