



Mindfulness

What is it about?



What is mindfulness about?

- # Paying attention?
 - # Awareness?
 - # The art of conscious living?
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How does meditation relate to mindfulness?

- # Meditation is about deepening our attention and awareness, refining them, and putting them to greater practical use in our lives.
 - # Meditation is intentional, systematic, human activity which is *not* about trying to improve yourself or go anywhere else, but to realize where you are already are.
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How does meditation relate to mindfulness? (cont.)

- # Meditation is something you have to be ready for.
 - # It has to be the right time in your life where you are ready to listen to your own
 - Voice
 - Heart
 - Breathing
 - Being present for them and with them without having to go anywhere or make anything better or different.
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Only that day dawns to which we are awake. *Thoreau*

- # When we let go of wanting something else to happen in the moment, steps toward being able to encounter the here and now can take place.
 - # Having a focus for your attention helps to keep you in the present moment.
 - Awareness of our breathing can be helpful
 - Tune into the feeling of the the breath entering/leaving the body, not deep or forced or thinking; just awareness
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Am I awake?

Where is my mind right now?

- # Mindfulness means being awake; knowing what you are doing
 - # Allow yourself room for stillness and non-doing.
 - This helps to connect into your breathing which allows the connection between mind and body to take place.
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When does practicing not mean rehearsing?

- # Mindfulness practice is not about rehearsing a certain mantra or going through repetitions to get better and better.
 - # It is simply committing fully to be present in the moment.
 - No performance
 - No improvement
 - No special insights or visions
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Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in. I drink at it; but while I drink, I see the sandy bottom and detect how shallow it is. Its thin current slides away, but eternity remains. I would drink deeper; fish in the sky, whose bottom is pebbly with stars.

Thoreau, Walden

How do we wake up?

- # If we are to grasp the reality of our life, we have to wake up to our moments
 - One way to accomplish this is through looking at others
 - # When we look at others, do we truly see them or just have our thoughts about them?
 - # Do our thoughts color things in a particular way or are we able to accurately see what is there?
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How does mindfulness work?

- # Think of your mind as the surface of a lake or the ocean.
 - # There are always waves on the water.
 - # Sometimes they are big, sometimes they are small, sometimes almost imperceptible.
 - # The water's waves are churned up by winds, which come and go and vary in direction and intensity, *just as the winds of stress and change in our lives, which stir the waves in our minds.*
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Why do some people say they can't meditate?

- # When people say they can't meditate, what they mean is they won't make time for it or don't like what happens.
 - # Thinking you are unable to meditate is like saying you are unable to breathe or concentrate or relax.
 - # Meditation is not about feeling a certain way; it is about feeling the way you feel. Not about emptying the mind, but letting the mind be as it is; not trying to get somewhere, but recognizing where you are.
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What qualities are necessary to assist you in mindfulness?

Patience

- # Allows you to cultivate mindfulness and invokes your meditative practice
 - # Is an alternative for the mind's restlessness and impatience.
 - Underneath impatience is anger; the energy of not wanting things to be the way they are or blaming someone or something for it (often yourself)
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And more.....

Letting Go

- # It is an invitation to cease clinging to anything (*Ideas, Things, Events, View, Desires*)
 - # To give up coercing, resisting, or struggling, in exchange for something more powerful and wholesome which comes from allowing things to be as they are without getting caught up in the attraction/rejection of them.
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And more

Non-judging

- # During meditation, the mind is constantly evaluating our experiences, comparing them with other experiences, holding them up against expectations/standards we create, *often out of fear.*
 - # Don't try to judge it, just acknowledge what comes to your mind/body.
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And more

Trust

- # The feeling of trust is important to cultivate in mindfulness practice, for if we do not trust in our ability to observe, be open and attentive, to reflect upon experience, to grow and learn from observing and attending, to know something deeply, we will hardly persevere in cultivating any of these abilities and so they will only wither or lie dormant.
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And more

Generosity

- # Can be used to deepen self-observation and inquiry
 - Starting with yourself, giving yourself gifts, such as self-acceptance or a certain amount of time each day.
 - # Do you often feel you are already giving too much?
 - # What are your motives to give?
 - # When are they a sign of fear/lack of confidence?
 - # Share the fullness of your being!
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Being Strong Enough to Be Weak

- # If you are strong-willed and accomplished, you may give off the impression that you are invulnerable to feeling inadequate or insecure or hurt.
 - *Thinking of yourself as getting stronger through meditation practice can create a dilemma of isolationism.*
 - # Do you run from your vulnerabilities?
 - *Allow yourself to feel, be open about your feelings*
 - # How do you meet obstacles in your life?
 - *Harshness or holding back?*
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Vision

- # Why do you do meditation?
- # What value in life does it provide?
- # How often do you re-evaluate your purpose?

Vision has to do with our values, what we view as important in life!

- # Does it reflect your true values/intentions?
 - # Do you practice your intentions?
 - # How am I now (school, relationships, etc.) with myself?
 - # How do I want to be?
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Practice as a path

- # Where are you going?
 - # What are you seeking?

 - # If your life were a book, what would you call it today?
 - # What would you call the chapter you are in now?
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Keys to Meditation

- # Not living in a perpetual crisis or immersed in social / economic chaos
 - # Flexibility of approach is essential
 - # Sincerity of effort is more important than the elapsed time put forth
 - # Mindfulness needs to be kindled and nurtured.
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