



Mindfulness

Every Flow Tool you have been using to this point has directed you to place your attention with intention somewhere within the 15 dimension framework and more specifically on a Flow Factor designed to eliminate the noise or remove the interference between you and your craft.

As you have come to understand, there is a time to pay attention to the Future, Internally, Externally, and the Past—all of which support your Focus in the here and now. But even in the here and now your Focus can be intentionally Broad (scanning the forest) or Narrow (observing the tree). But what if we were entirely in the present moment—not looking broadly or narrowly—but simply neutral without any intent whatsoever—the simple act of just “being” in the moment without expectation, thought, emotion, quest, challenge, analysis, or any other purpose for that matter? What if you could just “be” from time to time—with no agenda whatsoever? That is the goal of this tool and it might just be the simplest yet hardest thing you have ever done.

In 2013 researchers explored the behaviors of people surfing the web and found that on average people spent about 8 seconds looking at a page before moving on to find something else. But in 2000 the number was 12 seconds. By contrast, studies found that goldfish had an average attention span of 9 seconds. So, somewhere between 2000 - 2013 the human being became slightly less focused than a goldfish. This was somewhat of a humorous finding if it wasn't so serious.

The fact is: we're losing our capacity to be present. And why does this matter? Because people who practice various techniques of meditation and mindfulness seem to benefit in many ways compared to those who do not. Among them: mindfulness people experience less stress, anxiety and depression, insomnia, and emotional reactivity. Mindful practices also lower blood pressure while increasing cognitive ability. Mindful people seem to manage pain more effectively.

Source: Harald Weinreich, Hartmut Obendorf, Eelco Herder, and Matthias Mayer: “Not Quite the Average: An Empirical Study of Web Use,” in the *ACM Transactions on the Web*, vol. 2, no. 1 (February 2008), article #5.

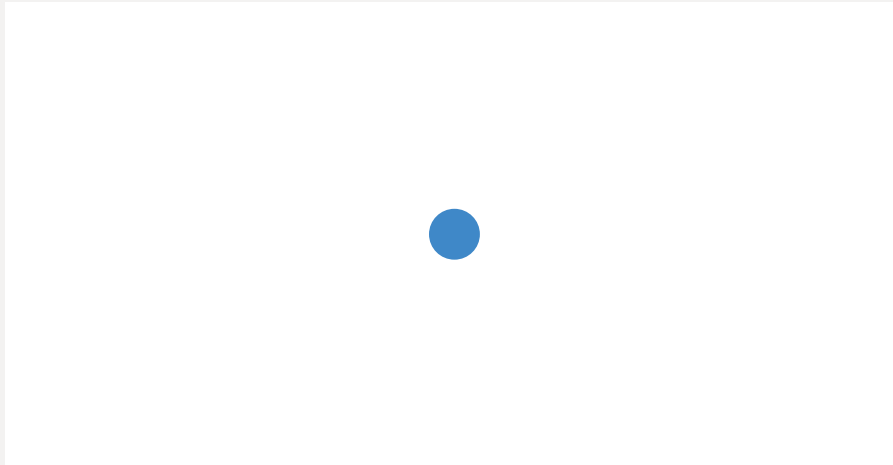
See: <https://www.healthline.com/health/mind-body/what-is-mindfulness#benefits>; <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/07-08/ce-corner> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/consumer-health/in-depth/mindfulness-exercises/art-20046356>.

As you might imagine, while the stresses of life are designed to push us to grow and evolve by various intentional acts where we place our attention, the act of “not acting” also has its purpose and place just the same. What a paradox: improving by NOT directing attention.

For the sake of tuning out everything you’ve been working on and tuning into the here and now, here are a few activities you can explore:

Activity 1:

Look at this dot and see how long you can go without thinking about anything.



How did you do? Did you break 8 seconds? Not a bad cognitive spa. But what if you could be mindful using all of your senses? Let’s explore a few examples and see what you experience.

Activity 2:

Experiment with these mindfulness strategies and modalities and notice their influence:

- 1. Meditative Breathing:** Breath in through your nose, holding it briefly, and out through your mouth (a common ratio is 4 seconds in/2 seconds hold /8 seconds out). See if you can pay attention to your breathing and nothing else. If anything distracts you stop the clock. Try again.
- 2. Body Scanning Meditation:** Scan your body from your toes all the way to your head. See if you can focus on of each body part. This not only relaxes your body but gets you to tap into physical sensations as you progress through them.
- 3. Mindful Sitting:** Try sitting in any environment and doing nothing but noticing what’s surrounding you.
- 4. Mindful discussion:** When having a conversation with someone tune out of everything but the conversation itself.

“Mindfulness means being awake. It means really knowing what you are doing.”

—Jon Kabat Zinn

- 5. Mindful Eating:** At your next meal be present for each bite. Notice the smell, the taste, the texture. Notice the process of your eating process.
- 6. Mindful Walking:** Take a brief nature walk and notice your surroundings. Notice the sensation of your walking, the wind against your face and body, and the motion of your feet. What else are you experiencing?
- 7. Journaling:** Taking time to journal your thoughts and emotions in a non-judgmental way. This improves your self-awareness.
- 8. Listening:** So often we are engaged in our own thinking when listening to others. Instead practice being totally focused on what is being said. Truly listen and observe what they are saying. Notice their body language, tone, gestures, pace, and inflection. Remember that words represent just 8% of communication. Let this be a reminder that to truly understand others, we must be fully present and mindful to take in all of the information they have to give.
- 9. Visualization:** Taking a few moments to generate positive images and be present with them is a powerful way to be mindful while tapping into thoughts and feelings.
- 10. Gratitude:** At any moment you can choose to be mindful of what you are grateful for. This practice also taps into positive thoughts and emotions that increase satisfaction and happiness.

As you can imagine, practicing mindfulness is nothing or more than tapping into any one or more your senses, but doing so in this moment. Whether you are breathing, taking your next step, noticing the objects in the room, engaging with another person, driving, shopping, eating, stretching, or sitting quietly attending to your thoughts, feelings, and other sensations, mindfulness is simply about being and experiencing right now with no other agenda attached.

If you would like to explore one or more of these mindful methods, use the chart below to see which one's work best for you:

Date:	Type of mindful activity:	Outcome of mindful activity:



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