

The Benefit of Mindfulness Meditation

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Abstract. Unlike past psychological studies, which mainly concerned experimental ones such as behavior and nervous system, current research involves more traits related to attention and awareness. Hence, thanks to the growing concern for people's mental health in modern society, the concept, "mindfulness" has gained ever-increasing impotence naturally as it could cultivate my awareness and benefit my both mental and mutual health.

Keywords: Mindfulness Meditation; benefit; awareness; mental health.

1. Introduction

There are many ways to be mindful, including feeling the breath, observing the mind, walking meditation, and body scans. Positive thinking mindfulness can bring new patterns of thinking and behavior, allowing over-thinking, even habitual ruminant thinking, and anxious brains to rest and work more efficiently.

In addition, mindfulness has been shown to have a healing effect on several psychological disorders. The field of counseling and therapy is known as one of the third waves of cognitive-behavioral therapy, which goes beyond the traditional cognitive-behavioralism and creatively applies techniques such as positive thinking, acceptance, meditation, and cognitive dissociation in counseling and therapy with remarkable results.

As modern neurophysiology has been developed to measure the emotional and decisive activity of the human brain, there is a graduate tendency from concerning experimental studies to research involving more traits related to attention and awareness in the psychological field. Ethicists and neuroscientists have experimented with people's decision-making in the face of a moral dilemma while monitoring the dynamics of their brain's neural circuits. Unlike ideal expectations and assumptions, the neuroimaging results suggest that there appears to be no evidence for a uniquely "moral brain" [1], and the decisions participants made when they were involved in moral decision-making tasks are independent of their rational thinking will. When people evaluate moral permissibility or appropriateness, the most active regions of the brain are those concerned with emotion and perceptual awareness [2].

The conclusion is quite disappointing but true: what can be deduced from the research--- the relationship between the activity of emotional brain areas and people's choices within moral dilemmas---is that every so-called test of morality is actually controlled and determined by physiological reflexes. This implies that morality is engraved in human genes and blended with various sociocultural immersions and distinctly personal experiences. In layman's words, what people think of as an intense mental struggle is just a mechanism of personal nature and instinctive pretensions. In that case, mindfulness is a good choice to avoid unnecessary tension and anxiety. As a basic human ability, one of the basic human abilities, being mindful means being fully present, aware of where we are, and what we are doing, and not overreacting or being totally indifferent to what is happening around us.

2. Definition and history of mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness refers to an approach that was developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues beginning in 1979 at the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Worcester, Massachusetts [Kabat-Zinn 2011]. Originating from Buddhism, however, mindfulness has been dereligiousized and deritualized, leaving only psychological or neuroscientific methods, which are widely used in various fields.

Initially, mindfulness has long been an important component of efficient medical practice, which means that it could create positive perceptions that complement the useful treatment. According to David S. Ludwig and Jon Kabat-Zinn on Mindfulness in Medicine, mindfulness has been proved to “influence susceptibility to, or ability to recover from, disability and disease [3].” and include a strong and unique healthy impact on mindfulness meditation on the brain function. Adversity has been on us from the moment people are born, and overcoming it has been a lifelong mission. For example, hunger and exhaustion are two of the most challenging tasks for babies who first arrive, and later, toddlers start to struggle with language and self-regulation. As children grow up from adolescence to teenagers, their daily lives become more and more complicated with increasing troubles: interpersonal relationships, adapting to school life, learning pressure, and exercising independence---so many elements of growth--- with naturally bring pressure to everyone, let alone the stress at work when adults end years of school and enter the society. Hence, it is necessary to manage society by self-regulation, and undoubtedly, mindfulness could be associated with clinical treatment for psychological wellness. As for depression, a series of researches shows that a 60-week follow-up mindfulness-based treatment for patients could effectively reduce the risk of relapse [Kuyken et al. 2016].

3. Experience and feelings of self-mindfulness meditation

Taking my own experience as an example: when I started my journey to university, I was required to take a variety of courses outside my field of major, and I believe that so do a great number of students around the world. I realize that some of them are unwilling to get in touch with those optional courses, which prompts them to prefer learning to pass, instead of learning those courses for sake of learning: whatever form educators is used to test students--- like an exam, a paper submission, or group presentation work---they will tend to focus on the assignment itself rather than on the accumulation of knowledge or understanding the subject outside students’ fields of study. With mindfulness, I believe that some students’ attitudes will change in a positive direction: they could discover the fun in the process of learning unfamiliar things, and the blending of various methodologies from different subjects can completely exemplify this argument. In other words, the familiar context in the field outside the major could help students have a deeper understanding, such as the interrelationship between math and economics, or literature and history. Mindfulness facilitates students to transfer a methodology and knowledge from one major to the other so that they could understand the essence of both aspects of different courses, and the process of learning is always more pleasing than having learned.

But honestly, I had created suffering and problems in my own mind until I managed to fully throw myself into the experience rather than the results themselves: the process of experience outweighs the latter and is definitely more revealing. When I was a freshman in high school, I had little confidence in spoken English due to my self-accentism. The fear of “mispronunciation” introduces a lot of stress and became an obstacle for me to talk in front of the public. It became even worse as I started my new chapter of entering the university, the fear of uncertainty led to mental illness status, resulting in a term withdrawal for health reasons. As I had to take the reduced coursed load, the mindfulness sessions that I took enabled me to be responsive with attention rather than a distraction in order to explore the power of uncertainty. I sat or stood with instructions in order to be engaged in creative tasks. Partially it is the reason I mentioned above that serves as a booster for me to declare Linguistics as a major several years ago: to overcome so-called anxiety and depression. In order words, mindfulness worked, and then I was conscious that linguisticism or "accenticism" should not come first in the language study compared to the context, even the culture, and history hidden behind. Through the awareness tipping process, I began to allow myself to speak in public confidently, like giving a presentation or actively participating in class. Hence, the ability of non-judgment gained through mindfulness facilitates me to stop holding “right” or “wrong” .

4. The importance of mindlessness and focus

Besides the importance of mindfulness, the opposite of it, mindlessness also serves as an experience that reminds people to point it out as a fault. It is common for most people, including me, to precisely recall the mindless behavior they have acted. When I was an absolute beginner of a Chinese instrument called guqin for a certificate, what I did at first was merely imitate the demanding skills performed by my teacher, rather than read through the musical notation. As expected, I failed to play beautiful music with my drizzling skills. My mindlessness is limited by ability, which makes it challenging to take up a new thing: I am lost in repeating the daily practice without figuring out the enjoyment: just reciting the various pages and accomplishing tasks. Mindlessness expends passion as a form of self-denial, therefore it is necessary to be mindful with the ability to accept and appreciate the thing itself. Finally, I gave up on the skills that I could not manage; instead, I started to enjoy music for releasing emotions: detecting the meanings that the composers intended to deliver. Exceedingly differently, I felt that I could play it much better with enthusiasm. A similar example has emerged in another book written by Thich Nhat Hanh ^[4]. In reference, if the mission of washing dishes is to wash the dishes themselves, it is expected to result in cleaner washing compared to those that have clean dishes. Mindfulness makes people focus on their own qualities at the moment (Original work published in 1987).

Last but not least, being mindful enriches my experience because I am willing to change regardless of relative potential failure when I am more likely to regard things around me from different perspectives. Writing here, I cannot help to recall all of the memories about my transfer from college to university. I am very grateful that I became mindful when I was poised at the crossroads of my life, which allowed me to learn how to face “failure” and an uncertain future. Mindfulness gave me the courage to let go of “I know I cannot work it” ; instead, I know that I tried, and it depends on if it would work that way.

Starting with Buddhism, mindfulness has been researched and popularized as to how it can drive your inner life. To sum up, I always believe that the improvement of the mind is an important and worthy goal, which can govern the most fundamental emotions and thoughts to observe the world, including the outlooks about the mind, values, and motivation. With thoughtful consideration instead of a whim, being mindful is a necessary and worthy goal: deepen thought and insight, deal with negative emotions, and attain what people want in life.

5. Conclusion

To be mindful is to be aware of the experience of the moment with acceptance at the state of being completely focused on the present moment, being mindful, paying attention to or being aware of the present moment, paying attention to the present moment, non-judgementally to consciousness and thoughts. In a counseling setting, it can be also regarded as a form of attention training, a scientific method of training the brain to focus on the present moment, while it can be also used as a routine practice in daily life. When we feel overly anxious or depressed, we are always immersed in negative information, worry about the future: "I know it's useless for me to think about it, but I just can't help thinking and worrying about it". At this point, mindfulness dissipates the clutter, pulls out the memories of the past or the worries about the future, and allows you to live in the present moment without distractions and focus on the present moment.

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