

What is Mindfulness Meditation?

Mindfulness Meditation is both a *practice* and a *way of living* that helps us—and those around us—to:

1. Decrease suffering
2. Increase happiness

Why We Suffer:

1. *Habitual thinking and reacting*: to what other people say or do, to external events, to physical pain, to loss, to our own streams of thinking, to our own mistakes, and so forth
2. *Entrenched, even unconscious, beliefs*: that current conditions are permanent; that other people in general are either inferior or superior to us (and, therefore, exist to us as problems to confront or avoid)

Mindfulness Meditation involves *deliberate efforts* to become *more fully present to what's happening right now*, through:

1. *Pausing* (before we have a negative reaction to what's going on around us or within us)
2. *Reflecting* (on what's happening within our *bodies, emotions, and perceptions/assumptions*)

Pausing – calming practices for whenever we feel “triggered,” or during our “down time”:

- *Focusing on our breathing*, by silently reciting “in, out,” or silently counting each in-breath and out-breath
- *Talking a walk* (without technology!), paying close attention to what we're seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, and smelling
- *Eating mindfully*, by taking our time with each bite and not multi-tasking
- Sitting comfortably or lying on our back on the carpet, and *directing our attention to each part of our body* in order to notice where it might be tense—and then focusing on our breathing while we tenderly observe this tension
- Silently reciting what's called *the loving-kindness mantra*: “May I be safe and protected from inner and outer harm.”

Reflecting – investing time, at our earliest opportunity, to more deeply consider the habitual thinking and beliefs that might be the sources of our:

- *Bodily sensations* (tension, stomach ache, headache, back ache, shortness of breath, racing heartbeat, dry throat, perspiration, etc.)
- *Emotional distress* (anger, fear, anxiety, sadness, shame, grief, disappointment, etc.)
- *Negative perceptions or assumptions* (“no one likes me, no one appreciates me, I'm going to get fired,” etc.)

Proven Outcomes of Mindfulness Meditation (just Google it!):

- Reduced stress
- Increased focus
- Increased productivity
- Healthier relationships
- Increased happiness and inner peace