

skillful manner is the key to not only becoming more resilient but to acquiring insight and transforming such moments into opportunities for personal growth and freedom.

PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER

If tomorrow you woke up and began brushing with a new toothpaste that had no taste, what would you do? Knowing the long-term benefits of brushing, you'd probably still brush. It's the same thing with mindfulness practice. Knowing the long-term cognitive, emotional, social, and physical benefits of practice, it can make good sense to practice even if the reasons for doing so are not realized right then and there.

But let's take this one step further and imagine that the toothpaste flavor is unpleasant. Why, because sometimes practicing mindfulness can feel a little unpleasant — we become restless, grow bored, or feel agitated. What would you do then? One impulse might be to ditch the toothpaste and stop brushing. We tend to do this with many things in life when they do not seem to be working. And, indeed, there is good reason to research and explore different types of wellness and insight practices to find those that work best for you.

If, however, you have done your research and decided to give this mindfulness practice a chance, then do just that. There are different mindfulness practices that taste a little different, *e.g.*, focused attention, body scan, open monitoring, lovingkindness, and you can read about them [here](#). And while they all have their minty moments, as mindfulness practices they inevitably (and this is the point of practice) have their uncomfortable moments. After all, directing a [fidgety attention](#) to an object, like the breath, will nonetheless inevitably lead to mind wandering into the past and future, which we all too frequently relate to with regret and worry. With practice we come to more readily detect such gratuitous meanderings of the mind and the unhelpful and often erroneous stories we tell ourselves about what happened and what is yet to be.

So the next time you practice mindfulness and begin to feel restless, bored, antsy, anxious, sad, tired, fearful, frustrated, and so on, remember that as nice as it might be for the practice to feel refreshing in that moment, what may be more important, and offer a larger return on your investment of time and patience, is relating more effectively — with greater resilience and clarity — to the moments of your life, especially those that are unpleasant and undesirable. Frequently, the unpleasantness is a *short-lived*

experience that invites us to take note and pay closer attention to what is arising. It's a useful signal that we need not confuse with the underlying situation.

By practicing mindfulness, establishing a routine, and over time developing a genuine and first-hand appreciation for the various benefits that follow (e.g., improved focus, greater awareness of mind wandering, reduced anxiety and rumination, more enduring feelings of connection, greater resilience and less impulsivity), you may well find the practice begins to taste sweeter, along with many other moments of your life.

If you are intrigued by the dual considerations of mindfulness practice discussed in this month's column, you may be interested in [this article](#) that takes a serious look at mindfulness through the playful lens of a Saturday Night Live skit. And if you would like to engage in a mindfulness practice right now, we invite you to do so by [clicking here](#).



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