



The Gifts of Mindfulness

Mindfulness defined: Per Kabat-Zinn, “Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, in the service of self-understanding and wisdom.”

Steps for being present in the moment:

- Be aware of your surroundings using each of your senses, without judgement and simply breathe.
- Be in the moment from the standpoint of past, present, and future. When your mind wanders, gently come back to the present moment with appreciation for what is.
- Making decisions that align with your moral compass.

Interventions to support mindfulness:

- Allow for quiet time such as Meditation (research shows that after 2 weeks of meditation, structural changes occur in the brain), Contemplation, Prayer, Inspirational readings, or Guided imagery.
- Practice Yoga or Tai Chi
- Engage in creative pursuits that feed you personally such as sports and music
- Practice gratitude, appreciation, and positive expectations
- Be compassionate and forgiving toward yourself and others
- Understand we are all doing our very best
- See the silver lining in most situations
- Accept what is beyond your control

Opportunities to practice mindfulness:

- Connecting with others
- Mealtimes
- Working
- Driving in traffic
- Walking, Running, kayaking ...

Gifts: The changes that occur when you become more mindful:

- Increased sense of calm and peace
- Robust immune system and improved health
- Improved relationships
- Better sleep and increased energy
- More patience
- Improved decision making

At the Harvard Medical School Mind Body Conference in 2021, Dr. Julia V. Lowenthal of Brigham and Women's Hospital presented the following research findings for people who practice:

Meditation:

- More peaceful, less anxiety and depression
- Improved cancer related side effects
- Reduction in blood pressure

Relaxation: Preserves telomeres. Doctors in internships who work long stressful hours, had telomeres shortened 24X more than the general population.

Yoga:

- Healthier telomeres, suggesting improvements in cellular aging.
- Downregulating stress response.
- Preserves muscle strength and balance.
- Improves emotional well-being and quality of life



90-year-old man practicing yoga.

Testimonials of people who practice mindfulness:

At work doing one task at a time: "I accomplish more, feel better about my accomplishments and have more energy at the end of the day."

Driving in Traffic: "I'm more relaxed. Drive is more pleasurable. More energy when I get where I'm going."

Running: "I run farther, faster and enjoy it more."

Meditation for an impulsive young professional male: One reported back: “It was very important to me that I was calm while boating. I take my friends out on my boat and fly off the handle when they stand up and block my view. At the end of the summer, one of my friends said ‘It’s so strange. We made it through the whole summer, and you never once yelled.’”

“Going with the Flow” “When you say these things, I’ve thought “yeh, right.’ Then, a challenge came up and I remembered. I calmed down. Looked at my options. To my surprise, you were right. It worked out just fine.”

Wellness Coaching process

- Start with creating your wellness vision.
- Ask yourself, what would you like to change or improve and why?
- Create small, attainable goals (1-2 week goals) to help you meet your 3-month goals.

Examples of 1 or 2-week goals:

- I’ll walk 10-15 minutes, 3 X/week.
- I’ll have quiet time for 10-15 minutes, 3X/week.
- I’ll track my calories 2 days this week
- I’ll spend 15 minutes organizing my office this week.

Resources:

Inspiring videos:

Celebrate What’s Right with The World. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gD_1Eh6rqf8

Gratitude and beauty. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpkEvBtyL7M>

Apps for Guided Medication

Insight Timer <https://www.insighttimer.com>

UCLA <https://www.uclahealth.org/marc/mindful-meditations>

Calm <https://www.calm.com/>

Jack Kornfield <https://jackkornfield.com/meditations/>

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