

The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking out new landscapes, but in having new eyes.

- Marcel Proust

CLASS ONE: WAKING UP TO AUTO-PILOT

No matter what challenges you are facing in life, there is still more right with you. Challenges are part of the human experience, and in this program you will learn cultivating mindfulness is fundamental to shifting our relationship to how we perceive and relate to stress. This means paying attention to what is happening in your life in the present moment, not in the past or the future.

Mindfulness begins when we recognize the tendency to be on auto-pilot, where we go about our days and habitually react to things without present moment awareness or intention. Once we become aware, we can commit to learn how to step out of this Doing Mode (where we're daydreaming, multi-tasking, planning, analyzing, judging) and in to the Being Mode (where we're noticing what's happening right now with non-judgmental curiosity).

We allow ourselves the possibility of greater freedom and choice of how we respond to our daily challenges, by paying attention to how our thoughts, emotions and body sensations arise from moment to moment. From a mindful stance, we can let go of our automatic reactions that may not be helpful to us. Instead, we can cultivate a new way in leaning towards challenges and stress, creating more space for acceptance, kindness and patience.

The aim of mindfulness is to promote self-awareness so that we can respond to situations with choice, rather than reacting automatically. We can cultivate mindfulness by practicing noticing where our attention is, what is pulling for our attention and deliberately redirecting our attention back to the present moment. You will begin by using your body as an anchor point for your attention, bringing awareness to sensations of breath and body.

I have been through a lot of difficult things in my life, some of which have actually happened.

- Unknown.

Class One Practice

1) Practice the guided [Meditation of Body and Breath](#) every day for the next 6 days.

The simple act of re-directing your attention back to the breath is the goal for this week.

See if you can practice this meditation without having any expected outcomes. We are not looking to achieve a special state of relaxation or calmness. Instead, we are training our mental muscles to pay attention and notice what is present.

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-one-mindfulness-of-body-and-breath>

2) Record your experiences, reactions, discoveries and challenges on the [Homework Log](#), as this will help with the inquiry process.

3) Choose one routine in your day and make a deliberate effort to bring moment-to-moment awareness to that activity. It could be walking, brushing your teeth, eating a meal mindfully or taking [three-minutes to breathe](#). The activity you choose does not matter, as long as you are bringing your full awareness to what you are doing.

<https://soundcloud.com/hachetteaudiouk/meditation-eight-the-three-minute-breathing-space>

Reference

Williams M. & Penman D. (2011). *Mindfulness: An eight-week plan to finding peace in a frantic world*. New York: Rodale Books. Chapter 5.