



*by Linda Fentress, M. Ed., LPCC*

Mindfulness is intentionally living with awareness in the present moment. In some ways, wise Oogway from the Kung Fu Panda movie said it best.....*"You are too concerned with what was and what will be. Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why they call it the present."*

Oogway wisely identified that living in the present is indeed a gift. It increases a sense of happiness and serves to lower anxiety and depression. How do we practice mindfulness? Start with 5 minutes a day and continue to increase the time as you are able. There are plenty of apps for your smart phone that are guides to developing this skill of mindfulness, but here's a starting place:

OBSERVE - Notice your body sensations, pay attention on purpose to the present moment, control your attention, let go of judging or rejecting the moment

DESCRIBE - Put words on the experience, label what you observe, what are your five senses taking in?

PARTICIPATE - throw yourself completely into activities of the current moment, become one with whatever you are doing, go with the flow.

A long and rich history of spiritually mindful practices exist in the Christian faith, such as meditation, contemplative prayer, and centering prayer. When we focus our mind on the present, and experiencing God in the present, we refocus our mind from the stress of the past and anxiety about the future, and allow ourselves to more fully take in God's presence.

*Be still and know that I am God.....  
Psalms 46:10*