Common Questions about Mindfulness

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is about being present for what’s going on in your life with acceptance. It’s noticing thoughts, feelings and experiences without judging what you notice.

Why Practice Mindfulness?

It’s really common to get distracted or overwhelmed by thoughts, worries and concerns. Mindfulness practices can help you to be more present for what’s actually going on, and less caught up in worries about the future (which you can’t control) or the past (which you can’t change). It can help you take a moment and be able to RESPOND (choose what you want) rather than REACT (yell at someone, for example).

How do you Practice Mindfulness?

Mindfulness can be practiced doing almost anything – walking, brushing your teeth, eating, skateboarding or riding your bike. Mindfulness is simply paying attention to your life, moment-to-moment, with an attitude of acceptance and compassion.

There are simple things you can do, right in the moment that help if you are feeling upset, angry or triggered by something that’s happening. It can be as simple as bringing your attention to your feet or your breath. Try it out and see if it’s helpful for you.

Mindfulness can also be practiced in sitting meditation. This helps teach you how to pay attention – so you can choose what YOU want to focus on. Taking a class or listening to a meditation recording can be helpful ongoing.
What is Meditation?

Meditation is the practice of turning your attention to a single point of focus. You can focus on anything. Most common is the breath, your body sensations, or sounds in the room.

Mindfulness meditation is a unique kind of meditation in that it’s not trying to make you to different from how you already are. Instead, it helps you become more aware of what’s already happening. It teaches you how to be present for your life, moment to moment, no matter what’s going on.

Is Meditation Difficult?

For many, especially at the beginning, meditating can be challenging because it can feel unfamiliar to focus on the breath and play with not being distracted by thoughts, ideas or things to do. From movies, to cell phones, to computers, to music... moments of stillness can be few! But it gets easier with practice. With time, meditation can become familiar and even something you may look forward to.

For many people, the most difficult thing about meditating is taking the time meditate! Any amount of time spent noticing the present-moment is valuable. Even 1 or 2 minutes a day can be helpful.

1 http://www.psychologytoday.com/basics/meditation
I can’t meditate because my mind is too busy! What can I do?

Congratulations - you are noticing a busy mind! That is mindfulness. It is very common for people to think they can’t meditate because their mind is too busy. However, mindfulness isn’t about having a quiet mind – if your mind is busy it’s about noticing that it’s busy and then bringing your attention back to your breath, or to sounds, or whatever you are meditating on.

Is Meditation Emptying your Mind?

Often people think meditating means emptying your mind of thoughts, but this isn’t really accurate. Meditation is more about noticing thoughts and feelings as they come up, accepting them and watching them like you might watch clouds pass through the sky.

With focused attention on your thoughts and feelings as they arise, it can become easier to notice them and let them pass by, rather than clinging to them, wishing they were different or being overwhelmed by them.

Learn more about mindfulness: [http://crisiscentre.bc.ca/mindfulness/](http://crisiscentre.bc.ca/mindfulness/)

“Meditation is the ultimate mobile device; you can use it anywhere, anytime, unobtrusively.” — Sharon Salzberg