

How to Use the *Living Practice* Diary

Aim. The aim of the *Living Practice* diary is to help cultivate mindfulness practice in everyday life as well as to support a daily meditation.

Diary structure. The diary explores a series of mindfulness teachings. Each week you will be asked to consider how you could cultivate mindfulness/awareness in your day-to-day life. You will be asked, for instance, to find a short walk that you could turn into a mindful walking practice. On each day the diary suggests a particular way of approaching your meditation practice. Space is left for you to fill in how you got on with your mindfulness *Living Practice* as well as your sitting practice.

At the end of each week there is space for you to review your week of practice.

Course structure. As the course progresses you will be encouraged to explore different aspects (or spheres) of mindfulness in a daily walk (e.g. to and from the tube), in your sitting meditation, and in one simple daily activity (e.g. your morning tea break).

How best to make use of the diary.

- **Fill in your diary each day**, saying how you got on and including any comments you might like to make. This will help you become clearer about what is happening in your *Living Practice*. Some people tend to write quite a lot, some very little – see what suits you. We will also be working with the diary in the class, so you'll need to bring it along with you.
- **If you forget your mindfulness practice, or do not meditate, cross that section out in your diary** (just so you become aware, not as a condemnation!) You may want to come back to the suggested approach of that day's practice later after the course has finished.
- **Come along to the class a little early, so that you can fill in your review of the week.** This will help you get more of a perspective on how your practice is going (it is all too easy to over-identify with the fact that you have missed some sessions, or not been very mindful). A large part of the class will be reviewing the week's practice and setting *realistic* goals for the following week.
- **Come to the class with questions.** Mindfulness and meditation can be easily misunderstood. Also, what helps one person may not always help another. Hopefully, filling in the diary will give you a sense of what you need to learn. The class will be very interactive and the teacher will want to hear what issues you are working with.
- **Approach the diary with an attitude of exploration.** It is easy for some people to become overly self-critical or to think in terms of 'succeeding or failing' at mindfulness practice. If you have this tendency, try to put it aside and think in terms of learning and exploring.
- **Overload warnings.** The *Living Practice* diary is an intensive, six-week course in mindfulness. Set your own level of intensity and adjust it as you go along. If it all seems too much, just concentrate on one aspect (e.g. the walking practice).