

What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness means being fully present and focusing on the now. It does not include thinking about the past or the future or worrying about other issues. It involves acceptance and avoiding judgment of yourself or others. When you are mindful you are one with what you are experiencing. For example, if you are sipping a cup of tea, you are fully immersed in that experience. You are totally focused on every aspect of sipping tea, from the aroma to the warmth, to the feel of the cup in your hand, to the taste of the tea and the feeling as it trickles down your throat. It encompasses being in front of the camera and not behind it, and “Experiencing your experiences.” When we are mindful, we are usually calmer and happier. We are living our life with intention and focus. We are distanced from stressful thoughts and the “What-ifs.” Mindfulness improves our mental and physical health. It lessens worries and regrets and provides us with time to heal and enjoy life. Pain and suffering seem to decrease while a sense of serenity and joy increases.

Remember to be Mindful:

- When you are with a friend carefully listen to them (listening is not just hearing), use your senses, facial expressions such as a smile or a nod and various gestures such as moving forward in your seat to show interest, to acknowledge them and validate their thoughts and feelings. Put the cell phone and other electronics away.
- When you eat, take small bites, and savor the taste and flavor of your food.
- Feel the texture of sand, soil, clay, dough, velvet, a baby’s delicate skin, a pet’s soft fur, etc.
- Breathe in fresh air, inhale scintillating scents of perfume, flowers, and fragrant aromas of delectable dishes.
- When you shower, take the time to notice how wonderful the water feels on your skin and how soothing the warmth is to your body and spirit.
- Focus on your partner’s essence, their eyes, skin, smell, and touch.
- Carefully observe the colors and beauty of a sunrise or sunset; be one with nature.

Don’t put effort into controlling your thoughts; allow them to gently drift away like lily pads floating on a sparkling lake. We are not our thoughts, and we don’t have to attach meaning to them; allow them to come and go like waves hitting the shore of a sandy beach.

Excerpt taken from “Reduce Anxiety Now, 150+ Ways to Lessen Stress and Increase peace and Serenity,” Susan I Buchalter, LPC, LPAT, CGP (Amazon).