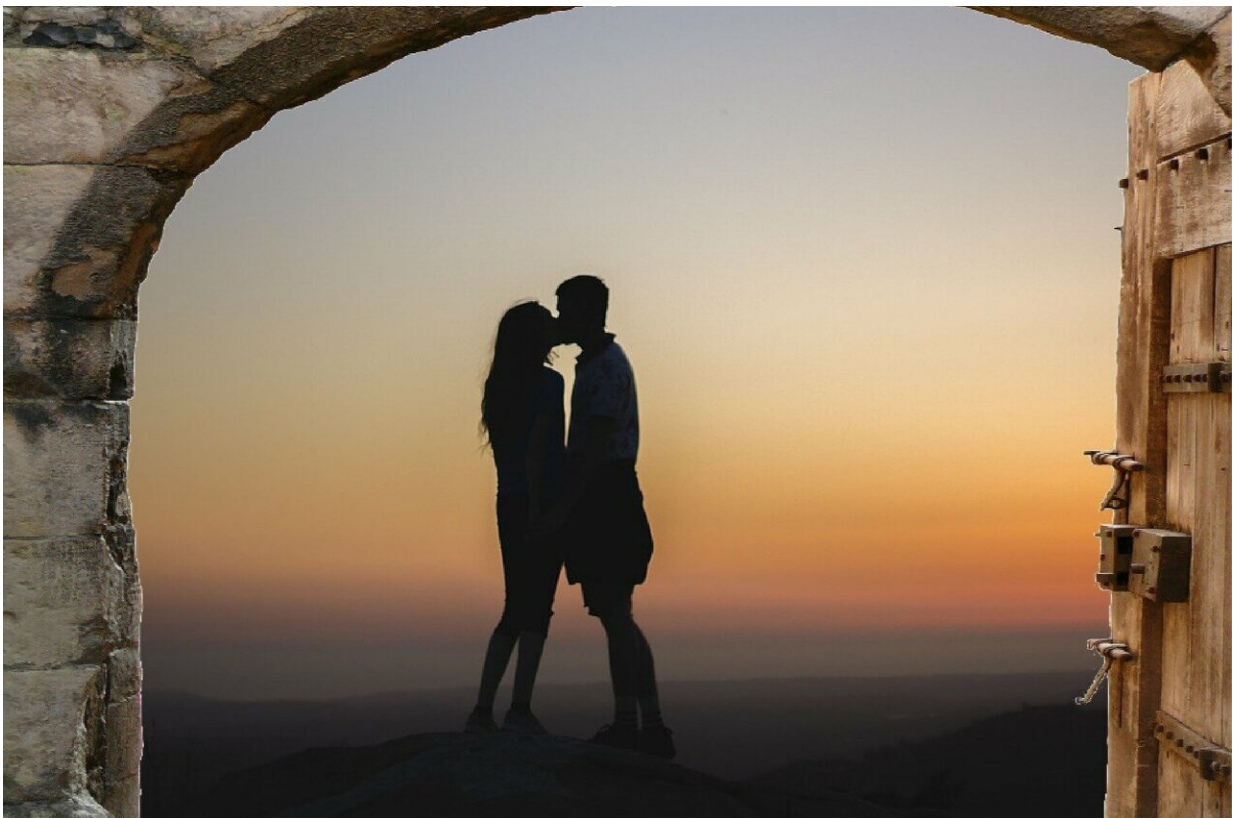


Trying to be more mindful in 2024? Try these tips for being mindful with your partner and kids

January 2 2024, by Hali Kil and Nathaniel Johnson



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With the new year comes New Year's resolutions. Many of us might be making those familiar promises to be healthier, go on that trip we've

always wanted to take or learn a new language. But if you're among the many wanting to be more mindful in 2024, [you're certainly not alone](#).

Mindfulness involves being attentive to the present moment and navigating experiences without judgment. It means being more attentive to our own needs as well as the needs and well-being of those around us.

Although much psychology research has shown that being mindful can help you feel better mentally and emotionally, recent evidence suggests that self-centered mindfulness can have a downside, particularly when it comes to our social lives.

A dark side to mindfulness?

In its Buddhist origins, [mindfulness involves showing compassion towards yourself and all living things](#). However, western psychological perspectives often highlight a [self-focused form of mindfulness](#), encouraging self-compassion and self-acceptance while ignoring compassion towards others.

There is a good reason that self-focused mindfulness has so long been emphasized in psychology research. This form of mindfulness has been shown to [improve symptoms of depression](#), [increase empathy](#) and [improve well-being](#), among a host of other benefits.

However, while being compassionate to yourself might sound like a great New Year's resolution, recent research has shown a darker side to this self-focused mindfulness. It may lead you to prioritize your own emotional well-being over the well-being of those in your social circle, leaving them by the wayside.

For example, there is evidence that people who practice [mindfulness meditation](#) are [less likely to feel guilt or want to apologize](#) when they

have hurt others. Other research has found that mindfully self-compassionate jailed inmates are [more likely to deny responsibility and show less sensitivity](#) to the consequences of their criminal behavior.

Across seven studies testing mindfulness programs for incarcerated adults, researchers have further found that, compared to controls, those trained in mindfulness showed [no significantly reduced risk for criminal behavior](#).

These recent studies suggest that we need a balanced view of mindfulness, emphasizing the interpersonal aspects, not just self-focused views, to extend benefits beyond ourselves.

Interpersonal mindfulness

[Interpersonal mindfulness](#), which involves showing compassionate attention to others, [is linked to having less stress and better relationships](#).

[Paying attention to your actions](#) and their consequences is especially important for being kind to others. Being receptive to the personal experiences of others can also make us [more empathetic towards them](#).

So how can we be mindful this year to benefit not just ourselves but those around us? Here are some tips to help you become more mindful in your relationships with your [partner](#) or children.

Practice mindful compassion with your partner

Romantic partners can be a source of tremendous happiness and security as well as disappointment and hurt. By committing to being more interpersonally mindful with your partner, you better enjoy the upsides and navigate the downsides of your relationship.

Extending mindful compassion and empathy towards your partner can be particularly [helpful for your relationship](#). Even if you are heading towards a potentially stressful life event, for example if you are [expecting a baby](#), being mindfully aware of each other can help you navigate stress and challenges.

Being [loving and kind](#) towards your partner is also helpful. This could include trying to understand how your partner's emotional state or their day might influence their tone or actions. Staying attentive and aware during date nights or even during arguments will make both of you feel acknowledged and seen, making for a more satisfying relationship.

Practicing these mindful skills can help you and your partner [feel closer and more connected](#), benefitting not just yourself but also your relationship.

Use mindful parenting with your kids

It can be so easy to fall into automatic habits when raising our kids. Using [mindful parenting](#) can help you to make conscious choices about how to respond to your [child](#), [nourishing their well-being and mental health](#).

That means [accepting and not judging yourself or your child](#). This can include accepting your own strengths and shortcomings as a parent while also accepting who your child is, even if things are not going your way. When your kids don't listen, be compassionate by trying to understand why, which can help you to better identify the cause and address their behavior.

Also try to keep aware of your own emotions as well as your child's. Listen to your child with full attention to help identify how they are feeling. Being attentive to how you're feeling and how that's affecting

your responses to your child can help you better assess their needs in the moment.

Being emotionally in tune with your child can bring you closer together and support your child's emotional development, and using mindful parenting might even [help your child to be more mindful](#).

With the [new year](#) comes the opportunity to improve ourselves as partners, colleagues, family members and friends. Perhaps being mindful was already part of your New Year's resolution, or after reading this, you have added it to your list. Whatever your resolutions might be, remember that [mindfulness](#) means being attentive to those around us and not just ourselves.

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