“Peace is not the absence of conflict, but rather the ability to manage it".

AHS Quality Health Summit
Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World

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Disclaimer

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Overview

- Introduction of mindfulness
- Review current literature
- Mindfulness practice: 10-minute Awareness of breath
- Stepping out of auto-pilot: 3-minute breathing space.

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Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally

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Developing a different relationship with our thoughts, emotions, and body sensations.

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Kindness plays an essential role

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Awareness Training

1. Direct: Notice and engage

2. Sustain: Explore and understand

3. Shift: Let go

Benefits

- Improved sleep
- Improved emotional regulation and impulse control
- Decrease rumination and emotional reactivity
- Improved concentration, memory, and learning.

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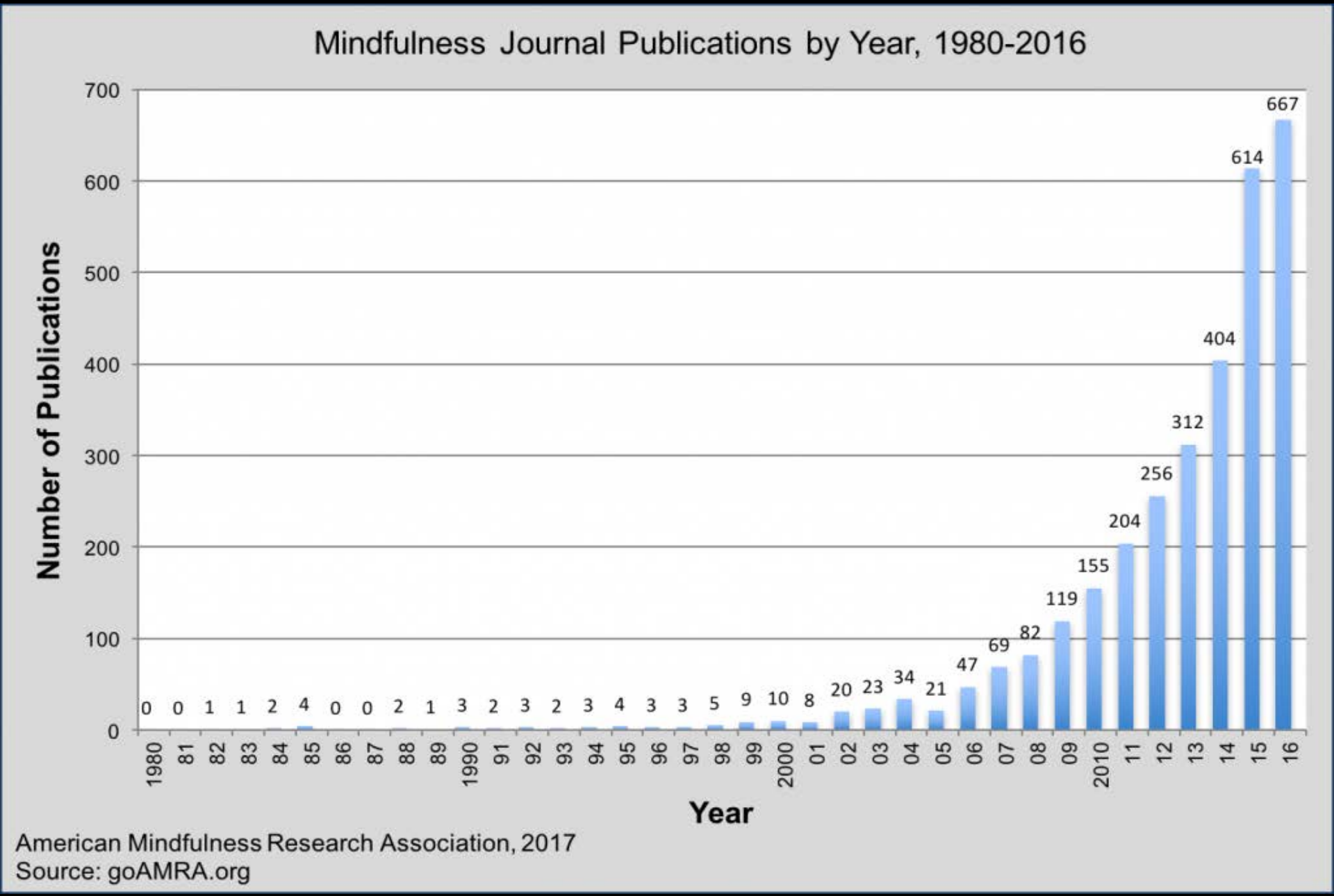
Mindfulness Journal Publications by Year, 1980-2016
Number of Publications
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
0 0 1 1 2 4 0 0 2 1 3 2 3 2 3 4 3 3 5 9 10 8 20 23 34 21 47 69 82 119 155 204 256 312 404 614 667
1980 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 1990 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 2000 01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 2010 11 12 13 14 15 16
Year
American Mindfulness Research Association, 2017
Source: goAMRA.org

Emerging Research Areas

- Peri – post partum mental health
- Adverse childhood experiences
- PTSD
- Chronic depression
- Chronic pain
- Addictions
- ADHD
- Cancer

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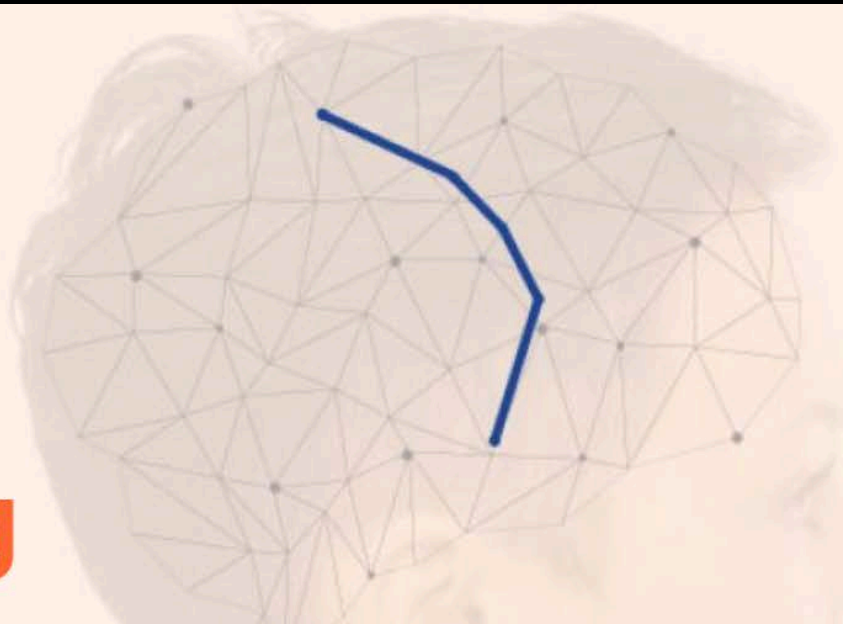
Making Connections

Within your brain, nerve cells called neurons signal to each other, forming connections that enable everything from bodily movement to thoughts and emotions. These networks are “roads” of sorts, and the more often they’re used, the more established they are in the brain – just like a road or path becomes worn over time.

https://centerhealthyminds.org/feature/neuroplasticity



Sculpting

There are different ways neuroplasticity works. Your brain can form new connections, produce new cells as well as sculpt existing connections to be more efficient. Because our brains at birth contain many more cells than we need for optimal functioning, sculpting is the most common form of neuroplasticity as we develop. This is the brain's way of being efficient and losing cells from pathways not currently in use.

Keep in mind that neuroplasticity isn't good or bad; it's neutral and always happening. However, through our work, we're learning we can shape our brains in more adaptive and beneficial ways by cultivating healthy habits of mind. The invitation is to use these insights to cultivate well-being in your own life.

https://centerhealthyminds.org/feature/neuroplasticity

New Challenges

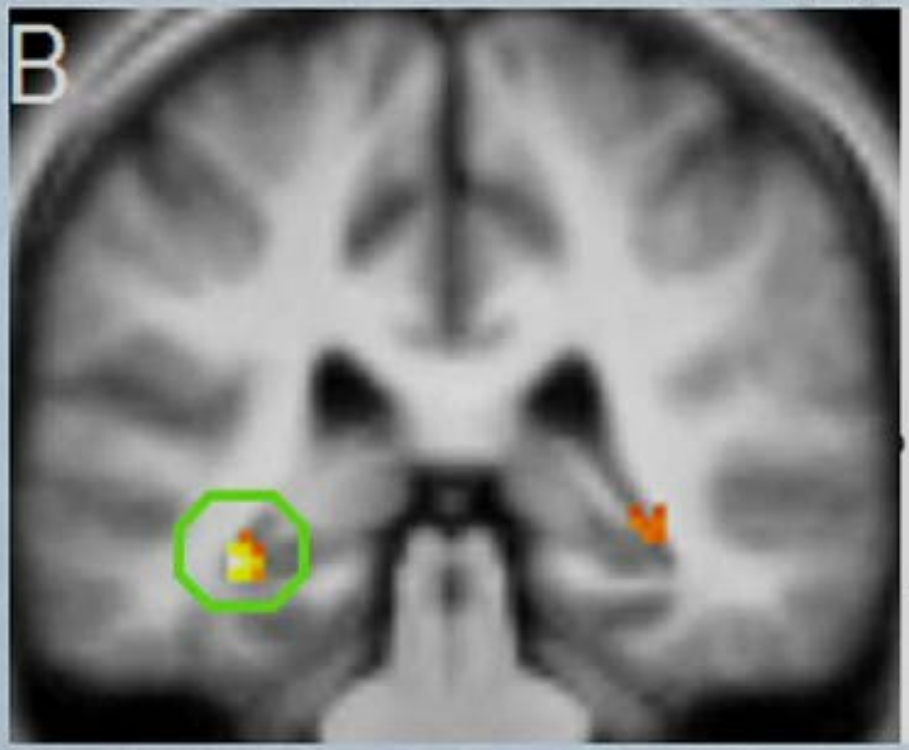
When given a challenging situation your brain hasn't encountered before, it can reorganize and restructure to respond to that situation. The more often your brain is exposed to that new challenge – like learning a musical instrument, for instance – the more it reorganizes and makes that path more established.

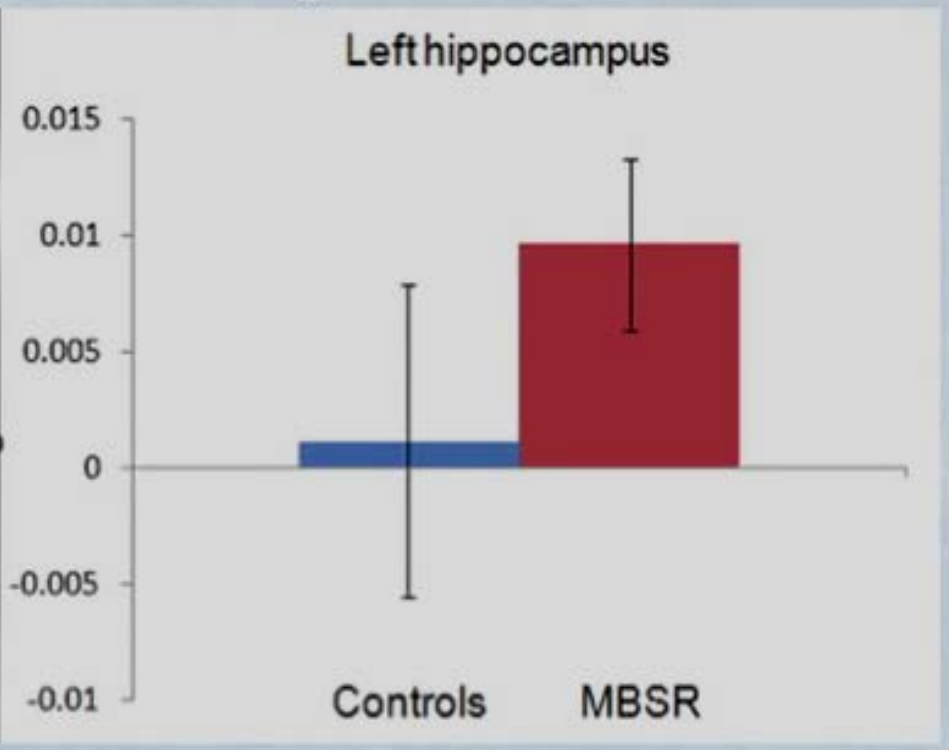
In addition, the more often your brain is exposed to difficult emotional challenges that are successfully navigated by healthy forms of emotion regulation, the more stable and enduring the neural pathways will become that promote well-being.

https://centerhealthyminds.org/feature/neuroplasticity

How Meditation Reshapes Our Brains

Left Hippocampus





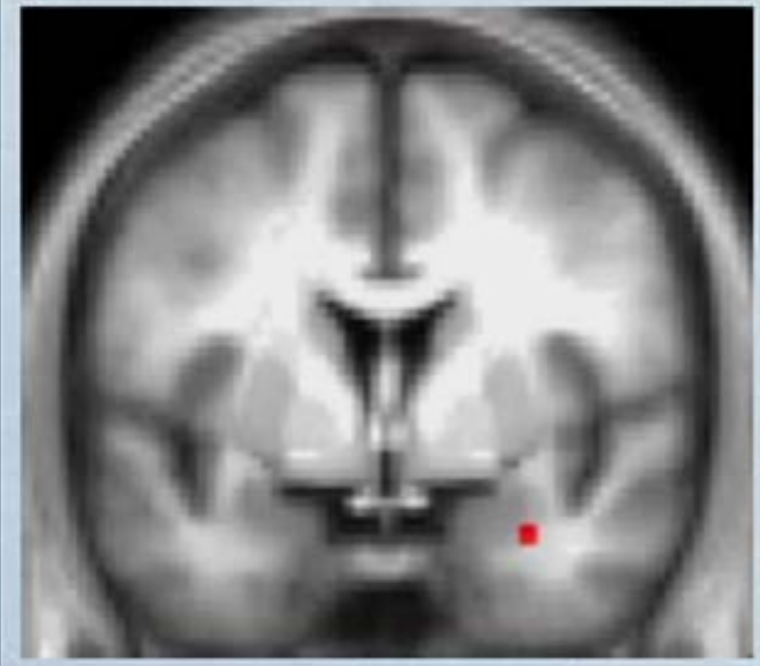
Assists learning and memory; emotion regulation.

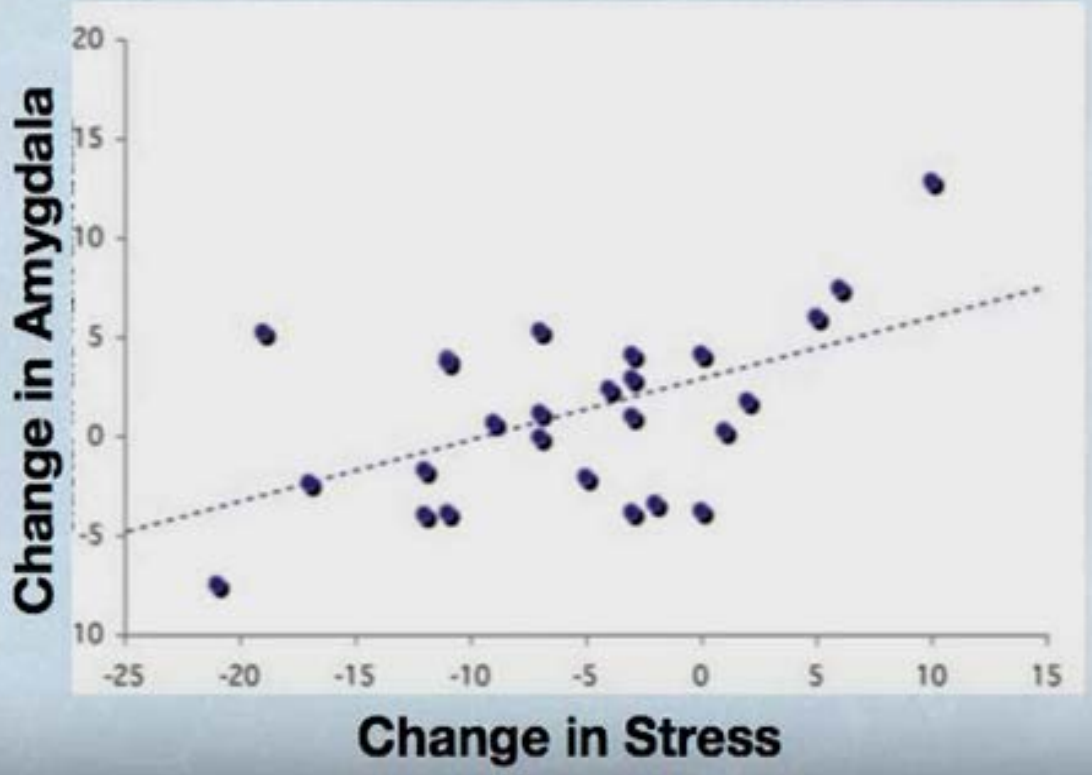
Less gray matter in depression and PTSD

Holzel, Carmody, Vangel et al. (2011).

How Reshapes Our Brains

Change in stress correlates with change in amygdala gray matter





Holzel, Carmody, Vangel et al. (2011).

Mindfulness is not:

- About relaxing or clearing the mind.
- About controlling thoughts.
- Quick fix to unpleasantness.
- Necessarily easy or enjoyable in the beginning.

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What We Resist Often Persists

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Mindfulness practice: 10-minute awareness of breath

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Inquiry

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Stepping Out of Auto-Pilot

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3-Minute Breathing Space

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Questions?

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Resources

Research

- American Mindfulness Research Assoication: https://goamra.org/

Text

- Mindfulness: An 8-week plan to finding peace in a frantic world. Mark Williams and Danny Penman.

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References

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- Hölzel, B. K., Carmody, J., Vangel, M., Congleton, C., Yerramsetti, S. M., Gard, T., & Lazar, S. W. (2011). Mindfulness practice leads to increases in regional brain gray matter density. *Psychiatry Research*, *191*(1), 36–43. http://doi.org/10.1016/j.pscychresns.2010.08.006

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