

Three mindfulness techniques can increase internal self-awareness.

What do you think of when you hear the word “meditation”? If you’re anything like the author, you might feel intimidated by the thought of yoga mats, incense and chanting. But it’s nothing to be scared of – for millennia meditation has helped people increase their self-awareness, and you don’t have to become a monk or make a grand lifestyle change to do it.

The author suggests three alternative techniques to increase your mindfulness and, with it, your internal self-awareness. It’s easy to confuse introspection and rumination with mindfulness, but they’re opposites. Rather than analyzing and judging our thoughts, mindfulness encourages you to notice them without judgment. By taking this approach, you’ll begin to make new observations about yourself, and improve your self-awareness. You may even improve your happiness, health and productivity, as many people who practice mindfulness find.

The first technique is called reframing. Reframing is all about looking at the bigger picture of your experiences. For example, if you lose your job, you might fixate on what you have lost. To reframe this experience, you would also focus on what you could gain from it. Perhaps you realize that you’d become stuck in a career rut, and that you’re now free to find new opportunities, or even start your own business.

Another technique is called comparing and contrasting. It involves noticing how our thoughts, feelings and behaviors have remained the same or changed over time. It’s a mindfulness technique that the author herself has used. Two years into her second job, she began to get restless. When she thought back to how she’d felt two years into her last job, the author realized she felt the same way this time.

She was then able to recognize that the problem wasn’t her current job, but an internal pattern that made her feel this way. Why not try this technique yourself? Ask yourself questions

about your job and relationships – what has remained the same, and what is different from past jobs or relationships?

The third mindfulness technique is the daily check-in. Take five minutes each day to reflect on what went well and what could have been better. Is there anything you can learn from your experience today that you can improve on tomorrow?
