

How to Declutter a Busy Mind

What would you give to clear your mind of all of the clutter? To rid yourself of the thoughts and emotions that are taking up unnecessary space? To stop holding onto grudges, guilt, and anger? To no longer live on autopilot to the extent that you completely forget to make yourself a priority?

You might say you want to live a positive and happy life, but worries about the past or the future, and negative emotions simply clutter up your mind, and steal the joy you should be experiencing in your life. The good news is there are some steps you can take to declutter your mind and have a happier, more balanced existence.

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Declutter your surroundings

This doesn't just mean your home, it means your workspace too. Clear that bulging closet and file away that pile of papers from your desk and just see how much less stressed and more balanced you feel.

Prioritise tasks

If you have a never ending to do list, this immediately clutters the mind and you can't see the wood for the trees. Have a look at your list and categorise tasks as urgent, important but not urgent, and not urgent, and you'll be able to see where you should be directing your energy. If you do have some onerous tasks on your list and you feel overwhelmed, try breaking them down into smaller, more manageable tasks.

Say 'no'

We can sometimes feel guilty for saying no when people ask us to do something, but if you're already very busy, and your brain is at boiling point, say no. You don't even have to give an explanation. Just acknowledge to yourself that you have your own priorities and a responsibility to look after yourself.

Resurrect your creativity

Do you love to write, draw, or paint, but never feel like you have the time? Make time for activities that bring you joy, relieve stress, and calm your mind.

Accept that there are things you can't change

Trying to control every little detail of your life, and allowing your thoughts to rule you is exhausting and overwhelming. Accept that there are things you can't change, and decide to be happy. It can be that simple. For example, imagine that you get caught in a really heavy rain shower and you tell yourself 'this is really miserable, I hate the rain, I bet it lasts all day,' how is this likely to make you feel? It won't make you feel good, that's for sure. This is just a small example of how thoughts can really impact upon how you feel. You can't stop bad things happening, but you can change how you think about them and react to them.

Practice mindful meditation

Mindfulness is about living in the present moment, not the past, or the future. Being mindful doesn't need to be about meditating either, though this is very helpful in reducing stress and bringing clarity of thought. You can do any activity mindfully, whether it's eating, showering, walking, or even washing the dishes. It's about savouring what you see, feel, taste, smell, hear, or notice and it focuses the mind on exactly what you're doing, and not on bills, the shopping list, or what that co-worker you don't like said to you today. Mindfulness can help you learn how to just 'be' rather than running around on autopilot. In today's busy world, everyone can benefit from being more mindful for the sake of their physical and emotional health.

If you are interested in learning more about Maureen's research, looking at relationships between character strengths, mindfulness and prosocial values and behaviours in business entrepreneurs, email mOCallaghan@lincoln.ac.uk

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Any questions, please contact info@mindfulworkplace.community.