

MINDFULNESS

By Amira Valle

Mindfulness is the latest buzz. We read and hear in the media about the wonders of the practice of mindfulness, but what is it really about?

Mindfulness is a particular way of bringing our attention, voluntarily, to the “present moment”. It is directing our attention to the experience, just as it unfolds moment by moment, with curiosity, an open mind, non-judgmentally and with acceptance. This attention can be directed to sensory experiences, thoughts, or emotions.

The origins of the Mindfulness practice are dated back 2500 years ago. It was Jon Kabat-Zinn, Professor of Medicine Emeritus and founding director of the Stress Reduction Clinic and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, who applied it for the first time, in a scientific way, 30 years ago. Kabat-Zinn designed the MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) program, which has been applied at hospitals and clinical settings with an outstanding success as a stress reduction method, a wellness tool, and as a treatment for stress related conditions.

The results of this practice were so remarkable that scientific research was immediately done in order to evaluate the effects of Mindfulness in the organism. As a result, it has been found that this practice benefits at three different levels: neurologic, physiologic and social.

Some of the benefits of Mindfulness are:

- * Better focus and concentration
- * Increased sense of calm
- * Decreased stress and anxiety
- * Enhanced health
- * Improved impulse control
- * Increased self awareness
- * Skilful responses to difficult emotions
- * Increased empathy and understanding of others
- * Development of natural conflict resolution skills

Because of all of these benefits, Mindfulness is being applied not only in hospitals and health centers, but also at many schools and work places.

In the next numbers, we'll be talking more in depth about it...

