



Small Surprises

Group Leader Instructions & Resources



Small Surprises

Introduction



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What are the benefits of being a group leader?

It is an opportunity to:

- Help others develop mindfulness skills
- Connect with friends and family
- Increase your written and visual communication skills
- Have fun!

What do I have to do?

Small Surprises Mindfulness Activity Leaders have these primary responsibilities:

- Invite participants (Usually 6 people plus the leader)
- Create Facebook Group
- Set Up and Facilitate Introductory Online Chat
- Send out Supplied “sense of the week” Reminder and Tips Emails.



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How Much Time Does It Take?

Beyond your time as a participant, the leaders role requires approximately 1 additional hour a week. You and the group can choose how long the group lasts. Either a set time of 6-8 weeks or open ended.

What Supporting Materials Do I Have to Work With?

Everything you need to facilitate the group is provided.

- Step by Step Leader Instructions
- Introductory Video for Group Participants
- Invitation, weekly reminder, and tips emails



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Getting Started



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Getting Started - Group Leader Instructions

Step 1

- Invite participants using [this email](#).

Step 2

- Once you have enough participants (5 or 6 is a good number), invite them to a kickoff meeting (online or in person) [using this email](#).

Step 3

- Decide if your group is going to post to a private social media group (instructions for [setting up a private group are here](#)) or to the [main Small Surprises Facebook group here](#).



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Getting Started - Group Leader Instructions, Cont'd

Step 4

- Hold the kick-off meeting
 1. Present [Introduction PowerPoint](#)
 2. Decide on whether participants will be posting to either a private Facebook group that you create or to the main [Small Surprises Mindfulness Activity Group](#)
 3. Decide on schedule for posting to social media and for monthly chats
 1. Typically, there is a “sense of the week” and each person posts once a week
 2. Once a month, participants get together (virtually or in person) to discuss their favorite posts from other people and to hear other experience with the activity.
 4. Answer questions
 5. Start the Small Surprises Mindfulness Activity!



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Getting Started - Group Leader Instructions, Cont'd

Step 5

- On-Going Tasks
 1. Send Out Weekly Reminder and Tips Emails Found Here
 2. Schedule and Facilitate Monthly Group Meetings
 1. [Invitation Email is Here](#)
 2. [Suggested Format is Here](#)



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Getting Started Resources Emails

Invitation Email

Dear Tara,

I am starting a small, online mindfulness group (mention here anyone else who has already joined the group) I would love to have you in the group.

If you are like most people, you spend much of your day repeatedly thinking about what you could have done better yesterday or what might go wrong tomorrow. In fact, social scientists tell us that 95% our thoughts are repetitive and 80% of those produce unwanted emotions.

Mindfulness helps stop these unhelpful thought patterns by bringing your mind into the present, blocking out old repetitive thoughts and emotions.

The format for the group is the Small Surprises Mindfulness Activity. It is a proven format that is simple and fun. You can find more information at this website.

Let me know if you would like to join the group. It's fun and it's free!

Best,

Jane



Small Surprises Mindfulness Activity

Kick Off Email

Dear All,

I am very excited to starting the Small Surprises Mindfulness Group!

The kick-off meeting will be:

Date

Time

Online platform

Watch this introductory video before the meeting.

The call will last between 30-45 minutes. We will start the Small Surprise Mindfulness Activity the following week. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best,

Jane





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On-Going

Tip Emails and Discussion Format



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On-Going Steps

Once your Small Surprises group is up and running, the group leader has two primary roles

1. Send out weekly [reminder/tips emails](#)
2. Facilitate monthly [group discussion](#)

Weekly Emails

Week 1- Sight Week

Dear Ellen,

This week's sense is Sight. Here are some tips seeing Small Surprises:

- Set time aside to look for things in your everyday environment that you haven't noticed before. It can be a time when you break away from your usual activities to take a "Small Surprise Walk" or you can decide to look for Small Surprises at expected moments during your day. For example, you can decide to look for small surprises every time you stop at a red light, wait in line at the store or when a commercial comes on the TV.
- If you come upon something that makes you think, "That's interesting." Or "Wow, how did I not see that before." Or "I want to learn more about THAT." Then you have a good candidate for a Small Surprise post.

And a reminder of some of the tips specifically for photographing or videotaping Small Surprises:

- Get as close to the subject of the story as possible, making it large in the photograph or video.
- Include as much information in the frame as needed to tell the story of your experience but eliminate extraneous objects or information.
- The brighter the subject, the more the eye is attracted to it. Make sure the brighter areas of the photo are the ones that are the most important.
- Compose the picture so that main subject falls on one of the four meridians or one of four areas.
- Create 2 or 3 images or video if necessary to tell the full story.

Weekly Emails

Week 2- Sound Week

This week's sense is Hearing. Hearing Small Surprises can be both easy and challenging. We are surrounded by sounds but many times we don't notice them, and they come part of the wallpaper of our life.

Here are some tips hearing Small Surprises:

- Hearing Small Surprises is as easy as listening. No matter what your environment, you are surrounded by sounds. The key is not to label the sound in your mind --- for example, as "car" --- but to listen more closely and try to hear the components of the sound. For example, when you hear a car driving down the road, sometimes you hear tires against the asphalt or the engine parts or the souped-up muffler.
- Notice the feelings or memories that certain sounds trigger.
- Sounds include conversations. Sometimes it is fun and interesting to just listen to bites of conversations as you walk through a crowd or people pass you by.

Weekly Emails

Week 3- Smell Week

This week's sense is Smell. Since detecting different scents relies a lot on contrast, it is important put your nose in the path of different smells that contrast the overall environment. Here are three ways to do that:

- Stay in a place where different smells pass you by --- for example, a street corner in the city.
- Move through different environments --- for example, walk through different rooms in your house or walk past open doors in a downtown area, or as walk or bike ride and try to detect scents as you move.
- Bring your nose to different people or things or animals. Another example, find objects in your house, closets or cupboards. Try to be aware of what memories these smells evoke.

Weekly Emails

Week 4- Taste Week

This week's sense is Taste. Taste can be challenging because we have developed strong associations with different foods over the course of our lives. It's been said that we don't eat the food, we eat the memory of a past time when we ate that specific food. How many times have you looked forward to your favorite dish only eat is so quickly and unmindfully that when it was over, you had no memory of eating? So, the most important thing when we eat is to chew SLOWLY and PAY ATTENTION. Some other tips:

- Try to discern different textures, tastes, and aromas in the food. (like a Top Chef)
- Focus on the eating --- don't do other things while mindfully eating.
- Notice when you are feeling full. There is a Japanese saying "Hara hachi bun me" --- eat until the belly is 8 parts of 10 full.
- Notice how you feel after eating – Was it satisfying?

Weekly Emails

Week 5- Touch Week

This week's sense is Touch. Here are some tips:

1. Keep your eyes closed and explore a desktop, drawer or closet.
2. Pick an object and see how many textures you can identify. (I once found 23 different textures on my keys and key fob.)
3. Be aware of how things are touching you --- like the wind, the warmth of the sun or the change in temperature from inside to outside.

Monthly Discussion Format

It Is Simple!

- Send out [this email](#)
- Ask each person to share a couple of their favorite small surprises that OTHER people posted. This simple starting point usually leads to a fun and robust discussion.

Monthly Discussion Format

Invite Email

Hi Everyone,

We will have a group video chat on (date). Here is the link (link address).

It a very simple discussion format. In advance of the call, pick one or two posts that you liked that *others* have posted. During the call I'll ask each person to share which posts they liked and why. Then the person who created the post will describe their experience of noticing the small surprise. This usually leads to a fun and robust discussion.

Looking forward to seeing everyone!



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Questions?

Contact Us Here