



RESILIENCE & EQUANIMITY

Living Well

□ MEDITATION

Connect with yourself more, don't try to ignore what you are feeling or thinking. One of the best ways for grounding yourself is through meditation. Descartes was wrong when he said "I think, therefore I am". It's more accurate to say "I watch myself think, therefore I am".

Formal mindfulness meditation involves allowing our focus to be guided towards certain kinds of awareness, such as of our breathing, bodily sensations, feelings, thoughts and sounds. It is completely normal to find that your mind tends to wander away from your focus of attention so that, from time to time, you must bring it back again. Gradually as we practice meditation we find that our focus and concentration become stronger.

Identify where the opportunity is in your typical day to find one minute of "me" time where you can meditate. Keep this going every day for 1 week. When you feel ready, increase your sitting time to 5, 10 and 15 minutes as you find beneficial.

Download and experiment with some mindfulness and meditation apps – there are lots to choose from, most of them excellent, so persevere until you find the right one for you. Perhaps start with 'The Mindfulness App' and try the body scan or 3-minute meditation. 'Smiling Mind', 'Breathe', 'Simply Being' and 'Headspace' are also great.

Try to make meditation an everyday practice – it will assist you in ways you might not even recognise – lowering your blood pressure, increasing your cardiovascular health, building your self-control (useful for eating habits).

Loving-Kindness meditation focuses on developing feelings of goodwill, kindness and warmth towards others and has been shown in research to:

- Increase positive emotions and decrease negative emotions
- Decrease migraines, chronic pain and PTSD
- Increase grey matter volume in the brain
- Activate empathy and emotional processing in the brain
- Increase compassion, empathy and social connection
- Curb self-criticism

"DOWNLOAD AND EXPERIMENT WITH SOME MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION APPS."

- Remember the analogy of the 'oxygen mask' – if you are not attending to your emotional needs, you are likely to experience emotional burn out, giving out to everyone else. Find a way to put your needs first – even if this means occasionally saying 'no' to people you care about.
- Expressing your emotions constructively to those closest to you can be really challenging. But well worth it if you can get this right! Many people opt for avoidance as the better alternative to creating a conflict – neither is great and there is a middle path. Read "Crucial Conversations – tools for talking when the stakes are high" by Patterson et al.

□ ANXIETY / DEPRESSION / STRESS / MOOD DISORDERS

Get professional help from your GP or ask for a referral to a specialist therapist, psychologist, psychiatrist or mindfulness-based stress reduction counsellor. There is no reason to endure prolonged anxiety or depression, they are highly treatable conditions with several different therapeutic and medical interventions available which have proven efficacy. Tell someone you trust, and ask them for some help.