

## **The Mindfulness Worksheet Introduction To Mindfulness**

"For many years, at great cost, I traveled through many countries, saw the high mountains, the oceans. The only things I did not see were the sparkling dewdrops in the grass just outside my door."

-Rabindranath Tagore



Mindfulness means becoming attentive, being aware and mentally focusing in a particular way in the present moment without analysis, judgment or criticism.

One of first aspects of development in an infant is the awareness of senses: touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. Thoughts and appraisals of emotion develop later. When being mindful, we become aware of the environment and our own body.

Mindfulness is simply a practical way to observe or notice details of tastes, sounds, scents, physical sensations and thoughts. For example: When we wash dishes we might be thinking "how untidy the kitchen is," "the floor needs cleaning" and so on.

Whereas a mindful moment means noticing the stack of plates, the water temperature, the scent of the soap, the clinking sound of dishes.

Children are more often mindful than adults because their attention and focus on the sensory system is stronger in the absence of judgment or analysis.

As we grow older our minds get busy in the past or future, thinking about what needs to be done or what we didn't do. Busy minds go on auto-pilot, such as when we are driving and are unaware of the environment around us, or of our own physical sensations.

### **From Unmindful to Mindful**

Mindfulness can be described as choosing and learning to control our focus, bringing our attention to the present moment while suspending analysis or judgments.

### **Practicing Mindfulness Mindful Activities**

#### **1) Mindful Breathing**

Sit comfortably with spine straight and eyes closed.

Direct your attention to your breathing.

Breathe in and notice your breath, the cool air flowing in, your expanding ribcage. Breathe out and notice the warm air streaming out of your nostrils, your abdomen pulling in.

When you notice that your attention has drifted to thoughts and/or feelings, simply acknowledge this and bring your awareness back to the breath.

When you notice sensations or thoughts, accept them as they are, making space for them to come and go without judgement or critical appraisal.

#### **2) Mindful Body Scanning**

Sit or lie down.

Start with the toes, move to the soles of the feet, the ankles, and so on, all the way up the body to the crown of the head.

Wiggle the toes. Go slow. Feel the sensations.

Moving upwards on the body, notice how the body feels: tight, relaxed, tired, peaceful. Stretch, linger, breathe.

Simply notice and accept what is.

#### **3) Mindful Walking:** Step out into the world and look around.

There are many natural delights in nature itself, and many marvels

that are man-made. Observe the details: the color of leaves, the sounds of birds, the smells of flowers, the height of buildings. Wherever you are, feel the ground beneath your feet.

We are often in our head thinking of the past or future. If only for a few minutes we can train the mind to look, listen, smell and feel, we will feel refreshed.

"Mindfulness is like brushing your teeth, it clears your mind of unnecessary clutter," says psychiatrist and mindfulness expert, Dr. Daniel Siegel. And like brushing your teeth, it does not take long to participate in a short but lasting mindfulness exercise.

After inhaling and exhaling a few deep breaths, simply take a flower or plant and observe all the different colors of the flower petals or stems.

Then, take a few moments to touch the sturdy stem, caress the supple petals. Lastly, sniff the life-affirming scent no matter the type of flower or plant. Inhale its earthy quality and be reminded that at that moment you are where you stand or sit, reinvigorating your senses.

Such a simple exercise, and so beneficial, as neuroscience shows it to be an effective technique in stilling the unquiet mind, which in turn helps maximize the brain's capacity.

**2) Mindful Showering:** Feel the warm water on your skin, listen to the splashing sounds, sniff the soap in your hands, run your fingers over your flesh.

Noticing when our mind wanders is all it takes to bring ourselves back to an awareness of immediate sensations.