

easy, cost-effective mindfulness techniques in this book can make a real difference.

Recent medical and psychological research shows that good mental health is one key to good physical health. How we think and feel affects how we look. Specific mental health challenges have a particular impact on different parts of our bodies, such as our skin and hair. Your total well-being also affects your appearance far more than you realize. If you're not balancing your life, it shows. Poor self-care behaviors can do cumulative collateral damage.

For your skin, reducing stress and anxiety is as good as wearing sunscreen. Our state of mind matters. Luckily, many of the routines around beauty lend themselves to mindfulness and can be practiced in a present, nonjudgmental way. These techniques can enhance your experience and have ongoing positive beautifying effects through reducing the stress and anxiety that can affect how we look and feel.

You can lose your permanent frown, smooth your worried brow without Botox, and turn your sag lines to smile lines with mindful beauty—and change your life at the same time.

About Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a practice and strategy that initially developed from Buddhist traditions. It has recently received attention in psychological fields, and has been found to be a successful way of managing anxiety, stress, and even depression.

To be mindful means to be conscious or aware. When we are practicing mindfulness, we are engaging with the present moment, noticing the feelings, thoughts, and sensations that

arise at the time. Often, we can get so caught up in our heads, or in a task, that we lose awareness of ourselves and what is going on around us. Have you ever driven a familiar route and then realized you can barely remember the experience of reaching your destination? Have you ever grabbed a hurried meal and eaten it in a flash without even really tasting it? This often happens when we are on autopilot, in a state of "doing," or when we are caught up in our own worries and stresses. Mindfulness is a way of reengaging with our moment-to-moment experiences, a way of switching into "being," and becoming aware of ourselves and our surroundings.

The other focus of mindfulness is to adopt a nonjudgmental stance. This is really about practicing acceptance of any thoughts, feelings, or sensations we experience in the moment. It is really normal to apply statements or judgments to experiences; for example, when we feel a breeze, thinking it is "too cold." Mindfulness is about letting go of these judgments and just noticing the cold sensation from the breeze, rather than assessing it. The same can be done with our thoughts and feelings. Rather than noticing that we feel stressed or upset and deciding we shouldn't feel that way, a mindful experience would be to acknowledge the presence of these feelings and letting them be present in the moment.

Meditation is a crucial part of mindfulness. All meditations help us to focus our attention and awareness, and there are many kinds of meditative techniques. Mindfulness meditations that come from the Buddhist tradition are known as *vipassana*, which means "to see things as they really are." It incorporates the concept of impermanence. Nothing stays the