



# Mindfulness and Anxiety

Kelly shares her own personal story  
**Kelly Saward**



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**A**nxiety consumed me for a long time; I thought this was my life. Living in fear took me away from myself, parts of me hidden for a while. Looking back, I see how I missed the enjoyment of day-to-day pleasures in many ways.

During a challenging time in my life anxiety started to present itself. Eight months after having my first daughter I was left on my own. I started to worry about my health, about something happening to me. This was, at first, what I would call a normal level of anxiety but knowing I was now responsible for another life, and I was all she had, I started to develop unhealthy patterns. Over time the fear of dying became so strong. I became fixated with any pain or sensation in my body, subsequently creating more discomfort within, almost always ending up in an imagined worst-case scenario.

This way of living became exhausting over the years, for those around me and more so myself. I was always seeking reassurance. My sleep suffered and everything felt off balance. I was now also experiencing panic attacks. I needed endless plans and lists to maintain control, to feel safe, busy. I truly felt I was protecting myself but all the while I was feeding the fear inside. Through struggles and difficult times, I had disconnected. Time went on and my youngest daughter started experiencing anxiety too, due to my own fears. I was making her thought patterns like mine! Something had to change...

I first became aware of mindfulness in my teens when my mum attended a retreat. Years later I read books around mindfulness and installed some apps on my phone. I could listen to guided meditations to maintain focus. I really struggled at first and was quite



frustrated I wasn't doing it right or feeling instant relief.

However, I began to follow shorter meditations and moved on to the meditation courses available where I built up my practice. After about 6 months I could really feel the benefits and a year on I was feeling completely different – practising every day. I loved the whole concept so much I wanted to learn more so signed up for the Mindfulness Now Teacher Training Pro-gramme. This was perfect. It solidified everything for me. I then taught my daughter some techniques too, alongside us journaling, and we had our own

sessions. She started to enjoy leading the mindful activities herself. With my outlook so present, hers was too!

Mindfulness and meditation freed me, opening a gateway to a completely new way of life, one I now experience fully. My relationships have improved; my daughter is also now free from anxiety. I've found that regular practice has been so important, and I find being able to connect with other teachers invaluable. Having the Mindfulness Now Monday evening sessions is a reminder to take care of ourselves too. I feel inspired, as each person

brings something different in their own way. I was even able to lead a session myself! I felt incredibly nervous, yet I felt so passionate about having the chance to share. My fears didn't stand in the way this time. And I had some wonderful feedback. It lifted my confidence as a teacher and now I will continue to follow my heart.

These tools we are all privileged to use and teach others, through Mindfulness, are life changing. My mindset now unrecognisable to everyone around me.

**Hi, I'm Kelly. I live in Buckinghamshire with my partner, two children and two dogs. Since completing my training with Mindfulness Now last Summer I went on to follow my heart and set up Room 478. I am delighted to be where I am today – teaching mindfulness, writing various pieces and meditations, and even creating my own book which is nearly finished. I am always open to help and connect with others, please do contact me.**

Website: [www.room478.co.uk](http://www.room478.co.uk)

Instagram @room\_478

Email: [hello@room478.co.uk](mailto:hello@room478.co.uk)

