

Mindfulness



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When people refer to mindfulness as a mental discipline they generally mean sustained attention to the here-and-now, although the here-and-now turns out to be a slippery concept. Even the most abstract thought about the furthest future or the most distant past is thought in the here-and-now, of course, but that is not what mindfulness people usually mean. They mean attention to immediate sensations like your breath and the feel of your feet on the floor, or to the physical space you are in and the objects that are in it with you; even though your

immediate view might encompass many miles or the vastness of space. The point of mindfulness is that you are not *thinking* about whatever you are attending to, you are simply *experiencing* it.

Definitely excluded from this sort of mindfulness is any human narrative that is extended in time and space; like yearning, disappointment, expectation, frustration and anxiety. These things do not exist in the moment, even though they are suffered there. Therein lies the therapeutic value of mindfulness. Sources and objects of anxiety, depression, frustration and anger are the natural targets of deconstruction by mindfulness. Mindfulness relieves these unpleasant feelings while you are actually practicing it and, if you are paying attention, it also demonstrates that there is no necessary connection between the elaborate narratives we think of as our lives and the way we actually feel at any particular moment. Mindfulness relieves suffering. If it sinks in, this intellectual insight can have a profound impact on your philosophy and your perspective, which can have a profound impact on your life and the way you experience it. Trust me. Call me.

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