



# MINDFULNESS WORKBOOK

*This workbook is a tool for you to use to guide your mindfulness practices and empower your recovery here at Stairway Resource Center*





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# Introduction

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This workbook is a tool for you to use to guide your mindfulness practices and empower your recovery here at Stairway Resource Center.

We created this workbook to help you realize your own ability to effect real, lasting behavior changes as they apply to your recovery from substance use disorder. Inside, you'll find useful materials, including information and mindfulness exercises focused on empowerment.

Throughout, you'll learn more about mindfulness, positive versus negative thought patterns, and more, and how these can help empower you to reach your own recovery goals. Along the way, our autonomy-supportive staff will provide you with tips for moving forward, including how to complete the exercises in this workbook.

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This mindfulness workbook focuses on self-empowerment, a concept supported by decades of scientific research. In the scientific community, this type of support is based on something called Self-Determination Theory, or SDT. SDT suggests that exploring your inner self, discovering your own goals and motivations, examining the positive thoughts and actions that support those goals along with the negative thoughts and actions that harm your progress, and owning autonomy over the process are keys to adopting the healthy behaviors you need to continue your recovery.

Practicing mindfulness to gain a sense of empowerment is a strategy well-suited for the SUD recovery space. It places focus on the ability of each individual to utilize their own unique resources to overcome obstacles. This approach allows us to help you discover your strengths and places you in the driver's seat in your own recovery. Perhaps most importantly, mindfulness and empowerment training help you realize that you are the expert in your own life and that remaining open to support from others can show you that you have what you need to succeed.

This book will provide you with a space to tap into your own personal resources by completing a variety of insightful mindfulness and empowerment exercises. It will also give our staff guided support as they assist in the recovery process.

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The exercises in this book are separated into various mindfulness themes, with 2 or 3 exercises per unit. These exercises are meant to be easily accessible and completed using a ballpoint pen or marker. Staff members are welcome to incorporate their own personal or professional skill sets by adding additional exercises and other activities.

Completing this mindfulness workbook allows you to experience success by:



**Using personal insights to create positive change.**



**Working through challenges in a group setting with peer support.**



**Listening to coaches and peers to gain practical information and learn new skills.**



**Awakening hope, setting goals, and acting on those goals with support.**



# My Own Goals

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When you began your journey to recovery, you set personal life goals based on the things you wished to change for the better.

Setting goals for recovery is a valuable exercise because these goals give you something to strive for.

However, you can only reach your goals by first making the decision to put in the work, then actively working toward achieving them. So, we ask: which of your personal recovery goals is worth the effort?

Before you answer, it is important to take the time to separate your goals from your expectations. Accomplishing goals is much different than simply expecting something to happen for you. Goals take active, consistent effort to achieve, while expectations allow you to remain passive and require little to no effort on your behalf.



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In your individual and group sessions, you are encouraged to discuss goal setting and the personal goals you wish to achieve. You can develop clarity regarding your goals by writing them down and speaking them out loud, both of which can help your goals become real to you. These practices also ensure you receive support from those around you for tapping into your own resources to achieve them.

**Lean into your resources, use your personal power, and accept support from staff and peers as you make an action plan to change your life and improve in the areas you desire.**

**You've got this!**



# My Own Goals

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It is vital to set genuine goals for yourself. Keep in mind: you should not base your goals on the expectations of others. Instead, set goals that hold personal significance, so you are energized and motivated to reach them authentically. Consider breaking down large goals into smaller parts so you can achieve the goal in stages.





# Weekly Assignment:

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## Feeling Successful

Take a moment to recall a time in your life when you felt like you did a good job. In other words, think of a time when you felt satisfied with yourself and how you performed. Answer the following questions by filling in the blanks with your own personal success story.

1. What was the situation? Explain what happened.

# Feeling Successful

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2. What made the experience itself so successful?

3. How did your actions bring about a positive outcome and contribute to this success?

# Feeling Successful

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4. Which of your personal strengths are highlighted by this success story?

5. Think of a potential future situation where you feel like you can use those personal strengths again. Explain.

# Thoughts and Wellbeing

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**Take steps to challenge your thoughts.**

As you take your journey through recovery and healing, you should seek to challenge your current way of thinking for several key reasons.

First, our thoughts often influence our perspective of situations, even when we are not aware of what's happening.

In addition, our thoughts can sometimes be a bit too one-sided or negative, usually as a result of a phenomenon called cognitive bias. Cognitive bias happens when you create your own, often erroneous, version of events based on your perception. Unfortunately, this can draw you into a pattern of negative thinking that is often hard to escape. As we all know, negative thoughts drive unhappiness and poor mood, and a negative mood dampens your ability to function.



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Moving toward healthy behaviors means turning away from unhealthy behaviors, and that includes how you think. That's why developing a healthy mindset is so critical in recovery.

Our thoughts have the power to impact:



**Our feelings and mood. Our mindset determines our perspective and can make experiences feel exciting and pleasant or overwhelming and unpleasant.**



**Our actions, or lack of action. Your mindset impacts whether you respond to situations with action or inaction. It is the difference between being active and passive in your own life.**



**Self-perception. How you view yourself and your abilities are also heavily influenced by your mindset.**



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A positive mindset not only makes you feel better in the moment but also helps you build your self-confidence for the future. Think of it in terms of this affirmation: *'I made a mistake, but I have learned a valuable lesson.'* We feel better about ourselves when we have a positive outlook and think positive thoughts, even if things don't go well. *'I am enough.'* *'Tomorrow is another chance to succeed.'*



View negative thinking as a trap. Doing so will help you realize that negative thinking only hurts your chance for success. Then, you can learn how to identify the traps you fall into, reflect on why this occurs, and take steps to change the pattern. By doing so, you can replace negative thinking with positive thinking.

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Some examples of negative thinking include:

-  **Either/or thinking.** You only see two extreme options in a given situation: 'I will either be amazing or a complete failure.' This can cause you to see things in black or white, with little to no gray areas.
-  **Overgeneralization.** You tend to generalize situations, using phrases like: "every time," "I never," "I always," "everybody," and "nobody." You may tend to allow past negative experiences to affect your perception of new situations.
-  **Belittling yourself by undermining your successes and your needs.**
-  **Demanding too much of yourself.**
-  **Placing focus on the negative in a situation and dismissing the opportunity for optimism and learning.**
-  **Assuming you can read other people's minds and make negative assumptions.**
-  **Getting stuck in negative mind traps and feeling defeated.**
-  **Having a negative outlook on the future.**

# Weekly Assignment:

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## Thoughts and Wellbeing

Read the following questions to gain more insight into your own thinking patterns. Take time to identify your negative thinking traps, then brainstorm and explain how you can use positive thinking to work through negative thinking patterns.

1. What are your negative thinking traps? Write them down below.



# Thoughts and Wellbeing

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2. How do your negative thinking traps influence your feelings, perspectives, and actions?

3. How can you change your negative thinking patterns to make positive changes in your life?

# Actions and Thoughts

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Did you know that you have the power to change how you think and feel with your actions and behavior? This is powerful information because it means you can be active in your own journey to recovery. You decide how you move forward. You also have the ability to disrupt negative thinking patterns with action, even by making small changes to your everyday routine.

Think of ways you can use daily activity to stop yourself from falling into negative thinking traps. What are those actions or activities?

# Weekly Assignment:

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## My Empowering Thoughts

Record your empowering thoughts:

# Returning to My Own Goals

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In this section, you will review the goals you set for yourself at the beginning of your treatment.

Take a moment to review your beginning goals. As you consider your beginning goals, think of all the recovery work you've done so far, then reflect on them now using the following prompts:

1. Which of your starting goals have you accomplished or begun taking steps to accomplish?

# Returning to My Own Goals

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2. What active steps have you taken to get closer to achieving your goals?

3. What active steps can you take in the future to meet your future goals?

# Returning to My Own Goals

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4. Have any of your goals changed since you started the program?  
If yes, how?

5. Which forms of support do you need to accomplish the goals you  
are currently working toward?

# Returning to My Own Goals

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Now that you have taken time to reflect, it's time to look at where you are and where you are going in the future. Write down your thoughts to answer the following questions:

1. What type of positive changes are you already noticing in yourself as you react to a challenging situation?

2. What have those changes shown you about yourself? How do they make you feel?

# Returning to My Own Goals

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3. How can you continue to build on these changes?

4. What do these changes mean for your future? What's your prediction?



# A Letter to Myself From the Future

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Close your eyes and picture the version of you that will exist six months in the future. Or, if you wish, travel even further into the future and imagine your life at that stage. Name some of the changes that will have occurred in your life.

**What will you be like?**

**What goals will you have accomplished?**

**What new goals will you have set?**

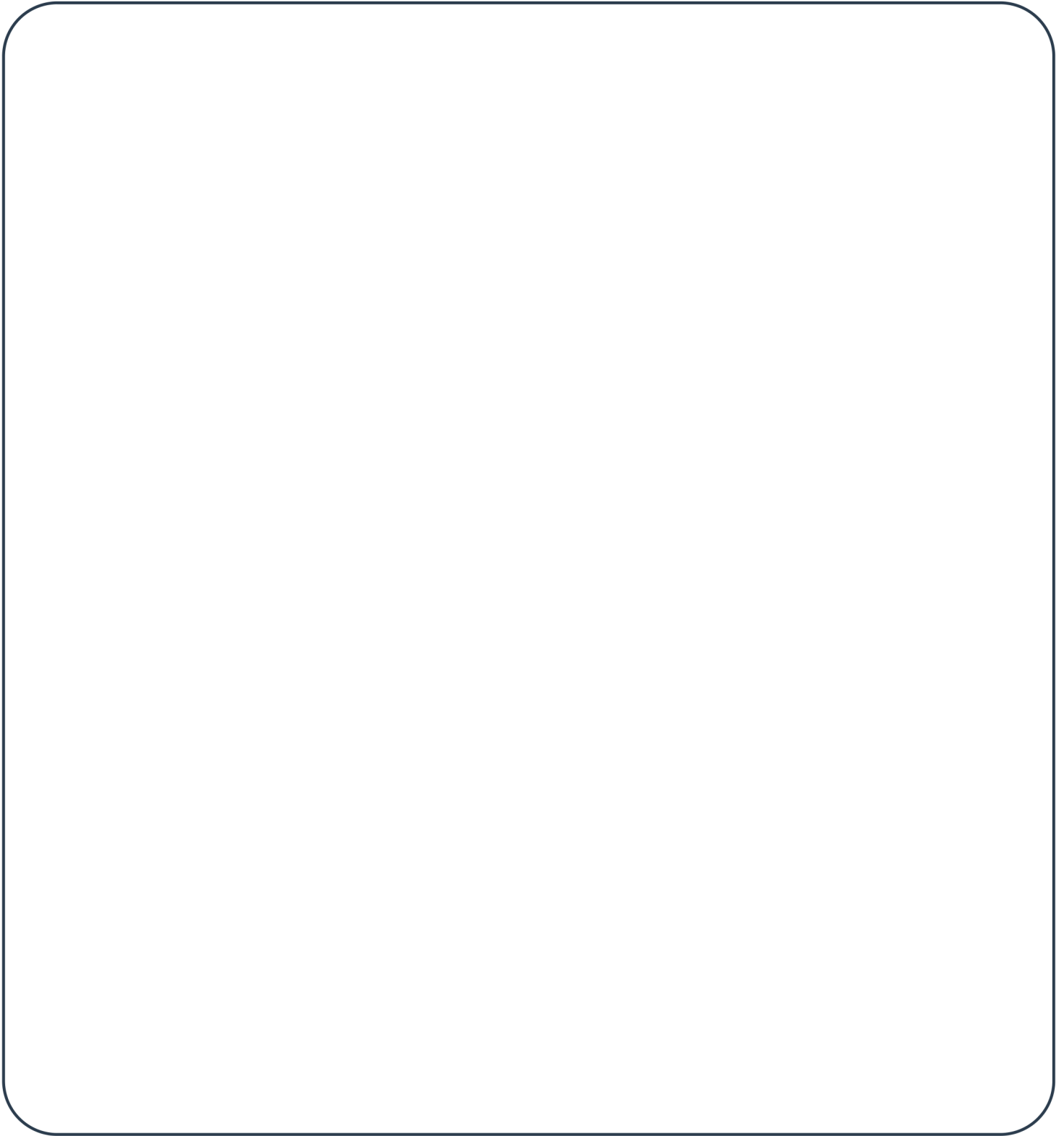
**After you've considered these potential changes, what do you think your future self would want your present self to know?**

**Write your present-day self a letter from the future version of you. Make sure to encourage yourself to keep working towards recovery because that version of you is dependent on the actions you take as the person you are right now.**



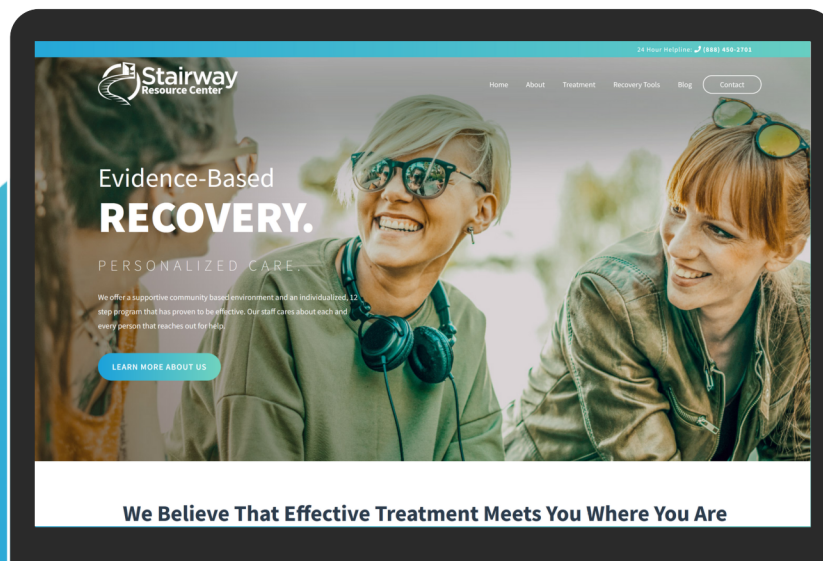
# A Letter to Myself From the Future

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