



# Mindfulness Meditation & How It Might Help

by Maile Malin (Hack for LA) – Brigade Congress  
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## Session Notes

*Did you know there are many scientific studies demonstrating that mindfulness meditation reduces stress, anxiety, and depression and can induce neuroplasticity? I did! So after hearing about Matt's session on burnout, I thought it might be useful to have an unconference session where we could take a moment to meditate and share the benefits of mindfulness meditation.*

*I'm Maile (MY'lay) 🙌. I'm a UX researcher and designer Community Fellow in Santa Monica, CA, working on improving the affordable housing application process through a service design lens, a Product and Visual Designer in the private sector, and a mindfulness-awareness practitioner... which **really** helps me with my work. I'm in the "Intensive Practice Program" at the Mindfulness Awareness Research Center (MARC) at UCLA which includes lots of classes, retreats, and a giant syllabus of books on the subject. Contact me at [mmalin@codeforamerica.org](mailto:mmalin@codeforamerica.org)*

## What did we discuss in this unconference session?

### What is mindfulness meditation?

- *According to Diana Winston, director of the Mindfulness Awareness Research Center (MARC) at UCLA, "Mindfulness is a willingness to be with the present moment (what IS) with curiosity and compassion."*
- *Classic mindfulness meditation involves using an anchor, like focusing on your breath, your hands, your tongue in your mouth (as one participant suggested), the sounds around you, noticing and labeling thoughts when your mind wanders. It can be done sitting on a chair, on the ground, standing or walking, or even doing mindful movements*
- *Accepting what is, as it is, and moving forward from it, is important for peace of mind and happiness, otherwise we are ruminating about the past (causing depression) or trying to forecast the future (causing anxiety). I heard the phrase "stop demanding*

*control” from a workshop I attended with Elizabeth Gilbert. It has stuck with me and changed my perspective so much!*

- *I didn’t get a chance to mention the Loving-kindness meditation, but meant to! It is a very important and beautiful meditation. Here’s a [Loving-Kindness Meditation](#) to try.*

### **How do we use meditation and mindfulness in our own lives and how has it helped us?**

- *Accepting when things go wrong and just doing what we can with what is available instead of getting mad, sad, frustrated, etc at what went wrong*
- *Letting go of trying to change people and things who can’t be changed*

### **How does it help at work?**

- *Removing ego from your work, especially from research, allows us to better hear our end-users needs, pivot and reiterate when our hypothesis or solution isn’t testing well, and better receive input from coworkers*
- *Mindfulness improves teamwork, even in difficult situations, by encouraging that we listen with curiosity and non-judgement*
- *Accepting what is, as it is, instead of fighting against change, really helps us to see what needs to be improved upon, rather than focusing on what has already happened that we might not have agreed with*

### **How can we bring mindfulness meditation into the workplace?**

- *I just found this relevant article: [Forbes: How to bring mindfulness into your employee wellness program](#)*
- *I think Headspace has corporate accounts*

### **Tips on how to teach children mindfulness-awareness practices**

### **Ending with a 5 minute meditation that you can find here:**

- *[Basic Breathing Meditation](#)*

### **Science behind Mindfulness Meditation:**

- [MARC UCLA research](#)  
*Research in mindfulness has identified a wide range of benefits in different areas of psychological health, such as helping to decrease anxiety, depression, rumination, and emotional reactivity. Research has also shown mindfulness helps to increase well-being, positive affect, and concentration. Practicing mindfulness can also be helpful to foster physical health by improving immune system function, quality of sleep, as well as decreasing blood pressure. Structural and functional brain changes have also been documented in areas associated with attention, emotional regulation, empathy, and bodily awareness.*

*In addition to health, research has been made on the benefits of mindfulness in business and educational settings. In companies, results showed improved communication and work performance. In educational settings, mindfulness practices improved social-emotional skills, executive functions, and decreased test stress in students, as well as reduced stress and burnout in teachers.*

### **Discussed Resources:**

*Free meditation apps:*

[Free Mindful Meditations from UCLA MARC](#)

[Insight Timer](#)

*Freemium apps:*

[Headspace](#)

Calm

Aura

*Other listenings:*

Oprah's Supersoul conversations

### **Resources**

Learn more:

[Mindful.org](#)

[Mindfulness Awareness Research Center \(MARC\) at UCLA](#)

[Mindfulness in plain English: What meditation is \(free to read online\)](#)

[Mindfulness in plain English: What meditation isn't \(free to read online\)](#)

Read more - recommended books:

[Fully Present: The Science, Art, and Practice of Mindfulness by Diana Winston](#)

[The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation by Thich Nhat Hanh](#)