Finding and Working with a Mindfulness Buddy

We highly recommend having a “mindfulness buddy” during the Mindfulness Fundamentals course. A mindfulness buddy is someone you will be communicating with either in person, by phone, or by email each week. Having a buddy enriches and often deepens one's experience in this course. It also creates connection and extra support to keep you on track with the weekly themes and practices. Although it will be up to you and your buddy to decide how long and what type of discussion is most supportive, your teacher will provide optional discussion questions and topics each week. Below are some helpful tips on how to find a buddy as well as how to best work together throughout the course.

Finding a Buddy
If you do not have a friend or relative in the course to be your buddy, we will match you with someone. Fill out the Mindfulness Buddy Survey to help us narrow down your best match. You will be able to indicate your preferred way of communicating (by phone, email, or in person) as well as anything else you’d like us to consider. We will connect you with your buddy by exchanging emails. It is up to you and your Buddy to initiate communication after that.

Integrity in the Buddy Agreement
It is important that you communicate with your buddy in the agreed upon format established between the two of you. If you do not have the time you had hoped, or if you feel you are not compatible, please do not just ignore your buddy, as this can often lead to confusion or hurt feelings. Instead, be up front that you’ll be a little late this week or that you just don’t have the time you thought, or that you just don’t think this is working out for you. Give it a try for some weeks first, and then act with integrity and care for the other person’s heart and rest of their course. If your buddy cancels on you, do not feel bad. This does happen. There is someone else out there for you. It’s all part of the process.

Good Listening is Key
Open, non-judgmental listening is a key component in the successful buddy relationship. Try not to tell your buddy what you think they should be doing to “fix” what’s going on in their life. “My buddy keeps telling me what to do” is the biggest complaint heard from people wanting to sever their buddy relationship. It’s a natural inclination to want to help, but be mindful that this is usually not what the other person needs.

Working with Your Buddy
How you engage with your buddy depends on your time and your preferred communication medium. We recommend connecting with your buddy for no less than 10 minutes at least once a week. Some will opt to do it more often. Be creative and see what feels right for the two (or more) of you.

By Telephone or In Person
Some people only want to talk on the phone with their buddy, or see them face-to-face. Be sure to indicate your preference in your post on the Forum, if this is the case for you. There are weekly practices and reflection questions in the weekly course work that you can go over with your buddy on the phone or in person, along with a check-in as to how the course impacted your life lately.
By Email
There are lots of options for connecting by email. You can arrange to have a weekly check-in, say, on Friday, where you write how you are doing as far as the present or past themes and practices. You could also implement a simple daily email exchange of one or two things you were mindful of or even not mindful of. This is a very powerful way to shift your usual outlook, or “default setting” to bring more awareness into your consciousness.

Working with More than One Buddy
It is fine to work with more than one buddy, if you have the time. Remember to be inclusive of all of your buddies and straightforward about what is working and what is not. Again, there is lots of room for creativity here.