

## Mindfulness

Rev. Shirley Lytle, LMHC/LPC, CSAT, CPTT

**Mindfulness is about focus. What we mediate on day and night has everything to do with our focus.**

I have a M-Div in Counseling and Family & LMHC/LPC in the state of Washington and Arizona. Living with Purpose Counseling is the name of my private practice in Bellevue, WA. I am a third-generation pastor and ordained in the AME church. I have been in ministry and psychotherapy for over 35 years supporting churches and organizations with interpersonal programs.

My therapy focus consists of anxiety, depression and marriage/couples counseling- from premarital to decoupling. I assist pastors with the dynamic challenges they experience personally and within their church communities. Please contact me regarding my self-guided programs for pre-marital or couples.

**Mindfulness has 7 principles or attitudes:**

**These attitudes are Non-judging, Patience, Beginner's mind, Trust, Non-striving, Acceptance and Letting go.** I will list the basics of these attitudes:

- **Non-judgment:** intentionally assume the mind frame of an impartial witness; to look at the events of the day with a curiosity over negativity. From a Cognitive behavioral position – take the airplane view of your situation and learn from the experience.
- **Patience:** a form of wisdom that allows us to give ourselves space and time to have our experiences; Extending grace to yourself before extending it others. Question if I have a double standard where we tend to be kind to others but fail to be kind to myself. I cannot give what I don't have.
- **A beginner's mind:** a mindset that is willing to experience everything as if it is the first time; No we cannot ignore prejudice or racial disparity, but we can find new ways to show up with integrity and a renewed mind. Having a beginner's mind says I can see my situation with clear eyes and challenge negative thoughts that are not helpful.
- **Trust:** having trust in yourself and honoring your own knowledge and experience; Consider how we have lived in a world that causes us to second guess decisions. To minimize who you are and to ignore your discernment. Reclaim and stand in your authentic self in this moment and this time.
- **Non-striving:** an attitude that eschews the usual state of trying to get somewhere or accomplish something in particular, but encourages the practitioner to simply be; It is time out for performance bias, where we need to convince people we belong somewhere. Be you everyone else is taken.

- **Acceptance:** seeing things as they really are in each moment, rather than as you would like them to be or as the worst interpretation may present; in other words, taking things as they come; Consider thinking in shades of grey instead of all or nothing. Place what you need to accept on a scale of 0 to 100. Consider how you succeeded at some degree over failing completely.
- **Letting go:** intentionally releasing control and allowing yourselves to fully participate in your experience. Let go of what you cannot control and consider your options regarding how you move forward on your terms. Consider your non-negotiables- these are specific things necessary for you to be in relationship with others. In other words, I will not compromise my integrity to be in relationship with you.

**Mindfulness gives you permission to experience your life on your terms in order to confront the triggers and live on your own terms.**

Mindfulness is deciding what you want to meditate on that empowers us to move with intention over reacting. **Using Non-judgement** when feeling guilt or shame in the moment.

**Consider mindfulness as a way to emotionally detox every single day.**

We cannot control at times what comes at us,

But we can control what we hold onto- what feeds us.

This includes the non-conscious ways that individuals attempt to give us their emotional baggage.

**What we focus or meditate on day and night has everything to do with our physical capacity and emotional currency.**

Imagine you only have \$100 per day of emotional currency.

After we deal with the things of this world-racism, sexism, ageism, the end of the day we are negative \$25. **Using Acceptance** to recognize how things really are and emotionally pushing out what we cannot influence or impact.

**Mindfulness is about being intentional regarding where you spend your energy.**

**Next Challenge for Self-care:**

**The I AM statement: Who are you want what is your purpose.**

When you are struggling you can recenter yourself by reminder yourself who you are.

We are more than what we do. When we feel that people are constantly pulling on us without someone pour back into us, it can be challenging.

**Very important to understand two concepts:**

- **Kryptonite and Blind spots**  
These can be in the form of triggers which consist of past trauma.  
It can be people, places and things that were never resolved.  
Know your capacity and enforce your boundaries.

**Give yourself about 30 minutes each day to mediate on places of gratitude.**

**Use the attitudes of mindfulness:**

**Non-judging, Patience, Beginner's mind, Trust, Non-striving, Acceptance and Letting go.**

**Take on the various principles of mindfulness to practice the art of emotional detox.**

### **Mindfulness in the “Here and Now”**

- What is happening right now?
- What makes me feel flooded? When your pulse goes over 100.
- How do I typically bring up issues or irritability or complaints?
- Do I store things up? Emotional detox
- What signals can you develop for letting others know you need personal space?
- Be sensitive to your emotional limitations.

### **Books to explore:**

- The Tools by Phil Stutz
- The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself by Michael Singer
- Building Your Resilience: Finding Meaning in Adversity by Molly Birkholm
- Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for self while caring for others. By Laura van Dernoot Lipsky
- Self-Compassion by Kristin Neff PhD

**There are several practical ways of relaxing and allowing your body to focus:**

### **5 second body scan.**

- You will be tensing and relaxing the muscles in your body in order for 5 seconds each.
- Start at the top of your body,
- Start with face muscles
- Flex for 5 seconds, then release for 5 seconds.
- Continue to work your way down your body
- Abdominal muscles, chest, thigh, calve muscles – toes and feet.
- Then move back up starting with the bottom.
- Focus on each muscle individually, breathing and releasing.
- This can be done as many times as necessary.

### **Deep Breathing-**

- Another way to set your focus is breathing.
- Breath in for a count of 5 hold for 2 breath out for 5.
- Breath peace, breath out fear- breath in healing, breath out guilt
- Breath in hope, breath out grief, breath in Calm, breath out rejection

### **Mindful Stretching**

- You can practice mindful stretching with any set of stretches that you like, but if you want a guided practice you can give yoga a try.

**Focus Mindfulness**

- Practicing mindfulness with an emphasis on focus involves looking inward to observe what is happening in your mind.
- It can be described as “eyes on the road” in that there is a singular focus on one experience.
- To keep your focus, it can be helpful to use a particular stimulus (like breath) to keep yourself grounded in the moment.

**Worry or Urge Surfing**

- **Approach your thoughts and feelings** like you’re surfing on a wave.
- Turn your awareness to the warning signs of a negative feeling like worry, anxiety, or anger approaching. Imagine the negative emotion coming at you like a wave that gets bigger and bigger as it approaches, crests as it reaches you, and falls as it moves away.
- Imagine riding that wave as it passes, and let the negative emotion go with it. Make sure to celebrate your ability to let the emotion go, but acknowledge that more will come eventually and remember to “ride the wave” again when they do (The Mindful Word, 2012).