

The Inspire Coach

Hello I'm Chrissie, The Inspire Coach and I'm so very pleased to bring you this week my project, 'Mindful Moments.'

But first a bit about me... I'm an actress and qualified drama teacher who loves being creative and helping others. Last year I decided to train as a professional coach to enable me to better support others on how to get creative, to inspire their motivation and confidence to achieve their goals. So now as a professional accredited coach I want to inspire with my positivity and encourage others to live the life they dream of.

I choose 'Mindfulness' as it's something I am very interested in and practice myself. It's about bringing yourself back to the present moment and not worrying about the past or future but living in the here and now.

This past year has been tough for us all and my way of coping has been to connect back to nature with my long outdoor walks. Sitting in nature is a tonic, breathing in fresh air and viewing beautiful surroundings, whilst exploring new areas and taking the time to experience new things.

Practicing breath work, focusing on being in the moment and looking around at things for longer than I normally would. This year it's been very important to me to practice gratitude and to think of all the things I have in my life that I am grateful for, even the smallest of things you can think of can bring you and others joy. Also the people who have helped you through the bad times or made you smile, I think it is also important to show gratitude to them too. So let's get started...



Activity 1 - Gratitude Jar

In your bag you will find a jar, ribbon in which to tie around your jar to decorate it and make it look fancy, a tag to personalise your jar and some cards to write the 3 things you are grateful for everyday for 7 days.

Putting your gratitude jar together is a lovely task as it will eventually contain positive things that have happened to you and also what you are grateful for during your week. At the end of the week I would like you to open your jar and read one by one your cards and all the beautiful things you have experienced or felt that made you thankful. This is such a positive activity and is scientifically proven to help you feel less stressed and boosts your mood. Who wouldn't want all those happy chemicals!

Every day write down 3 things you are grateful for on your card, fold it up and place into your gratitude jar. By the end of the week you should have 7 notes in your jar, which you can read and enjoy.

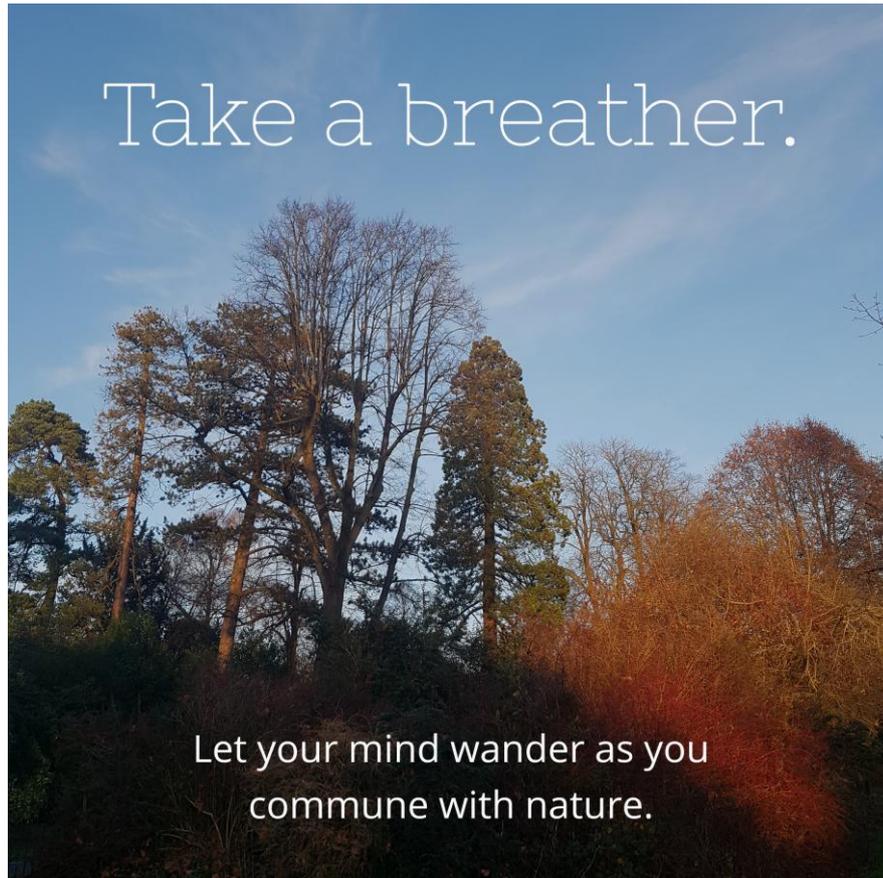
So here are some examples:

It could be anything that makes you grateful such as what you ate this morning, your family or something you are looking forward to.

Why not reuse your gratitude jar again by continuing to fill it with daily or weekly things that you are grateful for. You could continue on until new years day and open the jar for some positivity. Another option could be to start afresh on New Years day and continue all year.

I hope it brings more positivity to your days.





Activity 2 - Mindful Walking

So this next activity is called Mindful Walking and I'm sure you are eager to know what this means. Well, it is a sense of being consciously aware of your surroundings and as we've all be aware nature has probably helped us all in some way this year. To be more connected than we were before and to experience the outdoors with open eyes and having the time to contemplate on the true beauty of the world we live in. So being more mindful can incorporate breath work and walking with purpose.

To start, decide where you would like to go on your mindful walk whether it be in your garden, park or in the countryside it is wherever you feel at ease and most comfortable. As winter is here why not wrap up warm,

wear your favourite coat, gloves, hat and scarf and venture outside for some fresh air. Take yourself to your favourite place, somewhere that resonates with you and soak up the healing powers of the great outdoors.

Whilst outdoors think about your posture, how you hold yourself and start by bringing your awareness to the present. I want you now to focus on your breath. Breathing is the most natural of states however, a lot of us do not breathe as deeply as we should. Being more aware of our breath can aid us in coping with life's stressful moments. Whilst on your walk I want you to notice how you breathe as you mindfully walk. Take 3 deep breaths, slowly releasing the breath and just smile. That's right, just breathe, smile and relax. Note how mindful breathing and smiling in a tranquil place can make you feel.

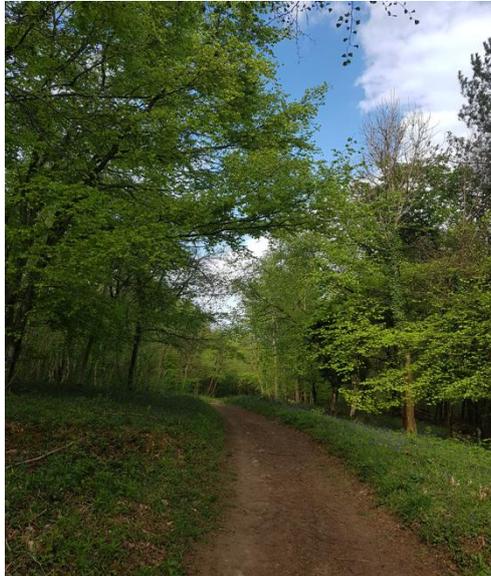
As you start to walk become aware of every step you take and of your breath, concentrating on your feet moving from heel to toe. Keep your steps, slow and relaxed, you have no reason to rush, this time is yours. You should start to feel an inner peace as you continue on your mindful walk, taking in your beautiful surroundings. Notice how you feel, gently guiding your thoughts back to the here and now.

Pay attention to your senses. Is the ground firm or springy? Do you hear the wind blowing through the trees? This leads on to the next activity on your walk, focusing on your 5 senses. Take your time exploring your surroundings and being at one with nature. Once you have finished taking notes on the senses you discovered today reflect back at all the wonder you saw and how it made you feel. I'm sure spending the time being more mindful has given you a positive experience.

The 5 Senses

Whatever the weather being in the great outdoors is a positive step to making a big impact on our mental and physical wellbeing.

Whilst out on your mindful walk, I would like you to focus on the present moment. Observe what is around you perhaps you can see a tree, hear a bird tweeting. Take your time, enjoy this time of being in the moment and exploring your surroundings. Note below the 5 senses you discover.



Note five things you can see...

Note four things you can hear...

Note three things you can feel...

Note two things you can smell...

Note one thing you can taste...



Activity 3 - Postcards of Kindness

In your bag you will find 3 postcards and some beautiful stickers. One postcard to send to someone special, one to send to you... yes you and one to send back to me at The Corn Exchange.

So I want you to think of that special someone who has helped you through this year. Reflecting back think of the people or person that has been great support to you and recall all of the positive ways they have helped you. Why not send them a postcard thanking them for all they have done. It will make you feel good to remember all the good things about them but to also put that down in writing will most certainly bring you joy and also for the person that will receive it. You could give thanks to your friend, partner, family, carer, next-door neighbour, work colleague or anyone you feel has made a difference to your life this year.

As an example, I would choose my friend who is always at the end of the phone for a giggle and to talk about everything and anything. Just knowing that she is there has given me hope and strength even when days haven't been that great. I would say to her that I am extremely

grateful to have her in my life and to know that I can call anytime means so very much to me.

Ok so in summary. Your postcard is personal to you and what you say with kindness will always be well received. It feels good to think of others and to let them know how much they mean to us. Take your time and enjoy thinking of how blessed you are to have such great support in your life right now.

You may wish to add some fabulous stickers onto the reverse of your postcard some hearts and stars for the people we love goes along way and sure to put a smile on their face. Plus these days we rarely receive thanks especially through the post. Enjoy spreading positivity!!

Also when was the last time you wrote a letter to yourself expressing the love and gratitude you have for the amazing unique being you are? It's easy to express gratitude for others, but it's something we don't do often enough for ourselves. Why not focus on your gifts and the things we love. So I challenge you to note your unique qualities and thank yourself for being you.

Finally, it would be so lovely to have some feedback on a postcard all about your Mindful Moments week, what you've enjoyed or how it's made you feel, what you've learnt about yourself and the experiences you encounter. So why not put on some of your favourite music to inspire your emotions and to aid in connecting to your innermost thoughts and feelings.

Overall, I just hope it has made you smile and brought some positivity to your life.



And finally in your pack... a gift from me, an affirmation card with one of my favourite quotes from Winnie the Pooh. Read it everyday or when you need strength and inspiration.

I was inspired to create this gift card for you as a memento, as I recently gave something similar to my mum to comfort her during her cancer treatment. My mum has found great strength in the positive words on that card, which she has read everyday and has continued to do so ever since. Thankfully, my mum has finished her treatment now and is getting better everyday.

I do hope you find some inspiration in the card I have put in your bag and I wish you health and happiness always.

With very best wishes,

Chrissie

The Inspire Coach

'Inspiring you one creative step at a time.'