

A GOOD PLAN

Timeless

Life Planner Instructions

The whole book, but this part in particular, functions as training for your mindfulness, as a support of self-love and as an avoidance of stress. But we are no mindfulness gurus. Many techniques came into being through experimentation and are based on our own experiences after our burnouts. Some techniques on the other hand are well researched and established, others were developed through collaboration with our users. We don't claim to have created the cure-all for mental health. But we pledge for mental hygiene in everyday life. The techniques explained here put focus on your inner self. Thus, you arrive at yourself and escape from the high-speed of everyday life. Many have forgotten this. But just like we should brush our teeth daily, we have to free our mind from time to time from processing external stimuli.

The more often you use the exercises in this life planner the easier it will become to decipher your inner emotional world. Train yourself several times a week by reciting the questions you've already answered. Often two minutes are enough for this task. You can do many exercises immediately or you can wait a while until you have more time and space. Let yourself in on these techniques in an open and curious manner and try to be mindful of your reactions while reading the explanations of the exercises. Do you feel a sense of reluctance towards one or more tasks? Try to find out why.

Our Understanding of Mindfulness

The explanation of mindfulness sounds the same in all books concerning this topic: the term was coined by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1970s and implies that we should feel the moment in the 'here and now' without judgement. But in fact, this conscious living in the moment has been a usual attitude to life in different religions and philosophies for thousands of years. Especially in Buddhism, this teaching has already been practised for 2,500 years.

In *A Good Plan* we approach this topic in an undogmatic way and combine old religions and 1970s revival with Berlin street knowledge. We call it radical mindfulness. Because we like it practical and non-esoteric. Everything that works will be put into this book. Everything that's incomprehensible or ineffective gets chucked out in the next edition. For us, living mindfully means to investigate one's own life and needs without evaluation or even judgement, name your needs and deduce actions from that. We also like to call that *mightfulness*. Because with *mindfulness* alone nothing has been really done. You also have to do something. This mindset gives you *might*.

Values and Principles

Knowing which values are of importance to you can help you adjust your life according to your needs and to find orientation in difficult times.

Step 1: Choose twelve values and principles from the list that are important to you. It's not about choosing terms that you consider fashionable or that might suit you well. Rather it should be the values and principles that define you and that create a warm feeling inside. You can ignore the basic needs of health, safety, love and freedom, if you already know that they belong to you anyway.

Step 2: Now put the twelve terms into the list on the next page. The order is not really relevant for now. The definition of the values that are the most important to you will follow in step 3.

Your Goals

Goals can drive and motivate you, but they can also put you under a lot of pressure. Thinking about what you wish for in the short, medium and long-term is enlightening and can give you clarity about your desires and the necessary means you need to get there.

Short-Term Goals (1 to 12 months)

Medium-Term Goals (1 to 4 years)

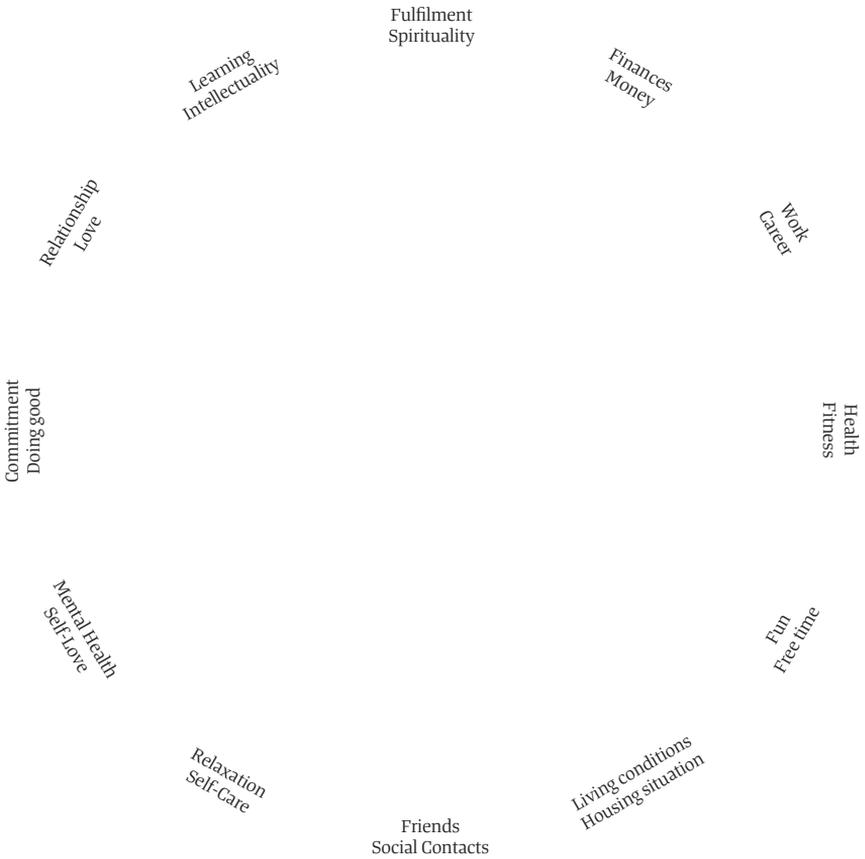
Your Autobiography

Author Emily Esfahani Smith took a look at the whole philosophy of humanity and defined four mental motives that make up a fulfilled life: feeling connected (social closeness), finding one's own purpose (fulfilment through one's own actions), seeing oneself as part of a whole (connection to the world or to spiritual concepts) and understanding the world through stories. The latter meaning that people are striving to set events into meaningful connection and place their own life story within it. According to this, people feel most fulfilled when they view their life as a typical heroic legend (positive resolution after hard trials) and can see sense and growth through this legend. But did you ever concern yourself intensely with your own autobiography?

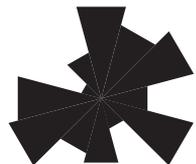
Write down the milestones in your life: school, your first own apartment, relationships, friendships, vocational training and jobs. Hence you get a feeling for your personal autobiography and maybe you can understand better what made you the person that you are now.

The Web of Life

Evaluate the twelve areas in which you can roughly categorise a life, from 1 (discontent) to 10 (very content). Colour in the relevant spaces. This way you'll get a cobweb of contentment. You can copy this page and repeat this technique several times or share it with others.



example



Your Emotional World

A myriad of theories and empirical findings are suggesting that an adequate procession of emotions plays a significant role for mental health. Which emotions do you feel most often? Which of them would you like to foster and which ones would you like to reduce? Evaluate from 1 to 5 what role these emotions play in your life and highlight whether you'd like to feel them more intensely or less intensely in future. In time you learn the vocabulary of emotions. This can help you to name your emotions more specifically. You can look back at this list every time you plan a new month. Then you can reflect on whether you should plan some activities that cause the emotions you want to foster.

active	dejected
affectionate	depressed
aggressive	determined
agitated	disappointed
ambitious	discontented
amused	disillusioned
angry	disinhibited
anxious	disinterested
apathetic	distanced
arrogant	distressed
balanced	eager
bored	easygoing
brave	embarrassed
callous	empathic
calm	empty
caring	energetic
cautious	enthusiastic
charming	envious
cheerful	euphoric
compassionate	exasperated
concerned	excited
confident	exhausted
confused	exhilarated
constrained	expectant
content	extroverted
cold	fearful
cosy	fearless
critical	feisty
curious	free
cynical	friendly
defiant	frustrated

Good Habits

Think of up to six habits you'd like to foster throughout the upcoming months. Describe as well why you chose exactly these habits and how well you think you might feel if you had stuck to them consistently. When you make yourself aware of your underlying motivation, you are more likely to keep your habits. Put your habits into the habit tracker, which you will find in the monthly planners at the end of the diary part.

1st habit

Why do you want to foster this habit? How would you feel if you succeeded?

2nd habit

Why do you want to foster this habit? How would you feel if you succeeded?

3rd habit

Why do you want to foster this habit? How would you feel if you succeeded?

Your Inner Critic

Have you ever consciously observed how you talk to yourself? You will have an inner voice that reprimands you, holds you back or talks you into a sense of shame. That is totally normal because your inner critic wants to protect you from danger and future failure. Self-critique can motivate you to always give your best but the border to very limiting thoughts is fluid. To recognise this phenomenon better, evaluate now the following statements from 1 to 10.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
I criticise many of my thoughts	<input type="radio"/>									
The tone in my head is very aggressive										
I also criticise small thoughts	<input type="radio"/>									
I criticise my performance										
I criticise my behaviour in social contacts	<input type="radio"/>									
I criticise my looks										
I compare myself to others a lot	<input type="radio"/>									
I take the inner critic very seriously										

1 (not at all) to 10 (very much)

There's a trick which can help gain some distance from this nagging voice: give your inner critic a name. Through personification you can say, when you recognise the reprimanding voice, that it's just Bernard, Ernest or Gerard who wants to protect you from potential harm but whose advice you can confidently reject.

My inner critic's name

Now try to write down situations in which your inner critic shows up on a regular basis.

Your Year in Pixels

For this technique you need pens in five different colours. Each column represents one month, each box a day. Every day mark how you're feeling with a colour. Our suggestion: red means very good, orange is good, yellow is okay, green for rather bad and blue for very bad. If you want to mark certain emotional particularities, you can additionally draw symbols into the boxes, for instance an x for a panic attack. You can define these factors yourself.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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31												

Your colours

very good

good

okay

rather bad

bad

Your special factors

What gives you energy?

If you can name what gives you energy and power in your life, you can work towards integrating more of it into your life. This way you avoid situations that deprive you of energy. Just tick them off!

being alone	surfing the internet	going out for dinner
being with people	playing	cooking
time with friends	reading	wellness
time with family	watching series/movies	working
time with partner	being in nature	excursions
doing sports	meditating	travelling
painting, crafting	tenderness	DIY
playing music	partying	doing nothing

How well do you sleep?

All mindfulness techniques have little effect when you're sleep deprived. Evaluate quarterly to which extent the following factors are true for you, from 0 (not true) to 10 (absolutely true).

Date

I don't use my phone / computer before going to sleep

I always go to bed at the same time

I go to bed completely relaxed

My bed is very comfortable

I fall asleep quickly

No external factors are disturbing my sleep

I sleep deeply

My room is very dark at night

My room is very quiet at night

I am wide awake in the morning

Fill in scores from 0 to 10

What causes you stress?

If you don't know your biggest stress factors, all mindfulness is in vain. Because, then even a small situation can get you out of balance. Tick what puts you in a state of unease.

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| being alone | working | conflicts at work |
| being with people | not being able to work | personal conflicts |
| time with friends | exams | uncertainty at work |
| time with family | presentations | private uncertainty |
| time with partner | travelling | unfinished tasks |
| doing sports | deadlines | phone calls |
| doing no sports | organisational stuff | doing nothing |
| running errands | business appointments | filling in lists |

How prone are you to burnout?

Overworking is only one out of many reasons that promote burnout. Therefore, always keep an eye on these factors and evaluate them once every quarter, from 0 (not true) to 10 (absolutely true).

Date

I have a lot of control at work / at uni

I have much control in private life

I get a lot praise at work / at uni

I get a lot praise in private life

I experience a sense of community at work / at uni

I experience a sense of community in my private life

People in my surroundings are treated fairly

There are no value conflicts at work / at uni

I am not overworked at work / at uni

I am not stressed in my private life

<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>				

Fill in scores from 0 to 10

Your Needs

When it comes to needs we distinguish between *basic needs*; the default of which can lead to psychological stress, and *growth needs*; the fulfilment of which grants us gratification but which aren't necessarily essential for survival. Now evaluate the following factors, from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much), how much you consider your needs met. Take into account that not every person assigns the same value to every need. So you don't have to evaluate every factor as *very fulfilled* to live a good life. If you like, you can tick the circle next to each need if you want to give special attention to it throughout the upcoming quarter. But keep in mind that these are the big tools of your life: wishing for improvement in certain areas is easy, putting them into action is not. Repeat this technique once every quarter.

Date:

Basic needs

Basic needs, food, water, sleep
Health (physical and mental)
Safety, housing, finances
Social needs

Growth needs

Fulfilment, spiritual purpose
Self-fulfilment, art
Appreciation, success
Fun, adventure/relaxation, free time

Date:

Basic needs

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Social needs

Growth needs

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Self-fulfilment, art
Appreciation, success
Fun, adventure/relaxation, free time

Diary Instructions

We will now explain to you how you can use the diary part. Only use those techniques that you like and don't waste energy forcing something upon yourself. If analysing your wellbeing every day is not to your taste: don't do it. You don't have to track your habits yearly, monthly and weekly, just choose one or two methods. A *Good Plan* accompanies you for a year, so don't torture yourself with tasks that are not your cup of tea.

How we handle holidays

As this is an undated version of *A Good Plan* you won't find any national holidays in the diary. Therefore, start with writing all the national holidays into your diary.

The structure of the weekly view: Appointments

This part of the diary consists of one double page per week. The left-hand side is for your appointments. By way of illustration we have displayed it here on the right-hand page. Every day has mindfulness labels (1) on the far right-hand side. Here you can evaluate different factors that influence your wellbeing with just one line. This way you will recognise stress patterns quickly. The few seconds you use for reflection will direct your focus immediately towards your overall state.

Evaluate the following factors on a scale from 1 to 5 by marking the boxes. It only needs you to draw a line and takes just a few seconds.

Sleep		Have you slept well and enough?
Mood		How are you?
Food		Did you eat healthy food?
Water		Did you drink enough water?
Activity		Did you move enough?
Wellness		Did you do something nice for yourself?
Social		Did you keep up your social connections?
Stress		How high is your stress level?

At the bottom, you will find a quote or a saying (2). Right next to it there is a small habit tracker (3). You can track your good habits with it. Every circle represents one day of the week. Tick it daily when you have stuck to this habit. You can define the habit in every monthly planner at the end of the diary part.

1	1	1	1	1	¹⁸ 1	
2	¹ 2	2	2	2	2	
3	3	3	3	¹⁴ 3	3	
4	4	4	4	4	4	
5	5	5	5	5	5	²³
6	6	⁶ 6	¹⁰ 6	6	6	
7	7	7	7	7	7	
8	8	8	8	8	¹⁹ 8	
9	² 9	9	9	9	9	
10	10	10	10	¹⁵ 10	10	
11	11	11	11	11	11	
12	12	12	12	12	12	²⁴
13	13	⁷ 13	¹¹ 13	13	13	
14	14	14	14	14	14	
15	15	15	15	15	²⁰ 15	
16	³ 16	16	16	16	16	
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22	22	22	22	22	²¹ 22	
23	⁴ 23	23	23	23	23	
24	24	24	24	¹⁷ 24	24	
25	25	25	25	25	25	
26	26	26	26	26	26	²⁶
27	27	⁹ 27	¹³ 27	27	27	
28	28	28	28	28	28	
29	29	29	29	29	²² 29	
30	⁵ 30	30	30	30	30	
31	31	31	31	31	31	

1	1	1	1	1	1	
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3	²⁷ 3	3	3	3	3	3
4	4	4	³⁶ 4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6	6	6	⁴⁵ 6
7	7	³² 7	7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9	9	⁴¹ 9	9
10	²⁸ 10	10	10	10	10	10
11	11	11	³⁷ 11	11	11	11
12	12	12	12	12	12	12
13	13	13	13	13	13	⁴⁶ 13
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18	18	18	³⁸ 18	18	18	18
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23	23	23	23	23	⁴³ 23	23
24	³⁰ 24	24	24	24	24	24
25	25	25	³⁹ 25	25	25	25
26	26	26	26	26	26	26
27	27	27	27	27	27	⁴⁸ 27
28	28	³⁵ 28	28	28	28	28
29	29	29	29	29	29	29
30	30	30	30	30	⁴⁴ 30	30
31	³¹ 31	31	31	31	31	31

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50

51

52

Goals and Wishes

What I'm looking forward to

What is going to be challenging



1

2

2

3

3

3

In our tips and advice, we use many terms that sound big and important; mindfulness, self-love, fulfillment, etc. This might suggest that one piece of wisdom after the other will be awaiting you here and that you should follow each of them. That's not true! Most tips are considerably shortened, sound more meaningful than they are and shouldn't influence you too much. See them as an offer to gain some new motivation. Throughout the year this might lead to some new perspectives and food for thought and that's all we want. No tip is supposed to become an irrefutable belief, no advice should influence you too much, because you probably, intuitively do most things right, but may also do them completely differently from what we recommend. When in doubt, always trust your gut feeling.

1

2

2

3

3

3

Large, loaded concepts like mindfulness have the tendency to become a kind of attitude towards life and an identification factor too and that's okay. But likewise, it's okay if you have a rather relaxed approach when dealing with mindfulness and, therefore, don't identify with it. Mindfulness is firstly a tool in the toolbox for mental health. You can use it when you need it, or you can establish it gently even if you don't need it right now. Being present in the moment, shedding light onto your needs, reflecting on your thinking and patterns of behaviour, all of it can enrich and slow your life down, but it doesn't need to become the core of your self. This way you avoid developing a kind of pressure to perform in order to be extra mindful all the time.

Jan Feb Mar Apr May June July Aug Sep Oct Nov Dec

What happened this month

What I'm grateful for

What I did well

What was difficult

Mindfulness Labels

Now you can evaluate all factors of the mindfulness labels again for the whole month and write down your findings.



Self-Reflection Psyche

Evaluate the following statements for the past month on a scale from 0 to 3. 0 means *not at all or very rarely*, 1 means *sometimes*, 2 means *more often* and 3 means *most often or always*.

I took care of my needs

I had enough social interactions

I'm content with what I achieved

I was optimistic

I tried something new

I was as active as usual

I was always able to fully relax

I tried seeing the good

I appreciated what I have

I was happy and content

I had enough energy for everything that happened

I looked into the future in a hopeful manner

I was brave and didn't have new fears

I could let go of negative thoughts quickly

I slept well

I had as many conversations as usual

I felt secure and comfortable

I enjoyed life

I felt liked by others

I was able to concentrate well

Total

If you consistently have less than 30 points, this could be an indicator that you are feeling intense psychological distress.

Goals and Wishes

Work

Contacts

Health

Free time

What I'm looking forward to

What is going to be challenging

I have up to six habits and track them on the right side of the monthly view

1

2

3

4

5

6

I have only one habit and I track it in the weekly view

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- 31

Your highlights of the year

Collect here the great moments of the year. This small list of happiness can help you to remember the good times and practise gratitude.

Ideas for gifts

The people we want to gift something to can give us the best ideas. We only have to remember and consider their wishes at the right time.

Travelling

Write down those places you dearly want to travel to. Ideally add a date to make it more binding.

Where to?

When?

Purchases

Write down all the big purchases you've planned for this year and evaluate how necessary they really are to you (1 = not necessary to 10 = very necessary).

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

