

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# HAPPINESS HABITS Handbook

Volume 1



“Happiness is not a matter of intensity but of balance and order and rhythm and harmony.”

Thomas Merton

What does happiness mean to you? Do you have habits and tools to help you become happier? Can you be more purposeful about things you do to bring about more happiness in your life?

The purpose of this happiness habits handbook is to explore the science of happiness through the foundations of positive psychology and learn the skills of developing happiness habits. This handbook is filled with activities to help you learn the skills of creating more moments of happiness. After completing the tasks, use this handbook for future reference.

# Table of Contents

TOPIC	PAGE
Thoughts on Happiness	
What Is Happiness to You?	
Understanding Your Emotions	
How Emotions Are Felt in Your Body	
Your Stress Response	
Resiliency Zone	
Resiliency Zone Tracking Form	
Calming and Coping Tools	
Positive Self-Talk	
Flow	
Routines	
Top Character Strengths	
Mindfulness – An Introduction	
Mindful or Unmindful	
Mindful Breathing	
5 Days of Mindful Minutes	
5 by 5 Mindfulness Activity	
Letters of Gratitude	
Happiness Plan	
Mindful Coloring	
Notes Pages	

# Thoughts on Happiness

What does it take to be happy?

- Basic needs met, including a safe home, enough to eat, enough sleep, regular movement and exercise, as well as positive and nurturing family relationships
- Connection with others, spending quality time with your family, friends, and being involved with community groups
- Active involvement in out-of-school activities such as music, athletics, scouting, etc.
- Outside play and exercise. Enjoy the sunshine, fresh air, and natural surroundings
- Develop talents and skills such as art, music, sports, and hobbies. Figure out what activities you do that make the time fly by and give you just the right amount of challenge!
- Practice gratitude. Focus on the good things each day so you can reflect more positively on the things that are going well in your life.
- Develop calming and coping tools for when life gets challenging.
- Utilize routines and daily schedules to help with daily structure and goal setting.

Researchers have shown that about 40% of our happiness is accounted for by intentional activity, whereas 50% is explained by genetics and 10% by circumstances (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon & Schkade, 2005). The happiness habits you create for yourself will lead to greater well-being. This means that what you do really matters!



# What is Happiness to You?

How do you define happiness?

---

---

---

---

Scientists have found that the three things that make you most happy are engagement (feeling interested in your activities and connected to others), pleasure (doing things you enjoy), and meaning (feeling like what you do matters).

Overall, how would you rate your level of happiness daily?

My overall happiness rating: 1 (low) 5 (high)

What things make you happy?

---

---

---

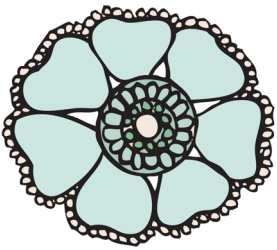
---

---

---

---

---



# Understanding Your Emotions

How do you feel right now? Calm? Anxious? Silly? Tired? Sleepy? We all experience a rainbow of emotions.

Emotions are sensations you notice within your body. The "feeling" refers to the words you use to describe your emotions and tend to last over time. You are constantly impacted by events and people around yourself which causes you to change a lot, so how you react changes too. That is why the word "motion" is inside the word "emotion."

Emotional regulation is your ability to understand and manage your emotions in order to direct your behavior (or what you do), complete tasks, and achieve your goals. The better you can label your emotions the easier it is to learn to understand and regulate your emotional responses.

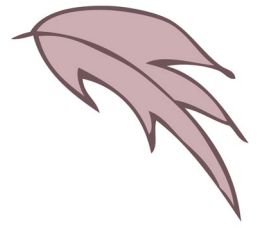
Below is a list of emotion words. Mark the emotions that you felt over the last several days.

Afraid	Brave	Excited	Jealous	Proud	Sorry
Ambitious	Calm	Frustrated	Joyful	Sad	Stressed
Angry	Confused	Guilty	Mad	Scared	Surprised
Annoyed	Content	Happy	Nervous	Serious	Tired
Ashamed	Disgusted	Honored	Optimistic	Shy	Upset
Bored	Embarrassed	Hopeful	Pleased	Silly	Worried

Are there others that aren't listed? Write them here:

\_\_\_\_\_

# How Emotions are Felt in Your Body



Most emotions that you feel have a connection to a reaction in your body. For example, you may clench your teeth when you are mad, cry when you are upset, laugh when you are happy, and blush when you are embarrassed. It is important to "feel" your emotions within your body and learn to identify where there are felt. This leads to greater emotional regulation.

Imagine your emotions are like a temperature gauge. When you are mad or overjoyed you run high or hot and the "color" of your emotion might be yellow, orange, or red. When you are sad or sick you run low or cold and your emotional "color" might be blue or purple, for example.

Lastly, learn to "release" this emotion by taking 5 slow deep breaths.

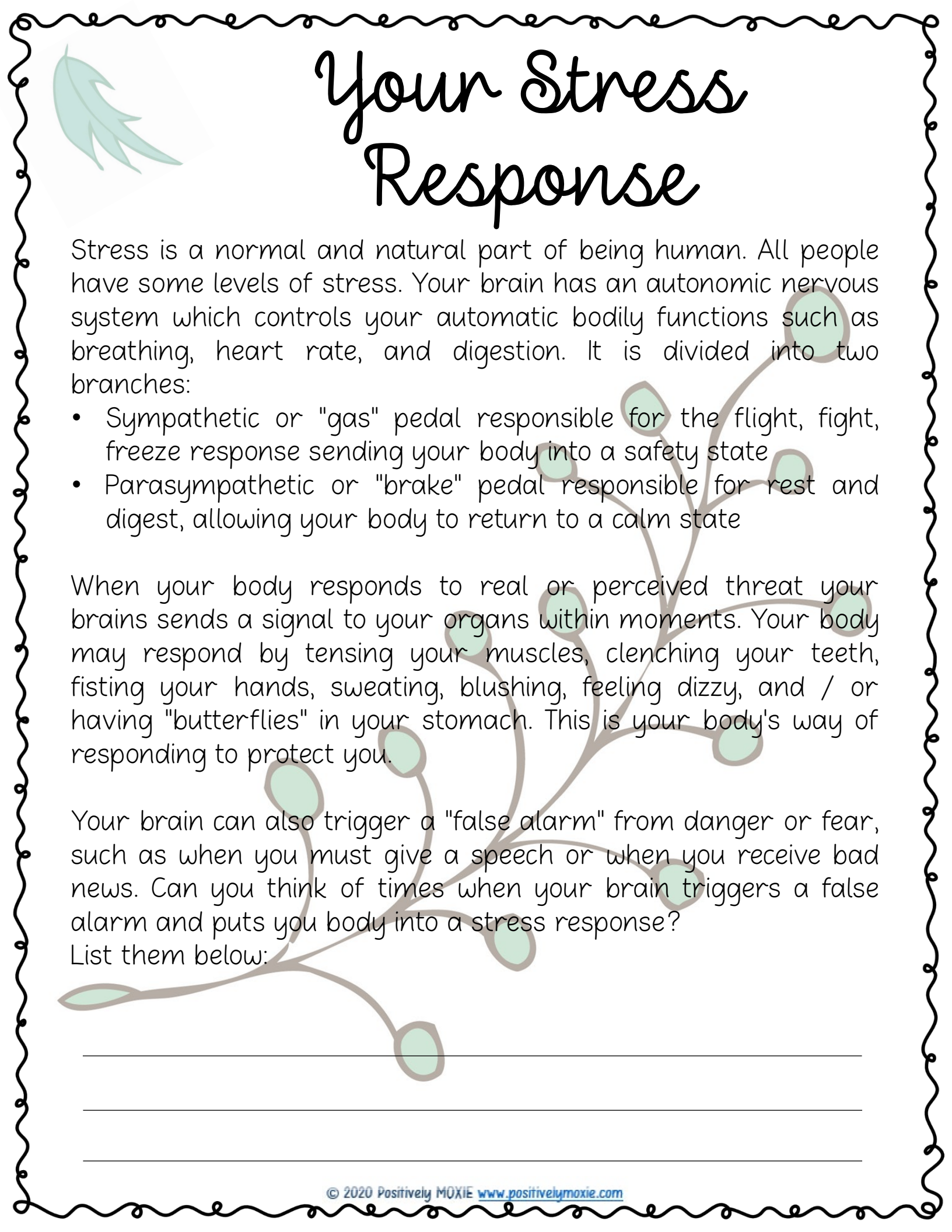
1) Name your emotion

2) What temperature is your emotion?

3) Where in your body do you feel this emotion?

4) What color is your emotion?

5) Take 5 deep breaths



# Your Stress Response

Stress is a normal and natural part of being human. All people have some levels of stress. Your brain has an autonomic nervous system which controls your automatic bodily functions such as breathing, heart rate, and digestion. It is divided into two branches:

- Sympathetic or "gas" pedal responsible for the flight, fight, freeze response sending your body into a safety state
- Parasympathetic or "brake" pedal responsible for rest and digest, allowing your body to return to a calm state

When your body responds to real or perceived threat your brains sends a signal to your organs within moments. Your body may respond by tensing your muscles, clenching your teeth, fisting your hands, sweating, blushing, feeling dizzy, and / or having "butterflies" in your stomach. This is your body's way of responding to protect you.

Your brain can also trigger a "false alarm" from danger or fear, such as when you must give a speech or when you receive bad news. Can you think of times when your brain triggers a false alarm and puts you body into a stress response?

List them below:

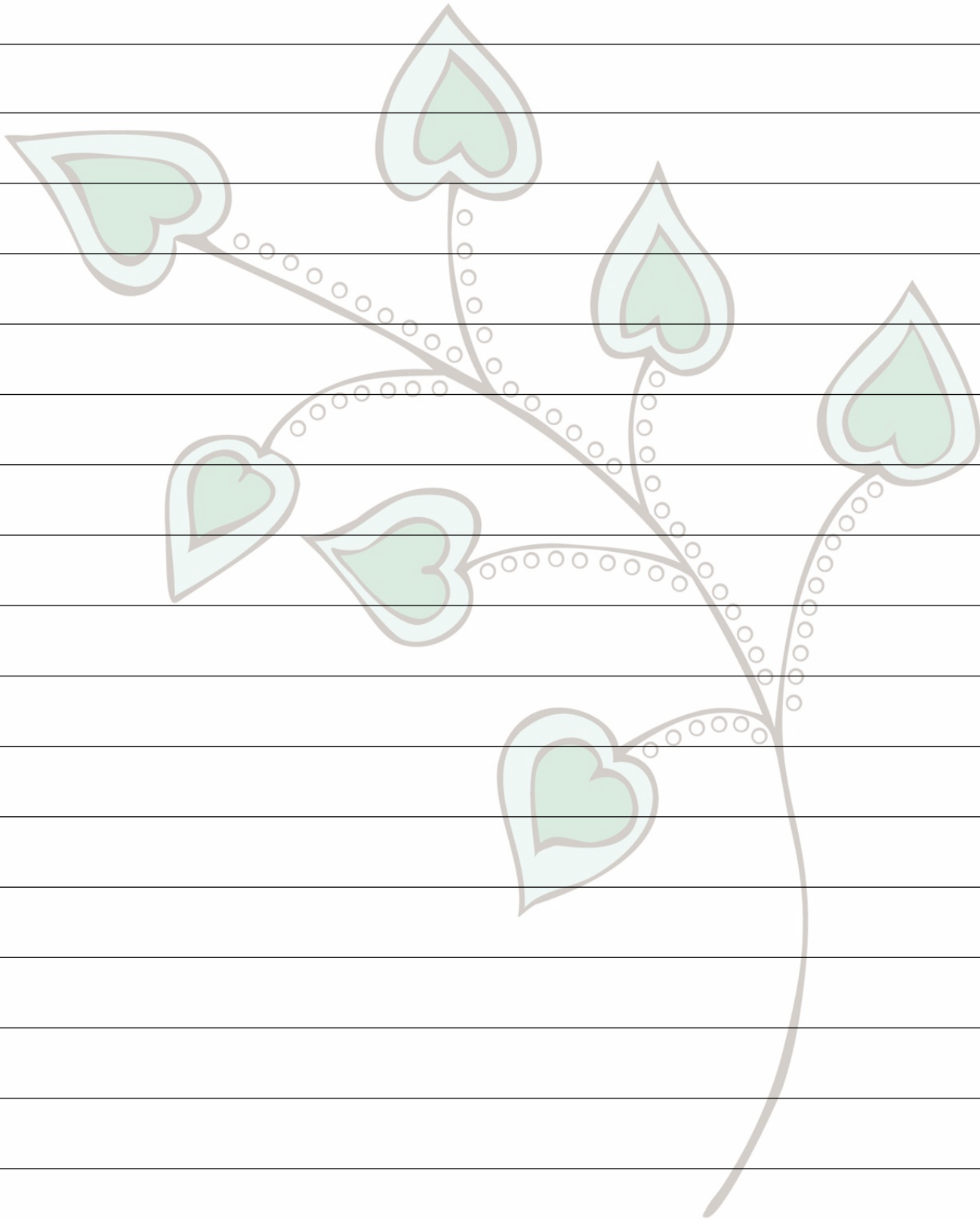
---

---

---

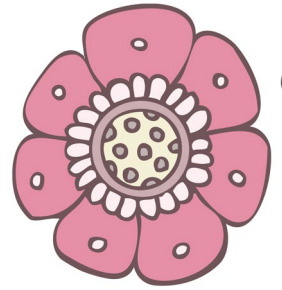


# Notes





# Resiliency Zone



We are at our best when we are in our resiliency zone. When we are in our resiliency zone, we feel okay and we can bounce back from whatever happens to us during the day. Sometimes we get bumped out of our resiliency zone. When we get bumped into high zone, it may express itself as angry outbursts, crying, or excessive worrying. When we get bumped into low zone, we may feel exhausted, sad, or bummed out.

**HIGH ZONE**

**Resiliency Zone**



**LOW ZONE**

It is important to track our energy and moods so that we may notice patterns. Tracking means to pay attention to sensations within our body to help us stay balanced. When we learn to recognize the difference between the sensations of well-being versus distress, we may choose to pay attention to those sensations of well-being. The goal is to expand our resiliency zone and to spend as much time as possible where we feel our best and we can handle whatever challenges come our way!

In this activity, you will keep track of your mood/energy level, exercise, sleep, and flow for one week and then reflect patterns you notice and how they are interconnected.

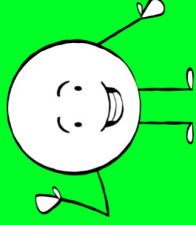
# Resiliency Zone Tracking Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

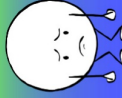
High energy/ mood zone: Edgy, irritable, hyper, worrying, outbursts, crying, nightmares



Resiliency Zone: Calm & relaxed. "My thoughts & feelings bounce around in the OK zone and I can adapt."



Low energy: Exhausted, sad, fatigued, bummed out.



Mark how high, low, or in-between your feelings and sensations feel each day.

**Date**

What type?

**Exercise**

How long?

**Sleep**  
more  
Just right  
less

What activity?

**Flow**

How long?

**Reflections**

Make connections about significant events that might affect your energy level or mood. Examples include interactions, successes, disappointments, etc.




# Calming & Coping Tools

Calming and coping tools help you get back to your "resiliency zone." Below are a few ideas to help start a "menu" of calming and coping strategies. Plan to add to this list! Practice the tools you have identified on your list below ahead of time. See how you feel and how your body reacts when you try a strategy. What works one day may not work the next time. The next time are faced with a "high zone / energy" obstacle you can more easily and automatically put a calming and coping tool in place. It is important to note that this is a lifelong skill!

## Calming & Coping Tools:

Use a stress ball

Dim lights

Go for a walk

Talk to a parent or friend

Practice yoga

Take deep breaths

Get a drink of water

Think of a calming place

Journal

Draw or doodle

Use a fidget

Use lavender or vanilla

Take a break

Use positive self talk

Listen to music

Count to 10

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

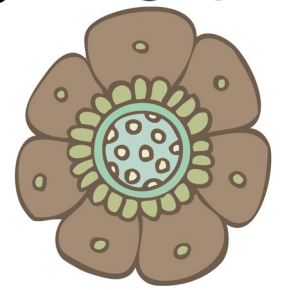
---

---

---

---

# Positive Self-Talk



The concept of self-talk is a powerful one. Everyone has an internal dialogue which can either build ourselves up or erode our self-confidence. Using positive self-talk is a coping tool to help you build your confidence.

Below, write 7 statements of encouragement you can recite to yourself. Examples include:

- Although this is hard for me, I will keep practicing to get better.
- I've got this.
- I can do hard things.
- I will try again.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

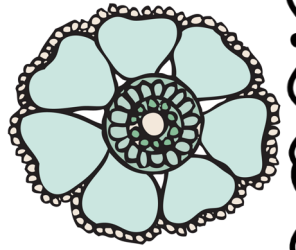
---

---

---

---

# Flow



The concept of "flow" as identified by Mihaly Csikszentmihályi (pronounced Me-high Chick-sent-me-high-ee) is the mental state in which you are engaged in an activity where you are fully immersed with a feeling of energized focus. You are fully involved and feel success in the process of the activity itself. You may even lose track of time. You are most likely to be in a state of flow when you are doing activities you really enjoy. People who report more feelings of flow tend to be happier.

When are you in flow? Below, list activities, situations, and/or people with whom flow activities occur. See if you can identify ten.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

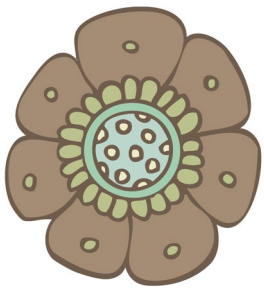
---

---

---

---

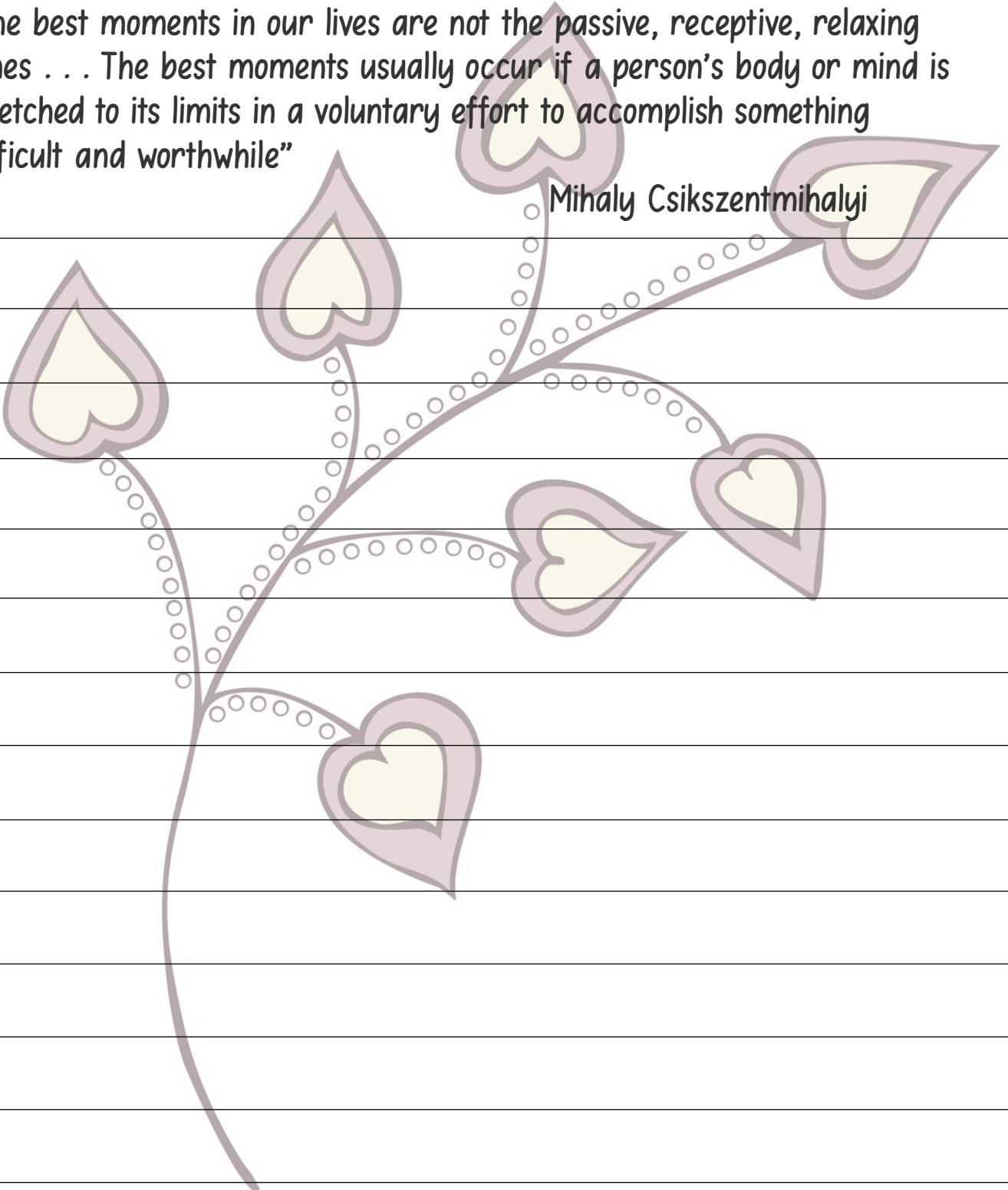
---



# Notes on Flow

“The best moments in our lives are not the passive, receptive, relaxing times . . . The best moments usually occur if a person’s body or mind is stretched to its limits in a voluntary effort to accomplish something difficult and worthwhile”

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi



# Routines

Our nervous system needs predictability. Creating daily structure through routines and schedules are excellent ways to develop healthy habits. A daily schedule (even a "loose" one) helps us to organize our day, use our time more productively, and ultimately get to the fun and passion projects on our list – get into our FLOW!

## DAILY SCHEDULE

Time	Activity
8 – 9	
9 – 10	
10 – 11	
11 – 12	
12 – 1	
1 – 2	
2 – 3	
3 – 4	

My Daily Task CARD	
→	
→	
→	
→	
→	



# Top Character Strengths

Positive psychologist Martin Seligman has found that people are happiest when using their strengths. According to the VIA Character Strengths website, "scientists discovered a common language of 24 character strengths which make up what's best about our personality. Everyone possesses all 24 character strengths in different degrees, so each person has a truly unique character profile."

PLEASE REFERENCE: [www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org). Complete the free Character Strengths survey which takes approximately 15 minutes. Once completed a free download is available.

Below, write down your top 5 character strengths and a brief description of how it applies to you. For example, HUMOR – "I can think of something that always makes me laugh." Use your top character strengths to help overcome challenges and obstacles. Ask yourself, "How can I use my character strengths in a way to overcome this struggle?" Next, recall a recent challenge. Think about what strength you can use or used to overcome this obstacle.

---

---

---

---

---

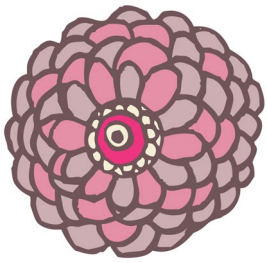
---

---



# Notes on Character Strengths

"Happiness depends upon ourselves"  
Aristotle



# Mindfulness – an Introduction

Mindfulness is described as sustaining awareness in the present moment of our thoughts, feelings, sensations, and surrounding environment. Mindfulness is also learning to notice what is happening without judgement. This means not thinking about the past or the future but being immersed in the moment. Mindful awareness can be described as "focusing without judgement." This means that mindfulness has two parts. Part one is focusing attention and part two is withholding opinion (judgement).

A mindful minute. Take one minute and pay close attention to your senses, vibrations, air movements, etc. you spot. Listen carefully to the sounds, notice the smells, and quietly observe. After about one minute, write down everything you remember below.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Mindful or Unmindful?



DIRECTIONS: Mindfulness is paying close attention on what's happening around you. The second part of mindfulness is noticing your surroundings *without judgement* – waiting to form an opinion until you have carefully considered the situation. In this exercise, circle the word (MINDFUL or UNDMINDFUL) which best describes the action.

Deciding not to like a food because you haven't tried it. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Stopping to listen to a friend's story. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Interrupting a friend to tell him/her about some of your exciting news! MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Helping your mom unload the groceries. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Liking a certain song or music group because your friends do. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Trying a new item on the menu of your favorite restaurant, even if you're unsure about the taste. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Ignoring a friend who is eager to talk to you. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

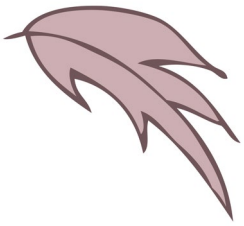
Working on a new skill in your sport until you have improved. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Deciding ahead of time that you're not going to learn a new piece of music on your instrument. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Listening to your brother or sister sing his/her favorite song on the radio. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Going to a party with some friends even though you would rather stay home and relax with movie. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL

Paying close attention to your parent so you can follow careful instructions. MINDFUL or UNMINDFUL



# Mindful Breathing

Focusing on your breath when you are upset, nervous, or stressed is one of the very quickest ways to activate your body's natural relaxation response. Mindful breathing assists the body by slowing heart rate, lowering blood pressure, and improving focus.

How does this work? During stressful times and in order to keep your body handling the normal ups and downs of life, your autonomic nervous system manages your body and brain through its sympathetic and parasympathetic branches. The sympathetic branch operates the "gas" pedal in your brain, responding quickly, triggering strong feelings and body reactions such as increased heart and breathing rate as well as releasing the hormones adrenaline and cortisol. The parasympathetic branch, on the other hand, is the "brake" pedal, producing a calming effect on your body by slowing your heart and breathing rate.

Practice lengthening exhalation (breathing out) in times of anxiety or stress and note what it does to your body. When you extend your exhale and it is slower than your inhale, it stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system and thereby calms your body.

Use a mantra or word pair to repeat to yourself silently as you inhale and exhale. Say the first word slowly (the whole time you inhale) and then the second word slowly (the whole time you exhale.) Mantra suggestions include:

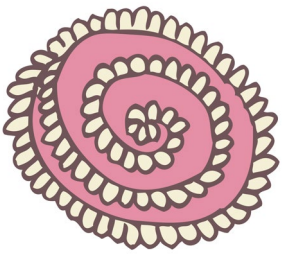
in...out

1...2

let...go

just...breathe

The goal of mindful breathing is to calm yourself and increase awareness of your breathe as well as ease your thoughts. Try it!



# 5 Days of Mindful Minutes

Mindfulness encourages you to deepen your thoughts of the present moment without judgement. Below, read each statement and answer the question in about a minute.

Day 1: I am mindful of my strengths I have that have helped me become who I am. Some of my strengths and skills include:

---

---

Day 2: I am mindful of my family and how they have encouraged me. Some of my motivations come from:

---

---

Day 3: I am mindful of the special people in my life (teachers, coaches, club leaders, instructors). They motivate me by:

---

---

Day 4: I am mindful of my pets and/or cherished possessions. Some of my motivation comes from:

---

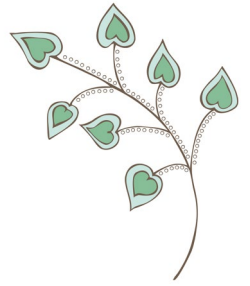
---

Day 5: I am mindful of my special skills and talents I have. Some of my talents include: .

---

---

# 5 by 5 Mindfulness Activity



Mindfulness inspires you to expand your thoughts of the current moment without judgement.

Take a minute to be aware of what is going on around you right now.

Directions:

Using your 5 primary senses of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch, write down 5 words or phrases that best describe what you are sensing in the present moment.

What can you SEE:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

What can you HEAR:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

What can you SMELL:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

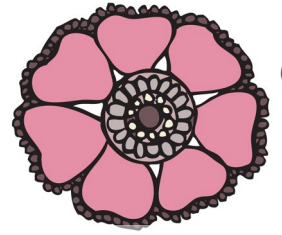
What can you TASTE:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

What can you FEEL:

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

# Letters of Gratitude



One powerful way we find meaning and engagement is in our relationships. A great way for you to be happy on the inside is to care and focus on others. "Resourcing" is a useful coping tool and is when we recall memories of people or things that make us happy. In this happiness exercise, identify 3 significant people in your life. This could include a family member, teacher, family friend, coach, mentor or organization leader. For each person on your list, identify 3 specific & meaningful reasons why he or she is important to you. From this list complete one of the following activities for each person.

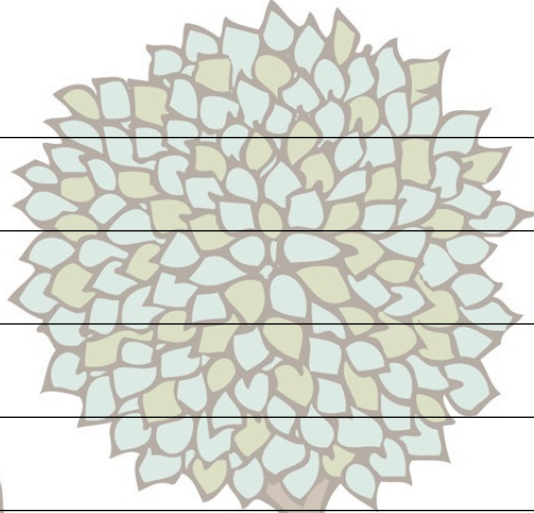
- 1) Make a gratitude visit. Visit them face-to-face and tell them why you're thanking him/her and how they helped. Afterwards, ask yourself how that made you feel. Was it easy or hard? How long did the feelings last?
- 2) Write a letter. Write a handwritten letter explaining why this person is so important to you. Don't forget to include the 3 specific & meaningful reasons you listed.
- 3) Make something meaningful. Create a collage, poem, painting or video that shows how much that person means to you. Explain to him or her why you made it and what it is meaningful.

---

---

---

# Notes on Gratitude Letters





# Happiness Plan

What are your happiness habits for the future? How can you put into place what you have learned?

Habits are the interconnection of knowledge, skill, and motivation. Knowledge is what we know, skill is how we do it, and motivation is desire. In order to make habit changes in our lives we must have all three. What happiness habits can you attempt?

Below, list 5 habit changes you would like to try:

1

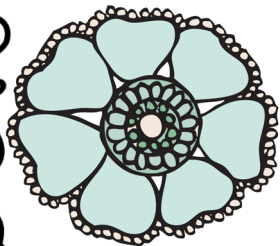
2

3

4

5

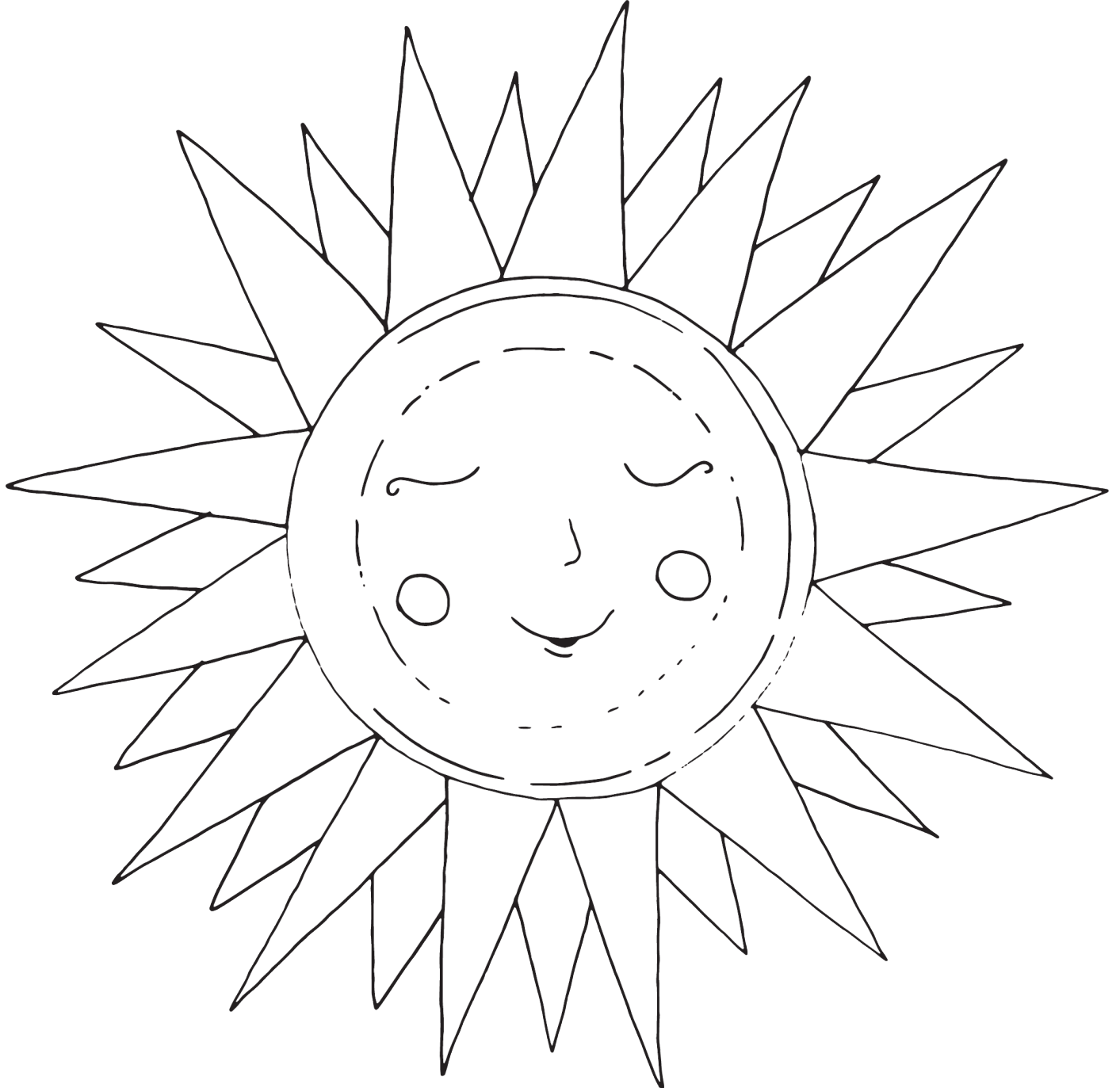
Additional notes:



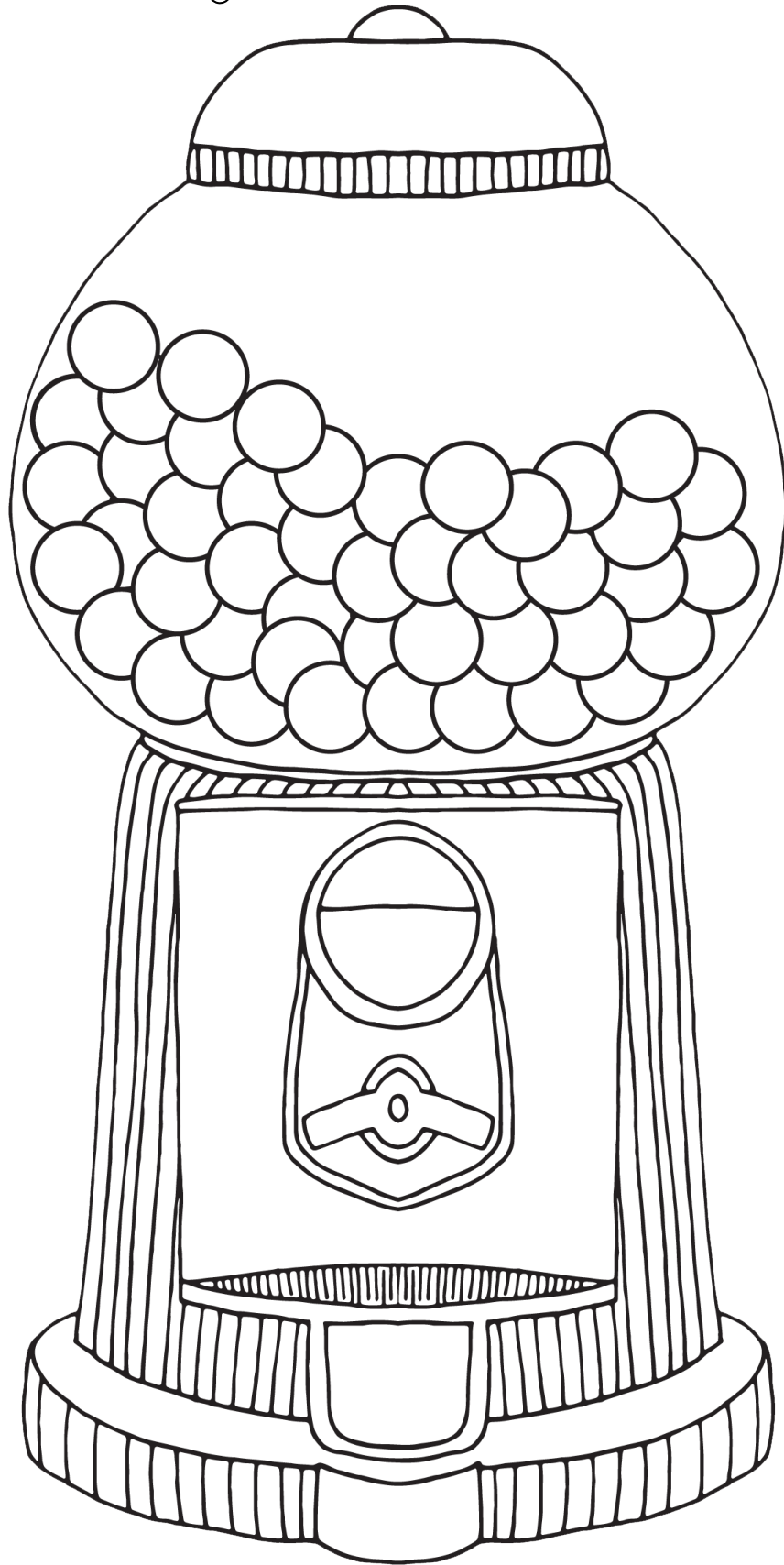
# Notes on Happiness Plan

“There is no way to happiness – happiness is the way.”  
Thich Nhat Hanh

# Mindful Coloring



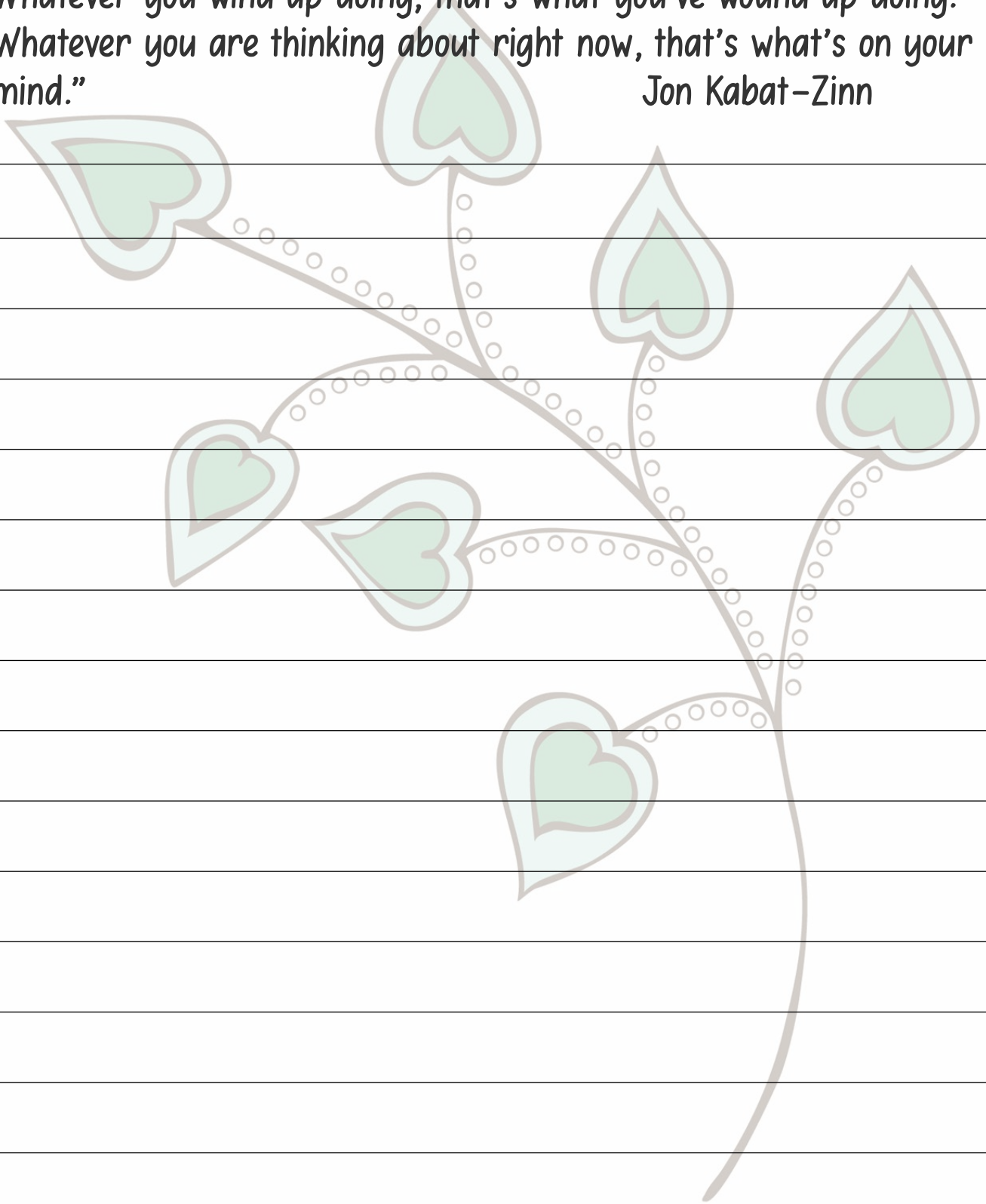
# Mindful Coloring



# Notes

“When it comes right down to it, wherever you go, there you are. Whatever you wind up doing, that’s what you’ve wound up doing. Whatever you are thinking about right now, that’s what’s on your mind.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn



# Mindful Coloring



# Mindful Coloring



# Notes

"Like it or not, this moment is all we really have to work with."  
Jon Kabat-Zinn

