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## As spring is sprung



In early spring, frost may still rime the windows in the morning, but we can feel the promise of a new season in each passing day. Almost imperceptibly, the sun warms, the day lengthens, and the air seems pure and thin as it takes on the scent of freshly turned soil, emerging green, and soft rains. Spring is a time of awakening, of healing and renewal, of the dawning and planting of new ideas a time when the world seems young again.

How many of us actually take the time to stop and notice the changes around us?

Many people nowadays work in a fast passed stressful world, dealing with a flood of information; emails, meetings, text messages, phone calls (and with the advent of the smart phones these bombard us 24/7), interactions at work (being expected to do more with less) and at home. Trying to meet everyone's needs and forgetting about your own.

Our minds are active much more than ever before, people accessing the internet wherever they are, multitasking. Watching TV whilst texting, tweeting, facebooking when we go to bed taking our computers etc with us, even our children are taking iPads and tablets to bed with them.

Reading from an iPad before bed not only makes it harder to fall asleep, but also impacts how sleepy and alert you are the next day, according to new research from Boston, Massachusetts. The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, said the findings could impact anyone who uses an eReader, laptop, smartphone, or certain TVs before bed.

The new research supports conclusions from older studies, which have also found that screen time before sleep can be detrimental.

“We know from previous work that light from screens in the evening alters sleepiness and alertness, and suppresses melatonin levels,” Dr. Anne-Marie Chang, an associate neuroscientist in BWH’s Division of Sleep and Circadian Disorders who was a co-author on the study, told The Huffington Post via email. “This study shows comprehensive results of a direct comparison between reading with a light-emitting device and reading a printed book and the consequences on sleep.”

Its so easy to stop noticing whats really going on within you and around you, to get caught up in thoughts without being aware of how those thoughts affect you.

People unaware of how they are thinking and that their thought processes are creating their lives, their reality.

We create our health & wellbeing through our beliefs, feelings and attitude towards life. This is how placebos are so effective, because of the recipient’s belief in the treatment. Ellen Langer has found through her studies and experiments that when we pay attention, are mindful, we have better control over our health and wellbeing.

In days gone by when someone was ailing it was said they had a dis-ease of the mind. The mind and body was treated as one and it was believed that we needed to remain balanced to remain healthy.

Over time the mind and body began to be treated separately; and now we are again just beginning to realize that they affect each other. By putting the mind and body back together again wherever the mind goes the body will follow. If the mind is in a truly healthy place then the body will be as well; and we can change our physical health by changing our mind.

Some of you may be asking how can the mind influence the body.

Research has shown that our wellbeing is connected to our mindset. The Simontons and Bernie Siegel working with Cancer patients found that those who were the most positive survived against medical science’s predictions; and Bruce Liptons work investigating how we are who we are because of our environment and that our beliefs can change our genetic blueprint.

In tests in 1975 investigating how our thoughts affected our health, a group of retired people in the USA were asked to look at the following statements and asked to respond whether they thought they were true or false.

Things get worse as I get older  
As you get older you are less useful and  
I am as happy now as I was when I was younger

In 1995 the same participants were reviewed and it was found that those who were positive about getting older lived much longer healthier lives.

We strive to be healthy, yet do we really know what this is.

What is being healthy? You could say it is a medical phenomenon. Medical science has a view on what good health is and they are ready to give us pills and potions to help us achieve this.

I believe that we have reached a time in our history when we over medicate. It seems that most 50+ people are taking medication for something - to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, to help them sleep, to make them happier .....

When we pay attention to what is happening around us, to what people are telling us we can make up our own minds as to what we believe and how we will respond. By looking at our lives, our health in this way you can not only control your experience of any dis-ease but also affect your recovery as has been shown by various research projects.

Ellen Langer completed a study to find out the effects of our thoughts on cancer survivors, her findings were much the same as those from the Simontons and Bernie Seigel. Those who had surgery were asked if they thought of themselves as being in remission or cured? Those who believed that they were cured were healthier, more energetic, and much happier in themselves. Those who thought of themselves as being in remission had pains, were depressed, lethargic and expecting the disease to come back.

How you think of yourself is of paramount importance. If someone has a headache they take an aspirin and the headache goes away and they feel better; yet if someone is depressed they take anti depressants and even if they feel better they still say they are depressed.

When we take in information without considering all the options, looking at the situation from different view points we are being mindless and tend to make a commitment to that information accepting it and acting as if it is true.

Mindfulness is a way to have a more helpful relationship with your thought processes, to recognise when your thoughts and feelings are being unhelpfully dragged back into the past or catapulted into the future. When mindful you are in the moment, aware of where you have been and where you are going.



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