

HELPFUL ATTITUDES



Non-judgment: Mindfulness is cultivated by assuming a gentle stance of impartial witness to your own experience. This requires that you become aware of the constant stream of evaluative and judgmental thoughts you have and then try to step back. With a non-judging mind, things are neither *good* nor *bad*, but simply the way they are.

Patience: Patience demonstrates that you understand and accept that things have their own schedule for unfolding. People tend to be particularly impatient with themselves, expecting that they *should* be able to calm the mind, stop the thoughts, or get over whatever's upsetting them. Nature has a *mind of its own* and patience allows you to simply observe the unfolding of the process over time.

Beginners' Mind: To see the richness of the present moment, it helps to cultivate a mind that's willing and able to see everything as if for the very first time. If you think you know it all, then there's nothing left to discover. With beginners' mind, the joys of the world as they unfold around us become new again, as if we were all children, freed from our old expectations.

Trust: Living in a world of experts can lead you to begin doubting yourself. Innately you are the best expert on you; for matters of personal growth, it's far better to be open to your own feelings and intuition than to get caught up in outside authorities. In mindfulness practice, if something doesn't feel right to you, pay attention and examine your feelings. Trust your intuition and your own basic wisdom, goodness, and ability to work through challenges.

Non-striving: Mindfulness is different from other human activity; we do it not with a goal or destination in mind, but rather with a mind toward simply being, not doing. There's no goal other than for you to be conscious of yourself as you are. The paradoxical aspect of mindfulness practice is that only by truly letting go of striving toward a goal or outcome will you potentially reach that outcome.

Acceptance: Acceptance involves seeing things as they actually are. You may not like it, but if that's the way things are, so they are. Acknowledging the truth of your life is the first in any genuine process of change. Through acceptance, you cease struggling to change things that are beyond your ability to control, and you free yourself from the weight of denial.

Letting Go: Letting go — also known as *nonattachment* — is fundamental to mindfulness practice. It involves recognizing and welcoming the ever-changing nature of experience. The human tendency to hold on to some parts of our experience and reject others is a root cause of suffering and distress. Letting go allows us to live in greater harmony with inevitable change.

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