

## Practice Mindfulness

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Mindfulness is the art of paying attention on purpose and living in the present moment. Sometimes people confuse meditation with mindfulness. Meditation, as we have already looked at, is setting aside time to quieten the mind. Mindfulness is more about living in the present moment.

When we allow ourselves to be fully present, to pay attention without passing judgment, our focus shifts from being stuck inside our heads to something much more rewarding. This can be excellent for a person's self-esteem.

Mindfulness can have many other benefits, aside from helping self-esteem. It can help us cope better with stress. Using mindfulness, we shift our attention to the present, and in doing so we are not consumed with worries about the past or future.

Our productivity can improve using mindfulness, because we learn to be mindful of whatever it is that we're doing. In practicing mindfulness, we can learn acceptance of situations and ourselves. The result is peace.



The banner features a bright orange background. At the top center is a white icon of a flask with a flame, followed by the word "EXPLORABLE" in a white, sans-serif font. Below this, the phrase "Quiz Time!" is written in a white, cursive font. Underneath, there are three white-bordered boxes, each containing a different image and a quiz title. The first box shows a pair of red roller skates on a wooden deck, with the text "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The second box shows a fan of colorful pencils, also with the text "Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2". The third box shows a Ferris wheel at sunset, with the text "Quiz: Flags in Europe". In the bottom right corner of the banner, there is a white button with the text "See all quizzes =>" in orange.

## Make an Effort

Like many of the techniques outlined in this course, mindfulness requires consistent effort. See it as a journey, not a destination.

Intention, attention and attitude are key three components of mindfulness. You need to have a sense of purpose to pay attention in a certain way. Mindfulness teaches us the differences between human being versus human doing.

This shifts our focus away from preoccupation with achievement, and instead permits us to enjoy the

process. When we are busy doing, our intention is on completing something. There is something rewarding about doing and having achieved measurable things.

However, we can get so caught up in doing things in order to escape an emotion, that we begin to feel like hamsters on a wheel.

## **Learn to Remain Calm**

On the other hand, when we are busy being, we can say very simply about whatever is happening around us, 'It is what it is.' We can be still and unfazed by all the doers around us. Perhaps you know someone who always remains calm while others around them are flapping. Observe them carefully. Maybe even ask them what their secret is, and don't be surprised if they know about mindfulness.

## **Be Patient, Yet Persistent**

Developing mindfulness takes time, so don't expect yourself to suddenly become mindful overnight. When you are trying to make any change in your life, take baby steps. Incorporate one small action at a time. A useful way to bring your brain to mindfulness is complete small tasks using different senses.

For example, find a piece of music that you've never heard before. The name of the song or the artist is not important. Put some headphones on, close your eyes, and listen. How does it sound? Try to focus fully on the rhythm and cadence, without allowing your mind to wander to other music that it may sound similar to.

Next, focus your attention on something in nature, maybe a sunset, a plant, or a creature. Give yourself permission to switch off from everything else, and study every detail of your chosen object for a couple of minutes. Let the rest of the busy world go past. It will still be there when you revert your attention.

## **Take the Time to Be Thankful**

Another way to cultivate mindfulness is to practice gratitude. In your day-to-day life, think carefully about how things come together to work. Allow yourself to feel awe for tiny details of creation. When you take the time to feel thankful, you will start to notice more joy and harmony come into your life.

## **Pay Attention**

At your next meal, take time to notice your body. Feel your hunger diminish as you slowly eat, noticing the colour, texture and taste of the food. Savor each mindful. Don't use meal times as a time to think about what you have done or what you need to do. Instead, be fully present with the sustenance in front of you.

As you can see, mindfulness does not need to incorporate anything fancy, technical or new-aged. It is a way of slowing down and switching off the auto-pilot in our minds.

## **Key Points**

- Mindfulness is a way of being fully present.
- Mindfulness has been shown to have many benefits for our well-being.

- Mindfulness exercises can be incorporated into our daily routine.

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