

Daily Mindfulness Practices

-When you first wake up in the morning, before you get out of bed, bring your attention to your breathing. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

-Notice changes in your posture. Be aware of how your body and mind feel when you move from lying down to sitting, to standing, to walking. Notice each time you make a transition from one posture to the next.

-Whenever you hear a phone ring, a bird sing, a train pass by, laughter, a car horn, the wind, the sound of a door closing—use any sound as the bell of mindfulness. Really listen and be present and awake.

-Throughout the day, take a few moments to bring your attention to your breathing. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

-Whenever you eat or drink something, take a minute and breathe. Look at your food and realize that the food was connected to something that nourished its growth. Can you see the sunlight, the rain, the earth, the farmer, the trucker in your food? Can you see the sunlight, the rain, the earth, the farmer, the trucker in your food? Pay attention as you eat, consciously consuming this food

2

for your physical health. Bring awareness to seeing your food, smelling your food, tasting your food, chewing your food, and swallowing your food.

-Notice your body while you walk or stand. Take a moment to notice your posture. Pay attention to the contact of the ground under your feet. Feel the air on your face, arms and legs as you walk. Are you rushing?

-Bring awareness to listening and talking. Can you listen without agreeing or disagreeing, liking or disliking, or planning what you will say when it is your turn? When talking, can you just say what you need to say without overstating or understating? Can you notice how your mind and body feel?

-Whenever you wait in a line, use this time to notice standing and breathing. Feel the contact of your feet on the floor and how your body feels. Bring attention to the rise and fall of your abdomen. Are you feeling impatient?

-Be aware of any points of tightness in your body throughout the day. See if you can breathe into them and, as you exhale, let go of excess tension. Is there tension stored anywhere in your body? For example, your neck, shoulders, stomach, jaw, or lower back? If possible, stretch or do yoga once a day.

-Focus attention on your daily activities such as brushing your teeth, washing up, brushing your hair, putting on your shoes, doing your job. Bring mindfulness to each activity.

-Try doing a routine activity in a different way. Comb your hair with your other hand. Change your morning routine. Notice how this feels and be aware of your tendency to do these things automatically in the same way each time.

-Before you go to sleep at night, take a few minutes and bring your attention to your breathing. Observe 5 mindful breaths.

Mindfulness Meditation Instructions

Decide how long you will sit in meditation. 15 to 20 minutes is suggested as a minimum. You can increase the time to 45 minutes or more as you become more comfortable with the practice. The use of a timer is helpful to signal the end of your sitting and avoid the distraction of looking at the clock.

Find an alert sitting position- head and spine erect, but relaxed. Close your eyes and rest your hands on your legs in an effortless way.

Bring your awareness to your body, and wherever possible, soften and release obvious areas of physical tension. Pay attention especially to your neck, shoulders, jaw, eyes and forehead.

Take in 3 to 5 deep breaths, filling the belly, diaphragm and finally the chest. Let your breath exhale slowly and easily without controlling it in any way. Use these initial breaths to let go of tension, relax and settle into your meditation.

We will use the breath as an anchor, a reminder to come back to attention whenever we get lost in our thoughts. This will help stabilize and concentration our attention.

Allow your breath to come and go naturally, without trying to control it. Be aware of when your breath is most noticeable to you. You might feel it touch your nostrils or your upper lips, or as it flows in and out of your nose. You might notice the movement of your chest or the rise and fall of your belly. Try to bring your

attention the most notable sensations of your breath. This will help you to sharpen your awareness as you continually bring your attention back to your breath.

Your mind will naturally drift off in thoughts. You are not trying to clear your mind of thoughts; that is what minds do. Instead you are developing a capacity to notice your thoughts as they occur and to observe them without getting pulled away into their content. Each time you become aware that your attention has wandered to thoughts, memories, daydreams, making plans, this is an opportunity to gently, without judgment, to bring your awareness back to your breath, the present moment. In this way your breath can serve as a place of presence, a comfortable sanctuary. You may notice other sensations or sounds; but they can become the background without drawing you away from your awareness of your breath.

Continue to sit in this awareness, without judgment, continually taking the opportunity to return to your breath whenever you notice your thoughts have distracted your attention away.