



OHM

OPEN-HEART MINDFULNESS TOOLBOX
 TOOLS TO LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

OPEN-HEART MINDFULNESS SCALE



EGO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	SPIRIT
FEAR											LOVE
NOISE											PRESENCE/PEACE
UNWORTHY											WORTHY
OUT OF BALANCE											ALIGNED
SEPARATE											CONNECTED
DEPRESSION											JOY
WOUNDED											HEALED
MASK/IMAGE											AUTHENTIC
INSECURE											SECURE
RESENTMENT											GRATITUDE
SHAME/GUILT											SELF ACCEPTANCE
SELF DOUBT											CONFIDENCE
SCARCITY											ABUNDANCE
ARROGANCE											HUMBLE
COMFORT ZONE											NO LIMITS
GRIEVANCE											FORGIVENESS
CONTROL/RESIST											ALLOW
STAGNATION											CREATIVITY
LOW ENERGY											ENTHUSIASM
APATHY											COMPASSION
BELIEVE/ASSUME											TRUTH
ANXIETY											CONTENTMENT

Practice Presence: Ram Dass preached, “Be here, now!” because that is where we find peace and joy. The ego wants our thoughts to either dwell in the past with shame and regret or worry about the future with anxiety and expectations. The present moment is the safe zone where the ego can’t touch us. This is where the spirit thrives, and the magical flow of life happens. The present moment is the space between thoughts where our spirit is peacefully observing everything without judgment. I feel this when I walk in the forest, soaking it all up without trying to label the trees and everything else around me. I let myself melt into magnificence of mother nature. When you find that place of stillness within, everything takes on a deeper and wondrous quality.

Unfortunately, with our busy lives and sensory overloaded environment, it is easy to be distracted and taken out of presence. It is the ultimate spiritual practice to try and be “in the moment” as much as you can with the interactions and experiences you have throughout the day. This isn’t easy but we can use everyday life as a classroom to practice the art of shifting from the ego to the spirit in order to experience presence. An example of a good place to practice is when we are waiting in line at a store or the dreaded DMV. If I find myself becoming impatient (slipping to the left side of the scale), I will relax into the present moment and fully accept my surroundings by observing others and all that is going on without judgment. Rather than observe others as strangers who I have no interest in, I look at them purely as souls just like myself. As I direct my thoughts to the right side of the scale, I will remind myself how fortunate I am to have the health and money to simply be standing in line. By replacing my resistance to the present moment with acceptance, my anxiety shifts to a sense of

contentment. What once felt like an uninteresting and almost hostile place suddenly becomes pleasant and comfortable.

An extreme example of using the power of presence is described by Victor Frankel when he observed his fellow prisoners in a Nazis concentration camp during World War II. The few prisoners who survived, were the ones who kept hope in their hearts while being present with the moment. They felt passion towards the simple things, like seeing a sunset through a crack in the prison wall or embracing an act of kindness from either a cellmate or prison guard.

It's also easy to become distracted and let our mind wander during an interaction with someone. Rather than allow the ego to occupy our thoughts with our future response, or how to turn the conversation onto our self, we should listen with presence to what they are saying. Doing this gives us a deeper understanding of their message and where they are coming from. We may even capture a sense of where THEY are on the scale. When we are present with someone, they feel seen and the interaction is much more authentic and genuine. We relate on the level of soul to soul...not role to role. Maya Angelou said, "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

When we practice presence, we keep a reflective space between thought and action and become more responsive and less reactive to situations. Practicing intentional and mindful ways to process issues will lead to making better decisions that are likely to result in positive outcomes.

Align with good energy: It's rational to think that a good life is an accumulation of good days. It is important to engage in activities that are in alignment with our spirit. Try to intentionally

spend your day with positive people in positive places doing positive things. Shedding the things that drag us down will shift us to the right side of the scale. This means learning to say no and become selective with who we surround ourselves with. It is best to hang with right sided people who are open minded and authentic. This means we may need to occasionally weed our friend garden in order to keep our life blossoming. We know who those friends are. They are the ones who leave us feeling drained and uninspired and cause us to shift toward the left. Maya Angelou said, "You must keep your place pristine. Clean. So that no one has the right to treat you badly." People don't treat us badly. We LET them treat us badly. Sometimes setting boundaries can be difficult, especially with family. We all suffer a bit from the disease to please however, shared DNA does not require us to allow negativity in our life. Of course, we should send them love but also recognize it's their journey and we can only do our half in the relationship.

It's important to be mindful of what we allow our attention to engage with on social media. Information coming from the left side of the scale can pollute our mind and weaken our spirit. Also, it's best to become intentional with how we spend our time. I think about the inscription found on a tombstone that includes a birth date followed by a line that connects to the date of death. That line represents how we spent our time. Time is precious and something we never get back!

Live simply: Stuff weighs us down and ultimately stuff doesn't make us happy as our materialist culture would like us to believe. We spend so much time taking care of our stuff and managing our stuff, which is time we could have spent doing what really matters to us. Remember, you

can't get time back. I did an inventory on everything I own and was amazed at how much useless stuff I had collected over time. I gathered it up and either put it on Craig's list, donated it, or gave it away. I let go of all things that were not useful or no longer brought me joy. This action brought me an incredible sense of freedom and lightness (moving to the right side of the scale) that was unexpected. It confirmed the belief that less is more. The popularity of Marie Kondo, who tells us to declutter our lives and throw unnecessary things away, along with the trend toward minimalism, are exposing the fact that too much stuff in our life can bring anxiety and a sense of feeling overwhelmed.

Become intentional with your word: The author of The Four Agreements, Miguel Ruiz states, "Use the power of your word in the direction of truth and love." I interpret this to mean communicate from the right side of the scale. The general rule is, we should say it if it's necessary, true, and kind. Sometimes saying nothing speaks volumes. Actions are stronger than words. We don't have to tell everyone what we plan to do. We can show them after we did it. Also, we need to stop gossiping! Shit talking tells more about the person gossiping than what the substance of the story is. When overcome by the ego, we thrive on drama and believe if we tear someone down, it makes us feel and appear stronger and superior. The truth is the opposite happens.

Solitude: It's important to set aside solo time to fully connect and become present with our spirit. Time used to self-reflect on all aspects of our life, is time well spent. It is a chance to reevaluate, reset and restore. Unfortunately, the ego teaches us to fear solitude and encourages

distraction. The ego is all about doing while the spirit appreciates the act of simply being. Pascal said, "All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone." When our mind is busy and filled with noise it can be harder to hear the voice of the spirit.

I cherish my alone time and think of it as a special time to fill my beaker. I have a favorite hiking trail that I frequent alone and where I find myself surrounded by the silence of nature. Many times, I begin my hike with a left sided perspective on life, but I always finish with a shift to the right.

Laugh! As Wavy Gravy, the Woodstock guru said, "We are all just Bozos on the Bus!" No one knows exactly what this human experience is supposed to be about. The author, Laura Ingalls Wilder stated, "A good laugh overcomes more difficulties and dissipates more dark clouds than any other thing." A good laugh is an easy and fast way to shove us from the left side to the right side of the scale.

We pretend things matter but in the big picture they really don't. Ram Dass calls this the "Cosmic Giggle." It's pretty comical to think that we can worry or stress over a bad hair day or about something someone said when ultimately nothing really matters because we are basically temporary tiny specks spinning on a rock we call Earth. The joke is on us.

Help Others: I believe we always get more than we give when we show compassion and kindness to both humans and animals. Reaching out to the kids at Eddy House and feeling a connection with them is food for my soul. I always found it kind of funny when some people would praise the work I did at Eddy House and think of me as some kind of saint when I know I'm actually selfish because I always got back more than I gave. Volunteering or getting involved

with something larger than ourselves is definitely a right sided move. Helping others doesn't have to be some grand gesture but can be as simple as being kind to strangers or helping an elderly person with their groceries. If we decide to commit our time to a cause it's important that we aren't doing it for left sided reasons, because our efforts will feel like a sacrifice and not a gift that we are giving ourselves.

Let go and take your hands off the steering wheel. We feel safe when we think we have control over the people and situations in our life. The constant need to feel prepared for the future is fear based and wrapped in all the negative what-ifs? The act of keeping our cocoons small and secure comes from a fear of uncertainty and will prevent the potential for amazing opportunities to show up. Eckhart Tolle writes in *A New Earth*, "When you become comfortable with uncertainty, infinite possibilities open up in your life. Fear is no longer a factor in what you do, and no longer prevents you from taking action to initiate change."

Life is a cool adventure. We aren't supposed to know exactly what is around each corner. The mystery is what makes life fun and interesting, so we should trust in our spirit and appreciate all that is presented.

Live Authentically. Let go of what others think of you and be real with yourself. Bronnie Ware, a hospice nurse and author of *The Top Regrets of the Dying*, said the most common statement she heard from terminal patients was, "I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me." You can't live by the whims of others because you are afraid to say no or express what you need. This outsourcing of your happiness will allow others to dictate

how you live your life. Also, don't compare yourself to others and try to live by their standards rather than your own. The third biggest regret in Ware's study was how they wished they had expressed their feelings more. So, go ahead and put your true self out there and take off the uncomfortable and heavy armor that you've been wearing out of fear of being judged. You will feel so much lighter. Bob Marley said, "Being vulnerable is the only way to allow your heart to feel true pleasure." You deserve the joy that comes with singing your song even if the audience walks out.

Enjoy a healthy lifestyle: We should pay attention to what we put in our body. We all know that when we eat crappy, we feel crappy. Garbage in garbage out. Our body is meant to be active and stretched otherwise it builds up blocked energy and again, we will feel crappy. Body movement can produce endorphins which are the free and legal drugs. Why would we pass that up? Also allow the body to get the rest it needs. Respect and take care of this gift we call our body because it's the only one we've got.

Show up for right sided causes: Support institutions and politicians which promote equality, peace, sustainability, and inclusion. Practice conscious consumerism by supporting businesses who treat their employees well, consider the health of the planet and are inclusive in their policies. Keep yourself informed on what is going on in your community and become actively involved. Show up for causes you care about. Volunteer. Vote.

Affirmations: These are daily reminders to keep ourselves grounded and to spend our day on the right side. A daily spiritual workout is more important than a physical one because a strong spiritual muscle is more powerful than a strong physical muscle. Journaling is a good way I check in with myself and examine any disturbances that may have popped up. Another practice that works for me is to remind myself, before I get out of bed in the morning, how lucky I am to have this day ahead of me. I'm alive, healthy, and blessed with a great family and supportive friends. I think how I can make the day a good day as if it were my last day. And then I go for it! This will set the tone for the day, and of course the day could go to shit, but at least it started with good intentions. Remember, you can choose peace at any time. It's simply a matter of how you manage your thoughts and tame the ego.

