

### **Episode 3: Mindfulness**

**This podcast is brought to you by Southern Migrant and Refugee, Better Place Australia, and South Eastern Melbourne Primary Health Network.**

Greetings and regards to our dear audience, today's podcast is about mental health and is produced by SMRC.

**Host:** I am Malahat Kamali hosting today's program. Today I have a special guest, and our guest is someone who, with his valuable achievements in the field of training and work experience in mental health, has won significant honours for the Afghan community in different countries such as Canada, England, Norway, USA, and Australia. She is Homaira Ansari and I welcome her to this program. He is currently working as a Master hypnotherapist in two areas of Melbourne, Bayside and Berwick.

Homaira Jan has been working in this field for 13 years and has more than 7,000 hours of work experience and has helped more than 15,00 people in different parts of the world with different mental issues, such as mental disorders, depression, excessive fears or phobia, and addiction. Homaira, welcome to our today's program.

**Homaira:**

Thank you for your invitation.

**Malahat Kamali:**

you are welcome, I am happy to have you and benefit from your valuable experiences. Homaira Jan, recently we have come across two terms a lot, which is meditation and mindfulness. For meditation, we do not have an equivalent word in the Dari language, but we can translate Mindfulness as the conscious mind, and I don't know how correct this translation might be. What do you think, what do meditation and mindfulness mean?

**Homaira:**

If you have noticed or thought about it, or what I noticed, I observed with my clients that most people do not enjoy their life, but it is their memory and imagination that make them suffer. They are suffering about What happened in the past and what might will happen in the future. These are the two things that make people suffer or feel pain in their life. Something that happened 10 years

ago or 20 years ago, but they are still suffering from it, and something that hasn't happened yet, they are suffering now, they don't even know if that thing will happen or not. So, memory and imagination are two features or factors that make people suffer and these are two wonderful abilities that God has gifted to us. We should use these abilities to lead our life well. Memory is something that teaches us a lot about the past. But if something happened in the past in which we had no fault, someone left our life or they died, it means that we can still be thankful that there are people in our life, or that We can learn a lot from the things that were passed in the past life, and based on that, we can plan our future life, how to move forward, so memory is not meant to make us suffer, but memory is meant to help us understand how we should move forward in life and imagination is something that how we can plan the future. But these two abilities that God has given us when we lose control of them, that is the time we suffer in our lives, get disturbed and anxious, and these mental issues occur. And when our imagination and memory are not under our control, suffering, and anxiety arise, and that is the time when we cannot use these two abilities that God has given us correctly. Mindfulness means focused or concentrated senses. So, we can say that when we think about the past or the future, it is because our senses are not focused, they are not in control, and our mind is not in our control, so mindfulness is the status of having control of our senses. Focused on yourself and live in the present. Because the only time we can act is the present time, neither in the past nor in the future, but we can think and plan for the future, we cannot do anything in the past and we can change the future only through our performance in the present. So, mindfulness is focusing or concentrating on your senses, and it is a way of being in the present. It is not something that I would say is an exercise to do, but it is a way of being or a way of living in the present. Meditation means we determine a time in which we focus or concentrate our senses for a minute, for two minutes, for 10 minutes, for half an hour, or for an hour, and how we do it, I will talk about it later. Determining the time is the purpose of meditation, and the way of being in the present is called mindfulness.

**Malahat Kamali:**

Thank you Mrs. Homaira, for a very clear explanation and the difference between these two terms was not clear to many people. So, meditation means concentrating or focusing our senses for a certain time, and mindfulness is to be in the present life. Another question, from the point of view of science, when

our senses are focused or in meditation, what changes may occur in our brain or in our physical body that improve our mental status?

**Humira:**

Very good. Mindfulness or meditation is not something new, it was said by Buddha five thousand years ago, and we have these concepts in Sufism, we also have to take care of behaviour, actions, and speech, and this is what a real Muslim should be like it. A Mindfulness person always lives in the present, trusts God, and accepts whatever happens to him/her. This is something that was in Eastern life, Westerners have seen that this is a good concept, and people are not worried and concerned, so Westerners conducted research on this matter, they have taken a functional MRI of the brain, to see what parts of the brain more functional and what parts are less functional. It has been seen that there are changes in the grey matter of the brain when we are focused on the present state. The brain has different parts, and each part has different functions, when they saw that in the frontal lobe of the brain which is more related to decision-making, disciplinary actions, and actions that are more under your control some changes have been noticed. Changes take place in the hippocampus, which is the centre of memory, and in the amygdala, which is the centre of stress, also known as the fight and flight centre. When you are in danger, your body becomes more active than your brain because of the changes in the fear centre. You have seen some of the people in your community whose lives are restless, because this part of their brain is active and they are very active and they always think of everything as a danger, and these people are always thinking about what will happen in the future. When you are mindful, changes occur in different parts of the brain, this part of the amygdala shrinks and its connection with the frontal cortex becomes weaker, and memory improves. The structure of the brain changes, some parts help us become strong, and those parts that do not help us become weak. Like a muscle, with exercise became stronger. Changes happen in the release of Chemical substances, such as serotonin and cortisone, the amount of cortisone decreases, endorphins and happiness substances, and melatonin, which is for sleep, this increase, and cortisone decreases. For those who have depression, anxiety, and stress, the secretion of these substances is decreased and for those who take medicines, the same chemical substances are given to them as a tablet, and those parts of the brain that produce these substances are inactive, and only the part of the brain is active where there is fear. When positive changes occur in the brain, changes occur directly in the

body, pressure is regulated, diabetes is controlled, pains are reduced, memory is improved, and so when we are living in the present, our senses are focused and the parts of the brain that are not necessary to be active are not active anymore, because we set safe at home, and it is not fair to suffer and everything is going well.

**Malahat Kamali:**

In a practical way, how can we learn to be mindful, some people say that I have practised meditation and I have not seen any change.

**Homaira:**

Meditation and Mindfulness are something that we have forgotten now, when we were children, we all remembered it, that was the time when we were Mindful, we didn't worry about tomorrow, and yesterday passed, it was all Mindfulness. That is, we all remembered. So, now how to get rid of bad habits. If we practice mindfulness, bad habits will go away. But mindfulness is not something new for us, but as we grew up, we found these worries by ourselves slowly, we thought that we are smart by thinking about everything and taking unnecessary responsibilities, which means that we only I have to do everything, to control everything or we were in the clash with ourselves or with others, these are the things that started with the growing up of these habits. So, how should we be in the present with ourselves, use our five senses, we should see with our eyes, where am I now, what am I doing now, what am I eating, taste the food we eat, chew it, see how its texture is, anything. When you are in the present moment, there is no need to meditate. Meditation is a practice of concentrating or focusing our senses. If you practice it every moment, I mean when you are mindful, you don't need to practice meditation for 2 minutes or 5 minutes. There are some people who practice meditation for 10 minutes in the morning and when they go out, and sit in the car, all the worries come up again. In order to see these changes in the brain, it is necessary that we should always be focused, it is true that meditation concentrates for 10 and 50 minutes, if you are upset and sit for a minute, calm yourself, and calm your thoughts. So, make your life calm and be with all your senses at the present, be with yourself, and focus on what you feel in your life, how you breathe in and out, this is good, but this is a way of life, we should always live in this way.

**Malahat Kamali:**

Thanks Mrs. Homaira, great information that everyone can understand, and something that is very relevant to our daily life, and everyone can learn it. Is it possible to have practical instruction for 4 or 5 minutes, how guided meditation can be done with a coach, and that even a person can do it alone?

**Homaira:**

Guided meditation means that I will guide you to where your senses should be, and what your thoughts should be, when I guided your thoughts and senses, be a hundred per cent with me, if you are driving, or work in a factory, or have a knife in your hand, don't listen now, because I'll tell you later to close your eyes and fully be with me. If you are busy, don't listen now, do it later and sit in a comfortable and quiet place and don't be disturbed, it is good to have headphones, otherwise sit quietly and just sit quietly and see how I take your attention or thoughts from one place to another. Because in practical life, people take your thoughts and attention from one point to another point without you knowing.

**Malahat Kamali:**

If possible, we have 4 minutes to practice it.

**Homaira:**

It's good, if you wear glasses take off your glasses, now sit comfortably and quietly and close your eyes, relax your face and forehead muscles, and focus your attention on your breath and see how you breathe, breathing in and out. It goes like this, let the breath in and out naturally and calmly, just listen to my voice, leave other sounds in the background and just listen to my voice, and go with me wherever I say, only you, no one else. Be with me, stop your imagination and thinking and think that you are in a garden, and you are alone and there is no one else and you are very safe, there is no danger, just you are with yourself, this is your time and you should enjoy it and this is a very private time for your own, see all around you grass, you took off our shoes and you are walking on the grass by your feet, feel the grass by your feet, look to the flowers, the blue sky how beautiful it is, there is little a cloud, the wind pushes the cloud to another side, there is a plane tree by the side of the stream, there is a carpet, there is no pain in this garden, and you are completely healthy and you can walk

properly, and there is no pain anywhere in your body. You are all healthy and fresh, go and lie down under the plane tree, and look up at the tree, wind moves the leaves of the tree gently and the sound of water is amazing and beautiful, the water is cold, but the weather is a little warm, it is a little sunny, the leaves of the tree falls on you, there is no pain, no suffering, and no sadness, and you are at comfort and ease, you are completely healthy, you are at peace, at peace, everything is good. Everything is comfortable and everything is calm and according to the time, you slowly open your eyes and bring this calmness and comfort with you to the present.

**Malahat Kamali:**

Really peaceful and relaxing, wonderful. Thank you so much Mrs Homaira, long life and I am sure that our viewers and audience have benefited a lot from this session, and I hope we could take benefit from your experience and knowledge in the future. On behalf of SMRC and the audience of this program once again I thank you and wish you more success in your professional and personal life.

**Homaira:**

You are welcome and wish you and all our people happiness and success.

**Malahat Kamali:**

Dear audience and viewers, this was today's podcast, I hope you liked it. Bye until the next program.