

Happiness and Fulfillment

Basic Rules of Happiness

1. Happiness is appreciation without expectation
2. Happiness is being, not doing
3. Happiness is anchored in the present

Does anxiety overwhelm you?

Anxiety is a state of contemplating the future or reflecting on the past. When you are troubled in thoughts or feelings, remember always that thoughts are not facts. Everything is okay in the present. Bring yourself immediately into the present by asking yourself these questions:

1. What am I seeing?
2. What am I hearing?
3. What am I smelling?
4. What am I tasting?
5. What am I feeling?

Finding your purpose.

Once in a while, ask yourself:

1. Of the things I do, what nourishes me, what increases my sense of actually being alive and present rather than merely existing?
2. Of the things that I do, what drains me, what decreases my sense of actually being alive and present?
3. Accepting that there are aspects of my life that I simply cannot change, am I consciously choosing to increase time and effort in activities that bring me up and to decrease the time and effort I give to activities that bring me down?

The 3-Minute Breath To Stay Present

(excerpt from: Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression, Zindel Segal, 2002)

1. Awareness: bring yourself into the present moment by deliberately adopting an erect and dignified posture. If possible, close your eyes and ask "What is my experience right now... in thoughts... in feelings... and in bodily sensations?" Acknowledge and register your experience even if it is unwanted.
2. Gathering: Then gently redirect full attention to breathing, to each in breath and to each out breath as they follow, one after the other. Your breath can function as an anchor to bring you into the present and help you tune into a state of awareness and stillness.
3. Expanding: Expand the field of your awareness around your breathing, so that it includes a sense of the body as a whole, your posture, and facial expression.

Be Happy. Stay Calm.

Integrate these mindful moments into your daily life. Start with one the first day. Add a second one when you have become habituated with the first. Then add another and another until you find yourself spending most of your day in the present moment.

- **In the morning:** Before you get out of bed in the morning, bring your attention to your breathing. Observe five full, mindful breaths- in through your nose and out through your nose.
- **Movement:** Notice changes in your posture. Be aware of how your body and mind feel when you move from lying to sitting, to standing, to walking. Notice each time you make a transition from one posture to another.
- **Breath:** Throughout the day, take a few moments to bring your attention to your breathing. Observe five mindful breaths at least three times per day.
- **Internal bodily sensations:** Be aware of any points of tightness in your body? For example, your neck, shoulders, stomach, jaw or lower back. If possible, stretch or do some easy yoga postures to release this.
- **External Body Sensations:** Notice your body while you walk or stand. Take a moment to notice your posture and how the ground feels under your feet. Feel the air on your face, arms, and legs as you walk. Are you rushing? What for?
- **Food:** Whenever you eat or drink, take a minute to 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, or the farmer in your food? Pay attention as you eat, consciously consuming this food for your physical and spiritual health. Bring awareness to seeing your food, smelling your food, tasting your food, chewing your food and swallowing your food.
- **Communication:** 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 to talk? When talking, can you say just what you need to say without overstating or understating? Can you notice how your mind and body feel as you are listening or as you are talking?
- **Sounds:** Use any sound as a bell of mindfulness to bring you back to the present- a phone ring, a bird chirp, a train pass by, laughter, a car horn, the wind, the sound of a door closing- really listen. Be present and awake
- **Waiting:** Whenever you are waiting for something, 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? If you can practice this, you will never be bored again.
- **Daily Activities:** Focus attention of your daily activities such as brushing your teeth, washing your hair, putting on your shoes, doing your job. Bring mindfulness to each activity.
- **Bedtime:** Before you go to sleep at night, take a few minutes and bring your attention to you breathing. Observe five mindful breaths.

Mindfulness Meditation

Please read through this a few times before beginning your practice.

Best times to practice: dawn and dusk.

- Upon rising in the morning- get out of bed, brush your teeth, wash your face and then meditate. This should be done before turning on phones or computers and before getting into your car. Your second practice would ideally be at the end of the day, before dinner.
- If you only have time for once a day, practice in the morning. Wake up 20 minutes earlier if you have to. It is worth it.

Note: Some individuals like to meditate just before bed. For some people however, meditation, can be an intensely restful experience thereby inhibiting your ability to fall asleep.

Things to remember with meditation

- Do not get hung up on your expectation of the experience that you want to have
- Accept the experience you are having as exactly the experience you are meant to have
- Meditating once will not bring about some great revelation in you or how you live your life. It is a practice that has the ability to refine itself infinitely. Every time you sit or lie down to meditate you will have a different experience.
- When it comes to meditation, there is no right or wrong.
- You don't have to ask yourself if you are doing it right. You are doing it exactly how you are supposed to. It is always right.
- Just as there is no right or wrong when it comes to meditating, there is also no good or bad. Some meditation practices may be more thought filled than others- but this does not make it necessary to judge as good or bad.
- The first few times you meditate, you may not feel relaxation. You may feel anxious, tense, irritable, impatient, even angry. Know that this is normal and okay. Although you may experience these feelings while you are meditating, when you come out of your meditation you will notice that they have dissolved considerably.
- Often you experience these negative feelings because they are bubbling to the surface as they are released. Stresses often leave the body with the same feelings they had coming in.
- While you are meditating pay attention to your breath coming in and out of your nostrils. Feel that breath move through your body and notice any sensations you feel in your body. Doing this keeps you present and meditation is all about being wakeful in the present moment.
- If focusing on your breath is not enough to keep you focused on the present- then give attention to all of your senses. Think about what you are feeling- where is your body resting on the ground, what is the temperature in the room...

- If a thought comes into your mind try and observe it without reacting to it. Acknowledge it as a thought, and then gently come back to your breath.
- If you feel yourself reacting to the thought by tensing your body or if you feel your heart beat faster, try observing these physical sensations and then come back to your breath.
- You do not need to punish yourself for not being able to stay with your breath. If you notice that your mind is thought filled, that is okay. That is the experience you are having. Once you notice that you are having a thought- just return to your breath. You may have to do this over and over again in the twenty-minute meditation. That is okay.
- Your mind naturally wants to take you to a place that is most charming. It may trick you into thinking that getting things done right away is the most charming. Know that this is not true and that there is nothing more charming for your mind and body than meditation.
- Do not fall asleep. Sleeping is not a deep form of meditation. Meditation is about transcending to a higher level of consciousness. Sleep is not a conscious state. Meditation is about falling awake- where you become more alert to everything happening in the present moment. If you find that you are having difficulty staying awake while laying down, then best to practice your meditation sitting up. If you wish to take a nap- do so after the meditation, or rest and then meditate upon rising. Some people experience drowsiness following meditation because of the relaxation, while others find meditation so restful that they feel alert and energized after.
- **DO NOT GET UP!** You may have the urge to get up early. You may find that your mind chooses to take you to your to do list, to all of the other things you could be doing with your time. Know that at the moment that you are meditating, for those 20 minutes, there is nothing else in the world you need to do. Whatever it is your mind is fooling you into thinking you have to do right away- it will still be there when you are done. Accept those feelings of impatience and anxiety, notice them and then come back to your breath. Work through that urge to give up and get up.