

We all have times when we get caught up in the past or the future. We can dwell on the past and replay past situations over and over. We can worry on and on about the future or constantly be making plans in our head. There is nothing wrong with thinking about the past or the future. The issue is that sometimes we get too caught up in the past or future and miss out on important experiences in the present moment right in front of us. We all have what it takes to learn and practice how to be more present in our lives. This way, we can get the most of life as it happens right in front of us and not miss out on the things that are important to us.

### Learning Point # 1 → *Being curious*

**Being curious is easier than forcing ourselves to focus.** Rather than forcing ourselves to focus on the moment, we can practice *being curious* about the moment. We can notice little details. We can notice things you usually don't pay attention to. We can also notice thoughts and feelings that pop up as engage in an activity.

- For you personally, what does it mean to “be curious about the present moment?”

### Learning Point # 2 → *The five senses*

**Focusing on the five senses can connect us with the moment.** One way to connect with the present moment is to notice the five senses – sights, sounds, touch, smells, and taste. At any moment, we can ask ourselves: “*What can I notice right now? What can I be curious about right now? What's going on with my five senses?*”

- What are some specific activities that help you connect with the sense of sight? How about sounds? Touch? Taste? Smell?

### Learning Point # 3 → *Finding pleasure in the ordinary*

**Being present opens up the opportunity to find pleasure from ordinary daily activities.**

When we're too caught up in the past or future, we can miss out on *little pleasures* right in front of us. If we practice pausing and being curious about the present moment, we open up the opportunity to find enjoyment from daily activities. This includes even small ordinary activities, like doing chores, getting ready in the morning, walking to and from places, eating a snack, or drinking coffee or tea.

- For you, what could be the benefits of pausing and focusing on the present moment?
- What is one little daily activity during which you can practice being curious about the present moment?

## Daily Practice

**Your brain is like a muscle. DAILY PRACTICE makes it strong.**

**Research studies show that daily practice...**

- Makes your brain healthier and stronger
- Reduces stress and anxiety
- Increases positive emotions

### Recommendations for Daily Practice

- Set aside a little time every day to do ONE lesson or exercise. The lessons focus on *learning* key concepts. Exercises focus on *strengthening* your skills.
- The key is to CHOOSE what works for you. Develop a personalized practice of your own. If you miss a day, no worries. You can always get back on track the next day.
- An exercise that goes well with this lesson is the **Mindful Eating Exercise**, available in the *Classic Mindfulness Exercise Category* of [MindfulCoping.com](http://MindfulCoping.com)

### Plan for Your Daily Practice

	What date/day of week will this be for me?	What Lesson or Exercise will I plan to do on this day? <i>(Tips: Consider repeating the “Focusing on the Moment” lesson or trying the Mindful Eating Exercise)</i>	When and where will I practice?
Day 1			
Day 2			
Day 3			
Day 4			
Day 5			
Day 6			
Day 7			

Keep in mind, the Mindful Coping Program is designed to be FLEXIBLE. Don't worry about doing the lessons or exercises in a particular order. You can go through the lessons and exercises in any order you prefer.

