

# Challenge

## Mindfulness Pack

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## 21-DAY MINDFULNESS CHALLENGE

This pack is *an invitation* to cultivate a little dose of mindfulness into your daily life. Studies have shown that practicing something for 21 days can help create a new habit—a mindful habit. Mindfulness can transform your life in many ways:

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Enhance ability to deal with illness
- Improve general health

In the next 21 days, you will have the opportunity to practice mindful living and to share it with your family and friends. We encourage you to complete the challenge with someone.

During this challenge, we will visit a variety of topics including meditation, gratitude, empathy, self-compassion, intention, mindful communication, and other interesting topics.

A person in a dark jacket stands on a wooden pier extending into a calm lake. The water reflects the surrounding green hills and a small boat in the distance. The scene is peaceful and still.

*“The answers you seek never come when the mind is busy,  
they come when the mind is still.”*

*- Leon Brown*

### **Day 1: ‘Beginner’s Mind’**

We find the ‘beginner’s mind’ to be an exceptional way for us to encourage creativity and critical thinking. It is also a healthier response to stress. ‘Beginner’s mind’ also helps us to resist making assumptions and to start living with a positive attitude and curious mind.

Have a wonderful experience in developing your mindful practice, one exercise at a time.



***“The smallest act of kindness is worth more than  
the greatest intention.”***

***- Kahlil Gibran***

## **Day 2: Mindfulness 101**

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is not “cold” thinking. In Japanese, the character for mindfulness combines the words of mind and heart. It is awareness with heart. Mindfulness invites you to respond to your experience rather than just react to it. It is paying attention in the “here and now”, non-reactively, non-judgmentally, and with an open heart and curiosity. You can see that in washing a dish or even brushing your teeth, in so many apparently “ordinary” experiences, when fully experienced, they are actually sparkling moments!



*“Simplicity is the best way that describes beauty.”*  
*- Charitarth Unagar*

### **Day 3: Walking Meditation**

Walking is a wonderful way of practicing mindfulness. On a beautiful day, we might find it “wasteful” to do sitting meditation. When you have too much on your “monkey mind” and it’s impossible to sit and meditate, take a mindful walk!

***When you walk, just walk.***

When walking, focus your awareness on your breath and bodily sensations. You can count to 4 for every in-breath and every out-breath. Allow yourself to start at a slow pace. You can also use the sound of the surrounding environment as a bell to come back to your breath.

**Today’s Challenge**

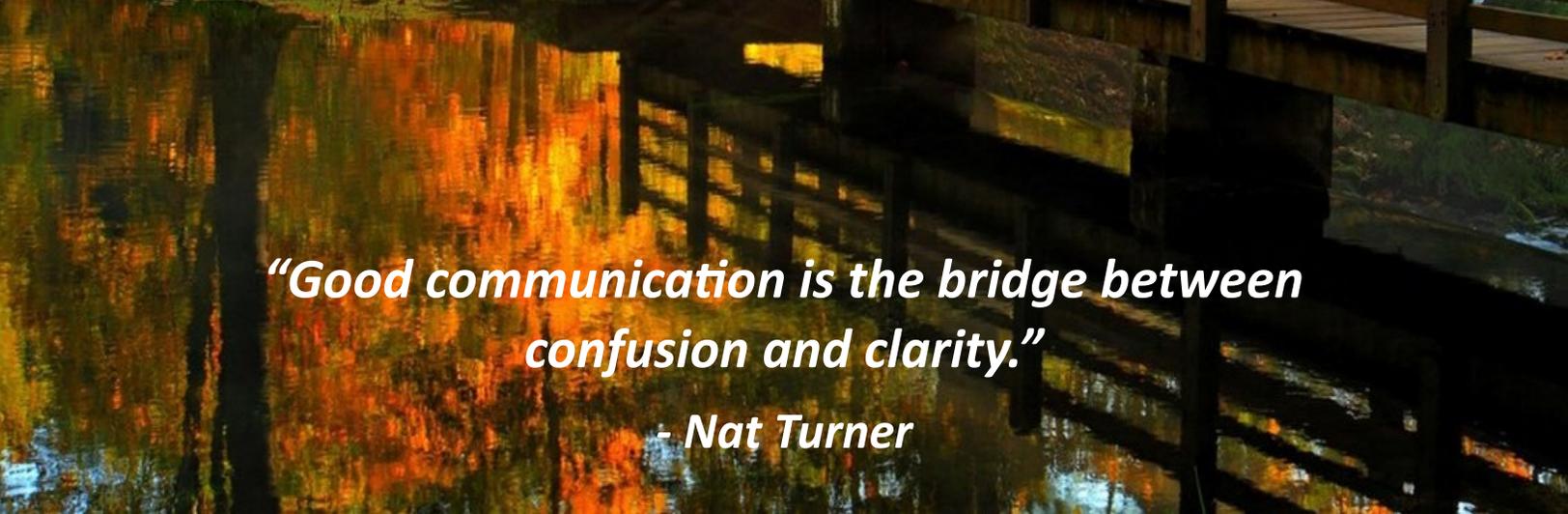


## **Day 4: Conscious Eating**

Through the food that we choose to eat, we directly and indirectly make an impact on our bodies and our minds, and on the environment around us. This is a newer concept since our ancestors didn't have much of a choice when it came to food. Now we have the ability to choose what to eat and what NOT to eat.

### **Today's Challenge**

At the beginning of your next meal, set the timer for 5 minutes for a mindful eating



***“Good communication is the bridge between confusion and clarity.”***

***- Nat Turner***

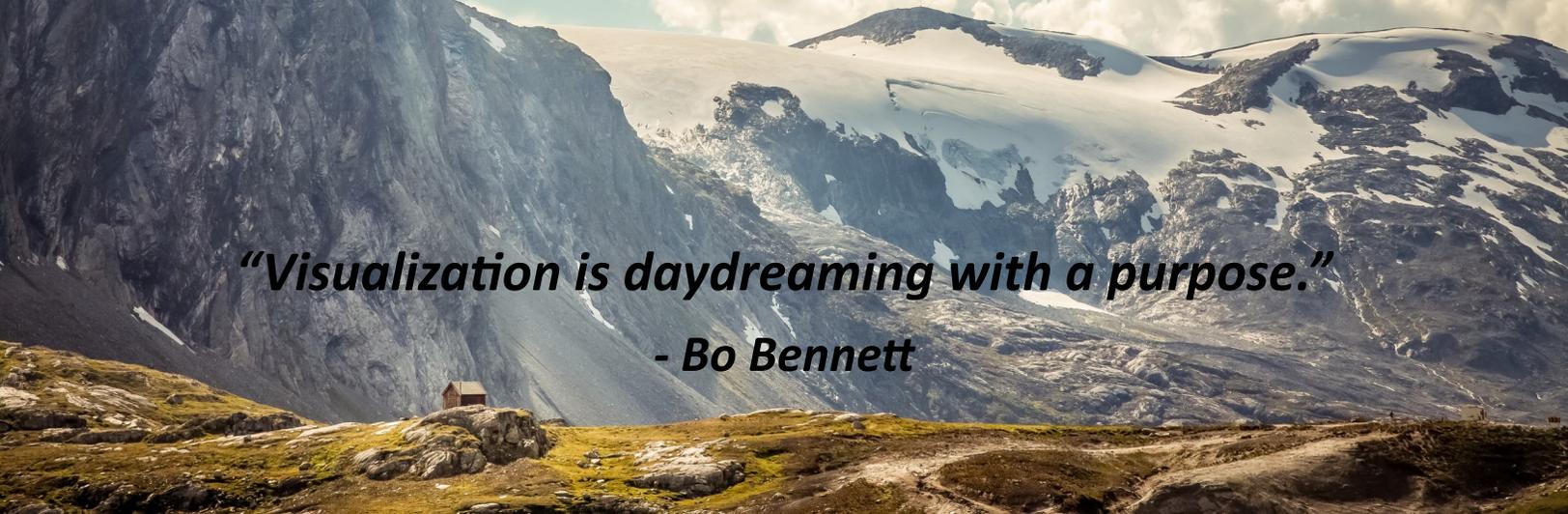
### **Day 5: The Power of Breath**

Our breath is our life-mate. The English word “spirit” comes from the Latin *spiritus* meaning “breath”. In Chinese, the word “breath” 息 is comprised of two separate words: 自 = “from” or “itself” and 心 = “the mind”. Therefore, *breath is from the mind itself*. Breathing is the spiritual journey of the mind.

can be used as a tool to diagnose our emotional sickness or wellness. When our mindfulness practice is strong, we will be aware when strong emotions come up, and we can take control of our breath to regulate emotions.

### **Today’s Challenge**

Count your breaths for 5 minutes. If you



***“Visualization is daydreaming with a purpose.”***

***- Bo Bennett***

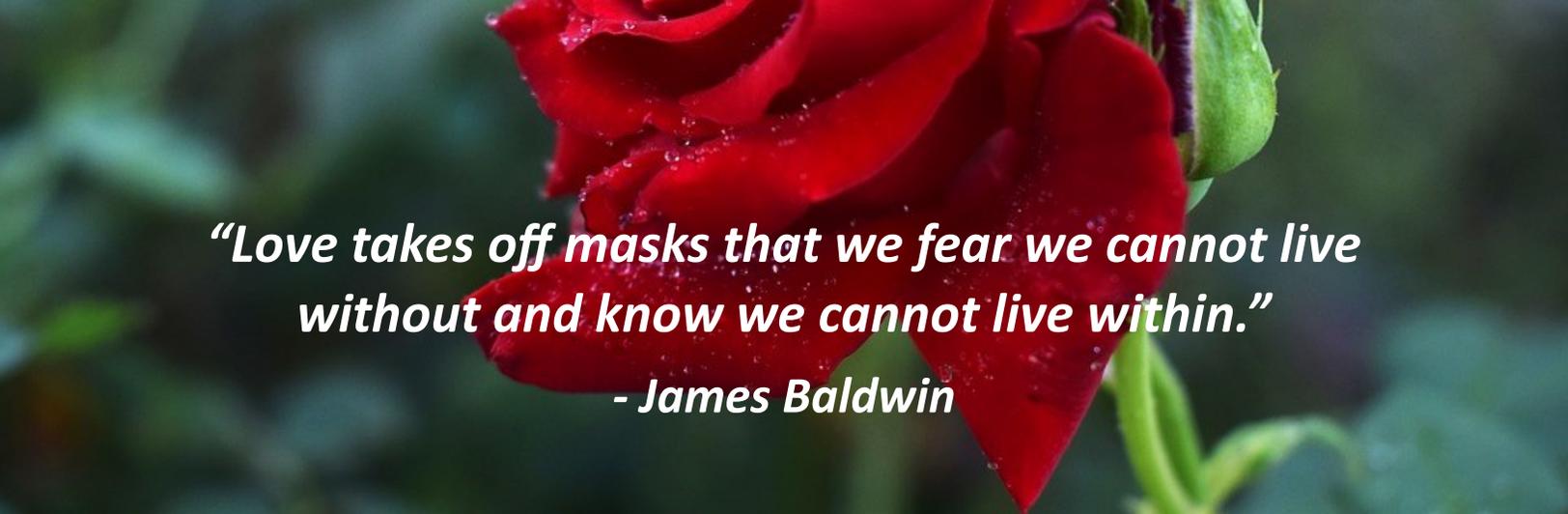
### **Day 6: The Universal Sound of Om̐**

Today we explore the sacred and universal sound of Om̐, a mantra we can use in our practice, to connect ourselves with others and nature. Om̐ comes from Samskritham (Sanskrit) and has been used throughout the millennia in the life-practices of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. You will find chanting the sound will bring health

Fun fact: The 3 roots of Om̐ are:

- A — “awe”. The sound starts at the back of the throat and you stretch it out.
- U — “oo”
- M — “mmm”

The last syllable is the deep silence of the infinite. You merge your chant from “M” to the deep silence.



*“Love takes off masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.”*

*- James Baldwin*

### **Day 7: Sitting Breath Meditation**

Gifts of the practice — Sitting and breathing mindfully brings four important elements into our lives: peace, clarity, compassion, and courage. When we are peaceful and clear-minded, we are inspired to be more compassionate.

Today you will be asked to count your breath. Your breath is a gift. From the day that you are born until the last instance of your life you will breathe. Your breath is evidence that you are invisible with the world. You are one with your environment, constantly in exchange: taking in and giving out. Your breath is also a good portable meditation device.



*“Having compassion starts and ends with having compassion for all those unwanted parts of ourselves, all those imperfections that we don’t even want to look at.”*

*- Pema Chodron*

### **Day 8: Be the Doorman**

Let us explain this to you. We are asking you to be the doorman of your thoughts (not the actual doorman) for today.

If a doorman works in a busy hotel (busy mind), he will see a lot of people coming in and out of the entrance. His job is to welcome the guests (the thoughts) and keep the hotel a safe and peaceful place. Some “negative” guests are tricky. They try to engage the doorman in their conversation to steal his attention. The best strategy to deal with the “bad” guests is to simply acknowledge them and not react or attach to their conversations. Just breathe and observe, so he won’t get lost. A good doorman needs to greet every

A silhouette of a person climbing a large rock formation against a sunset sky. The person is positioned on the left side of the rock, reaching up. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue, with some light clouds. The rock is dark and jagged.

***“I think we all have empathy. We may not have enough courage to display it.”***

***- Maya Angelou***

### **Day 9: The Power of Gratitude**

What does mindfulness have to do with gratitude? We cannot be grateful by being in the past or in the future. Gratitude brings us back to the present moment.

Gratitude allows us to be aware and appreciative of the blessings we have and not to focus solely on the struggles that we encounter. Mindfulness helps us respond to our misfortunes with acceptance and kindness. The two practices, gratitude and mindfulness, work together and are interconnected.

Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D. is the world’s leading scientific expert on gratitude. His work has



## Day 10: Reflection

Rewind what we have learned the past nine days. Take a deep breath and do a mindful observation of the content going through your mind.

What is mindfulness to you? Have you been able to practice mindful walking, eating, or sitting?

The water is at its clearest and most reflective stage when it is still. We sometimes need to take a few minutes to just be still. Mindful reflection helps us to live wholly in our conscious awareness.



### **Day 11: Planting Seeds**

We hope that seeds of mindfulness have grown in your beautiful garden. The practice of mindfulness does not only recognize our “positive” seeds and water them, but it also takes care of the “negative” seeds and transforms them. When we continue to practice mindfulness, we will build our inner garden into a serene, harmonious, and joyful one.

*Giving is receiving.*

Happiness is truly real when it is shared with others. We are inviting you to plant a seed of mindfulness by sharing your mindfulness practice with someone. That person could be a family member, a friend, a colleague, or a significant other.



## Day 12: Embracing Vulnerability

The #1 misconception of vulnerability is that it's often seen as a weakness. In fact, vulnerability is the opposite of weakness. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, the word 'vulnerability' is derived from the Latin word *vulnerare* meaning "to wound". Vulnerability is defined as "capable of being wounded" or "open to attack or damage". Meanwhile, weakness means the "inability to withstand attack or wounding".

*"What makes you vulnerable makes you beautiful". — Brené Brown*

Being vulnerable means putting ourselves in a "risky, uncertain, emotionally exposed" situation. If we are not mindful of who we open ourselves up to, they could end up hurting



### Day 13: Cultivating Empathy

The word “empathy” came into the English language when Edward Titchener adopted the German word *Einfühlung*, which means “feeling into”. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, empathy means “imagining, or having the capacity to imagine, feelings that one does not actually have”. Another way to put it is to have the ability to *feel into* what other people are

allow us to detect others’ feelings and emotions through the effect of the *mirror neurons*. To put it simply, when someone shows us an emotion, such as sadness, the same part of our brain will be lit up so that we can share the feeling of sadness as if it’s our own.

### Today’s Challenge

*Journaling: “Feel into” the shoes of three*

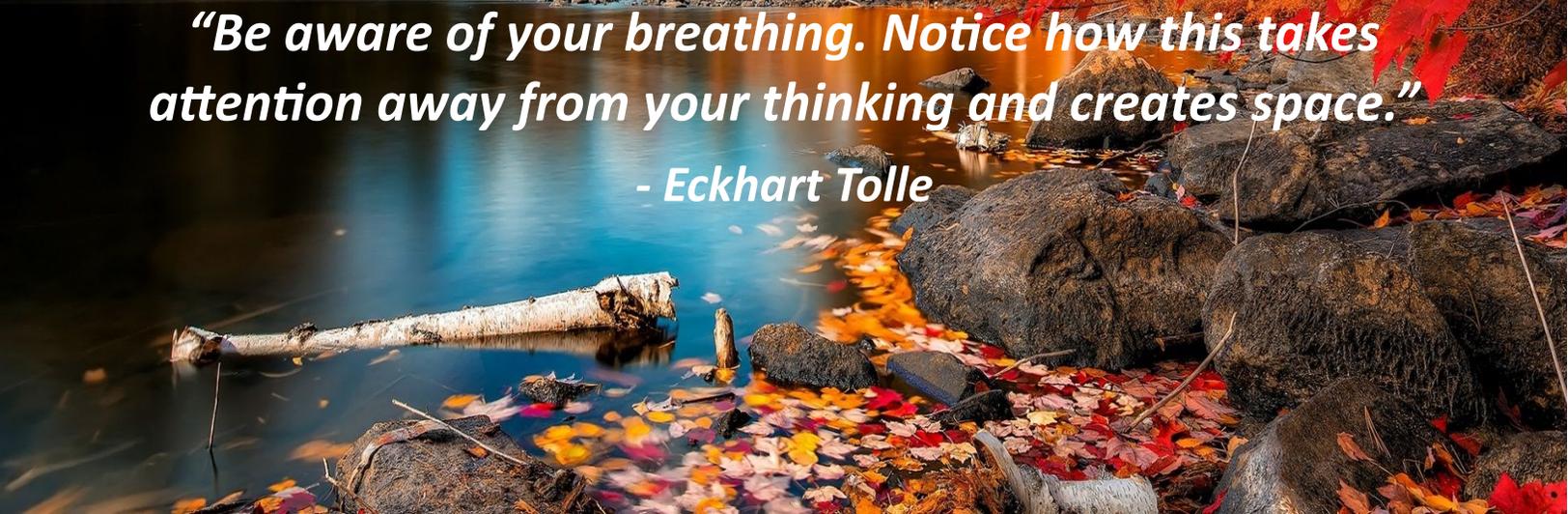


### **Day 14: Self- Compassion**

Be kind to yourself. How you use the information you receive from friends, colleagues, and others is important. Use it to help yourself grow, not to sink. Breathe, reflect, recite, and act upon these phrases: “I am good enough. I am happy to be here. I am kind to myself. I am not looking for anything more”. With that detachment from expectation, enjoy your life — a life of growth and opportunity, love and friendship.

### **Today’s Challenge:** Metta (Loving-kindness meditation)

Sit in a comfortable yet alert position. Close your eyes or allow them to focus on one point



*“Be aware of your breathing. Notice how this takes attention away from your thinking and creates space.”*

*- Eckhart Tolle*

### **Day 15: Mindful Love**

The word “love” is often blended with romantic relationships. This limits the meaning of this beautiful word. Today, we discuss universal love. According to Buddhist psychology, there are four elements that generate true love.

1. Loving-kindness (Metta): the intention and capacity to offer joy and happiness to oneself, and then giving it to others.
2. Compassion (Karuna): the capacity to relieve and transform suffering and lighten sorrows in oneself and in others.
3. Joy (Mudita): the desire to generate the feeling of joy for ourselves as well as joy for the other person. Our love should bring joy to us and the ones we love.



***“Om is the sound of  
creation. It is the  
vibration or heartbeat  
of the Universe...”***

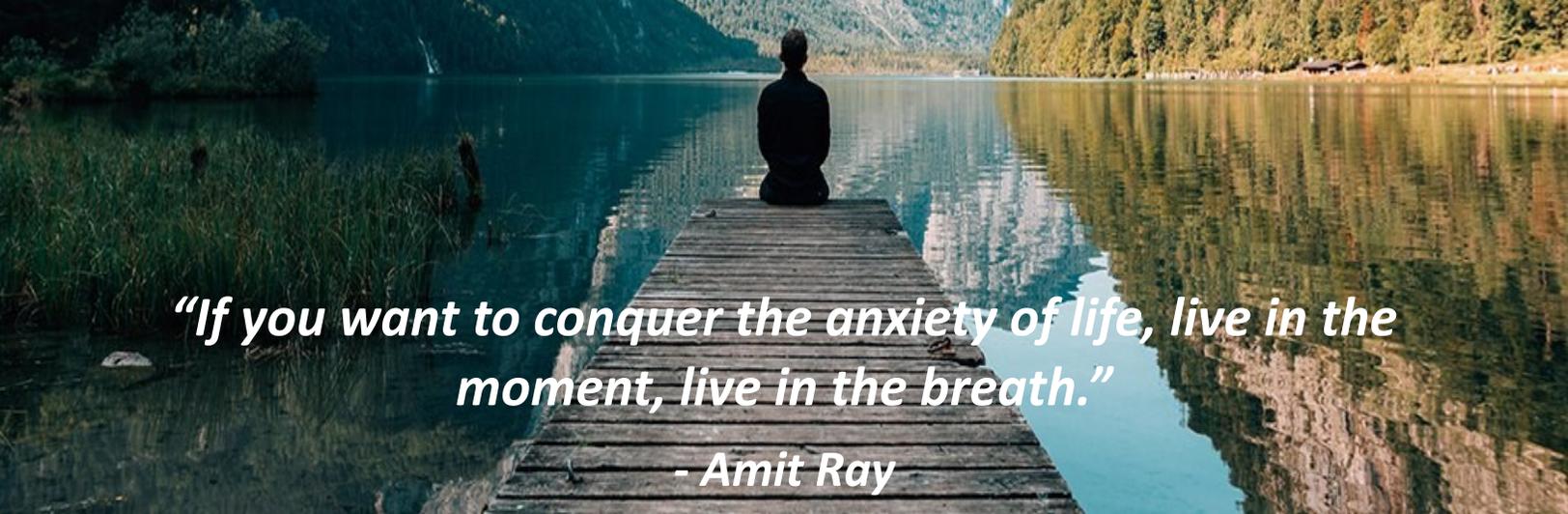
***- Shikoba***

### **Day 16: The Art of Visualization**

Visualization techniques have helped successful people accomplish great feats. Elite athletes have practiced it to reach their highest potentials. Visualization allows us to prepare for important events in our lives before they happen, giving us the opportunity to perform more consistently in pressing situations.

*“Visualization is daydreaming with a purpose”. — Bo Bennett*

Four benefits of visualization according to Jack Canfield, *author, motivational speaker, corporate trainer, and entrepreneur*: (1) activate your creative subconscious (2) program your brain to more readily perceive and recognize the resources you will need to achieve your

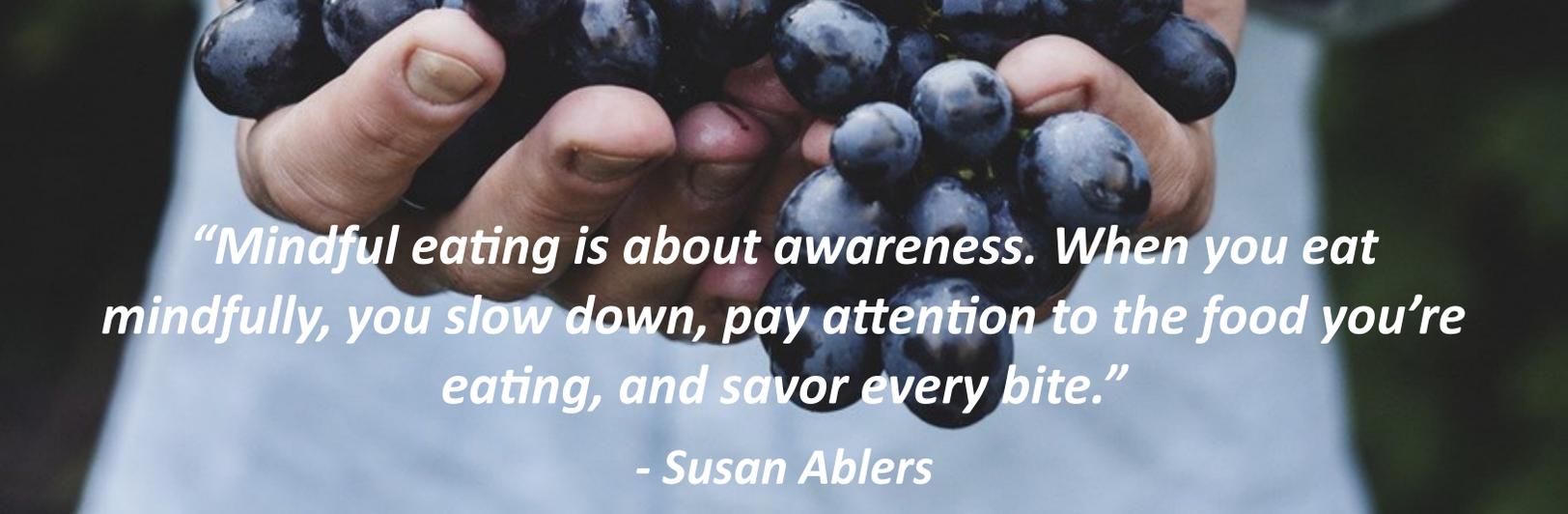


*“If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in the moment, live in the breath.”*

*- Amit Ray*

### **Day 17: Mindful Communication**

As human beings, we always have a strong desire for connection. Even before we are born, we communicate and connect with our mother. As we grow up, we seek connections with our family members, our friends in school, our romantic partners, our co-workers, etc. Communication can strengthen a relationship, but it can also break one if we're not mindful of our words. Self-communication is the key to interpersonal communication. The language we use to talk to ourselves, to create our story, directly and indirectly, affects our relationships with others. Two elements of mindful communication are deep listening and loving speech.



*“Mindful eating is about awareness. When you eat mindfully, you slow down, pay attention to the food you’re eating, and savor every bite.”*

*- Susan Ablers*

## **Day 18: The Power of Intention**

*Meditation is a goal-less goal. — Zen Saying*

A goal is something that cannot be seen or touched in the present moment. Meanwhile, intention helps to bring us back to where we are in the here and now.

When our intention is to accept and allow the experience during our sitting or walking practice and not expect anything from it, the experience starts to shift. *We can control our intention but not the result of our practice.* When we set an intention for our mindfulness practice (and our lives), we pave the way for our reality to manifest.



*“Let go of your sorrows, let go of your worries.  
That is the secret of walking meditation.”*

*- Thich Nhat Hanh*

### **Day 19: The Beauty of Simplicity**

Sometimes we believe that the more stuff we have, the happier we are. Our cultural and societal norms promote the idea that materialism results in happiness. We often seek happiness from someone or something outside of us and fail to listen to our inner-self. Ever-lasting peace and happiness come from within.

*Simplifying is beautifying.*

Simplicity allows us to declutter things in our home, as well as the thoughts in our mind. Simplicity gives us space to breathe and frees us from distractions so that our minds will be clear and our hearts will be pure. That's when we find peace and freedom in everything.



## Day 20: Kindness

*Mindfulness + Kindness = Kindfulness*

Today we invite you not only to be mindful but also to be *kindful*. Mindfulness can be challenging when we deal with a difficult situation. Kindness helps us flow through unhappy experiences while mindfulness helps us stay grounded in the present. The fault-finding mind is an inherent trait that supposedly helps us protect ourselves from suffering. However, it traps us in another layer of suffering itself because of fear, anger, and ego.

Do you have a fault-finding mind? If so, Ajahn Brahm prescribes a 3-step solution (AFL) for



*“The beginner’s mind is the mind of compassion. When our mind is compassionate, it is boundless.”*

*- Shunryu Suzuki*

### **Day 21: Back to the ‘Beginner’s Mind’**

We are grateful for your participation in this 21-day mindfulness challenge. We hope that you have planted a seed of mindfulness and compassion within yourself.

“I don’t know”, in many cases, is a power statement, where “been there, done that” prevents us from seeing the bigger picture. ‘Beginner’s mind’ doesn’t ask us to forget or to abandon what we have learned before. What it needs us to do is to put our expectations and beliefs aside so that the door of “many other possibilities” can be opened. We can cultivate this quality by being curious about the present situation and letting go of our preconceptions and assumptions based on past experiences.



## KEEP PRACTICING!

Why?

Because **“what you practice grows stronger”** — *Shauna Shapiro*

*May you be safe*

*May you be healthy*

*May you be happy*

*May you be free of suffering*