

Mindfulness Meditation

When the pupil is ready, the teacher will come.
—Ancient Chinese Proverb

Meditation

- In simple terms, meditation is a mind-cleansing or emptying process
- At a deeper level, meditation is focused concentration and increased awareness of one's being

Meditation

- When the mind is emptied of conscious thought, unconscious thoughts can enter the conscious realm to bring enlightenment to our lives.

Vehicles for Exclusive Meditation

- Mental repetition (mantra)
- Visual concentration (tratek)
- Repeated sounds (nadem)
- Physical repetition (breathing, rhythmic exercise)
- Tactile repetition (beads, shell, stone etc.)

Examples of Exclusive Meditation

- Transcendental Meditation (TM)
- The Relaxation Response

Inclusive Meditation

- Observance with emotional detachment
- Examples include:
 - Zen Meditation
 - Mindfulness Meditation

Physiological Effects of Meditation

- Decreased oxygen consumption
- Decreased blood lactate levels
- Increased skin resistance
- Decreased heart rate

Physiological Effects of Meditation

- Decreased blood pressure
- Decreased muscle tension
- Increased alpha waves

The Guest House

*This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.*

*A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor*

*Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they are a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably,
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.*

*The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.*

*Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.*

Jalaludin Rumi (1207-1273)

Mindfulness

Paying attention, on purpose, to one's own mental and physical processes during everyday tasks to act with clarity and insight.

... leads the mind back from theories, attitudes and abstractions to the experience itself

Mindfulness

- the study of subjective experience from the inside out
- a state of mind that *permits* insight
- can apply to emotions, thinking, ethics, technique, actions
- refers to actions in the moment, not just philosophizing or "monday morning quarterbacking"

Mindlessness

“The tendency of the mind to seek premature closure...that quality of mind that imposes a definition on things and then mistakes the definition for the actual experience”

M Epstein

What Could Have Gone Wrong?

- Inattentiveness
 - Ignoring that there was something different
- Lack of curiosity
 - Fulfilling rather than challenging expectations
- Lack of flexibility
 - Rigid categorization
- Lack of presence
 - Inability to respond appropriately

Habits of Mindful Practitioners

- Attentive observation
 - observing the observer while observing the observed
 - peripheral vision
 - pre-attentive processing
- Critical curiosity
 - asking reflective questions that “tend not toward edification”
 - Tolerating (and enjoying) being wrong
- Beginner’s mind
 - informed flexibility
 - willingness to set aside categories and examine bias
- Presence
 - diminished reactivity
 - control of anxiety
 - ego-lessness, singlemindedness
 - focus on the task and the other
 - tolerating contradictory ideas
 - personal involvement and investment
 - compassion based on insight

What Can One be Mindful Of?

- Mindfulness of the body
 - breath, contact, movements (technical skills)
- Mindfulness of feelings
 - unpleasant and pleasant sensations (the “sinking feeling”)
 - cognitive processes (decision-making, “reflection”)
- Mindfulness of emotions
 - countertransference – sadness, anxiety, heaviness, acceptance (diagnosis of mental disorders)
- Mindfulness of mind
 - self-awareness: state of alertness/attentiveness, “holding on”/“letting go”

Mindfulness in Clinical Practice

- Self-knowledge to distinguish one’s own values from those of the patient
- Greeting the uninvited (or unwanted) guest with hospitality
- Ethical response to delusion and suffering
- Purposeful presence in small actions

Mindful Practice

- Attentive observation
- Critical curiosity
- Beginner’s mind
- Presence


