

Best of Me Workshop IV

What is Mindfulness?:

Mindfulness means maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and surrounding environment.

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.

Though it has its roots in Buddhist meditation, a secular practice of mindfulness has entered the American mainstream in recent years, in part through the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn and his Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, which he launched at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in 1979. Since that time, thousands of studies have documented the physical and mental health benefits of mindfulness in general and MBSR in particular, inspiring countless programs to adapt the MBSR model for schools, prisons, hospitals, veterans centers, and beyond.

Enjoy these TEN practical benefits when you focus on being present/Mindful:

Five performance benefits:

1. Better performance under pressure. (you’re focused)
2. Improved listening and memory skills (you’re “present-minded”, not “absent-minded”)
3. Better conflict resolution (you don’t get emotionally ‘triggered’)
4. More persistence and ability to learn (you are more patient and tolerant of difficulties)
5. Wiser, clearer decisions (you don’t react out of habit)

Five health & relationship benefits:

1. Improved physical health & energy. (less stress, lower blood pressure, sharper mind)
2. More laughter and a playful outlook. (you’re at peace, so life is more joyful)
3. More honest & open communication (you have nothing to hide)
4. Confidence and conviction in leading others. (you can handle their criticisms)
5. Greater capacity for emotional intimacy. (you are comfortable in your own skin)

10 practical tips to start being more mindful right now:

1. Take a couple of minutes to notice your breathing. Sense the flow of the breath, the rise and fall of your belly
2. Notice what you are doing as you are doing it and tune into your senses. When you are eating, notice the colour, texture and taste of the food.
3. When you are walking, tune into how your weight shifts and the sensations in the bottom of your feet. Focus less on where you are headed.
4. Don't feel that you need to fill up all your time with doing. Take some time to simply be.
5. When your mind wanders to thinking, gently bring it back to your breath.
6. Recognize that thoughts are simply thoughts; you don't need to believe them or react to them.
7. Practise listening without making judgments.
8. Notice where you tend to zone out (e.g., driving, emailing or texting, web surfing, feeding the dog, doing dishes, brushing teeth, etc.). Practise bringing more awareness to that activity.
9. Spend time in nature.

Notice how the mind likes to constantly judge. Don't take it seriously. It's not who you are.



Strategies to surviving the holidays/staying on track

1. Remember the health basics for Crowded Nest Syndrome and increased tendency for colds:

- Personal hygiene
- Get your sleep/Keep up your energy
- Eat healthy whole foods high in energy low in sugar (The brain and gut are in permanent communication-every time you eat something you are sending signals to the brain. This is why good foods make you feel happy and the wrong foods leave you feeling anxious/depressed- Focus on a diet that improves mood)
- Common nutritional imbalances can worsen our mood and motivation- Use your foundational four supplements (good quality multivitamin with all the B vitamins, EFA's – fish oils, vitamin D and probiotics)
- Stay physically active and have regular Chiro/Massage
- Boost your immune function with natural products such as Oregasept etc.
- Drink extra water with every indiscretion/bad choice

2. Stress Reducing Strategies using the “ation” way:

Medit-ation

- Clear your mind of negative thoughts, chatter and stress. Be present. Mindful.

Visualiz-ation

- Dream big, “see” you the way you want to. Visualize your health

Affirm-ation

- Set your emotional and mental “state” by choice not chance.

3. Plan ahead

- Don't be afraid to say NO (you don't have to say yes to everything)
- Set a holiday plan/budget (time and money) and stick to it.
- Plan your cheats (limits, amount/smaller sample size portions)
- Bring healthy foods/gifts (stay focused- “not the season to throw out reason”)

-Eat ahead of social gatherings (you will binge less if you have had healthy choices beforehand- Don't skip meals!)

-Get your workouts in, even if a condensed version, use alternate methods like HIIT training (Short session, high intensity) keeping to your routines will help your energy/confidence and sense of control.

4. Simplify your celebrations

-Don't be afraid to start new traditions (drawing names/ varied meal plans/ afternoon walk or skate

-practice the power of NO (You don't have to go to every event you are invited to)

-Take some you time (book a holiday day off to beat the crowds, plan or prepare)

5. Stay Focused

-Remember the best gift you can give yourself is your fittest healthiest self!

-65 days left in year. That is 9.2 Weeks! There is almost 2 months till Christmas.

-There is still a lot you can accomplish!

-Review your goals so you are motivated and reminded of why you will stay in control this holiday season.

Many of us use excuses of the holidays to let the final months slip away. Don't let your past determine your future. This year can be different!

BE PROACTIVE! BE PREPARED! BE PRESENT for the holidays.

BE THE
BEST
VERSION
OF *you*

DO THE BEST YOU CAN