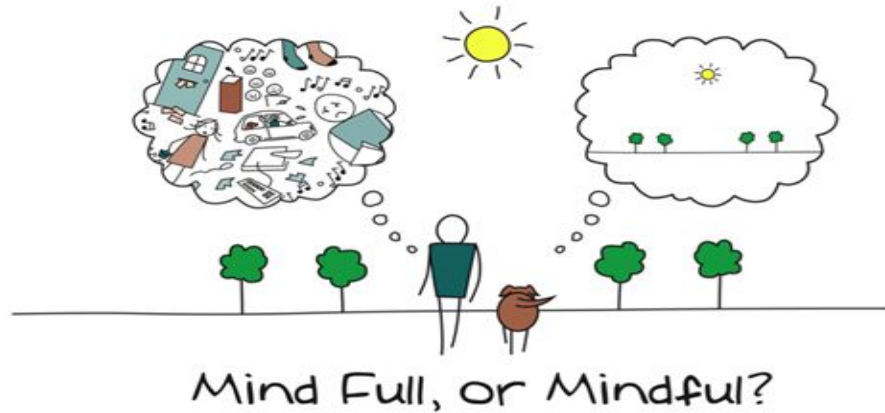


Communicating Mindfully: A Parent's Guide to Practical Techniques

The Dorm Parent Collective

Mindfulness

- Take a moment and think about some words, phrases, or images you associate with being mindful.
- Contrast that with some words, phrases, or images you associate with being full-minded.



Mindfulness: Definitions

“Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.” (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)

“Paying attention to the moment & accepting one’s experience.” (Davies, 2018)

“Waking up from a life on automatic & being sensitive to novelty in everyday experiences.” (Siegel, 2007)

“Process of openly attending, with awareness, to one’s present moment experience.” (Creswell, 2017)

What mindfulness is not:

In contrast to: (Creswell, 2017)

- Wandering mind
- Autopilot mode
- Suppressing or avoiding unwanted experiences
- Engaging in self-criticism or criticism of others
- Ruminating about the past
- Worrying about the future



“Time Travel”

Two common features in definitions

- Attention & awareness of present moment
- Attitude of openness & acceptance

Key Attitudes

Beginner's Mind: never experienced this conversation or situation before, stop “mind-reading”/predicting

Curiosity: approach with interest, reveal new layers, a desire to learn more; ask ?’s

Non-judgment: create space between what’s happening and how you think or feel about it, avoid labels good/bad/neutral

Acceptance: acknowledge and allow whatever is to be, accept reality

Patience: accept delay, WAIT (why am I talking?)

Trust: struggles can teach you something, emotions provide helpful insights

Letting go: not holding onto, not averting, not rehearsing what you plan to say next

Non-striving: pause, release physical tension (relax face/muscles), take a deep breath

Compassion: gentleness, kindness, relate to another’s experience, brings us together (vs. comparison – wall that separates us)

Gratitude: thankfulness

Putting Key Attitudes to Use

How does mindfulness connect to specific communication skills?

Mindfulness = nonjudgmental awareness. In communication this might include awareness of what others are saying (listening), awareness of your interpretations (assumptions/judgments), and awareness of your own needs/reactions.

If we can apply the key attitudes to our communications, we can increase our presence and therefore the productiveness of the conversation.

Using skills that break down the process of conversing about challenging topics can allow for more space for this, leading to less volatile – or stifled – interactions, and more ability to accept whatever the conversation brings up.

Applying Mindfulness to Communication: Everyday Skills

“I Statement” Reflection

I FEEL STATEMENT

I feel _____ (emotion) _____

I feel this way when _____ (describe event or situation objectively) _____

I feel this way because I think _____ (briefly describe thoughts) _____

My hope for myself is _____ (describe something in your control) _____

My hope for you is _____ (describe something out of your control) _____

REFLECTION

I hear that you feel _____ (repeat the other persons emotion) _____

You feel this way when _____ (repeat the other person's event) _____

You feel this way because you think _____ (repeat other's thoughts) _____

Your hope for yourself is _____ (repeat the others hope for self) _____

Your hope for me is _____ (repeat the other's hope for you) _____

Ask the other, “Did I get that right?”

The “I Statement” reflection embodies key mindfulness attitudes of acceptance, compassion and curiosity to slow down and enhance understanding in communication.

“I Statement Reflection” involves two parties working together to listen to and validate each other.

The purpose of this tool is not to convince another of something, but to simply allow both parties to feel heard.

DEAR MAN

DEAR MAN emphasises the key attributes of non-judgement, non-striving, and assertiveness to enhance the chances of getting our needs met.

WHAT

Describe (just the facts!)

Express (how you feel about those facts)

Assert (your needs)

Reinforce (the benefit to all)

HOW

Mindful (aware of body language)

Assertive (no apologies for your needs)

Negotiate (find the middle ground)

Discussion Questions

What feels like the most difficult part of embracing mindfulness in communication for you?

What was a recent communication mishap that may have had a different outcome had one or both parties been able to embrace a mindfulness approach?