

When Are You? Why Remaining Present is Necessary for Good Mental Health

rhcp

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When we bring mindful attention to our thoughts we notice that our minds naturally like to hang around in the past or the future. By gently encouraging attention to shift back to the present moment we increase our capacity to experience the richness of our lives as they are and take a greater sense of control.

So instead of asking **How Am I?** Try asking **When Am I?**

PAST

Historical Past

Our 'remembering' thoughts: includes joyful reflections, loss of past joy, regrets, shame-based memory.

Idealised Past

The 'If only' thoughts. How life could be different now if another choice or event occurred - it didn't however - simple as that.

Feared Past

The 'What could have gone wrong' thoughts: Thinking about retrospective worst-case scenarios may help problem solve for future action but spending too long in this time destination can cause unnecessary anxiety.

PRESENT

Right Now

The only moment that truly exists, and the only one you can control. This is your life - right now!

FUTURE

Neutral Future

Making plans or predictions for the future that are not necessarily emotionally evocative. Helpful at times but can only achieve so much.

Idealised Future

The 'If only' thoughts, if only I were could win the lottery, fall in love, lose weight, then life will be better. Idealised futures easily become idealised pasts.

Feared Future

The 'what might go wrong' thoughts which frequently come with an impending sense of doom, high levels of anxiety and difficulty 'switching off'.

The aim is not to stop your mind taking you to another point in time, but simply to notice and gently bring yourself back to now.