

Mindfulness: A Helpful Method for Stress Reduction



So many people complain of feeling stressed these days. We may feel stressed by our work lives, financial concerns, relationships with family members, health concerns for ourselves or loved ones, personal challenges we may have, as well as the many demands and responsibilities we face each day.

The key to managing stress is to manage your emotional reactions to whatever is stressing you.

Most of us automatically react in very negative ways to things we find stressful, which can actually make the stress that much worse. We may react with immediate feelings of impatience, frustration, anger, fear, anxiety, worry, agitation, overwhelm, helplessness, and other negative emotions. These negative feelings are often fueled by a spiral of negative thoughts that automatically trigger in our minds, which creates a vicious cycle of increasing emotional upset.

This is where the practice of mindfulness can be very valuable in helping you to better manage your response to stress.

Mindfulness practice helps you to become more self-aware and less reactive to stress. It teaches you to become more aware of your thoughts, feelings, and body sensations in a supportive, non-judgmental way, so you come to know yourself better and learn more about your patterns of reactivity. It guides you to pause, focus on breath awareness, and observe what is going on within you so you are not "hijacked" by your automatic, conditioned thoughts and emotional reactions.

Mindfulness practice teaches you to come back to the present moment rather than get lost in thoughts about the past or projections into the future. It helps you learn to quiet the mind chatter and calm the inner agitation and allows you to regain your mental clarity and emotional balance so you can better meet whatever challenges you face.

Mindfulness practice also increases your awareness and appreciation for the wonder and mystery of life. It helps you to feel more alive each day by living more fully in the present moment, rather than just going through the motions of living and taking much for granted.

While the practice of mindfulness will not eliminate your stressful circumstances, it will begin to transform your inner experience of feeling stressed when facing difficult and challenging circumstances. It will help you to feel less stressed as you learn to develop a clearer and calmer mind and a more relaxed body so you are able to respond to stress more adaptively.

While the practice of mindfulness is simple, it is not easy. It takes focus and practice to cultivate a state of mind and body that best supports you during stressful and challenging times.

If you are interested in learning more about how mindfulness can be helpful to you in learning to better manage stress in your life, please contact me and I would be happy to guide you further on how to develop this very important life skill.

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