

# CORE SKILLS OF MINDFULNESS

## LIVING MINDFULLY

To be mindful is to observe and label thoughts, feelings and sensations in the body in an objective manner. To live mindfully is to live in the moment and reawaken oneself to the present, rather than dwelling on the past or anticipating the future.

It is a state of active and open attention to the present. By practicing three core skills of mindfulness, over time you can develop a buffer between whatever stimulus you might have and your reaction to it.

### THREE CORE SKILLS

- Focused attention (concentration)
- Open Monitoring (present moment awareness)
- Acceptance (non-judgment)

## FOCUSED ATTENTION

Best described as paying attention "on purpose."

In its basic form, Focused Attention is concentrating on just *one* thing. Concentration is a good place to start your mindfulness exploration and practice. Exercises and meditations can help you learn to shut out the outside world, creating a more calm and centered approach to your thoughts and emotions. Focused Attention is the opposite of multi-tasking, doing one thing with a goal to filter out thoughts and emotions completely and train the mind to stay focused on a singular object, whether it be a long or short period of time.

### STRUGGLING WITH

- *Being Overwhelmed*
- *Racing Thoughts*
- *Difficulty Focusing*
- *High Stress or Anxiety*

### PRACTICE

- *Controlled Breathing*
- *Music Meditations*
- *Mindful Eating*
- *Guided Meditations*

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## OPEN MONITORING

Best described as being in the now, regardless of what that "now" actually is.

In it's basic form, Open Monitoring is letting go and observing whatever comes into your awareness. The key is to be the observer of all experiences, whether internal or external. The stark opposite of Open Monitoring is living in the past or future, which creates an unawareness of life experiences. It can be a very powerful skill to develop, as it puts you in control of your emotional response and reaction to anything that may come your way.

### STRUGGLING WITH

- *Worrying*
- *Ruminating about past events*
- *Over-emphasis on future plans*
- *Experiencing regret*

### PRACTICE

- *Mindful Walking*
- *Holding Space for Others*
- *Arriving Mindfully*
- *Using 5 Senses for Observation*

## ACCEPTANCE

Best described as non-judgement.

In simple terms, it is letting go of the thing we are judging and accepting the reality of what is. With acceptance, you stop believing that there 's a "right" or "wrong" way to think or feel in any given moment. By seeing things as they are, without judging them, you will be able to make peace with them and choose healthy ways of responding.

### STRUGGLING WITH

- *Frustrations with Others*
- *Seeking to Control People*
- *Seeking to Control Situations*
- *Low Self-Confidence*

### PRACTICE

- *Gratitude Meditations*
- *Mindfulness for Anger*
- *Self-compassion Exercises*
- *Urge Management*