

PODCAST



TRANSCRIPT

Episode 027

How Mindfulness Can Really Help Autoimmune Warriors Manage Symptoms

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DIANA HIMES: Welcome, welcome, welcome to today's episode of the **Tough Love for Sensitive Souls** podcast! I'm your host, Diana Himes. I've got another exciting topic planned for us today, so grab a beverage, your notebook, and get comfy!

Hey there Sensitive Soul, I'm so glad you're here! This is the last episode in a 4-part series about the correlation between Highly Sensitive People and Autoimmune Diseases. In this episode you'll **explore how unlocking your power from within can help manage symptoms of chronic illness**. You'll also learn the importance of staying grounded in the present by establishing a mindfulness practice for reducing stress, identifying symptom triggers, and navigating through flare-ups with grace and resilience.

You already know that life's like a roller coaster full of ups and downs. But imagine having a secret weapon, a shield to protect you when life throws you curveballs. Well, that's what mindfulness is all about. It's not some mystical mumbo-jumbo; **it's a practical, down-to-earth approach to staying strong, centered, and resilient.**

If you've been diagnosed with an autoimmune condition, you probably know that stress is like kryptonite to your immune system. When you're stressed, you're more vulnerable to flare-ups. And this is where mindfulness comes to the rescue.

So, how does mindfulness manage stress and boost your resilience? It's all about being present in the current moment, instead of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. **When you practice mindfulness, you're like a Zen master**, who's calm, cool, and collected even when stress comes knocking on your door!

Let's say you have a big presentation at work, and your nerves are going haywire. You notice your heart's pounding, your palms are sweaty, and your mind is racing with all the "what ifs." When that happens, don't let stress take the wheel. Bring out your secret weapon: mindfulness. Take a deep breath, **tune in to the sensations in your body, and acknowledge your thoughts without getting caught up in them.** Suddenly, you feel a sense of calm and focus wash over you. Stress doesn't stand a chance!

Now, here's the surprising part: you might think that mindfulness is all about zoning out and blocking stress, but it's quite the opposite. **Mindfulness is about facing stress head-on and dealing with it like a warrior.** By acknowledging stress without judgment, you take away its power. It's like looking at a scary lion in the eye and realizing it's just a puppet with strings.

Remember that stress is not your immune system's friend and it's always trying to take charge of your mind and body. But when you practice mindfulness, **you become the master of your own health** by choosing to kick stress to the curb. By keeping stress in check, you keep your immune system happy and it's got you covered.

Now I'm sure you're probably wondering, "Okay, mindfulness sounds cool and all, but how do I actually do it?" Well, sensitive soul, you're in for a treat. There's as many mindfulness practices as there are flavors in an ice cream parlor. And you know what, **you get to pick what works best for you!**

So, let's talk about some of the most common, and maybe not so common, mindfulness practices you can use anytime you're feeling stressed or anxious:

1. **Deep breathing is like a magic potion for your nervous system.** You breathe in through your nose, count to four, and breathe out through your mouth, counting to six. Keep doing this a few times, and boom, you've activate your Zen mode. This is one of the easiest ways to let go of stress and anxiety! This is my go-to anytime I have a Doctor visit or test performed. It helps keep my blood pressure and heart rate lower.
2. **A body scan meditation is when you focus your attention on each part of your body.** It's like taking a leisurely stroll through your body. You start at your toes and work your way up, noticing any sensations without judging them. It's a great way to recognize when your immune system is balanced or not.
3. **When you practice gratitude, you shift your focus from what's going wrong to what's going right.** It's like wearing gratitude glasses that make the world look brighter and more beautiful. And here's the surprise: research shows that gratitude boosts your immune system. So let gratitude be your attitude to help make your body happy.
4. **Laughter is like a supercharged turbo boost for your immune system.** It releases feel-good chemicals that combat stress and boost your body's natural defenses. It's like having a comedy show in your body, and everyone's laughing their way to health. So, the next time you're feeling stressed, don't forget to indulge in a good laugh. Watch a funny movie, share jokes with friends, or even try laughter yoga.
5. **Nature immersion therapy is being surrounded by lush greenery, the gentle breeze caressing your skin, and the soothing sounds of birds singing.** It's like a blissful oasis for your

mind and body. Studies show that spending time in nature reduces stress and inflammation. So, the next time you're feeling overwhelmed, take a stroll in the park or simply sit under a tree and soak in nature's healing vibes.

6. **Journaling is one of the BEST ways to relieve stress AND get negative thoughts out of your head.** Grab a pen and some paper, then start writing. If you're not sure what to write, do a body scan meditation and document the sensations or emotions you discovered.
7. **Do activities like yoga, tai chi, or qigong focusing on the present moment and the flow of energy in your body.** Gentle exercise or stretching while focusing on your breath, body sensations, and emotions helps ease pain and discomfort. Do things that bring you joy and help you relax like reading, listening to music, and meditation.

Remember, mindfulness is not just about sitting cross-legged in a silent room. You can be mindful anytime, anywhere. Here's an example...let's say you're stuck in traffic and starting to feel frustrated. Instead of honking and raising your blood pressure, you **take a breath and become aware of the moment without getting caught up in the chaos.** You've just become the calm eye of the storm!

Want to know the best part, mindfulness practices are not just a one-time deal. The more you do them, the stronger your resilience becomes. It's like flexing a muscle; **the more you work it out, the stronger it gets.** And all of a sudden, you're a stress-busting ninja!

You might be thinking that mindfulness is all about shutting down negative thoughts and emotions. I get it, I thought the same thing! But here's the juicy secret: it's about embracing them with open arms. Picture this: your immune system is like a superhero squad, with its highs and lows. Sometimes it might not function at its peak, and that's okay. **Instead of beating yourself up, you show yourself some compassion and grace.**

Don't think that mindfulness is just a band-aid solution to manage your stress and health. Here's the eye-opener: it's a lifelong journey of self-discovery and empowerment. Mindfulness is like a trusty companion, always by your side, **helping you face life's challenges with grace and resilience.** It's not about erasing stress or immune struggles but about building a strong foundation to weather life's storms.

Mindfulness helps you take on stress like a Zen master, unleashing your inner superhero to conquer autoimmune flare-ups. Conventional and unconventional mindfulness practices from gratitude to laughter, from yoga to nature immersion are just a few of the **tools you can use to build your resilience.**

Remember, mindfulness is not a quick fix; it's a powerful ally on your journey to wellness. So, the next time stress tries to knock you down, remember your secret weapon: mindfulness.

If you're ready to identify some of the mindfulness practices that'll help you reduce stress and manage symptoms, ask yourself these questions:

1. What activities or habits make you feel more grounded, centered, or at peace throughout the day? How can you integrate these mindful moments into your daily routine?

2. Explore different mindful movement practices like yoga, tai chi, or qigong. Which one resonates with you the most, and how can you incorporate it into your life regularly?
3. Consider creative activities you enjoy, such as painting, writing, or playing music. How can you use these creative outlets as tools for stress relief and emotional expression?
4. Analyze your sleep patterns and how they affect your well-being. What mindful rituals can you establish before bedtime to improve the quality of your sleep?

Well that, Sensitive Soul, brings me to the FAQ of the week... **How do I get started with a mindfulness practice when I can barely get out of bed?**

I know that some days can feel like an uphill battle, especially when managing autoimmune conditions. Even when getting out of bed seems like a daunting task, you can still embrace mindfulness with open arms. Let's explore 7 compassionate ways to get started on your mindfulness journey.

1. **Inhale peace, exhale stress!** Start by taking slow, deep breaths while lying in bed. Feel the gentle rise and fall of your chest, soothing your weary soul. Breathwork anchors you to the present moment, inviting tranquility into your day.
2. **Find stillness in bed by stretching your way to serenity!** Engage in simple bed yoga poses, like gentle twists and leg stretches. Even within the cozy confines of your bed, you'll find stillness and renewed energy.
3. **Listen to calming guided meditations that cater to your unique needs.** Tune in to these soothing voices, easing your mind into a state of tranquility.
4. **Dream your way to healing!** Picture your body as a vibrant canvas, painting itself with colors of strength and resilience. Visualize your autoimmune symptoms melting away, paving the path to a brighter day.
5. **Rest isn't a pause; it's necessary!** Turn everyday activities like sipping tea or applying lotion into moments of mindfulness. Savor each sensation and relish the beauty in these seemingly small acts.
6. **Create a safe space as a sanctuary!** Make a cozy corner your sacred mindfulness space surrounding yourself with comforting pillows, soft blankets, and soothing scents.
7. **Embrace mindful apps and tap into serenity at your fingertips!** Search for ones that are tailored for your needs. From meditations to sleep stories, these apps offer you a digital oasis for calm.

Beautiful warrior, you're not alone in your journey. Mindfulness starts with small, loving steps, and even from the warmth of your bed, you can infuse your day with mindfulness. Remember, be gentle with yourself; every mindful moment counts on your path to healing.

I'm excited to share there's an upcoming LIVE episode of the Tough Love for Sensitive Souls. Join me and my guest Justine Rodes from the brand Mentally A Badass as we talk about how hard it can be to live with autoimmune diseases. On July 29th at 2:00pm we'll shed light on the struggles faced by those fighting hidden battles every day. Seats are limited so save your spot by registering today at pages.dianahimes.com/live.

And that brings us to the end of this week's show! Now it's time for you to decide what you're going to do differently this week. Take 10 minutes right now and get started answering the journal prompts.

If you found this episode inspiring, don't forget to share it with other sensitive souls. Together, **let's ignite a movement of empowered individuals who believe in their infinite potential!**

Thank you so much for spending this time with me. I hope you got a few new ideas for doing things differently. Remember, **you're the only one in charge of your life regardless of what anyone else says or does.**

Join me next week for another episode of **Tough Love for Sensitive Souls**. Until then, don't forget that you've got everything you need to get anything you want!