

THE NINE ATTITUDES OF MINDFULNESS

According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, there are nine attitudes of mindfulness that serve as the foundation of mindfulness. These attitudes are described as follows.

1. **Non-Judging.** Practicing the attitude of “Non-Judging” involves being an impartial witness to your own experience. Choose a specific event that usually causes stress and see if you can simply notice the stream of judging or critical mind...good/bad/neutral. Don’t try to stop it; simply be aware of it.
2. **Patience.** “Patience,” as an attitude of mindfulness, refers to letting things unfold in their own time. You might think of how a child may try to help a butterfly emerge by breaking open a chrysalis, but chances are the butterfly won’t benefit from this help. When practicing patience with ourselves, we might inquire, “Why rush through some moments in order to get to other ‘better’ ones? Each one is your life in that moment.” Patience allows us to be completely open to each moment, accepting its fullness, knowing that like the butterfly, things will emerge in their own time.
3. **Beginner’s Mind.** Adopting “Beginner’s Mind” allows you to see everything as if for the first time. Too often we let our thinking and our beliefs about what we ‘know’ stop us from seeing things as they really are. Each moment is unique and contains unique possibilities. Being receptive to new possibilities enables us to avoid getting stuck in a rut of our own beliefs. Try adopting “Beginner’s Mind” with someone you know by seeing this person with fresh eyes. Try it with problems...with the sky...with the dog...with a co-worker.

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4. **Trust.** The attitude of “Trust” involves developing a basic trust in yourself and your feelings. It means trusting in your own authority and intuition, even if you make some ‘mistakes’ along the way. Practice honoring your feelings. Take responsibility for yourself and your own well-being.
5. **Non-Striving.** The best way to achieve your own goals is to adopt the attitude of “Non-Striving”. This means to back off from striving and instead start to really focus on carefully seeing and accepting things as they are, moment by moment. With patience and regular practice, movement toward your goal will unfold as intended.
6. **Acceptance.** The attitude of “Acceptance” refers to a willingness to see things as they are. We often waste a lot of time and energy denying what is fact. When we do this, we are trying to force situations to how we would like them to be. This creates more tension and prevents positive change occurring. Acceptance is not passive; it does not mean you have to like everything and abandon your principles and values. It does not mean that you should stop trying to break free of your own self-destructive habits or give up your desire to change and grow. Start by accepting yourself as you are; then you can really change. You are much more likely to know what to do and have an inner conviction to act when you have a clear picture of what is truly happening.
7. **Letting Go.** “Letting Go”, as an attitude of mindfulness, is a way of letting things be, of watching and accepting things as they are. If you find it particularly difficult to let go of something because it has such a strong hold on your mind, you can direct your attention to what ‘holding’ feels like. Holding on is the opposite of letting go. We practice ‘letting go’ every night when we go to sleep.

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8. **Gratitude.** The ability and willingness to see positive value in your experience and to appreciate all that life has to offer is the attitude of “Gratitude”. Gratitude is an antidote to many aversions such as feeling unappreciated, not being satisfied, etc. When you focus on and appreciate all that you *do* have, you are practicing ‘gratitude’. When you take a moment to appreciate the beauty of nature, you are practicing ‘gratitude’. Gratitude is cultivated through everyday experiences that you may take for granted. For example, the next time you breathe, take a moment to feel ‘gratitude’ for the breath that gives life. The next time you interact with a loved one, take a moment to notice one thing you really appreciate about that person. Feel the gratitude in your heart. Gratitude also helps you savor what may otherwise feel mundane. The next time you do laundry, feel a sense of gratitude that the result is clean, fresh clothing.
9. **Generosity.** “Generosity”, as an attitude of mindfulness, is a way of giving yourself over to life. Generosity is a self-less act of giving to other people what would make them happy. Generosity is giving of your time, attention and thought to someone or something. When you give someone a compliment, you are being generous with others. When you acknowledge something that you did well, you are being generous toward yourself. When you volunteer your time, you are being generous toward something outside of yourself. When you are generous with your time, attention and thought, you enhance your sense of interconnectedness with yourself, between yourself and others, and with the world around you.