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Mindfulness arts and crafts

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Background

Take Care Of You – Mindfulness

A renowned PhD summed up mindfulness when he stated, "Wherever you travel, there you are."

Mindfulness is attentiveness to the here and now and not thinking of what somebody said to you this morning, babbling on the phone while responding to an email, or fretting about the time to come.

One time a day from now on, I wish you to put earnest effort into being fully in the here and now. Give your exclusive attention to what you're doing. If you've a luncheon date, savor being with that individual, instead of thinking of that customer meeting you had in the morning or stressing about the great deal of work sitting on your desk. Even the most workaday tasks, like fixing dinner, may come alive. Notice the aromas, flavors, textures.

A description of mindfulness:

- Being yourself.
- Not labeling yourself, over-analyzing what you're going to talk about, or getting caught up in your ideas.
- Living with and valuing what each instant offers.
- Letting things be the way they are, without becoming caught up in prospects, hopes, wants, and experiences.
- Being patient with yourself and others. Not being impatient or uneasy about particular things, pleasant and obnoxious, to happen.
- Believing in yourself and your feelings.

What are you intrigued with? What inspires you, propels you, moves you? For instance, you might dream of having a life coach to keep you on course with your goals. If you can't afford it, go to the bookshop. There are enough helpful books to help you evaluate where you are now, where you prefer to be, and learn from individuals who have done it.

Determine if this scenario is familiar - you would love to go for lunch but you've too much to do, so you snap up a sandwich to go and bring it back to your desk. Inside minutes, your sandwich is spent, you're still hunched forward at the computer, and you are able to barely recall how it tasted.

Alternatively, begin each meal with a break - take a rich breath and give thanks for the food you are about to consume. Or, say a prayer, whatever has significance for you. Purchase a beautiful plate, placemat, mug, or container to utilize.

Monthly, treat yourself to a relaxation rub down. If it's out of your budget, think about going to a massage school student clinic in your region. Treatments by massage therapists-in-training are frequently one quarter of the regular cost.

Forgiving yourself and other people may be freeing. Many individuals carry past pains inside them and are not able to let them go. Begin by forgiving yourself - if something you state or do causes misunderstanding or might be taken as hurtful, don't let it sit and don't bash yourself over it.

Provide an earnest apology and then do something to psychologically clean, like taking that sentiment and imagining yourself throwing it in the trash barrel or taking a warm bath when you get home. You are able to also try affirmations.

The History of Art Therapy

It is difficult to look at the history of art therapy and its true meaning until one goes back to the history of the visual arts, where art was not art but was considered a trade or workmanship by the general mass or tradesmen. Artistic symbols were used as visual records of self-expression and communication. And even though ancient healing involved art in a multitude of forms and ideas, the history of art therapy was non-existent over the centuries until the late 19th and early 20th centuries, yet art was not.

The first men to apply art therapy to their psychiatry field were Ambrose Tardieu and Paul-Max Simon. French psychiatrists, they published studies regarding the artwork of the mentally ill. Looking at similar characteristics and symbolism of the patient's artwork, these men viewed the developing history of art therapy as one of the best effective diagnostic tools in order to identify a specific type of mental illness or traumatic event of the time.

Later on, Margaret Naumburg incorporated the field of art into psychotherapy in order for her own patients to visualize and recognize their unconscious state of mind. Using this form of psychological counseling, she founded the Walden School in the year 1915 to apply her findings to her student's artwork. To this day, she is considered the actual founder of art therapy in the United States, after publishing quite heavily on the subject and teaching art therapy seminars at the New York University in

the 1950s. From this moment on, the history of art therapy had a new beginning that would lead to a guarantee of its success.

Deeply rooted in the theories of Freud and Jung, both the conscious and subconscious play a major part in the two part process of art therapy--the creation of art and having its meaning discovered. The history of art therapy has shown that visual images and symbols are easily accessible to the human mind, and is considered to be the most natural form of communication. Each patient, regardless of their problem or age, is encouraged to visualize something in their mind they cannot talk about, yet have strong feelings and emotions about it. The art therapist then reviews it to have the patient interpret it.

Mindfulness Arts and Crafts

Learn To Draw And Paint

Everybody at some point in their life wanted to learn to draw and paint. Just by watching children, you could see that these skills are one of those that entice them during their early years. However, not all people decide to take this goal seriously, especially when adulthood comes around. Nevertheless, if you do want to develop this innate skill, it is still possible. Here are the basics that you have to know.

Drawing Versus Painting

One important factor that people do not understand is that drawing is different from painting. Thus, if you want to learn how to draw and paint, this means you have to develop two different skills. Drawing is generally defined as depicting a subject by the use of lines. On the other hand, painting is the art of coating surfaces with paint for artistic or utilitarian purposes.

Therefore, the medium you'd be using would be the main difference along with the process itself. Nevertheless, these two disciplines are still related and most often combined to make an art work. Most of the time, drawing becomes a prerequisite of painting; although this is not always the case.

Drawing Basics

For you to start having drawing skills, you should constantly practice with your hands and eyes. Do this by sketching. Constantly sketching is the best way for you to learn how to draw more artistically and professionally.

Remember that drawing is developed by constant practice of your hands. This is not improved by merely reading or acquiring whatever book based knowledge that is available. Thus, practice your hand to draw. Be very observant with your surroundings. Try to sketch things or people during your idle time. Doing this is really one worthwhile hobby that could pay off in the future.

Copying is your stepping stone in drawing. Get a model and copy it. It is all right to make mistakes. This is exactly what erasers are for any way. Also, do away with the notion that you need to have professional materials for your work to look good. A simple sketch book and basic drawing pencil and eraser would do.

Painting Basics

On the contrary, painting would entail appropriate materials so that your work would end up nicely done. You would need a couple of brushes that come in different sizes. You also need acrylic paint of various colors, but most importantly, you should have the primary colors, a bigger tube of white and black. However, if you do not want to buy a black tube, you could simply create your own. Do this by combining all the primary colors.

It is best to start with Acrylic paints because these are the easiest to work with. Thus, the general painting developmental stages would be mastering acrylics first before aiming to learn oils or water color. Also, this kind of paint is easily mixed with water. All you'll need would be a glass or a bucket in which you would put the water in for cleaning purposes. You also use this water to keep your paint moist, it dries up quickly. A pallet is needed too. If you don't have one, you can improvise by using paper plate that has Aluminum foil covering.

To start painting, you have to draw on your canvas first. Draw your subject and other details of the pictures' environment. After this, add on the color using your paint. Keep on practicing by choosing different subjects. Also, try to experiment with the colors you've got.

Make full use of your pallet and create various shades of colors. Continue on sketching and painting like this and for sure your skill would start to develop in no time.

Learning to Knit is as Easy as 1-2-3

Knitting is one of the most relaxing crafts you can do with your hands. Once you learn to knit you can easily sit back and knit and listen to the radio or watch your favorite television program while you happily knit away and make a great item, for yourself or someone else, at the same time.

Knitting is great for those of us who like to keep our hands busy but also like to multitask as well. I used to sit and watch my aunt knit at family gathering and was always amazed that by the end of the day she would have participated in all of the conversation and still she had a ton of knitting done.

When you first start knitting, it seems hard to do and it feels awkward in your hands. However, that awkwardness soon leaves and is replaced with the satisfied feeling of knowing you created something with your own two hands. It really is a very satisfying feeling.

While knitting is not difficult to do, it does require a few special supplies and some patience. With these three simple steps you can learn to knit today:

Step #1 – Your Supply List

To begin knitting you will simply need to have a pair of knitting needles and some yarn. If you are going to attempt to make an item from a pattern, you will also need that as well.

Knitting Needles

Knitting needles are not all created equal. By far, the easiest needles to knit on are made from wood. Wooden knitting needles allow you to knit much easier because your yarn will stay in place on them. When you use plastic or metal knitting needles you will soon find that your yarns want to slide off the needles if you are not careful in handling them. When you are new to knitting it really is best to stick to wooden needles.

When you are a beginner at knitting you should create your first project with large needles for a couple different reasons. The first reason is that the large needles are easier to work with and allow you to see your mistakes much easier. If you drop a stitch you will immediately know it and can rip out and start again fairly easily. The second reason is that large knitting needles make your projects much quicker to do. You can very easily finish a scarf on large knitting needles in only a couple days. This sense of accomplishment is great for newbies.

Yarns and Fibers

When you are new to knitting you will want to start out with natural fibers such as cotton or wool. The reason you want to stick to the natural fibers is because they will not slide off of your knitting needles quite as easily as synthetic fibers will. While all those fancy yarns look inviting, they can be a challenge to work with if you are new to knitting. It is best to start off simple and move you way up.

Step #2 – Learn Some Basic Knitting Lingo

Learning to knit means you have to learn the language which goes along with knitting. At first it looks a bit daunting, but here are the basic abbreviations. You can find more in a knitting dictionary in the front or back of most knitting books.

K stands for Knit

KB stands for Knit-in-Back

BO stands for Bind-Off

P stands for Purl

EOR stands for knit every other row

Step #3 – Just Do It

Just like the Nike ads say – Just do it! The only way you will ever learn a new skill, such as knitting, is to try it out and practice.

Learning to Crochet is as Easy as 1-2-3

Crocheting is one of the most relaxing crafts you can do with your hands. Once you learn to crochet you can easily sit back and crochet and listen to the radio or watch your favorite television program while you happily crochet away and make a great item, for yourself or someone else, at the same time. Crocheting is great for those of us who like to keep our hands busy but also like to multitask as well.

I used to sit back and watch my aunt crochet at family gathering and was always amazed that by the end of the day she would have participated in all of the conversation and still she had a ton of crocheting done.

When you first start crocheting, it seems hard to do and it feels awkward in your hands. However, that awkwardness soon leaves and is replaced with the satisfied feeling of knowing you created something with your own two hands. It really is a very satisfying feeling.

While crocheting is not difficult to do, it does require a few special supplies and some patience. With these three simple steps you can learn to crochet today:

Step #1 – Your Supply List

To begin crocheting you will simply need to have a crochet hook and some yarn. If you are going to attempt to make an item from a pattern, you will also need that as well.

Crocheting Hooks

One of the most important considerations for any crochet project is the size of the hook and the yarn you choose to use. Crochet hooks are labeled with numbers and letters. These numbers and letters correspond to different sizes. The higher the number or letter then the larger and thicker the size of the hook, and when you are new to crochet this means the quicker your project will be completed.

Crochet Fibers and Yarns

When you are first learning how to crochet you should stick to using natural fibers and yarns. These natural fibers tend to be less slippery and easier to work with.

Just as important as the fibers you use is the way that you hold them in your hand. By learning the “correct” way to hold your yarn and crochet hook from day one, it will be much easier for you to advance your crocheting projects without having to relearn how to hold things. Here is the best way to hold your yarn and crochet hook:

1. Place the yarn over your little finger, below your ring finger, and above your fore and middle fingers.
2. Hold your crochet hook as you would a pencil or fork. This allows you the best hold to heave the yarn from your fingers down to the loop in the hook.

As you begin to crochet more and more you will come up with just the right positions for you. But, it is always best to learn in a more classical style from the start and adopt your own style from there.

Step #2 – Learn Some Basic Crocheting Lingo

Learning to crochet means you have to learn the language which goes along with crocheting. At first it looks a bit daunting, but here are the basic abbreviations. You can find more in a crocheting dictionary in the front or back of most crocheting books.

CH stands for Chain Stitch

DEC stands for decrease

DC stands for Double Crochet

DB DEC stands for Double Decrease

INC stands for Increase

HDC stands for half-double crochet

REP stands for Repeat

RND stands for Round

SC stands for Single Crochet

SK stands for Skip

SL ST stands for Slip Stitch

SP(S) stands for Spaces

ST(S) stands for Stitches

YO stands for Yarn Over

Step #3 – Just Do It

As with knitting, you just have to go for it.

Learning to knit or crochet allows you to make new friends and to create beautiful works of art while relaxing at the same time. By taking care to use the right supplies for beginners, and for looking for groups where you can learn new techniques, you will be on your way to knitting and/or crocheting complex sweaters in no time.

Mindfulness Journal Writing

The Joy of Journaling

What is Journaling?

Journaling is the process of recording the events of your day, your thoughts, ideas, inspiration, and anything else you wish to keep a record of. There are lots of reasons to keep a journal. It can be fun, a great keepsake for you and your family, or a sourcebook of ideas you could use as a writer, artist, musician, songwriter, and so on. A journal can also act as a confidante to whom you can admit your deepest secrets, or serve as a way of getting things off your chest and moving on.

Journaling can also be a way of setting goals and then tracking your progress towards them. For example, if you are trying to lose weight, keeping a weight loss journal can help you sort out what went well versus what could have gone better. Then you can do more of the successful activities until you finally reach the target weight you've set for yourself.

If you struggle with anger issues, you could start an anger management journal, or a relationship journal to try to improve your connections with others.

Some people try to practice what is termed lucid dreaming, that is, harnessing the power of their mind when they are asleep. If you've ever 'slept on' a problem and come up with a solution the following morning, you will have an idea of how lucid dreaming works. Some people also write down their dreams because they think they have different meanings and they can interpret them.

Journaling and dream journals are used by some psychiatrists and psychologists as a tool to help people clear obstacles and issues that may be blocking them. It can be a great stress reliever and offer many benefits. Let's look at this in the next chapter.

What are the Benefits of Journaling?

A large body of research indicates that there are many mental and emotional benefits gained from journaling regularly. Studies have shown that as few as 15 to 20 minutes of journaling for 5 sessions or less were enough to help those who participated in the study deal with difficult and stressful events. It has also been proven effective in relation to people with cancer and other health challenges, serving as 'writing therapy.'

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) or 'talk therapy' has been shown to be just as effective as medication when it comes to mood disorders like depression and anxiety. Writing therapy can be even more effective because the person is writing for themselves only. There's no need to censor what they say due to a fear of what the listener will think of them.

Journaling about stressful events has been shown to be most effective when you write about events in a narrative form and including your emotions, rather than just noting down emotions only. This form of storytelling helps you make sense of what happened and your role in it. Journaling also allows you to explore different scenarios. It isn't just a diary of exactly what happened, but what you could have done differently, what you learned from the situation, and so on. Journaling can, therefore, be part of what is termed reflective practice.

With reflective practice, you reflect on your skills, abilities, choices and decisions in order to try to improve your skills. If you're a teacher, for example, or want to take more of a leadership role at work, reflective practice in your journal, in which you are honest about your strengths and weaknesses, can do a great deal to move you forward in your career.

Journaling will also make you a better writer. Writing every day for 15 minutes is bound to make you better at it. It can also provide a creative outlet in which you jot down all of the ideas that come to you. Many writers keep a journal or use a book small enough to be able to take it with them anywhere so they can jot down their thoughts whenever they come to them.

Writing down new ideas, experiences, and situations can help you make sense of them, and unravel complicated issues. Journals can also help you get more organized due to the profound changes that writing and communication can have on the brain, even if you are writing the journal only for yourself.

Journaling is ideal for setting goals and accomplishing them. You can't track your progress if you don't know where you're going in the first place. A journal can help you track your achievement so they don't get overlooked in the busy-ness of the day. You can also journal about mistakes you've made and use them as teaching moments.

Journaling can also be a good way to focus on an area in your life that you struggle with and feel is holding you back from being your best self. For example, you might struggle with procrastination. Keeping a to-do list and crossing the items off one by one as you accomplish them can help you overcome that bad habit and put better habits in its place.

If you're always busy but aren't sure where the time is going, a work diary or log of what you are doing, organizing in 15-minute increments, can show you where your time is being wasted. Then you can take steps to use those chunks of time more productively, including penciling in times to work out.

An exercise diary can also keep you on track. The suggested activity levels for all adults in the US is 30 minutes a day of aerobic activity, that is, an activity which boosts your heart rate, and strength training every other day for about 15 minutes a day. This can include light weights, resistance bands, or yoga. The only way to be sure you are meeting your daily requirements is to keep a progress journal.

If you struggle with excessive spending, a spending journal could get you back on track. Sometimes couples keep a journal together, of times spent with each other, special events, something important they are working on together as a team, and so on.

The only limit in terms of the benefits of a journal is your imagination in terms of what you wish to write about and how you want to use it. Now that you know what a valuable tool a journal can be, it's time to look at the best ways to start journaling.

How to Start Journaling

There are many ways of journaling in the modern world, so it's really a question of what is easy, likely to help you stick with it, and will make it fun and interesting enough that you will be motivated to keep on doing it.

Paper-Based Journals

Paper and pen

The traditional way is of course paper and pen. They are portable if you choose a small notebook, and studies have shown that writing things down tends to help the mind process better. It is also less likely to get hacked, though it is more likely to be read by others if you leave it sitting around. It can get lost if you are careless with it on your travels and there will be no digital backups.

The Bullet Journal

The BulletJournal.com method is a way to become more productive. It's not really a place for in-depth emotional analysis or recording of events, but rather, a planner to keep you organized so you can plow through your to-do list like a pro. There's a handy video to show you how to set one up and put all tasks in there, then record them as done, or move them on to the next month.

The Sorta Journal, and similar journals

The Sorta Journal offers a range of different papers and allows you to take pages out and replace them as needed. The video is interesting because it gives you an idea of types of paper that can be used. But you can also get sheets of various kinds and glue them into your regular journal, or use a looseleaf with a hole punch. You could also get a paper notebook with pockets for storing your special items. A similar product that might be worth considering is the Blueline MiracleBind Notebook, which comes in a range of colors with a variety of papers.

The Panda Planner

The Panda Planner is a paper notebook that sets you up with a motivational quote, and a range of papers to help you become more productive. It also comes with 7 e-books on various topics that encourage you to be your best self and work on a particular project, such as becoming more productive, with the help of the Panda Planner.

Themed Journals

There is a wide range of themed journals that can tap into your interests and make journaling more enjoyable. Angels, teddy bears, you name it, there's a journal for that. Many have inspirational quotes, writing prompts, and images designed to stimulate your senses. Some journals are plain on the outside, while others are gorgeous. Journaling should feel like a pleasure, not a chore, so shop around to find a journal that suits your taste and personality, and 'feels right' when you use it.

Digital Pens and Paper

This could be the best of both worlds. Digital pens like Livescribe work in one of several ways. They are a pen with real ink. They are also digital pens that record your work on special paper so that your information can then be uploaded to your computer. The latest generation also has a microphone built in.

They are ideal for students or busy executives who want to make sure the notes they are taking synch up with what has been said. These pens and pads, therefore, give you the option of recording your thoughts anywhere, at any time, either in writing or orally, then downloading them via your USB port. The disadvantage is that once something is digital, it can get hacked, but the plus side is it can really keep you organized and on track with all that is important to you.

Journaling and Diary Apps

We all live with our cell phones by our sides 24/7/365 these days, so journaling and diary apps might be a logical way to keep a journal if pen and paper seem just too clunky. There are several that will also work with laptops as well. The main problem is privacy online, and how much memory they take up on your device.

Penzu

Penzu promises you can write from any device and that it has military-grade security so that everything you upload will be safe. It offers different formats, is customizable in terms of appearance, and is fully searchable by text and tags.

DayOne

The DayOne Journal app is for iOS only but offers a range of suggestions and templates for how to use it to organize your life and work on the goals you set. It is location-aware, so you can add photos and more.

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