

Focusing on Your Presence of Mind with Mindful Affirmations

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What is Mindfulness?

The concept of mindfulness has actually been around for thousands of years. Its origins can be found in the earliest Buddhist teachings (2500 years ago). It has been used over the centuries in traditional eastern contemplative practices like Hatha Yoga and other meditation practices. Zen masters taught mindfulness to enlightened monks in the ultimate acceptance of their own existence.

However, the way we use the term here, Mindfulness should not be confused with inward focused mysticism or spirituality. Today Mindfulness not only refers to the *acceptance* of one's reality but what one *does* with that reality. As we use it, Mindfulness is the skill of living in the moment and relating to the world in a nonjudgmental and reflexive as oppose to reactive fashion.

In recent years, science and westernization have adapted Mindfulness so that it can be cultivated daily, used without years of practice, and be compatible and useful within almost any modern human activity. **Mindfulness is simply an introspective method for grounding your thoughts, emotions and behaviors in the reality you are currently experiencing, so you can stand back, observe, understand yourself more fully and take care of your needs.**

The act of Mindfulness is the ability to focus your attention on your inner thoughts while letting go of past or future worries. It will take some practice to witness your thoughts popping up and then going away without self-criticism, but it can be achieved by most people without extensive training, just daily practice. For instance, just watching your breathing can have a calming effect on your mind and slowly restore your sense of well-being. When you quiet your thoughts about what you have to do and your feelings dictating what you want to do, your intuitive mind takes over. Here you gently move from dwelling on the past or future to being focused on what you are doing right at this moment. Being in this state of Mindfulness allows you to listen to your gut and discover what you truly need. Mindfulness allows you to acknowledge your feelings, witness your thoughts and redirect yourself away from distraction.

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We live in era of constant upheaval and change. Actually, most of us get through life on autopilot. Our brain gets filled with restless ideas and memories that are hard to keep track of especially when we become stressed. We tend to "tune out" and just "try to get through the day."

Everyone's mind naturally wanders, but when you practice Mindfulness you are *aware* of your mind wandering and can gradually redirect it back to the present. Mindfulness allows you to gently quiet all the noise in your head. Paying attention to your breathing, tracking your thoughts, or scanning your body for tension are just few of the many ways to reduce mental chatter. With Mindful practice, you can learn to remove the tendency to jump to conclusions, make assumptions and idle judgments, and recognize that your negative or positive feelings are coming from you and not the external world around you.

Dr Marsha Linehan, founder of Evidence Based Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) says we need to adopt a "Reflexive Mind" in order to cope with distress and change. Here, your mind is trained to act like Teflon, nothing sticks to it long enough to attach. Mindfulness has been shown to bring calmness and patience to those who embrace the practice. People who practice daily Mindfulness are processing life rather than analyzing its content. The ultimate state of Mindfulness is *mental resiliency*.

In fact Mindfulness can also help you stay focused and aware even when you are engaged in mundane activities such as driving, eating, and walking. Research has shown its positive effects on boosting the immune system, managing pain, reducing stress and cultivating personal awareness.

A beginning Mindful sequence may involve:

- § Sitting in a quiet and comfortable location
- § Thinking about where you are and what you are doing at this very moment
- § Closing your eyes
- § Allowing thoughts about what already or will happen move in and out of your consciousness with your non-judging mind and gentle persuasion
- § Focusing on the sensations of breathing each breath and noticing what that does to your belly, nostrils and lungs
- § Making note of every thought and feeling that comes up and then returning to your breathing to further anchor your attention
- § Observing your mind but, not getting stuck on any one particular thought or feeling as your breathing becomes more natural, full and steady
- § Opening your eyes and looking at something you have seen before with a fresh perspective.

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What are Affirmations?

Affirmations are declarative statements about something you now know, did, or intend to do. When you use an Affirmation you are not only being aware of your thoughts, but you are taking conscious control of them. When you say, write, read or even think of an Affirmation, you are, in effect, taking steps to acknowledge what is worthwhile about you.

Studies have shown that most of our daily thoughts are negative. Working with Affirmations makes you aware of how self-defeating thoughts chip away at your creativity. Affirmations help you create a new reality and visualize what you essentially want out of life.

Negativity can threaten your health and happiness. In fact, when you are not paying attention to your thinking, you are more liable to pessimistic and not realistic or optimistic. The more you are aware of what you are actually telling yourself, the more upbeat you will sound. Using command based phraseology, keeping the Affirmation in the present tense and making it reality based offers you more reinforcement. Repeatedly telling yourself that you are, or will be, deserving, healthy, and successful, the more your positive determination will flow. You're more likely to see a bounce in your step and a lift in your life by using daily Affirmations.

What are Mindful Affirmations?

"Mindful Affirmations" (introduced in my book "[Presence of Mind - Mindful Affirmations](#)"), are not just inspirational sayings but, are thought provoking phrases that loosely derive from Mindfulness ideas of Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, who founded the medical and meditative models of Mindfulness. He came up with Eight Stations of Mindful Meditation:

- § Smile
- § Breathe
- § Arrive
- § Attend
- § Find the essence
- § Slow down
- § Listen
- § See things with a new perspective

Mindful Affirmations incorporate one or more of these active stations into each passage in order to support the Mindful notion of keeping an "open mind," where possibilities have no limits. They are not meditations as used by Dr Zinn and others. Mindful Affirmations take ordinary Affirmations like "*Your self-confidence will carry you on,*" and make them more **reality** based so

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the reader can gradually acknowledge and accept the truth about their life. An example of expanding the above Affirmation into a Mindful Affirmation would be *"I barely thought of my own self-worth until I saw myself going backwards in life. Letting myself go and losing all I had gained made me feel stuck and dependent. I now see how harnessing my self-esteem can help me not only find my way but, carry me through life."*

This phraseology helps to evoke not only the reader's subconscious mind, but keeps the reader focused on the key of Mindfulness, just being in the moment.

Pain is about growth and is inevitable. Unfortunately, too many of us have become addicted to suffering ... but suffering is optional! Mindful Affirmations make our conscious and subconscious minds look at our pain and release our fears about the unknown. Our inner subconscious mind has the desire for change but doesn't know just what to change or how to do it. Our outer conscious mind desires to be relaxed, in balance and accept our state of affairs. When working in concert our two minds remove expectations/accusations and allow us to gently examine our feelings, thoughts and behaviors about the past without dwelling or being judgmental.

When Mindful Affirmations are written in the first person they can help the reader not only empathize with the writer, but slowly begin to accept and validate their own pain, saying inside themselves, *"I guess I am not alone."* Mindful Affirmations not only break down the reader's self-imposed isolation but offer them options for change such as in the passage, *"I now see that responding rather than reacting will build a healthy interpersonal world for myself."*

It has been my clinical experience that each time I ask a patient to read a Mindful Affirmation, they mention to me that they now see their old problem in a different way. One of the core values of Mindfulness is to be able to see yourself and the world around you with a *"new set of eyes."*

The focus is on accepting, commitment and learning (refers to "ACT" therapy) a new way of living or looking at life. Mindful Affirmations help the reader's mind stay engaged while supporting the surrender of old baggage and unfulfilled expectations.

Mindful Affirmations use positive assertions like *"I feel happy,"* but allow our present awareness to reinforce our declaration giving us clarity of thought to see our options. It is a coping strategy. For example, the statement *"When I am stressed I make myself sit and take notice of my surroundings,"* supports your inner desire to stay calm and centered rather than be overwhelmed and scattered.

The book takes Affirmations to the next level by first talking about how "I" (the reader) arrived at the state of **not** being able to take control, what resulted, and how "I" plan to take command of my life in the future.

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Using these three components to the Affirmation not only supports the drive to do better, but plants the seed more firmly that “I” will make progress and “I” can learn from my past. Mindful Affirmations are cyclical in nature. Each time a negative feeling comes up the reader has a choice to make good or bad decisions. The truth is that we are more likely to accomplish what we set out to do, if we are keenly aware of how the past made us feel and what consequences may lie ahead.

In the book “[Presence of Mind - Mindful Affirmations](#)”, beautiful images and words are paired together to help stimulate your thoughts while gently lowering your subconscious resistance to being happy and successful. The journal pages allow you to explore your own ideas, blocks, and recovery needs. When you begin to embrace reality, you learn to believe that anything that you truly need is approachable, thinkable, and doable.

Mindful Affirmations help you not only face reality, but look beyond it by challenging your old mental dialogue with a new perspective.

Mindful Affirmations allow you to step back from life enough to examine regrets and embrace new options.

Mindful Affirmations help you discover that who you really *are* is what keeps you alive, vital and present.

Be sure to check out these articles/books in the [Real Psych Solutions Store](#):

[Presence of Mind - Mindful Affirmations](#)

(available as an eBook/PDF, or hardcopy (with lots of additional journal pages))

Also

[Getting Past Your Past](#)
[How to Stop Worrying & Start Living](#)

plus many more items by other well-qualified authors.

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