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BE

MINDFUL

& STRESS

LESS

50 ways to deal with your (crazy) life

BE PRESENT TO OTHERS

The author and educator Parker Palmer wrote, “Here’s the deal. The human doesn’t want to be advised or fixed or saved. It simply wants to be witnessed—to be seen, heard, and companioned exactly as it is.”

In the next conversation you have, listen to the person and try not to think of the next thing you’re going to say. Let them know what you think you heard them say.

give the gift of presence

People want to be seen and heard. Instead of giving others presents, give them your presence. Giving your full attention to another person can be an amazing gift.

Do you attend to other peoples’ needs and wants and forget about your own? You can also give yourself the gift of your presence. Be present to your own wants and needs too.

The following list offers ten ways you can give the gift of presence to others and yourself:

1. Be in the now. Practice mindfulness. Notice your grounding focal points. Notice your five senses. Check in with what you are thinking and feeling. Open to your environment. Be present to other people and let them know you see and hear them. Be present to yourself too.

2. Actively listen. Listen to your gut and your intuition. Give your full attention to someone else or yourself by minimizing other distractions—phone, the Internet, and so on. Use multiple forms of verbal and nonverbal communication (eyes, body language, nods when appropriate) to let others know you are listening.

3. Honor needs. Be present to your needs. Notice when you are **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired (HALT)**. Teach other people HALT so they can honor their own needs.

4. Engage in self-care. Engage in a positive activity that will fill you up and nourish you. Teach others that it isn't selfish to take care of themselves.

5. Allow time for play. Spend time having fun by yourself or with someone else. Play in the snow or the rain, listen to and sing along with some music, enjoy the process of decorating your room. There are many ways to have good, old-fashioned fun.

6. Do for others. Reflect on how you would like to be treated or the things you wish others would do for you. Do them for another person or yourself.

7. Focus on strengths. Acknowledge your own strengths when you see them in action. When you see strengths in others, let them know it.

8. Practice kindness. Today, do one kind act for another person that doesn't get you anything in return. Do one kind act for yourself today.

9. Take a break from social media. Focus on others and yourself without the use of social media. Communicate with others through a call, a text, or a face-to-face visit. Turn off social media for an entire day.

10. Take in the good. Alone or with someone else, engage in what you consider a positive and healthy experience. Take time to practice HOT (**H**ave the beneficial experience. **O**pen to the beneficial experience. **T**ake in the beneficial experience).

Try any of these ten ways to be present every day, once a week, or once a month. When you are aware of engaging in any of these gifts of presence, notice what it feels like, savor it, and take it in.



MINDFUL TAKEAWAY

Thich Nhat Hanh, a well-known peace activist and Zen master, said, “The most precious gift we can offer others is our presence. When mindfulness embraces those we love, they will bloom like flowers.” Take the time to be present for yourself and another person today. Notice how it feels when you do this.

“Be Mindful and Stress Less provides teens and young adults with the tools they need to navigate their way through life. This book is full of accessible and practical skills to bring mindfulness, acceptance, self-care, and compassion into your life. I wish I had these practices when I was younger.”

—Congressman Tim Ryan

“Gina Biegel writes with remarkable clarity, simplicity, and heart. This is a truly beautiful, thorough, helpful book.”

—Rick Hanson, PHD,
author of *Hardwiring Happiness*

The demands and pressures of everyday life can really stress you out! School, work, relationships, social media, and the like can leave you pulled in so many directions it can make your head spin. When you need help fast, these simple, accessible mindfulness-based practices will help bring you relief and ease right away. If you make these mindfulness and self-care practices part of your routine, you'll discover little life hacks to get through even the toughest days.

Gina M. Biegel, MA, LMFT, is a psychotherapist, researcher, and author of *The Stress Reduction Workbook for Teens* and the *Be Mindful Card Deck for Teens*. She is founder of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction for Teens program (MBSR-T) and CEO of Stressed Teens.

Cover design: Kathleen Lynch/
Black Kat Design
©2018 Shambhala Publications, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.

www.shambhala.com



Shambhala
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ISBN 978-1-61180-494-2

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9 781611 804942

US \$14.95 **CAN \$19.95**