# 17 Misconceptions about mindfulness meditation

Mindfulness meditation is about clinging to the story: Emotions aren’t real. Aren’t accurate. Will pass.

When you dissociate from your negative emotions, an integral part of who you are, seventeen of many unintended negative consequences may result:

1. You start to judge uncomfortable thoughts and feelings as inferior, unreal, or bad, which gets in your way of actually learning from them, experiencing and healing them, growing from them, and integrating them.
2. You get good at stuffing anger and other negative emotions, which might make them go away — temporarily. But hasn’t shown to be very effective.
3. If and when a traumatic or emotionally painful experience occurs, you don’t fully process it, and cut your grieving process dangerously short.
4. You have low tolerance for processing old grief. So if a repressed traumatic memory starts to surface, you stuff it down, re-traumatizing yourself.
5. You expect meditation to fix your problems for you, resolve your relationship conflicts, and make you happy. Each of those things requires hard work, commitment, and realistically, some discomfort. When you look to meditation to save you, you stop putting in the hard work and commitment, and evade the discomfort, which makes it harder to effectively work toward your goals.
6. You detach yourself from conflicts in your life, expecting that meditation will get rid of the negative emotions — and fix the problem altogether. The emotions just signal the problem. Even if you ignore the emotions, the problem is still there.
7. You detach from your partner or loved one when they’re upset or experiencing an emotion you see as undesirable. You wish they’d just meditate it away, calm down, take a walk, get a grip — do whatever it takes to get rid of the emotion. When you invalidate your partner’s negative emotions, you cause serious wounds to both of you, harming trust and intimacy.
8. You find it difficult to connect to your feelings when you want to be emotionally honest with yourself and others. Because you’ve trained yourself to avoid them. This impairs your ability to be emotionally intimate with anyone.
9. Your relationships deteriorate, because you lose touch with what interpersonal conflict really means. After all, no one is really experiencing hurt feelings, right? Those feelings aren’t really real; just dissociate from them. Or, “observe” them.
10. You struggle to empathize with others, or understand their pain. If you don’t feel your own pain — you can’t expect to have compassion for another’s pain.
11. You lose your ability to naturally feel upset, sad, or concerned when there’s an issue in your life that you need to address. This puts a damper on healthy discernment.
12. Your ability to feel positive emotions is also affected. Because you don’t allow experience of the negative. The positive cannot exist without the negative. Get rid of the negative, the positive has no meaning.
13. Your passion and drive in life start to fade, or shift away from those things that are truly special to you, which may be a good thing, if you don’t want to cling to such things. But a bad thing if you give up pursuits that once gave you meaning and reward.
14. You start to feel dissatisfied with your life, and alone. But because of the nature of mindfulness meditation, you compound the problem by meditating, dissociating, and numbing even more.
15. You become fixated, obsessed, attached to abstract, man-made, escapist concepts like enlightenment and transcendence. This distracts you from attending to your actual life, here on Earth, as a mortal human being.
16. You subconsciously seek a guru or teacher to show you the way to “better” enlightenment and transcendence. You have no idea how this person deals with their interpersonal relationships, not to mention conflict. You have no idea if this person could manage the mundane responsibilities you struggle to balance in life. Yet you put this person on a pedestal, and potentially take a advice that’s really not suited for your lifestyle.
17. You get it in your head that humans are so imperfect. This may come from the spiritual beliefs surrounding the practice, or just hanging around others who practice. (“Perfect” is a human construct by the way.) You then judge your human-ness. And seek to quiet (or kill) your ego, or self-concept, which puts you in ultimate conflict with yourself.

*Extract from* [*http://mindfulconstruct.com/2011/02/04/17-ways-mindfulness-meditation-can-cause-you-emotional-harm/*](http://mindfulconstruct.com/2011/02/04/17-ways-mindfulness-meditation-can-cause-you-emotional-harm/)

# One of the many responses to the above

**Karma Gyatso** [February 5, 2011 at 8:08 am](http://mindfulconstruct.com/2011/02/04/17-ways-mindfulness-meditation-can-cause-you-emotional-harm/#comment-35490)

With respect, you seem to have completely missed the point of mindfulness meditation which can happen when we pratice without the guidance of a proper teacher. Properly taught mindfulness meditation has the potential to provide us with the most natural understanding of our mind and the source of our emotions. Many people in the West are now turning to mindfulness because they are feeling stressed, anxious, depressed or generally unhappy. These emotions are there already – before undertaking a practice of mindfulness. However, we are unable to see why we are unhappy (i.e. the causes) – we think the next material object we buy will bring us happiness – and although it might bring us a fleeting illusion of happiness, it of course doesn’t result in lasting happiness. The only route to happiness is to see how our mind is working and to see the source of the emotions and thoughts that lead to our unhappiness. The way we “see” the source is by the practice of settling the mind – this can take time, but when the mind is sufficiently settled we can see the source of our unhappiness. Of course this can be challenging because we see things that we do not like in ourselves and others which challenges our percieved identity of ourself. However, such insight shows us how things really are – how we really are – as opposed to a dilusion and fog which we live in with an untrained mind. Also, when we actually “see” the source that has caused us so much unhappiness for years we are liberated from that unhappiness. To counteract any things we see in ourselves and others that we do not like it is essential to also practice the cultivation of compassion. Many “new” so-called meditation teachers do not teach the practice of compassion alongside mindfulness. My teacher considers meditation and compassion to be like the two wings of a bird – they go hand-in-hand to enable the mind to develop in a balanced way. It is essntial to find a good teacher of meditation. Sorry for the long comment but it’s a big topic.