

Mindfulness Meditation

Learning to Live in the Moment ...

Today I hope you will

- * Learn skills to be more mindful**
- * Experience deeper calmness**
- * Improve compassion and trust**

What is Mindfulness???

- Mindfulness is about focusing– with intention and purpose, without judgement– only on what is happening right now. It’s about being present in the moment and accepting it as it is. You may choose to focus on your breathing or the sounds or smells around you. Or you may focus on the people you are spending time with right now. Whatever you focus on, when you are mindful, you don’t judge it as good or bad. It just is.

What happened the last time you tried to focus?

- Most people know how to focus and pay attention. When you are in a meeting, you focus on the speaker, right? But to be really present in each moment in your everyday life, you need to make a commitment and you need to practice.

Think about the last time you focused....

- Perhaps you were reading something. At some time, your mind probably wandered- you remembered other things you needed to do or something in the room may have distracted you. You may have become frustrated that your focus was broken. Sooner or later, you returned to reading. These moments happen to almost everyone.

How is it different when you are mindful?

- When you are trying to be mindful and be in the moment, you may still notice that thoughts pop into your mind. When that happens, don't be frustrated and don't blame yourself. It's normal. Be aware that it happened; respond to the thought quickly; don't judge it negatively (or positively). Gently bring your attention back to the present moment.
- Mindfulness trains your brain to look at, or observe, your thought and feelings without focusing on them or judging them.

Being mindful is about...

- *Focusing on the present.* Being present to what's around you or in you at the moment.
- *Delaying judgement on what you are focusing on.* For example, the meeting you are sitting in isn't "boring" or "frustrating". It is just a conversation about...
- *Being grateful for the positive aspects of your life and showing compassion toward yourself and other people.*

Mindfulness has helped these people....These examples are real. Every person has different needs and may have different results. Ask your health care provider how being mindful could help you.

- Tom is 35 years old and has a high-stress job in information technology (IT). He also has had high blood pressure for a few years. His health care provider talked to him about treating his blood pressure with medication. But Tom didn't want to do that without first trying non-medication treatment. So his health care provider talked to him about living in the moment, building his gratitude and compassion, and practicing slow-breathing exercises. Tom agreed to live mindfully. He practiced these skills for 3 months and rechecked the BP and then again after continuing to practice living mindfully by his 6 month check up his blood pressure was normal.

A second example

- Valarie is a 44 year old who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Of course she was scared by the news. She became anxious and couldn't focus. Her health care provider suggested that she focus on the present moment and work to increase her gratitude, compassion and acceptance. Valarie practiced these ideas for the weeks when she was getting chemotherapy.
- When Valarie went back for a six-month check-up, she was calm. She said she wouldn't want anyone to have cancer. But she was grateful for what she's learned during her cancer treatment. "It helped me—because it helped me become a new person, a stronger person." She said she connects better with people now, especially those who have health problems. And she's a better mother now too.

And one more example....

- Bob is a 55 year old man with sleep problems. He often woke up in the middle of the night and began to worry about the stress in his life. He had a hard time falling asleep again. And he often worried about getting a good night's sleep.
- But when Bob practiced being mindful about the things in his bedroom, he was able to break the chain of worries. He focused on the things he could see from his bed, the sounds of his home and the feeling he had. He was able to fall asleep quickly when he was mindful.
 - ***Can you see the stars from where you are???***

How could mindfulness help you???

There are many benefits to the mind and body when you live

mindfully

• *Being mindful could help you?*

- Relax
- React less to stress
- Pay attention and focus better
- Be more flexible in your thinking
- Be better able to handle life and its challenges
- Develop more options for solving problems
- Manage negative thoughts
- Feel more at peace and more positive in general
- Better appreciate people and your everyday life

Being mindful also may help:

- Improve how well you sleep
- Lower symptoms of stress and anxiety
- Lower high blood pressure
- Improve symptoms of depression and pain

As you practice being mindful, you are training your brain and your body to react differently than it has in the past. And you are using more of the parts of your brain that host attention, positive thinking and happiness.

What does it take to be Mindful?

❖ **Make the decision to begin.**

❖ Try to do everything mindfully. As you begin to practice mindfulness, you likely won't remember to be mindful every time. But by making the decision to be mindful all the time you likely will be more mindful than you would have been before you made that decision.

❖ **Be curious, like a new explorer.**

❖ Be open– look at each moment of your day as though it's all new to you. Do this actively, not passively. Use all of your five senses to fully experience each moment– including the moments, places and people you think you know well.

❖ **Have the spirit of a gardener.**

❖ Be willing to grow or develop yourself into a new, more-present person– a person who wants to live life to the fullest. Be willing to learn more about yourself and how your world affects you.

❖ **Have a sense of gratitude and compassion.**

❖ To be mindful includes having a sense of gratitude – being grateful for what you have and for who you have in your life. Be willing to share that with those who mean a lot to you.

What does it take to be mindful continued...

❖ **Be kind to yourself.**

❖ Be patient as you learn about yourself and as you learn to have new relationships with people and your “world”. You may be surprised at how your thoughts may change over time.

❖ **Be willing to delay judgements.**

❖ This may not be easy to do. For many people, their brains have a habit of labeling or judging events and people. To be mindful, you must be willing to try to let go of judgments.

❖ **Give yourself the gift of time.**

❖ Spend time learning, being quiet and thinking. Think about what you are learning, feeling and sensing. Practice makes “better”.

Getting Started:

- Even if you've never tried mindfulness before, it's simple to try . And it's simple to practice anywhere, anytime.
- To start out, try to follow a schedule. Practice once or twice every day for at least 5 to 10 minutes. Practice at the same time each day. Whenever you want, you can add more time. Try to practice in the same place each day if possible. That could be sitting in a chair or as you go for a walk.
- To practice more informally, focus on any simple task you are doing, like washing the dishes. Notice the sound of water pouring over the dishes or filling the sink. How does the water feel as it glides over your hands? Think about any part of that job that's different than what you usually do in a typical day. Pay attention to your breathing and how your body is feeling as you do this task. If any thoughts pop into you head, make a decision to think about them later.

The goal is to live mindfully all the time or as much as possible.

- ***Mindful questions to ask yourself***

- What am I feeling, or experiencing, in my body right now that I usually might not notice?
- What is going on in my head right now? Just make note of it quickly then let it go.
- What is “the one thing” that I am more aware of right now – either about myself, the situation or other people around me?
- In this moment, how can I allow myself to let go of the need to “think and do”
How can I allow myself to simply “be” in this moment?

Final Thoughts

- Chances are you already know how to be mindful. For example, have you ever watched your children or grandchildren blowing bubbles and squealing with happiness? Did you get so wrapped up in that moment that you soon realized you had been smiling and staring at the children for a while? You were being mindful. You were absorbed in the moment, noticing and feeling and sensing each movement, each child's reaction and each delightful noise. The reason you stayed in that mindful place is because it was peaceful and joyful.
- **The goal of becoming mindful is to extend that peace to the rest of your days.**

- Over time, you can move from “practicing mindfulness” to “living in a sense of mindfulness” or being mindful. That doesn’t mean that every moment will be as fun as watching your young ones play. You still take care of your home, job, loved ones, and other tasks. But you can feel more peaceful about yourself and your life. You can have more inner calm and feel less conflict and less negativity.

- **Being mindful can help you face life as it is.**
- **It can help you rediscover your ability to live life fully.**
- **Thank you for attending and I wish you much peace in your life.**