

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is about keeping your awareness in the current moment most of the time. It is about being present and aware in your life today. Mindfulness would say the past is the past and the future isn't here yet.

What has happened in the past has already happened. It can't be changed. It is possible to learn from the past, reflect on the past, or just have a memory of the past.

Since the future hasn't happened yet, there is no point in excessively worrying about what is to come. And yet, it is effective to plan and prepare for the future.

Being in the past and future mindfully or intentionally is optimal. If instead you live your life mind/ess/y in the past or future, you can miss out on really important things going on right now and end up regretting it later (or some other rationale).

Mindfulness would say: If you are going to spend time and energy focusing on the past and future; do it intentionally and with full awareness. However, spend most of your time in the present moment, in the here and now, in today. This allows you to fully experience your life as it is happening, rather than what it was or what it might be.

How might practicing mindfulness help you achieve your goals?

Mindfulness

How might practicing mindfulness help you act more effectively in your daily life when challenges arise?

What is hard about practicing mindfulness:

Strategies to overcome what is hard about practicing mindfulness:

What is useful about practicing mindfulness:

Strategies to increase mindfulness in daily life:

MINDFULNESS HANDOUT #2

Taking hold of your mind: “What” Skills

OBSERVE

- * Just notice the experience. Pay attention without reacting.
- * Control your attention, but not what you notice. Push away nothing; cling to nothing.
- * Be like a guard at the palace gate, alert to every thought, feeling, and action that comes through the gate of your mind.
- * Watch your thoughts coming and going like clouds in the sky. Notice each feeling rising and falling, like waves in the ocean. Notice exactly what you are doing.
- * Notice what comes in through your senses – your eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue.

DESCRIBE

- * Put words on the experience. When a feeling or thought comes along, say to yourself “Sadness has just come up,” or “My stomach muscles are tightening.”
- * Put experiences into words. Describe to yourself what is happening, such as “She is smiling at me,” or “He is explaining the rules to me.”
- * Call a thought a thought and a feeling a feeling; know the names as separate from the content.

PARTICIPATE

- * Enter fully into your experiences, letting yourself get involved in the moment and letting go of ruminations (repeated thoughts). **BECOME ONE WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE, COMPLETELY FORGETTING YOURSELF AS SEPARATE FROM IT.**
- * Act intuitively from Wise Mind. Do just what is needed in each situation like a skillful dancer who is completely attuned to the music and the dance steps, thinking of nothing else.

MINDFULNESS HANDOUT 3

Taking Hold of Your Mind: "How" Skills

NON-JUDGMENTALLY

- See but **DON'T EVALUATE**. Take a nonjudgmental stance. Just the facts. Focus on the "what," not the "good" or "bad," the "terrible" or "wonderful," the "should" or "should not."
- **UNGLUE YOUR OPINIONS** from the facts, from the "who, what, when, and where."
- **ACCEPT** each moment, each event as a blanket spread out on the lawn accepts both the rain and the sun, each leaf that falls upon it.
- **ACKNOWLEDGE** the helpful, the wholesome, but don't judge it. Acknowledge the harmful, the unwholesome, but don't judge it.
- When you find yourself judging, **DON'T JUDGE YOUR JUDGING**.

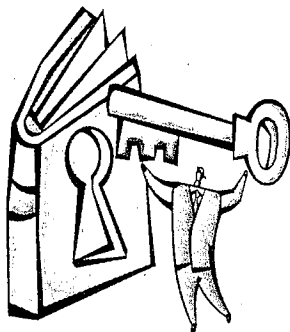
ONE-MINDFULLY

- **DO ONE THING AT A TIME**. When you are eating, eat. When you are walking, walk. When you are bathing, bathe. When you are working, work. When you are in a group, or a conversation, focus your attention on the very moment you are in with the other person. When you are thinking, think. When you are worrying, worry. When you are planning, plan. When you are remembering, remember. Do each thing with all of your attention.
- If other actions, or other thoughts, or strong feelings distract you, **LET GO OF DISTRACTIONS** and go back to what you are doing—again, and again, and again.
- **CONCENTRATE YOUR MIND**. If you find you are doing two things at once, stop and go back to one thing at a time.

EFFECTIVELY

- **FOCUS ON WHAT WORKS**. Do what needs to be done in each situation. Stay away from "fair" and "unfair," "right" and "wrong," "should" and "should not."
- **PLAY BY THE RULES**. Don't "cut off your nose to spite your face."
- Act as **SKILLFULLY** as you can, meeting the needs of the situation you are in. Not the situation you wish you were in; not the one that is just; not the one that is more comfortable; not the one that. . . .
- Keep an eye on **YOUR OBJECTIVES** in the situation and do what is necessary to achieve them.
- **LET GO** of vengeance, useless anger, and righteousness that hurts you and doesn't work.

Non-Judgmental



Being “Non-Judgmental” is about not assigning a value to yourself or others such as being good, bad, terrible, or unlovable. Making judgments or assigning value to yourself or others causes unnecessary distress and discomfort.

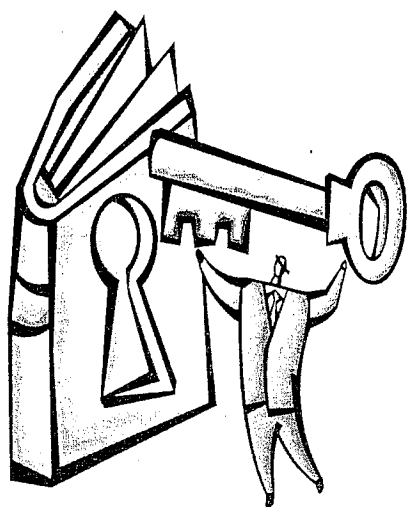
Behavior can be judged as good or bad, right or wrong, useful or useless, but it is unnecessary and ineffective to judge the person engaging in the behavior. Behavior can generate natural and logical consequences that are both good and bad. Instead of making judgments, describe what is going on, how you feel about it, and how you want to respond to it, without assigning value to yourself or others. Examples:

“I am very unhappy that this happened to me,” instead of “I am a complete idiot because this happened to me.”

“That person disrespected me and that is not OK with me,” instead of “That person is a complete jerk.”

Positive judgments are just as problematic as negative judgments. If you judge positively, you are at risk of also making negative judgments. The best advice is to skip the judgment, describe what is going on and identify your feelings. Once you have done this you can be as effective as possible in the relationship or situation.

Non-Judgmental



Being “Non-Judgmental” is about not assigning a value to yourself or others. Using judgments can be isolating and problematic. The judgments people might make of themselves may confirm their beliefs that they are failures, terrible, or unlovable. This can make engaging in problematic, harmful behaviors justified.

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Instead of putting a value on yourself or others, you can describe what is going on. Remember descriptions can include opinions about whether or not you like something or disagree with it. Being “Non-Judgmental” doesn’t mean that everything is pleasant and there are no problems. Non-judgmental just means that you don’t have to put a label on yourself or others as being good or bad.

Let’s try an exercise of identifying judgments and replacing them with a description. Below are some examples.

Judgment: “I am a terrible parent.”

Description: “I don’t have all the answers about how to parent.”

Judgment: “I am a complete failure, I deserve to be unhappy.”

Descriptions: “Sometimes I make mistakes.”

Judgment: “My boss is a complete idiot.”

Description: “My boss doesn’t understand how hard I am working.”

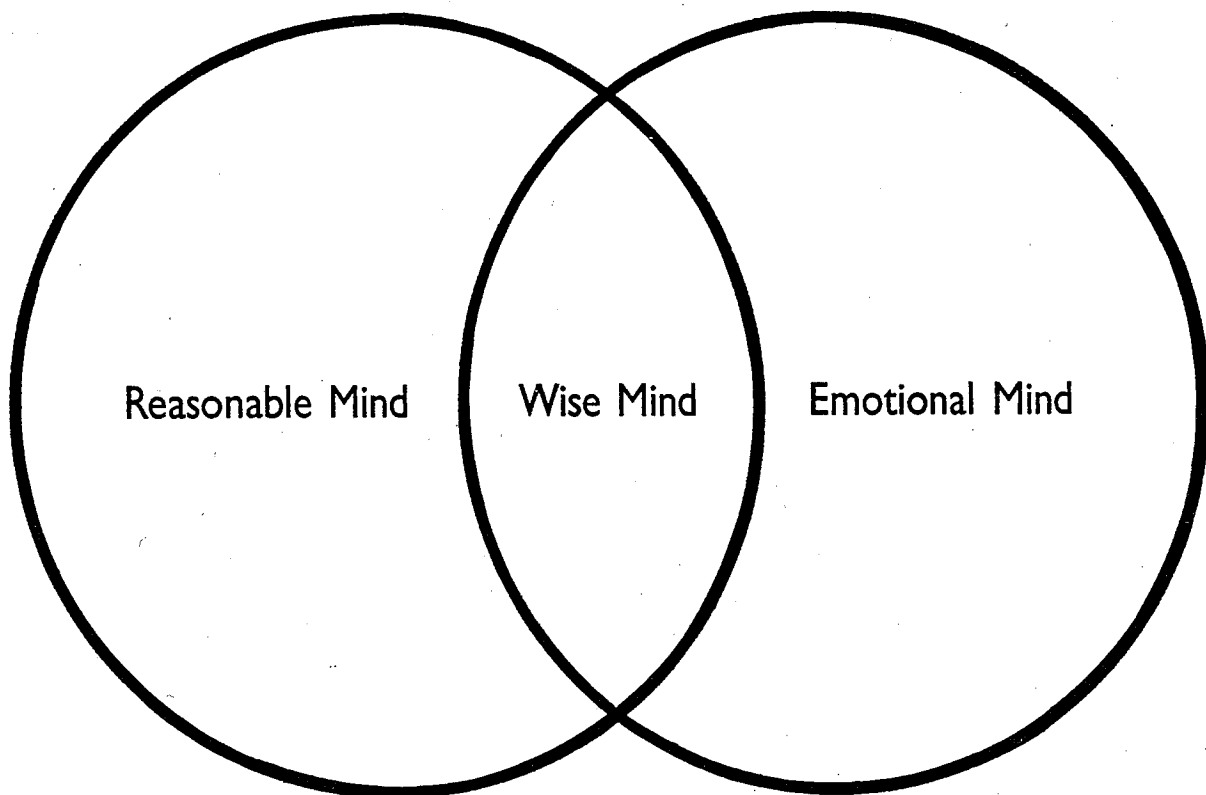
Judgment: “My family is the worst ever.”

Description: “My family does things that hurt me and I’m mad about it.”

MINDFULNESS HANDOUT I

Taking Hold of Your Mind:

States of Mind



MINDFULNESS

STATES OF MIND



WISE MIND
Knows and Experiences truth
Quiet/Peaceful/Centered
Similar to Intuition
Integration of all ways of knowing something
Integration of logic and emotion – deep feeling
EVERYONE has it although NO ONE uses it
ALL the time



REASONABLE MIND

Rational
Logical
The part of the mind that plans
And evaluates

EMOTION MIND

Emotions influence thinking and
behavior
Passion for causes and beliefs
Intensity of feelings

MINDFULNESS SKILLS

WHAT SKILLS:

OBSERVE
DESCRIBE
PARTICIPATE

HOW SKILLS:

NON-JUDGMENTALLY
ONE AT A TIME
EFFECTIVELY

Wise Mind



This skill is about balancing thinking and feeling. DBT believes that we are more effective in our lives when we have both thinking and feeling in our experience.

An example of this is Captain Kirk from the original Star Trek series. Captain Kirk is typically in a state of "Wise Mind." Spock, the Vulcan, represents logic and thinking (our rational mind). McCoy, the doctor, represents feelings and passion (our emotional mind). Kirk takes information from both the logical and feeling perspective to act in his and others' best interest.

Another example is from Harry Potter. Hermione is very thoughtful and Ron is emotional. Harry uses his best friends to make sense of what is happening and decide how he should respond.

Successes with being in "Wise Mind," even when I didn't know it:

Strategies for increasing thinking when out of balance with too much emotion or feelings:

Strategies for increasing positive emotions when out of balance with too much thinking:

Mindfulness Skills

Wise Mind



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Benefits of being almost entirely in emotional mind:

Costs of being almost entirely in emotional mind:

Benefits of being almost entirely in rational mind:

Costs of being almost entirely in rational mind:

Benefits of being in "Wise Mind":

Costs of being in "Wise Mind":

Mindful Eating

“Mindful Eating” is about being fully present in the experience of eating. It is just eating. Noticing all 5 of your senses while eating. It is about fully appreciating the experience of eating. It is also about being non-judgmental with yourself before, during, and after eating.

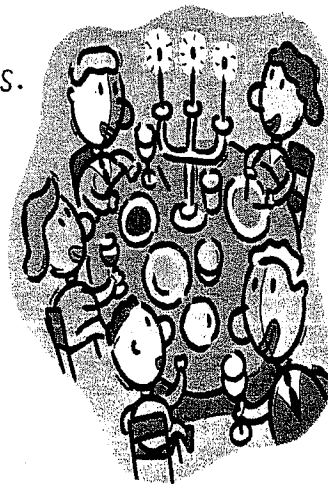
1. Just eat, don't do anything else.
2. Notice what the food looks like.
3. Notice the scents or smells of the food.
4. Notice what it feels like in your hand or with a utensil.
5. Notice the weight, texture, and other sensations of the food in your mouth.
6. Notice salivation, taste, and any smells.
7. Chew each bite really well: 10, 15, or 20 chews.
8. Continue to eat the rest of your food by paying attention to all these experiences and sensations.
9. Notice any feelings of food in your stomach.
10. Notice feeling full and satiated.

Practice this exercise with something small that you typically eat in handfuls: dried fruit, popcorn, nuts, chocolate, or chips.

Practice one mindful meal a week for 1 month.

Then practice 3 mindful meals a week for another month.

Ultimately, it may be useful to practice 1 mindful meal a day.



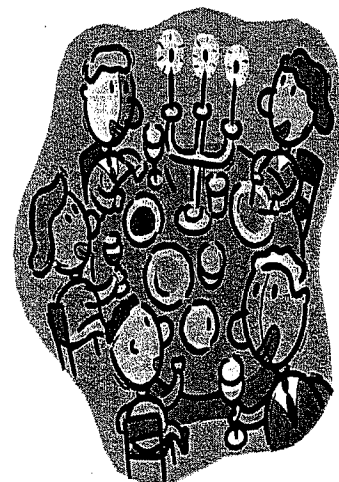
Mindful Eating

Things I noticed when I was "Mindfully Eating":

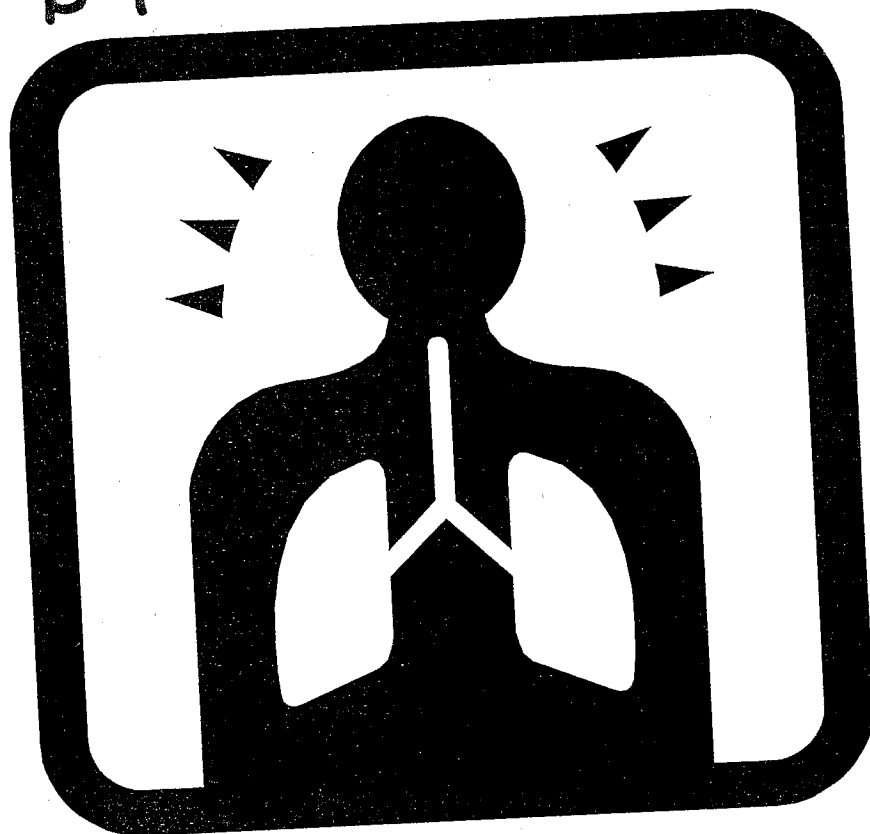
Things that I was surprised by or didn't expect when eating mindfully:

"Mindful Eating" will be useful to me by:

Ways that I eat mindfully on regular basis:



Square Breathing

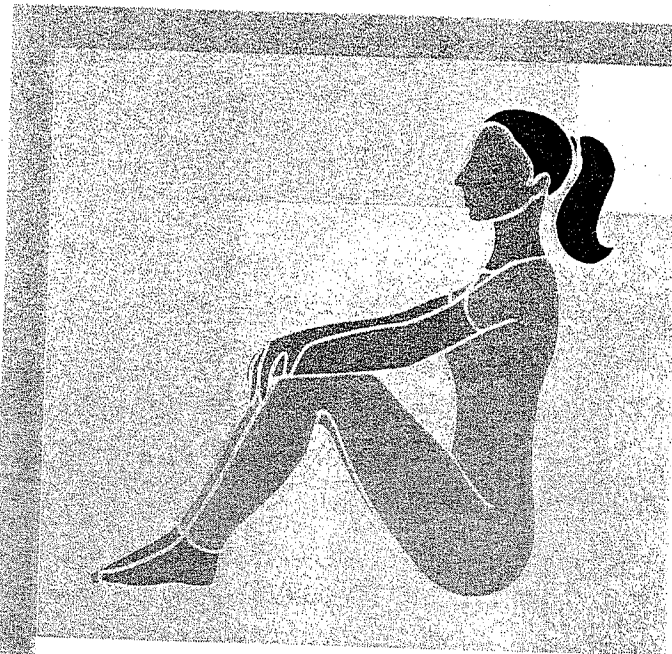


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Do this skill mindfully, with full awareness, focusing only on your breathing. If you notice your mind wandering, just notice and bring yourself back to your breathing. By taking these long, slow, deep breaths, you will get more air into your lungs which will get more air to your muscles which will reduce tension and more air to your brain so you can think a little bit more clearly.

1. Breathe in while counting to 4.
2. Hold your breath while counting to 4.
3. Exhale while counting to 4.
4. Repeat 4 times.

Try "Square Breathing" at least 4 times a day.
More often if it is useful.



Body Scan

Let's take a few minutes to get grounded. That means understanding what is going on in the inside and around us in our environment.

First, go inside. Notice any pain, tension, or discomfort. Do not do anything about it, just make space for it. Second, notice any sensations of feeling at ease, relaxed, or comfortable. Do not try to create it, just make space for even the smallest amount. Third, notice any neutral sensations. The neutral sensations are the things you do not normally notice because they are neutral. Feel all the different sensations on the inside for a few moments.

Now turn your attention to the outside. Notice your feet on the ground. The feeling of being connected to the ground or with the furniture on which you are sitting. Notice your environment with your 5 senses: seeing, hearing, feeling, perhaps smell and taste. Become aware of any people around you. Take a few more moments to be present with yourself on the outside, then one more moment on the inside.

Practice this exercise at least once a day to get grounded in the here and now and act in your own best interest.