


BRINGING MINDFULNESS TO LIFE



 @wellbeingfromsource

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Contents

- 03 Definition and Benefits
- 04 The power of now
- 05 Mindful speech
- 06 Mindful eating
- 07 Mindful sleep
- 08 Mindfulness at work
- 09 How to use mindfulness in stressful situations
- 10 Responding effectively to stressful situations
- 11 A mindfulness meditation
- 12 Daily mindfulness

Definition & Benefits

In a nutshell, practicing Mindfulness involves taking a step back and observing yourself and your internal emotions and feelings non-judgementally before responding to any given situation.

The mind and body are interlinked, thus our physical wellbeing is influenced by our mental wellbeing. Just as a healthy diet and lifestyle can enhance our wellbeing, so too can training our minds. You may not have control over your thoughts, but there are techniques you can use to influence your thoughts and how you reduce the negative impacts of negative thoughts.

Mindfulness is not a quick fix, it takes time and persistence to form this way of living and to achieve the results.

“Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally”
Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Benefits

- Clarity
- Improved sleep
- Better concentration and focus
- Increased emotion regulation and self-control
- Reduced symptoms of burnout at work and enhanced job performance
- More tolerant of ourselves by reducing our identification with negative thoughts
- Improved relationships as you become less reactive and more emotionally available
- Enhanced mental wellbeing and functioning – helps alleviate anxiety and depression
- Improved problem solving skills by creating the space to come up with wiser responses
- More accepting - being able to live well independently of whether or not things go to plan
- Less unhelpful thoughts holding us back, thus more able to act skilfully based on the present moment
- Greater enjoyment of life as we become more aware of our positive experiences that previously may have been overlooked
- Reduces stress which has a positive impact on our physical wellbeing. Stress also has the side-effect of speeding up our biological clock, mindfulness can help to slow it down and thus the ageing process.

The Power of Now

Living in the present moment is one of the key aspects of Mindfulness. This means instead of thinking about the past or future, your awareness is fully focused on the present moment.

This will help you become more focused and less anxious.

To practice living in the present moment try the following:

- Bring your attention to your body and notice which parts of your body are holding tension.
- As thoughts of the past or future start to arise, let them go and bring your attention back to the present moment.

You can practice this while doing mundane daily tasks such as washing up, cooking or going for a walk. Thoughts will try to pop up, and when they do just observe them, don't attach any story to it and let them go.

You will notice after this practice that it had a peaceful timeless quality about it and you'll feel less tension in your body as a result.



Mindful Speech

To speak mindfully means to speak with awareness. Speaking with awareness and compassion whilst giving space for the other person to respond will foster the Mindful practice.

Precision

Speak clearly and deliberately so that you can convey your message loud and clear. If you notice you are speaking repetitively, trailing-off, or speak too quickly, pause, take a breath, and speak precisely.

Simplicity

Take your time to choose your words with intention.

Pace

Speak slowly and calmly. Pay attention to how your words are being delivered. This impacts the tone and the atmosphere of the conversation.

Silence

A natural silence in conversation is usually seen as 'awkward', but we should use these moments as an opportunity to pause and notice our thoughts, instead of speaking less meaningfully.

Observe Others

Listen actively. Focus your attention beyond the words you are hearing, and notice the tone, quality and body language too. By paying attention in this way you will gain a greater understanding of the other person's true emotions and intentions. When others feel they are truly being listened to, this will deepen your connection and yield greater trust.

Observe Yourself

Be mindful of your speech. Pay attention to what you are saying and how we are saying it. Is your speech in alignment with your intentions and feelings? Is your message being delivered successfully?

Mindful Eating

It's best to do this practice when eating alone.

- Sit down comfortably, bring awareness to the present moment and take a deep breath before you start eating
- Take every mouthful slowly and consciously and chew fully before swallowing
- Bring your attention to how the food tastes
- You will notice that you can taste and appreciate the food more than usual
- When a thought pops up, just bring your attention back to the food's taste and texture

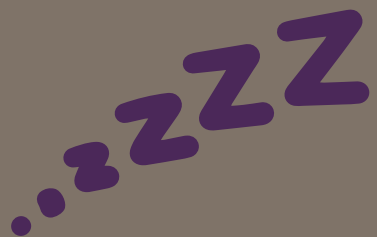
Not only will your food taste better, but you will feel more **peaceful** and **relaxed** too.



Mindful Sleep

One of the main contributors to keeping us up at night and preventing us from falling asleep is our minds. We have our to-do lists swirling round in our heads, we're reflecting on the day we've just had and planning for the next. Practicing Mindfulness can help switch off the energy that our brain is creating with all these thoughts, helping us to fall asleep.

When you get into bed and find you are struggling to fall asleep with all the noise going on in your head, observe the thoughts, become aware of the present moment and focus on your body and your breathing. It is hard to do this at first, as the mind will keep bringing in new thoughts, but if you let the thoughts go you will feel the energy that the thoughts create dissipate and your body will relax enabling you to fall asleep.



Mindfulness at Work

When our mind is occupied by distracting negative unhelpful thinking, it is likely for this to be reflected in our body language, behaviour and speech. Lack of mindfulness can cause challenges between us and our peers when this happens.

On the flip side, a mindful person can experience the following at work:

- Better leadership
- Reduced stressed
- Better communication and listening skills
- Better problem solving and decision making skills
- Acceptance and non-judgement will help their relationships with other members of the team
- Developed emotional intelligence- especially self-awareness, self-management and social awareness
- Better focus, concentration and productivity due to less distractions from intrusive thoughts or worries about the past or future

“These benefits are cultivated by regularly pausing, checking in with our emotions and bodily sensations and practicing attentional control. Doing this helps you become less reactive and more rational.”

How To Use Mindfulness in Stressful Situations

Accepting impermanence:

One of the key concepts of mindfulness is accepting that nothing is permanent. The feeling of the need to attach and find permanence, sets us up for unhappiness when we eventually encounter a loss. If we can accept that it's natural for things to end (lives, relationships, jobs), we will be able to reduce/ avoid attachment. Accepting impermanence also prevents us trying to avoid endings from occurring.

Loss and pain are natural parts of life which always provide opportunities for growth. Nothing in life is permanent and that includes suffering and pain.

Control and Letting Go

On the following page, using the diagram, take these steps:

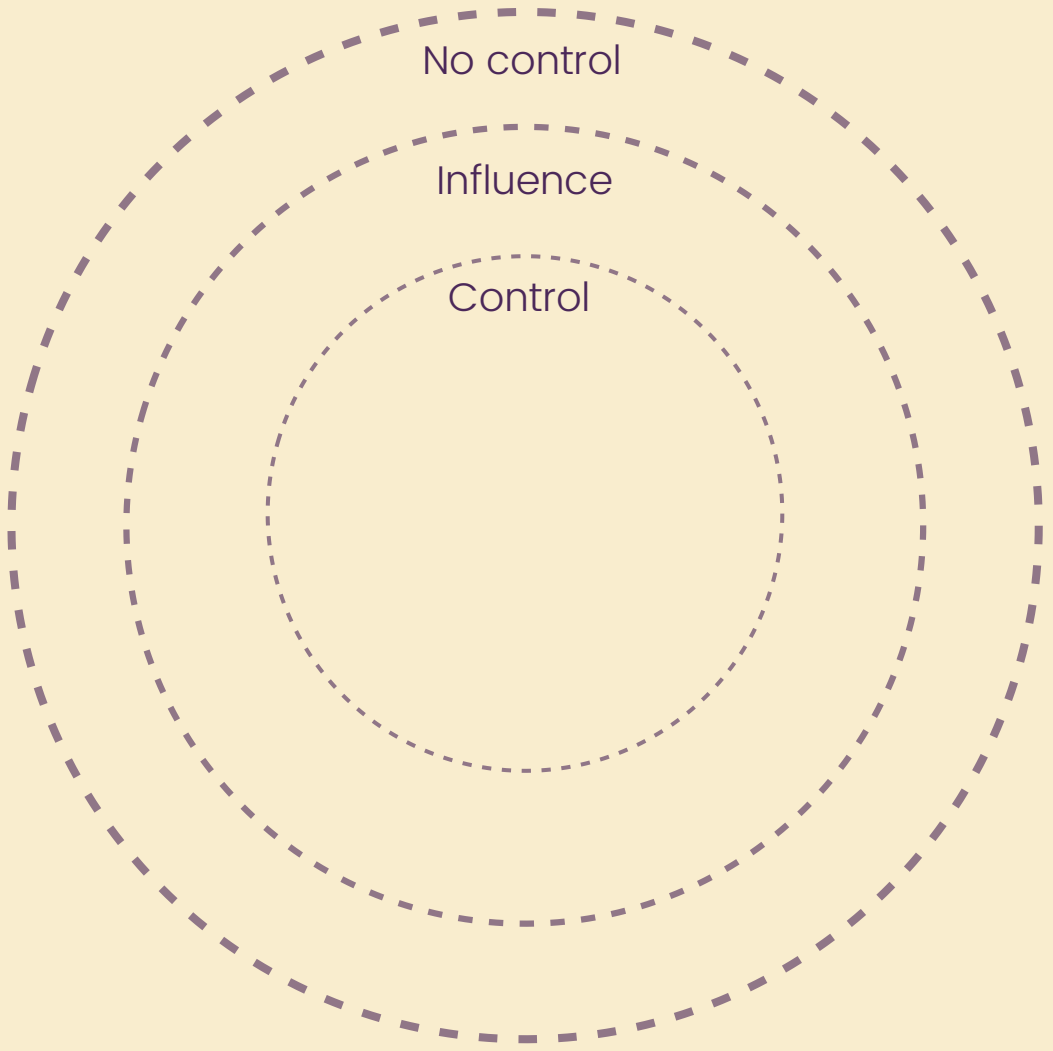
- 1 Write down the things you can control in the centre
- 2 Write down the things you can influence in the next ring
- 3 Write down things you have no control over in the outer ring
- 4 You can then construct a plan based on what you can influence, whilst letting go of the need to control or change what you don't have influence/control over.

Example:

- During the Pandemic you may not have had control over having to work from home
- You can influence your wellbeing by searching for ways to adapt to this new working style
- You have control to create a new routine that includes taking scheduled breaks, getting fresh air at lunchtime, logging out of your work emails after hours etc.

It won't do you any good to focus on what you can't control. Instead of dwelling on the feelings of hopelessness and helplessness until you find yourself in a more preferred situation, focus on acting upon the things you do have control over. You'll notice you'll be much better at reacting and responding to stressful situations and your wellbeing will be a whole lot better for it.

Responding effectively to stressful situations



A Mindful Meditation

Regular meditation helps you think more clearly and helps manage stress.

Preparation:

- Turn off electrical appliances/ put your phone on silent
- Set a gentle alarm to ring at the end of the duration you wish to meditate for
 - Dress comfortably
 - Sit in an upright position

Meditation:

Close your eyes and take a few deep breaths in and out.
With every exhale release all the stress from your body.

Scan your body and observe where you may be holding tension (usually it's in the jaw, shoulders and pelvis).
Actively relax these areas, relieving any tension.

Now bring your attention back to your breathing,
as you feel the air travelling through the body.
Make a mental note of how you feel now.

Begin to focus on the present moment, if your mind wanders don't judge the thoughts just notice them and let them go bringing your attention back to your breathing.

You will gradually experience spaces between the thoughts.
Now you are meditating!

You can stay in this state for as long as you wish.
The longer you do stay in this state for, the deeper you will go.
Once you've finished meditating open your eyes and make notes of how you felt before, during and after the meditation.

Note: If any noises or interruptions occur during your meditation, observe it objectively and non-judgementally. Try not to attach a thought or an emotional reaction to it.

“It can be challenging to set the time aside and discipline yourself to practice regularly. If you find this to be the case, it may be worth joining a group or meditation class to help you get into some sort of routine and regular practice. It may also be helpful to plan what time would suit you best to meditate the day before, and set a reminder on your phone to remind you on the day.”

Daily Mindfulness

Be open-minded and flexible.
The ego likes to put control
and boundaries on things.
The more rigid we are the less
mindful we are.

Be aware of any judgemental
thoughts, bring your
attention to them and
then let them go.

Live in the present moment. When
you start to notice you're worrying
about the future or reminiscing on
something that happened in the past,
let go and come back to the
present moment.

Slowly and deliberately,
do one thing at a time.

Cultivate compassion and
gratitude for yourself
and others.

Avoid overfilling your day.
Prioritise your tasks
and let go of the ones that
can wait.

Leave space between each task
where possible. Leaving room for error
can reduce the stress of completing
everything in time.

Spend at least 5 minutes a day
where you are not thinking,
remembering or planning. The best
way to do this is to meditate.

I hope you have found this mindfulness guide useful. For more guidance join our wellbeing from source community



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