

Transcript

5 reasons to care about mindfulness

DR MATHIJS LUCASSEN:

Five reasons why you should care about mindfulness. Mindfulness is about focusing on the present moment, whilst at the same time accepting your feelings, thoughts, and body sensations. But why does mindfulness matter?

One, people have been doing mindfulness for centuries. Mindfulness is based on principles originating in Buddhist practices, amongst other things, and is often achieved through yoga, meditation, and breathing techniques. However, mindfulness is now recognized as something that can be of benefit, regardless of whether or not you have spiritual or religious beliefs. One way in which we can practice mindfulness is by setting aside time to sit silently and to pay attention to the sensations of our breathing.

Two, mindfulness can help you manage pain. The human condition includes pain, but the mind and body don't have to instinctively react to painful experiences. Mindfulness is a skill that allows us to be less unthinkingly responsive to what is happening in the present, so that our overall suffering might be reduced and our sense of well-being improved.

Three, most of us can get really stuck on autopilot. We're usually caught up in unhelpful patterns of thinking and can end up operating on autopilot. This is mindlessness. For instance, during mealtimes, most of us eat too quickly to think about what we're consuming or reflect upon the experience of devouring our food. We might want to consider switching off the television or computer during mealtimes and really savoring the flavors of the food we eat, and being alert to the experience.

Four, many people are already benefiting from mindfulness in the United Kingdom and abroad. The Mental Health Foundation considers mindfulness as something that has real benefit. Mindfulness has become increasingly cited in the research. Back in 1970, about two dozen articles were published related to mindfulness. By 2016, there were nearly 200,000 articles. As with any practice, it may not work for everyone, but there is increasing interest in its beneficial effects.

Five, we can all take time to stop and smell the roses. It's very easy to unintentionally enter a state of mindlessness. That means we overlook the things that might be really important to us. Hence we all need to remind ourselves about the value of mindfulness.

So the next time you take a stroll outdoors, notice how the plants and the trees change with the seasons, how the smells meet your nose, or how the temperature feels on your skin. Really appreciate being part of that particular moment.

To learn more about mental health, please click on the screen now.

[MUSIC PLAYING]