

Helpful Tips & Hopeful Information



Attitudes, Beliefs and Behaviors of Undergraduate Students Concerning Suicide at Athens State University
Research by Vanessa Miller PhD, Kathleen Henderson BA, Charles Abernathy, Laine Martin, Christopher Curtis, Jessica Weed, and Hannah Trostel

IMPORTANT STATISTICS

Suicide is the **2nd** leading cause of death in America for those aged 10-34 years old.

And the **10th** leading cause of death for all ages.



Every day approximately **123** Americans die by suicide.

Roughly 1 suicide every 12 minutes

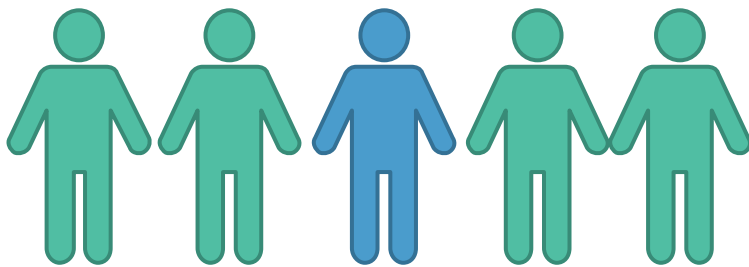
In 2015

9.8 million adults aged 18 and older thought seriously about trying to kill themselves in the past 12 months,

including 2.7 million who made suicide plans

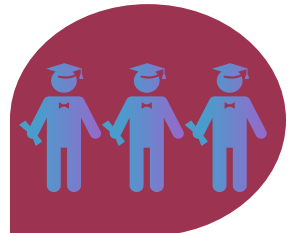
and 1.4 million who made a nonfatal suicide attempt.

A RECENT STUDY FOUND **1 IN 5** COLLEGE STUDENTS HAD SUICIDAL THOUGHTS IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS.



AND...

Among adults across all age groups, the prevalence of serious suicidal thoughts was highest among adults aged 18-25.

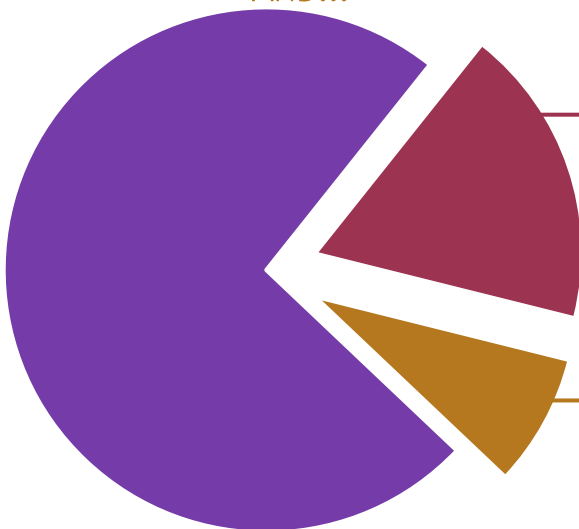


Four out of five people who die by suicide are male.

However, three out of every four people (75%) who make a suicide attempt are female.

20% OF COLLEGE STUDENTS REPORTED ENGAGING IN SELF-INJURY IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS

9% OF COLLEGE STUDENTS REPORTED ATTEMPTING SUICIDE IN THE LAST 12 MONTHS



Know the

Pain isn't always obvious.

WARNING SIGNS OF SUICIDE

Actions & Behavior

- Substance & alcohol abuse
- Isolating self from friends and family
- Withdrawing self from events & activities
- Giving away prized possessions
- Visiting and/or telling people good-bye
- Aggression
- Recklessness
- Fatigue

Feelings

- Helplessness and/or Hopelessness: no longer feeling they are able to cope
- Psychache (Mental Pain)
- Worthlessness: feeling others would be better off without them
- Shame and/or Guilt
- Loneliness
- Stress
- Depression
- Anxiety & Worry
- Loss of Interest
- Irritability and/or Anger

Talk

- Direct References: "I just want to kill myself."
- Indirect References: "Everyone would be better off without me.", "I just can't do this anymore.", "I want to go to sleep and never wake up."
- Threats of suicide
- Questions about methods
- Saying they feel trapped, like a burden, or have no reason to live

Changes

- Behavior
- Personality
- Eating Habits
- Sleeping Habits
- Negative life events
- Trauma
- Exposure to suicide
- Loss (of a loved one, relationship, job, etc.)

MYTHS	FACTS
Only people with a mental illness commit suicide.	Many individuals with mental illness are not affected by suicidal thoughts and not all people who attempt or die by suicide have mental illness. Relationship problems and other life stressors such as criminal/legal matters, persecution, eviction/loss of home, death of a loved one, a devastating or debilitating illness, trauma, sexual abuse, rejection, and recent or impending crises are also associated with suicidal thoughts and attempts.
People who threaten to complete suicide rarely do so.	80% of people who complete suicide told at least one other person that they were thinking about it.
People who talk about suicide really want to die.	People do not usually want to die, but they see no other options. It may seem like the only option they have left to make things better. Suicide is contemplated with a great deal of ambivalence.
Talking to a troubled person about suicide will put ideas into that person's head.	It's highly unlikely that you will plant an idea into somebody's head if you bring up the topic of suicide. However, if they have been thinking about it and you ask, it is likely to provide a great deal of relief to the person. Trying to avoid the topic will likely be embarrassing to the person and they will begin to feel guilty that they are having thoughts.
People who attempt suicide and survive are just seeking attention; they seldom ever try it again.	With each attempt a person's chance of completing suicide increases.
All acts of suicide are done on the spur of the moment, with no previous planning.	While some acts of suicide are done impulsively (often under the influence of drugs or alcohol), the majority of suicides are attempted after planning and discussing their thoughts with others.
Troubled teenagers who drink or use drugs as an escape are less likely to complete suicide to escape from their problems.	Drugs and alcohol decrease a person's inhibitions and increase a person's impulsivity, increasing a person's risk of suicide.
Depression is the most basic predictor of suicide.	While depression is a high indicator for suicide, the highest indicators are helplessness and hopelessness. Helplessness is when people feel that no matter what they do, their situation does not improve. Hopelessness is when people feel that there is no hope for improvement with their situation.
Once a person has survived a suicide attempt, he or she will never try again.	With each attempt a person's chance of completing suicide increases.
When a suicidal person's depression improves and spirits lift, he or she is out of danger.	Oftentimes, a person's depression decreases and spirits lift once the person has made up their mind to complete suicide and they have their plan in place, almost as if a large burden has been lifted off of them.
Once someone has decided on suicide there is no way to prevent the tragedy from taking place.	There is help available and it is important to intervene. Tell somebody and get help for the individual. A trained professional will be able to help the individual. Do not keep secrets. An angry friend is better than a dead friend.

RESOURCES

If you are worried about someone or if you yourself are feeling vulnerable or suicidal, there are multiple resources available. Call, text, or chat online with someone who cares and can help you by contacting one of the resources below.

Call Lines:



National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255) | Available 24/7

Crisis Services of North Alabama; HELPLine: Call 256-716-1000 or 1-800-691-8426 | Available 24/7



The Crisis Center; Crisis Suicide Line: Call 205-323-7777 | Available 24/7

The National Graduate Student Crisis Line: Call 1-877-472-3457 | Available 24/7



The Trevor Project Lifeline (for struggling LGBTQIA Youth & Young Adults): Call 1-866-488-7386 | Available 24/7



Veterans Crisis Line (for Veterans & Active Service Members): Call 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 | Available 24/7

Vet2Vet Veterans Crisis Hotline: Call 1-877-838-2838 | Available 24/7

Teen to Teen Peer Counseling Hotline: Call 1-877-968-8454

Trans Lifeline Hotline: 1-877- 565-8860 | Available 24/7

Text Lines:

The National Crisis Text Line: Text "BRAVE" to 741-741 | Available 24/7

The Trevor Project Text Line (for struggling LGBTQIA Youth & Young Adults): Text "START" to 678-678 | Available 24/7

Veterans Crisis Text Line (for Veterans & Active Service Members): Text 838255 | Available 24/7

SPEAK Teen Text Line: 256-722-8219 | Available 4pm - 11:30pm, 7 days a week

Online Chat:

National Suicide Prevention Online Chat: Go to www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/chat | Available 24/7

IMALIVE Virtual Crisis Support Network: Go to www.imalive.org | Available 24/7

The Trevor Project Online Chat: Go to www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now | Available 24/7

Veterans Crisis Online Chat (for Veterans & Active Service Members): Go to www.veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat | Available 24/7

OTHER HELPFUL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Phone Apps



SPEAK North Alabama

Free - Available on iPhone

SPEAK North Alabama is a "first line of defense" app for suicide prevention and education funded by Huntsville Hospital. It has many resources and tools available you can use to assist those in time of crisis and connect them to useful resources for more long-term help.



Headspace

Free - Available on iPhone & Android

Headspace teaches you how to meditate using short sessions daily. By learning quick meditation exercises you can learn to better deal with difficult emotions such as anxiety and stress.



MY3 - Support Network

Free - Available on iPhone & Android

MY3 is a suicide prevention app that lets you create your own support network and safety plan so you can be prepared to help yourself and reach out to others in time of crisis.



Moodpath

Free - Available on iPhone & Android

Moodpath is for those struggling with anxiety and depression. Its goal is to guide you toward emotional well-being by tracking your emotional states and asking personalized questions using journaling. The app provides you with snapshots of your mood over time to help you quickly identify when you feel certain emotions and which situations cause them.



Insight Timer

Free - Available on iPhone & Android

Insight Timer has one of the largest libraries of guided mindfulness and meditation exercises. With varying categories such as stress, self-compassion, and sleep.

Other Resources Continued

- **The Alabama Institute for Mindfulness (AIM)** holds monthly group mindfulness meetings that are open and free to the public. In a stress-free environment you can sit in and follow the guided meditation practice.

For more information: www.alabamainstituteformindfulness.com

256-682-2235

- **Military OneSource** offers confidential, non-medical counseling services that address issues such as decision-making, grief and loss, life adjustments, stress management, and relationship improvements at work or home. Counseling services are available to active-duty service members, National Guard and reserve service members, survivors, and family members for free via telephone, face-to-face, or through a secure, live video session or online chat.

For more information: www.militaryonesource.mil

1-800-342-9647

- **Mental Health Center of North Alabama** | <https://www.mhcnca.org/> | 256-355-5904

Dial 2-1-1 to be referred and sometimes connected with local agencies and community organizations in your community.

The 211 center's referral specialists receive requests from callers, access databases of resources available from private and public health and human service agencies, match the callers' needs to available resources, and link or refer them directly to an agency or organization that can help.

Athens State University

Campus Counselor



My name is Lisa Philippart and I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) for the state of Alabama. I am also a Distance Credentialed Counselor (DCC,) which can be helpful for those who do not live locally. I provide personal counseling services for staff, students, and faculty at Athens State University free of charge, through a contract with the Mental Health Center of North Central Alabama. My clients come to me with a variety of challenges and needs: conflict resolution, anger management, emotional disturbances, grief issues, difficulties at home, social skills training, and study skills training. I tell all my clients that my goal is to help them to better manage their problems within a 6-8 week time frame; and if their situation is more complicated or requires something longer term, I refer them to the Mental Health Center. I have tried to make my office a place where my clients can come to relax, talk, vent, and cry without judgment or fear. If my door is open, I am available.....on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:00am to 5:00pm.

Lisa Philippart, LPC, DCC
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GET INVOLVED!

For events and volunteer opportunities please visit:

The Alabama Suicide Prevention and Resources Coalition (ASPARC)

www.asparc.org

Crisis Services of North Alabama

www.csna.org/donate-volunteer

The Qualities of Helpful People

Helpful people notice signs of suicidal behavior such as:

- **Feelings:** hopeless, helpless, very sad, agitated, anxious
- **Actions/Events:** drug or alcohol use, talk of death, a major fight or argument, isolation from usual friends and/or activities, aggression
- **Changes:** in personality, behaviors, sleeping and eating patterns, interests and hobbies, appearance; sudden improvement in mood after being down or withdrawn
- **Threats:** statements about death and dying, threat to kill self if something doesn't go right, a plan for suicide, making a will or giving away favorite things, self-injury, or any suicidal gesture or attempt
- **Situations:** recent loss, breakup, or getting into trouble

What to Do:

1. Show You Care

- a. Listen without judging or giving advice.
- b. Take all talk of suicide seriously.
- c. Stay calm, stay with your friend.

2. Ask about Suicide

- a. Ask about suicide very directly: "Are you thinking about suicide?"
- b. "Are you wishing you were dead?"
- c. "Are you planning how you will kill yourself?"

3. Get Help

- a. Take action sooner rather than later.
- b. Have your friend identify a trusted adult and offer to go with him or her to talk to that adult.
- c. Call a crisis line.
- d. Offer help/hope in any way you can.
- e. Know your own limits.
- f. Ask a trusted adult for help, even if your friend resists.

What to Avoid:

- Do not argue with a suicidal person.
- Do not offer simple solutions.
- Do not promise secrecy. Keeping a potential suicide a secret is a form of assuming responsibility.
- Do not treat the situation lightly, even if your friend begins to joke about it.
- Do not challenge your friend or suggest drugs or alcohol as a solution.
- Do not leave your friend alone unless you sense personal danger.
- Do not try to be the only person to rescue your friend. Get help.
- Do not try to forcefully remove a gun from anyone. Call for help.

If you ever need someone to talk to about a friend, or about something you're dealing with,
please call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-8255

Or visit **crisischat.org** for online emotional support.

There are people out there who care about you and want you to be happy and healthy. Reach out and allow them to help you!

5 Ways to Turn Sympathetic Statements Into Empathetic Ones

(Originally published in *The Mighty*:

<https://themighty.com/2017/04/whats-the-difference-between-sympathy-and-empathy/>)

“Sympathy” and “empathy” are two words so often used interchangeably that it’s rare to find two people who agree on exactly what the difference is.

The way I see it, sympathy is “feeling for,” and empathy is “feeling with.” Put another way, sympathy is telling someone you care, while empathy is showing it. At Crisis Text Line, we like to think we’re in the empathy business, and value empathy as a skill — it’s the key tenet of our Crisis Counselor training, which prepares our volunteers to work with people in crisis via text message.

We recognize everyone’s experience is different. It’s impossible for any one person to know exactly what another is feeling, because they’ll never be in precisely the same set of circumstances.

That’s why we don’t think of empathy in terms of sharing a person’s experience, we think of it as actively listening and genuinely trying to understand that experience to reflect back what it might feel like.

There are many ways you might be practicing sympathy in your life that can easily be turned into more meaningful and powerful acts of empathy.

1. Hold back on the advice.

The instinct to give advice is totally natural, but that’s often not what people are looking for. Bits of (sometimes terrible) advice are a dime-a-dozen, but thoughtful listening is rare. Instead of offering a friend unsolicited advice, try asking what they think they should do.

Example: “You know yourself best. What do you think would be most helpful to you right now?”

2. Avoid showing pity.

There are few things that make a person feel smaller than the sense that they're being pitied. Replace expressions of pity (anything along the lines of "You poor thing") with identifications of the person's strengths.

Example: "You're showing so much self-awareness in this situation. It's really admirable. Thanks for being brave enough to come to me with this."

3. Don't assume you know the whole story.

When someone is telling you about their experience, it's easy to believe you know exactly how they feel. Again, it's impossible to know exactly how someone is feeling. Replace "I know you feel..." with more tentative statements like, "It sounds like you're feeling..."

Example: "It seems like all this has left you feeling embarrassed, is that right?"

4. Validate difficult emotions.

Expressing painful emotions is never easy, and can leave someone feeling vulnerable. You can help mitigate the fear around it by validating the way someone is feeling, and letting them know it's OK to not be OK.

Example: "It makes perfect sense that you're feeling frustrated right now."

5. Ask questions.

When someone's struggling, showing a real interest in what they're saying goes a long way. Don't be afraid to come right out and ask questions that allow them to further explain how they're feeling. The caveat is to avoid "curiosity questions," or questions that seek details, but don't do anything but feed into your own desire to know more. Another type of question to avoid is the "why" question, which can sound judgmental, even when it's not meant to be. Try rewording "why" questions into "how" questions to make them more effective.

Example: "How were you feeling when this first happened?"

Turning your sympathy into empathy takes practice, but if you keep these five strategies in mind, you'll be well on your way to being a more empathetic friend, partner, co-worker and family member.

Wellcast Life-Saver Worksheet

Is your friend suicidal? Here's how to tell—and what you can do about it.

Look for these environmental risk factors that can increase a person's chances of becoming suicidal:

- experience of bullying or sexual abuse
- death of a family member or close friend
- family history of violence or suicide
- surviving a previous suicide attempt

The decision to kill oneself is rarely made in the moment; often times, the person will just state their intentions right out loud. Here are some behavioral warning signs to keep a lookout for:

- loss of interest in activities
- change in sleep patterns—insomnia or excessive sleeping
- lost appetite or major change in weight
- mood swings, becoming depressed or isolated, acting enraged or easily irritable. These sudden changes can even include becoming calmer and happier
- suffering from anxiety or panic attacks
- talking about being in pain, feeling trapped or like a burden to others
- saying things, even jokingly, like “I want to kill myself” or “I have no reason to live”
- acting out sexually
- abusing alcohol or drugs
- giving away belongings; calling and visiting people to say goodbye
- looking for ways to kill themselves, such as collecting pills or trying to buy a gun

How do you talk to a friend who might be having thoughts of suicide? The time to act is now. First, find a safe and private place for the two of you to talk. Then, begin a conversation with them:

- start by telling your friend how much you care about them; ask them to be honest with you about their mental and emotional state—are you ok?
- investigate further, to find the root of their burden: is something going on that you'd feel comfortable sharing with me?
- tell them that some of their behavior has you concerned: You haven't been acting like yourself...—be specific
- ask point-blank: Are you considering suicide? Do you have a specific plan or date in mind?
- people who are suicidal often believe they are beyond repair. Let them know: You don't deserve to die. I'd like to help you heal.
- encourage them to seek professional help immediately: Let's find someone who can help and setup up an appointment together. I can drop you off and pick you up and can even

go inside with you if you'd let me.

- **If your friend threatens suicide during your conversation, do not leave them alone. Call 911 or the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-TALK (8255). This is a *crisis* situation. Remove guns, pills or sharp objects in the immediate area that they might try to use to hurt themselves.**

Coping Skills

By: Kathleen Henderson

Coping skills are things that we use to deal with anything that is difficult or considered a problem. We have negative and positive coping skills that we use when problems arise.

We already have many positive coping skills in our arsenal. Also, there are many others which are pretty easy to access and use.

However, sometimes we cannot think to use positive coping skills and instead choose negative ones.

We all get overwhelmed and feel like we are at a loss for ways to deal with difficult situations sometimes. So, we have included a list of positive coping skills just for you.

Anytime you are feeling down, anxious, or overwhelmed is a great time to use these skills. However, sometimes we need to use a few of

them along the way before we get to that point.

Please, feel free to share this information with your friends as well.

Simple Ways to Cope

1. Breathe- slowly and deeply 3 times
2. Meditate
3. Scribble/ doodle on paper
4. Sing! Who cares if you're good?
5. Dance with abandon
6. Be silly
7. Spend time with your pets
8. Do something creative
9. Talk to someone
10. Stretch
11. Play games, any game will do

12. Show yourself some care: take a long shower, get a massage, treat yourself
13. Do something nice for someone else, even if it is a smile
14. Go outside
15. Contact your therapist or a hotline, like crisis text line/hotline

Coping Skills

Distraction

Conversation, listen to talk radio, read, do puzzles, TV, computer games, jigsaws, solve a problem, make a list, learn something new, cleaning & tidying, gardening, arts & crafts.

Pros

Gives your heart & mind a break.
Great for short term relief.
Great to get through a crisis.

Cons

Can't do it for too long.
Doesn't resolve any underlying issues. Meds can make it hard to concentrate.

Grounding

Use body & senses: smell fragrances, slowly taste food, notice the colours around you. Walk on the grass barefoot, squeeze clay or mud, do yoga, meditate, exercise.

Pros

Helps slow or stop 'dissociation' (feeling numb, floaty or disconnected).
Reduces physicality of anxiety.

Cons

Sometimes it's better to stay a bit dissociated (that's how your mind protects you).

Emotional Release

Yell, scream, run! Try a cold shower. Let yourself cry... and sob. Put on a funny DVD and let yourself laugh! Try boxing, popping balloons, or crank up some music & dance crazy!

Pros

Great for anger and fear.
Releases the pressure of overwhelming emotion.

Cons

Hard to do in every situation. Feels odd. Some people might think you're acting 'crazier' (be selective with how & where you do this)

Self Love

Massage hands with nice cream, manicure your nails, cook a special meal, clean your house (or just make your bed), bubble bath or long shower, brush hair, buy a small treat.

Pros

Become your own best friend, your own support worker.
Great for guilt or shame.
You deserve it!

Cons

Sometimes can feel really hard to do, or feel superficial (but it's not).

Thought challenge

Write down negative thoughts then list all the reasons they may not be true. Imagine someone you love had these thoughts - what advice would you give them?

Pros

Can help to shift long-term, negative thinking habits.
Trying to be more logical can help reduce extreme emotion.

Cons

The more emotional you feel, the harder this is to do. In particular, feelings of shame can make this very hard.

Access your higher self

Help someone else, smile at strangers (see how many smiles you get back), pray, volunteer, do randomly kind things for others, pat dogs at the local park, join a cause

Pros

Reminds us that everyone has value and that purpose can be found in small as well as large things.

Cons

Don't get stuck trying to save everyone else and forget about you!

5 WAYS TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Here are some ideas of how you can incorporate self-care into your weekly routine to boost creativity, focus, and your overall mental health.

1 SELF-CARE SUNDAYS

Carve out some time on Sundays to get ready for the week ahead. This could include a face mask, meal prepping, cleaning your living space, or relaxing into a good book.



2 SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS

Pets provide a huge amount of stress relief. If you don't personally have one, go visit the Humane Society and play with some puppies to get some of the stress buffering benefits!

3 TAKE YOURSELF OUT FOR COFFEE

Turn your phone to silent and take yourself out to your favourite coffee shop. Feel free to bring a book or a notepad to sketch, but use this time to relax and enjoy some much needed R&R.



4 EXPLORE YOUR CITY

Become a tourist in your own city by exploring a new neighborhood or walking an unfamiliar route on an errand. With a fresh perspective, you might just uncover a hidden gem you've never seen before!

5 CARVE OUT NATURE TIME

Spend time in the mountains, by a lake, or merely in a large green space to feel the relaxing benefits that nature has to offer. Also, no phones allowed!



What is self-care?

It is simply taking care of yourself so that you can live a healthy happy life. Basically, taking time out to do things that nourish you!

Why should I practice it?

It is important to take care of yourself so that you can be the best version of you possible. How can you possibly live your busy life, filled with all sorts of things that might stress you out, if you are already running on empty? Your physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing is important and worth every minute you spend recharging.

SO... Why are we talking about this?

It is simple, we know college is stressful, and we want you to succeed. Besides, you cannot help anyone else if you are out of energy yourself.

Here are a few ideas (Don't worry we researched first):

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

Many college students live on a few hours. It is important to sleep 6-8 hours a night. Your brain cannot clear away the clutter if you consistently sleep less. I know it is tough, but clear away night time distractions (electronics, etc) at least one hour before you decide to sleep, make sure you are comfortable and enjoy.

EAT ENOUGH AND DRINK PLENTY OF WATER

I know we sound a bit like parental figures here, but it is important! 6- 8 glasses of water daily and not skipping meals helps keep away the brain fog.

GET UP AND GET OUT

That's right, go outside, get moving! You can do some form of exercise, or just lay around outside, whatever fits your personal style and/or needs at the time.

ENJOY A BATH

Bath bombs are taking the world by storm right now, go ahead, splurge. Find an indulgent aroma and just relax. The hot water had benefits to your physical body too, like helping with aches, pains and even headaches and abdominal pain.

PRACTICE MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Mindfulness is a way of being present in your life without judging. Take a breath, can you feel it? Think only on your breath if an emotion or thought intrudes, acknowledge but don't judge. Mindfulness is helpful for many different kinds of anxiety and other issues.

The following link will help you learn more about it!

<http://www.freemindfulness.org/>

LAUGH

Not an easy task sometimes, right? How about that one friend, you know, the one who makes you laugh every time? Give them a call, spend some time laughing. If you don't have that kind of friend, find you tube comedy, or a funny movie. I promise it is worth the time investment. Sometimes all you need is to get those endorphins in gear.

DISCONNECT

Turn off your phone. Step away from your social media. Leave the television off. The world will continue to turn if we are not connected every single moment. In fact, you may find that it helps relieve some of the stress of constantly having to be a part other people's worlds. Just be, in this moment, in your life, no outside pressure.



50 Ways to Take a Break

NEW

- Take a Bath
- Listen to Music
- Take a Nap
- Go to a body of water
- Watch the clouds
- Light a candle
- REST your legs up on a wall
- Let out a sigh
- Fly a Kite
- Watch the stars
- Write a Letter
- Learn something
- Listen to a guided relaxation
- Read a Book
- 2x Move twice as slowly
- Take Deep Belly Breaths
- Call a Friend
- Meander around Town
- WRITE in a journal
- Notice Your Body
- Buy Some Flowers
- Find a relaxing scent
- Walk Outside
- Go for a run
- Take a bike ride
- Create your own coffee break
- View some ART
- Eat a meal in SILENCE
- Turn off all electronics
- Go to a park
- pet a furry creature
- Examine an everyday object with Fresh Eyes
- Drive somewhere NEW
- Go to a Farmer's Market
- Forgive Someone
- read or watch something FUNNY
- COLOR with crayons
- Make some MUSIC
- Climb a Tree
- Let go of something
- Engage in small acts of KINDNESS
- Do some gentle stretches
- Print on a surface other than paper
- Write a quick poem
- Read poetry
- Put on some music and DANCE
- Give Thanks

Healthy Coping Skills Word Search

B M A M E D I T A T E S D W V Q Y C P U
T Y L N X D L U Y M K O S O A X C I U O
F C U A R D E L P O R C R F E L J L C R
E P C O P M T W M M G I O R D S K F M F
N Z M Y C X F X F R W A L E U S E V V M
Q K J J N T F R Q Z H L E A T F A F F J
U M Y N T E S E H Q V I S D I B U G W K
U O L Z T B G L I G I Z N M T J W N H E
E E Z X X C P A G T F E U U A I J I U S
T S O U E S I X A C A W O S R E O L B I
A S C U J R G L R D E C C I G C I A V C
C C A A E N R F D R V Z S C W B S N M R
I H D W F V T X E C I H O B B Y T R S E
N L S L Q H G Q N B G W H L H Y R U I X
U A R X P P S L I B R G L Y R Q E O M E
M A T C S F B W N P O M D J N V T J I G
M V M O V I E S G P F A T H B O C Q T N
O V W M X C D P R X D Z O M D M H N P R
C D T E L E V I S I O N Q Y J R W Z O T
R E E Q K D Z K S C K H S W J P B M W R

meditate	television	socialize	walk	stretch
movies	relax	forgive	yoga	read
hobby	gratitude	music	communicate	optimism
journaling	exercise	gardening	counselors	

GOOD FOR YOU, MEDITATION IS.

Set a timer for 10 min.

Sit comfortably.

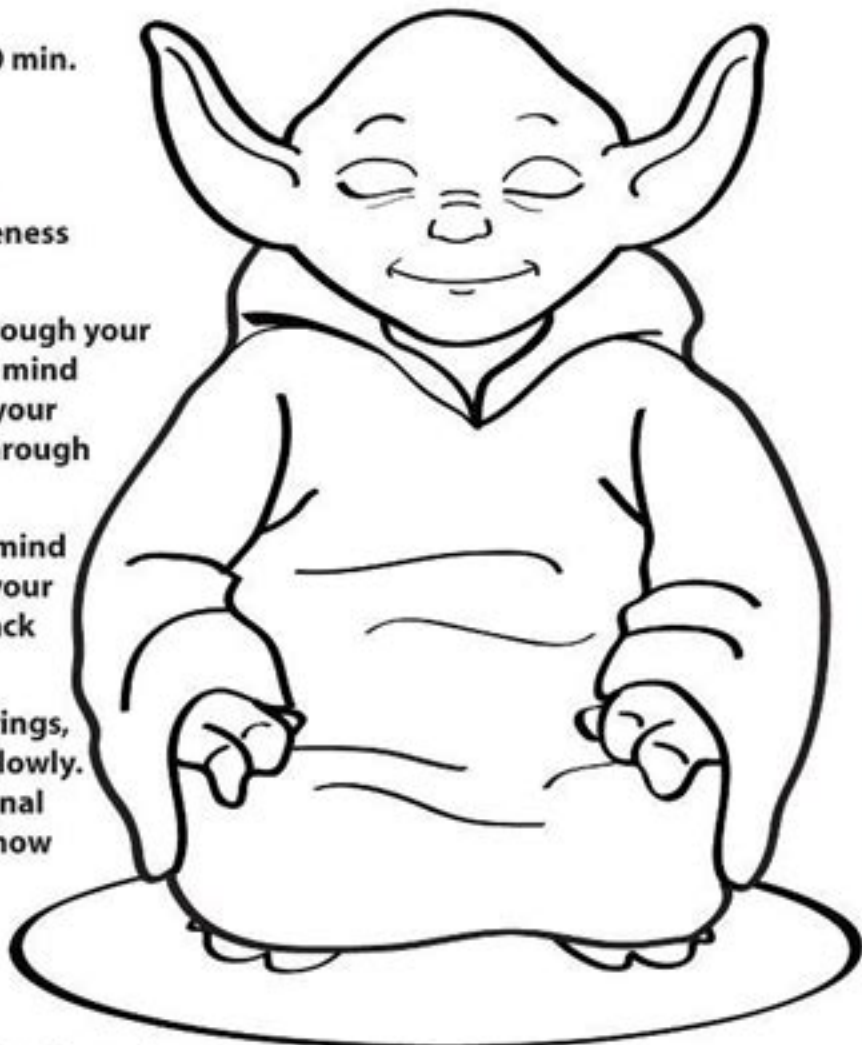
Close your eyes.

Bring your awareness
to your breath.

Slowly inhale through your
nose. Focus your mind
on the sound of your
breath. Exhale through
your nose.

Every time your mind
wanders, bring your
concentration back
to your breath.

When the timer rings,
open your eyes slowly.
Keep a daily journal
and write down how
meditation
makes you feel.

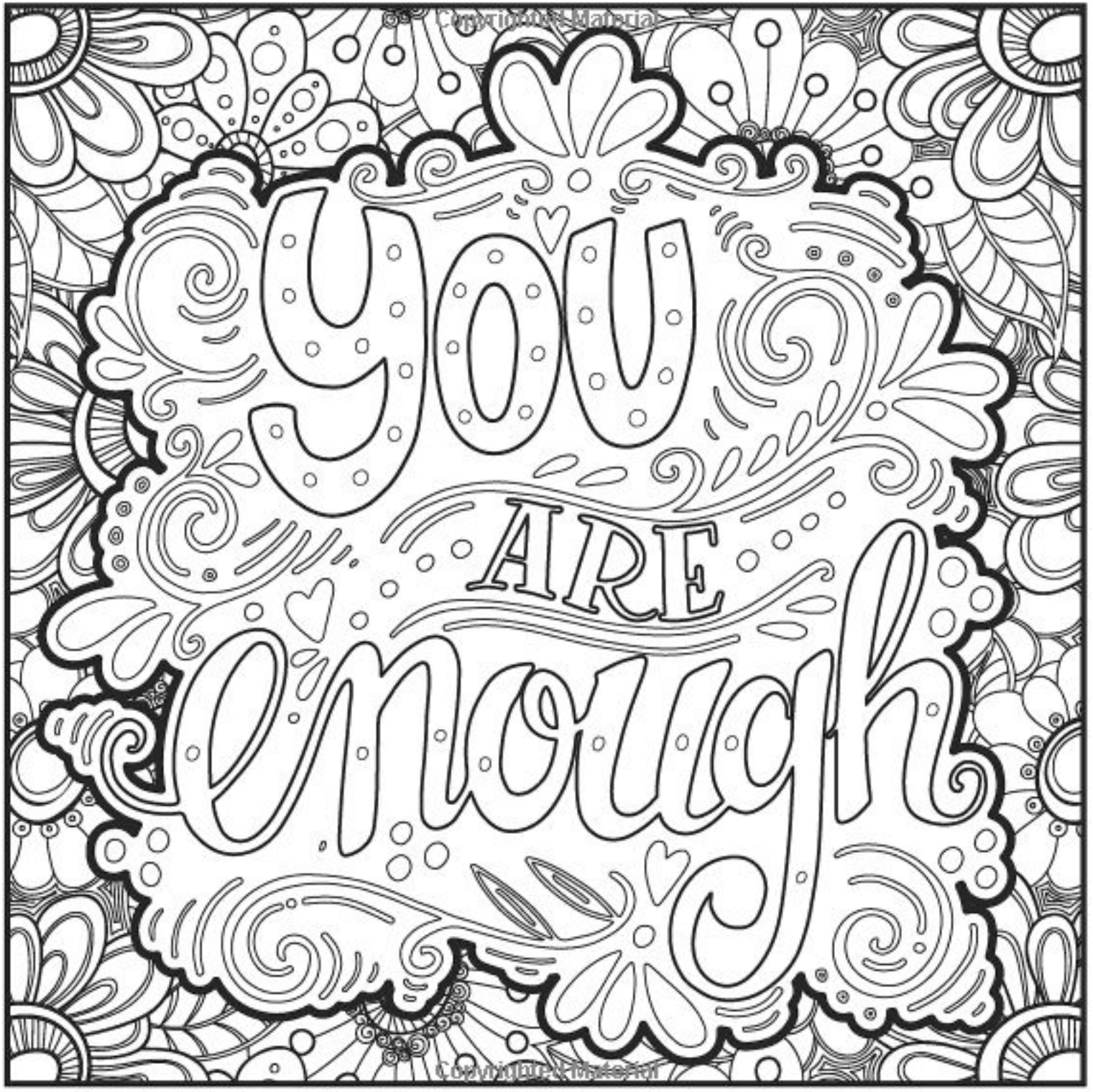


It might be challenging at first. But
don't give up! With steady practice,
you'll soon be able to meditate just
like Yoda!

COLOR YODA!

Always
Believe
that something
Good
is about to
HAPPEN

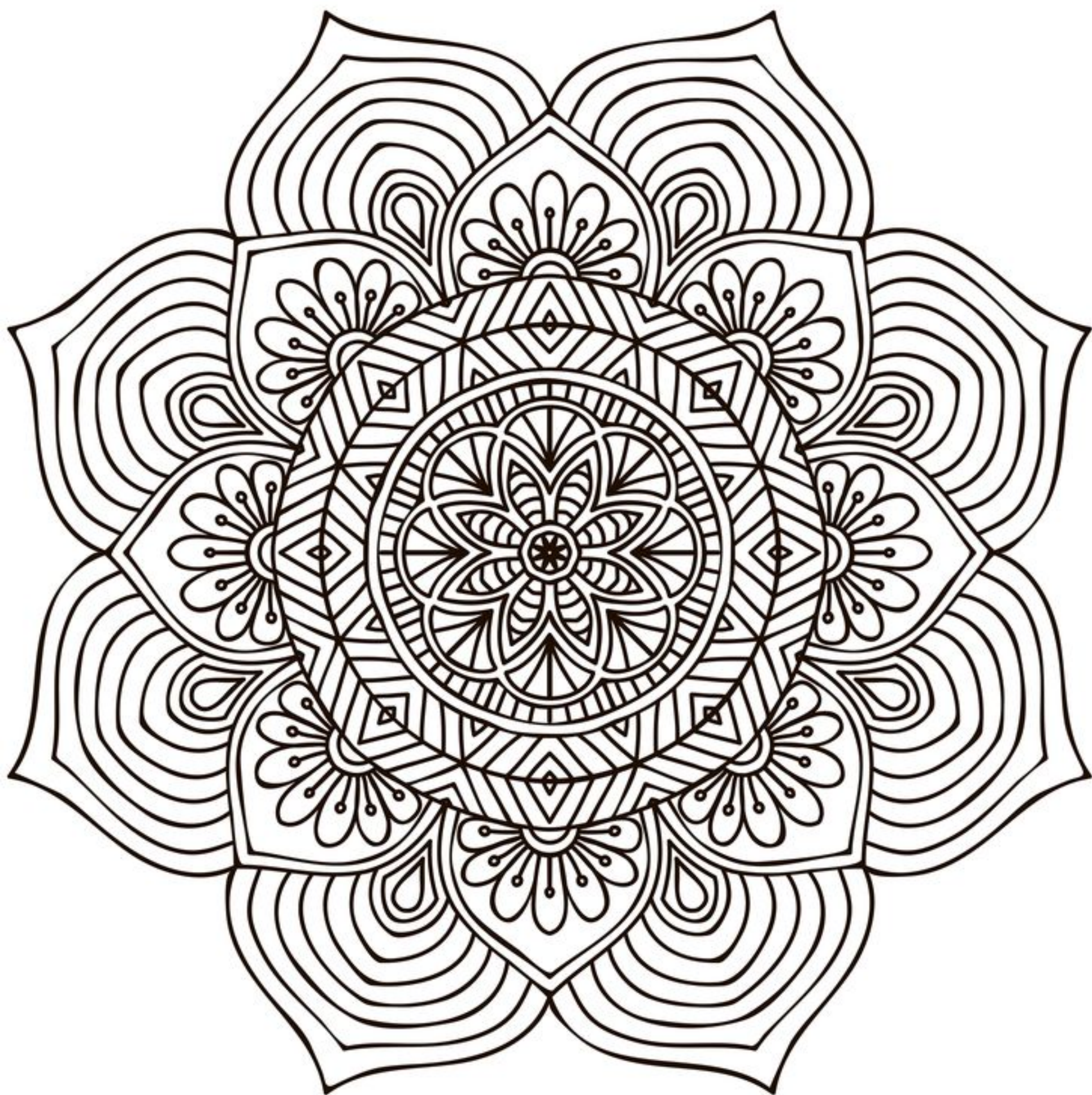




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I am Worthy



K W M M Z E D T F J H L H G Q O V I P I
 I I R P R R R E A E T L E O B L L H V O
 N T D C R E E A I L B Z N S Q M K Y J J
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 N U A A I D Q P O S Y I F F O S D N A H
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 S I G R E S P E C T F U L O A L S R N P
 S S Y G U F P H Q E L X E R U D A I W Q
 Y Z D A H U I K X Y B I I F N T P A I A
 A Z R R W H V E Q O O N S E G P B F D R
 G U L U E A H E A Z G E I T C R V C V Y
 B W R M L T K S B H H R T S E O X R T H
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 O B Z C N P D M A Y Z O X Z B W K J H F
 P D E E A N O S P W H E L P I N G I O T

CARING
 FRIENDS
 IGNORE
 RESPECTFUL
 SHARE
 WITSUP

FAIR
 HANDS OFF
 KINDNESS
 SAFE
 TALK IT OUT

FEELINGS
 HELPING
 LISTEN
 SEEK HELP
 WALK AWAY

6 Mindfulness Exercises You Can Try Today

By Alfred James

In this busy world of ours, the mind is constantly pulled from pillar to post, scattering our thoughts and emotions and leaving us feeling stressed, highly-strung and at times quite anxious.

Most of us don't have five minutes to sit down and relax, let alone 30 minutes or more for a meditation session.

But it is essential for our wellbeing to take a few minutes each day to cultivate mental spaciousness and achieve a positive mind-body balance.

So if you are a busy bee like me, you can use these simple mindfulness exercises to empty your mind and find some much-needed calm amidst the madness of your hectic day.

I'm going to cover 6 exercises that take very little effort and can be done pretty much anywhere at anytime:

- Mindful breathing
- Mindful observation
- Mindful awareness
- Mindful listening
- Mindful immersion
- Mindful appreciation

Let's get started...

1. Mindful Breathing

This exercise can be done standing up or sitting down, and pretty much anywhere at any time. All you have to do is be still and focus on your breath for just one minute.

1. Start by breathing in and out slowly. One breath cycle should last for approximately 6 seconds.
2. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth, letting your breath flow effortlessly in and out of your body.
3. Let go of your thoughts. Let go of things you have to do later today or pending projects that need your attention. Simply let thoughts rise and fall of their own accord and be at one with your breath.

4. Purposefully watch your breath, focusing your sense of awareness on its pathway as it enters your body and fills you with life.

5. Then watch with your awareness as it works work its way up and out of your mouth and its energy dissipates into the world.

If you are someone who thought they'd never be able to meditate, guess what? You are half way there already!

If you enjoyed one minute of this mind-calming exercise, why not try two or three?

2. Mindful Observation

This exercise is simple but incredibly powerful because it helps you notice and appreciate seemingly simple elements of your environment in a more profound way.

The exercise is designed to connect us with the beauty of the natural environment, something that is easily missed when we are rushing around in the car or hopping on and off trains on the way to work.

1. Choose a natural object from within your immediate environment and focus on watching it for a minute or two. This could be a flower or an insect, or even the clouds or the moon.

2. Don't do anything except notice the thing you are looking at. Simply relax into watching for as long as your concentration allows.

3. Look at this object as if you are seeing it for the first time.

4. Visually explore every aspect of its formation, and allow yourself to be consumed by its presence.

5. Allow yourself to connect with its energy and its purpose within the natural world.

3. Mindful Awareness

This exercise is designed to cultivate a heightened awareness and appreciation of simple daily tasks and the results they achieve.

Think of something that happens every day more than once; something you take for granted, like opening a door, for example.

At the very moment you touch the doorknob to open the door, stop for a moment and be mindful of where you are, how you feel in that moment and where the door will lead you.

Similarly, the moment you open your computer to start work, take a moment to appreciate the hands that enable this process and the brain that facilitates your understanding of how to use the computer.

These 'touch point' cues don't have to be physical ones.

For example: Each time you think a negative thought, you might choose to take a moment to stop, label the thought as unhelpful and release the negativity.

Or, perhaps each time you smell food, you take a moment to stop and appreciate how lucky you are to have good food to eat and share with your family and friends.

Choose a touch point that resonates with you today and, instead of going through your daily motions on autopilot, take occasional moments to stop and cultivate purposeful awareness of what you are doing and the blessings these actions brings to your life.

4. Mindful Listening

This exercise is designed to open your ears to sound in a non-judgmental way, and indeed to train your mind to be less swayed by the influence of past experiences and preconception.

So much of what we "feel" is influenced by past experience: For example, we may dislike a song because it reminds of us of a breakup or another period of life when things felt negative.

So the idea of this exercise is to listen to some music from a neutral standpoint, with a present awareness that is unhindered by preconception.

Select a piece of music you have never heard before. You may have something in your own collection that you have never listened to, or you might choose to turn the radio dial until something catches your ear.

1. Close your eyes and put on your headphones.
2. Try not to get drawn into judging the music by its genre, title or artist name before it has begun. Instead, ignore any labels and neutrally allow yourself to get lost in the journey of sound for the duration of the song.

3. Allow yourself to explore every aspect of track. Even if the music isn't to your liking at first, let go of your dislike and give your awareness full permission to climb inside the track and dance among the sound waves.

4. Explore the song by listening to the dynamics of each instrument. Separate each sound in your mind and analyze each one by one.

5. Hone in on the vocals: the sound of the voice, its range and tones. If there is more than one voice, separate them out as you did in step 4.

The idea is to listen intently, to become fully entwined with the composition without preconception or judgment of the genre, artist, lyrics or instrumentation. Don't think; hear.

5. Mindful Immersion

The intention of this exercise is to cultivate contentment in the moment and escape the persistent striving we find ourselves caught up in on a daily basis.

Rather than anxiously wanting to finish an everyday routine task in order to get on with doing something else, take that regular routine and fully experience it like never before.

For example: if you are cleaning your house, pay attention to every detail of the activity.

Rather than treat this as a regular chore, create an entirely new experience by noticing every aspect of your actions:

Feel and become the motion when sweeping the floor, sense the muscles you use when scrubbing the dishes, develop a more efficient way of wiping the windows clean.

The idea is to get creative and discover new experiences within a familiar routine task.

Instead of labouring through and constantly thinking about finishing the task, become aware of every step and fully immerse yourself in the progress. Take the activity beyond a routine by aligning yourself with it physically, mentally and spiritually.

Who knows, you might even enjoy the cleaning for once!

6. Mindful Appreciation

In this last exercise, all you have to do is notice 5 things in your day that usually go unappreciated.

These things can be objects or people; it's up to you. Use a notepad to check off 5 by the end of the day.

The point of this exercise is to simply give thanks and appreciate the seemingly insignificant things in life, the things that support our existence but rarely get a second thought amidst our desire for bigger and better things.

For example: electricity powers your kettle, the postman delivers your mail, your clothes provide you warmth, your nose lets you smell the flowers in the park, your ears let you hear the birds in the tree by the bus stop, but...

- Do you know how these things/processes came to exist, or how they really work?
- Have you ever properly acknowledged how these things benefit your life and the lives of others?
- Have you ever thought about what life might be like without these things?
- Have you ever stopped to notice their finer, more intricate details?
- Have you ever sat down and thought about the relationships between these things and how together they play an interconnected role in the functioning of the earth?

Once you have identified your 5 things, make it your duty to find out everything you can about their creation and purpose to truly appreciate the way in which they support your life.

For more advanced mindfulness exercises, and two 30-minute meditation music mp3s...

[Click here to read more about my bestselling book.](#)

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