

# MINDFUL EDGE

## LESSON 5 HOW DO THOUGHTS IMPACT EMOTIONS & BEHAVIOURS?

1. WHAT IS  
STRESS?

2. WHAT IS  
MINDFULNESS?

3. HOW TO  
PRACTICE  
MINDFULNESS?

6. HOW DO  
EMOTIONS IMPACT  
THOUGHTS &  
BEHAVIOURS?

7. HOW TO  
BEFRIEND  
STRONG  
EMOTIONS?

8. WHAT IS THE  
SCIENCE OF  
HAPPINESS?

4. WHAT IS THE  
NEUROSCIENCE  
OF  
MINDFULNESS?

**My Mindful Journey Reflective Journal**  
**Mindful Edge Interactive™**  
Skill for Being with the Ups and Downs of Life  
(Stress Management and Life Strategies for Youth)  
for use with [MindfulEdge.ca](http://MindfulEdge.ca) interactive website for Youth

Curriculum Authors: Heidi Bornstein | Stephen Chadwick | Naomi Nurgitz | Natalia Fister

All content is protected by copyright Mindful Edge™ | Redistribution, replication or commercial use is prohibited without the expressed written permission of Mindfulness Everyday who is the sole owner and copyright holder of this property.

For more information on educational programs and materials, please contact us at [info@mindfulnesseveryday.org](mailto:info@mindfulnesseveryday.org) | Mindfulness Everyday is a registered Canadian charity #83693 3507 RR0001

# HOW DO THOUGHTS IMPACT EXPERIENCE?

**WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THOUGHTS?**

WHY DO I BELIEVE WHAT I DO?

**Watch Your Thoughts....**

Watch your **THOUGHTS**, for they become **WORDS**.

Watch your **WORDS**, for they become **ACTIONS**.

Watch your **ACTIONS**, for they become **HABITS**.

Watch your **CHARACTER**, for it becomes your **DESTINY**.

Watch your **HABITS**, for they become **CHARACTER**.

**Key Points About Thoughts**

They can be observed, not always acted on

Thoughts aren't always true

Negative self-talk affects focus and mood

Mindfulness builds self-compassion

**Don't Believe Everything You Think**

**1. IS IT TRUE?**  
Often this is just an autopiloted reaction

**2. IS IT ABSOLUTELY TRUE?**  
Can it be seen differently?

*If you are stuck on a negative thought, check in...*

**3. HOW DOES THIS THOUGHT MAKE ME FEEL?**  
Name the emotion (sad, angry, hurt, jealous)

**4. HOW WOULD THINGS BE IF YOU COULD LET GO OF THE THOUGHT?**  
How would things change if it's different?

**IS IT TRUE?**

**Fact Checking Thoughts**

Thoughts aren't always facts

- Is it exaggerated?
- Is it justified?
- Is it appropriate for the present moment?
- Is it a reaction from the past?

**Not all thoughts are false—some are valid.**  
Differentiate and choose your response wisely.

**5 Thought Influencers**

- 1. Implicit Bias:** Automatic judgments that affect behaviour
- 2. Cognitive Dissonance:** Discomfort when beliefs and actions don't align
- 3. Cognitive Distortions:** Mental filters that increase anxiety and negative thinking
- 4. Unconscious Bias:** Stereotypes we hold without awareness
- 5. Culture, Gender and Families:** Shapes how we see and interpret the world

**WHO OR WHAT INFLUENCES MY THINKING?**

**COUNTERACTING THE UNKIND MIND COMPLETE THE REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**How to Counteract the Inner Critic**

Inner Critic Unkind Mind → Inner Ally Inner Friend

**HOW LOUD IS MY INNER CRITIC?**

**Healthy Self-Talk**

**TURN THIS INTO THIS**

- No one likes me.
- I'm so stupid.
- I give up. I'll never be able to do this.
- I never get anything right.
- I'm not good enough.

- I Like me.
- Whoops. I am a mistake
- This is really hard but I'm going to keep trying.
- I haven't figured it out ...yet.
- I am enough. And worthy too.

**Self-Assessment - Self-Criticism - Self-Compassion**

**WHICH ONE MOTIVATES YOU? COMPLETE THE REFLECTION QUESTIONS**

**Self-Assessment:**  
Kindly and honestly identify areas for growth to support improvement.

**Self-Criticism:**  
Harshly judge yourself for mistakes or shortcomings, which can reduce motivation.

**Self-Compassion:**  
Offer yourself support and encouragement after reflecting on areas for growth.

**WHEN WE FAIL, MAKE MISTAKES, FEEL INADEQUATE, FACE CHALLENGE AND DIFFICULTIES**

**PRACTICE WATCHING THOUGHTS HERE!**

**Thought Watching on the sidewalk...**

PLANNING, JUDGEMENTAL THOUGHTS, KIND THOUGHTS, RUMINATING THOUGHTS, IMAGING THE FUTURE, REMEMBERING THE PAST, WORRYING, CREATIVE IDEAS

## DON'T BELIEVE EVERYTHING YOU THINK

*If you are stuck on a negative thought, check in...*

❖ *Are you stuck in a negative thought? What is it?*

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

❖ **Check in:**

|                                                            |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Is it true?                                             |  |
| 2. Is it absolutely true?                                  |  |
| 3. How does this thought make me feel?                     |  |
| 4. How would things be if you could let go of the thought? |  |

## FACT CHECKING THOUGHTS



Thoughts aren't always facts. Consider:

*Is it exaggerated?*

*Is it justified?*

*Is it appropriate for the present moment?*

*Is it a reaction from the past?*

❖ *Can you recall a situation when you believed something that later turned out to be untrue? Perhaps something you thought you overheard or found out on social media?*

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

❖ *How did you uncover the truth?*

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## COUNTERACTING THE UNKIND MIND - THE INNER CRITIC

Your inner critic is the voice of self-doubt that tries to protect you from failure or rejection; sometimes it can be overly critical. You can reprogram and soften this internal Unkind Mind using a few practical approaches.

Practicing and implementing specific techniques can help develop a supportive inner voice, shift your mindset and build a healthier relationship with yourself:

- **The Friend Rule:** A great starting rule is to not say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to a good friend.
- **Replace Negative Self-talk** with positive affirmations. Simple phrases like "I am enough" can redirect your thoughts.

**Complete these reflective questions:**

| Ways I am mean to myself                                                        | Ways I am kind to my friends                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Write down some of the things that you say to yourself when you make a mistake. | Write down some of the things that you say to a friend when they make a mistake. |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                  |
|                                                                                 |                                                                                  |

❖ **Can you treat yourself the way you treat a good friend? Why/Why not?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

❖ **Practice reframing unhelpful thoughts into positive ones. Complete the chart below...**

| Negative Self-talk thought<br>Write down some of the things that you say to yourself when you make a mistake. | Positive Affirmation<br>Replace them with a positive thought that is true for you, even if you don't fully believe it yet. |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                            |
|                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                            |

**Positive self-talk is the practice of using an encouraging, compassionate internal dialogue to challenge negative thoughts and boost emotional well-being.**

**This habit helps lower stress, increase resilience, and improve overall confidence.**

## SELF-ASSESSMENT - SELF-CRITICISM - SELF-COMPASSION

❖ Which motivates you when you fail, make mistakes, feel inadequate, face challenge and difficulties.

| Self-criticism:                                                                                                                                                                                          | Self-assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Self-compassion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Subjectively look at areas for improvement impatiently, judgmentally and with a sense of "I'm lacking" (that can sometimes become so unkind and demoralizing that we give are paralyzed into in-action). | Objectively look at areas for improvement with a kind, hopeful and patient attitude to motivate us to get the desired outcome.                                                                                              | After Self-assessing, we give ourselves support and encouragement rather than being cold and judgmental.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| · I suck at math; everyone else is doing better It doesn't matter if I study so why bother.                                                                                                              | · I need to improve in math (objective).<br>· If I come in for extra help and study more, I'm sure my mark will go up over time (patient I hope my parents understand if I tell them my game plan moving forward (hopeful). | · Math is really hard for me, even when I try.<br>· This makes it hard for me to stay motivated. I need to try to stay positive even if others don't have faith in me.<br>· I'm going to use the Pomodoro technique and give myself a treat for every 1/2 hr. of studying. |

❖ Write your own example of a self-critical thought.

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

**NOTICE AND NAME  
THE CHALLENGE**

This is tough

**CONNECT TO COMMON  
HUMANITY**

Many people are  
in similar situations

**BE KIND TO  
YOURSELF**

What do I need  
right now ?

❖ How could you turn it into a self-compassion thought?

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

## THOUGHT PARTY ACTIVITY

❖ *Do we ever have a teacher's voice in our heads saying something critical? A parent's voice? A sibling's voice? A voice from the future?*

❖ *What are some negative thoughts that you might have when faced with challenges?*

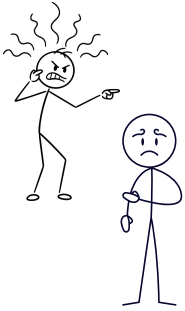
❖ *Are these thoughts helpful?*

Let's do a simple writing activity that examines this tendency that many of us have.

| Person might say | Not Helpful                                      | Helpful                                         |
|------------------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Teacher          | "there will be no makeup test"                   | "you got this; you have worked hard to prepare: |
| Parent           | "you need to up your grades to get into uni"     | "just do the best you can, that is enough."     |
| Sibling          | "it's not a big deal whether you do well or not" | "I admire the way you prepare for things:       |
| Friend           | "why are you always studying?"                   | "I miss hanging out with you."                  |
| Self             | "I hate math"                                    | "I can do this"                                 |

Fill in your own phrases that are meaningful to you. Remember, you can make the choice to replace an unhelpful thought with a helpful thought.

## COUNTERACTING THE UNKIND MIND - THE INNER CRITIC



Your inner critic is the voice of self-doubt that tries to protect you from failure or rejection; sometimes it can be overly critical. You can reprogram and soften this internal Unkind Mind using a few practical approaches.

Practicing and implementing specific techniques can help develop a supportive inner voice, shift your mindset and build a healthier relationship with yourself:

- **The Friend Rule:** A great starting rule is to not say anything to yourself that you wouldn't say to a good friend.
- **Replace Negative Self-talk** with positive affirmations. Simple phrases like "I am enough" can redirect your thoughts.

**Complete these reflective questions:**

| <b>Ways I am mean to myself</b><br>Write down some of the things that you say to yourself when you make a mistake. | <b>Ways I am kind to my friends</b><br>Write down some of the things that you say to a friend when they make a mistake. |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         |
|                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                         |

❖ **Can you treat yourself the way you treat a good friend? Why/Why not?**

|  |
|--|
|  |
|  |

❖ **Practice reframing unhelpful thoughts into positive ones. Complete the chart below...**

| <b>Negative Self-talk thought</b><br>Write down some of the things that you say to yourself when you make a mistake. | <b>Positive Affirmation</b><br>Replace them with a positive thought that is true for you, even if you don't fully believe it yet. |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                   |
|                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                   |

Positive self-talk is the practice of using an encouraging, compassionate internal dialogue to challenge negative thoughts and boost emotional well-being. This habit helps lower stress, increase resilience, and improve overall confidence.

## LESSON 5 EVALUATION: HOW DO THOUGHTS IMPACT EXPERIENCE?

❖ Which idea(s) and practices from the *How Do Thoughts Impact Emotions and Behaviour?* lesson did you find supportive/helpful/interesting that you might try and incorporate into your daily life?

| Lesson Components |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arriving          | Listening to the Bell                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Check-in          | Triangle of Awareness & Thoughts                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Breathing         | Comparing Breath Awareness vs Circle Breathing                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Focus             | Thought Watching                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Movement          | Chair Flow With Eagle Arms                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Thoughts          | Information, Activities and Practices – please specify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't Believe Everything You Think</li> <li>• Fact-Checking Thoughts</li> <li>• Thought Influencers</li> <li>• Culture, Gender &amp; Families on Thought</li> <li>• Self-talk and Negativity Bias</li> </ul> |
| Mindful Attitudes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letting Go</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Healthy Habits    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play Time</li> <li>• Rest- Down Time</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

❖ Please list 1 thing you might try to incorporate into your daily life.

❖ What did you like least about this lesson or found challenging?