

# GETTING STARTED WITH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness practices bring many benefits but don't have to be overwhelming. Like many habits, the more we practice, the better we get, but we don't have to be experts before we can start. Here are some ideas for getting started with mindfulness in small doses in a variety of ways until you hit your stride.

- 1. Mindful Mornings.** Are you aware of how you start the day? Even before you get out of bed, take some deep breaths, use a favorite centering prayer, or pause to be aware of how the various parts of your body feel.
- 2. Working Ways.** When you sit in your chair, let yourself feel your body come into contact with the chair, the floor, the desk, or other physical tools of your profession. Draw a breath and let it out slowly before moving on to be physically present to another dimension of your space before being lost in the rush of tasks.
- 3. The Best Intentions.** We all have things we have to *do* every day that consume most of our time. It only takes a few seconds to choose something that we want to *be* today—kind, calm, patient. What value is on your heart that you want to embrace in this moment?
- 4. Noticing Senses.** Try using a sense you don't usually focus on. Close your eyes and listen. Stop moving and be still. Inhale deeply the fragrances around you. Touch a new texture. In that moment, what is that sense of discovery like?
- 5. All the Feels.** We do so much on auto-pilot, from small tasks like brushing our teeth to important tasks like how we fuel our bodies or have conversations. For one minute, turn off auto-pilot. What does it feel like to brush your teeth? To scratch the dog's chin? To inhale clean laundry?
- 6. The Real Truth.** When you have a self-deprecating thought, nip the rumination in the bud by speaking truth out loud. Say something positive and admirable about yourself, take a deep breath, and sit with the truth for a moment before moving on.
- 7. Flickering Flames.** Light a candle and simply watch it flicker and dance. Let the simple movement of the light calm you. You are not trying to think about anything or accomplish anything but simply notice.
- 8. Soothing Showers.** A warm shower already has a calming effect for many people. Use it as an opportunity to intentionally slow down, notice the sensory experience and observe your thoughts without judging them.
- 9. Ritual Richness.** Your own mini-ceremony for anything from how you prepare your tea to clearing your desk—and your mind—at the end of the day can create calming space for you to better manage stress in your life.
- 10. Cool Spots.** Choose a spot where you can be alone for five minutes—even in the midst of a group of people, such as on a bus or subway ride. Anywhere you can close your eyes, breathe intentionally, and observe your senses will help reduce stress.