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Mindfulness meditation and mindfulness practices are rooted in ancient Buddhist tradition. The modern practice of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was created by Jon Kabat-Zinn and has gained great popularity all over the world. Many variations of mindfulness meditation and practice can easily be found with a simple Google search, but the information can be overwhelming and daunting. However, exploring these practices is something I

recommend to almost all of my patients because they are a powerful way to shift your mind-set, quiet the mind, ease the suffering related to emotional turmoil, and utilize the power of your brain to change your habitual responses to difficult life circumstances.

Mindfulness practices teach us to be present, in the here and now. Difficult emotions like anxiety, anger, depression, and guilt live and breathe in the past and the future. The present moment is where all the possibilities are, all the control. Meditation teaches you to return to the present moment each time your mind wanders and learn to master that shifting of attention throughout your days. This is extremely helpful to people who easily get caught in loops of negative thinking and catastrophizing.

Mindfulness also teaches us to be curious, to have a “beginner’s mind,” rather than being judgmental in looking at our emotional experiences. This non-judgmental approach allows us to be lifelong learners in managing our emotional lives and reducing the suffering that is caused by difficult emotional experiences.

Mindfulness practices train us in compassion and attention. We learn to have more mastery over where we place our attention and how to shift our attention in a way that serves us better. Increasing compassion for ourselves and others makes us more patient, understanding, and calm and thus less reactive to the difficult circumstances of our lives.

People fear that mindfulness meditation is about “clearing” the mind, which is

extremely hard to do. But in reality, it is more about quieting and focusing the mind and teaching ourselves to do that in our everyday lives. Exploring mindfulness meditation is a worthwhile endeavor for almost everybody. A daily practice of 10 to 15 minutes can make a world of difference for you. I encourage you to give it a try!

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