

Patience  
&  
Focused Presence

A Mini-Course

By  
Iris Higgins



“Speed of life is a killer not a healer,  
so slow down to bloom like a flower.”

— Debasish Mridha

The word of the month for this mini-course is actually two words: PATIENCE and FOCUSED PRESENCE.

Um...I guess that's three words :)

I decided to put those words together into one mini-course (with two parts) because ultimately, they both come from the same place: mindfulness.

According to Psychology Today, mindfulness is:

A state of active, open attention on the present. When you're **mindful**, you observe your thoughts and feelings from a distance, without judging them good or bad. Instead of letting your life pass you by, **mindfulness** means living in the moment and awakening to Experience.

### **PART 1: Patience**

And so for Part 1 of our mini-course, I'm going to have you explore a 4 day mindfulness experiment.

In today's hectic world, it's easy to get caught up in multi-tasking, never really giving our true focus to any one thing. And when we're feeling impatient to get to the next thing, we ramp up that hectic energy so that we can jump from where we are to the next phase in our lives. The problem is that when we do that, we forget to enjoy the phase we're in right now. We forget to see the beauty and magic along the way.

4 Day Mindfulness Experiment:

#### **Day 1:**

Think of an activity you do regularly that takes approximately 10 minutes and that you often do while multi-tasking. I want you to write down:



1. What other things you tend to do at the same time (listen to music or podcasts, watch TV, plan to-do list, etc.).
2. Three to five words or phrases that come to mind when you think of that activity.

Example: When I do the dishes, I tend to listen to podcasts or watch Netflix at the same time. The words that come to my mind are: *Again? Never ending. Boring. Get it done as quickly as possible! Cutting into my time!*

I want you to do that activity mindfully today, with complete presence. Turn off background noise. Allow yourself to be fully immersed in the activity. If it's boring, let it be boring. Be fully present with whatever the activity is, and do it as if it's the most important thing you could be doing with your 10 minutes.

Afterwards, write down three to five words or phrases to describe what the experience was like. Remember, this is an experiment! There is no right or wrong experience to have. You might realize you hate doing the activity mindfully (personally, I hate mindful eating exercises; I get so impatient!). Or you might realize it changes the tone of your day from hectic to calm. You might notice something else entirely.

### **Day 2 and Day 3:**

Your challenge for the next two days is the same as Day 1, except I want you to increase the amount of time you spend in mindfulness practice each day. For Day 2, think of an activity that takes about 30 minutes. For Day 3, think of an activity that takes about 60 minutes. Each day, make sure to write down what you normally also do while you're working on that activity, and what words come to mind about that activity both before and after the mindfulness experiment.

### **Day 4:**

Think of an area of your life where you feel impatient to get to the next phase. Perhaps you're in a relationship that you suspect might end someday and you're having trouble being present in the relationship now. Or maybe you have a big goal in your business and you are having trouble appreciating where you're at now because you want to *get to the end point already!* Or perhaps you live somewhere that you know is temporary for you, and rather than enjoying where you're living right now, you constantly worry about finding a better place. Whatever it is, choose one area/situation in your life that feels like it needs more patience and focused presence.



Listen to the Sacred Space Exploration guided meditation. Before you start the recording, think of that one situation in your life and ask your subconscious to help you receive messages around that situation.

## **PART 2: Focused Presence**

### ***Why I love River by Kaji Aso***

*I am often asked by people, "Why do you do river trip?" I do not have an exact answer for them. I cannot quite explain it, because there is no particular purpose. If someone were explaining about mountain climbing, the goal would be to reach to the top. If it were boxing, it would be to hit the other person as much as one could until the other is knocked out. With river trip perhaps the purpose is to go down a river from beginning to end without stopping. Still there are many ways to travel a river, and there is no way to say which is more perfect. In fact there is no winning or being defeated, unless you die. River trip is not a game, even if it is a sport. The purpose of river trip is that a person who loves river goes down the river while dipping the body into the water, and traveling down while being rocked by waves.*

When I was in college, I studied watercolor painting with Kate Finnegan, a brilliant teacher, and a student of the late artist, [Kaji Aso](#). Through Kate, I learned Kaji Aso's unique watercolor painting style, a style which I am going to teach you as a practice in patience and focused presence.

### **Watercolor painting project:**

You'll need: Watercolor set. Brushes. Watercolor paper. Good quality paper and watercolors are best but even a kid's set will work just fine for beginners!

**Your assignment is to paint a flower - any type - using the technique I share in this 3 part video series.**

If you really want to go over and above with patience ;) start by sitting outside and sketching a flower in pencil before moving to watercolor. The more you can look at a flower and focus on drawing each little petal or leaf with patience and focus, the more your painting will begin to come alive when you work on it. When I was in Kate's watercolor class, this is what we would do, and the paintings I took the time to do sketches of first were always the best. (In all honesty, I do not have that kind of patience these days, which is part of the reason I love doing abstract paintings now.)



*“I don’t want to be doing tasks with the END in focus, but recognize that every tiny shoot or leaf will grow into a flower, at some point, eventually, in the end. So I just need to focus on the leaf in front of me, and trust that the flower is coming.” - Jacqueline Raposo*

