

*INSPIR3*

# Mindful Loving

Guide to Relationship Success

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## Introduction



Mindful Loving is effective for all of your most important relationships. I've written the Mindful Loving guide to focus on romantic relationships, but most of the topics can be easily applied to other family members, coworkers, neighbors, friends and anyone else you come in contact with. The skills learned will help you grow, heal, improve and deepen any relationship you decide to apply them to, including your relationship to you. In fact

the more you practice these techniques in all your relationships, the stronger they will become to enhance your primary relationships.

I'm sure you've realized by now that many relationships come and go. Some of them need to go. They might be abusive, toxic or filled with dysfunction that one or both partners are unwilling to get help for. While it can be sad to let go of those relationships, preserving your own health and future happiness sometimes demands that.

Unfortunately many great relationships get thrown out too because of historically low relationship literacy rates and issues due to past relationships, especially from our childhood. The reason I wrote the Mindful Loving guide is to help you overcome slight to extreme relationship issues by using Mindful Loving skills. It will help you create astoundingly deep and nourishing relationships.

### **How do you know if a relationship is worth improving or saving?**

- If you have made a commitment together such as marriage or living together
- If you have children together
- If there is no abuse
- If there are no ACTIVE addictions and a person that is an alcoholic/addict is pursuing ongoing recovery to sustain a healthy, functional lifestyle
- If you both agree on the most important things in life, an example would be having similar morals and values

If you have decided that your relationship is worth fighting for, beginning to practice the following Mindful Loving practices will create some immediate and ongoing improvements. They will be most effective if you and your partner both agree to practice

together, but even if only one of you begins, there will be a marked improvement because when one of you in a partnership changes, the other person has no choice but adjust to those changes. While some changes may be met with an initial negative reaction, mostly due to attachment to what is familiar, sticking with them will provide positive outcomes.

These Mindful Loving practices are so strong that the world's leading relationship coaches and counselors also use them when working with clients. You can start them on your own, or decide to enlist the help of an Inspir3 coach to keep you both accountable as you create new habits with each other.

The Mindful Loving Guide is a gift to you and your relationship, because the world needs more stable unions and healthier ways of celebrating those most special bonds. If at any time in the guide you have any questions, please contact me at [tracy@inspir3.com](mailto:tracy@inspir3.com) for a free coaching session to help figure it out.

## What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is most easily explained as Being Present, in this moment, with a nonjudgmental, purposeful awareness. Maintaining that awareness means that you are paying attention with intention to simply observe what is going on around you. A great example would be to think about food.

You can be aware that you are eating, but being mindful to what you are eating goes a few steps deeper, it means paying attention to the food, how it looks, smells, tastes, what its textures feels like, what your mouth feels like as you are chewing and how it feels when you swallow. It also means that you are aware when your mind takes you away from being present with your food and to gently bring your attention back to the experience of eating. Most people are not so present while they eat. Instead they eat and read their emails, surf the web, watch television or any other distraction.

When you are mindful, you are not in your head thinking about the past or future. Now what is confusing to most people is that the brain goes on and on and is impossible to



quiet down, it will always distract you. But, that is the brains job to do so and stopping it is like trying to stop your heart from beating, so don't bother. Just return yourself to the present moment. Become aware of when your mind wanders and just let it go as you bring the rest of your senses into the immediate life experience. Your mind will eventually get the idea and become calmer, clearer and will not bother you quite as much as it will when you first make attempts to live without becoming attached to its constant chatter.

This way of living, mindfully, is not normal in the sense that most people are not able to maintain a mindful state of being for very long. That is why mindfulness is a practice. It can be strengthened through yoga, meditation, or other methods such as listening, feeling and observing exercises. The benefits are endless though and will not only improve your relationship with your partner, but with all of life.

Mindful Loving brings a different element into a mindfulness practice in order to specifically strengthen and enhance your relationships. It combines mindfulness with specific relationship skills that you may never have thought that deeply about before.

### **Benefits of Mindfulness**

- Allows you to respond to life instead of reacting to it
- Allows you the opportunity to live life instead of becoming a victim of life living you.
- Improves focus, concentration, and precision
- Enhances the quality of communications and relationships
- Heightens the clarity of our thinking and intentions
- Improves efficiency and safety
- Deepens peace of mind and sense of flow
- Effectively helps you handle stress
- Deepens insight and intuitive wisdom.
- Awakens more authenticity, heart, soul, and caring in our lives and work
- Increases resilience to change
- Strengthens faith and self-confidence

### **Mindfulness with Your Partner**

As you can imagine, the benefits of mindfulness for yourself will create a significant improvement in your relationship and all other aspects of your life. You will be LIVING! When you feel, you can feel deeply, but being mindful that you are not your emotions, you will develop stronger decision making abilities over how to best respond to those

feelings. Adding these benefits with the important relationship skills addressed in this guide is proven to strengthen your bond together and create a more loving environment for the two of you.

Think of the time you spend with your partner and how often you are distracted from giving them your full presence. You are thinking about the past, the future, getting what you want or need, texting, or sidetracked in any other way to where you are “there” with your partner, but not truly “THERE”.

Now think about the times you notice that your partner is “there”, but not “THERE” with you. Chances are you might remember that you felt as if you were not very important to him or her in that moment, you may feel as if they were not truly listening to you, or any other feelings, including a sense of abandonment. Those are the feelings your partner is experiencing when you are not fully “THERE” for them, right here, right now. Those feelings do not encourage a deep intimacy, where mindful presence with each other will give you a profound sense of connection. This is where you want to aim your efforts and while sometimes it will feel impossible, just gently return to a mindful stance and eventually it gets easier. Please keep in mind that unless you are super extraordinary, you will never perfect this practice, only get better at it.

***Being present for your partner in a mindful way means that you are with him or her fully in the present moment, you are allowing space to observe them and what is going on with both of you, around both of you, in the right here and right now.***

When you are mindful for your partner your listening skills will automatically increase and you will notice so much more about your partner. Not only that, he or she will feel more secure and loved because they will be able to feel as if you are truly there for them, not just a physical presence with a mind off in some other land. This is the core basis of what Mindful Loving is all about.

Before you begin to read the rest of this guide, spend a few moments thinking about what it looks like to show up completely in the present moment and to offer that presence to your partner. Do you consciously put down the remote, cell phone or turn your face away from your computer to look them in the eyes? Yes would be the correct answer. Do you criticize or judge your partner based on your observations of them? No would be the correct answer to that question. I am sure you intuitively knew that, but if you think a moment, you might find that there has been times when you only half heartedly gave your partner your attention, and when you did you may have been critical or judgmental of them. That does not make you a bad person, but now is the time to make corrections in order to improve this most important relationship.

## It Starts with YOU



While your partner may have a ton of faults or bad habits they need to correct, the pursuit of mindful loving starts with you. While this is hard news for many to accept when they are hoping for their partner to change, becoming serious about having a great relationship is worth looking to improve yourself first regardless of what your partner needs to do.

The more whole you are on your own, the more you can offer to your relationship. Half a person and half a person coming together do not make a whole. A whole person coming together with a whole person makes a healthy union.

Of course you need your partner to meet some of your needs, but being realistic about it, they should meet your need for safety, trust, companionship, loyalty and affection/sex. You need to meet your own needs for happiness and emotional, mental and spiritual fulfillment. When you are pursuing meeting your own needs, you set an example for your partner and others that you have strength and are worth the value and respect you would like to receive.

### **From this Day Forth:**

#### **For Yourself:**

- Pursue healthy living including enriching your diet, need for rest, need for spiritual nourishment and personal development for your mind and emotions.
- Practice becoming more mindful to life as it unfolds in the here and now.
- Be happy, positive and stable for yourself first, and then share that with your partner in an open and loving manner without expecting him or her to provide it for you.

#### **For Your Relationship**

- Set a commitment to stop blaming and complaining; drop the criticism while you are at it.
- Make a promise to yourself that you will kindly and assertively ask for what you want.

- Let go of focusing or complaining about what is happening that you don't want.

What you will find is that when you ask for what you want, and are willing to negotiate ways to get your desires met in a way that is respectful and comfortable for your partner that he or she is more willing to give you your requests.

### **What this looks like:**

Instead of saying “I can't believe what a jackass you are! How can you possibly not know how rude it is to not show up on time?”

Say: “I want to be able to count on the plans we make so I can plan my own time accordingly. Can you please either show up on time or let me know as soon as possible if you are running late?”

Chances are your partner will agree to your request and instead of a heated fight dragging the past and the kitchen sink in for ammunition, you can just ask for what you want and talk about how that will happen in a calm and mutually respectful way.

When you make sure you are the best that you can be in all ways, you set an example and you show that your relationship is important enough for you to bring your best to. This, along with being lovingly assertive about what you want is the only way you can hope for the best for your partner and in your relationship.

## **Mindful Loving Skills**

While the pursuit of mindfulness in and of itself brings amazing results to your union with your partner, and focusing on yourself first is the best way to approach your life together, there are other skills that are important to incorporate into your mindfulness practice. Remaining aware of these skills and doing your best to become accomplished at them will assure that you can achieve a healthy happy life together for many years to come.

These skills take commitment, as does living mindfully require a dedication of your time, energy and effort. Make it a conscious effort to implement these skills unconditionally, without waiting to see if your partner is going to reciprocate. This is important and especially so if you have had a rough patch together and need to heal and redirect your partnership to a happier path. While this can be challenging if you have deep resentment towards your partner for how things have been playing out between the two of you, do



your best to set those resentments aside. You will be able to address them when you and your beloved are on better ground with each other if they need to be addressed, chances are many of the resentments will fall away on their own as your relationship gets increasingly better for both of you. So, think forgiveness first, then set your sights on bringing your all to creating a happier union together.

## **Mindful Understanding and Validation**

The most valuable skill you can bring to your relationship is to continuously strive to understand your partner on all levels. Not to “know” them, the moment you think you know them, you will never know them. True knowledge happens moment by moment, so understanding requires the willingness to learn who your partner is and what their experience is on a moment to moment basis. Obviously there are things you should know, such as allergies, beliefs and moral values, but thoughts and feelings are fleeting and how your partner feels or thinks yesterday might not be the same way they think or feel today.

When you develop the skill of understanding, you will ask questions and will continuously validate your partner’s thoughts and feelings. This does not mean you have to agree with everything they say, you might not agree at all and that is okay. Giving him or her understanding and validation means that you reflect back to them what you understand. For example, if your partner comes home in a grouchy mood and is complaining about their boss, or traffic, you might say “It sounds as if you had a bad day”. That way of validating your partner shows you value them for who they are and nothing is more powerful than that.

### ***Validation = Showing your partner that you value them***

How understanding and validation work during a conflict is that you reflect your partners thoughts and feelings back to them while you also share your thoughts and feelings. Working from this point you can come together to explore options you will both be happy with. Let’s look at a common complaint amongst couples and how that might play out in a Mindful Loving way.

Partner A is working hard and values supporting the family. Partner B feels left alone and that he/she needs more time together as a couple and tells Partner A about that need.

Partner B says, “I need more time together as a couple and to feel that you are more of the daily home routine.”

Partner A says, “It sounds as if you are lonely because I am away at work so much.”  
(Notice the validation)

Partner B says, “Yes, I feel like I am the only one who cares about what’s going on at home and I need to feel as if you can be here more often.”

Partner A says, “I understand that you would like me to be around more often. My work schedule has been really intense and there are important goals I am trying to meet. Can we look at options to help you feel as if I am here more that will still allow me to pursue my objectives?”

Partner B says, “What do you have in mind to accomplish that?”

This opens the floor to negotiations instead of arguments, blaming or criticism. This couple’s options could be setting a date night once a week, Partner A checking in with Partner B more often while he/she is at work, such as texts or phone calls, or they may think of other options where they can both feel good about. This is Mindful Loving in action and shows the skills of understanding and validation.

You and your mate might have to work diligently to achieve that level of communication if you are currently entrenched in less than wonderful habits such as finger pointing, blaming, complaining, criticism or having unrealistic expectations of one another, but it is an achievable goal if you commit to staying mindful with reaching it.

If there is an issue and emotions are high, watch your emotions and wait until you can respond to your partner in a calm and loving way about the problem and keep the boundary that you will only talk with your partner about problems when you are approached with the same consideration. You might have to say something such as “I can see you are very upset right now, I love you and want to resolve this issue. Let’s get back together in twenty minutes when we (Notice, “we”, not “you”) can talk calmly and productively about this.” Then, walk away or leave, but make sure to return at the time you said you would and talk in a calm and loving manner about the issue. If emotions start to run high again, repeat the time out for a longer period of time in the same loving way you originally did it.

This way of resolving issues will help you remain on the same team with each other. You are a couple, not adversaries. It is not about who is right or who is wrong; it is about making sure you are both happy and comfortable in your mutual life together.

## **Mindful Meeting of Needs**

Working to understand and validate your partner is the first and most important way of meeting a basic human need in him or her that we each have. Never underestimate this. The next Mindful Loving skill is to meet your partner's needs. While your partner may have many wants that you might not be able to meet, being able to meet their needs in a way that he or she can see they are being met is another way of becoming a partner worthy of a lifetime commitment. Sometimes those needs are impossible to know unless your partner talks to you, so seeking to understand them and validate them will significantly help you learn their basic needs.

The most obvious need we all have is to feel safe from abuse, including verbal, emotional, mental and physical abuse. If there is any form of abuse, seek help to overcome it, or separate until one or both of you become willing to seek help and can come back together to create an environment that is abuse free. It is possible to do this in some relationships, but not all. If this is impossible for your relationship you must end it. This is the most loving thing to do for both of you, although can be extremely difficult.

Assuming abuse is not an issue in your relationship, let's move on. One need to focus on is giving your partner love in a way that they need to experience it. For some, the need to be touched often is what they need to feel loved. It could be that your partner needs to hear words of endearment or encouragement from you, to spend ample time with you, or to receive gifts. Finding out how your partner needs to feel loved and doing your best to provide them with it will enrich your relationship in ways you cannot imagine until you fully commit yourself to it.

You may have an entirely different way of experiencing love. For example, while your partner may need to be touched often to feel loved, you might need to receive gifts. Being honest with how you need to feel loved will give your partner the opportunity to meet your needs in a way that you can fully experience it. If they have not been providing this for you, it is not that he/she is thoughtless, it is probably that he/she thinks that you experience love the same way he/she does. For example, one partner working hard to provide for another could be his/her way of showing love without a clue that their partner really needs to be touched more. So, exploring how each of you need to feel loved and what that looks like is an excellent practice to stay in communication with each other about.

When exploring how you can best meet each other's needs, you may find out that many of the needs are something you both require, such as safety, trust, and honesty. You may find your partner has needs that make no sense to you. Working to understand, validate

and meet those needs in an ever mindful way, which is also comfortable for you, is a relationship skill to continuously strive for when creating a wonderful partnership together. This might not be something that can just be done overnight, it may take time, additional communication and lifestyle adjustments from both of you, but the payoff will be huge.

## **Mindful Trust and Respect**

Trust and respect are no brainer requirements in any relationship if you hope for it to go the distance. Creating and building trust and respect is a moment by moment activity, not to be taken for granted. Obviously this requires remaining mindful of promises, and respect such as using good manners and treating each other with consideration should be a given.

### ***Do what you say you are going to do, when you say you are going to do it***

Doing what you say you are going to do applies to everything, not just the “big” things. Being someone that can be counted on is an important relationship skill to develop and “that is just how I am” is not an excuse. Doing what you say you will, when you said you would is a decision, not a personality trait. If you have problems remembering, get a calendar or app to help with that.

Trust and respect is as much as how you treat each other face to face as to how you honor the relationship when you are not face to face. This means protecting each other’s reputation. Remain mindful to what you discuss with others about your partner. This includes anything that might put your partner in a bad light or embarrass him/her if they were to find out that you shared the information. If there are issues that must be discussed outside of the relationship, talk to a neutral third party professional or spiritual counselor that adheres to confidentiality. In this reality show era we live in, it might seem acceptable to bare it all to the masses, building trust and respect in your relationship requires better actions than that.

One good way to stay mindful of building trust and respect in your relationship is to monitor yourself to assure you are treating your partner better than you treat strangers or others. Your partner eats, breathes, sleeps and lives an intertwined life with you in a way no other will do. Even children grow up and leave the nest to pursue their own lives. Make sure your best actions are for your partner first, and then turn to face the rest of the world together.

## **Mindful Playfulness and Passion**

While life gets in the way in any partnership, the reason you came together in the first place was to enjoy each other. Lighten up and be mindful of opportunities for playtime and passion. Bills, taking care of a home, possibly children, pets, aging parents and other issues can really rob a partnership of feeling light hearted and fun all the time, if you make it important, you will find time.

Playfulness can amount to anything that is fun. Text each other jokes, lovingly tease, roughhouse a little bit, imagine, create, dream and learn fun hobbies to enjoy with each other. You may have different ideas of what playfulness is, explore what it means for both of you and put playfulness as a top priority.

Passion isn't all about sex. It's about giving and receiving all the love and romantic enjoyment that you are each capable of. And, of course sex too. Sex is important, not only to your relationship but for each of you on an individual health needs basis. The ideal amount of time is three to four times a week. More is not healthy of men. While you may not always be able to create the time to be together sexually this many times a week, it is the ideal to shoot for. Passion does not need to be spontaneous, it can be planned. Planning passion and/or sex dates will give you both a sense of anticipation, and you can be playful about it too.

Mindful playfulness and passion will keep the spark alive in your relationship. While the common thought is that this declines over time, it only does because couples allow it to. You can choose to purposely deepen and keep the fires burning bright.

## **Mindful Courage and Honesty**

You might question why you need courage in your most intimate relationship, but it takes courage to become vulnerable to another person. If you have ever struggled with intimacy issues, or letting someone in to your most private side of yourself, you will know all too well that it takes courage. Courage is needed to fully give love, and to fully accept it. Sometimes knowing someone loves you enough to put his/her life on the line for you is overwhelming, you might struggle with feelings that you are not good enough, or that it's not real, but none of that will serve you. You must face your fears and allow love to flow back and forth abundantly between you and that person that you are willing to put your life on the line for.

Honesty in a relationship includes becoming honest with yourself including your limitations and perceived flaws. It also means, if you are tempted to lie about something

that you should avoid it at all costs. Lack of honesty equates to loss of love. It does not mean you have to be cruel with your honesty. For example, if she asks you if her butt looks big in those pants, saying “Hell yes it does” is probably not going to promote warm feelings. Honesty would be to say, “I love you no matter how you look, but those pants aren’t as flattering on you as “this” pair is”. That is honest and kind and is how you should always conduct yourself with your partner if you are hoping to have the best possible relationship with them.

## **Mindful Alignment**

There are times you may wonder how the two of you ever got together, especially if your opinions and tastes seem to be completely opposite. Finding what you can agree on is very important. While it would probably get incredibly boring if you were both just alike, finding out what is alike or complementary to each other will help you strengthen your bond and will also tell you both how to proceed with each other.

An example is the couple that complains that there is nothing for them to do together as a couple. He/she loves to fish, the other loves to shop, etc... This is an easy fix. They can go shopping together for fishing supplies. There is always something you can find to enjoy together. This goes the same for decision making, one of you might be conservative while the other prefers to fly by the seat of his/her pants. Finding the middle ground that you can both agree on is a way to align with each other.

Practicing these Mindful Loving skills is not something you do once and forget about. They need careful tending as a flower needs careful tending to offer its most beautiful bloom. It might help you to write a list of what Mindful Loving skills you want to focus on and put it somewhere that is quick and easy to access for a reminder.

Beginning to meditate is one of the most helpful ways to strengthen mindfulness because it calms your mind. If you have never meditated before or have tried and couldn’t “do it” you will want to download the free eBook “[The Art of Meditation](#)”. Yoga is also powerful because it creates mind, body and spirit union. You do not have to pursue these practices though. You can become mindful with every part of your life and strengthen your practice by continually turning to the present moment.

You may want to practice being mindful in all ways first, and then start to add one relationship skill at a time as you feel more confident in your abilities. There is no right or wrong ways to achieve Mindful Loving, so experiment to find which ways work best for you to become mindful and practice the relationship skills.

## Mindful Loving Tips for Practicing



By this point, you can see how Mindful Loving and incorporating the relationship skills can have a profound and lasting effect on your relationship. The trick is to be able to strengthen your personal mindfulness skills in order to remain mindful with your partner and of the skills that will help you reach the goals of a fulfilling partnership together. The following tips will help. You can modify the tips according to practicing them individually or together, but your focus should be on individual mindfulness first in order to bring the best of yourself to your couple's practice.

1. Slow down your morning ritual and pay attention to how you go through each motion. While most of rush through to begin our day, taking time first thing in the morning to make sure you are fully present in the day is going to give you a head start towards continuing mindfulness throughout your day and into your evening.
2. When talking to your partner or others, refrain from thinking about the things you need to do instead. Stop everything, connect with your eyes and be **THERE** in the conversation. Fully listen to what is being said and respond from a thoughtful place.
3. Reserve judgments. There is a difference between discernment and judging, practice holding off on judgment and take your time to discern what is going on around you. This is especially hard to do when someone is doing something that annoys you such as driving very slowly in front of you. They may be lost or dealing with something traumatic though, so work on discerning reasons why they may be driving as they are instead of jumping in and judging them in a litany of impolite terms.
4. Move your body and become mindful how it feels to move throughout time and space. Fully experience how each part of your body feels as you move it by exercise, yoga or simply walking.
5. Take breathing breaks. Once an hour or so stop everything and put all of your attention on breathing in and breathing out. This gives your mind an opportunity to slow down and refreshes you. It also pulls you into a deeper connection to what is going on around you in the immediate moment.

6. During any activity, especially those ones that you find are easy to focus on without distraction. Whether it's walking in nature, cooking, reading or listening to music, allow yourself to immerse completely into as many experiences as you can.

7. When you have challenging feelings. Our first instinct is to escape from these types of feelings, but instead of lashing out or doing anything else to get rid of them, just sit with them. Exploring those feelings with awareness and without judgment will help you gain clarity and time to respond to them in a way that will enrich your relationships and not destroy them with anger, contemptuous silence or other forms of acting out.

8. All the time. Slow down, live where you are at, right here, right now. When you fully immerse your awareness in your activities throughout the day you will find something amazing. You will find that all that time up in your head thinking about yesterday, tomorrow, who said what, what is wrong with everything, etc... is robbing you from truly living.

The more mindful you become, the more you will realize the benefits, the more rewarding your own life will become and the more rewarding your relationship will be.

## **Mindful Resources**

Now that you have the knowledge to begin your practice of Mindful Loving, you will want to continue to pursue your knowledge. Here are some resources you might enjoy:

### **Free Downloads:**

[Rebuild and Deepen the Trust in Your Relationship](#)

[The Art of Meditation](#)

[12 Steps for Guaranteed Self Improvement](#)

### **Other eBooks:**

[Life Make Over](#)

[The Golden Key to Unlocking Your Soulmate Relationship](#)

### **Programs**

[Total Couple's Conditioning](#)