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Mindfulness: You're Soaking In It!

By Maya Talisman Frost

Mindfulness: You're Soaking In It!

by: **Maya Talisman Frost**

Looking for a bit more mindfulness in your daily life? Relax. You're soaking in it!

Perhaps you remember Madge the Manicurist, a television commercial character who commiserates with her clients about their chapped hands. While she is filing the nails of one hand, she conspiratorially confides that her client is actually soaking her other hand in Palmolive dishwashing liquid. After all, "It softens hands while you do the dishes."

It was a memorable pitch—good visual, element of surprise, great what-it-will-do-for-you line. That commercial, in several variations, ran for nearly thirty years. Jan Miner, the actress who played Madge, died earlier this year at the age of 86, but her persona lives on.

Softening hands is nice, but here's a better idea. How about softening our hearts while we do the dishes?

Seriously. There's not a lot of multitasking you can do when you're elbow-deep in suds. Singing works, though your dance moves are a bit limited. You could talk on your hands-free wireless phone, but let's hope you can disconnect for the few minutes it takes to clean up after a meal.

Given free rein, our minds tend to go into worry mode. We're likely to spin our stories, get locked into our beliefs, or ponder our personal list of things to do.

What if we got intentional about that time spent at the sink? Take advantage of the task and use those soapy bubbles as a trigger to be mindful.

Here's how to do it:

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- 1) Whenever you touch your bottle of Palmolive (or any other brand) dishwashing liquid, simply say to yourself, "Soften your heart."
- 2) Before you can soften your heart, you've got to cleanse it of anger, frustration, or resistance. So, when you squirt that first blob of colorful liquid soap, say "Cleanse."
- 3) As you wipe your dishes, swab your glasses, and scrub your pans, focus on the act of each stroke, every circular caress, and the repetitive and rhythmic series of motions. Scrub, rinse, drain, repeat.
- 4) Visualize the scouring of your heart, scrubbing the crusty residue of your overcooked stew of negative emotions and thoughts. Watch as your heart becomes pure again, sparkling clean and ready for the world.

We often get stuck in thinking that mindfulness is something we can develop only if we sit in meditation on a regular basis. Meditation is powerful, but so is the purposeful awareness cultivated in the most

mundane moments throughout the day.

You won't miss the thoughts you would've had while doing dishes, but you will definitely benefit from the focused attention on your heart and this remarkably simple way to restore equilibrium.

Madge the Manicurist encouraged us to soak in order to soften. By taking it one step further, you can ease into your dishwashing task with intention and emerge with a sense of lightness—as well as gleaming dishes.

Think of it as mindful multitasking, and scrub your way to a more balanced day.

Pass the sponge.

Maya Talisman Frost is a mind masseuse offering specialized mindfulness training in Portland, Oregon. She is the mother of four teenage daughters. To subscribe to her free weekly ezine, the Friday Mind Massage, visit

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The Art of Conscious Living

By Yvonne Chiarelli, PdD

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Mindfulness is an ancient Buddhist practice that has profound relevance for today. It is relevant because mindfulness is a practice of being consciously awake, experiencing the fullness of the present moment, and living in harmony with yourself and the world. The practice of mindfulness allows you to cultivate an appreciation for experiencing your life as you are living it. One of its effects is an increased ability to see the extraordinary in the mundane. Mindfulness has to do with being in touch and seeing what is so.

Practicing mindfulness is simple but not easy. Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. It requires a mental discipline to wake up in each moment, and to keep waking up for each oncoming moment. This kind of extraordinary quality of attention requires effort. It requires such effort because you are almost programmed to forget, or you succumb to unawareness, or wish to become deliberately unaware. The use of medicants of all kinds is prevalent in our culture ranging from drugs, over busi-ness, TV watching, and other activities that tend to narrow our attention.

The power of mindfulness is in its practice and everyday applications. Applying mindfulness as a strategy can have significant positive outcomes on the job. How many times have you wasted time because you forgot to take something with you? How many times did you respond just a bit inappropriately because you weren't fully listening? Did you actually experience your lunch? How many times did that tiny forgotten detail cause more effort than necessary?

Mindfulness is empowering because it cultivates greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of the present moment reality. Mindfulness as a work or life strategy:

- > Saves time
- > Increases memory retention
- > Preserves integrity
- > Improves performance
- > Improves perception.

Who wouldn't like that? Successful people are highly skilled in using their focused attention on their activity, even if they spend little time on that activity. They can efficiently absorb, process, and discern and at very high rate when focusing

their deep and mindful attention.

I challenge you to be fully awake, aware, focused in the present, and see the extraordinary in the mundane for the next two hours. Be ever vigilant that you are paying attention.

There are many resources on mindfulness at your local or virtual bookseller. Here are two that I can recommend:

1. *Wherever You Go, There You Are : Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* by Jon Kabat–Zinn
2. *The Miracle of Mindfulness : A Manual on Meditation* -- by Thich Nhat Hanh, Mobi Ho (Translator)

Having a personal support team is a great way to keep you on track. You can also use a coach to help you reach your goals on personal growth and your desire to handcraft a life of choice.

By Yvonne Chiarelli. Yvonne is a professional coach providing personal support, clarity, and strategy through collaborative relationship. For more information, visit her website at: <http://www.goalminderplus.com> Free subscriptions to e–Letters are available. ©2002 Yvonne Chiarelli

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