

With practice, everyone can become more mindful, or aware and fully present in the current moment.

The How Skills of mindfulness simply describe how to be when practicing mindfulness:

nonjudgmental, one-minded, and effective. Practicing these skills helps us concentrate, choose our actions wisely, and avoid the pitfalls of judging yourself or others. You can engage in all three How Skills at once:



nonjudgmental

- Not judging what you observe as “good” or “bad,” useful or useless, worthwhile or not, valuable or not.
- Noticing the objective difference between two things (“discriminating”), but not forming a subjective opinion on which is better or worse (“evaluating”).
- Knowing your own thoughts, emotions, values, hopes, intentions, but not judging them.

AND



one-minded

- Concentrating on one thing at a time - not multitasking.
- Being completely present, right now.
- Continually turning your attention away from distractions.
- “When you are eating, eat. When you are walking, walk.”

AND



effective

- Choosing actions that *actually* get you closer to your goals (even if you don’t feel like it).
- Matching your actions to the real situation (not the situation you wish you were in).
- Resisting urges to be stubborn or avoid tough situations.
- “Do what actually works.”

*This worksheet provides information but is not a substitute for therapy. It works best with guidance from a professional.



Nonjudgmentalness

What does nonjudgmental mean?

Practicing mindfulness nonjudgmentally means:

- Seeing reality for what it is, not determining whether what you see is good or bad (evaluating).
- Remembering that evaluations are subjective. For example, getting a B on a test may be great to one person and disappointing to someone else. What a B is answering 80-89% of the test questions correctly.
- Letting go of “shoulds.” Oftentimes, “should” (e.g., “It *should* be this way,” “You *should* do this”) is disguising a want (“I *want* it to be this way,” “I *want* you to do this”) with a subjective value judgment (“It’s *better* to do it this way,” “You would do this if you were a *good person*”).
- Remember: being nonjudgmental about something does not mean you approve of it, you are ignoring its consequences, or that you no longer have preferences, desires, hopes, or wants.

Why is being nonjudgmental important?

- Judgments can **damage** relationships. Do you enjoy highly judgmental relationships?
- Judgments can have sneaky effects on our **emotions**. If you think your grade on a test is good but your parent thinks it is bad, you might swing from excitement to disappointment. Notice that the grade hasn’t changed at all - just the subjective judgment of the grade.
- Judging that something needs to change is not the same as **actually changing reality**. We often wish that something were different, or judge ourselves or others, and stop there (e.g., “I should exercise more”). To make change, we must take action (e.g., take a daily walk after work).

What does being nonjudgmental look like?

Being nonjudgmental looks like the thoughts and statements on the left - **not** the ones on the right:



✓ *Hmm... that answer is incorrect*
✗ *It's bad that she got that wrong*

✓ “Don’t forget to double-check your work”
 ✗ “You really shouldn’t be making mistakes like that”

✓ *I hope she catches her mistake*
✗ *She’d better catch her mistake*

✓ “Take another look. Number four is not correct.”
 ✗ “Number four is wrong - you should know better than that”

These thoughts and statements note the difference between right and wrong, but don’t put a value judgment on wrong answers.

These thoughts and statements make value judgments (essentially, it’s *bad* that she got an answer wrong and she *should* perform better).

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One-Mindedness

What does one-minded mean?

Practicing mindfulness one-mindedly means:

- Being present in *this* moment. The past is over and the future is not here yet. Be here now.
- Doing one thing at a time. Bring your whole self into what you are doing right now.
- Being aware of the entirety of your experience (your thoughts, feelings, sensations, action) or what you are doing (not multitasking).

Why is being one-minded important?

- Being one-minded means we **don't borrow pain** from the past or future. Getting stuck in painful past memories or painful worries about the future increases suffering.
- Multitasking is **inefficient**. Do one thing at a time well.
- Being one-minded means we **don't miss things in the present**. When we're not existing in the moment, we forget to “smell the roses.”

What does being one-minded look like?

*Focusing on one
skincare step at a
time*



*Paying attention
to physical
sensations*

*Fully engaged in
conversation*



*Listening, letting
go of unrelated
thoughts*

*Staying present (even if
you'd rather be
somewhere else)*



*Not thinking about past
or future workouts, just
the current workout*

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Effectiveness

What does effective mean?

Practicing mindfulness effectively means:

- Knowing what your goals are, then doing what works to actually achieve your goals.
 - Keeping in mind that “what works” might not always feel pleasant, fair, or right to you (e.g., asking someone to treat you differently, even though they should “know better”).
- Reacting to the actual situation, not what we think the situation should be (e.g., if you’d like to go on a date with someone, asking them out, rather than waiting to be asked because the other person “should” ask you). Remember that everyone has different ideas about what “should” and “should not” be done based on their identity and experiences - meet people where they are.
- Doing what is necessary. If you are *not* in a position of power, you may need to “play by the rules” or sacrifice a principle to achieve a necessary goal (e.g., appearing in court when required, even if you believe the accusation is unjust, in order to avoid additional legal consequences).

Why is being effective important?

- Doing things effectively gets us **closer to our goals**.
- Being effective helps us **avoid getting stuck in suffering**. Suffering is the pain of denying reality (that is, wishing that reality were different because it “should” be, rather than taking action).
- Being effective is **satisfying in the long term**. Ineffective choices might feel good in the moment, but are often unhelpful (e.g., getting frustrated and yelling at someone whose help you need).

What does being effective look like?

Being effective looks like the thoughts and statements on the left - **not** the ones on the right:

✓ *It is infuriating to be blamed for my coworker’s mistake. But eyes on the prize – promotion*

✓ *How can I get the mistake fixed and show that I’m a competent leader?*

✓ *He’s calling. I’ll get him to fix the mistake, we can collaborate changing our procedures, and I’ll update our boss*



✗ *My boss shouldn’t be upset with me - my coworker is the one that messed up!*

✗ *My coworker should know that he has to explain to our boss what happened*

✗ *He should know I’m trying to get a promotion; I don’t have time for his mistakes*

✗ *He’s seriously calling me right now? I’m not dealing with this*

These thoughts stay focused on solutions that serve the larger goal (demonstrating competence and leadership).

These thoughts are more concerned with how things *should* be and less concerned with actions that will actually serve the larger goal.

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Additional Resources to Support Your Mental Health Journey

It can be hard to know where to begin looking for support in your mental health journey. Getting a referral from a primary care physician is a reliable first step. Also, sometimes family and friends have experienced similar issues and have professionals they would recommend. The experts at ChoosingTherapy.com are here to help as well, with resources we have reviewed and recommend. Our [strict editorial standards](#) ensure our reviews are fair, honest, thorough, and based on firsthand experience.

You Can Trust ChoosingTherapy.com



325+
Companies Reviewed



3,625+
Hours of Firsthand Experience



1,545+
Data Points Analyzed



[Best Online Therapy](#)

Online therapy is a convenient way to connect with a licensed therapist to address mental health issues, reduce unhealthy behaviors, develop effective coping skills, and get more satisfaction out of life. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.

[Best Online Psychiatry](#)

Online psychiatry providers enable patients to consult with licensed psychiatrists and other mental health professionals. They can evaluate, diagnose, and prescribe medication to help manage mental health issues. Many companies accept insurance and most have next-day appointments available.



[Best Mental Health Apps](#)

Apps can be great way to monitor mood, track sleep, journal, and practice healthy coping skills like mindfulness and meditation. There are apps specifically designed to help people reduce the symptoms of depression, anxiety, ADHD, chronic stress, and burnout.

[Therapist Directory](#)

When you're looking for a mental health provider with a very particular skill set, level of experience, or personality type, a therapist directory can be very helpful. Using the filters, you can refine your search until you find a therapist who feels like a perfect fit.





Tools for Self-Assessment and Psychoeducation

Figuring out the next step in your mental health journey can be overwhelming. Developed by psychologists, the tools at [ChoosingTherapy.com](https://www.ChoosingTherapy.com) can help. Our mental health self-assessment quizzes can help you explore common symptoms of mental health concerns, as well as find the best therapy style for you. Our mental health worksheets can guide you through therapy concepts and how to use them in your life.

[Learn More with Mental Health Quizzes](#)

Our collection of psychologist-developed mental health quizzes can help you learn if you are experiencing mild, moderate, or concerning levels of anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and more. Each quiz also provides targeted resources based on your answers. These self-assessments are designed to offer insight, not diagnoses, and can be a helpful first step in recognizing symptoms and deciding whether to seek further support. If you have concerns about your mental health or your quiz results, we recommend you reach out to a licensed mental health professional.



[Free Mental Health Worksheets](#)

Search our collection of therapy worksheets by mental health topic, therapy modality, or demographic group. Our free, psychologist-developed worksheets make therapy exercises understandable and relevant to daily life. Find worksheets for help with ADHD, anxiety, depression, relationship difficulties, and other common mental health challenges.