

# **MINDFULNESS**

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**Mindfulness**

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**“A thought is just a thought.**

**“Don’t take it too seriously.”**

## CHAPTER ONE

### Definition of Mindfulness

We, humans, usually go into thought. And like a bird that jumps from one branch to another, we jump from one thought to another. To the extent that we drown in the forest of our thoughts and lose our connection with the reality around us. Each of these thoughts creates in us the emotions of sadness, anger, and fear, and we not only become overwhelmed by our thoughts, but we also become slaves to the emotions caused by those thoughts.

Dara is a 30 year old man. He is attractive in appearance and has beautiful eyes. But it was as if those beautiful eyes were not created to see reality. If you looked into his eyes, it seemed that instead of staring at the external reality, they were staring at their inner thoughts. Whenever Dara was in that state of mind, those around him become anxious, because it was in those circumstances that Dara's anger suddenly erupted and his actions resulting from his negative judgments and anger impacted on others.

Dara is an example of a person who is not aware of the behavior of the mind and is drowning in his thoughts and loses his connection with reality, resulting in suffering. Mindfulness is a method that can take people like Dara out of the depths of their thoughts and bring them back to reality with simple techniques. Dara eventually gets to the point where he agrees to seek help from a psychological counselor.

**Dara:** Doctor, I need a nerve pill, because I am not able to battle with my thoughts.

**Therapist:** Some drugs are not bad, but I know people who, after twenty years of taking medicine, still cannot not resist their thoughts. In addition to its properties, each drug has its disadvantages. But there is a simple technique called Mindfulness that takes only twenty seconds to help you and it has no side effects. Would you like to get acquainted with it?

**Dara:** What is that technique?

**Therapist:** This technique is introduced with these four words:

- **1- Stand still.**
- **2- Breathe.**
- **3- Observe.**
- **4- Return to your normal life.**

**Stand still**, in the sense that you pause for a moment whatever you are thinking and doing.

**Breathe**, in the sense of taking a deep breath. The reason is that our breathing is the first to be affected by anxiety. That is why we sigh when we are sad or mourning. We forget to breathe properly when we are subjected to severe anxiety. The deep inhalation sends more oxygen to the brain and enhances the brain's ability to properly analyze thoughts and events.

**Observe**, that is, direct your senses to the reality external to the thoughts in your mind. Look at a physical object outside for ten seconds.

**Return to your normal life**, to what you did before, or what you want to do.

And do this for twenty seconds to return to reality from the thoughts in which you were drowning.

**Dara:** What is the function of this exercise?

**Therapist:** When we are immersed in our thoughts, we remain like a person whose head is under water, and if our head stays under water for a long time, we die. Likewise, if we dwell on our thoughts for a long time, we become delusional, or depressed, or anxious. This technique helps us to get our minds out of the mostly negative endless thoughts and to connect with reality. This twenty-second attention outside the thoughts in your mind stops you from being overwhelmed by the constant and negative flow of thoughts.



At first you do this according to the schedule every hour, but later you learn that whenever you have a lot of negative thoughts, instead of exploring those thoughts, before you drown, with twenty seconds of mindfulness, you can pull yourself out from the depths of your thoughts to the level of reality and save yourself.

**Dara:** What should I look at?

**Therapist:** Look at anything in front of you - a fruit, a flower, a door, the window, someone next to you.

**Dara:** When I am drowning in my thoughts, I do not see or hear anyone at all.

**Therapist:** There are two options. One is drowning in thoughts, the penalty of which is paranoia, sadness, fear or anger. The second is drowning in reality or in what we do, the reward of which is joy and happiness. In both options you are drowning, but where is one and where is the other?

We humans have the ability to split into two so that our body is somewhere and our mind is somewhere else (in the past, or in the future). Mindfulness helps to bring the mind to where our body is. It means being here, in the present, in reality. Focusing on what is happening now, on what we are doing even if it is dishwashing or brushing.

Learning from texts or just making a decision to change the habit of leading an existence where our body and mind are split into two entities functioning separate from each other will not help. The integration of body and mind requires practice. This exercise 'Twenty seconds of Mindfulness' should be done repeatedly for changes to appear in our habit.

Only being aware that our mind and body are divided, and that our mind constantly wanders in the past and the future instead of in the present and here, does not change anything. We need to change this in action, with practice and technique.

### **Does Mindfulness need technique?**

A woman asks the Indian mystic Osho: Is it possible to meditate without technique?

**Osho:** Your question is the answer. It should be clear that meditation itself does not require any technique. Meditation is a simple concept. It is alertness. It is awareness. Do alertness and awareness require technique?

But man has created obstacles to this awareness for centuries. Now we need to remove these obstacles along the way. The role of techniques is to lay the groundwork, to smoothing the way. To help us in the path of transition. Techniques are not meditation in themselves. So, if you start with technique, you lose the purpose of meditation.

Krishnamurti has always insisted that no technique is needed for meditation. And the end result was that he deprived millions of people of the ability to meditate. He forgot to tell us what to do with the obstacles. Krishnamurti mentally convinced his listeners that technique was not necessary for meditation. I met some of his honest followers and said, I totally agree that technique is not needed for meditation. But have people been able to successfully meditate without employing techniques to remove the obstacles?

What Krishnamurti is saying is fundamentally true. But he speaks only of the positive aspects of his meditation experience. But this point also has a negative side. And for this negative aspect, all kinds of techniques are needed. Otherwise, the groundwork will not be well provided. Because if we do not get rid of the weeds from the ground, beautiful roses and other beautiful flowers will not grow.

You ask if it is possible to meditate without any technique? Not only is it possible, it's the only possibility. No technique is required for the meditation itself. But what will you do with the mind? The mind creates a thousand and one problems. Techniques are important and necessary to put the mind on the path of meditation. In such a way that the mind is silent. And almost disappears. Meditation is a natural thing to do. It is something that is hidden inside you, and it tries to find a way to come out and go to the sky, to the sun, to space. But the person's mind is surrounded on all sides and all the doors and windows are closed. Techniques are needed to open the doors and windows, and immediately the whole sky will be available to you. The sky with all its stars and beauties. With all its beautiful sunrises and sunsets. Only the absence of a small window prevents you from

knowing what is going on in the sky. Even a speck of dust or a single eyelash hair in your eyes, causes you to close your eyes, and not see the sky. Techniques are needed to remove the dust or the hair from your eyes. But meditation is in your nature. You have the full potential.

A man named Kohan was dying. Kohan's friends asked him to send them news from the other world if possible and to ask if there was a baseball field in that world. A few days after his death Kohan called from the other world to the house where his friends had gathered. His friends asked: Kohan is it really you? What about that world? Kohan said: Yes, I am in the other world. I have good news and bad news from this world for you. The good news is that there is a baseball field in this world. The bad news is that the baseball field is reserved for all of you to play next Sunday.

There is good news and bad news about meditation. "The good news is that you do not need any meditation techniques, but the bad news is that without these techniques, you will not be able to meditate."

In contrast to Osho, a prominent American therapist Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn (born 1944) who founded Stress Reduction Clinic in USA and has written several books on Mindfulness and its role in the treatment of disease, agrees with Krishnamurti: Meditation is not a technique, but a kind of being. And it depends on whether you live in your mind or you are watching your life every moment.

### **Mindfulness and intelligence**

When a few months old child, looks all around, those who observe him say that he is a smart and intelligent child. Their criterion is that he pays attention to the world outside. In contrast, a child who does not pay attention to the outside world, or is usually crying, they do not consider as intelligent. A person who has open eyes and ears to observe and reduces the wandering of the mind makes better use of his own intelligence potential.

We are all born with a certain percentage of intelligence. Our Intelligence quotient (IQ) does not change much during our lifetime. But we also have Emotional intel-

ligence (EQ) and it can change.

### **What is Emotional intelligence?**

The first is to know what are the feelings of sadness, anger, fear, or peace and joy we experience, and which emotions are in us in the present moment.

Second, we can reduce the speed, intensity, duration, and frequency of our negative emotions, or increase our positive emotions.

Third, to be able to recognize and quantify emotions in others through observation and through indicators.

Fourth, to know how to reduce negative emotions in others with appropriate behavior and increase their positive emotions.

One who is drowning in the sea of thought and is captivated by the emotions arising from those thoughts is not only emotionally conscious, he is captivated by his own emotions. He is not able to overcome them and their emotional effects until he is engrossed in his thoughts. The first step to using emotional intelligence is to activate the five senses and distance yourself from the thought. Any way we distance ourselves from our thoughts and come into contact with reality with our five senses is called mindfulness. Those who practice mindfulness contribute to their emotional alertness.

### **Mindfulness and amygdala<sup>1</sup> reduction**

The amygdala is a small part of our brain that is responsible for emotional memory and the initiation of emotional reactions, especially fear. Brain imaging of hundreds of thousands of people shows that their amygdala has shrunk after eight weeks of mindfulness. This means that we have the power to replace the amygdala with the cortex of the advanced part of our brain, so that we can behave more wisely.

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1. The amygdala is a collection of cells near the base of the brain. There are two, one in each hemisphere or side of the brain. This is where emotions are given meaning, remembered, and attached to associations and responses to them (emotional memories). The amygdala is considered to be part of the brain's limbic system.

**Mindfulness and realism**

People who are constantly immersed in their own thoughts define themselves, those around them, and the situation as delusional. But those who practice mindfulness use their five senses more, and observe reality, and are less delusional.

Instead of trying to recover, they wallow in their sadness and thus, experience more failure.

You do not even have to do any special work for mindfulness. If you have children, pay attention to your children. When cooking food, pay attention to the food you are cooking. When reading books, pay attention to the books you are reading. When eating food, pay attention to the food you are eating.

**Client:** I do some of these things these days, but I get distracted and drown in my thoughts. As a result, I do not enjoy what I do.

**Therapist:** This is natural. Over time, you will become accustomed to thinking long and hard. You need to get out of this situation for a while by practicing mindfulness. And every time the senses gather and you come out of the thought, and you pay attention to the reality, say to yourself, well done! In this case, the brain secretes dopamine which is the hormone of reward, and it gradually becomes the routine of life.

After practicing under the direction of Buddhist teachers, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn realised that mindfulness can be used as one of the medical treatments. “We all know the role of chocolates and sweets, which can lead to diabetes, stroke and heart attack,” he says. But we know that stress in any level of intensity can lead to illness and death. There are people who get angry because of the intensity of stress and have a stroke at the same time. He suggests that in addition to reducing fat, sweets and salt, one should practice mindfulness every day and regularly to reduce the severity of the stresses of modern times.

Kabat Zinn first taught Mindfulness from Buddhism, he established a center called Stress Reduction in the United States, and he taught eight-week programs independent of the Buddhist teachings. His mindfulness technique is a combina-

tion of meditation and yoga as an exercise. His goal is to be aware of the moment and help the patients to cope with stress, pain and illness.

Kabat Zinn says that mindfulness reduces the influx of thoughts and inevitably reduces stress and makes life easier. Mindfulness is, in fact, nothing more than focusing attention. And paying attention does not belong to the East or to the West; it is universal.

Mindfulness is not a technique. It is the way to be. Mindfulness is awakening our senses and paying attention without judgment in the present moment. When we say this is bad, this is good, this is what I like, this is what I do not like, we are judging.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Positioning Mindfulness

About 350 theories in the nascent science of psychology have been proposed from the beginning to date, which, despite their diversity, can be summarized in four approaches and three waves:

#### **The first approach**

The first approach is psychoanalysis, which began with Freud. Psychologists believe that our psychological problems in adulthood are rooted in the first five years of our lives. Beyond that age, the child within us, a creation of nature, loses freedom in the face of parental upbringing and is subjected to the restraint of civilization. Psychoanalysts insist on treatment which involves dialogue to delve into the subconscious concerning the first five years of one's life.

#### **The second approach**

The second approach is behavioral-cognitive. The peak of the behaviorism approach was from the fifties to the eighties. But it officially began with Watson's article in 1913. The definition of psychology as the study of behavior was announced fifty years after Watson's article was published by Skinner. This approach has had three waves so far:

The first wave was the focus on behavioral change, through changing environmental conditions. Pavlov, Watson, and Skinner were among the first to influence this wave of behavioral therapy.

The second wave was the focus on changing cognition to change behavior. Albert Ellis is one of the founders of the second wave with his theory of Rational Emotive Therapy, and Aaron Beck with his theory of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT).

The third wave was the focus on controlling mental health problems through acceptance and body. Steven Hayes with the Acceptance and Commitment theory

(ACT) and Kabat Zin with the theory of Mindfulness, are some of the creators of this third wave in therapeutic behavior.

### **The third approach**

The third approach is humanism. Existential, and semantic tendencies. Frankl, Rollo May, Maslow, Rogers, and Yalom, in their various theories, have proposed a separate path for psychoanalysts and behaviorists to recognize and treat the human psyche.

### **The fourth approach**

The fourth approach, transpersonal psychology, by adding a sense and transcendence to the field of psychology, has shed another light on these psychological sciences. Stanislav Graph is the best known theorist of this approach.

### **Mindfulness**

The theory of mindfulness, or the mind of consciousness, has long existed in Buddhist teachings, but Kabat Zinn has once again considered it as a psychology theory. Mindfulness is now at the forefront of therapies in many countries, especially in third-wave therapies, such as ACT, the fourth trans-personal approach, and other similar ones. Mindfulness is a way that teaches us to look at our thoughts, rather than to look at ourselves, others and the world through the filter of thoughts.

### **Mindfulness is learnable**

In some therapies, such as psychoanalysis, the client speaks and the psychologist diagnoses and guides the problem. In mindfulness, the client learns the method and implements it himself, and mindfulness treatment sessions are spent more on training and practicing this method.



## CHAPTER THREE

### Assumptions and techniques

All psychological theories consist of two parts:

**First:** Assumptions (worldview and anthropology)

**Second:** Techniques

In psychology, if we do not understand the assumptions of a theory which form the philosophical base of that theory, we do not understand the techniques of that theory either. In Iranian culture, we have many psychological philosophies, but we do not have its psychological techniques. As an example of Iranian poetry that contains psychological philosophy, note the following:

Sepehri<sup>2</sup>: “Life is to swim in the pool of now.”

Sohrab introduces the psychological philosophy of living in the present in his poem, but he does not mention the technique of living in the present and is satisfied only with the design of his philosophy.

Some Western psychologists have derived their psychological philosophies from the Orient but have proposed appropriate techniques for it. Like the technique of solving the problem of the mind, through the body.

In Mindfulness theory, both the philosophy and some of the techniques are derived from the East. For example, in the theory of mindfulness, you are taught that philosophically, a thought is only a thought, and if you take your thought seriously or realistically, you become one with your thoughts. If the philosophy of the theory with the arguments the therapist presents is accepted, the next query will be, ‘what technique I can use now’, and the answer will be: ‘I have used this technique with success. Pay attention to one thing with your five senses until you enter the present. Like smelling and touching and seeing an apple and hearing

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2. Sohrab Sepehri was a notable Iranian poet and a painter.

its sound when you crunch it with your teeth and tasting it.

Of course, Western psychologists have also added new techniques to these theories, which we will become familiar with below.

### **Mindfulness philosophy in a nutshell:**

- A thought is just a thought.
- I am not my thought.
- Thought is not the truth.
- Thought is not reality.
- Thought is mostly useless and usually harmful.
- Thought is an escape route to the past and to the future.
- Thought is not a good filter to see reality.
- One should look at thoughts, not look at the world with thoughts.

### **Four Mindfulness Assumptions:**

#### **THE FIRST ASSUMPTION:**

“How to think is more important than what to think. Thinking about something is the content of the thought. How to think is the process of thinking.”

**Example:** Your colleague does not respond to your greetings and you are upset with his treatment. (This is the content of your thoughts.) Everyone will be upset if their colleague does not say hello. But it does matter how much you think about it. This relates to how important this discomfort is in the period which follows. Does the discomfort get the same intensity when you remember it again after half an hour? Do you constantly analyze to find out the cause by asking ‘why did this happen’? Or are you are trying to distract yourself? Do you take your thoughts real and serious, or do you know that you are only currently and temporarily thinking about it, but do not take it seriously?

**Thought measurement technique**

**Exercise:** Close your eyes. For three minutes, make a mark on a piece of paper for each thought that flits through your mind. Then multiply these thoughts by 20 minutes to find out how many thoughts you have in an hour. Multiply the result of your one-hour thoughts by 16 to arrive at the number of thoughts you have in a day when you are awake (an ordinary person has several thousand thoughts a day). If you have four thousand thoughts a day, multiply those four thousand thoughts by 365 days in a year. After calculating the thoughts you have in a year, multiply by the average life expectancy of a human being which is 80 years. The result is about 117 million thoughts. The days when we are depressed or anxious, the number of thoughts we have increase. Do we have that many real and useful thoughts in life? Do we have to believe these 117 million thoughts we have in our lifetime, and create sadness, fear and anger in ourselves as a result of these thoughts?

**Example:**

**Client:** Doctor, some of my thoughts in my life have been right.

**Therapist:** Out of 117 million thoughts, how many of your thoughts were correct? Suppose tens of thousands of your thoughts were correct. Does this mean that the remainder from the 117 millions of your thoughts were correct? If a scientist experiments a lifetime and only a few of his experiments lead to scientific discovery, will all his unsuccessful experiments count as scientific discovery?

In fact, in this way, the therapist discredits the belief in infinite (endless) thoughts.

**Technique of Billboard**

Imagine you are the driver of a car on the freeway and you look past the billboards on the road. Billboards come and go. You do not have to look back to see the billboards. Practice now to have the same encounter with your thoughts.

**Practice:**

Look at your thoughts for three minutes and let your thoughts pass in front of your

eyes like billboards on a suburban road. Do not go back to look at your thoughts.

It is written on one of the boards:

“I cannot do it, that is why I cannot attain anything in life.”

On another board is written:

“My friend looks at me with hatred. I am not lovable.”

On the next board is written:

“Something bad is happening and I am miserable.”

On another board is written:

“I have not done anything worthwhile in my life, neither for myself nor for others. I am worthless.”

Do not take these thoughts seriously, do not take them for granted. Do not unite the thought with yourself. Do not use your thoughts as a filter to look at the world and your life. Just look at these thoughts in your mind very briefly. That is it. Let the thoughts come and go ...

Most people think that all their thoughts are important and take them seriously, and as a result, they become anxious, angry and depressed. Mindfulness reminds us that now that negative thoughts cannot be stopped, let the thoughts come and go.

Do not push them back, do not push them forward. Look at them like street signs and cross them.

#### **THE SECOND ASSUMPTION:**

“How you respond to your thoughts is more important than the thoughts themselves.”

90% of people think of violence. Or they entertain immoral thoughts of sexual

intercourse. But only the ten percent who fulfill those thoughts are violent or aggressive. Or they become obsessed with their thoughts.

**Result:** Do not fulfill your thoughts. Do not get stuck in your thoughts.

Do not consider them important. Just let the thoughts pass through the mind like the clouds which pass through the sky.

### Clouds and sky<sup>3</sup>

My thought is a cloud and my mind is the sky

Blue, it is the roof of my world

Laughter is on my lips in every breath.

A cloud of sorrow passed through the sky

It's cold shadow on my mind

I beat my cloud away

The sun of my laughter is shining.

It struggles in my anxious mind

Suddenly an angry thunderbolt

The bloody sky is squeezing

Dropping its anger on the ground.

I sit a little on my anger

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3. Poem by Mohsen Makhmalbaf

Until the rain passes from my eyes

The sun is again in the blue of the mind

Laughter is on my lips now.

My day is sometimes cloudy, sometimes clear

This is my destiny from the beginning

I cast away the past because it passed

The future was better than I thought.

My thought is a cloud and my mind is the sky

Blue, it is roof of my world

Laughter is on my lips in every breath.

**Technique:**

**Wrong attitude towards thoughts:** I think so / This is my opinion / I believe that ...

**Correct method to deal with thoughts:** I have a thought right now / I have a thought in my mind that says. That is, give temporary credit to your thoughts. Believe me, this is not valid. By saying this (I think), do not equate yourself with your thoughts. Let it be thought that passing through one of the several thousand daily thoughts is important to you, and no more.

**THE THIRD ASSUMPTION:**

“Many of the clients’ problems are due to misrelation to their own inner experiences.”

When something happens to us, it leads us to think, feel, behave, and to react with our body.

1- **Situation:** My colleague did not say hello to me.

2- **Thought:** He insulted me.

3- **Feeling:** I am sad or angry.

4- **Behavior:** I respond to his insult with insult.

5- **Body:** I have heartburn in my stomach.

**Practice:**

Think for two minutes about someone you have a bad relationship with. Examine your thoughts, feelings, behavior, and body.

Now think for two minutes about a person with whom you have a good relationship, and examine how your thoughts, feelings, behavior, and body react.

If the client's relationship with his or her inner experiences is wrong, the following will happen:

**Avoidance:** Escape from the subject. Example: A person who has suffered panic attacks, because he does not want to be aware of the reactions of his body, keeps himself busy with some task. And in fact, it helps to distract. (Correct solution: Do not run away, look at how your body is reacting.)

**Identification:** Because I think bad, I'm bad. That is, uniting oneself with the thoughts.

**Judgment:** Judging oneself and others. The result is an experience of negative emotions. Solution: Do not judge, just look.

**Three models: Dealing with inner experience**

1- **Problem-oriented:** Constantly thinking about solving the problem.

2- **Emotion-oriented:** Constantly in conflict with one's emotions resulting in anger, fear or sadness.

3- **Disconnection-oriented:** Mindfulness. Observe what happens inside you,

but do not get involved.

**Technique: Look at yourself from above like a third person.**

**Example:** I know I am angry. I know I want to shout. But I am just looking at myself from above. I am like a third person.

## THE FOURTH ASSUMPTION

Most of the time we live in a state of sleep and wakefulness. Because we are not focused. Because we do not live in the present.

That is, we are doing something, but we are not focused on what we are doing. We drive on the road, but we think about our own problems. We eat, but we are thinking about what to do the next day. Or we eat but we are watching the news and discussing the day's events.

**Technique:**

**1. The technique of just one job at a time:** At any time do only one job focusing on all five senses. Otherwise, you will not enjoy life. Be in the present moment, fully aware of your five senses.

**Example:**

- When you are at a party, just be at that party.
- When you are in class, just be in class.
- When you are reading a book, just read a book.

With focus, you complete the task faster and with utmost efficiency.

**2. The technique of white room with two doors:** Sit quietly for two minutes, closing your eyes and imagining that your thoughts are coming in through one door and leaving through the other. Let your thoughts go in and out. By repeating this exercise, you learn to keep your mind like a double doored room where every thought that enters, goes out, and does not last.



**3. The technique of observer from above:** Sit quietly for two minutes and imagine that you are sitting on top of the room like an observer and watching your own thoughts, feelings and behavior. By repeating this exercise, you will learn not to confuse your thoughts with yourself, and to observe the feelings, behaviors, and bodily reactions that result from your thoughts from the outside.

**4. The technique of writing on the shores of the beach:** Sit quietly for two minutes and imagine that your thoughts are written on the sands of the beach by your hand, with the waves of the sea washing away the writing. Repeating this technique will teach you that your thoughts too are not permanent and will be washed away with time.

**5. The technique of abdominal breathing:** Sit quietly for a minute and take three deep breaths so that your abdomen inflates and deflates from your breathing. This causes blood to flow to more parts of the brain. Doing this exercise several times a day affects the improvement of the brain's electricity.

**6. The technique of attentive styles:** Our thoughts are formed from the subconscious or from situations and overflow into our minds. We have no control over their presence or absence. But depending on the style of attention, we develop the right practice. There are four types of attention styles:

- First, external and extended attention: for example, when we go to the street or the park and look at everything in general.
- Second, external and focused attention: For example, when we look for an address in the Street and look at a street sign.
- Third, internal and extended attention: For example, when we ask questions in our mind and our thoughts jump from one branch to another. Times when we are immersed in our thoughts for no reason.
- Fourth, internal and focused attention: For example, when we are looking for the answer to a particular question from within our minds and memories.

**Example:**

A depressed person is taken to the seaside or a forest reserve by family or friends. While the people around him are paying close attention and enjoy seeing the new scenes, the depressed person stares at one point and pushes everything else away. He seems to have an outward and focused gaze, while his inward gaze is focused on his misfortunes.

His problem is locking himself in a style of attention and not shifting from one state to another state.

**What factors steal our attention?**

- Reflection
- Worry
- Control (obsession)
- Browsing memories
- Mental pre-occupation (love, hate, problem)

7. The technique of body scan: Sit quietly for five minutes. Do not cross your legs. Put your hands on your knees. Close your eyes. Take three deep breaths. Pay attention to my words. Whatever thoughts came to your mind, do not follow them. Just pay attention to my words and focus on your body parts:

Now think for ten seconds about your toes. Answer for yourself how does this part of my body feel? Tighten your toes for five seconds, then release them gently.

In the same way, every ten seconds think of a part of body as listed below:

The feet / soles of the feet / ankles / legs / knees / thighs / groin / fingers / palms / wrists / hands / elbows / upper arms / shoulders / chin / cheeks / forehead.

Score yourself in terms of the level of your relaxation before and after this exercise with zero indicating total relaxation and 10 indicating maximum tension. What was your score?

Repeat this exercise one more time and score again. Does it change?

Know your body pains. Massage the painful areas. Look at the painful part of the body, and know that if that organ does not calm down, they will be the cause of mental illness in the future.

**8. The technique of five senses:** Pay attention to everything you do. Like eating, brushing, walking, working with all your five senses.

**9. The technique of looking, not focusing:** Osho says: When we focus on something, it is tenuous to distract ourselves. Because one voice, or another, can distract us from that focus again. The right way is to look at everything, not to focus on something in particular. In this case, when our attention is focused on everything by observing, no one and nothing can take away this awareness of our position at the present time.

#### **For whom is Mindfulness ineffective?**

- For a hasty person. Those who have a strong desire for rapid change.
- For people in severe crisis.

**Example:** A person who begins to think about controlling his anxiety just one week before an exam.

- A person who believes that his problems are the fault of others.

**Example:** A woman who says: "My husband brought me to this present state. Now, instead of him changing himself, why do I have to go to a counselor and take a deep breath to make myself feel better"?

**Example:** A man who says: "My wife has blackened my life; she will not let me go about my work and my personal life". Or "she left me, I went with another woman and I was miserable". Now do I have to go to the psychologist again and look at 'billboards'?

#### **Who does Mindfulness treat?**

- Only those who do the exercises.

**An example of a mindfulness counseling method**

**Therapist:** What are your problems?

**Client:** I do not sleep. I think a lot in bed. I am always looking for the cause of my problems.

**Therapist:** What do you do to avoid problems?

**Client:** Sometimes I get distracted during the day, but it is harder in bed.

**Therapist:** Do you think a lot about the future and the past?

**Client:** Yes.

**Therapist:** Are you always focused on what you are doing, I mean, are you really focused on one thing or how often do you usually focus?

**Client:** My attention goes to different places.

**Therapist:** Are you missing something?

**Client:** Sometimes.

**Therapist:** My impression is that you have no control over your mind.

**Client:** What does it mean?

**Therapist:** You see, we have 4 types of attention:

- Internal and extended.
- Internal and focused.
- External and extended.
- External and focused.

It seems that when your attention should be external and focused, it is probably internal and extended. For example, you are cutting something with a knife, instead of focusing on the knife and cutting, your mind wanders a few times, such as the

past and the future, and suddenly you may end up cutting your own hands. Right?

**Client:** Yes.

**Therapist:** Now we are swapping places. What I have taught you, you teach me.

Another example:

**Therapist:** In my opinion, your problem is that you believe your thoughts a lot.

Do you think that everything that comes to your mind is real?

Then, if a contradictory thought comes to you, you still think it is true.

Whereas if thoughts were reality, why do they change?

Why do thoughts change at different times and places?

Now my advice is to memorize these mantras and say to yourself a hundred times a day:

- A thought is just a thought.
- Do not believe your thoughts.
- Do not confuse your thoughts with yourselves.
- What is the benefit of this thought for you now? Except for anxiety and sadness and anger and confusion.
- Thoughts come and go. Let the thoughts come and go. Like the passers-by on the street. Do not try to push them out of your way to get rid of them sooner. Do not invite them into the house of your mind. Just look at your thoughts.
- Do not look at people, yourself and the world through the filter of thoughts. Look at your thoughts instead.
- When you have a thought, do not become one with it.
- Do not believe your thoughts.

- Be a temporary owner of your thoughts.
- Tell yourself that now and only now until further notice I have this thought. That means you do not have the same thought after that.

What we have learned so far is called mindfulness.

**If the client learns mindfulness but does not practice, what is the reason?**

1- Client has an ego: They do not see themselves doing the exercise and make fun: Imagine my problem being solved by taking deep breaths!

2- Therapist did not explain clearly; did not check whether the clients have learned mindfulness or not.

3- Misconceptions about psychotherapy.

**Example:**

**Client:** I paid the fees; it is the job of the therapist to solve my problem

**10. The technique of awareness from negative judgment**

Have you ever wondered why we judge?

1- For planning:

I will go later as a guest so that I do not get caught in their company. This way, they will not bother me.

Whenever our judgment causes us to change something, it is positive in our own interests or morals.

2- To prove your own superiority:

When we question everything, we are trying to elevate ourselves.

3- A feeling of humiliation:

One way is to slander. Some student has stood first in the exam. Another says 'Don't give him all the credit, he got his position using his family's influence'. Here

this person is trying to justify his failure to achieve the first rank.

#### 4- Self-punishment:

Judging yourself badly. Question: Do you, in the presence of a forensic doctor, see a man whose body is full of knife wounds? With every criticism you make of yourself, you stab yourself in the face.

#### 5- Freedom from shame and embarrassment:

Someone finds fault in us and we make it worse ourselves: You are right, I am lazy, I am a coward, I am low in intelligence, I am immoral, I have no memory.

#### 6- Striving for perfectionism:

You criticize yourself to motivate yourself to move ahead.

**Therapist:** Only one model of judgment is correct, to find a solution. The rest only cause illness.

**Example:** Traffic is bad. This results in grumbling. People stuck in the traffic don't behave morally. There would be anxiety and frustration.

**Client:** When I get upset, if I complain or I judge, I feel a little better.

**Therapist:** How many years have you used the method of grumbling, nagging, criticizing, judging when you are in turmoil? What good did you see from these works? Now, sometimes, use the method of not looking and judging, or take deep breaths.

**Client:** Is it enough to be aware that judgment is bad?

**Therapist:** No, it definitely needs practice.

**Client:** Does our bad judgment hurt others more, or ourselves?

**Therapist:** More to ourselves. There is a causal relationship between our judgments and our present situation. With each judgment, our nerves get worse.

**Practice:**

Think carefully for three minutes and recall the judgments you have made since morning. What was the reason for the judgments you made?



## Meditation

Close your eyes. Put your hands on your feet in a sitting position with your legs crossed. Take three deep breaths and imagine what I'm saying.

- Negative thoughts, once a heavy burden on our minds.
- They cause stress in our minds and bodies.
- It is important to recognize these negative thoughts and let them go.
- Put yourself in a comfortable position.
- Keep your eyes closed.
- Put one hand on your heart.
- Breathe into your heart.
- Imagine that you take light, love and peace to your heart with this breath. And you get out of stress and muscle cramps with exhalation.
- This is a relaxing breath.
- Your body is warming, from love, peace and light. Your focus is on the soul.
- Be completely in the moment.
- You are now fully experiencing yourself.
- Pay attention to the sounds around you and the ground beneath your body.
- Now put your hands next to your body. Or on your feet.
- With every breath you take, take the love you want from the world around you.
- Feel that this energy is growing and filling your whole body with love.

- With each exhalation, spread that love around yourself.
- Open your heart to calm emotions.
- When you let go of resistance, you can experience inner peace.
- Look at everything that goes through your mind without judgment.
- Now scan your body.
- From the tip of your finger, slowly come up to the top of your head.
- Relax wherever your body is in pain or cramps.
- Wherever the energy is locked in, focus on it and send your warm breath to that part to soften it.
- This heat of love and light is melting and removing tensions from your body.
- And it helps to be completely relaxed. It helps the energy to pass completely through your body.
- Now you feel soft. Release your body cramps.
- Take the energy of love and peace to every part of your body.

Now imagine you are standing on a beautiful white marble staircase.

Put your hand on the soft, cold railing next to the stairs, which goes up to ten steps down.

These are the steps that take you deeper into relaxation.

With every number I count, you go down one step.

10. You feel that the stresses are melting.

9. You feel that you have fulfilled all the responsibilities that have been on your shoulders so far. And now you are just focusing on yourself. Leave the semi-fin-

ished work as well.

8. Let your body and mind be completely calm.
  7. The relaxation is getting deeper.
  6. You promise yourself to change your life towards peace and happiness.
  5. As you go down, there is more light. A light is coming at you from one side at a time.
  4. You get one step closer to the light and you become more relaxed.
  3. Now you are near the staircase. Near the light that is shining on you.
  2. You are completely calm.
  1. You reach the foot of the stairs. To a position of complete relaxation.
- From behind the front door, light comes towards you.
  - But a lid is closed and does not let full light into you.
  - You feel that if the door opens and gives you full light, you will get what you want.
  - You know, in order for this door to open, you have to let go of one thing.
  - Those things are locking this door.
  - One of those locks is the negative weaving you have had so far.
  - No need to name your negative emotions
  - Just let it go.
  - Leave them.
  - Let go of negative energies.

- Leave them.
- Do not hold them.
- Do not push them
- Leave them.
- They are going to be gone.
- They hang in the air like feathers and are blowing in the wind.
- Fill the empty space of negative thoughts with positive thoughts.
- Limitations in your mind prevent you from progressing.
- Leave them alone.
- Give up all expectations of yourself.
- Let go of all the expectations that others have of you.
- Let go of wanting to please others.
- Let go of what others are saying about you.
- Let go of comparing yourself to others.
- Let go of comparing yourself to your own past.
- Let go of your jealousy.
- Let go if you always want to speak correctly.
- Let go if you always want to do the right thing.
- Let go if you want to be perfect.
- Let go of your hatred.
- Let go of your pity

- Let go of your hate and excuses
- Leave your apologies.
- Leave your judgments.
- Let go of the thought that I am not perfect and still leave me imperfect.
- Let go of the thought of insecurity.
- Leave everyone.
- Let go and open the front door.
- They are going to be gone.
- Let go of future worries.
- Let them all go.
- Let go of the past to move forward.
- Let go of your fears. Let the future make the fears of the past.
- Give up everything that does not help you at all.
- Now the minds are empty.
- Do not be afraid that minds are empty.
- You just threw away the rubbish.
- Now fill your minds with good remembrances.
- Listen to this mantra and repeat it with your heart.
- You are enough.
- You are perfect. You are enough.
- Adequacy means peace in your body.

- Adequacy means accepting yourself.
- Let sufficiency enter the belief system.
- Let the feeling of being be deep in you.
- You are enough.
- Let this belief go in the memory of the mind.
- In the memory of your body muscles.
- Give the world what you want the world to give you.
- The world will return it to you.
- Now you put your hand on the door handle.
- You open the door and die in the light.
- All your inner strength is revealed.
- This inner power fills the space around you. Now you feel the power you have coming out of your whole body, and your mind, with all its positive aspects.
- Fill your whole body and heart with this power.
- In this light you see your wholeness.
- You have a bench in front of you.
- You can sit there and think of all the talents.
- Let your mind open to new ways and possibilities.
- Let your mind be open to new and positive changes and situations.
- Choose what you know, what you want and what is important to you.
- You know it takes a while for changes to take root in your body.
- You know you are exactly where you need to be right now.

- Commit to yourself the valuable things that are good for you, the things that are just easier,
- Or you got used to it, you preferred it.
- Repeat with me within yourself.
  - o I value love, peace, happiness and success.
  - o I have confidence in myself.
  - o I try to move towards the values of my life.
  - o I believe in myself and my abilities.
  - o Feel enough, even more.
  - o You are enough, even more.
- Repeat with me.
  - o From now on, I am all myself and not just a part of myself.
  - o I build my future.
  - o I leave the past and live in the present.
  - o I am enough to live in the present.
  - o I do not have to wait until I am full and complete in the future.
- It is as if you see yourself from the outside.
- Now get up from the bench.
- Go to the door.
- Go through the door.
- Go to the stairs.

With every number I count, you go up one step.

1. You are coming out of the meditation situation and coming back to life.
2. You focus on the present and listen to the sounds around you.
3. You feel calm and motivated.
4. Your mind is clean and trustworthy.
5. You feel at peace with yourself and others and the world.
6. You are the friend of all, you are not the enemy of anyone.
7. You have chosen to live by your values.
8. Believe in yourself.
9. Ready to open your eyes and start living with values.
10. Open your eyes completely. Now you are awake and self-aware.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### Mindfulness is a kind of existence

I dedicate the last chapter to a summary of Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn's workshop in Norway. Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn says:

“Just a few seconds of looking at your mind is enough to realize that your mind is constantly judging. Your mind says I like this experience. I did not like that experience. I like someone and I do not like someone. Mindfulness does not prevent you from judging. But looking at your mind can help you to not believe in those judgments. If you do not believe the propaganda of your brain, a situation will be created in which you behave more wisely with other people and with your thoughts, feelings, behavior and body.

Mindfulness is not a technique; it is a way. The way is to be awake. The way is to have a wise relationship. In mindfulness, it is not a matter of doing anything special. It is a matter of being. Thinking and judging are a big part of our behavior. Judging and seeing things in black and white. Mindfulness is the gray of seeing everything. Mindfulness frees us from a small mind addicted to thought and judgment.

Now sit down for a moment. Choose a topic to focus on. Like your breath. Or your body. You do not have to do anything special. Just be aware of the breath that your body takes. You do not even have to close your eyes. Can you feel your breathing?

Do not judge your breathing either. Do not say that I have to breathe better from now on. The body itself knows how to breathe. Even if you say that my breath is loose and tasteless. If your ability to breath were in your hands, you would have died many years ago.

Even if you believe that your breath is very slack and weak, if the ability to breathe were in your control, you would have died years ago.

Stay in this position. In this awakening and awareness your body is breathing to survive without you playing a role. And this is like a miracle in every moment.

Knowing and awareness does not mean thinking, breathing. It is to feel it.

Our brains are addicted to drugs of thought and judgment. But after mindfulness, if it lasts long, like twenty minutes to an hour, the mind enters a new state that you have may not have experienced before. When you become aware of this addiction, you can regulate it. You can slip on the edge. You can dance with your brain. In the experience of mindfulness now, did you experience awareness on the awareness of breathing? In this experience you were only aware, without judgment. When we focus on breathing, it has nothing to do with breathing, it has to do with consciousness. For example, if you pay attention to what you hear. To the sounds you hear from nature. It may be very attractive. But in fact, you also hear the sound of silence.

Just listen to what you hear. Do not judge, do not name it.

Another interesting topic is young children, up to three or four years old. Look at these children. This look itself is mindfulness.

Mindfulness can occur with any of the five senses in everyday life. Seeing. By hearing. By smelling. By touching. By tasting. You can even reach awareness without choosing a specific topic to focus on. You can just sit without a plan and let whatever is happening to you come and go. From the image, from the sound, from the smell, without any judgment.

Do not name anything. Do not push back any thought, do not push any thought forward. And everything took your senses with it to a place and time other than now and here, calmly return to now and here. That you are sitting here, without judgment. When you return to the here and now, return kind and loving.

Just as exercise strengthens muscles, mindfulness reinforces our mind's attention to being here and now without judgment. It is a kind of intelligence that monitors and regulates stress, pain, illness, old age and everything in us. And we can improve everything moment by moment. Science shows that mindfulness really changes our vital situation. Even our heart, or our spirituality. Name whatever you want. Nothing can give you such a gift. Neither wealth, nor fame, nor power, nor relationships with others, give you such a gift in life. This gift will make you love yourself.

Don't tell yourself, now I have done all my work for life and all I have left is to sit and meditate! This is the most important thing you can do to connect with yourself.

Pay attention to this poem by Derek Walcott:

**Love after love**

by

Derek Walcott

The time will come

When, with elation

You will greet yourself arriving

At your own door, in your own mirror

And each will smile at the other's welcome,

And say, sit here. Eat.

You will love again the stranger who was yourself.

Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart

To itself, to the stranger who has loved you

All your life, whom you ignored  
For another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,  
  
The photographs, the desperate notes,  
Peel your own image from the mirror.  
  
Sit. Feast on your life.

Although meditation<sup>4</sup> came into wide practice with the Buddha, it has nothing to do with Buddhism. It is related to every human mind.

Mindfulness is a great capacity that we all have in us. Mindfulness affects brain cells that are hundreds of millions of years old. New research shows that after eight weeks of doing mindfulness, the hippocampus<sup>5</sup> and cortex<sup>6</sup> in our brain change, and the amygdala, which is the center of our fears, becomes significantly smaller. And that is really great.

### **Internal conversation with yourself**

We decide which one to listen to. We have our own interpretation of everything. Like a football commentator who does not allow us to experience watching a football game ourselves. A study in Canada shows that when you are deeply de-

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4. The oldest documented evidence of the practice of meditation are wall arts in the Indian sub-continent from approximately 5,000 to 3,500 BCE, showing people seated in meditative postures with half-closed eyes. Written evidence of any form of meditation was first seen in the Vedas around 1500 BCE.

5. The elongated ridges on the floor of each lateral ventricle of the brain, thought to be the centre of emotion, memory, and the autonomic nervous system.

6. The outer layer of the cerebrum (the cerebral cortex ), composed of folded grey matter and playing an important role in consciousness.

pressed, you have this inner interpreter of your brain. His interpretations cannot be stopped. But one can practice not believing his interpretations and saying that I am not what the interpreter of my brain says. I am not my name. I am not my age. I do not have the ideas I have. And question the beliefs you have about everything, including your thoughts. And this is the beginning of human freedom.

There are two ways to live: in THOUGHT or in FACT. Mindfulness is an exercise in getting us out of our minds, and living in reality NOW and HERE. I want to end this book with a joke by Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn: “When you look at your watch, if you look right, you do not see the number. Always written on the clock are the words ‘right now’. It doesn’t matter what time you look at the watch, day or night, it is always ‘right now’. NOW and HERE”.

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**London**

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