

MINDFULNESS



A Beginner's Guide
To Improve Your Body, Mind
and Spirit

BY DR SARAH COHAN

with Christopher Stulgan

Disclaimer

This eBook has been written for information purposes only. Every effort has been made to make this eBook as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes in typography or content. Also, this eBook provides information only up to the publishing date. Therefore, this eBook should be used as a guide - not as the ultimate source.

The purpose of this eBook is to educate. The author and the publisher do not warrant that the information contained in this eBook is fully complete and shall not be responsible for any errors or omissions. The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by this ebook.

This eBook offers information and is designed for educational purposes only. You should not rely on this information as a substitute for, nor does it replace professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	8
Who Should Read This Book?	8
Book Layout.....	9
What Is Mindfulness?	11
Understanding The Point Of Mindfulness.....	11
Benefits Of Mindfulness	13
Recap	13
Mindfulness In Times Of Chaos.....	15
What Counts As A “Time Of Chaos?”.....	15
Negative Effects Of Chaotic Times.....	16
How Mindfulness Helps.....	17
Recap	17
Mindfulness And The Body.....	19
Benefits Of Practicing Mindfulness For The Body	19
Decreases Heart Disease	19
Increases Immune System Response.....	20
Reduces Cell Aging	20
Why Mindfulness Benefits The Body.....	21
Mindfulness And The Body Practices.....	21
Progressive Muscle Relaxation.....	22
Body Scan	24

MINDFULNESS

Sipping On A Warm Drink.....26

Recap27

Mindfulness And The Mind29

Benefits Of Practicing Mindfulness For The Mind.....29

 Improves Reasoning Abilities And Increases Attention29

 Improves Memory30

 Regulates Emotions And Improves Compassion30

 Helps To Connect The Right And Left Hemispheres Of The Brain.....31

Mindfulness And The Mind Practices31

 Creating A Morning Routine.....31

 Repeating Affirmations.....32

 Recap33

Mindfulness And The Spirit.....35

Benefits Of Practicing Mindfulness For The Spirit35

 Increases Your Well Being.....35

 Increases Satisfaction With Life36

 Enhances Self-Insight.....36

Mindfulness And The Spirit Practices37

 1. Reflection37

 2. Create the Affirmations38

 3. Repeat Affirmations38

Recap38

Mindfulness As A Growth Opportunity 40

 Practicing Mindfulness When Things Are Good 40

 Growing To Become More Resilient 40

 Becoming More Resilient 41

 1. Compassion..... 41

 2. Acceptance..... 41

 3. Openness 42

 4. Creativity 42

 Recap 42

Mindfulness In Meditation 44

 Mindfulness Vs. Meditation 44

 How To Practice Mindful Meditation 44

 1. Set Aside Special Time..... 45

 2. Create Your Space 45

 3. Observe The Moment..... 45

 4. Be Kind To Your Thoughts And Let Them Come 46

 5. Finish..... 46

 Recap 46

Bringing It All Together: Holistic Mindfulness For Your Entire Essence 48

 Why Holistic Mindfulness Matters 48

 Holistic Mindfulness 49

 How To Practice Holistic Mindfulness 49

MINDFULNESS

Meditation Through Yoga.....50

Recap50

Conclusion53

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Life is full of unforeseen changes, challenges, and chaotic times. It is easy to be swept away by the seemingly endless list of chores, tasks, and deadlines that seem to pile up without you even realizing it. This can cause you to feel rundown in your body, mind, and spirit.

Once you find yourself feeling this way, it can seem nearly impossible to wake yourself back up to the beauty and benefits of life. This can then cause you to feel completely hopeless and tired of your own life, and your health, both physically and mentally, may suffer.

Luckily, there is a way to improve your life even during the most chaotic or stressful of times. Studies have shown that mindfulness is a key technique for improving your body, mind, and spirit no matter the situation, even times of chaos.

In short, mindfulness is the act of being in the present, but there is more to it than that. In this book, we will learn what mindfulness is and key techniques for becoming more mindful. As a result, you will learn how to improve your entire essence during these chaotic and challenging times.

Who Should Read This Book?

This book will be especially helpful for those who have never tried or practiced mindfulness before. We have specifically created this book with the inexperienced user in mind, allowing it to be a beginner's guide of sorts.

Even if you have practiced mindfulness before, this book may be useful. We offer a variety of unique practice ideas, tips, and tricks that will help you enhance your current mindfulness practice.

Book Layout

We begin by looking at mindfulness and what it means to be mindful during chaotic times. Then, we move on to discuss how to use mindfulness to improve your body, mind, spirit, and personal growth. In the last two chapters, we discuss how meditation can affect mindfulness and offer key tips on how to bring together all of the tools we have learned in the book.

Without further ado, let us get started learning about mindfulness and how it can improve your entire essence and well being.

CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?



WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

Mindfulness is the ability to be completely in the present, as opposed to thinking about the past, future, or any other event that takes us away from the present time. Being mindful includes being aware of where we are, what we are doing, and how we feel. More so, it includes being in touch with ourselves, knowing our limits, and understanding our goals and desires for life.

As humans, it is easy to get swept away by other thoughts and events than the present. This causes us to be the opposite of mindful, wreaking havoc on our physical, mental, and emotional health. For example, stress in the workplace can distract us from appreciating our family, causing problems in the home. Mindfulness can help.

All people are capable of mindfulness, even if it seems hard. Our brains are completely capable of focusing on the present and honing out the distractions of life. With that being said, it can be incredibly difficult to do this, which is why mindfulness practices are so helpful. Practicing mindfulness can teach us and train us to better focus on the present, allowing us to ignore anything else that may be a distraction.

Understanding The Point Of Mindfulness

Before starting your mindfulness journey, it is important to understand what mindfulness can and cannot do for you. If you have unrealistic expectations about mindfulness, it can be incredibly easy to feel like mindfulness is not working and give up on the practice completely.

MINDFULNESS

Many people believe that mindfulness is about attaining some [state of bliss](#). Bliss is often described as some state of perfect happiness that is oblivious to other factors surrounding it. It is important to recognize that mindfulness is not about reaching a state of bliss. This state is impossible to reach because there will always be challenges and difficulties in life that disrupt this so-called state. In other words, bliss does not exist.

With that being said, mindfulness can and should make you feel happier and more content with your overall life, but it is more realistic about it. This allows mindfulness to be geared towards appreciating your life and self better. It helps you see past short-term struggles and appreciate the life you have, even in the bad times.

For this reason, the point of mindfulness is to help you live a better life. Living a better life includes being more content in your situation, responding more compassionately and rationally in difficult situations, and being more compassionate with yourself and others. Mindfulness is not about creating a perfect life, but it is about creating the life you want and are excited to live.

If you understand that this is the point of mindfulness, you can more easily set [realistic goals](#) for your mindfulness training. These goals should reflect your current abilities and future wants so you are actively pursuing your ideal life.

It is important to note that mindfulness is not about being in the present all the time. As humans, we would become completely overwhelmed and overloaded if we stayed in the present all day, every day. There are times in our lives when we should think about the past, future, or [nothing at all](#).

Benefits Of Mindfulness

The effects of mindfulness have been studied by [several clinical trials](#), allowing us to confidently know that mindfulness improves our overall health and wellbeing. For example, mindfulness can improve the following conditions:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Pain
- Depression
- Blood pressure
- Insomnia
- Diabetes
- Cardiovascular diseases

Mindfulness also helps to increase attention, regulate emotions, and increase motivation and overall life satisfaction. Together, these benefits allow you to experience a healthier and happier life.

Recap

Mindfulness is the act of being in the present so that you can live a healthier and happier life. As you become more mindful, you will experience a number of benefits for your emotional, mental, and physical health.

CHAPTER 2

MINDFULNESS IN TIMES OF CHAOS



MINDFULNESS IN TIMES OF CHAOS

Life is full of unexpected, stressful, and difficult periods and events. Whenever these challenging times arise, it is easy to feel overwhelmed, overworked, and overall dissatisfied with your life. Even more worrisome is that humans often ignore these feelings or chalk them up to weakness whenever they arise. This causes this situation to feel even worse, creating a never-ending cycle of stress, anger, and dissatisfaction.

To stop the cycle head-on, we must recognize how we are feeling, understand the situation fully, and take active steps to be more compassionate to ourselves and problem-solve our way out of the situation. For many people, stopping the cycle is really difficult. Either they feel as though their feelings are not important or rational or they feel as though they can handle their emotions simply by ignoring them.

Many people especially ignore their feelings whenever they feel like this situation is not "bad" enough to warrant their emotions. One damaging thing humans do is comparing ourselves to others. When you compare your difficult situation to that of another, it is easy to feel as though your situation is not that bad and that you should simply get over it. This causes the situation to compound until emotions explode.

What Counts As A "Time Of Chaos?"

To avoid making the mistake of discounting your emotions, it is important to recognize when a situation is difficult, challenging, or chaotic for you. Every [person has their own limits](#), meaning you should not compare your chaotic times to that of another.

In short, a chaotic time is anything that leaves you feeling stressed, overwhelmed, overworked, or chaotic. It does not matter what the situation or event was. The only thing that matters is how you feel in response to the situation. This can include your actual emotions, as well as how you plan to react to the situation.

Anything from a failed test to a death in the family can count as a time of chaos. It is important to accept that anything that causes you to feel negatively counts as a chaotic time. You owe it to yourself to accept this fact so you can learn tools to better navigate those times in a healthy and functional manner.

Negative Effects Of Chaotic Times

It is important to correctly navigate our feelings and responses during chaotic times. Many studies have shown that chaotic events or periods result in costly and life-altering health effects. For example, poorly-managed chaotic times can lead to the following:

- Increased stress
- Increased anxiety
- Insomnia
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Work burnout
- Poor relationships
- Obesity

How Mindfulness Helps

To combat these unwanted health effects, it is important to healthily manage ourselves during these times. [Mindfulness is one of the best ways to learn](#) how to find your calm amidst a chaotic storm. By practicing mindfulness, you can learn how to better comprehend the issue at hand, connect your rationality to your emotions, and respond to people and yourself in a more compassionate and respectful way.

Simply by practicing mindfulness every day, you will be able to better handle any situation that comes your way. It will help you to become more compassionate and resilient, allowing you to tackle all of life's challenges confidently and eagerly.

Recap

Life is full of hardships, challenges, and chaos. If we do not properly handle ourselves during these difficult times, our body, mind, and spirit can and will suffer. Luckily, mindfulness is one tool for combatting feelings of stress or inadequacy during times of chaos. It allows us to calm down, better connect to our rationality, and respond respectfully and compassionately.

CHAPTER 3

MINDFULNESS AND THE BODY



MINDFULNESS AND THE BODY

It is no surprise that being mindful and optimistic during chaotic times has a significant impact on your physical wellbeing and body. In fact, being mindful is one of the best ways to improve your physical health during chaotic and monotonous times alike. Let us take a look at exactly how mindfulness impacts the body.

Benefits of Practicing Mindfulness For The Body

Mindfulness has been studied frequently, which has provided us with a plethora of research and data about the health benefits of mindfulness on our bodies.

Decreases Heart Disease

Most notably, many researches have found that mindfulness may be good for hearts. Since heart disease is a leading killer in the United States, it is imperative to take special care of our hearts in what ever ways possible.

More specifically, some [studies](#) have shown that mindfulness and progressive muscle relaxation, which we will discuss more in the next section, significantly reduces systolic and diastolic blood pressure in those with prehypertension. As a result, it decreases the risk of heart disease since it lowers blood pressure.

[Research](#) also shows that those who practice mindfulness have stronger hearts, allowing them to improve their breathing rates when exercising. In one study specifically, some people with heart disease were randomly assigned a mindful practice and then given a six-minute walking test.

Those who were assigned meditation showed signs of slower heart rates, a measure of cardiovascular capacity, during the test.

Increases Immune System Response

Another way that mindfulness impacts our body is that it improves our immune response. Whenever we encounter any viruses or organisms that cause diseases, our body sends out immune cells to fight them off. Studies have found that mindfulness affects these cells.

More specifically, several [studies](#) have shown that mindfulness often increases levels of T cells or T cell activity in patients with HIV or breast cancer. Though this is not proof that mindfulness will cure the illnesses, it does suggest that mindfulness will improve biomarkers that indicate disease progression.

In another study, [elderly patients were assigned](#) either a mindfulness-based stress reduction course or a moderate-intensity exercise program at random. The patients who practiced mindfulness had an increased amount of protein interleukin 8 in their nasal secretions. This increased protein suggests an improved immune function.

Reduces Cell Aging

Everyone wants to live forever, but our cells naturally age, making our bodies age as well. Some [studies](#) have suggested that longtime mindfulness practitioners have greater telomere length or telomere activity. Telomere length is associated with cell aging. The longer the length, the slower the cell is aging.

One study found that cancer survivors who were prescribed mindfulness had longer telomeres than those who were not. In contrast, other studies

have found that some survivors who practice mindfulness have no difference in telomere length but increased telomere activity instead. This increased telomere length and telomere activity leave scientists optimistic about the connection between mindfulness and cell aging reduction.

Why Mindfulness Benefits The Body

Whenever we experience stress, our body physically responds by sending out various hormones and chemicals. These hormones and chemicals are designed to help us act and problem-solve our way out of tough situations.

Though these hormones and chemicals are helpful in the short term for increasing productivity or problem solving, they are extremely damaging to our body if they are constantly released. Whenever we find ourselves in constant stress, such as when we are living in a chaotic time, our body responds too strongly.

Mindfulness, however, calms us down, which signals our brain to stop releasing the hormones and chemicals associated with stress. This then allows our body to recover and restore itself more frequently, making us healthier both in the short term and the long term.

Mindfulness And The Body Practices

To unlock the full benefits of mindfulness and the body, it is important to know the best mindfulness practices that relate to the body. Here are the most popular mindfulness techniques that help to improve your body's physical health and wellness.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

[Progressive muscle relaxation](#) is a mindfulness technique that is specifically designed to manage stress and alleviate stress-related pain. Whenever you experience stress, your body often responds with muscle tension. Progressive muscle relaxation allows you to relieve that tension, thus lessening the pain.

How progressive muscle relaxation works is that it is a series of tensing and relaxing every muscle group in your body. When you intentionally release your muscles, it allows your body to relax, which signals to your brain to feel less pain and stress and relax further. When you are new to this technique, it may be helpful to try it with an audio recording, which you can find [online](#) or at your local library.

1. Lay Down

Start by laying on your back in an area where you will not be interrupted. Stretch out comfortably. Many people prefer to do this on a carpeted floor. You might want to avoid trying this technique on a bed since beds are soft and can inhibit your abilities to properly tense and relax.

2. Breathe, Tense, and Relax

Once you are in a comfortable place, breathe in and tense the first muscle group. Hold for about four to ten seconds. Then, breathe out as you suddenly relax the muscle group completely. Do not relax the muscles gradually. Instead, relax them immediately or all at once. Keep your muscles relaxed for about ten to twenty seconds.

3. Repeat Over The Entire Body

MINDFULNESS

Once your relax/rest time is up, move on to the next muscle group and repeat the process all over again. When you finish all muscle groups, bring yourself back to the present by counting backward from five to one.

Muscle Group	How To Tense
Hands	Close fists
Wrists and forearms	Extend arms and bend hands back at the wrist
Biceps and upper arms	Make fists with your hands, bend arms at the elbow, and flex biceps
Shoulders	Shrug
Forehead	Wrinkle
Eyes and bridge of nose	Remove contact lenses before you start practice if needed and close eyes as tightly as possible
Cheeks and jaws	Smile as widely as possible
Mouth	Press lips together as tightly as possible

MINDFULNESS

Chest	Inhale deeply and hold for four to ten seconds
Back	Arch your back up and away from whatever surface you are laying on
Stomach	Suck in as tightly as possible
Hips and buttocks	Squeeze buttocks as tightly as possible
Lower legs	Flex toes towards face then curl them downward at the same time

Body Scan

The [body scan](#) practice is a way to connect to how your body feels at that moment. Like with a progressive muscle relaxation practice, you can find plenty of body scan guided practices online. Here is a quick look at how to do your own body scan for mindfulness purposes.

1. Lay Down And Be Attentive

Begin by lying down on a comfortable but firm surface. A carpet or a floor with a mat on top will be best. Close your eyes and try to draw attention to the feelings around you. Feel the surface you are laying on, note the heaviness of your body, and try to detect the temperature of the air.

Any time you feel yourself drifting away during the practice, come back to this step.

2. Breathe Intentionally

Begin to pay attention to your breathing. Try to slow the breathing as slowly as possible, making a conscious effort to elongate the exhale so that way it is longer than the inhale. You might want to count your breath to keep your breathing even and deep. Many people start off by inhaling for four seconds, holding for five seconds, and exhaling for seven seconds.

3. Start The Body Scan

When you are ready, let go of your breath on an exhale. Focus your attention now on your left leg and try to imagine your mind's eye coming into the left foot's big toe. Pay attention to any sensations that you feel, but do not move your leg in any way. Just try to hold your attention to the sensation of your leg. Press your attention to the other toes on your leg and continue the practice.

When you are ready, open your awareness to the top of the foot and slowly work your way up through the entire left leg, starting with the ankle and working your way up. Once you get all the way to the top of the left leg, repeat the practice starting with your right big toe.

4. Work Your Way Up

Once you repeat all of the steps on your right leg, carefully work your attention throughout your entire body, starting with the hips and then continuing through the pelvic region, back, shoulders, arms, hands, stomach, chest, neck, and head. Try to notice every sensation you feel, even when you are not moving.

5. Finish

After you have completed scanning the entire body. Open your attention even more so that way you can recognize all of the body's sensations at once. You might want to imagine that you are breathing into your whole body throughout this step. Whenever you are ready, you can open your eyes, stretch a little, and gently get up.

Throughout the practice, you may find your mind wandering to different ideas, memories, or To-Do Lists. Gently recognize the thought and then let it go whenever it has reached a natural conclusion.

Sipping On A Warm Drink

If you do not have the time for progressive muscle relaxation or a body scan, then you might want to try sipping on a warm drink. This mindfulness technique is great for incorporating into your morning routine or coffee break, making it ideal for those on the go.

1. Prepare Your Drink

All you need to do is select your favorite warm drink and prepare as usual. Most people prefer selecting a non-caffeinated drink, such as warm lemon water or herbal tea, for this practice, but you can try this with your morning cup of coffee as well. It will work just as efficiently.

2. Breathe In The Steam Before Drinking

Before you start drinking, take a few deep breaths to get in touch with how you feel. Slowly bring the cup up to your mouth but do not sip yet. Instead, continue breathing deeply, inhaling the steam. Note how the warm air feels when it goes in your nose, into your body, and out your mouth. After a few rounds of this, you can start drinking your drink.

3. Drink Slowly

As you are drinking your warm drink, sip slowly. Pay attention to how the liquid feels on your tongue and running down your throat. Additionally, note how the warm liquid fills your belly after you have swallowed. Do this while drinking the entire cup. Once you have finished drinking, place the cup on a table and deeply inhale and quickly exhale. Note if you feel any different from before.

Recap

Mindfulness positively impacts our bodies by decreasing the risk of heart disease, improving immunity, and slowing the aging process. Just by practicing progressive muscle relaxation, body scan, or sipping on a warm drink, you can signal to your body to relax, which increases your body's overall health and wellbeing.

CHAPTER 4

MINDFULNESS AND THE MIND



MINDFULNESS AND THE MIND

Just as mindfulness positively affects the body, it also positively affects the mind. In fact, mindfulness literally changes the brain, allowing it to function properly. As a result, your mind is improved, allowing you to be a better learner, listener, and thinker.

Benefits Of Practicing Mindfulness For The Mind

Thanks to modern medical technology, researchers are able to study exactly how mindfulness and meditation affect the brain. Numerous [studies](#) have since come out, showing that mindfulness greatly impacts the brain, allowing you to be the best version of yourself.

Improves Reasoning Abilities And Increases Attention

Practicing mindfulness improves reasoning abilities and increases attention. Studies have found that mindfulness and meditation boost brain activity in the frontal cortex, which is the area of the brain associated with rational thought, intentional planning, effective functioning, and emotional awareness and control. If the frontal cortex is more active, you are better able to problem-solve and think outside the box in tough situations.

Additionally, mindfulness increases the brain activity in the anterior cingulate cortex, or the ACC. This area of the brain is associated with things like emotion regulation, self-perception, and attention. If the ACC is more active, you are able to lengthen your attention span, allowing you to focus for longer periods of time and learn more technical content easier.

Together, these two benefits, namely improving reasoning abilities and increasing attention, allow you to be a better learner. You will be able to

think of more effective problem-solving techniques as well as focus on whatever task is at hand.

Improves Memory

The hippocampus is also affected by mindfulness. The hippocampus is responsible for making new memories, instead of living in the past. Studies have found that patients with post traumatic stress disorder or severe depression have a smaller hippocampus, which partially explains why these patients are less able to disconnect from the past and live in the present.

Mindfulness increases the gray matter within the hippocampus, which improves your ability to make new memories. When you make new memories, you usually are more content with your life in the present, instead of focusing on things in the past. This generally allows people to feel more content and satisfied with their lives.

Regulates Emotions And Improves Compassion

Both the frontal cortex and ACC are associated with emotion regulation. As both of the brain regions are improved, so will your emotional regulation. As your emotions become more regulated, you are better able to see situations as they are, connect actual situations to your feelings, and live an overall happier and more content life.

At the same time, mindfulness improves compassion and self-compassion. This allows you to respond to tough situations more understandingly and responsibly. More so, it allows you to view yourself in a more positive light, which prevents against irrational self depictions.

Helps To Connect The Right And Left Hemispheres Of The Brain

Mindfulness also helps to connect the right and left hemispheres of the brain. The right hemisphere is often associated with emotional and nonverbal processing, while the left hemisphere is associated with logical thinking and verbal processing. When the two hemispheres work together, you are better able to connect your emotional feelings with rationality and the outside world, allowing you to be more realistic.

The corpus callosum is responsible for connecting the two hemispheres. Scientists believe that the thicker the corpus callosum, the better able your brain is to connect the ideas or processes between the two hemispheres. The thought goes that a person with a thicker corpus callosum is better able to understand their own feelings and relate it to real-life events, henceforth allowing them to be more responsible and realistic in their responses.

Mindfulness And The Mind Practices

Here are the top three ways to practice mindfulness in order to improve your mind and brain:

Creating A Morning Routine

A morning routine will help set the stage for your day. If you have a chaotic morning, chances are the rest of your day will feel stressful, chaotic, and unorganized. Put your best foot forward by creating a mindful morning routine that makes you motivated and relaxed for the day to come. Every person's morning routine should be tailored to their preferences and desires.

With that being said, there are a few general rules that most people like to incorporate into their morning routine to make their days more mindful.

1. Put Down The Phone

Firstly, try not to use a device for the first hour you are awake. Use this hour to really connect with yourself and your senses, as opposed to Instagram or your inbox. Though this rule may be impossible to implement every day, try your best to avoid using your phone or device during your morning routine.

2. Set An Intention

Another important aspect of most people's morning routine is setting an intention for the day. Oftentimes, it is so easy to fall into a trap of waking up, working, eating, sleeping, allowing our lives to be run on autopilot. To help prevent this from happening, set an intention that matches your needs and To-Do List for the day. Throughout the day, check-in with your intention and see how well you are doing.

3. Write It Out

Some people also like to journal or write a gratitude list every morning. Journaling will allow you to get in touch with your feelings and set the stage for the day, while a gratitude list will allow you to truly focus on what matters in your life. This will prevent you from getting bogged down by negative feelings or harsh situations that may come your way.

Repeating Affirmations

Affirmations are short but inspirational sayings that you say to yourself, either in your head or out loud. [Studies](#) suggest that repeating affirmations rewires your brain to think more positively and compassionately. As a

result, repeating affirmations is one of the best ways to use mindfulness to better your brain and mind.

You can look online for affirmation ideas or you can create your own by paying attention to your needs, insecurities, and anything else that may be weighing on your mind. For example, if you feel inadequate at work, create an affirmation like “I am competent and able.” An affirmation like this one will directly address your issues while still being easy to remember on a daily basis.

The only rule for affirmations is that they must be short. The reason for this is that it is obviously easier to remember a short sentence than a long one. Create affirmations that are to the point and catchy so you are sure to remember them for multiple days at a time. It is important to repeat the affirmation for several days in a row since that is how our brain becomes rewired.

We will discuss affirmations in more detail in the next chapter.

Recap

Mindfulness greatly increases our minds by making us better learners and listeners, as well as making us more compassionate and emotionally stable. To increase the benefits of mindfulness for your mind, try creating a mindful morning routine to set the stage for the day or reciting affirmations that address your exact needs, desires, or weaknesses.

CHAPTER 5

MINDFULNESS AND THE SPIRIT



MINDFULNESS AND THE SPIRIT

Whenever life gets chaotic or difficult, the spirit often feels worn-down, tired, and downright awful. It is important to use mindfulness to target the spirit since it is nearly impossible to appreciate life when you feel this way. Although mindfulness does not necessarily have measurable impacts on the spirit like it does the mind, it still can improve your spirit dramatically.

Benefits Of Practicing Mindfulness For The Spirit

Since the spirit is not a measurable organ like the brain or heart, the benefits of mindfulness on the spirit are more ambiguous and less studied. This is not to say that mindfulness does not help the spirit. On the contrary, mindfulness is a great influencer on your spirit. Instead, it simply means that the results are not as easily measured or quantifiable.

Increases Your Well Being

How to improve your well being has been one of the most frequently asked questions since the ancient times. One's "well being" often refers to their health from a holistic perspective, including the body, mind, and spirit. To improve your well being, it is crucial to focus on your spirit since it is often the most forgotten aspect of well being.

Studies have found that mindfulness is one of the best ways to improve your well being. It frees you from distraction, centers yourself on what matters, and diminishes rumination. Your spirit then becomes less restless and your well being is improved.

Increases Satisfaction With Life

One of the worst features of a worn-down spirit is feeling like life is meaningless or not finding satisfaction with life. If you do not like your life, it is easy to give in to the chaos and give up. Without satisfaction in your life, it is nearly impossible to overcome any situation, let alone a chaotic one.

Some studies have shown that mindfulness increases one's satisfaction in life. One [study](#) actually found that those who practice mindfulness believe that the life they are living more closely matches the life they *want* to be living, or their ideal life.

As you focus on your spirit and become more satisfied with life, other aspects of your life are likely to improve. Life satisfaction is one of the greatest determiners of work burnout. The more satisfied you are with life, the less likely you are to feel work burnout, increasing your satisfaction and work functionality.

Life satisfaction also improves satisfaction in your relationships. The old saying goes, "Nobody can love you if you do not love yourself first." Although other people can love you regardless, you will not believe they love you until you love yourself. If you improve your satisfaction in life, it is much easier to enjoy those around you and truly engage in healthy relationship patterns.

Enhances Self-Insight

One of the most important functions of the spirit is to reflect on one's self and truly understand who they are as an individual. If your spirit is worn-down and tired, it can be difficult to understand or know yourself, making it imperative to use mindfulness to improve the spirit.

Recent [studies](#) have found that mindfulness is a great way to get to know yourself better and increase self-insight. Since judgmental actions and unawareness are the culprits behind inadequate knowledge of yourself, mindfulness forces you to take a close, honest, and compassionate look at yourself, allowing you to become more insightful.

As your self-insight increases, you can better understand why you make the choices you make and change the unhealthy behaviors accordingly. It will also increase your emotional stability since you will have a better understanding of yourself.

Mindfulness And The Spirit Practices

One of the best ways to improve the spirit is to repeat positive and true affirmations based on your exact needs. Most people's spirits are worn-down because they believe hurtful and untrue things about themselves. Use affirmations to rewire the negative beliefs about yourself.

Here is how to create and use affirmations that actually enhance your life and spirit:

1. Reflection

Reflect on yourself, your feelings, and your actions. Are there any feelings that keep coming up? What has been bothering you lately? What do you want to improve about yourself? What do you wish someone else would tell you?

Reflecting on these questions will help you learn exactly what areas you need to work on within yourself. If you skip this reflection phase, you will not create affirmations that actually impact your mindset, spirit, or life.

2. Create the Affirmations

Once you have pinpointed your weak areas, you will be able to create helpful affirmations. Make sure that the affirmations directly address the issue and are short and easy to remember. Since you will be repeating these affirmations, you need to be able to remember them in a month's time.

For example, if your reflection showed you that you are insecure with your abilities at work, create an affirmation that addresses the insecurity specifically. "I am competent and know how to fulfill my job" is a great affirmation for this issue. It is short, sweet, and directly flips the original insecurity on its head.

3. Repeat Affirmations

Affirmations take many recitations to improve your life. Repeat your affirmation morning and night, five times each, for at least one month. Even if you start feeling an improvement sooner, keep saying the affirmations for a month minimum. You may want to say the affirmations longer depending on your needs.

Recap

Your spirit is an often forgotten about part of the self. Improve your spirit by practicing mindfulness. Doing so will increase your well being, increase your satisfaction with life, and enhance your self-insight. Try creating and reciting targeted affirmations to become mindful of your spirit.

The background of the entire page is a dense, close-up photograph of smooth, light-colored stones, likely river stones or pebbles. The stones vary in size and shape, creating a textured, organic pattern. The colors are muted, ranging from off-white to light grey.

CHAPTER 6

MINDFULNESS AS A GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

MINDFULNESS AS A GROWTH OPPORTUNITY

Mindfulness is a great tool when things are chaotic and harsh. It helps us to connect with ourselves and the present, making us feel more grounded despite the chaotic situation. But what about when things are going great? Should you practice mindfulness then too?

Practicing Mindfulness When Things Are Good

It can be incredibly easy to forget about your mindfulness training whenever the chaotic and harsh situations abide, but it is important to practice mindfulness during these times, nonetheless.

If you practice mindfulness even on the good days, you will become better and better at mindful thinking. As a result, you will already know the tools and tricks to help you become grounded during the bad days as well.

Let us consider a sports analogy. Even the most athletic and capable athletes practice and prepare for a big game or meet. In fact, it is their practice that allows them to win and continually perform well.

Being mindful on good days is like an athlete's practice or training: it teaches you what you want to feel like and prepares you for the bad days. This then allows you to be mindful on bad days, too, even when it is hard.

Growing To Become More Resilient

If you practice mindfulness all the time, you will be more able to handle tough situations whenever they come about. This should cause you to view

mindfulness training as a growth opportunity regardless of the point of life you may find yourself in.

Studies show that [mindfulness increases one's resilience](#), which is the ability to bounce back from harsh situations. As you become more resilient, you grow and learn how to tackle all of life's challenges. This makes resilience one of the greatest markers for personal growth.

If you are not resilient, it is impossible to overcome challenges and adversity. Resilience should be one of the most important personal attributes to grow and nourish since you simply will not succeed without it.

Becoming More Resilient

There are [four main areas](#) that we need to focus on to become more resilient. All of these areas benefit from mindfulness training, so be sure to focus on these areas when being mindful.

1. Compassion

Become more resilient by being compassionate to yourself and others. Although you need to hold yourself accountable for your own actions, be kind, supportive, and compassionate to yourself. Do not say anything to yourself that you would not say to a friend.

As you become more compassionate to yourself, you will also find that you are more compassionate to others as well.

2. Acceptance

Accept facts as they come and distinguish them from feelings. Accepting a fact is not giving up. Instead, it is giving yourself a healthy perspective so you can deal with it actively, appropriately, and healthily.

3. Openness

Becoming resilient involves being open to new ideas and perspectives. Use your mindfulness training to get outside your comfort zone and be more open to new ideas, perspectives, and techniques for tackling all of life's problems. Ask yourself where your comfort zones lie and figure out *why* they lie there.

4. Creativity

Once you are open to new ideas, you need to be creative enough to visualize and execute the results you want. View your life as a journey, not a fixed point, that requires constant reworking and visualization. Use your creativity to create your ideal life.

Recap

Treat the good days as training days by practicing mindfulness no matter what. Being mindful on the good days will give you the emotional skills and endurance to become resilient and tackle chaotic days more efficiently. Incorporate compassion, acceptance, openness, and creativity into these practices to further boost your resilience and growth.

CHAPTER 7

MINDFULNESS IN MEDITATION



MINDFULNESS IN MEDITATION

The terms “mindfulness” and “meditation” are often used [synonymously](#), but they are not exactly the same. There is a good reason they are often used together, though. You can use meditation to become more mindful and unlock all the benefits of mindfulness for yourself.

Mindfulness Vs. Meditation

Mindfulness is the act of being present in the moment. There are many ways to be mindful, such as through affirmations, a morning routine, or progressive muscle relaxation. It does not matter exactly what you do to be mindful, as long as you are being authentically in the present.

Meditation is a formal practice that involves being mindful, but it is only one example of a mindfulness practice. People often associate meditation with a spiritual practice, but it can be used by religious and nonreligious people alike to become healthier and more aware of the present.

When you think of mindfulness and meditation, recognize that meditation is a formal practice that involves being mindful, but mindfulness is not just meditation exclusively. Similarly, meditation is not just about mindfulness; there can be other goals of meditation in addition to mindfulness.

It may be helpful to think of mindfulness as a general outlook on life that can be observed through a variety of practices, such as formal meditation.

How To Practice Mindful Meditation

There are a variety of meditation styles to choose from. If you already meditate, then you can continue meditating in the style you are most

comfortable with. For those who are new to meditation, here is a simple mindful meditation practice to try at home:

1. Set Aside Special Time

Life can be overwhelmingly full of deadlines, jobs, and errands. Set aside special time for your mindful meditation to ensure that your practice does not get swept away in the sea of tasks. All you will need is a little bit of time, a quiet space, and maybe a pillow or blanket to make the experience more comfortable.

2. Create Your Space

When it is time to do your practice, turn off all potential distractions. This includes setting your phone on airplane mode, dimming the lights, and telling family members to not enter your meditation space until you are finished.

If you want to use a pillow or blanket, place them where you intend to meditate. Though they are not necessary, they will make sitting more comfortable and relaxing. Also, set an alarm clock for however long you want the practice to be.

3. Observe The Moment

Sit down in your meditation spot and gently close your eyes. Allow your breath to flow naturally and let it deepen on its own. Take this time to observe the moment, setting the tone for your mindfulness practice.

Remind yourself that the point of this practice is not to quiet your mind. Instead, it is to pay attention to the moment, which includes your thoughts, feelings, and sensations. If you try to quiet these things, your practice will be entirely useless.

4. Be Kind To Your Thoughts And Let Them Come

Your mind is destined to wander during this time. Take the time to notice and appreciate your thoughts, no matter how big or small they may seem at the time. Be honest and kind to the thought as well, always remembering to talk to yourself the way you would talk to a stranger.

As soon as the thought comes to its natural end, come back to your present moment. In everyday life, it is easy to let our thoughts ramble like a never-ending ball of yarn. Prevent this by happening by coming back to your present.

5. Finish

Whenever your time is up, take the time to note if you feel any different. Doing this will allow you to learn from the meditation and do better in the future. If you need help understanding your feelings, take the time to journal about the experience, and really reflect on it.

Recap

Meditation is a great practice for your mindfulness. Even though it is not exactly the same as mindfulness, it is a tool to connect with the present to become more mindful in a formal setting. If you decide to meditate, remember to be kind to yourself, accept thoughts, and reflect on the experience. Doing so will maximize the effects of the meditation.

CHAPTER 8

BRING IT ALL TOGETHER



BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: HOLISTIC MINDFULNESS FOR YOUR ENTIRE ESSENCE

So far, we have looked at how to be mindful during chaotic times, as well as how to be mindful of the body, mind, spirit, and growth. What we have not looked at is how to put all of these pieces together to have a more holistic view of mindfulness.

Why Holistic Mindfulness Matters

If you only focus on one aspect of mindfulness, you will see some improvement, but you will not reach your desired results. Use a variety of mindfulness practices to focus on the body, mind, and spirit as equally important aspects of your well being.

Several [studies](#) have shown that viewing the mind, body, and spirit as separate entities has several negative health effects on your body. For example, those who distinguish between the spirit and body are more likely to practice unhealthy habits such as avoiding exercise or eating unhealthily.

Though it might sound odd that separating the mind and body results in harmful practices, it is true. If you do not view them together, your mind does not think to connect your everyday lives and actions to either bodily consequences or mental consequences.

This should encourage you to view all three aspects in relation to one another. If your mind is not healthy, then your spirit and body probably are not either. Similarly, it can be difficult to be mentally and spiritually healthy if

your body is not taken care of. Take care of your entire well being by placing significance and connectivity on the body, mind, and spirit.

Holistic Mindfulness

Mindfulness works in the same way. If you only focus on one aspect of mindfulness, the same will happen: your mindfulness abilities will be hindered, and you might not see the point in the practice anymore.

Avoid this mistake by viewing mindfulness as an intimate connection between the body, mind, and spirit. To improve any aspect of your self's mindfulness is to improve all aspects.

How To Practice Holistic Mindfulness

The easiest way to practice holistic mindfulness is to incorporate all aspects into every mindfulness practice. If you noticed in almost all of our mindfulness practice examples, we incorporated bodily senses, emotions, and mental clarity into the mindfulness practice. By incorporating all three factors, you are practicing more holistic mindfulness.

With that being said, some mindfulness practices are geared towards specific issues. Progressive muscle relaxation is one great example of a mindfulness practice that is more geared toward the body. There is absolutely nothing wrong with practicing progressive muscle relaxation and it is actually one of the best treatments for pain.

With that being said, you should not only do progressive muscle relaxation. Instead, incorporate another mindfulness practice into your daily routine in order to have a more holistic perspective. If you like progressive muscle relaxation before bed, try creating a mindful morning routine to create more balance.

Meditation Through Yoga

Meditation can be a great way to focus on all three aspects of mindfulness. Since there are a variety of meditation practices, it will be easy to find one you like. Many people find yoga to be an incredibly helpful and enjoyable meditative practice for holistic mindfulness.

Yoga is a meditative practice that connects your body, mind, and spirit. Though it is rooted in ancient Indian philosophy and religion, it is often used today as an exercise for your mind and body. By encouraging you to be in the present and connect your mind and body together, most often through the act of breathing, yoga allows you to take a holistic approach to mindfulness.

Most yoga practices recommend moving to your own breath. This will allow you to get your mind and body in sync through the naturally produced tempo of your breath. Even though this may seem like a silly idea, moving to the sound of your breath and thinking in junction with it is an incredibly beneficial mindfulness and meditation technique.

You can start practicing yoga by going to a local yoga studio near you. If that is too expensive for you or you want to stay home, you can go [online](#) for free options. YouTube is a great source for thousands of free guided yoga sessions. Simply type “Yoga for mindfulness” in the search bar and select whichever video you want.

Recap

Always practice mindfulness in a way that emphasizes all aspects of your essence, including your body, mind, and spirit. If you only focus on one aspect, you will not become fully mindful and your health will suffer. Try to

MINDFULNESS

incorporate all aspects into your mindfulness training through mindfulness practices we have mentioned before or through yoga.

CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

Mindfulness is an incredibly helpful practice to help you navigate through stressful or chaotic times. By practicing mindfulness, you will be able to improve the body, mind, and spirit to grow and become more resilient. You can try a variety of mindfulness practices, such as progressive muscle relaxation, affirmations, or meditation.

Always remember to connect all aspects of mindfulness, though. The body, mind, and spirit are equally important aspects to consider. If you only emphasize one aspect of your essence, you will not receive the full benefits of mindfulness and your health may suffer. We recommend trying yoga for a more holistic perspective on mindfulness.

Now that you have finished our beginner's guide to mindfulness, you are probably eager to start trying out some of our techniques and tips. It is important to note that mindfulness is not easily built. Expect for it to take at least a month or longer to see any results of your mindfulness training.

Be patient and compassionate with yourself. Breaking habits is hard, and you are not a superhero. Be proud that you are taking this first step to prioritize your health during these chaotic times. If you continue with these practices for a substantial amount of time, that is when you will start to see the results.