

# MINDFULNESS: WHAT IS IT AND HOW CAN IT HELP?

In the last decade mindfulness has gained huge popularity in our Western society especially in the health and wellness industry. For me, mindfulness is the foundation that allows me to live a calm, yet engaging life. I believe it's the most important life skill to learn and our number one tool to navigate the challenges of our busy and demanding modern-day life.

But what is mindfulness exactly?

"Mindfulness is a state of awareness that involves paying attention to the present moment with openness, curiosity and flexibility" -Jon Kabat- Zinn. Personally my favourite, simple explanation of mindfulness is the following one by James Baraz;

**Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different.**

Sounds simple right?

To add to that, I like to define mindfulness as a state of awareness in which we stay focused on whatever is happening in the here and now; fully noticing both our inner and outer world. It's a state that involves our whole being, not just the mind. When we are mindful, our mind doesn't jump around thinking about the past or the future; it solely engages with the present moment.

The best way to fully understand mindfulness is to experience it for yourself. (Have you signed up to the Self Set Free Living newsletter yet to receive free mindfulness resources?)

It can also be helpful to think about the opposite of mindfulness – ‘mindlessness’ or ‘auto-pilot mode’ – when we are largely disconnected from the present moment.

Have you ever driven somewhere – such as home or work – and whilst driving been so caught up in your thoughts, perhaps going over things that happened during the day or thinking about the things you need to do when you get home, that you arrive at your destination and realise you can't even remember what streets you took to get there or what happened around you on your way there?

**Do you ever get so caught up in your own thoughts or inner world that you forget what you just did? Do you ever feel like you are so busy within your mind thinking, worrying, problem solving or imagining things, that life just passes you by?**

If you answered yes to any or all of these, you're officially human. We can all relate.

Due to our busy, fast-paced lives we go through most of our day on auto-pilot, never really stopping to think about what we are doing.

We simply act out well-established, habitual patterns of behaviours and reactions, instead of conscious, accurate responses to what is truly happening in the present moment. We spend our day going through the motions whilst our mind jumps around crazily between thoughts of the past or the future.

We often multi-task and spend hours ruminating about things in our mind. It has become the norm and simultaneous stranglehold of our society. People experience more worry and anxiety than ever before.

Chronic stress is at an all-time high, while there are significantly greater rates of mental illness and suicide. We are seeing the effects on relationships, through conflicts and breakdowns and lower levels of happiness, contentment and cohesion.

## Can mindfulness help?

The short answer is ABSOLUTELY! As mindfulness gains more and more well-deserved attention, scientific research is documenting the extensive benefits of the practice. Scientists have confirmed the positive impact mindfulness can have on our mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

It can help you:

- decrease emotional distress
- feel less affected by unpleasant thoughts and feelings
- feel more in control of your reactions
- make clearer choices
- increase insight and awareness of self; mind and body
- feel less judgmental and better able to let things go
- reduce stress, worry and anxiety
- improve physical wellness and reduce intensity of pain
- improve interpersonal relationships
- improve concentration, productivity and creativity
- reduce unhelpful mind wandering
- develop greater acceptance of ourselves and the present moment
- adapt to change more easily
- feel happier and more connected to those around us

Mindfulness is more than just something we do every now and then; it's a way of living. The great thing about mindfulness is that you can practise it anytime, anywhere and in any way. We can easily start to live more mindfully and reduce the negative affects of mindlessness.



Not sure how to get started?

Send us an email today ( [info@selfsetfreeliving.com](mailto:info@selfsetfreeliving.com) ) to find out how you can join other men and women in our community who have learnt to reduce stress, anxiety & worry by using mindfulness.

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