



What the Heck IS Mindfulness??

Mindfulness is one of those universal things that we all need more of and something which can always be improved. I like to think of mindfulness as a muscle that needs to be regularly exercised and developed. If you are new to mindfulness and still working to build your understanding of the general concept, the following is a collection of definitions from various sources to get you started. Next week, we will get into the nuts and bolts, so stay tuned!

1. **ActMindfully.com** starts us off with the overview that “*Mindfulness is about waking up, connecting with ourselves, and appreciating the fullness of each moment of life.*” (<https://www.actmindfully.com.au/about-mindfulness/>)
2. According to **Oxford Living Dictionaries**, mindfulness is 1) *The quality or state of being conscious or aware of something*, and 2) *A mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations, used as a therapeutic technique.* (<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/mindfulness>)
3. Per **Greater Good Magazine**, “*Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment, through a gentle, nurturing lens. Mindfulness also involves acceptance, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings without judging them—without believing, for instance, that there’s a “right” or “wrong” way to think or feel in a given moment. When we practice mindfulness, our thoughts tune into what we’re sensing in the present moment rather than rehashing the past or imagining the future.*” (<https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition>)
4. On www.mrsmindfulness.com, the discussion emphasizes that, “*Mindfulness also involves non-judgment, meaning that we pay attention to our thoughts and feelings with the attitude of an impartial witness — without believing them or taking them personally.*” (<https://mrsmindfulness.com/what-is-mindfulness/>)
5. As written in a client handout by Cindy Sanderson, Ph.D., “*Mindfulness is “awareness without judgment of what is, via direct and immediate experience”.*” (http://stiftelsen-hvasser.no/documents/Mindfulness_for_clients_and_famil_members.pdf)
6. And finally, from one of our leading minds on the subject, we have Jon Kabat-Zinn who says that “*Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally...It’s about knowing what is on your mind.*” (<https://www.mindful.org/jon-kabat-zinn-defining-mindfulness/>)

As you can see, the running themes include awareness of situation and personal experience, without judgment or expectation, and without reaction. Mindfulness means noticing your thoughts and emotions, without trying to either fuel them or terminate them. Simply seeing, naming, and accepting...without judging. And that also includes not judging yourself when you notice yourself judging. Especially because judging is a normal part of being a human being, we just want to notice when we are doing it. Mindfulness gets a little complicated. Check in next week for more information and strategies for getting started!