

Deep meditation and spiritual support -- mindfulness -- can help people

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The key to dealing with some of the challenges life throws at us - including pain, suffering, illness, grief and loss - is to truly appreciate the positive aspects of our life, and not simply focus on the negative. It is important to acknowledge the setbacks, but equal attention and value need to be given to what is going well. This lesson in living, based on the teachings of Buddha, is given by Karen Hilsberg, from the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health in California in the US, in an article published online in Springer's journal, *Mindfulness*.

Her moving, personal account describes how [mindfulness](#) - or a special kind of awareness that is attentive and warmly engaged with each moment of life - helped her cope with her husband's cancer, and the impact of his illness and death on both herself and her young family. The rigorous practice of mindfulness through daily meditation, weekly Buddhist group (sangha) meetings, and daily deep relaxation helped Hilsberg to be honest and objective about what was happening in her life.

Mindfulness taught her some valuable coping strategies and lessons in living, helping her to put things into perspective and stay grounded in the present. She learned to ask for help from others; she was no longer alone due to the moral and ethical support she received. However seemingly unbearable her experiences were, they would not last.

Karen Hilsberg concludes: "The practice of mindfulness, the teachings and the sangha have encouraged me to continually use the realities of my

own life experiences to find peace in the present moment. I have learned for myself that peace does not come from outside conditions, but that my true serenity can only come from within me. And life goes on and on - we are alive and breathing, and this is a miracle."

More information: Hilsberg KR (2011). Lessons in living. Mindfulness. [DOI 10.1007/s12671-011-0051-8](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-011-0051-8)

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