
Mindfulness: Definition And Implementation

Mindfulness can be defined as a 'state of being attentive to and aware of what is taking place in the present' (Brown & Ryan 2003, pg. 822). The implementation of being mindful allows individuals to prevent routines and habits that lead to mindlessness. This state of mind can lead people to act on autopilot, daydreaming, worrying about the future or ruminating about past acts. To be mindful incorporates awareness of current external stimuli, the 5 senses, culminating in internal processes and states such as perceptions, sensations, emotions and cognitions. Advantages of mindfulness comprise in increased charisma, empathy, higher emotional intelligence, better cognition, high self-regulation, and better recognition of supplemental emotional states culminating in better social interactions. Previous clinical studies have implicated the benefit of this state of mind in different patient categories as well as benefits to children and adults. Studies show a consistent positive correlation and relationship between trait mindfulness and cognitive health (Richards, 2012). It is therefore apparent that being mindful can impact an individual's life positively as it assists with ones self-being in the moment and not allowing one's thoughts to wander into a counterproductive state of mind.

'Mindfulness is an attribute of consciousness long believed to promote well-being' (Brown, 2003). This quotation extracted from the journal article, the benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being (2003), signifies the positives outcomes of having present moment awareness alongside a non-judging observing stance. The article stipulates that there are two states of mindfulness. These include awareness of current stimuli such as the five senses, as well as awareness of internal processes such as perceptions, sensations, emotions and cognitions. Brown states that the inclusion of both or either states of mindfulness allows 'an individual to reach a higher emotional intelligence, higher self-regulation, resulting in overt signs of greater charisma and empathy in social interactions' (2003). This view contrasts an article previously composed by a Harvard University professor in the 1980's. He stipulates that 'In contemporary modern society, Individuals can perform rather seemingly intricate and complex tasks with little to no active cerebral stimulation' (Langar, 1989). He then perpetuates that although society is very well capable of acting mindfully or being in a state of mindfulness, most individuals work better and respond better to routinized, structured and mindless interactions, ultimately relying on distinctions in the past which result in patterns of brain functions.

The implementation of mindfulness focuses on enhancing three key areas of one's life, motivation and focus, resulting in an open, curious attitude. Although the practice of mindfulness has only recently become relevant in popular culture, with certain high-profile celebrities and corporations endorsing its effect on mental wellbeing, Eastern traditions have advocated this practice for centuries. Ruth Bair in her research paper, a clinical guide to mindfulness-based treatment approaches (2015) stipulates that 'Eastern spiritual traditions have upheld that mindfulness mediation practices result in reduced sorrow and increased well-being' (2015). She continues to attribute the adaption by individuals of these eastern practices for western secular use, particularly in the workplace can lead to reducing stress, anxiety, and mindlessness from repetitive tasks. The introduction of mindfulness meditation was first seen in the 5th century in modern-day India. This was known as Sattipatana Sutta and was bequeathed orally through the traditions of the Pali people and Pali language. Contemporary adaption of this

methodology has seen the benefits of mindfulness in fields such as management, therapy, and education (UTS Blackboard). Conversely in the article, ‘the assessment of mindfulness with self-report measures’ (Bergomi, 2013), Bergomi argues that mindfulness ‘results in less creativity’ (2013). The article has a differing perspective on the effectiveness of this way of thinking. While mindfulness has been scientifically proven to be helpful in clearing the mind and effective for ‘analytical thinking’, this state of mind inhibits the use of ‘mind wandering that will lead to greater creativity’, ultimately, mindfulness constrains this type of thought processing by ‘being in the moment’. Therefore it is evident that the occasional use of constructive daydreaming can be the most effective tool in harnessing creativity and thinking beyond the confines of groupthink.