

MINDFULNESS



What is it?

- It is a type of meditation
- Traditional meditation requires that you try to rid your mind of thoughts
- However, unlike traditional meditation – instead of quieting the mind – mindfulness asks that you focus on something specific in the present
- It finds its roots in Buddhism, Taoism and Native American traditions



Benefits of Mindfulness

- Physical Benefits: lowers heart rate and blood pressure, reduces chronic pain, improves sleep and can improve intestinal issues
- Mental Health: Can help with depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, relationship conflicts, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorders
- It is believed that mindfulness is helping people to accept their experiences—including painful emotions—rather than react to them with aversion and avoidance.



Mindfulness

- Living in the moment – lowers stress levels
- Stress is most often a product of worrying about what you cannot control –
- In particular – the future and the past
- Focusing on the present prevents worrying
- It also provides an opportunity to see things from a new perspective – you will take things less for granted



Living in the moment

- It is a paradox
 - It does not involve the pursuit of benefits – as that requires thoughts of the future (rewards are a future event)
 - The paradox is this – During mindfulness, you let go of what you want as a means of getting what you want
 - You need to trust that it will come as you focus on the present
 - Here are few steps to help
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- A digital screen displaying the word "NOW!" in large, bold, white letters against a dark blue background with faint, glowing text and a grid pattern.



1. To improve how you perform – don't think about - the best dancers, for example just let go

- Thinking too hard about what you do causes you to do worse

2. Stop worrying about the future – work in the present and experience life now and enjoy it – learn to savour

3. If you want a future with someone – focus on living in the present. One study showed that by doing mindfulness exercises of focusing on the present made people less aggressive towards others when upset



- 4. To make the most of time – lose track of it - in other words being so engrossed in a task that you are totally absorbed – this is known as creating flow
- You can't force flow (like sleep)but you can set the stage for it to occur
- You do this by setting a goal that is challenging but not unattainable so you can fire on all cylinders
- There also needs to be immediate feedback as to whether you are going in the right direction so you can make corrections as you go



5.If something is bothering you, move towards it – do not avoid it.

Avoiding the pain only makes it worse – we have primary emotions and secondary ones – you stress about the bad feelings you have and fight trying to have them which creates more stress.

Instead – acknowledging the feelings and realizing they are normal reduces the effect they can have



6. Know that you do not know – have you even been lost in your thoughts that you cannot remember what just happened in the present – this is known as mindlessness

- Once we think we know something – we stop paying attention to it (like our drive home)
- We should be looking at everything with fresh eyes – living in the present allows for this
- Try this the next time you leave the house – look at everything around you – you will see it is different each time – it will be a new adventure



Mindfulness

- This must be practiced and there are courses that can teach this
- The practice will take time
- It does not mean you do not make plans – it just means that you make your plans but stay focused on one task at a time
- It takes time to develop the skill but it is worth the effort and it will lower stress levels
- It allows you to be you

"Today you are you,
that is truer than true.
There is no one alive who
is youer than you."
- Dr. Seuss

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