



Day 17- Greenest

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The Importance of Mindfulness



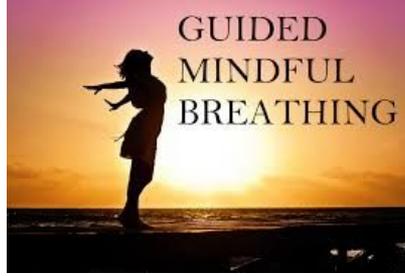
After reading the challenges details for the greenest challenge, I knew this was going to be one of my favorite challenges. A big part of my life I dedicate to mindfulness and always staying self aware, it has played a major role in my life by helping me cope with my anxiety so the benefits of mindfulness, self awareness, and my path to self-actualization really hit home. Having the ability to not only understand but interpret your own thoughts, feelings, actions, senses, and ideas without becoming extremely self-conscious or insecure is one of the most important skills you could possibly obtain. In addition to this, understanding how you interpret the emotions and ideas of others undoubtedly helps people become more mindful of themselves and others. Being able to accept your current state of mind as well as all of the other things I previously mentioned is an amazing quality to have.

Mindfulness Yoga → my past experience



As I mentioned previously, today was the perfect day for this challenge because I am already involved in the YOGA club at my school, T.C. Williams High School. It is run by one of my best friends Elizabeth Considine who is actually a certified yoga instructor. She is the reason I initially got in to yoga, she insisted that it would be a great way to relieve my stress, bring good intentions to my mind, and help me set free all of the negative energy I have been holding on to. The first day I participated in a yoga class with her about 5 months ago was one of the most liberating experience ever, I felt lighter on my feet, more open, and more free which was a really good coping mechanism for my anxiety. Unsurprisingly, ever since that day I have been practicing yoga.

Mindfulness Breathing



This exercise was so helpful for me especially after a long lengthy day at school. Just being able to sit down and relax myself without feeling stressed about what obstacles I might have to face just felt marvelous. Being a worry free gal, even if it was just for a few minutes really let me take a minute to reflect on myself and my own actions. Before trying this out, I felt pressured, like I had a huge chunk of concrete on my back but as I sat down on that yoga mat and did the breathing exercises I felt like as I exhaled all of the worries and the weight of the concrete left my body. After the exercise, I felt much more calm and less stressed about school. In this case I had external barriers that affect my session of mindfulness to be less effective because I struggled focusing on my breathing because the environment I was in was too noisy and made it hard to focus on my breathing and made it harder to reflect on myself but, I still was able to shut out the noise.

Mindfulness Yoga vs. Mindfulness Breathing

My personal favorite between these two were mindfulness yoga because yoga incorporates mindfulness breathing within its practice and on top of that doing the actually poses helped me release my stress more than the breathing exercises. Part of this may be because of the external barriers (noise) that prevented me for being as peacefully and whole as I could've possibly been. Yoga has just been a part of me for so long and has helped me cope with so many of my problems through each and every pose I have ever done. It has been a life changing activity that really helps not only me but hundreds of thousands of others!

