

Introduction to Mindfulness

‘ When you drink you just drink, when you walk you just walk ‘

Zen saying

Mindfulness is noticing what is happening in the **present moment**. Mindfulness can help us learn to **pay close attention** to what we are doing. It can also help us to be aware of stress, calm down when we are angry, sad, frustrated, or have any difficult emotion. Mindfulness can help us notice when we are happy or grateful too. It can teach us to be more accepting of the present moment.

How many times a day, do you actually sit quietly, even for a minute?

What will help you to sit quietly is to focus on your breath. Sit up tall, with dignity, reaching the crown of your head to the ceiling. Connect your hands with your body, on your lap, or knees. Feet are flat on the floor. Bring your awareness inward.

Now turn your attention to your breath. You will be inhaling through your nose, and exhaling through your nose. **Diaphragmatic Breathing.** Once you notice the change to calm, you can return to your normal breath.

Close the eyes or cast your gaze down. Concentrate on breathing in through your nose, letting your belly expand, and then releasing through your nose. Not holding your breath, but taking long slow breaths, that move through your entire body.

When to practice Mindfulness? Start making mindfulness a part of your daily routine by setting aside 2-5 minutes a day. Short daily sessions are better than long but less frequent practices. Start with 2 minutes and build up to 5. The best way to do this is to identify your most regular habits and find time before, during, or after one of these activities during which you can fit in mindfulness. It can be practiced anywhere, at your desk, in your car of course not while driving, at bedtime, or at any time that is convenient for you.

My mind wanders: Be patient! Over time, mindfulness helps you improve your focus. **Remember it is a PRACTICE.** Each time you lose focus go back to concentrating on your breath. You can acknowledge those thoughts that wander into your mind and let them pass, always going back to your breath, the anchor of your practice.

Peace.

It does not mean to be in a place where there is no noise, trouble or hard work.

It means to be in the midst of those things and still be calm in your heart.

- Unknown