MINDFULNESS EXERCISES

A TEACHER'S GUIDE

How to Teach Mindfulness & Meditation

Teaching with confidence and credibility

8 lessons · 3 ready-to-teach scripts · a trauma-safety checklist

By Sean Fargo — Founder of Mindfulness Exercises, former Buddhist monk, and trained instructor for Search Inside Yourself, the mindfulness program born at Google.

INTERNATIONALLY ACCREDITED TEACHER TRAINING · CPD & IMMA ACCREDITED · LEAD TEACHER IMTA-CERTIFIED

BEFORE WE BEGIN

The world needs more mindfulness and meditation teachers

Maybe you've felt a quiet pull toward a calmer, kinder way of being — the kind the people around you could use more of. This guide is about turning that pull into the confidence to teach. And the timing has rarely been better: since the pandemic, the demand for mindfulness teachers has grown in places most of us never expected — schools, hospitals, corporations, coaching practices, the military, local communities, and online.

This guide gathers the foundational trainings and tools we've accumulated over years of teaching mindfulness in some of the most demanding settings imaginable — maximum-security prisons, children's programs, healthcare systems, and global corporations. The aim is to save you from spending hundreds of hours and tens of thousands of dollars before you ever help your first person.

One idea runs through everything that follows: teaching mindfulness is simple. Not always easy, but simple.

Anyone can teach mindfulness who brings sincerity, compassion, and a few solid tools — you don't need to be a master, or calm all the time. You need to care, and to keep learning.

WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS

1. The foundation of all effective mindfulness teaching
2. Overcoming self-doubt, fear of judgment, and imposter syndrome
3. The essential fundamentals for introducing mindfulness to anyone
4. Three techniques to make mindfulness practical and relevant
5. The templates and credentials used by respected professionals
6. How to lead guided meditations with authenticity and creativity
7. Simple trauma-sensitive methods to keep people safe
8. The number-one ingredient for lasting impact

Each chapter follows the same shape: first the story of how I learned the lesson, then how we can put it into practice today. And if you're in a hurry, the three ready-to-read scripts begin near the end — start there. Let's begin.

CHAPTER ONE

The Foundation of All Effective Mindfulness Teaching

Mindfulness is simply gentle awareness of our moment-to-moment experience — noticing our thoughts, emotions, and sensations as they unfold, without judging them to be good or bad, right or wrong. We are being present with what is, whether it's pleasant or not.

Meditation is usually a more formal way of cultivating that same awareness: mindfulness of breathing, the body scan, mindful walking, mindful eating, self-compassion practice, and so on. Thousands of clinical studies link mindfulness to improvements in mental and emotional health, focus, physical health, self-awareness, workplace wellbeing, and relationships.

But underneath all of those techniques sits one quality that makes a mindfulness teacher effective. Here is how I learned what it is.

From 2006 to 2009 I lived in Thailand and China doing business. I was burned out — working seven days a week, on the other side of the world, doing something that didn't align with my values.

Searching for clarity, I stumbled upon an old Taoist hermit on the outskirts of Beijing who was known for teaching a few foreigners how to meditate. He barely spoke English. He was small, with a shiny, peaceful face and soft, flowing clothes, and his presence radiated a quiet strength. His name was Wei, which means power in Mandarin.

Our first meeting, he made tea and we sipped in silence for an hour. Our second, we walked slowly in figure-eights through an old forest grove, again in silence. There was very little teaching through words — it was teaching through presence. In our third meeting he asked me to count my exhales from one to ten and back again. I couldn't even reach ten. My mind was that scattered.

On our fourth meeting he asked me to sit for thirty minutes and simply sense into my body breathing. After ten minutes my legs were on fire. After fifteen, my body wanted to burst from the stress I'd been carrying. After twenty, I was judging him — who is this guy, this is stupid. After thirty, he rang a bell, the most beautiful sound I'd ever heard, because it meant I could finally move.

I wanted to escape — go get a beer, do anything but feel the discomfort I'd been avoiding. Then I looked into Wei's eyes. They were the eyes of a wise grandfather who knew exactly what I had just been through. He looked at me as if to say, *I'm proud of you. It takes great courage to look within.* And something clicked. The difficulty was part of the practice. It wasn't supposed to be easy — it was supposed to be revealing.

For that meditation and every one after, Wei never asked me to pretend everything was okay or to reach some blissful calm. He asked me to sense into each moment within my window of tolerance, to breathe with what was there, and to let go of the fight with it — to see that discomfort isn't wrong or bad, but a part of being human that tends to soften when we bring gentle, spacious, kind awareness to it. The compassion he showed me was teaching me how to be compassionate with myself.

> *The foundation beneath all good mindfulness teaching is a sense of compassion.*

Putting it into practice

When we teach, our first job is to embody and make explicit the three ingredients of self-compassion. People absorb these far more from how we hold the room than from any definition:

- **Kindness rather than judgment** — meeting what arises with warmth instead of criticism.
- **Common humanity rather than isolation** — remembering that struggle is part of being human, not a personal failing.
- **Present-moment awareness rather than over-identifying** — holding thoughts and feelings without being swept away by any one of them.

It also helps to gently dismantle the myths people carry about compassion — the quiet beliefs that keep them from being kind to themselves. Naming a myth out loud is often enough to loosen its grip:

- "It will undermine my motivation." (In practice, it tends to build motivation, not erode it.)
- "It means letting myself off the hook" — or "it's just feeling sorry for myself."
- "It's the same as self-esteem," "it's selfish," or "it will make me look weak."

A PRACTICE YOU CAN GUIDE: MEETING A DIFFICULT FEELING WITH COMPASSION

1. **Choose a memory.** Invite people to recall something mildly difficult — a frustration, sadness, or stress. Start mild, never the hardest thing.
2. **Rate it.** On a scale of one to ten, how intense is it? Working with the milder end keeps everyone within their window of tolerance.
3. **Feel it in the body.** Where does the emotion actually live? Notice its temperature, weight, and texture — the felt sense, not the story.
4. **Separate sensation from story.** Gently distinguish the raw physical feeling from the thoughts and judgments wrapped around it.
5. **Soften with curiosity.** Breathe with the sensation, letting kindness be present alongside the discomfort. Nothing has to change for this to help.

Finally, help people see how mindfulness and compassion overlap. Mindfulness is gentle moment-to-moment awareness; compassion is that same awareness plus common humanity and kindness. When we bring mindfulness to our own stress, a seed of self-compassion is already there.

> *The hallmark of every good mindfulness teacher is care for others — because we know how hard it can be to open to the raw experience of life.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Deepening this quality of self-compassion is the first thing we practice together inside the Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Certification — it's the ground everything else is built on. **Explore the certification →**

CHAPTER TWO

Overcoming Self-Doubt, Fear of Judgment, and Imposter Syndrome

Ordained as a monk in Thailand.

After meeting Wei, I gave away my possessions, said goodbye to my parents, and entered a Buddhist monastery. I was ordained for two years — in rural Thailand and later in Northern California. I shaved my head, wore robes, slept on a hardwood floor with no pillow, and walked villages with an alms bowl for my one meal a day. It was the hardest and most beautiful thing I've ever done. My heart kept breaking open, and my struggles turned into resilience.

By the end of two years I wanted to share mindfulness with others. But my monastery required ten years before they would even consider letting me teach. I felt trapped. *Why can't I share these simple practices that have helped me so much? Am I not good enough?*

I also felt like an imposter. *I'm not a full master. Will people accept me — just Sean Fargo from Bakersfield, who drank a little in college?* I compared myself to famous teachers and thought maybe I needed to sound like Jack Kornfield or Thich Nhat Hanh or Tara Brach.

I had a recurring nightmare: I'm pushing a shopping cart in a grocery store, turn a corner, and bump into the cart of a very senior, well-respected teacher. He looks at me and says, "I heard you want to teach mindfulness. Who do you think you are?" And I'd wake up sweating, terrified of being found out.

After enough of these nightmares, I was tired of running. So I did something a little scary: I brought mindfulness to the fear itself. I imagined the grocery store, let the fear arise, and felt it in my body — heat in the forehead, constriction around the heart, butterflies in the belly. Instead of reacting with shame, I stayed with the sensations with gentle awareness. *Breathing in, I feel the fear. Breathing out, I feel the fear.* Over time it began to subside.

Then I had the nightmare again. Same store, same cart, same teacher, same question. But this time the fear was gone, and I had an answer: *A lot of people are suffering and want help. I feel called to help them, and I know a few simple practices that can. So who am I not to help them?* The teacher in the dream had nothing to say. The dream dissolved, and I felt free. That was the shift — from fear to service.

Putting it into practice

When fear, doubt, or that imposter feeling shows up, we can meet it the same way I learned to — not by arguing with the thoughts, but by befriending the sensations underneath them.

A PRACTICE FOR IMPOSTER FEAR

1. **Picture the moment.** Imagine yourself teaching, or being questioned, and let the fear arise on purpose.
2. **Locate it.** Find where it lives in the body — the chest, the throat, the belly — and notice its temperature, shape, and size.
3. **Drop the label.** Instead of "fear" or "shame," call it simply energy or sensation, and breathe with it: breathing in, I feel this; breathing out, I feel this.
4. **Remember common humanity.** Nearly every teacher you admire has felt exactly this. You're not uniquely unqualified — you're human.
5. **Offer yourself kindness.** Give yourself the same encouragement you'd give a dear friend who felt this way.

It also helps to take the pressure off. We're not trying to convince anyone of anything — we're simply offering tools for people to try. It isn't about us, and it isn't even about mindfulness; it's about giving people something they can use. Some will take to it, some won't, and either way we're planting seeds.

One reassurance worth holding onto: among senior teachers there's a quiet rule of thumb. When a student is unsure whether they're ready, that's usually a good sign — it points to humility and care. When someone is overly certain they'll change the world with their singular wisdom, that's often the ego talking. So the doubt you may be feeling right now is not a disqualification.

> *Often, it's a qualification.*

"I struggled with imposter syndrome for years. This program gave me a genuine voice, real structure, and practical tools to finally step up with confidence."

— Jennifer M., licensed therapist & certified mindfulness teacher

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TAKE IT FURTHER

The certification's mindset training is built for exactly this — moving from self-doubt to a steady sense of service. And if you're still wondering whether you're ready, that's often the surest sign you are. **Book a free 15-minute call →**

> *Sean is the absolute gold standard for mindfulness training and coaching. He has tremendous depth and breadth — and bone-deep integrity.*
>
> **Dr. Rick Hanson** · New York Times bestselling author of *Resilient* & *Hardwiring Happiness*

CHAPTER THREE

The Essential Fundamentals for Introducing Mindfulness to Anyone

When I left the monastery, I was hired at Spirit Rock Meditation Center to coordinate classes for teachers like Jack Kornfield, Sharon Salzberg, and Tara Brach. I wasn't teaching — I was supporting more than fifty revered teachers and over a hundred thousand students. Jack Kornfield called it my "halfway house" between the monastery and ordinary life.

One day I saw a flyer in the hallway: a photo of three large men meditating in a prison cell, and a call for people who wanted to learn to teach mindfulness to inmates in maximum-security prisons. I was terrified — and it looked like my first real chance to learn how to teach. So I registered, with no idea what I was getting into.

The trainer was Jacques Verduin, who brought mindfulness into prisons across California. Days before we went in, he gave me the most important teaching: introduce mindfulness through experience, not long explanation. Keep it simple and experiential. If people voice skepticism or boredom, welcome it, validate it, honor it.

Then we walked into San Quentin. Hundreds of men in blue uniforms, and I felt every eye on me. We sat in a circle with about thirty inmates, introduced ourselves, and shared our sincere intention to support them. I got to be the assistant — to feel what it's like to teach without being the sole focal point. We led a few short meditations and gently dismantled common misconceptions: that mindfulness means clearing the mind of all thoughts, that you have to be

religious, that it requires incense and silence and years of practice. A few men said it was the first time they'd felt peaceful in a long time.

> *You can't describe the taste of an apple — you have to let people taste it.*

Putting it into practice

A few fundamentals carry almost any first encounter with mindfulness:

- **Welcome skepticism.** We're not here to convince anyone — we're inviting people to try a practice and notice what works for them.
- **Make it non-religious and additive.** Mindfulness isn't a belief system; it can enhance whatever someone already believes.
- **Lead with experience, not concepts.** Keep it informal. It often helps not to announce how long we'll practice — it keeps people with the actual experience.
- **Use "story, teach, tool."** Begin with a short story, name the lesson inside it, then offer a simple tool people can use right away.

It also helps to clear away the misconceptions that stop people before they start. Gently name what mindfulness isn't: it isn't about emptying the mind of all thoughts; it doesn't require religion, incense, or silence; and it doesn't take years of practice before it helps.

A REFLECTION TO MAKE THE VALUE PERSONAL

1. **Look back.** Ask: how has a lack of gentle awareness affected your life so far — your relationships, your work, your peace of mind?
2. **Look forward.** And how might that same lack affect you in ten or twenty years, if nothing changes?
3. **Now reverse it.** How might more presence change those same areas — your relationships, your work, your sense of self?

When you want to cultivate appreciation for life itself, there's a practice many traditions call the most powerful of all: sensing that this very breath could be your last. Held lightly, this awareness of impermanence wakes us up to the preciousness of the moment we're already in.

And for those who want a rigorous map of what skillful teaching actually involves, the Mindfulness-Based Interventions: Teaching Assessment Criteria (MBI:TAC) is the field's most widely used framework. It was developed by Rebecca Crane and colleagues at Bangor University, and it describes six domains of competent teaching.

THE SIX DOMAINS OF SKILLFUL TEACHING · MBI:TAC

1. **Coverage, pacing & organization.** Hold a clear plan for the session — lightly and responsively — so the right things are covered, at a humane pace.
2. **Relational skills.** The quality of connection: authenticity, warmth, curiosity, and respect for each person in the room.
3. **Embodying mindfulness.** Actually living the qualities you teach — present, unhurried, responsive — in how you speak and listen.
4. **Guiding practices.** Leading meditations clearly and from your own experience, with language and pacing that invite rather than instruct.
5. **Conveying themes through inquiry and teaching.** Drawing out the learning through dialogue, and offering clear, well-timed teaching points.
6. **Holding the group.** Creating a safe, inclusive container where people feel able to learn together.

You don't have to master all six at once. Treat them as a compass for where to grow next.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Our self-paced Mindfulness Teaching Fundamentals course walks through all of this step by step — for groups or individuals, online or in person. It's included in the certification. **Explore the certification →**

CHAPTER FOUR

Three Techniques to Make Mindfulness Practical and Relevant

After teaching in a couple of prisons, a colleague at Spirit Rock asked if I'd help share mindfulness with children in their family program. I said yes — and then panicked. Muscle-bound inmates are one thing; little kids are another. Kids tell you exactly what's on their mind. *What if they don't like me? What if they run all over me?*

So before my first session, I asked the family program a lot of questions. What has worked for other teachers with these kids? What hasn't? What do they want and need? What can they actually be mindful of?

In my first class, I listened to the energy each child brought, asked how they were feeling, and we brought mindfulness to whatever was actually present. I offered options: sense the belly rising and falling, feel an emotion in the body, or name five sounds, five colors, five sensations. They appreciated it far more than a rigid curriculum.

At the end I asked each child what they liked and didn't like, and the next week I checked in with the parents at pickup. Preparing, listening, and asking turned each session into a better one.

Putting it into practice

Three movements make our teaching far more relevant than almost anyone else's: prepare, listen, and ask.

PREPARE — BEFORE YOU TEACH

1. **Sketch your avatar.** Get specific about who you're serving: their age and background, their values and lifestyle, and the daily challenges they're actually facing.
2. **Learn their language.** Note the exact words they use for their struggles and goals — "overwhelmed," "wired and tired," "stuck" — and use those words back to them.
3. **Adapt the practice.** Choose and frame techniques for their world, not yours. The same breath practice lands very differently for nurses, executives, and teenagers.

Listen — while you teach. Meet people exactly where they are. Bring mindfulness to whatever is actually present in the room — the restlessness, the skepticism, the tiredness — rather than marching through a fixed plan. Relate the practice to what they value and the challenge they walked in with.

ASK — AFTER YOU TEACH

1. **Gather a number.** "On a scale of one to ten, how would you rate your stress right now?" — asked before and after — lets you see change over time.
2. **Gather a story.** "In your own words, what did you notice?" surfaces the human detail that numbers miss.
3. **Use what you learn.** Let the feedback shape your next session. Most teachers never ask — doing it consistently is what makes you stand out.

> *Preparing, listening, and asking is the difference between performing a practice at people and teaching it with them.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Inside the certification you'll get the templates, practice sessions, and personalized feedback that make "prepare, listen, ask" second nature. **Explore the certification →**

CHAPTER FIVE

The Templates and Credentials Used by

Respected Professionals

Teaching inmates and children was illuminating, but it wasn't what I'd pictured. I grew curious about how teachers from Spirit Rock were working in healthcare, corporations, schools, and global organizations. How do ordinary people teach mindfulness in a workplace or a coaching practice?

So I asked one of my teachers how he taught at Google. He'd started by getting certified through an accredited coaching program called New Ventures West. I applied, received a scholarship, and over two years earned an accredited certification. Around the same time, I met Meng Tan, the founder of Search Inside Yourself, the mindfulness program born at Google, and within a year I became an instructor for the program.

Both programs were roughly $10,000, in-person, time-intensive, and offered little personalized support. They taught beautifully — but in retrospect, what they really gave me boiled down to two things: teaching templates that provided accepted, engaging structures, and accredited certification that opened doors and gave me credibility. Those two things springboarded my confidence and my career.

Putting it into practice

You don't need to spend $10,000 to get what matters. Aim for the same two things those programs really gave me: solid teaching templates, and a credential people trust.

For templates, a couple of resources are worth keeping on your shelf. *A Clinician's Guide to Teaching Mindfulness* by Christiane Wolf and J. Greg Serpa offers a complete, session-by-session program — class outlines, guided practices, and detailed guidance on inquiry — that adapts well beyond clinical settings. And the MBI:TAC framework (from Chapter Three) doubles as a self-assessment tool: after a class, you can honestly ask how you did across its six domains, and pick one to strengthen next time.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A CERTIFICATION

1. **Real accreditation.** Is it recognized by an independent body (for example CPD or IMMA) that your setting will accept?
2. **Templates you can use.** Does it hand you scripts, slides, and session structures — not just theory?
3. **Ongoing support.** Is there mentorship and a community, or are you on your own once the course ends?
4. **Lifetime access and fair cost.** Can you revisit the material later, without recurring fees you'll resent?

Whatever path you choose, remember the principle underneath it.

> *Templates gave me the structure I needed; an accredited credential gave me the doors. Those two things built my career.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

This is exactly why we built our program: premium teaching templates and an internationally accredited credential (CPD and IMMA) in one place — at a fraction of the cost of the $10,000 trainings. **See what's included →**

> *Having collaborated with Sean Fargo, I can attest that he is a visionary who brings scope, insight and compassion to his teaching and support of others on the path of meditation.*
>
> **Gabor Maté, M.D.** · author of *The Myth of Normal*

CHAPTER SIX

How to Lead Guided Meditations with Authenticity and Creativity

With new certifications and templates, I was ready to teach full-time. A healthcare startup, WellBrain, found me on LinkedIn and hired me to write and record hundreds of evidence-based meditations that doctors could prescribe to patients with anxiety, depression, addiction, and chronic pain.

I'd never done anything like it. Writing a meditation to be spoken is very different from writing to be read. The more I practiced, the more I realized there are really no rigid rules: as long as you invite gentle awareness of moment-to-

moment experience, you can be as creative as you like. To record, I bought a simple USB mic, found a quiet closet with soft surfaces, and used free software.

The most useful habit was meditating myself, in the dark, before recording — so my voice came out natural and heartfelt. The hardest part was listening to my own voice. I'd cringe — *is that really me?* So I brought mindfulness to the self-criticism and stayed with it. I posted meditations on Insight Timer for feedback, eventually shared hundreds with thousands of doctors, and posted many to YouTube — now over 130,000 subscribers and nearly 7 million views.

Putting it into practice

Here is a simple sequence that will carry almost any guided meditation:

1. Welcome people in and let them settle.
2. Introduce the topic and the intention for the practice.
3. Remind them mindfulness is about noticing what's here, not forcing anything.
4. Ground into the body — the breath or a physical sensation.
5. Invite awareness of the main theme; notice what arises with non-judgment and care.
6. Segue into self-compassion or loving-kindness.
7. Close with an intention, a brief summary, and a gentle next step.

If you'd like to record your meditations — for clients, an app, or your own library — you don't need a studio.

RECORDING YOUR OWN MEDITATIONS

1. **Keep it simple.** A basic USB mic and a small, soft-surfaced space (even a closet) is plenty.
2. **Meditate first.** Sit for a few minutes before you record, so your voice comes from a settled, embodied place.
3. **Record line by line.** Speak each line until it feels true; an editor can clean up the pauses later, so you don't need a flawless take.
4. **Gather feedback.** Share a few recordings with trusted listeners (or a site like Insight Timer) and learn from what resonates.

Beyond technique, the real work is finding your own voice. People can feel whether you're speaking authentically or imitating someone you admire. Remember that “mind” in mindfulness isn't only the head — it includes the heart and the body, and we guide best with our whole being. The surest way to deepen this is to meditate a lot, especially on retreat.

> *There are no rigid rules for guiding meditation. As long as you invite gentle, moment-to-moment awareness, you can be as creative as you like.*

After the practice: the art of inquiry

Leading the meditation is only half of teaching. The other half is inquiry — the gentle conversation afterward that helps people discover the lesson for themselves. In *A Clinician's Guide to Teaching Mindfulness*, Christiane Wolf and J. Greg Serpa describe inquiry as helping a student give birth to their own understanding — drawing on the teacher's own embodiment and attunement to the group.

A SIMPLE WAY TO LEAD INQUIRY

1. **Start with direct experience.** Invite someone to share what the practice was actually like — the felt experience, not the backstory.
2. **Stay with "how," not "what."** Steer gently from what happened to how they related to it. Meet each answer with a warm thank-you and genuine curiosity.
3. **Deepen, with consent.** When you feel a pull of curiosity, ask whether they'd be willing to say a little more.
4. **Link it to life.** Then ask whether this feels familiar in daily life, or how it differs from their usual reaction — pointing lightly to how the mind tends to work.

And remember what inquiry is not: it isn't therapy, advice, or fixing — and it isn't the teacher knowing best. It's friendly, not-knowing curiosity, an invitation to explore that may, or may not, reveal something.

TAKE IT FURTHER

The certification includes a full self-paced course on guiding meditations — plus 200+ done-for-you scripts you can use and adapt from day one. **Get the 200+ done-for-you scripts →**

CHAPTER SEVEN

Simple Trauma-Sensitive Methods to Keep People Safe

As my healthcare work grew, a respected nonprofit invited me to co-lead a meditation retreat for urban teens in the mountains. I pictured a relaxing few days among the trees. Then about thirty teens arrived, many carrying unresolved trauma — abuse, recent loss of a parent, severe depression. We had no therapists or counselors on site: just a few meditation teachers, asking these young people to bring awareness to their bodies, which is exactly where trauma tends to live.

I felt completely inadequate and quickly overwhelmed by fear. Fortunately, my co-teachers gave me invaluable guidance: use gentle, encouraging language; never force anyone to do anything; offer options people can choose from; make extra room for questions; and emphasize self-compassion, softening, and ease with whatever arises.

No one was overwhelmed or re-triggered — but driving home, I broke down in tears, releasing the fear of having possibly harmed someone. That experience sent me to learn trauma sensitivity properly.

Putting it into practice

First, an important distinction: trauma-sensitive mindfulness is not the same as trauma-focused work. Most of us are not therapists working directly with someone's trauma. We are compassionate people sharing mindfulness while staying sensitive to the trauma others may carry — and a few simple habits keep people safe.

SIMPLE WAYS TO KEEP PEOPLE SAFE

1. **Set expectations kindly.** Let people know mindfulness isn't a substitute for therapy, and that they're always free to adjust or stop.
2. **Offer choice, not commands.** Give a few options — eyes open or closed; attention on the breath, the feet, or a sound — rather than one rigid instruction.
3. **Anchor in safety.** Invite people to find a neutral or pleasant place in the body, or a sound in the room, they can return to if things feel like too much.
4. **Stay within the window of tolerance.** The aim is gentle contact with experience, never overwhelm. Slower and softer is almost always better.
5. **Normalize backing off.** Remind people that opening the eyes or shifting attention isn't failing the practice — it's practicing wisely.

To go deeper, two books are excellent: *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness* by David Treleaven, and *Waking the Tiger* by Peter Levine.

> *Our job isn't to dig into anyone's trauma. It's to offer presence gently enough that people stay safe while they practice.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

A 15-Hour Trauma-Sensitivity Certification ($297 value) is included free with enrollment — so you can hold space safely and with confidence. **Claim the free trauma-sensitivity certification →**

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Number-One Ingredient for Lasting Impact: Community

When I finally started my own business, I leaned on my certifications and templates, built a website, and offered to teach at large companies for free in exchange for feedback and referrals. But I was doing all of it alone, and it took a toll. I wasn't sure how genuine the feedback was. I had no safe place to try new things. I started practicing from the lens of a strategic teacher — *how can I use this?* — rather than a sincere practitioner. Even as a mindfulness teacher, my mental health declined.

Then I remembered what my own teachers had said made them successful: they had learned to lean on each other. The senior monks at my monasteries gathered regularly to share how their practice and teaching were going. So did the senior teachers at Spirit Rock. To a person, they named community and ongoing teaching practice as their number-one ingredient for long-term growth and impact.

So community became central to how I built Mindfulness Exercises — and that community has since included people from organizations like the EPA, Kaiser Permanente, the Veterans Administration, Dell, Tesla, Duke University, and Canadian Olympic teams.

Putting it into practice

We don't have to build a community from scratch — we can find one, or start small. What matters is not going it alone.

WAYS TO FIND YOUR PEOPLE

1. **Ask around locally.** Introduce yourself at meditation centers and wellness groups, and ask local teachers how they stay connected.
2. **Look for existing circles.** Mindfulness-based book clubs, sitting groups, and coaching programs are full of potential peers.
3. **Find a practice partner.** Even one person to teach with, swap feedback, and stay accountable changes everything.
4. **Or start your own.** A simple monthly call or a small online group is enough to begin.

Community is where our teaching actually improves: it's where we get honest feedback, discover our blind spots, hear about new opportunities, and remember why we started. Teaching mindfulness takes a village — and the teachers who last are the ones who don't try to go it alone.

> *If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.*

TAKE IT FURTHER

Enrollment includes lifetime access to our global teaching community, optional weekly mentorship calls, and monthly live workshops with renowned teachers like Gabor Maté, Byron Katie, and Richie Davidson. **See the mentorship & guest-teacher calls →**

IN CLOSING

Bringing It Together

We've covered a lot, so here is the whole arc in a breath. Meeting myself with compassion taught me to teach others with compassion. Shifting from fear to service let me take the first step. Focusing on simple, experiential practice let me reach anyone. Listening to what people actually wanted made my teaching land. Templates and credentials grew my confidence and my career. Finding my own voice let my meditations reach far more people. Sensitivity to trauma kept my teaching safe. And practicing in community fueled everything else.

None of this requires you to be a master. It requires sincerity, compassion, and a willingness to keep learning alongside others.

If people are hurting, and they want help, and you feel called and able to offer even a little — who are you not to help them? That question changed my life. Wherever you are right now is enough to begin.

> *This skill may be the bridge between where you are and wherever you want to go. It has been for me.*

NOT READY TO ENROLL?

Keep practicing with us, free — a mindful quote and teaching tips by email (**Mindful Musings**), and a **free community** of fellow teachers to practice alongside.

ABOUT YOUR TEACHER

"My deepest hope is that this guide helps you share mindfulness in a way that feels true to who you are. Whenever you're ready to go further, I'd be honored to support you."

— Sean

Sean Fargo is the founder of Mindfulness Exercises and the lead teacher of the Mindfulness Meditation Teacher Certification.

A former Buddhist monk of more than two years, Sean is a trained instructor for Search Inside Yourself — the mindfulness program developed at Google — and has served as a mindfulness consultant for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, NOAA, two Olympic teams, the American Red Cross, Ernst & Young, and Kaiser Permanente.

Since 2015, he and the team at Mindfulness Exercises have helped more than 2,000 people in over 30 countries get certified to teach, and have shared free mindfulness practices with more than 20 million people.

His teaching rests on a simple conviction: that mindfulness is most powerful when it's offered with compassion, in your own authentic voice — and that anyone sincere enough to care can learn to share it well.

If you're ready to move from practicing mindfulness to confidently teaching it, here's the path thousands have taken.

Sean Fargo · Founder, Mindfulness Exercises

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO GO FURTHER

Become a Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher

Everything in this guide — and far more — lives inside our internationally accredited certification. Since 2015, it has helped thousands of compassionate people teach mindfulness with confidence, in their own voice, in settings from healthcare and corporations to schools and private practice.

2,000+	30+	10 yrs	20M+
CERTIFIED GRADUATES	COUNTRIES	RUNNING SINCE 2015	PRACTITIONERS REACHED

CPD CERTIFIED · IMMA ACCREDITED · LEAD TEACHER IMTA-CERTIFIED · 100% SELF-PACED · LIFETIME ACCESS · 39.25 CE HOURS · PREMIUM

Two ways to certify — $1,000 off either, right now

Both include lifetime access, optional weekly mentorship with Sean, monthly guest-teacher workshops, a supportive community, and a 30-day money-back guarantee. Start for as low as $99/month — flexible monthly payment plans make it easy to begin today, or choose pay-in-full at checkout.

MOST FLEXIBLE

Core

$1,497 ~~$2,497~~

or monthly payment plans available

- ✓ Accreditation & credentials
- ✓ Training in the 7 core mindfulness practices
- ✓ Mindfulness Teaching Fundamentals course
- ✓ Guiding-meditations course + 200+ scripts
- ✓ 300+ mindfulness worksheets
- ✓ Weekly live mentorship & Q&A with Sean
- ✓ Monthly guest-teacher workshops
- ✓ Private community + lifetime access

BEST VALUE

Premium

$1,997 ~~$2,997~~

or monthly payment plans available

Everything in Core, plus:

- ✓ Fully customizable, brandable curriculum
- ✓ 10-week course with 500+ teaching slides
- ✓ Student workbooks & teacher guides
- ✓ Ready-to-use teaching materials
- ✓ 39.25 CE hours for licensed professionals

Choose Premium if you're a licensed professional who needs the 39.25 CE hours, or you want done-for-you slides and workbooks to run a 10-week course. **Choose Core** if you want everything you need to start teaching with confidence.

INCLUDED WITH ENROLLMENT

- ★ **Free:** 15-Hour Trauma-Sensitivity Certification ($297 value)
- ★ **Pay in full & choose a bonus:** a 1-hour 1:1 with Sean ($500 value) or a team training ($1,000 value)
- ★ 30-day money-back guarantee · No annual renewal fees · Scholarships available

From **$99/month** — and need-based scholarships are available if cost is the barrier.

NOT SURE WHICH PATH IS RIGHT?

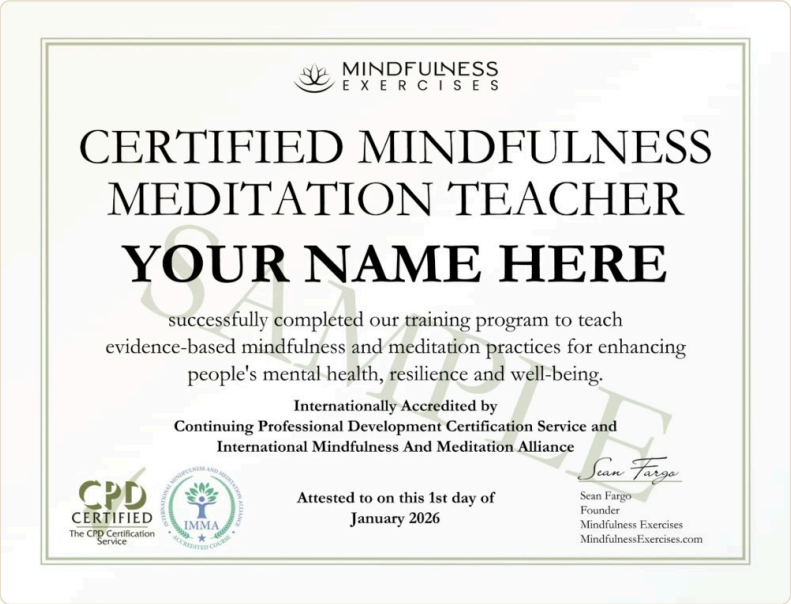
Book a **free 15-minute call** with our team — no pressure, no pitch.

Accredited program: recognized by the CPD Certification Service (UK) and the International Mindfulness & Meditation Alliance (IMMA).

Lead teacher: Sean Fargo is individually certified by the International Mindfulness Teachers Association (IMTA).

Continuing education: sponsored by Mindful CECs, an APA-approved CE sponsor — 39.25 CE contact hours for licensed professionals (psychologists, MFTs, LCSWs, LPCCs, LEPs, CA RNs & more), included with the Premium Package. Acceptance varies by board.

Credential earned: graduates use the post-nominal CMMT — Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher.



The internationally accredited certificate (CMMT) graduates earn upon completion.

ENDORSED BY LEADERS IN MINDFULNESS

"*I know Sean Fargo well and deeply appreciate the work he does supporting people in their meditation practice. He has something special to offer others: his own unique way of sharing mindfulness with clarity, heartfulness and generosity. I highly recommend him.*"

— James Baraz, co-founding teacher, Spirit Rock Meditation Center

"*Sean is the most thoughtful, courageous and inclusive teacher I have had in a long time. His passion to contribute to others' learning and development is contagious.*"

— Hasan Rafiq, Chief Operating Officer of Diversity, Facebook

"*It is a privilege to contribute to Sean Fargo's mindfulness teacher certification program. The warm and inviting atmosphere of the classes nourishes and reflects everything that is taught. This is mindfulness training in the truest sense.*"

— Christopher Germer, Ph.D., co-founder of the Mindful Self-Compassion program

"I am always grateful to work with Sean Fargo. I find him an unusual combination of great emotional intelligence and the diligence to get any job done. His caring and kindness are exemplary."

— Sharon Salzberg, world-renowned meditation teacher

FROM PERSONAL PRACTICE TO PROFESSIONAL IMPACT

Yoga practitioner → corporate facilitator

Sarah meditated for ten years but felt like an imposter. Within four months of certifying, she was leading weekly mindfulness sessions at two corporate offices and a yoga studio.

Nurse → clinic program director

Burned out in healthcare, James launched a stress-reduction program that became a core part of patient care within six months.

School counselor → district wellness director

Priya wanted to bring mindfulness to students but lacked the credentials. She designed a district-wide student wellness program now adopted by twelve schools.

Start your teaching journey today

mindfulnessexercises.com/certification

$1,000 off both packages · Plans from $99/month · Scholarships available · 30-day money-back guarantee

Not sure yet? Book a free 15-minute clarifying call — no pressure, no pitch.

Whether or not you ever enroll, thank you for wanting to help others. The world needs more compassionate teachers — and that may well be you.

— Sean

A GIFT TO GET YOU STARTED

Three complete practices to teach — or try

Reading a meditation aloud is the simplest way to begin. Here are three full, evidence-informed scripts you can read to others — or to yourself — today. Speak slowly, pause often, and let the silences do some of the teaching. Each "…" is an invitation to rest for a breath or two, and "(Long pause.)" means give it real, unhurried space.

PRACTICE ONE · ABOUT 6 MINUTES

A Settling Breath

Let's begin by finding a comfortable position … sitting in a way that feels both relaxed and awake. … Let the feet rest on the floor, and the hands settle in the lap. … And if it feels okay, allow the eyes to gently close … or simply soften your gaze toward the floor. …

Take a slow breath in through the nose … and a long, easy breath out. … Once more — breathing in a little fuller than usual … and letting the exhale be slow. … And now letting the breath return to its own natural rhythm. … Nothing to control, nothing to fix. …

There is nowhere else you need to be right now … and nothing else you need to do. … Just this breath … and then the next one. …

Begin to notice the simple sensations of breathing. … Perhaps the cool air as it enters the nostrils … and the warmer air as it leaves. … Perhaps the gentle rise of the chest or the belly … and the soft falling away as you exhale. … Let your attention rest wherever the breath is easiest to feel. …

There's no need to make the breath deep or special. … We're simply keeping it company … the way you might sit quietly beside a friend. …

And at some point — maybe already — you'll notice the mind has wandered … off to a memory, a worry, a plan. … This is completely normal; it's what minds do. … The moment you realize you've drifted is the moment of mindfulness. … There's no need to judge it. … Just gently, kindly, escort your attention back to the next breath. …

Breathing in … knowing you're breathing in. … Breathing out … knowing you're breathing out. … If it helps, you might quietly count — in, one … out, two … on up to ten, and then begin again. … And whenever you lose the count, simply start back at one, with a small smile of patience for yourself. …

Let's stay here together for a few more breaths … resting in the simple, steady rhythm that is always available to you. … (Long pause.) …

And now, gently widening your awareness to the room around you. … Noticing any sounds … the support of the chair … the light beyond your eyelids. … When you're ready, allowing the eyes to open … and carrying a little of this calm and steadiness with you into whatever comes next.

PRACTICE TWO · ABOUT 9 MINUTES

A Body Scan for Coming Home

Find a position where you can be comfortable and alert — sitting or lying down. … Let the body be heavy, supported by whatever is beneath you. … Allowing the eyes to close, if that feels right. …

Take two or three slow breaths … and with each exhale, let yourself arrive a little more fully — here, in this body, in this moment. … There's nothing to achieve in the next few minutes. … We're simply going to visit the body with curiosity and kindness. …

Begin by bringing your attention all the way down to the feet. … Notice whatever is there — warmth or coolness, contact with the floor, tingling, pressure, or perhaps very little at all. … There's no right thing to feel. We're just noticing. …

Now let your attention move slowly up into the lower legs … the shins and the calves … and the knees. … If you notice tension anywhere, you don't have to fix it. … See if you can simply breathe toward it, and let it be a little softer. …

Up into the thighs now … and the hips. … Feeling the weight of the lower body, settled and supported. … And if the mind has wandered — it will — that's okay. … Just gently return to the part of the body you'd left. …

Bring your awareness into the belly. … Notice it rising and falling with the breath. … So much of what we feel lives here; see if you can let this whole area be soft. … And into the lower back … and the long length of the spine. …

Now the chest … perhaps sensing the heartbeat, or the breath moving in and out. … And the shoulders — which so often carry more than we realize. … On your next exhale, let them drop, just a little. …

Down the arms now … the elbows … the forearms … all the way to the hands and the fingertips. … And back up to the neck and the throat. …

Bring a gentle attention to the face. … Letting the jaw be loose … the lips soft … the space between the eyebrows smooth. … Letting the whole face rest. …

And now, for a few moments, sensing the body as a whole. … One complete, breathing body … alive, present, here. … There is nothing you need to add, and nothing you need to become. … You are already home. … (Long pause.) …

When you're ready, deepen the breath a little … wiggle the fingers and the toes … and gently open the eyes, bringing this sense of presence and ease with you.

PRACTICE THREE · ABOUT 7 MINUTES

A Self-Compassion Practice

Settle into a comfortable position … and take a few slow, easy breaths. … Letting the body soften, and the eyes close, if that feels okay. …

Bring to mind something that's been weighing on you lately. … Not the very hardest thing — let's choose something mild to moderate, a situation that brings a little stress or sadness when you think of it. … Picture it for a moment: who's there, what's happening. …

Now notice how it shows up in the body. … Maybe a tightness in the chest … a heaviness in the shoulders … an unsettled feeling in the stomach. … Just letting yourself feel it, as best you can, without pushing it away. …

We're going to offer ourselves three simple acknowledgements — the heart of self-compassion. …

The first is mindfulness. … Quietly say to yourself: *This is a moment of difficulty.* … Or simply, *this hurts.* … Naming it plainly, without drama, is its own small relief. …

The second is common humanity. … Difficulty is part of being human. … You are not alone in this. … In this very moment, countless other people are feeling something like what you feel. … Struggle isn't a sign that something has gone wrong with you — it's a sign that you're alive, and that you care. …

And the third is kindness. … If it feels comfortable, place a hand gently over your heart, and feel its warmth. … And offer yourself a few quiet wishes: … *May I be kind to myself.* … *May I give myself what I need.* … *May I be as patient with myself as I would be with a good friend.* …

Let these words land however they land. … There's no need to force a feeling. … The simple intention to be kind is enough. …

Take one more slow breath. … And notice this: turning toward our own pain with kindness doesn't make us weak or self-indulgent — it's exactly what allows us to stay present, and to keep showing up for others. … (Long pause.) …

When you're ready, let the hand rest, take a slightly deeper breath, and gently open the eyes — carrying this kindness with you into the rest of your day.

TAKE IT FURTHER

Want 200+ done-for-you scripts like these — plus slides, workbooks, and a fully brandable curriculum? They're all included in the certification. **See what's included →**

KEEP PRACTICING & TEACHING

Free resources to take with you

Everything here is free on MindfulnessExercises.com — no purchase needed. Bookmark these to keep deepening your own practice and growing your teaching.

Free Community →

Connect with fellow teachers and join live sessions.

connect.mindfulnessexercises.com

Mindful Musings Newsletter →

A mindful quote, practice, and teaching tips — gently, by email.

mindfulnessexercises.com/mindful-musings-newsletter

Free Meditation Scripts →

230+ searchable, read-aloud scripts for every setting.

mindfulnessexercises.com/free-guided-meditation-scripts

Mindfulness Worksheets →

Printable PDFs to use with clients, students, and classes.

mindfulnessexercises.com/free-mindfulness-worksheets

Free Online Courses →

15 self-paced courses, 265+ lessons.

mindfulnessexercises.com/free-online-mindfulness-courses

How to Teach Meditation →

A free guide to guiding others with skill and care.

mindfulnessexercises.com/how-to-teach-meditation

Free Ebooks →

Downloadable guides on practice and teaching.

mindfulnessexercises.com/free-mindfulness-e-books

The Podcast →

Conversations and practices with leading teachers.

mindfulnessexercises.com/podcast

WHEN YOU'RE READY

Ready to teach for real? Become a Certified Mindfulness Meditation Teacher — with everything in this guide and far more. **Explore the certification →**