



# The Mindfulness Teaching Guide: Essential Skills and Competencies for Teaching Mindfulness-Based Interventions

By Rob Brandsma

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You must embody mindfulness in order to teach it. *The Mindfulness Teaching Guide* offers a thorough and practical guide for mindfulness teachers and professionals, offering a systematic approach to developing the teaching methods, skills, and competencies needed to become a proficient mindfulness teacher.

Mindfulness has captured public attention like never before. From the classroom to the boardroom, everyone is trying to make present moment awareness a part of daily life. Likewise, more and more professionals are adopting mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in their work, whether it's in healthcare, education, counseling, or social services. However, many people lack the resources needed to teach mindfulness well.

In this guide, you'll learn the three essential skills of being an effective mindfulness teacher: how to guide mindfulness practice, how to explore mindful inquiry, and how to give didactic presentations. Along with teaching underlying theory, this book also offers practical options, suggestions, examples, and even reminder lists so you can swiftly put what you learn to use. The approach in this book is descriptive instead of prescriptive, offering options instead of instructions to help you develop your own style of teaching.

If you want to improve the way you teach mindfulness—no matter what kind of setting you're in—this book is for you.

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## The Mindfulness Teaching Guide: Essential Skills and Competencies for Teaching Mindfulness-Based Interventions By Rob Brandsma Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“This book is elegant, subtle, and spacious, and at the same time, rigorous and honest. Therefore it can be extremely useful to those with serious aspirations to teach and those who already do teach mindfulness in the forms of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), and beyond. You can learn a lot about yourself by incorporating Brandsma’s high-resolution perspective into your own meditation practice and attending carefully to what it offers, both inwardly, and in terms of your own teaching. You will find that it is your own emergent embodied learning from the process that does all the work, only then it is not exactly ‘work,’ or entirely a matter of ‘doing.’”

—**Jon Kabat-Zinn**, founder of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and author of *Full Catastrophe Living* and *Coming to Our Senses*

“This is a must-have book for anyone interested in teaching mindfulness! Brandsma shares his considerable knowledge of the ins and outs of teaching in a way that is incredibly helpful, including lots of concrete examples of esoteric practices like inquiry which make the process of teaching mindfulness much easier and straightforward. I wish I’d had this book when I was first learning to teach.”

—**Kristin Neff, PhD**, associate professor in the department of educational psychology at The University of Texas at Austin, and author of *Self-Compassion*

“This is an outstanding and welcome book! With clarity and insight based in extensive personal practice, and considerable experience teaching mindfulness, Rob Brandsma identifies essential skills and competencies, and provides in-depth examples, including scripts, citations, and historical context, to help the aspiring or experienced teacher grow, enrich, and deepen their mindfulness work with others.”

—**Jeffrey Brantley, MD**, founder and director of the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program at Duke Integrative Medicine, author of *Calming Your Angry Mind*, and coauthor of *Daily Meditations for Calming Your Anxious Mind*

“Mindfulness transforms lives. Rob’s warm but practical book will help you do this ever more effectively.”

—**Danny Penman, PhD**, coauthor of the international bestseller, *Mindfulness*

“As someone who has been involved in the teaching of mindfulness since it was first brought to the United States, I found myself continually applauding *The Mindfulness Teaching Guide* for its accuracy (not easily attained), depth, and usefulness. It will carry forward the fields of mindfulness studies and application.”

—**Sharon Salzberg**, cofounder of the Insight Meditation Society and author of *Lovingkindness* and *Real Happiness*

“Teaching mindfulness is as much an art as a science. It requires a firm understanding of how mindfulness can serve to reduce stress and alleviate suffering as much as the ability to make this understanding come alive, intuitively and intellectually, for others. This book is a wonderful gift. It goes far beyond what any

manual can offer, and opens the reader's perspective to what might be referred to as the 'hidden curriculum.' It serves as a companion and wise teacher, providing answers and insights from the minute details of teaching to the broader view on the inner journey of becoming a teacher. Few people are as exceptionally well placed to serve as a guide on this journey as Rob Brandsma is, having taught and supported hundreds of teachers at his center in Amsterdam, Netherlands. This book will be treasured by anyone who is passionate about teaching mindfulness."

—**Thorsten Barnhofer, PhD**, associate professor at the University of Exeter, and coauthor of *Mindfulness and the Transformation of Despair*

"This how-to guide to teaching MBSR fills an important gap, and does so with great skill, discernment, and heart. Rob Brandsma's wealth of experience shines through as he explains the artistry and practical skills of MBSR teaching. He tackles some of the most important questions inviting teachers to be the very best teachers they can be in the service of their clients, but never losing sight of the heart as the compass for this work. It is a beautifully rich and practical contribution."

—**Willem Kuyken**, professor of clinical psychology in the department of psychiatry at the University of Oxford

"This book is the most comprehensive guide to teaching mindfulness to date. Rob Brandsma, who has taught mindfulness for many years, including at the Dutch Parliament, systematically unpacks and addresses the subtle details of the art. No question is left unanswered. Both seasoned and novice mindfulness teachers will want this book as a reference for years to come."

—**Christopher Germer, PhD**, clinical instructor at Harvard Medical School, and author of *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*

"This lovely book is full of the sort of wisdom and insight that comes from long and thoughtful experience. The author obviously teaches a lot, and pays attention to exactly what's happening. He understands the limits of words, yet offers clear explanations and nice examples of helpful ways to phrase things. Highly recommended."

—**Ruth Baer**, author of *The Practicing Happiness Workbook*

"Rob is a dear colleague of mine and I have greatly enjoyed teaching together. I warmly recommend his book for both mindfulness teachers to be, and experienced mindfulness teachers. May it not only enhance their own mindfulness skills, but also that of their participants!"

—**Anne Speckens**, professor of psychiatry, and founder and director of the Radboud University Medical Centre for Mindfulness in Nijmegen, Netherlands

About the Author

**Rob Brandsma** is a licensed health psychologist, pedagogue, and author. He is cofounder and codirector of the Amsterdam *Centrum voor Mindfulness* (Netherlands) and head of its teacher training programs. As a mindfulness teacher, he has long-standing experience in teaching mindfulness-based applications, such as mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), as well as compassion-based programs.

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