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Introduction

Ten million people in America practice mindful meditation. That's quite a lot. Mindful meditation has become popular as more and more people enjoy living a better, less stressful, more productive life.

Why are these people turning to meditation to improve their daily lives? The easy answer is, meditation works. The more complex answer is that today, we are suffering from information overload and stress more than previous generations. Some meditators want to reduce stress and enjoy greater peace. Others seek more awareness to create a more purposeful life. Still others want to gain greater awareness and align their thoughts with their actions. Mindful meditation is useful for all of these purposes. What is true for everyone, however, is that the more you know about your thinking, the more you are in control of your life.

Whatever the reason, mindful meditation can be a powerful force. Like music, life has many layers, and mindful meditation can help you become aware of all the nuances.

Mindful meditation isn't magic. It allows you to concentrate your awareness on the here and now. All too frequently, our attention can scatter into the past or the future. We become distracted and unable to focus on what is important in the present.

Mindful meditation gives us power to focus on the here and now. It increases our mental energy, allowing us to perform better and achieve more. Quite simply, mindful meditation makes us more efficient in many areas of our lives. More importantly, it puts us in control. The mind is an extremely complex labyrinth, where the subconscious can rule and throw roadblocks in our path. There are times we behave in certain ways without being consciously aware of why. Mindful meditation increases our awareness and opens our minds to more answers. Our senses are heightened as we enjoy the present more fully. Everyday activities, from what we eat, how we enjoy art and listen to music, and how we respond to friends and family become more vivid as mental walls crumble.

Mindful meditation relaxes us. With awareness, stress and unpleasant thoughts become less threatening and easier to handle. We become more relaxed and are able to let more joy and peace into our lives.

Today, we live in a state of impermanence more than ever before in history. More than a hundred years ago, most people spent their lives in the town in which they were born. They knew all their neighbors. Their station in life determined their job. It may not sound ideal to us, but it certainly wasn't stressful. These days, we live very fragmented lives. We may move regularly and barely know our neighbors. We switch jobs and friends on a regular basis.

Constant change has become the one permanence on which we can rely. There's no denying that modern knowledge and conveniences have brought us untold advantages. However, at the same time, we have lost our connection to others and our surroundings. Mindful meditation brings back that important lost connection to what is happening inside of us and around us. It's not an antidote to the problems of living in the 21st century, but it can provide the skills to help us cope with many of its problems.