What is mindfulness?

Paying attention, on purpose, to what is happening now, with kindness.

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention. It means noticing what is going on, inside you and around you, as it happens, and meeting it with curiosity instead of judgement.

Most of the time our attention is somewhere else: replaying the past, rehearsing the future, running on autopilot. Mindfulness is the practice of noticing that, and coming back.

Mindfulness is

- Noticing what is here
- Coming back when the mind wanders
- A skill that grows with practice
- Possible in any activity
- Being kind about what you find

Mindfulness is not

- Emptying the mind
- Stopping thoughts
- Relaxation (though that can happen)
- A religion
- Getting it right

How it helps

- You catch thoughts and moods earlier, before they snowball.
- You get a gap between a feeling and what you do about it.
- You spend less time in worry and rumination.
- You notice more of the ordinary good moments.

How to start

1. **Small.** Two or three minutes a day is plenty to begin with.
2. **Regular.** The same time each day, attached to something you already do.
3. **Simple.** Follow your breath. When your mind wanders, notice where it went and bring it back.
4. **Kind.** A wandering mind is not failing. Noticing and returning is the exercise. Each return is one repetition, like a lift in the gym.

In daily life

Pick one routine activity, such as the first cup of tea, brushing your teeth or the walk to the bus, and give it your full attention each day.

Go carefully

If you have a history of trauma, or if sitting quietly with your eyes closed brings up distress, keep practices short, keep your eyes open, and focus on something outside you such as sounds or your feet on the floor. Talk to me about adapting it.

My notes and questions

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