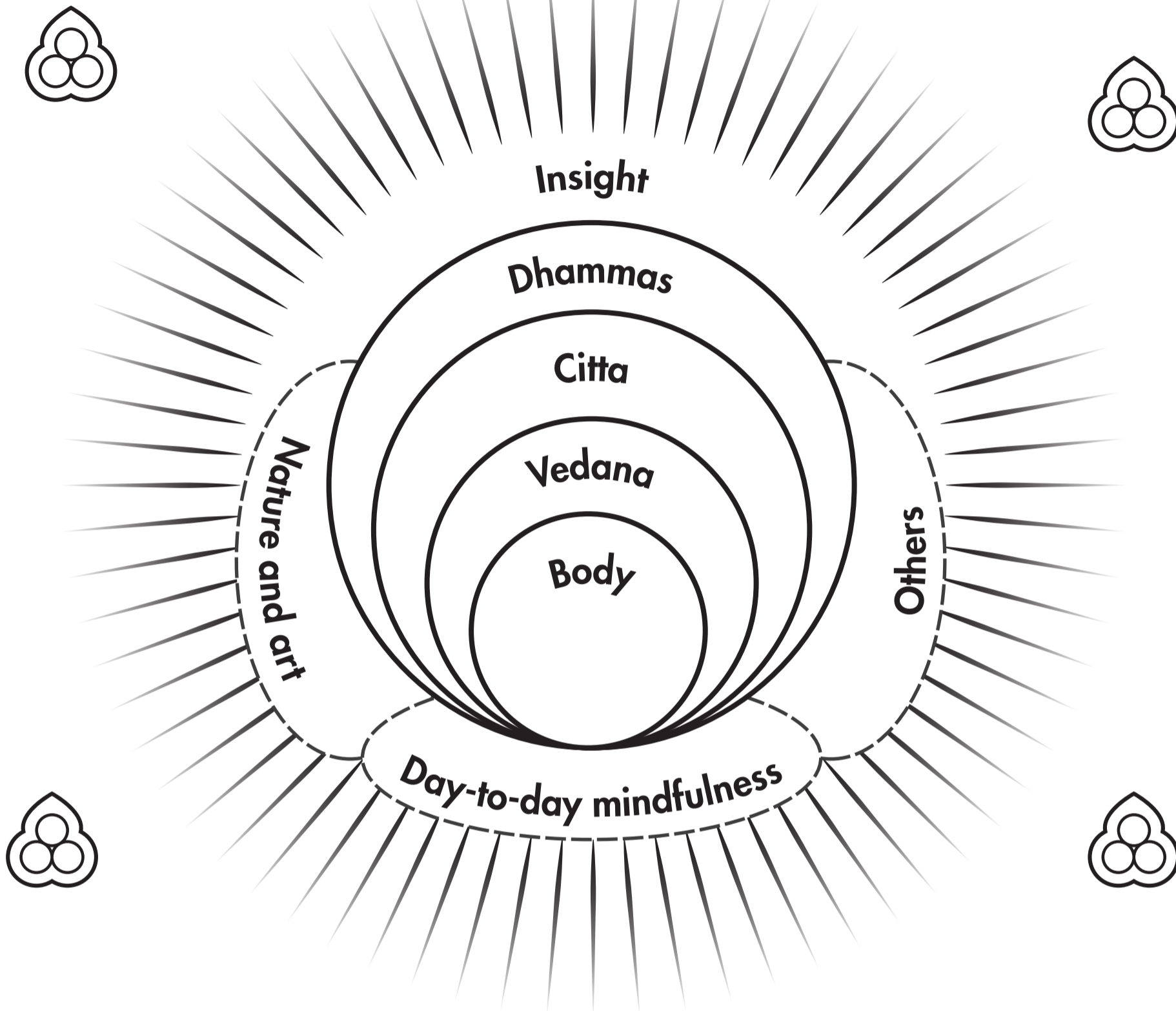


• Life with Full Attention. •



Three dimensions of mindfulness

Four satipatthanas (spheres) of mindfulness

Day-to-day mindfulness

Modern life is so hectic and rushed, we often forget what we're doing or why we're doing it. Developing day-to-day mindfulness means developing routines, cultivating mastery, and reducing input. If we do that, we'll feel more in charge of our life and less overwhelmed.

Nature and art

We need to cultivate an appreciative mode of being, as opposed to an acquisitive mode. The less materialistic we are, the happier we become. If we can let ourselves become deeply absorbed in the appreciation of art and nature, we'll forget ourselves and, to that degree, transcend egotism.

Others

We need to be in better communication with others. We need to be more aware of our parents, partner, family, and friends. When we become genuinely aware of others, we can't help but love them. Buddhism says it's only when we liberate ourselves from the belief of a separate self – separate from others and the world – that we'll finally be happy.

Body

Most of the time, we're so lost in thought we almost forget we have a body. Reconnecting with direct physical experience is essential to mindfulness: a way of unhooking from our toxic busy-busy mind. Awareness of the body and its movements cultivates calm. It relieves stress and anger, and is a way of working with depression.

Vedana

Vedana means "feeling-sensation". Everything we experience has a feeling tone: it will feel pleasant, unpleasant, or somewhere in between (neutral). Mindfulness of vedana means becoming aware of these three basic building-blocks of emotion, and learning not to react to them habitually. If we anxiously repeat pleasure, we'll experience less pleasure. If we react to pain with aversion, we'll create more pain. Mindfulness helps us suffer less and appreciate more.

Citta

Citta means "state of mind". It includes thought, emotion, mood and motivation. Being mindful of citta means becoming aware of how we interpret reality. Without realising it we often mix up our interpretations of experience with experience itself. We mistake thoughts for facts. With mindfulness of citta, we become aware of our habitual inner narratives and start to question their accuracy.

Dhammas

Dhammas means "bringing the teachings to mind". Based on what we've learnt so far, especially mindfulness of feelings (vedana) and of our state of mind (citta), we decide how best to act. Mindfulness of dhammas means bringing to mind what is truly in our best interests. If we react to experience habitually and without awareness, we'll tend to create suffering. If we can respond to experience with awareness and empathy, we'll create happiness. The choice is ours.

Insight

Mindfulness is a path towards insight – a wholly new way of perceiving the world. Insight is a shattering confrontation with reality. It permanently breaks down our fixed sense of self, liberating us into spontaneous compassion, wisdom and creative energy. The path to insight involves clarity, sustained concentration, positive emotion, faith and single-minded dedication. The Buddha said that the fact of impermanence is the best thing to reflect on in order to gain insight. Once we truly understand the impermanent nature of all things, we'll finally find peace.

For the practice of mindfulness to have lasting, positive effects, we need to do it for others. We need to aim beyond self-development. We need to realise that we can only help ourselves if we help others. The best motivation for living a Life with Full Attention is doing it "for the benefit of all".