**Mindfulness Meditation**

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 Mindfulness is a form of brain training. It is training our brain to pay attention to where we want it to be. It is training our brain to not wander or be stuck on one thought but to be able to train our brain to go where we want it to go … and ultimately, be able to stay there for a while. The goal of Mindfulness Meditation is simply to get our brain to pay attention to the present moment, and what is happening ‘right now.’ But we must also be able to do this without judging our thoughts, ourselves, or others.

 **How Mindfulness Works**

 During a mindfulness mediation, the idea is for you to be able to focus on your breathing as a way to calm your thoughts, ground yourself and become aware of the present moment. Your brain will absolutely wander, and it will wander continuously! The key is to gently bring your thoughts back to your breathing each time your mind wanders. Without getting frustrated with yourself and without judging yourself. Get yourself to refocus on your breathing again, and again and again! Each time you do this, you train your brain to leave those intrusive thoughts and come back to the present moment.

 **Instructions**

Find a time and a place that you are unlikely to be interrupted. Turn off your phone and other devices as needed. Ideally you will want to sit in a chair and straighten your back and sitting tall but not to the point of stiffness. If you are just starting out you may or lie on the floor or a bed, however sitting is the best.

 Let your body feel relaxed, lower your chin, close your eyes and let your arms and hands fall where they are most comfortable. If sitting in a chair make sure your feet are resting on the ground, if sitting on the floor sit cross legged. Now focus on your breathing. Noticing the sensation of the air as it passes through your nostrils and if your breath goes into your chest or your belly. Notice the rise and fall of your chest or belly. Then breathing out, notice the temperature and sound of your breath being exhaled.

 Guaranteed your mind will wander! That is OKAY. It is normal for your thoughts to wander. Just gently bring them back when you notice this and start again to focus on your breathing. Mindfulness is not about preventing your mind from wandering, it is about being able to bring your mind back to the present moment again, and again, and again, and again. A hundred times or more!

By doing this you help yourself by letting those thoughts go away (***letting those negative thoughts, those intrusive thoughts, those harmful thoughts and any worrisome thoughts come into your brain but then also LEAVE your brain as well, without you becoming upset, angry or disappointed with yourself.)*** Thus you are able to calm yourself and heal yourself.

It will take practice to be good at doing this, and it will take time. BUT, it will be very beneficial in the end.

To help you get started search the internet for “guided meditations.” There are literally thousands of meditations out there waiting for you to try. Start today, for 5 minutes and then gradually increase your time. You will be happy that you did.