

The Applicability of Mindfulness for Daily Living

Let's talk about mindlessness first...

Have you ever started eating a packet of chips and then suddenly noticed all you had left in your hands was an empty packet? Most of us have!

This is one example of 'mindlessness' – A state we also often refer to as being on 'autopilot.' Basically our attention is absorbed in our wandering minds and we are not really 'present' in our own lives. Some teachers talk about autopilot as being a dreamlike state because in that mode we're simply not fully 'there' in that moment.

Living this way we often fail to notice the beauty of life, fail to hear what our bodies are telling us and we all too often become stuck in mechanical conditioned ways of thinking and living that may be harmful to ourselves or others. We also become vulnerable to anxiety, stress, depression and reactivity. Research shows, in fact, that the more our minds wander, the less happy we are

What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the opposite of mindlessness.

It means waking up out of autopilot and 'taking the steering wheel' of our attention again.

We practice mindfulness by maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and the surrounding environment.

Mindfulness also involves non-judgment, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings with the attitude of an impartial witness — without believing them or taking them personally.

How do you practice mindfulness?

There are two forms of mindfulness practice. The first is the formal practice of mindfulness, which is commonly referred to as meditation.

A meditation practice is commonly done sitting, usually with eyes closed, but can also be done lying down or even walking. Some meditation practices also involve mantra (sound) or movement.

The informal practice is the rest of your life! You see, anything we do in daily life with full awareness can be said to be mindfulness practice.

You can do the dishes mindfully, wait at the traffic lights or go for your morning walk mindfully. **Any routine activity can be made into a mindfulness practice when you bring your full attention to it.**

Here are some of the proven ways that mindfulness can benefit you...

-Mindfulness reduces stress, anxiety and other destructive emotions (Mindfulness actually shrinks the brain's "fight or flight" center. This primal region of the brain, associated with fear and emotion, is involved in the initiation of the body's response to stress; this is the part of the brain responsible for so many destructive emotions like fear, unhappiness and anger.)

-Mindfulness reduces depression.

-Mindfulness reduces insomnia.

-Mindfulness is also very effective for pain management.

-Mindfulness sharpens your memory and increases your focus and attention.

-Mindfulness improves your emotional and social intelligence and develops your empathy and compassion.

-Mindfulness improves health and boosts immunity.

In fact, mindfulness is shown to have beneficial effects on many serious illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

-Mindfulness improves confidence and emotional resilience.

-Mindfulness reduces compulsive and addictive tendencies and has also been shown to work better than any diet for effective long-term weight loss.

In other words, the more mindful you are the happier you are.

Mindfulness can literally transform your entire world from the inside out and for the millions of mindfulness practitioners around the world it's doing just that! If you haven't already, why not find out for yourself, the first hand, what it's all about?

You might just discover the most incredible and wonderful surprise. That everything you've been searching for 'out there' — feelings of fulfilment, peace and wholeness — have been within you all along.