

## **The Benefits of Mindfulness and Living in the Present**

So many of us go through each day of our life on “auto-pilot”, waking up, brushing our teeth, showering, coffee, commute, work, come home and start all over.

Bringing ourselves to a complete awareness of every experience from moment to moment is called mindfulness, and it is the only way to experience truly being alive.

Leaving yesterday to yesterday, and tomorrow to tomorrow, we learn to face each moment of each day without judgment and in direct contact with the actual experience.

The benefits of mindfulness and living in the present helps us:

- to be fully present, in the here and now
- to safely experience unpleasant feelings and thoughts
- to have more balance, less emotional upsets
- to become more connected to ourselves, to others and the world around us
- to increase our self-awareness
- to become less reactive to unpleasant experiences
- to learn the distinction between ourselves and our thoughts
- to become aware of what we are avoiding and why
- to develop self-compassion and self-acceptance
- to have direct contact with the world, rather than living in our thoughts
- to learn that the only constant is change; that thoughts and feelings come and go like the weather
- to experience more peacefulness and calm

Sholto Radford, founder of Wilderness Minds, which runs mindfulness courses in the outdoors says “Ideally mindfulness in daily life is a combination of formal practice, which involves setting aside time to engage with mindfulness practices such as sitting meditation, ‘body scanning’ and mindful movement, as well as informal practice, which is bringing mindfulness into everyday activities,” he explains. The formal practice, he says, helps support the informal practice.

Practicing mindfulness in our daily lives can be found in some simple exercises. Being aware of our surroundings (nature people and architecture), meditation, active listening, expressing kindness, being still and dedicating time to “just being”, slowing down, and not sweating the small stuff are all ways to begin the mindfulness practice.