

## Mindfulness as observing the weather

We can think of mindfulness as bringing a certain kind of awareness to one's internal weather system. This is helpful in two ways. First, it can be dangerous to ignore the weather, for example hiking on a hot summer day or going outside in the bitter cold. Second, when you hate the weather, that judgment makes it worse. When you realize that you can't make the weather different and just accept today's snowstorm or hot and humid weather you're not as miserable.

Mindfulness means that we are *practicing*

- *Practicing* reminds us that our understanding of what mindfulness means grows over time.

being aware of what is *coming in through our senses*

- It's like noticing my internal weather system: what am I noticing *now*?

with the *intention*

- Intention lets go of 'should' and 'expectation' and 'doing it right.'

to be *curious* and

- Think of the curiosity of a 3-year old child or a scientist who loves his/her research.

to be *kind, accepting, non-judgmental* toward ourselves in this moment.

- These words are essentially interchangeable in pointing to the attitude we are cultivating.

### Several important points about mindfulness and about meditation

1. Mindfulness is a quality of being that we *cultivate* over time. It helps us to see what is happening in the present moment more clearly, and this results in more skillful decisions.
2. Learning to notice moments of self-judgment with mindfulness *creates the space* for the possibility of making changes in how we treat ourselves and others.
3. Some of the most common benefits of mindfulness include: those mental storms happen less frequently; when they happen, the storm is generally less intense, and recovery time is quicker.
4. Meditation is practicing bringing this kind of awareness for a period of time. There are many other practices that support mindfulness: being in nature, gardening, quiet time, yoga, tai chi, certain hobbies and crafts, etc.
5. Meditation is not getting the mind to stop, but rather bringing mindful awareness to *how we are in this moment*. This brings clarity, reduces stress, and increases appreciation.

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