

## Mindful in the Modern Age of Technology

Post by Vaishali  
Monday, 04 June 2012 00:58

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by Vaishali via [The Huffington Post](#)

In today's technology-saturated world, our attention is bombarded with stimuli and distractions on an incredibly wide scale. Computers and laptops, cell phones, smartphones, not-so-smart phones, the Internet, bluetooth, Blu-ray, texting, Tweeting, videogames, iPads. Even our cars and appliances have become tainted with a technological look and feel. But does all this mental movement make us a more mindful nation, community, individual?

Does anyone today even know what mindful means? Outside of the occasional practicing Buddhist or Eastern philosophical student, does anyone even consider or value mindfulness? For the sake of clarity, let's define mindfulness as a state of complete engagement with "what is" in the present moment. In our modern world, that is an experience as common as a winning lottery ticket. Instead, today what passes for experiential normal is walking into traffic while texting because you were oblivious to anything other than your keyboard, running a red light or missing a turn because you were sucked into a cell phone conversation, missing a birthday or other important social event because you were addicted to a videogame or could not break away from updating your status on a social media site.

Mindfulness, on the other hand, is being aware of what is going on inwardly: feeling your body make contact with the chair or your feet touching the ground, sensing the air temperature against your skin. It also encompasses attention directed outwardly: listening to the sounds and noises around you. Maybe it is the wind-chimes just outside your window, or the sound of a dog barking down the street, or the sound the air-conditioning makes. It is being aware of the light around you, be it an early morning ray of sunshine coming through the window or the slight flicker of the fluorescent lights overhead in your office. Being mindful is integrating all that sensory organ information into one embodied, gentle focus that actually allows you to take in more: to be completely aware of the present moment and not just reactive to a particular portion of it.

In other words, being mindful is a relationship with the information gathered by the sensory organs in a manner that heightens your experience of "what is" as opposed to the sensory organ information fragmenting, distracting and constricting your awareness into one myopic, reductionist point of focus. Like Alice in Wonderland's pills, one form of awareness makes you big and the other makes you small.

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Mindfulness allows the mind to reorganize and empty itself, much in the same way that fasting can support the body in cleansing and releasing toxins. Mindfulness is the point of meditation and deep relaxation therapies. I have been diagnosed terminal twice and have lived with extreme levels of pain and agony for many years. Practicing mindfulness allowed me to be with the pain, to live through the pain without being shattered and broken by it. When I practiced mindfulness, I was able to reduce the pain to a moment-to-moment reality. I was no longer trying to figure out how I was going to live with all of this mind-bending suffering for the rest of my life. I was not attempting to solve all future-moment problems in a single second. I was just being here, now. I only had to live with the pain one moment at a time. And that in and of itself freed me to manage the anguish each moment brought to bear.

I found it to be the same with loneliness, worry and depression. When focusing awareness on being present with "what is" there was space to process, digest and release the emotional stress. The practice of mindfulness offers the liberation of witnessing the movement of challenging forces without identifying with them as personal and contracting helplessly around them.

There is another interesting aspect of attention, and that is its fleeting potential; it is rarely here now. Even though life gives us one day at a time, one minute, one second, one moment at a time, most of us experience our attention as all over the time continuum. One instant we are thinking about a future possible moment, then within the blink of an eye we are reliving and reviewing some past event. Then, faster than the speed of thought, we are back to imagining something else ahead in the future that may or may not ever happen. Attention is so easily projected and retracted, like the breeze it can shift direction and where it will go nobody knows. Mindfulness is the practice of reseating the focus to being here now with increased consistency and ease. Mindfulness at its best rests in the present moment without an agenda. It is pure awareness minus the tyranny of the intellect.

Want to work on being a better listener? To make yourself available to really hearing those around you instead of always being preoccupied by what you want to say next? Try mindfulness. Try allowing your attention to ground you in the moment when someone else is speaking. When the attention shifts from inner dialogue mode to being aware of where your body is and the sounds around you, the receptivity to authentic listening finds a place within you to open and flourish. Sound only happens in the present moment. It does not live in the past or the future, just in the now. Mindfulness is a time-honored way of tapping into that present moment, "be here now" gateway.

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Mindfulness is a practice and it requires a willing heart and spirit. There are no shortcuts in the practice of mindfulness and no matter how advanced we get, in spite of all the great technological achievements humankind will ever make, one thing is for sure. When it comes to achieving mindfulness you will never hear someone say, "They have an app for that."

For more Vaishali, [click here](#) .

**Vaishali** is the author of *Wisdom Rising* and *You Are What You Love*. She is an international health & wellness speaker who has appeared on The Dr. Oz Radio Show and Oprah.com. Vaishali learned to transform her life from the threat of two terminal disease diagnoses, domestic abuse and financial devastation. Join Vaishali in Los Angeles July 21st & 22nd for a one or two day 'Create Your Health Holistically Through Chi Nei Tsang & Ayurveda" and/or "Spirituality 505" To: learn more [visit here](#)

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