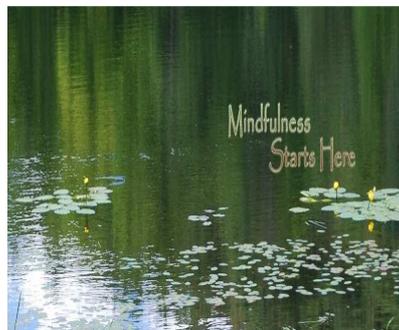


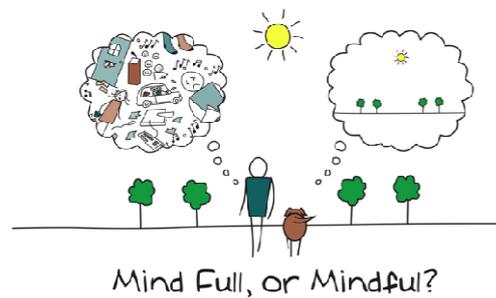


If you look in any mainstream bookstore or local library, you can find countless books written about Mindfulness. Over the next few weeks, I will write some brief articles introducing you to how Mindfulness can be implemented in your life to improve your overall happiness. All I ask, on your part, is for you to begin with a curious/beginner's mind to this new way of witnessing the world. Furthermore, for you to be patient with respect to witnessing positive results and that you practice mindfulness often in your lives.



### What is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness involves being fully aware in the present moment. Importantly, not wishing anything to be different. Think for a moment if you were now undertaking your favorite activity - your mind would be completely engaged, content and relaxed in this present moment. Interestingly, Mindfulness can even improve how we approach some of those most mundane and repetitive tasks in our lives. For example, we can learn how to bring a completely different mindset when we are doing something like washing the dishes!



Un-mindfulness, on the other hand, is when we are daydreaming, on auto pilot or experiencing monkey-mind – some researchers now describe this as our default mode. During these times our mind tends to constantly wander; consequently, we generally pay little, if any attention, to what we are doing in the present (e.g. we completely forget where we left our car keys just a moment ago) and we are more susceptible to allow ourselves to become engaged with negative thought patterns. For instance, we sometimes start to engage in self-criticism (where did I leave those blasted car keys!) and often fall into the trap of allowing our minds to revisit past negative events about how stupid we often can be.

To return ourselves to an open mindset again (to bring our attention back to the present moment) requires ourselves to be firstly conscious of exactly what problems we can bring onto ourselves when we constantly allow ourselves to drift into default mode. When we are in default mode we do not operate efficiently. What we need to learn to do immediately is to return to utilizing the C.E.O part of our mindset (the executive functioning part of our brain) so that we can get back to reasoning, planning and holding our emotions in check so that we can efficiently undertake important required tasks (find exactly where we left the keys so we can be on our way).

Researchers have found that most of us spend the majority of our time in default mode. Next week, I will explain the most effective, proven ways to bring our minds out of default mode. Until then, I would like you to undertake a curious approach this week with respect to be conscious during the week when you find yourself falling into default mode (auto pilot/ monkey mind).