

Meditation for critical thinking, focus, creativity, and stress management

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What questions do you have about
mindfulness?

Benefits of Mindfulness Practice for Learning

- Develops capacity for focus/attention
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Strengthens metacognition
- Relaxes judgmental thoughts
- Improves resilience
- Increases confidence, persistence, and empathy for self and others
- Encourages thoughtful exploration
- Supports intellectual, creative, and personal development

What is meditation?

Calm abiding

Being present

Mindfulness-
awareness



Holistic Life Foundation, Baltimore, Maryland

“how to work openheartedly with life just as it is”

–Pema Chodron, *Start Where You Are*

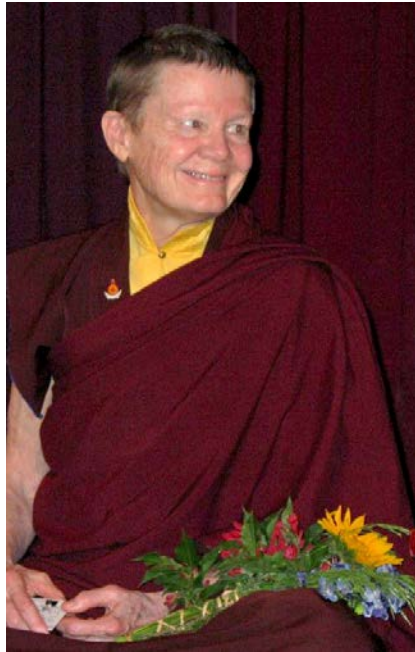
What do we mean by Mindfulness-Awareness?

- **Mindfulness:** Consciously and purposefully directing your attention
- **Awareness:** Being open to and aware of the environment within and around you
- Nonjudgmental
- Balance between gentle and precise: Not too tight, not too loose

What is mindfulness meditation?

3 main elements:

- In the present moment (anchor in *TIME*)
- Aware (anchor in *PLACE*)
- Non-judgmental (anchor in *PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE*)



Seeing ourselves honestly

“We are not trying to get rid of our thoughts. Rather, we are clearly seeing our defense mechanisms, our negative beliefs about ourselves, our desires and expectations. We also see our kindness, our bravery, our wisdom.”

–Pema Chodron, *The Places That Scare You*

Why meditate?

Meditation allows us to **TAME** and **TRAIN** our mind so that we can...

- know our own present state of mind
- be available to others
- attune to the environment around us
- *choose* how to act rather than simply *reacting* based on *habitual or emotional patterns*



Acceptance – Appreciation – Empowerment

“You, just as you are, and your life here, right now, are all there is and all you need to know. You don’t have to do anything special. Mostly, you have to be open to meeting face to face, and even dancing with, the truth that pertains to your life right now. You have to find a way to collect your fractured pieces, examine them, and then accept them as part of who you are. Spiritual practice is about transformation, but it’s also, and more importantly, about working with what is.”

--Rev. Angel Kyodo Williams

“We already have
everything we need.
There is no need for
self-improvement.”

–Pema Chodron, *Start
Where You Are*



Mindfulness practices for the classroom

- Meditation
- Moment of silence
- Stretching
- Pausing
- Listening exercises
- Combine with writing

For more
information

- Mason's Center for the Advancement of Well-being:
<https://wellbeing.gmu.edu/>
- Various centers in the region to learn more
- See me if you want more information
(sdoetsch@gmu.edu)

A few references

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