

Mindfulness

Understanding Mindfulness

- Awareness of the present moment
- Being fully engaged in the present
- Paying attention
- Focusing without judgment
- Shutting off the mind to all else

Mindlessness

- Living in the past and future
- Continuous judging and inner talking
- Moving constantly from one thought to another

Hadith

Surely the friends of Allah when they are silent their silence is thoughtful, when they look their sight is insightful, when they speak their talk is wisdom, and when they walk their walking among people is blessed.

Holy Prophet (s) – al-Kafi, 2/237

Tawhid and the Mind

The true acceptance of One God creates a perspective of life that is mindful of the connection between God and the self. Every action and thought is referred to and connected with God. This consciousness is energized by following a program of activities sent as guidance by God.

Advantages of Mindfulness

- 1) Creates appreciation for life
- 2) Makes a person fully aware and alert.
- 3) Increases well-being and reduces stress.
- 4) Brings awareness of thought patterns and habits
- 5) Allows for healthier ways to respond to life's challenges

Stimulus → Reaction

Stimulus → Mindfulness → Response

The Inner state of a believer

- Submission to God
- Khushu; Awe of God
- Taqwa; God consciousness
- Gratitude
- Hope/Fear

Steps to becoming Mindful

- 1) **Observe your mind** - Watch your thoughts like an outside observer. What do you notice? How often do these thoughts repeat themselves?
- 2) **Control your thoughts** - When a negative thought comes up, counter it with a positive thought.
- 3) **Live in the now** - Most people live in the past or the future. By being conscious and aware of the present, you cleanse your mind of a lot of negativity.
- 4) **Fill your mind with positive messages** - The mind picks up negative messages from the environment. It could be people, media, books . . . etc. Inspire your mind through constant exposure to positive messages.

Quotes From: *Mindfulness in plain English*, Bhante Gunaratana

There is a difference between being aware of a thought and thinking a thought. The difference is very subtle. It is primarily a matter of feeling or texture. A thought you are simply aware of with bare attention feels light in texture; there is a sense of distance between the thought and the awareness viewing it. It arises lightly like a bubble and it passes away without necessarily giving rise to the next thought in that chain.

Normal conscious thought is much heavier in texture. It is ponderous, commanding, and compulsive. It sucks you in and grabs control of consciousness. By its very nature it is obsessional, and it leads straight to the next thought in the chain, with apparently no gap between them . . .

‘Discipline’ is a difficult word for most of us. It conjures up images of somebody standing over you with a stick, telling you that you’re wrong. But self-discipline is different. It’s the skill of seeing through the hollow shouting of your own impulses and piercing their secret. They have no power over you. It’s all a show, a deception. Your urges scream and bluster at you; they cajole; they coax; they threaten; but they really carry no stick at all. You give in out of habit. You give in because you never really bother to look beyond the threat. It is all empty back there. There is only one way to learn this lesson, though. The words on this page won’t do it. But look within and watch the stuff coming up – restlessness, anxiety, impatience, pain – just watch it come up and don’t get involved. Much to your surprise, it will simply go away. It rises, it passes away. As simple as that. There is another word for self-discipline. It is patience.