

Mindfulness 101



Mindfulness is a holistic philosophy that is much more than a meditation practice or a set of techniques. It encourages us to explore who we are, question our worldview, and foster appreciation for our experiences.

There are many ways to practice mindfulness. We often think of formal activities such as meditation or breathing exercises, but you can also be mindful during everyday activities, like eating or washing dishes.

The key is to bring your attention to what you are doing in the present moment, and to avoid judging any feelings or thoughts that may arise.

What does mindfulness look and feel like? Let's consider some of the practices and ways of being that constitute a mindful philosophy and approach to life.¹

Acceptance

Seeing and acknowledging things as they are in the present moment.

Authenticity

Openness, honesty with the self and others, and gaining a realization of the beauty and completeness of each human being.

Awareness

Awareness of thoughts, feelings, and habits; seeing the “big picture” rather than giving into one’s conditioned habitual behaviour; awareness of the wider environment.

Curiosity

A spirit of interest, investigation, and exploration.

Empathy and Compassion

A respectful consideration of another person’s experience, including feelings, needs, and desires; this consideration will naturally extend to include the environment.

Equanimity

A quality of wisdom, an evenness and steadiness of mind that comprehends the nature of change.

Gentleness

A soft, considerate, and tender quality, but not passive, undisciplined or indulgent.

Letting Go

Non-attachment, not holding on to thoughts, feelings or experiences.

Loving Kindness

Truly wishing another well – to be healthy, safe, free from harm, and free from fear; a quality embodying friendliness, benevolence, and love. Loving kindness extends to all that surrounds a person, too.

Non-attachment

Letting go, not grasping and clinging to outcomes; allowing events to simply unfold.

Non-judging

Impartial witnessing, observing the present moment without evaluation or categorization.

Non-reactivity

Ability to respond with consciousness and clarity, instead of automatically reacting in a habitual or conditioned way.

Non-striving

Non-goal-oriented, remaining unattached to outcome or achievement.

Openness (Beginner’s Mind)

Seeing things newly, as if for the first time.


Patience

Allowing things to unfold in their own time.

Trust

Developing a basic trust in your experience and your own inner wisdom.

¹ The list is reprinted from *Teachers teaching mindfulness with children: An interpretative phenomenological analysis* by N. J. Albrecht (2016) (Doctoral dissertation, Flinders University, Australia).



This information can also be found in *Mindfulness-Based Programs for Marginalized Youth: A toolkit for youth workers*. Check it out on YouthREX’s Knowledge Hub to learn more!