



Hello, my name is Joel, and I am a Peer Support Specialist. I hope you are all having a fantastic holiday season!

I should start by telling you all a little about myself and how I ended up at CMMHC. Up until 1,960 days ago, I have had a long struggle with a substance use disorder which resulted with being diagnosed with major depressive disorder. Having a great therapist, great support from family, friends, and coworkers, along with the right medications, diet, and exercise, I am now living my best life that I ever dreamed possible.

The one thing that I have learned, and what has taken lots of never-ending practice and hard work is being able to live in the present moment. To be totally present while talking with somebody whether you're with a stranger, a client, a friend, a coworker, or a family member has helped them and myself be calm and engaged. To be able to put someone at ease is easy for some and takes practice for others. To be able to put my past behind me and to not stress about the future and to just live for the moment has improved the mental health for me and those around me. The present, or right now can be a few moments or a morning or a year-if you can stay in it for that long. The less energy we waste regretting the past or worrying about the future, the more energy we will have for what's in front of us.

So, how do we stay present and in the moment?

... We must:

- Be as careful as someone crossing an iced-over stream.
- Be as alert as a warrior in enemy territory.
- Be as courteous as a guest.
- Be as shapable as a block of wood.
- Be as fluid as melting ice.
- Be as receptive as a valley.
- Be as clear as a glass of water.

We must all try to reach a calm, open-minded, clarity by:

- Be fully present.
- Emptying our minds of preconceptions.
- Taking our time.
- Sitting quietly while reflecting.
- Rejecting distractions.
- Weighing advice against the council of our convictions.
- Deliberating without being paralyzed.

If it is difficult for you to be present or you've had trouble with it in the past, it's okay. That's the nice thing about the present. It keeps showing up to give you another chance. If you are looking for a good way to start living in the moment you can begin by setting your phone to silent.

A wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.

-HERBERT SIMON-

MINDFULNESS- A state of active, open attention on the present moment. It has been clinically proven to reduce stress and improve cognitive abilities like focus and memory.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays! - Joel Lovitz, Peer Support Specialist

*We are the evidence; We hold the hope.*