



## Participant's Workbook and Journal



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# INTRODUCTION

mPEAK (Mindful Performance Enhancement, Awareness & Knowledge) is an intensive course in mindfulness training for those who seek a more balanced way to achieve their goals, both personal and professional, as well as attain new levels of performance and success. This cutting-edge training program is built around the latest brain research related to peak performance, resilience, focus, and “flow”. The mPEAK program enhances the human capacity of mindfulness through established and empirically supported practices and exercises. Mindfulness is effective precisely because it is a way of being and relating to all aspects of life, rather than a specific technique or tool for a particular goal. As with physical training, this brain-training program is based on the understanding that optimal outcomes occur most often when participants continue to engage in the practices and exercises on a daily basis as a part of their training regimen. The foundation of this program is drawn from the highly respected and empirically-supported Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD. Additionally, the program incorporates specific practices and exercises formulated to correspond to recent neuroscientific findings, competitive advances, and related research regarding optimal performance.



# HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is a companion to the mPEAK 3-day intensive or 8-week course. It organizes the informational material about mindfulness and performance into one resource to streamline the didactic portions of mPEAK. In the pages provided, you can also record insights and reflections on the various experiences you'll have along this journey. Your time in the mPEAK course will be distributed over the following categories:

**Formal Mindfulness Meditation Practices** Meditation is a specific period of practice often done in stillness and silence. Meditation training re-wires the brain through neuroplasticity to increase your capacity for presence, discernment and flow in your life, work and sport. The formal practices introduced in mPEAK are: The Body Scan, Awareness of Breath, Mental Noting, Mindful Movement and Self-Compassion.

**Experiential Exercises** These exercises are like a mirror to more clearly see the way you relate to various aspects of performance. By observing your own conditioned thoughts, habits and identities in the face of these challenges, you recognize what is serving your performance and what might be holding you back.

**Didactic Topics** Each section of this course offers just enough science and information to help you build a conceptual framework around mindfulness and ideally inspire you to practice. The emphasis of mPEAK is less on learning about mindfulness and more on actually being mindful.



**Journal Exercises** The workbook provides dedicated pages to reflect on your past experiences with various performance related topics. Journaling itself can be a mindfulness practice of observing and recording thoughts and feelings onto paper.

**Dyads/ Triads** Sharing your experience is an important part of deepening your awareness of yourself in relation to others. You are encouraged to connect with authenticity and vulnerability with as many other participants as possible. Participants often say they learn as much from the others sharing as from the course content.

**Group Coaching and Discussion** After each experiential exercise or formal practice, an invitation is offered for discussion and coaching around challenges or insights that may have come up. Coaching is a process of inquiry intended to deepen self-awareness and personalize strategies to integrate mindfulness into areas of life and performance. Even though only a few participants are coached after each activity, everyone can benefit from these interactions.

**Operationalized Mindfulness Practices** Sometimes referred to as “Informal Mindfulness Practices”, these are short, on the spot practices intended to integrate mindfulness into everyday life and performance activities. These are offered as home practices at the end of each section.





## LIVING WITH INTENTION

The topic of mindfulness and goals may test your ability to hold paradox -but don't get too attached to passing this test, it's not the entire point. When we consider the benefits of mindfulness as Jon Kabat-Zinn suggests, one is left with the sense that mindfulness and goals are complete opposites.

*Mindfulness is the only intentional, systematic human activity which at bottom is about not trying to improve yourself or get anywhere else, but simply to realize where you already are. Perhaps its value lies precisely in this. Maybe we all need to do one thing in our lives simply for its own sake.*

And yet, when mindfulness is applied to the goal setting process and to the moment-to-moment relationship to our goals, we see that there is actually a natural synergy. This section will explore the cost and benefits of setting goals, how to approach your performance goals mindfully and how to even use goals to stabilize and inspire your mindfulness practice.



# TOPIC: MINDFULNESS AND GOALS

Although many suggestions will be given, there is no one right way to relate to goal setting. Some people are inspired by setting big “10X goals” while others will prefer to break them up into bite-sized steps. Another group of people will have a general allergy to the entire topic, and that’s okay too. Some people like to make their goals specific, measurable and time dependent and others prefer make moment to moment choices based on vague intentions. The mPEAK approach is to simply become aware of how you personally best relate to goals, if at all, and then to honor that. If you’re not sure how you best relate to goals, treat this section as an experiment.



## JOURNAL:

*What are the 3 biggest "10X" performance goals you want to achieve in the next 10 years?*

*How do these goals make you feel when you think about them?*

*What do you feel are the benefits of goal setting?*

*What are the potential costs of goal setting?*



# TOPIC: EMBRACING THE WHOLE JOURNEY- MINDFULNESS OF GOALS AND INTENTIONS

In mPEAK, we use the mountain as a metaphor for goals and intentions. Whether in our Mountain Visualization or on the Mindful Hike, the most common goal is to hike to the top of the mountain in order to see the extraordinary view from the peak. It's a valuable goal that gets us excited and motivates us to get up early to hit the trail.

Before we begin the hike, we set our intention to be present to the sights and smells along the trail, noticing the beauty of the plants and unexpected views that arise with each twist in the trail. There is an intention to feel the body and to notice mind wandering and return to path. Even if the fog unexpectedly rolls in or something else prevents us from hiking to the peak, our intention to be present and enjoy the process can still be fulfilled.

If we are just focused on the goal of reaching the peak—and something prevents that—we might return feeling disappointed by not reaching our goal. If we're guided by your intention of being fully present to the experience, you can return satisfied that you fulfilled your intention. But focusing on intentions does not mean you have to give up your goals or desire to achieve. Here are some differences between goals and intentions:

1. Goals are focused on the future outcome. Intentions are in the present moment.
2. Goals are a destination or specific accomplishment. Intentions are lived each day, independent of achieving the goal or destination.
3. Goals are external achievements. Intentions are an internal direction.

From the perspective of mPEAK you can set and hold both goals and intentions mindfully, enjoying both the journey, as well as the destination. As taught in the Mindful Hiking section, you're always already "there" anyways. The journey and destination are both ultimately an illusion and the here-and-now are all that really exist. So if we're going to set goals for performance, we might as well have fun with it! To practice mindfulness around your goals we'll first address some of the hindrances that goals can pose so you'll know what to watch for in your own life.



# TOPIC: “GOALS GONE WILD”

## THE COST OF GOAL SETTING

**Goal attachment clouds discernment.** Committed, focused action towards a valuable goal can be healthy. Attachment to a goal can lead to suffering. When attached or identified with a particular goal, it can be difficult to discern when the goal no longer serves you. You may end up staying in an investment that is tanking, a relationship that is beyond repair or a family tradition that has been long outgrown.

**Goals are a destination or specific accomplishment.** Goals can create expectations and when progress toward a goal doesn't keep pace with a deadline or the way you'd imagined it would unfold, frustration and shame can be triggering.

**Goals are focused on the future outcome.** It's easy to get caught up in living only for a dream of a better future rather than this present moment. The journey is often sacrificed for the destination and happiness is postponed in the present for a later date in the future when the goal is finally achieved. Then when that future comes...

**Goal achievement is rarely enjoyed.** Once one goal has been checked off the list, there are several more to replace it. Goal achievement is just another moment -and one that is seldom noticed and almost never savored or celebrated. In the mPEAK Mountain Visualization, it's not uncommon for participants to get to their peak and feel empty or overwhelmed as they look out on a vast range of mountains.

**Goals feed the comparing mind.** Setting a goal to be or have something different can create a discrepancy between what we're experiencing now and what we would like to happen. This can lead to judging our current experience as "not good enough" or "unacceptable".

*What is true for life as a whole is also true in the more limited domain of sport. Winning, getting medals, improving one's time, or beating a record are important to get us motivated in the beginning, but if we take these goals too seriously -so that their pursuit blinds us to the experience along the way -then we miss the main gift that sport can give.*

-Csikszentmihalyi



TOPIC:

## THE BENEFIT OF BRINGING MINDFULNESS TO GOALS

Meditation itself can be seen as a metaphor for a mindful relationship to goals. Try this perspective on: Goals are to your performance what the breath is to the present moment. The breath is an important resource that gives a sense of focused direction to the practice. But mastering the breath or even being a good breather is not the main point of meditation. The ultimate point of the practice is the cultivation of presence and self-knowledge and a stable object like the breath supports that intention. Similarly, setting a goal can offer stability, focused direction and purpose to ones performance but the achievement of the goal is not the main purpose. It's the personal development that happens within the context of the performance goal that is most important to mPEAK participants.

Goals are an inherent part of high performance culture and when approached mindfully, can offer motivation, stability and sense of direction. Let's explore how your mindfulness practice can support the goals you've set for your life, work and sport.

**Mindfulness helps you get out of your own way** What's the number one thing that holds you back from taking action toward your goal? You are. Mindfulness illuminates all of your bad habits such as procrastination, temptation and unhelpful distractions. When you can see the thought "Maybe I'll watch a movie rather than finish writing my article", you have a better chance of re-directing your attention back toward the goal. Mindfulness also brings attention to internal obstacles such as "off-peak performance stories" and the limiting beliefs that drive them. "This project doesn't make a difference anyways so I might as well give up." By seeing this story clearly, you can dispute the it, taking away it's power and making it easier to let go of.

*What is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*

-Mary Oliver



**Mindfulness helps you be present to choices** Future goals are like a compass that can guide behavior in the moment. If you're present, you'll be more likely to notice new opportunities that you may not have previously been aware of. You can ask yourself if taking on the potential new investor you just met at a dinner party aligns or distract you from your initial goals. Mindfulness can also help you to notice crossroads moments throughout your day. Waking up to these moment's offers a greater sense of agency, allowing you to choose the new path that is in alignment with your goals rather than the old habitual path that might take you further away from your goals. Will you go to the bar after work or to the gym? Labeling "crossroads moment" can help clarify and bring weight to the choice you're about to make.

**Mindfulness helps you take disciplined action toward your goals** Positive Psychologist, Angela Duckworth defines grit as "perseverance and passion for long-term goals" and has shown that it is one of the best predictors of elite performance, whether in the classroom or in the workforce. Grit requires emotional regulation, which we know is enhanced through mindfulness. The better you are at mentally noting emotions that could potentially sabotage your intentions, the less likely you are to be derailed by them. If the words "discipline" and "grit" conjure up aversion to an image of a drill sergeant promoting "mental toughness", try asking yourself how you might authentically employ your "Yang Inner Compassionate Coach" to help you with discipline toward what you find most important in life.

**Mindfulness helps you find balance your effort to trigger flow states** According to Dr. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's flow psychology, our happiest moments are when we're stretched to our limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile. Mindfulness can be used to evaluate your level of effort towards your goals. When the challenge of the goal you're pursuing is equal to or slightly above the level of your skill, happiness and performance increases. Recalling the "skill to challenge ratio", you can ask yourself what goals and actions will help access the flow zone? If you notice symptoms of overwhelm in relation to your goals, you may need to downsize, set boundaries, outsource or delegate. If you're mindfully observing feelings of boredom, you may try doubling down on the goal, raising the stakes, making bigger commitments and stretching yourself.

**Mindfulness helps you hold goals with non-attachment** You may choose a goal that has a specific, time dependent outcome, like making a sales quota by the end of the second quarter or finishing a marathon in under x time. However, life is lived and mindfulness is practiced in the process. It's important to place your focus on all of the regular behaviors, actions and practices rather than only on the outcome itself. Mindfulness reminds us that if you take care of the process the outcome will take care of itself. Non-attachment to outcome doesn't mean you don't care about the outcome. Rather it's a humble acceptance that the outcome may or may not happen, or it might not happen exactly as you'd envisioned it. There is a recognition that factors outside your control play a big part in any outcome and your job is simply to show up consistently and do your best. The practice of non-attachment will also help you to hold goal lightly, allowing them to change, evolve and even drop away over time.



# TOPIC:           EXTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED GOALS

According to Self Determination Theory, the most prominent research in human motivation, there is a spectrum of motivation- from being extrinsically motivated by external forces to being intrinsically motivated by an internal drive. At the lower levels of extrinsic motivation, people are motivated to avoid or move away from something unpleasant such as fear, guilt or lack. At mid level, motivation comes from an external other such as your doctor, coach, boss or spouse. At the higher end of the extrinsic motivation is the pursuit of a reward such as a trophy, a bonus or bragging rights.

At it's best, extrinsic motivation is associated with only short-term goal achievement. The problem is that as soon as the external motivator is gone, so is the fuel for action. As soon as there is no longer a stick to scare you, you'll stop. As soon as there is no longer a carrot to reward you, it's over. But the cost might even be higher than loss of long-term motivation. Researchers found that when material ambition for rewards such as fame, money or beauty is out of balance with the intrinsic drivers, there is a strong association with unstable mental health including higher depression, anxiety, narcissism, and poorer social functioning.

Even when extrinsically motivated goals are achieved they don't lead to long-term happiness. The reason for this is linked to the theory of "Hedonistic Adaptation". This is the tendency for people to quickly return to a stable level of happiness, or happiness set point, despite major positive or negative events or life changes. For example, if someone loses weight, gets a raise, moves to a bigger house or buys a new car, eventually his or her expectations and desires rise in tandem, which results in a no permanent gain in happiness. For obvious reasons it is called the hedonistic treadmill where we continue striving for more but seem to never get anywhere.



# TOPIC: INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED GOALS

One of the first practices of mPEAK is the Mountain Adventure Visualization. As you may recall this visualization uses the mountain as a metaphor for a goal and the path up the mountain is the path you're walking in life. The first peak often represents an extrinsically motivated goal. Usually it's some kind of performance enhancement goal that gives an advantage over the competition and improves your odds of winning and succeeding. And of course! Why would you choose to sit and do nothing for thirty minutes in the middle of your busy lives for no reason? Your goals or intentions don't have to be in conflict with mindfulness practice and may even be the key to long term, sustainable practice. Those with strong aspirations and motivation consistently bring focus and zest to their meditation practice. Without a clearly articulated intention for practice, it's easy to lose site of the purpose of practice. Motivation inevitably wanes and sitting for any extended periods of silence becomes a dull and meaningless chore.

Returning to the Mountain Adventure Visualization -after acknowledging what your mountain peak represents to you, the weather shifts and exposes an even taller peak that had previously been hidden. This second peak represents an aspiration that is even greater than what was revealed before. You're guided to continue inquiring into what you really, really want. This often reveals a more intrinsically motivated intention connected with an aspiration for a greater sense of well-being, connection to loved ones, inner peace, life purpose and legacy.

Intrinsically motivated goals are ones that align with your personal values -the things that are most important to you. Their pursuit gives you a sense of purpose. Taking action toward these goals feels like an act of self-compassion. It just feels good to take care of yourself and do what you know you need to do for yourself! Intrinsically motivated goals would likely be the various endeavors you would follow even if you didn't get paid for them. The fulfillment along the way is the reward for these kinds of goals. Often these kinds of goals are also in the service of something greater than your self, even if it's just being nicer to other people.

*Once you realize that the road is the goal and that you are always on the road, not to reach a goal, but to enjoy its beauty and its wisdom, life ceases to be a task and becomes natural and simple, in itself an ecstasy.*

Nisargadatta Maharaj



# EXERCISE: VALUES BASED GOALS

The traditions in which secular mindfulness has been extracted all have frameworks and maps, precepts and vows. These structures have been used for centuries to keep practitioners on the path. The following worksheet is an opportunity to make your own map and vows based on your personal "values" to guide you along your journey.

Core values are that which are most important to you -they're what you're willing to take a stand for. They are your fundamental beliefs, guiding principles, and the foundations that give meaning to your life and work goals. Values are not right or wrong and they aren't something you need to cultivate; they're already inside of you. Values can range from the commonplace, such as diligence and punctuality, to the more psychological, such as spaciousness, connection, fairness, and harmony. There is a long list of potential values that could feel right to you, but some of them are so primary that throughout all the changes and phases of your life, these core values abide.

The purpose of this exercise is to clarify your core values and set goals and intentions that best align with them. This process will guarantee that your goals and intentions will be intrinsically motivated. Selecting values from a list can lead to fantasizing or over intellectualizing the process. There's no need to vote on the most desirable or socially acceptable values or the ones you feel "should" choose. The process is to answer the questions below as authentically as possible, extract your values and set intentions accordingly.

*Although some values can change as we pass through different life stages, other values stay consistent. What is still important to you now that you also valued in your past?*

*Think of a person who you respect or admire. What do you imagine their most important values might be? Which of these values do you share?*

*We often share many values with close friends, family and communities. What do you value that is different or unique from the others around you?*

*Think of behaviors that you disapprove of, or dislike from others. What values do you hold that might be the opposites of what you judge?*



1. Looking at what you've written in the boxes above, come up with 3 "core values" and write them in the boxes below.
2. Write 1 goal/intention that aligns with each of your 3 core values.
3. Write 1 specific action that will move you toward each of your values-based goals.
4. Write 1 thing you need to STOP doing to honor each of these values.

Core Value	Integration Plan - Intention Setting
	1.  2.  3.
	1.  2.  3.
	1.  2.  3.

# TOPIC: THE GOAL OF MINDFULNESS

So far most of the focus of this section has been on using mindfulness to enhance goal setting for areas of your life and performance. But we can also use goal setting to help build a stable mindfulness practice. Meditation is done both as a means to an end and as an end in itself. On one hand we meditate because there is something inherently nourishing and life sustaining about simply being with oneself in a non-judgmental way. There is a rare sanity in regularly stopping the incessant habit of doing. But meditation done long term also has psychological benefits that make the practice “pay-off” in ways that are motivating. To be more peaceful, less stressed, more compassionate, and more present are noble aspirations worthy of our effort.

What goals do you have for your mindfulness practice? Maybe you want to increase your meditation time or meditate twice a day? Perhaps you want to cultivate certain foundational attitudes or integrate mindfulness into your life in a specific way? You might even have the aspiration to go on a silent retreat of some length.

A question that is often asked is, how much should I meditate? Below are some contradicting perspectives from mindfulness teachers in varying contexts highlight that we really don't know how much YOU should meditate. All of these perspectives hold valuable truths. According to Self Determination Theory, “autonomy” is a primary motivator. So from the perspective of mPEAK, once you are informed about the research and the below perspectives, how much you meditate is really up to you.

*Your intentions set the stage for what is possible. They remind you from moment to moment of why you are practicing. ...I used to think that meditation practice was so powerful...that as long as you did it at all, you would see growth and change. But time has taught me that some kind of personal vision is also necessary.*

Jon Kabat-Zinn





- The researched benefits from MBSR come from practicing 45 minutes daily for 8 weeks, so that is how much you should do.
- Stick with the “lowest effective dose” which research has shown to be 8 minutes/day for 2 weeks.
- Even one mindful breath is better than none.
- “You should sit in meditation for twenty minutes every day - unless you are busy; then you should sit for an hour.” - Sukhraj S. Dillon
- Quality over quantity. It doesn't matter how long you sit so no need to set a timer --simply meditate until you're finished.
- Start small and build.
- Research shows that meditation for 15 min/5 days per week for 2 weeks showed no significant results, but 4 weeks did, so make sure you stick with it.
- Research suggests that meditation is dose dependent and there is no ceiling effect so the more you do, the better your results.
- The right amount of meditation for you is the amount you are willing to do.
- It's an experiment, set an intention and adjust weekly based on results and experience.



# JOURNAL:

*How much will you meditate this week?*

*What will it take for you to make this happen?*

*What obstacles might stop you and how will you handle them?*

*What other goals or intentions do you have for your mindfulness practice?*



# TOPIC: THE EVOLUTION OF INTENTION

The intentions you hold for your self and your life will naturally evolve as your self-awareness and understanding deepens with mindfulness practice. You may begin a meditation practice because an externally motivated goal: to kick more butt, to make more money or to be a modern day samurai. All of this is fine. The most important thing is to start where you're at, which is typically right here. In time your goals may become more intrinsic and eventually may even fall away. If you stay on this path long enough, you'll find that there comes a time when you trust yourself and trust life to the point that you no longer need goals or intentions to guide you. When fully connected to your own heart and to the flow of nature, the appropriate response spontaneously arises from moment to moment. So for now, set goals and intentions that feel true for you at this phase of your life. Work toward these goals mindfully and diligently with kindness and non-attachment, allowing them to naturally evolve... and evolve you, over time.

*The view changes as we walk along the path and we abandon the goals that, at first, we had in mind. It's painful to let go of our original intentions but, eventually they are in the way because we have changed, we are no longer the person who set off. Our intentions gave us the journey and that is enough.*

John Tarrant,  
Zen Teacher

