

# Change Your Mind, Change The World

Opportunities for change surround us everyday, yet are you aware of them?



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It's when we are present and engaged that more possibilities become apparent to us.

Being vacant in your body and ruminating over things in your mind, while it's been adrift in the distance, is to be mindless.

One of the greatest things for me to learn was getting out of my head - to be more mindful.

I spent decades in my head, believing every thought that came up. Going over and over the past as though I could change something that way and fearing or expecting something specific from the future.

What I was missing was the peace of living each moment mindfully.

Yes, there are times when it's required to go to the past or the future and training yourself to do that for *practicality* is the most useful way to maneuver time.

## Why Do We Want To Change The Way We Use Our Mind?

Mindfulness is now being examined scientifically and has been found to be a key element in stress reduction and overall happiness.

Professor emeritus Jon Kabat-Zinn, the founder and former director of the Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, demonstrated that practicing mindfulness can bring improvements in both physical and psychological symptoms as well as positive changes in health, attitudes, and behaviors, such as:

### Overall Well-being

By focusing on the here and now, many people find they are less likely to get caught up in worries about the future or regrets over the past. They're less preoccupied with concerns about success and self-esteem, and are better able to form deep connections with others.

### Physical Health

Scientists have discovered that mindfulness techniques help improve physical health in a number of ways. By relieving stress, mindfulness treats heart disease, lowers blood pressure, reduces chronic pain, improves sleep, and alleviates gastrointestinal difficulties.

### Mental Health

In recent years, psychotherapists have turned to mindfulness meditation as an important element in the treatment of a number of mental health issues, including: depression, substance abuse, eating disorders, couples' conflicts, anxiety disorders, and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

### New Possibilities

This is when you're open to new possibilities and opportunities. You become more aware of everything around you in a more clear way. New inventions, ideas, creativity of all kinds can show up where there seemed to be none before.

## How Is It Done?

Mindfulness can be cultivated through mindfulness meditation, or just a systematic method of focusing your attention.

- Focus on an object, plant, flower or section of a painting without labelling it and just sense it.

- Notice subtle feelings in your body without labelling them. Just be aware of them and let it go.
- Focus on your breath as it enters your nose and your windpipe, then into your lungs. Follow it slowly, step by step and just notice how it feels without judgement.
- Whenever emotions come up, feel them. Feel where they are in your body and the characteristics they have in how they feel. Don't judge them or get into the story of what brought the emotions up in the first place. Then let them go.
- Sit quietly while focusing on your breathing or on a word or sound that you repeat silently. Allow thoughts to come and go without judging them and return to your focus on your breath or sound.

I had a very spontaneous mindfulness experience one day after the passing of our beloved family cat.

Tiger loved to lay in the sun in front of our patio doors and when I would sweep the floor in that area, he'd always try to catch the broom. It was so funny.

So on this day I was sweeping in that same spot and the memory popped into my mind. While the initial memory brought me so much joy, almost immediately after, tears were streaming down my cheeks.

In that moment, I wanted to know why such a joyful moment had changed to such a sad one so quickly.

So I sat down mindfully catching the space between my thoughts. What arose were thoughts like:

- How could this have happened?
- Why didn't I know he was sick earlier?
- He was in pain and I didn't realize it.

They were causing feelings of such sadness that tears just spilled uncontrollably from my eyes.

Instead of staying with the initially beautiful emotions and letting my heart expand with joy, my thoughts swooped in to remind me:

- he's no longer here
- he suffered with pain
- he wouldn't eat or drink

By being aware of what my thoughts were, I knew I could then choose thoughts and memories that Tiger and I could both enjoy.

This article was written and researched by Lucy Crisetig.  
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<https://www.helpguide.org/harvard/benefits-of-mindfulness.htm>