

“If we hope to go anywhere or develop ourselves in any way, we can only step from where we are standing. If we don't really know where we are standing... We may only go in circles...”

~ Jon Kabat-Zinn



Simple Ways to Practice Mindfulness

STOP: Stop, Take a breath, Open, Proceed (pause, plan...)

- When you wake up in the morning, before rising, bring your attention to your breathing. Instead of letting your mind spin off into yesterday or today, take a few mindful breaths. Focus on your breathing, and sense the effects of breathing throughout your body. What is your intention for the day? For even the next few moments?
- In the shower, notice how the water feels on your body. Coming back to the sensations of showering and noticing the simple, mostly automatic choices of routine. As best you can, staying present with actually showering.
- Really focus and listen when someone is talking to you. Pay careful attention to what they are saying and focus on absorbing and understanding them before you think about your own thoughts, responses, or criticism (judgements). Checking in with your own breathing during a conversation, perhaps even the breath of the person you are with.
- When you are walking, focus on your body and the sensations of your feet as you take each step. Noticing your feet touching and leaving the ground, your posture, hips and arm movements. Explore what it feels like to bring presence to walking and rest in even the simplest and briefest moments of movement throughout the day.
- When you arrive at your destination, take a few moments to orient yourself; breathe consciously and calmly, and relax your body. Pause for a moment, look around and take in where you are, noticing, and then proceed.
- When sitting at your desk, keyboard, or checking information on your smartphone, bring awareness to any subtle signs of physical tension and take a break to stretch or walk around. Is there boredom? Awareness of autopilot is a moment of mindfulness.
- Use the repetitive events of the day, such as the cellphone ringing, doorbell, getting a beverage or food—as cues for a mini-break. What happens when you bring presence to what is thought of as mundane? a chore? or an obstacle to happiness?
- As you prepare to sleep, let go of today and plans for tomorrow as best you can, and take some slow, mindful breaths. Resting in bed and returning to the sensations of breathing.