

Jon Kabat-Zinn

MINDFULNESS THINKERS · MINDFULNESS-BASED STRESS REDUCTION

Bringing mindfulness into medicine and everyday life

Jon Kabat-Zinn (born 1944) is an American scientist and meditation teacher. Trained in molecular biology, he drew on Buddhist meditation and yoga to create Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) in 1979, a secular programme for people living with stress, pain and illness. His work helped inspire later approaches such as mindfulness-based cognitive therapy.

on purpose

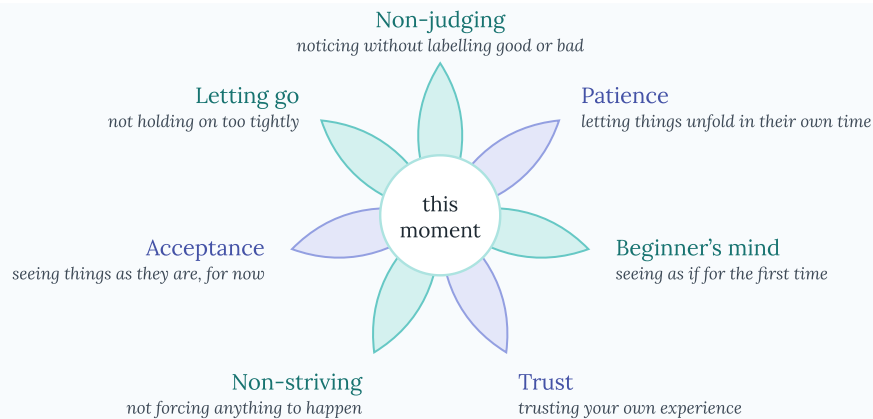
in the present moment

without judging

How he described paying attention mindfully (Kabat-Zinn, 1994), in brief

01 Seven attitudes of mindfulness

original illustration of the foundations he described



02 What an MBSR course involves

formal and everyday practice

Body scan

Moving attention slowly through the body, noticing sensations without trying to change them.

Sitting meditation

Resting attention on the breath, then widening to sounds, thoughts and feelings.

Mindful movement

Gentle stretching and yoga, done with awareness and within your own limits.

Walking meditation

Walking slowly, noticing each step and the contact of feet with the ground.

Everyday mindfulness

Bringing the same attention to ordinary tasks, such as eating or washing up.

Group learning

Weekly sessions over about eight weeks, with home practice between them.

03 A life's work in brief

1944

Born in New York City

1971

PhD in molecular biology,
MIT

1979

Founds the Stress
Reduction Clinic and MBSR

1990

Full Catastrophe Living

1994

*Wherever You Go, There
You Are*

1995

Founds the Center for
Mindfulness

04 Try it gently

a three-minute pause, and a simple record

A SHORT PAUSE · INFORMED BY MINDFULNESS-BASED APPROACHES

- 1 Arrive. Notice what is here: thoughts, feelings, sensations.
- 2 Gather. Bring attention to a few breaths, or to your feet on the floor.
- 3 Widen. Sense the whole body, then return to your day.
- ~ When the mind wanders, notice where it went and gently come back. Wandering is part of practice.

Day	What I practised	What I noticed

Which attitude feels most helpful, or most difficult, for me?

To bring to my next session

A NOTE ON THE EVIDENCE

A review of 47 trials with active control groups found moderate evidence that mindfulness programmes can reduce anxiety, depression and pain, with modest effects that were generally similar to other active treatments (Goyal et al., 2014). Focusing inward can sometimes feel uncomfortable, particularly after trauma; practices can be shortened or adapted, for example with eyes open.

SOURCES

Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E. M. S., Gould, N. F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D. D., Shihab, H. M., Ranasinghe, P. D., Linn, S., Saha, S., Bass, E. B., & Haythornthwaite, J. A. (2014). Meditation programs for psychological stress and well-being: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174(3), 357–368. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.13018>

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. Hyperion.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2013). *Full catastrophe living: Using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain, and illness* (Rev. ed.). Bantam Books. (Original work published 1990)