

Introduction

The purpose of this workbook is to help teens and young adults:

- Develop a sense of purpose and meaning, and experience happiness as a result.
- Use mindfulness and meditation to break unkind habits and build kinder ones that benefit ourselves and others.
- Act with kindness by being friendly, offering help, showing appreciation, and reaching out to those in need.
- Share with others the key message about the value of mindful kindness.
- Live a happy, healthy, and meaningful life through close, healthy, and caring relationships.

The goals of this workbook are simple to understand but challenging to accomplish. Science tells us that being kind and paying attention to others builds stronger relationships. Being kind and paying attention to others even makes us happier in the long run. It is not difficult to understand that what the scientists say is important if we are to be happy. But changing how we interact with others can sometimes seem impossible. This is especially true because many teens and youth are experiencing high levels of stress, with causes ranging from lacking enough close, caring relationships to anxiety over the climate crisis. The resulting stress and depression make it even harder to break unkind habits and build new kind habits.

The truth is that everyone can learn to be mindfully kind. And with practice, treating yourself and others with mindful kindness can change your life. This workbook, *Lasting Happiness: A Guide For Teens and Young Adults*, offers such a plan. Step by step, it leads you through skills and ideas critical in changing your life for the better. Making a significant change in your life is not something to be done in an afternoon, but rather takes considerable time and effort. Making these changes is similar to building a house. We need to go through several steps, one at a time—pour a foundation, construct walls, put on a roof, install the electrical circuits and fixtures, etc.—before we can finally enjoy our new house.

Below are the steps used in this workbook. Each step teaches important skills for building happiness in your life. When you incorporate these skills into your life daily, you can reduce stress and anxiety, enjoy life more, and feel more energetic.

Step 1: Prepare for Lasting Happiness

Create a foundation.

- Chapter 1 explains the relevance of mindfulness and kindness to teenagers and young adults. Kindness is especially important in developing close, caring relationships, which are a key factor in bringing about a happy, healthy life.
- Chapter 2 presents the skills of action and character that are the building blocks for changing your life.

Step 2: Build Kind Habits

Construct walls to support a house of kindness.

- Chapter 3 gives examples and provides exercises to expand thinking about all the different ways to be kind.
- Chapter 4 guides you in how to build kind habits.

Step 3: Train Your Mind

Put up a roof of mindfulness and meditation to keep out the cold unkindness and keep in the warm kindness.

- Chapter 5 lays out practical ways to meditate and practice mindfulness in daily life.
- Chapter 6 explains what it means to be mindful. It then provides explanations and exercises to develop mindfulness practices with the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste.
- Chapter 7 explains how mindful practices can be incorporated into daily activities, such as brushing your teeth, cleaning your clothes, eating, taking a coffee break, etc.

Step 4: Deal with Unkind Habits

Install electrical circuits that conduct positive energy but prevent the flow of negative, unkind energy.

- Chapter 8 assists you in recognizing unkind habits that hurt you and others. This type of energy blocks you from being more kind and developing close, caring relationships.
- Chapter 9 gives ways to break the unkind habits that are most damaging to a life of well-being.
- Chapter 10 focuses on several specific ways to cope with the unkind habits of others.

Step 5: Take the Final Steps to Lasting Happiness

Add finishing touches that show all are welcome.

- Chapter 11 prepares you to be resilient when hard times come, and they always do come.
- Chapter 12 explains how to make your house welcoming to others. Here you'll learn to extend the reach of your kindness to those seen as "different" because of race, language, economic status, and political or religious beliefs.
- Chapter 13 explains the importance of caring for yourself and serving others in the present moment, rather than worrying about the future or feeling bad about the past.
- Chapter 14 describes why and how to encourage others to act with mindful kindness.
- Chapter 15 offers two paths for making kindness a permanent part of your life.
- An afterword briefly describes the joy, contentment, and energy that come from living in a kindful manner.

Each chapter is constructed according to these principles of teaching that have been proven to be very effective in helping us learn:

- Introduce key ideas, with examples and exercises you can do on your own.
- Start with simple key ideas and build on them so you can take on more complex challenges.
- Complete exercises for each new key idea until you gain some sense of mastery in how to apply that idea in your daily life.
- Periodically go back to review earlier key ideas so they become mindfully kind habits that form a path to lasting happiness.

If you complete the exercises in this workbook, you'll end up with something as comfortable as a well-built house that you can enjoy with family and friends and feel secure in during stormy times.