

## Exactly What is Mindfulness?

### MINDFULNESS

We spend a lot of time developing our intelligence in school and strengthen our bodies through sports or exercise. But we give our mind/brain very little attention. In fact, where do you think your mind/brain even is? Most of us aren't exactly sure. When we develop and strengthen our mind/brain we are increasing our ability to focus, recognize and manage our emotions, make better decisions, and empathize in our relationships.

### DEFINITION OF MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is paying attention to our experience in a way that allows us to respond rather than react. We see our experiences without judging them as right or wrong. It is a quality of inner stillness that is always available, even when our life circumstances feel out of our control and chaotic. It is possible to be mindful/aware/pay attention to everything in our experience including anything we experience through our five senses, as well as our thoughts and emotions.

### RELEVANCE

For mindfulness to work, we have to really do it. And in the beginning, it might seem weird or pointless. Although keep in mind that this is new for everyone and we are all doing the same thing, so you are not alone in this mindfulness experiment. If we don't do it, we can't determine if it is useful for ourselves or not. So, here is a list of a few ways that you might find mindfulness to be useful and relevant in your own life.

- >Said something you wish you could take back?
- >Done something that you later regretted?
- >Felt angry and out of control?
- >Felt nervous or anxious about an exam or performance?
- >Been in a bad mood but not sure why?
- >Been in a bad mood but not even sure what emotion it is?
- >Felt like you need a break and want everyone to just leave you alone?
- >Had trouble falling asleep because your mind/brain won't be quiet?
- >Been accidentally spacing out?
- >Noticed that you do much better at anything when you are really focused?

Our emotions are continually changing. Difficult emotions like anger, fear, worry, and stress release chemicals in our brain that prevent us from focusing, learning, and can make us react and say and do things we didn't want to. Mindfulness stops these chemicals.

These examples and explanations may encourage you to practice mindfulness to discover for yourself if it is helpful for your life. *It's YOUR choice and only YOUR Choice.*