



MINDFULNESS

It's All About *Paying Attention*

Mindfulness.

Simply put, it is a way to ensure your attention is in the present moment.

- It is noticing all that is going on both around you and within you, at the present moment.
- It enables one to become an expert in knowing oneself.

It is not about changing who we are; instead it is about understanding who we are and accepting ourselves with compassion. This leads to a life that is richer in the knowing.

People who participate in Mindfulness practices show a marked decrease in stress, in pain levels, and an improvement in sleep quality. They are happier and healthier.

A Brief Practice

- Take a moment right now...and fully notice how it feels to be in your body... noticing where your body is making contact with what you are sitting on...feeling your weight on the back of your legs...and just resting in the moment...with no place to go and nothing to do...and when your mind wanders as it surely will... just noticing without judgment...once again how it feels to be sitting.
- Prior to your next meeting or teleconference, consider pausing to notice where your mind is at...are you still possibly reliving a past meeting or email you sent from earlier in the day or worrying about a future meeting or situation? If so, with kindness toward yourself, remember that you're in this moment...and this moment is the only one that actually exists.



Suggested Practice – Take a Mindful Walk

- As you walk, PAUSE for a moment, if possible turn off your phone, TAKE A DEEP BREATH and PAY ATTENTION.
 - ❖ Notice your mood, your thoughts, and your body sensations with non-judgment.
- Where is your mind?
 - ❖ Are you already back in front of your computer, at a meeting, answering a call, traveling home, replaying a past conversation in your mind, adding to your “to do” list, OR are you experiencing the present, since the only moment that truly exists is now?
 - ❖ Notice with compassion if your mind frequently wanders and where it wanders. This is a practice, so the more you practice the easier it will become to live fully in the present.
- What do you hear?
 - ❖ Can you hear, trying not to judge what you’re hearing as a good or bad sound, wanting people to be quieter, or to hear more birds, or less car noise? Notice the sounds without wanting them to be different in any way.
 - ❖ Accept the sounds as they are. This is non-judgmental awareness.
 - ❖ As your mind wanders back to a past memory or skips ahead to a thought about the future, purposefully bring your attention back to your experience right now in the present, and actively listen.

“Mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose in the present moment, nonjudgmentally.... in the service of self-understanding and wisdom.”

— Jon Kabat-Zinn

Additional Suggested Reading

- *Coming to Our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World Through Mindfulness*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Wherever You Go, There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life*, by Jon Kabat-Zinn

Free Guided Meditation Practices

- UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC)
<http://marc.ucla.edu/mindful-meditations>

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