

Mindfulness

Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way:

On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.” -Jon Kabat-Zinn



Ahhh, sounds so simple... and on some levels it is.

Yet, I found out that in order to be consistently **mindful**- *to be PRESENT, NOW, HERE*- I needed some training.

We are conditioned to want to be anywhere but “here”. The mind is like a puppy, if you tell it to sit and stay, in a few seconds it hops up again, chasing its tail or whatever else attracts its attention. We are a culture lost in thought, out-of-body, living in either the past or future. We believe we don’t want to be “here” because what is going on here (internally or externally) can feel uncomfortable or boring.

But all this “chasing our ideas” actually takes us nowhere real.

There is no “there” there. There is only Here.

Years ago, after too much busy-ness, too much chasing after happiness “out there”, I was introduced to **Vipassana meditation**(IMCW.org). Instantly I felt that I had come Home.

This simple, profound practice helped me return to my body, my senses, and the life right here.

The key is the “on purpose” and “non-judgmentally” part. Attitude is everything. Mindfulness is cultivated by paying attention on purpose, deeply, and without judgment (friendly and inviting) to whatever arises in the present moment, either inside or outside of us. By intentionally practicing mindfulness, deliberately paying more careful moment-to-moment attention, we can live more fully and less on “automatic pilot,” thus, being more present for our own lives. And in that space, when the mind calms down and our senses come awake... is **insight**. When we look the reality of “what is” in the eyes, in that space, we find wisdom. Not “our” wisdom, but “THE” wisdom. And amazingly, it was right here all along. As Dorothy found out in the Wizard of Oz “there is no place like home”. Or, put another way,

“There is no place like HERE”.

This practice (and I do mean practice! -haven’t found any shortcuts) has changed the quality of my life. Sure, my puppy mind is still busy and distractable at times. But, through a regular **Vipassana meditation practice**, I don’t stray too far from that calm, clear, compassionate place inside. I am learning strategies to help me in the course of everyday life to *return*... to pause and come home.

I call that place the “Water Table”... just under the busy, noisy surface. I never want to stray too far from the water table... or my well dries up.

Mindfulness is not about blissing out. Just the opposite.

It is about *waking up*. Noticing, feeling and facing everything that is... with friendliness, non-reactively. I find when I stop resisting “what is”... the fight in me relaxes. And the world appears in full color! Life is not meant to be a struggle. And the good news is, it doesn’t have to be.

~~~~~

***It is our mind, and that alone, that chains us or sets us free.***

~Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche