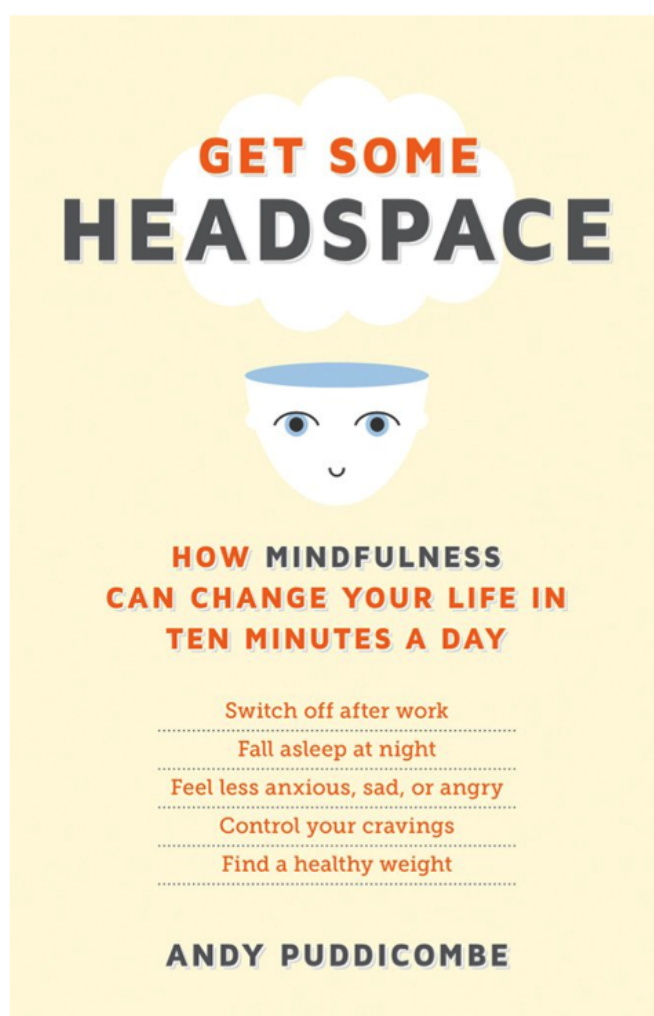


Andy Puddicombe, Author of 'Get Some Headspace,' Shares the Ingredients for a Perfect Relationship



By Whitney Baker

As a former Buddhist monk, Andy Puddicombe knows a thing or two about meditation. Considered to be the United Kingdom's foremost expert on mindfulness, he founded the Headspace organization in an attempt to demystify the practice of meditation. To further this goal, Puddicombe wrote *Get Some Headspace: How Mindfulness Can Change Your Life in 10 Minutes a Day*; he was inspired by his "desire to make meditation accessible, practical and relevant to modern-day living." CupidsPulse.com had a chance to interview Puddicombe about the importance of meditation and how finding balance can lead to greater happiness and improved relationships.

Can you define "headspace" or "mindfulness" for our readers?

Mindfulness is the ability to be present and in the moment. Most of us have experienced this at some time, perhaps whilst watching a sunset or listening to music. The problem is that it seems to pass quite quickly, and before long, we are caught up in lots of thinking or struggling with difficult emotions.

So we need some way of training the mind to be more familiar with the state of being present and engaged with what is happening now. This is where meditation comes in. It is simply a technique that allows us to become more familiar with this quality.

And headspace is the result of both. When we are present in life, there is a sense of being grounded; we are not easily put off balance by challenging emotions, and at the same time, we are fully aware that our thoughts do not control us. When we have a sense of headspace, we are at ease with our thoughts, our emotions and our body; perhaps just as importantly, we are at ease with those around us as well.

For people interested in finding more balance, what is the number one technique you recommend using to clear the clutter in their heads?

I always recommend starting with something simple. Go to www.getsomeheadspace.com or download the Headspace App, and you can learn a classic mindfulness technique for free. It takes just 10 minutes a day, and it provides all the essential elements for learning how to step back from thought and to experience a greater sense of calm, clarity and balance in the mind.

What areas of our lives will be enriched by daily meditation?

When we meditate, we are fine-tuning the mind. It doesn't just change our relationship to one or two particular things; it changes our relationship to everything in life. It fundamentally changes our perception of everyone and everything. It allows us to stop projecting what we think and instead see the world for what it really is.

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When it comes to love, how can mindfulness help us be our best selves and thus attract our best matches?

Mindfulness has been shown to reduce stress, worry and anger, whilst increasing the qualities of happiness, openness and empathy. Needless to say, when we are looking for love, we want the very best of us to shine. We want to be able to let go of our impatience, nervousness and maybe even our desperation. At the same time, we want to be able to connect with our partner, to meet them where they are in life, to see them for who they are and not what we want them to be. That is the starting place for any healthy relationship.

For someone who is still nervous and unsure about a new relationship, can mindfulness help calm their fears and give them confidence? How so?

Absolutely. In fact, a study at University of California-Los Angeles showed that, by learning to be more aware of our emotions through the practice of mindfulness, we can reduce

the intensity of anxiety by up to 50 percent.

But perhaps more importantly still, as we get to know ourselves better through the practice of mindfulness, we're able to recognize the tendency to run away from difficult situations or to get very defensive when we feel unsure or insecure. This is replaced by the ability and willingness to just stay with that uncertainty, to embrace it and allow it to be part of the journey. There is a certain feeling of freedom that comes from the certainty that nothing is certain. This, in turns, tends to have a very positive effect on the relationship.

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And finally, how can mindfulness help us get the most of our current relationships?

Mindfulness helps us to be present. This means that, when we are with others, we are actually with them rather than simply being there in person but elsewhere in our mind. It allows us the space of mind to listen to others, to understand others, to be less critical and judgmental of others. At the same time, it encourages the qualities of openness, flexibility and empathy. Most of all, it allows us to give others the opportunity to be themselves, which is the only way either person is ever going to be truly happy. If you were putting a mix together to make the perfect relationship, it is difficult to imagine a better list of ingredients.

To purchase Andy Puddicombe's 'Get Some Headspace,' visit Amazon. You can also follow him on Twitter, Facebook and his site at www.GetSomeHeadSpace.com.