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**Dr. Beth
Speaks**



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WSPY, Your Life Matters, Strategies to Change the Way We Think

- Mike Williams And welcome now to Your Life Matters with Clinical Social Worker, Dr. Beth Placketka from Safe Harbor Counseling and Doctor Beth Speaks.
- Mike Williams Dr. Placketka, thanks again for joining us. How are you?
- Dr. Beth Placketka I'm fine! Thank you! It is a pleasure to be here.
- Mike Williams Yes, so today we're going to be a talking about the different strategies to change the way we think. So what are we talking about here?
- Dr. Beth Placketka Well, you know it is interesting because that question comes up a lot with listeners and clients. They're saying, "How do I make changes in my life." Sometimes it's just straight out, that's the question and other times we're talking about a tough area of life and it kind of evolves, and "ok, how do I make those changes." It's been said that over 95% of our thoughts are actually useless. They're random things that just clutter our mind, and we don't pay attention to them. So making changes really requires developing some awareness about what we're thinking about and how we think.
- Mike Williams So we are trying to reduce that 95% to a number that is a little lower for the useless stuff, and get a little more important things in our minds.
- Dr. Beth Placketka Right! We want a little clarity about what's actually going on, and what's really important.

Dr. Beth Placketka There are some strategies that I'm sure many people have heard about. Right now mindfulness is a very popular term. People also use meditation and prayer. Often people use those three terms: mindfulness, meditation, and prayer interchangeably, but actually they're very different and can be used in very different ways. So mindfulness is actually paying attention to what you're doing. Now I don't know about you but sometimes when I drive someplace, I don't end up where I'm going because I go on my automatic route. I start thinking about my grocery list if it is a clear road, or you know, I do the dishes and forget to do something else. So what we are doing is we are thinking about one thing and doing another, and it makes us feel unsettled. Now here's the thing, our body records the sensations, but our brains don't file them. So we get all messed up. We start thinking that our body is upset, and our mind comes up with a reason for it, and it may or may not be accurate. So mindfulness means what am I doing right now and what's going on, and not thinking about other things.

Dr. Beth Placketka Meditation, on the other hand is a calming of the body and quiet reflection where you focus on a single concept without searching for a specific outcome. So for example, if you're thinking about a new project that you want to have, you might you might start out thinking, well I want to do this, this, and this, but it kind of inhibits your creativity because you've put limits on it. You think of the word or the concept and then as new ideas come in, if they're related they're going attached to that thought, and if they're unrelated you just let them pass through. So if I'm thinking about calm, I want to be calm, and I think about the grocery list, I don't get up and write down a grocery list, I just go back took the word calm and let it focus in my head.

Mike Williams So the simpler you are, mind wise and what's in your mind, you can meditate better and easier.

Dr. Beth Placketka Right and you just keep wanting to think of that same thing, and it allows you to be calm and more creative

Dr. Beth Placketka Prayer, on the other hand is a focus on communication with God or if you call it a higher power, creator which allows us to recognize that we are definitely not in charge which for many of us is a huge relief. We can relax and know that somebody else is doing it. When we are praying, we also calm ourselves, and we recognize that there's generally four kinds. One is adoration, one is contrition, thanksgiving, and petition. We're saying, "Ok God, you're cooler than me," when we adore. In contrition, we're saying, "Hey we're not all that. Sorry about that." Thanksgiving says that something good happened, and I didn't know it was coming. Petitions we are just asking what we need.

Dr. Beth Placketka All of them are calming and creative approaches to changing the way we think. It does take some time to develop these skills. I read, one time that somebody said, "I actually meditated for ten minutes" and whoever they were they were telling was their mentor, and they said, "Oh my gosh, I can only do five." The mentor could do less because it's varies. It's so easy to get distracted.

Mike Williams And I guess with some of these things, you feel like you want to start or maybe you feel like you are making a good attempt at meditation or what have.you, but is there a way to know if you're doing it properly or if you can improve the way you're trying to do it?

Dr. Beth Placketka I think the first thing really that we want to do is set a short timer, find a time when you're not going to be distracted. Get yourself in a quiet place and then just relax and let it happen. As time goes on it gets easier and easier, so you just keep practicing. You can start with 2 minutes and you can go up to 20. These things help change the way we think so that we are not always worried about every little thing that crosses through our mind. We can't stop those thoughts, but we don't have to keep focusing on those little random things.

Mike Williams It sounds like the goals was to try to at times at least slow things down because these days everybody's got seemingly 50,000 things going on at one time, and you just want to take a step back, slow it down, and focus

Dr. Beth Placketka Exactly! Exactly! And by doing that then you know what's important to you and then you can respond in a way that actually allows you to live your own life because you know your life matters!

Mike Williams And there is a book too that you wanted to mention?

Dr. Beth Placketka Yes I did. I forgot. In ***Reality Unveiled***, they were talking about the power of meditation. In 1980, they had 3,000 professional meditators that mediated just on peace and love for two weeks. Controlling for weather and all that kind of stuff, there were 70% fewer acts of war during those two weeks worldwide just by having people meditate, calm, focus, not be all so frantic and angry.

Mike Williams Seems like good advice for these times, doesn't it?

Dr. Beth Placketka It sure does!

Mike Williams

Well thank you again. That's all the time we have for today's show don't forget listeners you can submit your questions at: safeharboril.com and maybe you'll get your question answered on an upcoming show. Make sure you tune in next Monday morning for, **Your Life Matters** with Clinical Social Worker, **Dr. Beth Plachetka** with **Safe Harbor Counseling** and **Dr. Beth Speaks**.