

The Importance of Mindfulness and How It Can Help

Life isn't meant to be experienced in the past or the future. It is meant to be experienced and enjoyed in the present moment. Mindfulness is important because it teaches people how to do just that – live in the present moment. Research shows that mindfulness can help with the following:

- Stress reduction
- Increases focus
- Decreases anxiety
- Increases immune functioning
- Enhances mental health
- Improves relationships
- More cognitive flexibility
- Allows for compassion towards self and others
- Increases emotional regulation and self-control

When it comes to the way a person thinks and feels, being Mindful of their emotions, can help them cultivate a more positive mindset and work towards being a 'better' or 'happier' person. The more a person practices Mindfulness, the more it will help them let go of living in the space of "what should have been" and live for what is happening in the here and now.

This practice can be especially helpful for those in the middle and later years of life who may be facing life challenges such as body aches, the loss of loved ones, the decline of their physical and mental health, the loss of their identity due to retirement and even the "empty nest syndrome." Mindfulness can also help deal with unexpected financial burdens and the fear of possible health concerns.

Mindfulness is helpful because it helps manage any uncomfortable emotions, people may face due to life events, and it teaches them how to accept what's beyond their control and let go. Mindfulness doesn't mean they will never experience anger, anxiety, disappointment, depression, frustration, or grief and loss. It does mean *pausing* before reacting to stressful situations and offers an opportunity to see people, places, things, and events from a place of openness, understanding, empathy, kindness, and compassion.

In the stressful chaos of modern life, hard times, and uncertainty, can Mindfulness help? Yes – it can. It takes time, practice, patience, and self-kindness, but it is possible.