



June 2023

Mindfulness

This word captures so many experiences and practices it can be challenging to understand (and write about). Mindfulness is best understood experientially. Kind of like trying to explain what a pineapple taste like (just take a bit!). So, let's start with a story. For those whose mind craves definitions and analysis worry not, they will come. Practice patience (it's an aspect of mindfulness).

Off in a forest Grandfather sits crossed legged,
eyes closed, breathing evenly.

His granddaughter bounces up to him and begins to
chat:

Grandpa! What are we doing today?

Did you hear that bird?

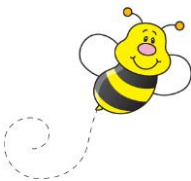
I'm having a memory of hearing her before, now
I'm imagining she's singing for me!

Grandpa continued breathing.

Granddaughter continued chatting. Spilling out her
thoughts, she stopped, and asked
Grandpa, what are you doing?

"Practicing not doing."

huh? What do you call that?



"Mindfulness"

Mind-full-ness? Yeah I have that, that's why I
talk so much.

Hey, if you're mind's full of ness,
why aren't you talking to get rid of it?

Some talk, other's listen. Would you like to join me?

Ok, how do I do or not do mindfulness? What's this
first thing to know?

It's best if you shift your focus from knowing to
observing.

Wander with me into the forest. See, smell, and
listen. The forest will offer what you need.

Granddaughter wandered off into the forest. She
noticed many sights and smells. Fresh spring leaves,
bright flowers offering nectar. Her senses guided
her to a strawberry patch where she met her Uncle.

A bear of a man, who had the curious habit of
sharing any thought that passed through his head
out loud:

Walking, ground, soft, smell sweet, familiar, gnome,
berries, hunger, move towards

Hi Uncle! I have a question

"Smelling, berries, hungry"

Tongue slurp, sweet, juice, seeds, down throat, belly
filling, shifting to listen now.

Finally! Grandpa said the forest would help me
understand mind-full-ness, but all the forest offered
is pretty flowers, sweet smells, gentle sounds, and
softness on my feet.

My mind doesn't feel full at all. If anything it's
empty!

When you wandered in the forest, all you noticed was
forest.

Like you were being with it instead of thinking about
it.

So, I had mindfulness, then lost it when I started
thinking about?

Seems like.

Well that's confusing!

But was it confusing earlier??



No, I don't remember feeling confused. Though now that I'm thinking about it I feel confused.

Confused when you think about it, not when you're being with it?

I guess

Good guess...tummy, hunger, craving, berries...

Ok, let's go together, maybe we'll find mindfulness again if we don't try so hard



Mindfulness is a particular way of paying attention with curiosity and acceptance to what arises in the present moment. How and what we pay attention to changes our state of mind.

Many of us pay attention with a doing state of mind, a goal focused state of mind where we attempt to change or make something happening. In a mindfulness state of mind, we pay attention softly, observing, receiving without 'doing' (analyzing, judging). Granddaughter does this when she observes the bird, or when her uncle smells strawberries.

Mindfulness practices involves intentional focus. Usually inward, outward, or the fluctuating process between. Grandfather is focused mostly inward on his breath; granddaughter is more focused outward, on her senses; while her uncle goes in between his senses (smelling) and inner experience (his belly). When practicing mindfulness we practice observing curiously (children are great at this) without judgment.

We notice thoughts as thoughts (not facts or truths) and become aware of how our perception is greatly influenced my memory. In mindfulness, there is an acceptance of what is happening as it is now.

Notice, uncle does not suffer. He's hungry, he eats. He does not ruminate on the past, nor worry about the future. Which are some of the most common sources of our modern day suffering.



If you would like to book an appointment with a counsellor simply phone one of the numbers listed.

One of our administrative assistants will be pleased to help you arrange your appointment.



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