

## Definitions of mindfulness

‘My working definition of mindfulness is the awareness that arises through paying attention on purpose in the present moment — non-judgmentally. And the non-judgmental part is the kicker, because we’ve got ideas and opinions about virtually everything. Our consciousness is almost always colored by our likes and dislikes. All highly conditioned, habitual behaviors really comes down to this: do I like it or not, do I want more or do I want to escape? That’s all going on below the surface of awareness and it runs our lives.’

*Jon Kabatt-Zinn*

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‘Mindfulness describes a moment-to-moment awareness of your thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensations. It’s a state of being attuned to what’s going on in your body and in the surrounding environment—being in the present moment without thinking about the future or what happened in the past. An essential component of mindfulness is acceptance. Whatever you’re thinking and feeling at that moment is neither right nor wrong. You notice it, and accept it, and move onto the next moment without getting caught up in judging what you’re thinking or feeling.’

*Jason Marsh director of programs for the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC) at UC Berkeley*

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‘Mindfulness is about observation without criticism; being compassionate with yourself. When unhappiness or stress hover overhead, rather than taking it personally, you learn to treat them as if they were black clouds in the sky, and to observe them with friendly curiosity and they drift past. In essence, Mindfulness allows you to catch negative thought patterns before they tip you into a downward spiral. It begins the process of putting you back in control of your life.’

*Mark Williams and Danny Pearman in ‘Mindfulness, a Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World’*

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'The simple act of actively noticing things.'

*Ellen Langer*

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'For me, mindfulness designates any growth process based on acquiring and applying concentration, clarity, and equanimity skills, and capable of providing industrial strength effects.'

*Shinzen Young in 'What is Mindfulness?'*

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'Mindfulness is the practice of giving our full, open-hearted attentiveness to what is immediately occurring; physically and mentally, both within and around us....Described in this way, it is clear that mindfulness involves more than just the mind. First and foremost it is about being attentive to the physical sensations that occur in our bodies and noting how these shift and change in response to behaviours, mind states, emotions and environmental conditions....When we feel present and grounded in our body, we become more effortlessly here, with life, as it is occurring. Our mind becomes less distracted by conflicting obligations, and we feel more alive through our five senses.'

*Tarchin Hearn*

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'Mindfulness is natural and takes no effort; it's already there. You simply get out the way, and allow yourself to experience the full richness of the present moment. Your practice is to learn to stay with it, be patient, be curious, and make no comment. Combine this with an underlying sense of connection and compassion to all others, and wonder at the beauty around us, and life will change fundamentally.'

*Simon*