

## The Mind Guide - Mindfulness

**Will:** Hello and welcome back to The Mind Guide, I'm Will Dell.

The Mind Guide is all about mental health and wellbeing, it's produced to coincide with mental health and wellbeing awareness week here at the University of Chester, there's a new episode every day this week. Just a heads up, there's some stuff in the podcast that some listeners might find upsetting, so if that's you or if you've got kids in the room, you might want to sit this one out.

Today it's all about Mindfulness, we're going to be looking at what mindfulness is, how we can practice it, and how it can help our mental wellbeing. We're talking to Russ Treasure, he's an established mindfulness and meditation practitioner.

Speaking of which, in each episode of The Mind Guide we invite you to take part in 60 seconds of meditation, that's 0.06 percent of your day to look after your mental wellbeing.

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**Russ:** Mindfulness being a more general term – how to react differently to what happens to us in everyday life.

**Will:** This is Russ, he's been practicing mindfulness and meditation since his early thirties. He now has a diploma in teaching meditation, his mantra is 'everything is going to be okay'.

His clients include, but are not limited to, Warrington Wolves, The Alzheimer's Society, prison inmates and of course himself. Today he and his wife Carol run a successful meditation business.

**Russ:** I'm Russel Treasure and I teach mindfulness. I currently live near Warrington.

**Will:** So, to start with, when we're talking about mindfulness what are we talking about? What is mindfulness?

**Russ:** It's difficult to describe in words less than one syllable, but in essence mindfulness is giving people the ability to put a space between what happens to them and how they react to it. So in other words, if something happens you don't immediately label it good or bad for example – you don't become happy or sad instantaneously, through practicing mindfulness

you can look at what's happened and make a more rational or sensible decision on what to do about it.

**Will:** How can we practice mindfulness in our day to day lives?

**Russ:** Well one of the best tools for mindfulness is mindfulness meditation and this is one of the main things that I teach, and that is basically the ability to stop the mind from constantly projecting into the future and worrying about what's happened in the past. So, we do that by, well there's a few different ways, the main one I use is by focusing on the breath, or it may be how you touch things how you look at things, it may be how you walk, how you feel contact that you have with various everyday items, brushing your teeth, etcetera etcetera, even eating.

**Will:** Is there a difference between mindfulness and meditation or is it more of like a link?

**Russ:** Well meditation is one of the tools you would use for mindfulness. Meditation being the ability to stop one's mind from thinking and worrying about things and mindfulness being a more general term, as I said before how to react differently to what happens to us in everyday life.

**Will:** Why is mindfulness good for us? How would you sell it to people? How would you encourage – why would you encourage people to practice mindfulness?

**Russ:** Mindfulness is good for us, the benefits are manifold and there are many medical research papers out there, but the main advantages are a lowering in blood pressure, aiding sleep, reducing anxiety, enhanced relationships with the people that you work with and live with. Certainly, for absolute sure a reduction in sickness – and there are again studies which show the majority of sick days taken off work at the moment are down to stress and anxiety, so purely just by reducing stress and anxiety in our minds we can be more productive.

**Will:** I think it shows how much of an impact practicing mindfulness can have on our day to day lives, weather that's our work life, our home life and things like that.

**Russ:** That's right.

**Will:** If the idea is exciting to people, if people are interested, how would you recommend people can get started in practicing mindfulness.

**Russ:** Well the easiest way to start is probably to download an app or to listen to the thousands of videos and audios on something like YouTube. But the best way I feel is to go along to a class and actually experience it in front of a mindfulness teacher. Many people sometimes come to a one-to-one with me before they start attending a class, I run several classes during the week and workshops at various employers, local authorities, prisons and schools. And when you're actually sat in front of somebody and teaching them how to do this directly face to face then that's by far, in my opinion the best way to go.

**Will:** So, if there's one thing you want people to take away about mindfulness, what would that be?

**Russ:** It would be the ability we all have to simply practice mindfulness by using the breath at any one time, at any time during the day or at night to go to sleep, so by practicing in front of an experienced coach or teacher we can have that very simple action, i.e listening to the breath, which is available to us at any time.

**Will:** Russ Treasure thanks so much for your time today.

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You're listening to The Mind Guide, it's a part of mental health and wellbeing awareness week here at the University of Chester, today we're looking and mindfulness. I sat down with some of our second-year mental health nursing students, here at the University of Chester, to find out what mindfulness means to them, and what tips they have for practicing it.

**Tom:** My name's Tom, I'm a second-year mental health nursing student.

**Helen:** I'm Helen, a second-year mental health student

**Jess:** And I'm Jess, also a second-year mental health student.

**Will:** Why did you choose to get into mental health nursing? What kind of drew you to this?

**Tom:** For me it was a desire to achieve something, do something, I'd worked in health and social care previously, and wanted to kind of legitimise that experience by gaining a qualification in the area.

**Helen:** So, I'm previously from the prison service and so I have a massive gap in really what could help people with their mental health, so I left that and took up this course.

**Jess:** For me, from being young I've always wanted to be in the nursing field and could never really put my finger on what kind of nursing it was that I wanted to do, and then just from like speaking with family members and stuff I decided to dip into mental health and it's probably the best decision that I did pick.

**Will:** Have you been enjoying it? has it been a worthwhile experience?

**Helen:** It's challenging, but a really good experience, we're learning different things every time and especially when we go out on placement.

**Will:** So, this episode of the podcast is all about Mindfulness and meditation, so what does that mean to you guys?

**Helen:** So, I think mindfulness is about seeing ourselves in the present moment, and when we do that, we can positively change the way we see ourselves, and our lives that we live.

**Will:** That's awesome, I think mindfulness and meditation is something that we all kind of practice on a day to day basis, how – do you guys have any tips for how we can practice it or how do you guys practice mindfulness and meditation to look after your own mental wellbeing.

**Tom:** It's a very personal thing and I think everyone has to find something that works for them individually. So what works for me might not work for somebody else, there's basic principles and concepts that are familiar just being able to take the time to pause and reflect and consider where you are in relation to a situation or how you think and feel about something, but it's how you choose to do that I think for me personally it's less about being mindful in the time because that's what I try and practice anyway but maybe reflecting on it later on.

**Will:** It helps us differentiate or put a gap between the things that happen to us and how we react to them and how we process them. Do you guys have any other tips for how we can either practice mindfulness and meditation or just any other little things we can do to look after our general mental wellbeing.

**Helen:** I think it's about being open and honest with people around you and having the confidence to ask someone how they are that day.

**Jess:** And I think for ourselves as well it's like rationalising the here and now, it's not about forward thinking all the time it's focusing on what's important now rather than what's going to happen in the future, what hurdle am I going to come across.

**Tom:** I think that's a nice point though the fact that you can be mindful yourself, but you can also be mindful of other people's mindfulness, so that might support your own considerations and experiences as Helen says by being open and honest and communicating.

**Will:** I've had a lot of conversations in the past couple of days about how just because something doesn't affect you personally, you still need to be aware of how to have a conversation with your friends or your peers and how to signpost them to any relevant help they might need.

**Helen:** I think if we're not able to understand what mindfulness is then how do we expect service users and others to understand what it is.

**Will:** Final question, if you have one take away tip for people, one piece of advice, to help them look after their mental wellbeing what do you think that is?

**Helen:** Not feeling like you're alone. There's a lot of people out there experiencing exactly what people – with the stigma around it's not spoken about, so I think that's why we've defiantly gone into this field, of reducing that stigma and encouraging people to talk more about their feelings.

**Will:** I think that's one of the big focus points of this week as mental health awareness week is to make it clear that it is okay to have those conversations even if you are a bit nervous or a bit shy about it. Awesome thanks a lot guys!

**Jess:** Thank you for having us!

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In every episode of The Mind Guide we invite you to join in with 60 seconds of meditation, that's 0.06 percent of your day to look after your mental wellbeing, you can do it at home, in

the office, on the train or wherever you're listening to this episode. Today's meditation comes with the sounds of a tropical beach. So, sit back and get comfortable, close your eyes and take some deep breaths in and out.

The Mind Guide, is produced by me, Will Dell for The Cat Radio, for more visit [thecatradio.co.uk](http://thecatradio.co.uk).

Thanks to Russ Treasure and our mental health nursing students for being on the show today.

If anything in this podcast has affected you, you can find local support and services by accessing the Hub of Hope website and simply typing in your postcode; this will provide you with all local support, that's [hubofhope.co.uk](http://hubofhope.co.uk), you can also access support or treatment via the NHS by visiting your GP or local A&E service.

Michelle Ponting is our executive producer  
Cat Warren is the script advisor  
and Dean McShane is our mental health adviser

Join us tomorrow for episode four – State of mind, and if you can share the podcast with a friend, that would really help us out.

