

Making Everything Easier!™

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy

FOR
DUMMIES®
A Wiley Brand

Learn to:

- Identify and banish negative thought processes
- Understand your past experiences while staying in the present
- Use MBCT to overcome depression, addiction, anxiety and more



**Download the audio files
of guided meditations**

Dr Patrizia Collard

Counsellor, trainer, coach and therapist



Get More and Do More at Dummies.com®



Start with **FREE** Cheat Sheets

Cheat Sheets include

- Checklists
- Charts
- Common Instructions
- And Other Good Stuff!

To access the Cheat Sheet created specifically for this book, go to
www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/mindfulnessbasedcognitivetherapyuk

Get Smart at Dummies.com

Dummies.com makes your life easier with thousands of answers on everything from removing wallpaper to using the latest version of Windows.

Check out our

- Videos
- Illustrated Articles
- Step-by-Step Instructions

Want a weekly dose of Dummies?

Sign up for Newsletters on

- Digital Photography
- Microsoft Windows & Office
- Personal Finance & Investing
- Health & Wellness
- Computing, iPods & Mobile Phones
- eBay
- Internet
- Food, Home & Garden

Find out **“HOW”** at Dummies.com



***Mindfulness-Based
Cognitive Therapy***

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

by Dr Patrizia Collard

FOR
DUMMIES[®]
A Wiley Brand

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.**, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, www.wiley.com

This edition first published 2013

© 2013 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, Chichester, West Sussex.

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, United Kingdom

For details of our global editorial offices, for customer services and for information about how to apply for permission to reuse the copyright material in this book please see our website at www.wiley.com.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except as permitted by the UK Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at www.dummies.com. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Designations used by companies to distinguish their products are often claimed as trademarks. All brand names and product names used in this book are trade names, service marks, trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The publisher is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: WHILE THE PUBLISHER AND AUTHOR HAVE USED THEIR BEST EFFORTS IN PREPARING THIS BOOK, THEY MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH THE RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. IT IS SOLD ON THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. IF PROFESSIONAL ADVICE OR OTHER EXPERT ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL SHOULD BE SOUGHT.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at (001) 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit www.wiley.com/techsupport.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-118-51946-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-118-51943-1 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-51944-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-118-51945-5 (ebk)

Printed in Great Britain by TJ International, Padstow, Cornwall

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



Contents at a Glance

<i>Introduction</i>	1
<i>Part I: Introducing Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy ...</i>	7
Chapter 1: Improving Your Wellbeing with Mindfulness.....	9
Chapter 2: Deciding to Lead a Mindful Existence.....	23
Chapter 3: Putting Mindfulness into Practice with the Eight-Week Course.....	39
<i>Part II: Sailing Your Personal Ship – the Eight-Week MBCT Course</i>	59
Chapter 4: Preparing for the Voyage – Week One: Practising Mindfulness and Stepping Out of Autopilot	61
Chapter 5: Plotting the Course – Week Two: Cultivating the Right Attitude	77
Chapter 6: Setting Sail – Week Three: Developing Physical Awareness	97
Chapter 7: Weathering the Storm – Week Four: Dealing with Difficulties	115
Chapter 8: Navigating Troubled Waters – Week Five: Relinquishing Attachments	133
Chapter 9: Going with the Current – Week Six: Accepting the True Nature of Thoughts	153
Chapter 10: Coming Into Port – Week Seven: Looking After Your Own Wellbeing.....	173
Chapter 11: Looking Beyond the Horizon to the Rest of Your Life – Week Eight: Living Mindfully	191
<i>Part III: Developing Different Treatment Practices</i>	209
Chapter 12: Stopping the Cycle of Depression.....	211
Chapter 13: Breaking Free from Addiction	231
Chapter 14: Relieving the Strain of Anxiety.....	249
Chapter 15: Nurturing Hope While Living with Pain	265
Chapter 16: Finding Purpose and Meaning When You're Older	281
Chapter 17: Bringing Harmony to Your Life	301
<i>Part IV: The Part of Tens</i>	325
Chapter 18: Ten Ways to Expand Your Mindfulness Experience	327
Chapter 19: Checking Out Ten Inspirational People	335
Chapter 20: Surveying (Almost) Ten Inspirational Places to Visit	343
<i>Index</i>	349

Table of Contents

.....

<i>Introduction</i>	1
About This Book.....	2
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
Icons Used in This Book.....	3
Beyond the Book.....	3
Where to Go from Here.....	4

Part 1: Introducing Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy.... 7

Chapter 1: Improving Your Wellbeing with Mindfulness 9

Placing the Power in Your Hands: Discovering MBCT.....	10
Encountering the term MBCT.....	11
Drawing on Buddhist philosophy.....	11
Developing from CBT.....	13
Integrating mindfulness and CBT into MBCT.....	14
Recognising the Need for a Mindful Approach.....	16
Addressing the shortcomings of CBT.....	16
Going beyond traditional therapy.....	17
Enjoying the Benefits of MBCT.....	17
Seeing the evidence of success.....	17
Fearing past and future experiences.....	19
Choosing to live in the now.....	20
Perusing even more ways that MBCT can help you.....	21

Chapter 2: Deciding to Lead a Mindful Existence 23

Understanding Your Problems.....	23
Feeling that you can't cope.....	24
Wanting to make a change.....	26
Breaking the cycle of mental anguish.....	26
Developing an Understanding of Yourself.....	28
Opening up to yourself.....	29
Studying your personal thought patterns.....	29
Preparing for the Challenges Ahead.....	31
Facing your fears.....	32
Jumping over hurdles.....	33
Recognising the importance of everyday practice.....	33

Looking Forward to Long-Term Balance	34
Living in the moment.....	35
Accepting reality.....	35
Reducing suffering.....	36
Becoming your own best friend.....	37

Chapter 3: Putting Mindfulness into Practice with the Eight-Week Course 39

Creating a Personal Practice that Works.....	40
Setting yourself goals	40
Making the practice part of your daily routine.....	41
Making time, not finding time.....	42
Drawing up a schedule.....	43
Keeping a practice diary	43
Dispelling the Myths	43
Feeling that you lack the necessary experience or knowledge	45
Assuming that mindfulness is all spiritual mumbo-jumbo	45
Distinguishing between meditation, mindfulness and awareness training	46
Believing that you can do it by yourself	46
Being Actively Mindful: Theory Rooted in Practice	47
Practising oriental disciplines.....	47
Adapting old techniques.....	48
Joining body and mind.....	48
Focusing on each individual task, and being present in the moment.....	50
Discovering the Advantages Awaiting You	50
Adding up the benefits	50
Tailoring the benefits to you	52
Living healthily.....	53
Slowing right down.....	53
Helping yourself and others	53
Introducing the Eight-Week Course	55
Going over the core skills	55
Casting a look over the weeks to come.....	55

Part 11: Sailing Your Personal Ship – the Eight-Week MBCT Course..... 59

Chapter 4: Preparing for the Voyage – Week One: Practising Mindfulness and Stepping Out of Autopilot 61

Preparing Yourself and Your Surroundings.....	62
Creating your practice space	62
Making yourself comfortable.....	63

Uncluttering Your Mind 65
 Letting go of worries and concerns 65
 Entering the now 65
 Exploring Your Physical Self Mindfully 66
 Understanding the importance of taking your time 66
 Engaging in the body scan practice 67
 Becoming aware of your mind wandering 70
 Slowing Down and Living Your Life Mindfully 71
 Performing everyday activities mindfully 71
 Eating with awareness: Raisin exercise 72
 Making time for regular practice 74
 Recording your reactions and responses 75
 Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week 75

**Chapter 5: Plotting the Course – Week Two: Cultivating
 the Right Attitude 77**

Getting Your Bearings on the Course 77
 Going Deeper into Self-Awareness 78
 Listening mindfully: A ten-minute sound meditation 79
 Engaging in your mindful routine 81
 Retaining your awareness 82
 Dealing with Barriers to Practising Mindful Exercises 84
 Suggesting changes to maintain motivation 86
 Staying focused and committed 89
 Coping with Setbacks, Pain and Emotions During Your Practice 89
 Trusting your own judgement 90
 Accepting difficult emotions 90
 Knowing your physical limits 91
 Observing the Wandering Mind 92
 Regulating the breath: Mindful breathing exercise 92
 Exploring automatic thoughts and the connected feelings 94
 Taking note of thoughts throughout the day 94
 Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week 96

**Chapter 6: Setting Sail – Week Three: Developing
 Physical Awareness 97**

Getting Your Bearings on the Course 98
 Applying Mindfulness to Your Body’s Senses 99
 Seeing mindfully: Making a short mind-movie 99
 Getting physically in touch with daily tasks 100
 Finding the breathing space: An emergency meditation 101
 Allowing awareness of sight, sound, breath and body 102
 Engaging Your Body in Mindful Movement 103
 Discovering movement exercises 103
 Stretching yourself 106
 Going for a stroll: Walking exercises 109

Observing Mindfulness in Daily Movement	111
Getting up in the morning.....	111
Preparing a mindful breakfast.....	111
Exercising mindfully throughout the day.....	112
Retiring for the night	112
Making a Note of Unpleasant Events.....	113
Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week	114

Chapter 7: Weathering the Storm – Week Four:

Dealing with Difficulties 115

Getting Your Bearings on the Course	115
Exploring and Explaining Stress	117
Grasping the nature of stress	117
Hearing the good news.....	119
Dealing with Unhelpful Thoughts	120
Being with negative thoughts.....	121
Creating more helpful thoughts.....	123
Addressing Your Anxiety Demons	123
Attending to an anchor of awareness – or two	124
Using mindfulness with unpleasant tasks.....	125
Coping with Troublesome Thoughts	126
Tracing your stressful thought patterns.....	127
Sitting with difficult thoughts.....	128
Strengthening your position by finding new perspectives.....	130
Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week	132

Chapter 8: Navigating Troubled Waters – Week Five:

Relinquishing Attachments 133

Getting Your Bearings on the Course	134
Allowing the Presence of Painful Thoughts, Emotions and Memories....	134
Staying with discomforting thoughts	135
Developing the coping breathing space exercise.....	137
Tackling Troubling Past Experiences	138
Bringing painful experiences to mind	139
Seeing your past as the midnight movie.....	140
Pre-empting future events	141
Coping with strong emotions	142
Resisting the urge to fight or run away.....	143
Maintaining a gentle approach.....	144
Beginning a new relationship with your experiences	145
Using storytelling to understand suffering.....	146
Unchaining Yourself from Attachments	147
Noticing strong attachments to the past	149
Co-existing with aversion.....	149

Understanding the importance of acceptance..... 150
 Letting go of the desire for quick fixes..... 150
 Jettisoning pleasant attachments too 151
 Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week 152

Chapter 9: Going with the Current – Week Six: Accepting the True Nature of Thoughts 153

Getting Your Bearings on the Course 154
 Demystifying Thoughts: They’re Less Peculiar Than You Think 154
 Understanding how your thoughts affect your moods
 (and vice versa)..... 155
 Distinguishing your thoughts from facts 156
 Relating to your thoughts in a new way..... 157
 Parting the Waves of Self-Doubt 159
 Bringing awareness to your thoughts 159
 Performing the pebble meditation to consider deeper thoughts 160
 Writing to yourself about your thoughts 161
 Approaching difficult thoughts in a longer meditation..... 162
 Visualising problems and problematic people 164
 Being Kind to Yourself 165
 Treating yourself well with the kindness meditation..... 166
 Remembering real moods occurring during real events 166
 Avoiding self-criticism and -judgement..... 169
 Releasing unhelpful emotional habits..... 170
 Finding inner peace by sitting with your thoughts 171
 Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week 172

Chapter 10: Coming Into Port – Week Seven: Looking After Your Own Wellbeing 173

Getting Your Bearings on the Course 174
 Taking Positive Steps to Look After Yourself 175
 Taking a break: Fixing your focus mindfully 175
 Maintaining and developing your practice for your benefit 177
 Beginning your day with a treat..... 178
 Rebalancing Your Daily Life 179
 Identifying your daily drainers and possible rechargers 180
 Alleviating feelings of anger..... 181
 Stabilising your mood 183
 Having Fun for Fun’s Sake..... 184
 Treating yourself..... 185
 Not overindulging 185
 Dealing with Threats to Your Wellbeing..... 186
 Remembering the good..... 186
 Finding the right response..... 187
 Linking your actions to your moods 187



- Improving how you feel through what you do..... 188
- Sitting with spacious awareness..... 189
- Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week..... 190

Chapter 11: Looking Beyond the Horizon to the Rest of Your Life – Week Eight: Living Mindfully191

- Getting Your Bearings on the Course 192
- Embracing a Mindful Life in Good and Bad Times 192
- Pledging to Practise..... 195
 - Motivating yourself..... 195
 - Creating action plans..... 196
 - Keeping a progress diary 197
- Having a Mindful Day, Every Day..... 198
 - Waking up 198
 - Breaking your fast..... 198
 - Journeying mindfully..... 198
 - Taking regular breathing breaks..... 199
 - Performing mindful daily actions 199
 - Communicating mindfully..... 199
 - Going to sleep..... 200
 - Embracing your experiences..... 200
 - Exercising mind and body 200
- Developing Mindfulness Attributes..... 200
 - Remembering non-judgement 201
 - Having patience..... 202
 - Using childlike curiosity: Beginner’s mind 202
 - Trusting yourself..... 203
 - Working on non-striving..... 204
 - Accepting things the way they are 204
 - Letting go 204
 - Accepting the importance of commitment, self-discipline and intention..... 205
 - Keeping it simple 206
 - Giving yourself a reason to keep practising 207
- Reviewing Your Accomplishments This Week 207

Part III: Developing Different Treatment Practices 209

Chapter 12: Stopping the Cycle of Depression211

- Staring into a Black Hole: Understanding Depression 212
- Becoming depressed: You’re not alone 214
- Knowing the common symptoms of depression 214
- Identifying the causes 215
- Observing the effects that feed depression 217

Breaking Down Common Symptoms: Your Personal Narrative	218
Searching for your personal signature.....	218
Noticing how depression affects you	220
Lacking drive or energy	221
Feeling helpless	222
Understanding why some people self-harm	223
Overcoming Unhelpful Thoughts	224
‘Snapping out’ of it	224
Believing that you’re against the world	225
Deleting the Depression Loop.....	225
Encountering a depression loop.....	226
Making time, not finding time.....	227
Following up on your progress	227
Using MBCT to prevent depression relapse.....	228
Believing that things can and will improve	228
Chapter 13: Breaking Free from Addiction	231
Discovering the Realities of Addiction	232
Filling a void – why people get addicted.....	232
Looking at common factors of addiction.....	233
Wanting to Stop: The Process of Change	235
Entering the sea of change	236
Meeting with others.....	237
Accepting who you really are.....	237
Believing in yourself	239
Letting go of addiction, mindfully.....	239
Starting afresh, now.....	241
Staving Off Relapse.....	241
Losing Control: Understanding Alcohol Addiction	242
Considering the symptoms of alcohol addiction.....	242
Discovering the dangers	244
Challenging the misconceptions.....	244
Believing that the problem is out of your hands	246
Going cold turkey.....	246
Remembering Helpful Lessons	248
Chapter 14: Relieving the Strain of Anxiety.....	249
Coping with Pressure	249
Understanding how anxiety manifests itself	251
Differentiating between the types of anxiety	251
Tackling Your Fears with Targeted Interventions.....	253
Developing a coping plan.....	254
Changing unhelpful thoughts	255
Intervening mindfully	256
Creating practice points	257

Making Peace with Your Fears.....	259
Understanding that your instincts are natural	259
Knowing that you can rise above your instincts	259
Accepting Anxiety as Part of Life.....	260
Pre-empting anxious feelings	260
Changing what can be changed	261
Allowing what can't be changed	261
Sleeping it off.....	262
Remembering Helpful Lessons from the Course.....	262

Chapter 15: Nurturing Hope While Living with Pain 265

Grinding to a Halt: When Pain Stops You from Living Life.....	266
Understanding the nature of pain.....	267
Looking at different types of pain.....	268
Studying the effects of pain on memory	269
Hurting mentally	270
Maintaining Perspective	271
Waking Up to Life: Accepting Pain	272
Accepting and then responding.....	273
Recognising what your body can still do.....	274
Creating a new relationship with pain	274
Using Regular Coping Skills.....	275
Engaging in breathing practices	275
Achieving wholeness.....	278

Chapter 16: Finding Purpose and Meaning When You're Older . . . 281

Thinking About the True Meaning of Purpose.....	282
Redefining your concept of purpose.....	283
Reconnecting to your own sense of purpose.....	283
Finding Positive Aspects of Life.....	285
Surrounding yourself with positive people	285
Widening your experience of life	286
Cultivating motivation and inspiration.....	287
Dismissing nothing, including everything	289
Finding joy	290
Accepting Limitations of All Kinds	290
Trying to improve and develop	292
Dismissing the notion of 'failure'	293
Rediscovering your strengths	294
Connecting Fully with the Life You Have Now.....	295
Setting yourself new goals and challenges.....	296
Moving forward one step at a time.....	298
Living in the now, whatever your age	299

Moving Gently, but Mindfully.....	299
Pressing palms	299
Cutting wood	299
Opening the chest.....	300
Flexing the spine	300
Chapter 17: Bringing Harmony to Your Life	301
Accepting the Importance of Mindful Living.....	301
Homing in on Domestic Mindfulness	302
Waking with an open mind	303
Getting up on the right side of bed.....	304
Enjoying your morning routine.....	304
Starting with a positive attitude.....	305
Preparing yourself for the rigours of the day.....	306
Relaxing and enjoying yourself	306
Winding down.....	307
Employing Mindfulness at Work.....	308
Focusing on each individual task.....	309
Making sure not to overload yourself	310
Responding to pressure and criticism	311
Knowing when you've done enough and setting up boundaries ...	312
Making time for mindfulness practice.....	313
Enhancing Your Relationships.....	314
Communicating mindfully.....	314
Being mindful of your body language.....	315
Noticing when and why moods change	316
Having realistic expectations and accepting the notion of change	317
Assessing Your Core Values.....	318
Looking at what makes people human.....	319
Seeing how your values agree or conflict with those of other people	320
Accepting the imperfection of human beings	322
Making Mindfulness a Shared Experience.....	322
Considering ways to share mindfulness with other people.....	323
Living in a mindful society.....	323
 Part IV: The Part of Tens	 325
 Chapter 18: Ten Ways to Expand Your Mindfulness Experience . . .	 327
Dropping by the Enter Mindfulness Website.....	327
Checking out the Be Mindful Website.....	328

Visiting the Mindfulnet Website	328
Studying Mindfulness Formally: Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice.....	329
Benefiting from Research at the Oxford Mindfulness Centre	330
Taking a Mindful Breath with Breathworks	330
Attending a Mindfulness Course in Scotland	331
Watching Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter . . . and Spring.....	332
Changing Lives: Doing Time, Doing Vipassana.....	332
Following One Man’s Mindful Recovery: I Am	333

Chapter 19: Checking Out Ten Inspirational People 335

Thich Nhat Hanh: Spreading Mindfulness and Peace.....	335
The Dalai Lama: ‘My Message Is Love’.....	336
Jon Kabat-Zinn: Mindfulness in Medicine.....	337
Ram Dass: Expressing Gratitude.....	338
Eckhart Tolle: Living Moment to Moment.....	338
Melissa Myozen Blacker: Teaching Mindfulness	339
Buddha Maitreya: Living the Path	339
Rick Hanson: Examining the Mindful Brain	340
Jenny Ronayne: Studying Autism	341
Kristin Neff: Focusing on Self-Compassion.....	341

Chapter 20: Surveying (Almost) Ten Inspirational Places to Visit . . . 343

Plumbing the Heights of Mindfulness at Plum Village	343
Attending Quiet Days at the London Insight Meditation Society	344
Finding a Home from Home at Findhorn	344
Channelling Your Inner Bruce Lee at Shaolin Monastery	345
Exploring the Buddha’s Teachings at Gaia House	346
Retreating to the Countryside at Trigonos	347
Enjoying the Food (Mindfully!) at The Abbey	347
Getting the Best of Both Worlds: West-Östliche Weisheit, Benediktushof.....	348
Visiting The Well at Willen	348

Index..... 349

Introduction

When I was young I learned to sing and read very early on but, my mum tells me, I refused to learn how to read the time. Clocks and watches were my enemy. They spoilt my games and forced me to do things I wasn't ready to do at that moment. I resisted until I was seven years old, and then the world got me!

Little children are naturally mindful. They don't want to look at a clock to determine whether playtime is over or whether they're hungry or not; they just play until they're tired or until their stomach rumbles. They enjoy sweets without worrying whether the next portion is going to taste just as good as this one; they climb onto climbing frames and roundabouts in the park because doing so is exciting; they build sandcastles even though they're going to be washed away by the sea. They don't feel guilty about just being and not doing much. They live in the moment completely.

Unfortunately, most adults have lost this immediate experience of life. Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (or MBCT as you'll see throughout this book) may be a way to return, at least temporarily, to these moments of joy, these moments of simply tasting life.

MBCT was developed to help people help themselves. It features in-depth training in meditation and moment-to-moment everyday awareness. More precisely, you can see mindfulness as bringing your awareness deliberately to the present moment and accepting what you find, as opposed to judging it or wanting to change it.

I can't stress enough the importance of being able to just experience life, rather than rushing through it. When you look at your life, do you find yourself being calm and centred, joyful and relaxed? If so, congratulations! The majority of people find that they've less and less time for being, despite all the technological advances you can dream of. In fact these are often your bane rather than your saviour. Perhaps you too find yourself using your mobile or computer tablet while eating, travelling, crossing the road or even when having a conversation.

If you belong to this latter category of ‘human doings’ (rather than ‘human beings’), this book is for you. I demonstrate numerous ways of stepping out of autopilot and moving back into moments of simply being alive. My hope is that this book reminds you that being alive is special and that every moment counts and is precious, because it’s all part of your life experience.

About This Book

Everybody’s talking about MBCT: newspapers and magazines are writing about it; books are being published on it; YouTube is bursting with short videos explaining how to do it. Perhaps a well-meaning friend even gave you this book as a gift. The purpose of *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy For Dummies* is to introduce you to the concept of MBCT, the whys and hows, and whether it may be a life skill that can benefit you. Being a *For Dummies* book, you can choose to pick up a couple of useful tools and meditations or a whole bag full of them, depending on what you choose to read and how much you feel you want to experiment with mindfulness.

This book is helpful for the beginner, who wants a taste of mindfulness and maybe to take things further step by step, as well as for the more experienced meditator, who may find a number of new insights and perspectives on the subject.

I want you to read this book in the way that helps you most. I’ve done my best to create something that gives you the insights and tools to help you cope better with the various upheavals that life may throw at you. I sincerely hope that you don’t need to read all the chapters. You may, however, gain deeper insight into MBCT and the human condition if you skim-read what the different chapters are about: go on, take a peep.

I include many anecdotes, stories, examples, poems, and so on, but place these in grey-tinted boxes called sidebars so you can choose to read or skip them. They enrich your experience (stories and poems have this great way of unfolding complicated facts so that you can feel the truth rather than just know it), but these sidebars aren’t essential to practising mindfulness so skip them if you want to.

Foolish Assumptions

In my line of work I meet many individuals who struggle with aspects of their lives, including clients and therapists alike. So I assume that every person can benefit to a larger or smaller degree from this book. I also assume that you’re genuinely interested in finding out what MBCT is and how it may help you.

I certainly don't assume any existing knowledge about MBCT, mindfulness, cognitive behavioural therapy, meditation or Buddhism.

I lead you gently through the subject and hope that this book becomes a good companion to you over the next few months or years.

Icons Used in This Book

If this book is your first *For Dummies* one, you may not be familiar with the icons used throughout the book. Even if this is your umpteenth *For Dummies* experience, remembering what they stand for is still useful:



This icon points out ideas to help you make your mindfulness voyage smoother.



This icon features essential pieces of guidance that you may want to note down in your diary or read a few times until they sink in.



Sometimes, you have to watch out for specific problems, and I provide advice on avoiding the pitfalls that other people have fallen into beside this icon.



Beside this icon you find exercises, practices and meditations that lead you through something new and inspiring.



Here I demystify therapy language that you may not have come across before.



This book comes with a selection of guided MBCT meditations and exercises. This icon draws your attention to those meditations and exercises for which you can download accompanying audio tracks.

Beyond the Book

As you walk your journey of discovery into the world of MBCT, you can augment what you read here by checking out some of the access-anywhere extra goodies I've hosted for you online.

You can find the book's e-cheat sheet online, at www.dummies.com/cheat-sheet/mindfulnessbasedcognitivetherapyuk. The at-a-glance ideas and tips I offer in this cheat sheet can help you to make room for mindfulness in your life, and to bring mindful attitudes to everyday activities.

I've also recorded a selection of guided meditations and exercises to go along with some of those I've included in the book:

- ✓ **Track One:** Introduction
- ✓ **Track Two:** Making yourself comfortable, Chapter 4
- ✓ **Track Three:** The body scan practice, Chapter 4
- ✓ **Track Four:** Ten-minute sound meditation, Chapter 5
- ✓ **Track Five:** Mindful breathing exercise, Chapter 5
- ✓ **Track Six:** Allowing awareness of sound, breath and body meditation, Chapter 6
- ✓ **Track Seven:** Sitting with difficult thoughts meditation, Chapter 7
- ✓ **Track Eight:** Sitting with spacious awareness exercise, Chapter 10
- ✓ **Track Nine:** Mindful walking exercise, Chapter 12

You can access these audio tracks online, at www.dummies.com/go/mindfulnessbasedcognitivetherapyuk.

Additionally, you can also find bonus content online, at www.dummies.com/extras/mindfulnessbasedcognitivetherapyuk, which includes an extra Part of Tens chapter: 'Ten (Plus One) Tips for Developing Mindful Attitudes'.

Where to Go from Here

I've been leading MBCT courses for more than a decade, and over the years I've discovered plenty about what works and what doesn't. I do my best to convey this knowledge to you, so that you can make practical use of it in your own time and at your leisure.

You can read this book in any order you like. I suggest, however, that you read Chapter 1 initially and then skim through the Table of Contents to pick out what seems most interesting to you. If you have a specific issue you want

to tackle quickly, you can turn to the relevant chapter in Part III, such as Chapter 12 for depression or Chapter 16 for handling retirement, for example.

My guess is that when you understand how essential mindfulness is for surviving mentally and physically in this frenetic world, you may feel inspired to engage more deeply and start the eight-session voyage into mindfulness that forms the core of this book in Chapters 4 to 11. Whether you choose to take eight weeks or eight months, these sessions are the best way of getting your head round the topic and installing enough mindful ways of being into your brain and daily life.

If you get infected with the mindfulness bug, you may even set up a group with others and meditate together. Sitting in a circle can be particularly powerful and unifying; connecting with others and experiencing kindness. Be well!

6

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy For Dummies _____

Part I

Introducing Mindfulness- Based Cognitive Therapy



For Dummies can help you get started with lots of subjects. Visit www.dummies.com to learn more and do more with *For Dummies*.

In this part...

- ✔ Grasp what purpose mindfulness-based cognitive therapy has and how it is used as a treatment tool, and discover how it can enable you to tackle and live with problems, struggles and challenges.
- ✔ Know the importance of experience and of being in the present moment as central aspects of mindfulness-based cognitive therapy.
- ✔ Understand yourself and the problems you face in your life today, and get motivated to make a real change for the better.
- ✔ Learn how to use mindfulness-based cognitive therapy to let go of pointless ruminative thinking and to help you focus on *now*.
- ✔ See the benefits of regular mindfulness-based cognitive therapy practice, and prepare yourself for and successfully personalise an eight-week voyage into mindfulness to suit you.

Chapter 1

Improving Your Wellbeing with Mindfulness

In This Chapter

- ▶ Introducing MBCT
 - ▶ Perceiving its purpose
 - ▶ Focusing on the benefits
-

The person who's never worried, faced challenges, suffered pain or struggled with life has never existed. Every single person (however rich or materially successful) experiences difficulties, simply as a part of being alive. So don't worry – you're not alone! Therefore, the issue isn't to try and avoid or run away from problems (that's futile), but to find a healthy way to tackle or live with them, without adding to your original suffering.

I believe that mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is a great technique for doing just that, first because it worked for me and second because research proves that mindfulness can convey a sense of meaning and purpose to life, based on the understanding that everything in life is interconnected.

In this chapter I introduce you to the basic concept of MBCT, how it works and how you can use it to improve your life and wellbeing. I describe two central aspects of MBCT that crop up throughout this book: the importance of experience and of trying to be in the present moment. I also provide a brief taster of some of the useful skills you can pick up as you practise the meditations and exercises in this book.



Although the term may seem a bit forbidding at first glance, MBCT isn't something reserved for academic experts or an elite group of super-dedicated Eastern monks. Quite the reverse: MBCT is a practice for you to use in your own way and integrate into your personal life to help combat your personal

demons. Whatever your background, culture, religion, experience, age, and so on, MBCT can work for you. After all, if suffering is a universal fact of being human, the world needs a universal approach to dealing with it.

Placing the Power in Your Hands: Discovering MBCT

In this section I introduce you to the nature of MBCT practice, which helps you overcome personal problems by increasing your understanding about the reality of the world you live in and your own thoughts and behaviours. I describe the term MBCT, break down its components of Eastern philosophy and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), and explain how these aspects integrate so effectively in MBCT.



The essence of MBCT is discovering how to let go of negative thinking and behaviour patterns.

You certainly don't need to know anything about the historical development of MBCT to practise it successfully but if you're interested, check out the nearby sidebar 'A brief history lesson: East meets West' for a little background.

A brief history lesson: East meets West

MBCT is a fusing of two distinct techniques: the Eastern, Buddhist philosophy of meditation and everyday mindfulness and the Western psychological treatment called cognitive behavioural therapy. First created and used as a group-intervention tool to prevent relapse into depression, MBCT is used today as a path of healing for loads of mental and physical health issues.

MBCT was developed by three clinical psychologists: Mark Williams, John Teasdale and Zindel Segal. They all studied mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), a programme based on mindfulness meditation and yoga that Jon Kabat-Zinn created in the US to help people with chronic pain and illness. For more on Jon

and on MBSR, turn to the later sidebars 'The work of Jon Kabat-Zinn' and 'MBSR: The forerunner to MBCT', respectively.

These early practitioners discovered that even negligible increases in sadness reactivated depressive thinking patterns in formerly depressed people. But an experiment showed that MBCT significantly reduced the recurrence of depression in people who had experienced clinical depression more than twice; in fact it halved the recurrence of depression in this group. To confirm its effectiveness, the experiment was repeated a few years later and the positive results were repeated.

Encountering the term MBCT

Don't let the apparent jumble of consonants of MBCT put you off! Its meaning is pretty straightforward.



The 'M' stands for *mindfulness*, which you can see quite simply as the practice of bringing your awareness deliberately to the present moment in time and experiencing it without judgement or expectation. Mindfulness isn't about intense concentration or effort. In fact, most little children are quite naturally mindful, such as when they're absorbed in flying a kite and being amazed, eating a delicious ice cream or building sandcastles. Children have the enviable ability of living in the present moment without any reason for doing a particular thing. In this sense, they live life to the full.

Although adults often lose this natural ability as they mature, mindfulness can reconnect you to this sense of pure living without constantly feeling that you need to create purpose.

And the other letters? Well:

- ✓ B stands for *based*, as in 'derived from' or 'connected to' (but you knew that, didn't you!).
- ✓ C stands for *cognitive*, which refers to the thinking, planning and measuring part of your brain.
- ✓ T stands for *therapy*: the treatment of disorders and illnesses. (Interestingly, *therapia* is a Greek word meaning 'walking a path together for a while', so you can see me as walking with you for these eight weeks. The rest of your life then continues to deepen your practice.)

Essentially, MBCT is about becoming more aware of how you think and behave in order to help improve your life.

Drawing on Buddhist philosophy



Although MBCT draws on techniques from Buddhist mindfulness meditation, Zen, yoga, Taoism and Christian mysticism, MBCT isn't a spiritual path in itself. It's a secular form of meditations and exercises aimed at reducing your suffering.

That said, traditional Buddhist philosophy is a central part of MBCT. This philosophy emphasises the importance of direct personal experience, as opposed to just studying a theory. Meditation, therefore, is the path that connects theory with practice. The goal of mindfulness is to observe your mind

in depth. In order to develop profound insight into the unfolding of life and the meaning you give it, you need to observe your mind deeply and regularly, and question what you find out.

Awareness, as seen in the Buddhist context, refers to a certain kind of focusing in the present moment: with alertness, openness, objectivity and non-judgement.



When practising mindfulness, try as best as you can to observe everything that arises; experience thoughts without adding emotional memories from the past that may taint them as positive or negative. Furthermore, try to experience awareness of the present moment as an unbroken progression, coming and going, without being censored or interpreted, or held on to or pushed away.

In this book's eight-week course (which I introduce in Chapter 3 and cover week-by-week in Chapters 4 to 11), I encourage you to experience mindfully every single moment of your life (however apparently mundane) as something special and almost miraculous – to allow life to unfold itself moment by moment. In other words, when you eat, just eat; and when you walk, just walk!

One practical example that's a central part of Buddhist meditation is just focusing your attention on your breath. By this simple act of anchoring awareness on the breath, you start breathing more deeply, which leads to a more peaceful and focused awareness moment to moment. In a sense, meditation is a way of befriending yourself, because with practice you tend to experience life with less anger and more acceptance.

The work of Jon Kabat-Zinn

The vision of molecular biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn made the application of mindfulness to medicine and psychotherapy possible. A keen practitioner of yoga and Buddhist meditation for more than a decade, he was inspired by the benefits these traditions brought him. He was convinced that others could improve their own wellbeing as well, by adopting these practices in their own lives.

His goal was to make mindfulness available as a life-enhancing skill for all and to 'translate' parts of Buddhist wisdom and philosophy. He hoped to reduce suffering where it was mainly caused by unhelpful thinking, expectations and behaviours. He wrapped the wisdom of the East into a digestible form for people in the West.

For more on Jon Kabat-Zinn, flip to Chapter 19.

Working together

Dr Aaron Beck, a psychiatrist and the founding father of CBT, was frustrated with his attempts to treat patients suffering from major episodes of depression with psychoanalytical therapy in the 1960s. He concluded that the notion and motto of the analytical approach that patients need to suffer was simply unnecessary and even damaging at times. He applied psychoanalysis to patients, at times for more than six years, without seeing significant changes. In some cases, they responded so negatively that they attempted suicide.

In contrast, in CBT the therapeutic relationship is extremely important and focuses on empathy, genuineness, respect, warmth and unconditional positive regard. The client and therapist work as a team to resolve problems and two-way feedback is encouraged. Goals for change are identified and agreed upon. Even the therapist's mistakes are admitted and the client suggests solutions when therapy gets stuck. In fact, you could say that clients are trained to become their own therapists.



Keep a look out for these aspects that I revisit repeatedly throughout this book. They're central to the exercises I provide and to the attitude I invite you to have when practising mindfulness: bringing awareness to this moment you've selected and doing so without judgement. So, if you choose to focus on your breath and your mind flits off occasionally, you just kindly and patiently bring it back and start over.

Developing from CBT

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) is one of the most highly recommended and respected talking therapies of the 21st century (for some background, see the nearby sidebar 'Working together'), and can be defined as an active, directive, time-limited, structured approach used to treat a variety of mental problems such as depression, anxiety, phobias, stress, pain, and so on.

CBT mainly focuses on the here and now, and the therapist accompanies the client towards chosen goals. In this sense, CBT (and MBCT) is *client driven* and you choose what you want to work on throughout the whole therapy. As with MBCT, you're also advised to use a notebook to record insights, just as I do in this book (check out Chapters 3 and 4 for more about creating your personal mindfulness diary).

MBSR: The forerunner to MBCT

MBSR is a group-based programme, designed and developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues at the University of Massachusetts, for people with a wide range of physical and mental health problems. It comprises an eight-week course and has been used to treat patients within a large traditional American hospital since 1979.

By 1999 over 10,000 patients had completed the course and it was extended into prisons, deprived inner-city areas, schools, and professional sport and corporate environments. MBSR is now a recognised part of behavioural medicine and general healthcare. Its potential

lies not only in treatment, but also in prevention of 'dis-ease'!

MBSR uses the ancient tradition of mindfulness in an accessible, secular format and helps participants to conquer their difficulties when suffering from a variety of physical and psychological illnesses. MBSR research shows positive results for participants with chronic pain, fibromyalgia, multiple sclerosis, psoriasis, generalised anxiety disorder and panic attacks, and some forms of cancer, among other ailments. The programme involves intensive training in mindfulness meditation, yoga movements and discussions on stress and life skills.

During CBT treatment sessions, problems are uncovered and assessed constantly. Problems are identified and therapy helps you to shed light on how your thoughts and emotions, physical health, relationships and general daily functioning, are interrelated. The treatment plan is created early on but constantly reviewed and expanded; plus a specific timeframe is set and adhered to.

Integrating mindfulness and CBT into MBCT

MBCT is based on an integration of CBT components with Eastern mindfulness meditations (check out the preceding section and the earlier 'Drawing on Buddhist philosophy', respectively), as well as mindful movement skills. It aims to increase your understanding about your particular difficulty (such as anxiety, chronic fatigue, chronic pain and illness, depression, eating disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, sleeping difficulties, stress, and so on).

For example, in the case of depression (to which I devote the whole of Chapter 12), you're given information about the universal characteristics of depression to help you recognise your personal *relapse signatures* (behaviours and thinking patterns peculiar to you – when you know the signals that indicate you may be slipping back into depression, you can nip it in the bud). The pattern of behaviour that makes people vulnerable to depressive relapse is called *ruminating*. When ruminating, the mind repetitively reruns