Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Practice Manual

Mindfulness is about being fully awake
in our lives. It is about perceiving
the exquisite vividness of each moment.
We feel more alive.
We also gain immediate access
to our own powerful inner resources
for insight, transformation, and healing.

Jon Kabat-Zinn
Originator of MBSR, and founding director
of the renowned Stress Reduction Clinic at
the University of Massachusetts Medical School

Contact information for class instructor

Name_____
Email:_____@_____
Phone: (_____)_____

An Invitation

Dear Students,

In the late 1970's, Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn, found that people practicing a 2500 year old form of meditation - and an even older practice of yoga, were learning new ways to manage the challenges and even heal from mental and physical illness. He translated these practices into modern western language and developed a curriculum called Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) which he began teaching in a major New England University Medical Center. By removing all the religious and cultural aspects from these practices, people from varying backgrounds and all walks of life are able to benefit from the program. The MBSR course is now taught all over the world in a variety of settings - universities, medical schools, hospitals, cancer centers. And these mindfulness techniques are being used by many organizations, including governments, sports teams, military and law enforcement, and major corporations, for their scientifically measurable physical and mental benefits.

The curriculum was originally developed for people in crisis, to help them cope with serious health issues. In the decades since it began, the application of the MBSR techniques has evolved to include the prevention of stress related illnesses, the improvement of concentration, work performance, and overall well-being. We have the opportunity to learn these practices at a very positive time in our lives, so that we can enhance our experiences and live to our fullest potential. Then when hard times come, we have the tools we need to stay centered through them.

This course is an invitation for you to do something radical and courageous - stopping for a moment and bringing awareness to our lives is a radical act. Learning and applying mindful meditative practices takes courage, and means we are willing to see where we can take responsibility for our choices and our lives. In a time where there are so many distractions and so many options, it is crucial to have clarity and to really know ourselves, so that we can live from our deepest values. Mindfulness can support us in this.

We encourage you to accept this invitation, and enter into the course as fully as you possibly can.

Let's see where this adventure takes us!

Sincerely,

Mindful-Way

Informed Consent / Liability Waiver

The nature of this Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program, - MBSR, which includes skill training in relaxation and meditation methods as well as gentle yoga style stretching exercises, along with the risks, benefits, and possible side effects of the MBSR Program have been explained to me in detail. And I voluntarily assume the risk inherent in my participation in the Mindfulness/Stress Reduction Program including the risk of injury, accident loss, cost or damage to my person or property. I release and indemnify Mindful-Way and it's teachers, agents, and the owners and management of the Facilities where the classes are held from, and against, any and all such claims and liabilities, including attorneys' fees.

I further attest that I am in sufficient health, and/or that I have consulted with a physician and I am able to undertake and engage in the mental inquiry and physical movements and exercises in classes that I have chosen to take.

I understand that if for any reason I am unable to, or think it unwise to engage in these techniques and exercises either during the weekly class sessions or at home, I am under no obligation to do so.

And I understand that these programs do not replace medical treatment, and the instructors will not diagnose, prescribe or treat any medical conditions.

I assume responsibility to update Mindful-Way Stress Reduction teachers of any changes in my medical condition that might affect my safety or participation in any Mindful-Way classes.

Furthermore, I understand that I am expected to attend each of the class sessions, including additional events or retreats, if they are a constituent part of the program, and to practice home assignments for the specified time per day for the duration of the program.

_____	_____
print name	date
_____	_____
signature	witness

Perceived Stress Questionaire Pt.1

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the month preceeding the SR class. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Name _____ Date _____Age _____
Gender (Circle): M F Other _____

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1.
In the last month before the SR class , how often have you been upset
because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4

2.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you felt that you
were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4

3.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have
you felt nervous and "stressed"? 0 1 2 3 4

4.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you felt confident
about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4

5.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you felt
that things were going your way? 0 1 2 3 4

6.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you found that
you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4

7.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you
been able to control irritations in your life? 0 1 2 3 4

8.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you felt that
you were on top of things? 0 1 2 3 4

9.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you been angered
because of things that were outside of your control? 0 1 2 3 4

10.
In the last month before the SR class, how often have you felt difficulties
were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? 0 1 2 3 4

Class 1
Theme and Homework

Theme:

From our point of view there is more right with you than wrong with you, no matter what your problems are. Problems can be worked with, and this course is an opportunity to do so in a supportive environment. Meditative awareness is fundamental in this work since the present moment is the only time any of us has to perceive, learn, grow or change.

Homework:

Practice with Body Scan Exercise recording - 6 days
Read upstream/downstream fable
Complete the “Nine Dots” Exercise
Practice mindfulness of everyday activities, showering, driving preparing food, working
Eat one meal mindfully

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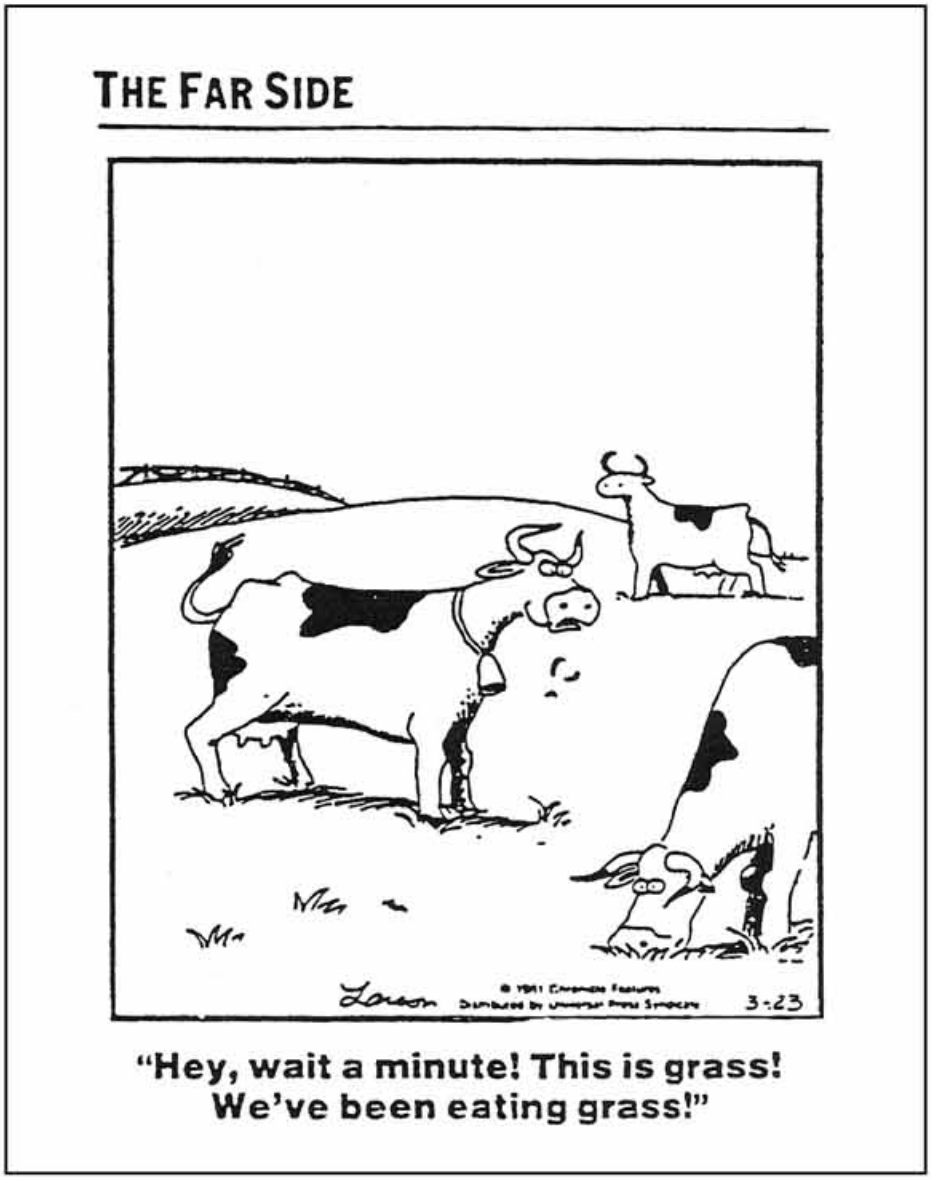
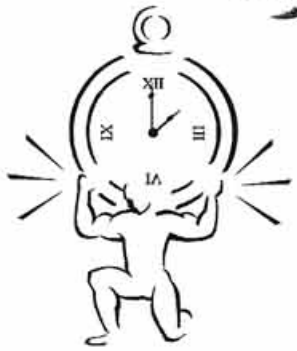
Mindful Eating



"Hey, wait a minute! This is grass! We've been eating grass!"

By eating *Mindfully* we become aware of what we are consuming

What Happens to Your Body Under Stress



Our body's ability to react to stress is essential for our survival. The stress reaction helps channel resources for strength and speed. Benefits are numerous. Among them, the brain dulls the body's sense of pain; thinking and memory improve; vision gets sharper; lungs take in more oxygen and our energy rises as liver releases more glycogen into the bloodstream. Digestion halts -- allowing the body to dedicate energy to the muscles.

However, if the stress continues long enough, the body can no longer function normally. Organ systems may fail and the body breaks down in a variety of ways. Continuous stress that causes the body to constantly adapt can become a threat to health. It is difficult to maintain a state of wellness over time when our body energy is channeled into coping with stress.

These are some of the immediate physiological changes that result from the Stress Reaction:

- Increased central nervous system (CNS) activity
- Increased mental activity
- Increased secretion of adrenaline (epinephrine), noradrenalin (norepinephrine) and cortisol into the bloodstream and to every cell in the body
- Increased heart rate
- Increased cardaiac output
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased breathing rate
- Breathing airways dilate
- Increased metabolism
- Increased oxygen consumption
- Increased oxygen to the brain
- Blood is shunted away from the digestive tract and directed into the muscles and limbs
- Increased muscle contraction which leads to increased strength
- Increased blood coagulation (blood clotting ability)
- Increased circulation of free fatty acids
- Increased output of blood cholesterol
- Increased blood sugar released by the liver to nourish the muscles
- Release of endorphins from the pituitary gland
- Pupils of the eyes dilate
- Hair stands on its end
- Blood thins
- Increased brainwave activity
- Sweat glands increase secretion
- Increased secretion from Apocrine glands resulting in foul body odor
- Capillaries under the surface of the skin constrict (which consequently increases blood pressure)

There are also several processes in the body that tend to decrease in functioning when the fight-or-flight response is activated.

- Immune system is suppressed
- Constriction of blood vessels, except to running and fighting muscles
- Reproductive and sexual systems stop working normally
- Digestive system stops metabolizing food normally
- Excretory system turns off
- Saliva dries up
- Decreased perception of pain
- Kidneys decrease output
- Bowel and Bladder sphincter close

Social Readjustment rating Scale

The following instrument is based on the premise that good and bad events in one's life can increase stress levels and make one more susceptible to illness and mental health problems (Holmes & Rahe, 1967)

Assessment:

1. Death of a spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation	65
4. Jail term	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation	45
10. Retirement	45
11. Change in health of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sex difficulties	39
14. Gain of a new family member	39
15. Business readjustments	39
16. Change in financial state	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Change to different line of work	36
19. Change in no. of arguments with spouse	35
20. Mortgage over $ 50,000	31
21. Foreclosure of mortgage	30
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29
24. Trouble with in-laws	29
25. Outstanding Personal achievements	28
26. Wife begins or stops work	26
27. Begin or end school	26
28. Change in living conditions	25
29. Revision of personal habits	24
30. Trouble with boss	23
31. Change in work hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Change in school	20
34. Change in recreation	19
35. Change in religious activities	19
36. Change in social activities	18
37. Loan less than 50,000	17
38. Change in sleeping habits	16
39. Change in no. of family get- together	15
40. Change in eating habits	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Holidays	12
43. Minor violation of laws	11

SCORING

Each event should be considered if it has taken place in the last 12 months. Add values to the right of each item to obtain the total score.

Your susceptibility to illness and mental health problems: Your Score:_____

Low	< 149
Mild	= 150-200
Moderate	= 200-299
Major	>300

The Body Scan Meditation

The Body scan meditation is a systematic way of gradually getting in touch with the way your body feels to you in a given moment. It is generally done lying down, but may be just as effective done sitting up. While it may produce a state of relaxation, this is not the only benefit of the Body Scan and so it is best not to approach it with effort. In other words, don't try too hard to relax, keep an open mind and see what happens. You'll notice right away that unlike other relaxation exercises, there is no instruction to "relax your legs" or any other body part. The instruction is simply to see what sensations, if any, are currently present in your legs, and note them to yourself. This can include – no sensation.

By developing this kind of awareness of and accuracy about our own body, we will gradually be able to separate thoughts about our body (many times very inaccurate, like I am fat, out of shape, this pain is killing me…) from the actual experience of being in our body, simple sensations with out judgments or conclusions . The body scan is a time to experience what it feels like to just **be** in your own skin, to feel your aliveness with out any doing component . As Jon Kabat-Zinn says "It's very hard to heal a body that you are not **in**."

Research has shown that practicing the body scan regularly over a period of at least 8 weeks, reduces stress hormones, and therefore reduces blood pressure, improves sleep, helps the immune system and in general helps get us into a state of Balance.

When you begin to do it, the first thing that you may notice is the chatter of your mind. It doesn't want to focus on the knees or fingers, it wants to think about all the other things you could or should be doing. The instruction is to simply notice that your mind has wandered off, and to gently bring it back to the body part we are on. By doing this over and over we develop better concentration and a stronger ability to stay in the present moment. Also by practicing **simply feeling** - without trying to change anything, we develop an ability to accept things as they are **right now**. Another thing that may arise during the body scan is pain, physical and or emotional. Usually our first impulse with pain is to move away from it as quickly as possible. Our approach here is different, we actually open to the sensations and explore them, "What does this thing I call pain actually feel like? Does it change or move as I observe it? This is a very brave thing to do, but it has great benefits. Try it and see what you find.

Another important benefit of the Body Scan and of being more in touch with the way our bodies feel is, there is vital information in our body. It will tell us when we are stressed so we can take care of ourselves; it will tell us when someone or something doesn't feel right - if we will listen, so we can set good boundaries. Think about expressions like "Follow your heart." Or "I had a gut feeling about it." It can help greatly to listen to the language of the body and its feelings. We can use it as guide to live wisely and healthily.

I hope this meditation benefits you as much as it has me and thousands of others.

A Contemporary Fable: Upstream/Downstream

From *High Level Wellness: An Alternative to Doctors, Drugs and Disease* by Donald Ardell

It was many years years ago that the villagers of Downstream recall spotting the first body in the river Some old timers remember how spartan were the facilities and procedures for managing that sort of thing. Sometimes, they say, it would take hours to pull 10 people from the river, and even then only a few would survive.

Though the number of victims in the river has increased greatly in recent years, the good folks of Downstream have responded admirably to the challenge. Their rescue system is clearly second to none: most people discovered in the swirling waters are reached within 20 minutes many less than 10. Only a small number drown each day before help arrives - a big improvement from the way it use to be.

Talk to the people of Downstream and they'll speak with pride about the new hospital by the edge of the waters, the flotilla of rescue boats ready for service at a moment's notice the comprehensive health plans for coordinating all the manpower involved, and the large numbers of highly trained and dedicated swimmers always ready to risk their lives to save victims from the raging currents. Sure it costs a lot, but, say the Downstreamers, but what else can decent people do except to provide whatever is necessary when human lives are at stake.

Oh, a few people in Downstream have raised the question now and again, but most folks show little interest in what's happening Upstream. It seems there's so much to do to help those in the river that nobody's got time to check how all these bodies are getting there in the first place. That's the way things are, sometimes.

If I Had My Life to Live Over

Nadine Stair, age 85, Louisville, Kentucky

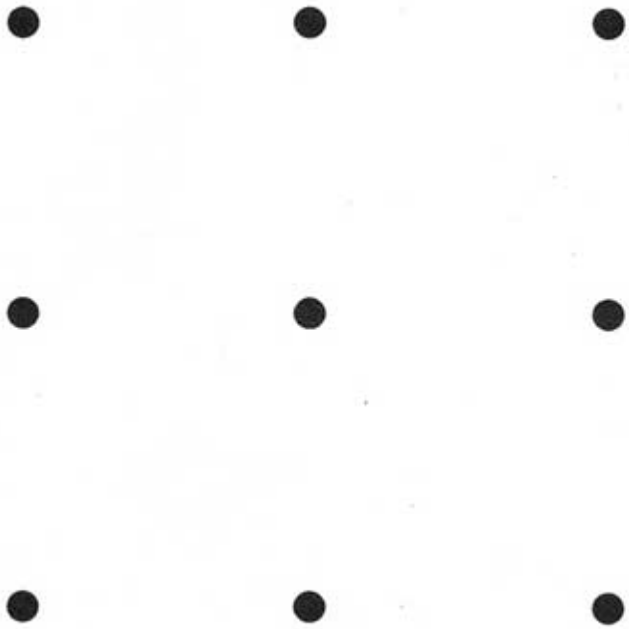
I'd like to make more mistakes next time. I'd relax, I would limber up. I would be sillier than I had been this trip. I would take fewer things seriously. I would take more chances. I would climb more mountains and swim more rivers. I would eat more ice cream and less beans. I would perhaps have more actual troubles, but I'd have fewer imaginary ones.

You see, I'm one of those people who live sensibly and sanely hour after hour, day after day. Oh, I've had my moments, and if I had to do it over again, I'd have more of them. In fact, I'd try to have nothing else. Just moments, one after another, instead of living so many years ahead of each day. I've been one of those people who never goes anywhere without a thermometer, a hot water bottle, a raincoat, and a parachute. If I had to do it again, I would travel lighter than I have.

If I had my life to live over, I would start barefoot earlier in the spring and stay that way later in the fall. I would go to more dances. I would ride more merry-go-rounds. I would pick more daisies.

Nine Dots Exercise

Connect all nine dots using only four strainght lines and without lifting your pen/pencil from the paper



You may use these for practice

Class 2
Theme and Homework

Theme:

Understanding that the nature of the mind is to produce thoughts and to wander – this is a universal quality of the mind.
We are learning to relate to our minds differently, by developing an ability to watch it like a movie and not to believe all of our thoughts, nor to judge them. Seeing that it is our perceptions that determine how we will respond to a certain situation. It's not the stressors per se but how we handle them, that determines the short and long term health-effects they may have on your mind and body.

Homework:

Practice with Body Scan Exercise recording - 6 days a week
Workbook: fill out 'pleasant events' calendar
Mindfulness of routine activities: showering, washing dishes, brushing teeth, taking out the trash, shopping, reading to kids, eating.

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It's ten o'clock. Do you know where your mind is?

Perception is nine tenths of the law

Awareness of Pleasant Events Calendar

Instructions: One week be aware of one pleasant event or occurence each day while it is happening. At a later time record what happend and some details of what you experienced.

	What was the experience?	Were you aware of pleasant / Un-pleasant feelings during the event?	How did your body feel, any details of sensations etc, during this experience	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event at the time?
Day 7.				
Day 6.				
Day 5.				
Day 4.				
Day 3.				
Day 2.				
Day 1.				

Class 3
Theme and Homework

Theme:

There is pleasure and power in being present. When we are present-we have a lot more options, because we are not operating on automatic pilot. "Make the moment vital and worth living…do not let it slip away unnoticed and unused."Martha Graham
Notice that we miss many of our pleasant moments, perhaps focusing only on the unpleasant ones. We can learn to appreciate what we have in this moment, and see that we can have pleasant moments in spite of being in crisis or in pain.

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Homework:

Alternate Body Scan with Floor Yoga series - 6 days of the week
Sitting meditation with awareness of breath 10-15 min/day
Workbook: Unpleasant events calendar
Read pages on Yoga
Make an effort to "capture your moments" during the day
Mindfulness of going on "Automatic pilot and under what circumstances it occurs.
What pulls you off center?

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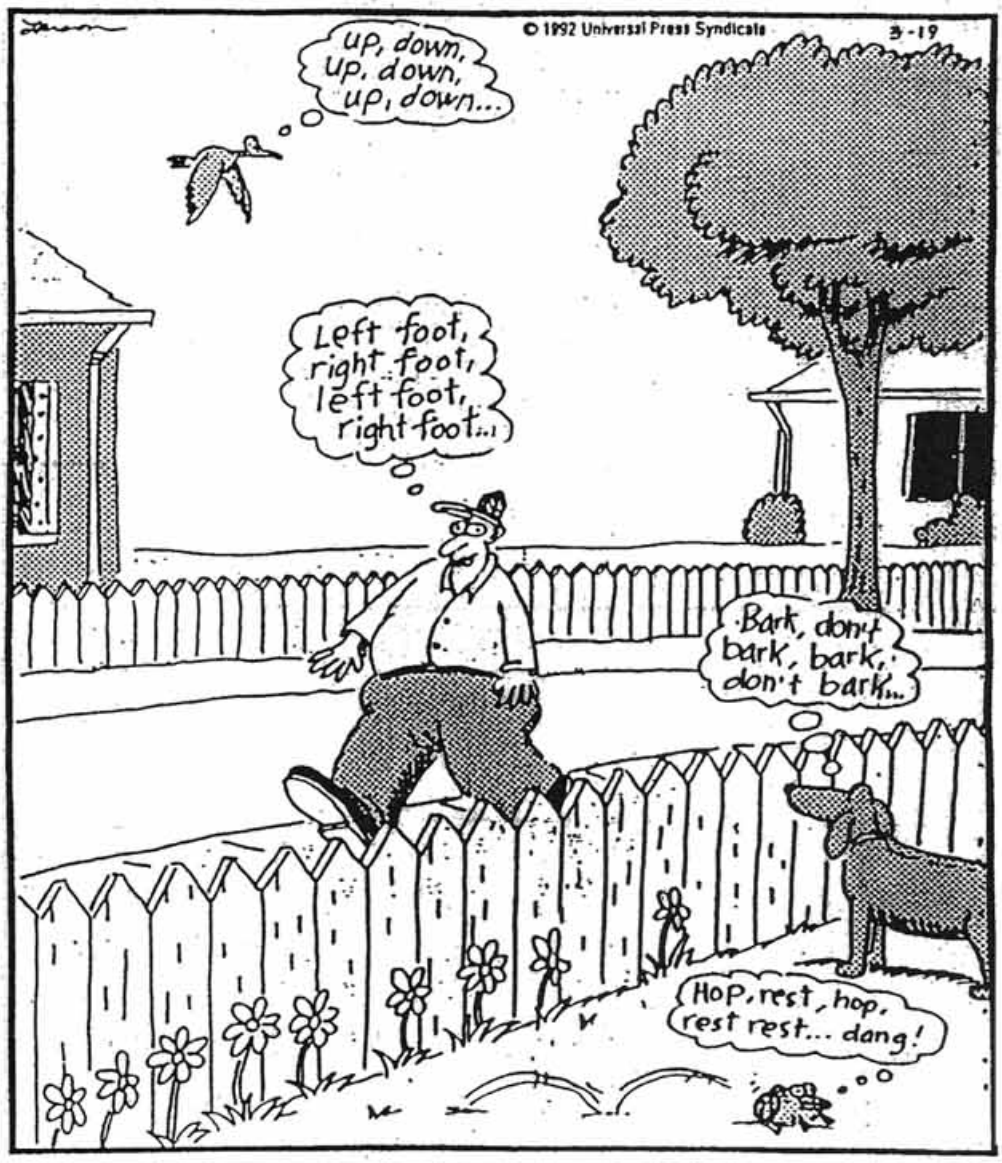

THE FAR SIDE
© 1992 Universal Press Syndicate
3-19
up, down, up, down, up, down...
Left foot, right foot, left foot, right foot...
Bark, don't bark, bark, don't bark...
Hop, rest, hop, rest rest... dang!

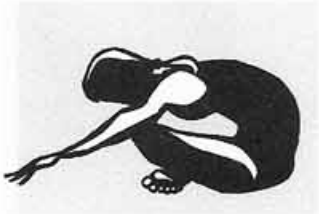
Basic lives

On Awareness

Awareness is not the same as thought. It lies beyond thinking although it makes use of thinking, honoring its value and its power. Awareness is more like a vessel which can hold and contain our thinking, helping us to see and know our thoughts as thoughts rather than getting caught up in them as reality.

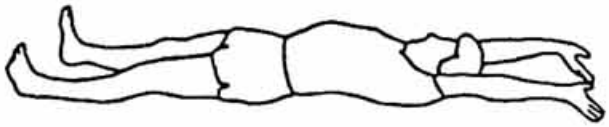
The thinking mind can at times be severely fragmented. In fact it almost always is. This is the nature of thought. Awareness is the pot which cradles all the fragments, just as the soup holds all the chopped up carrots, peas, onions, etc. and allows them to cook into one whole, the soup itself. Awareness itself does the cooking as long as it is sustained. You just let the fragments stir while you hold them in awareness. Whatever comes up in the mind or body goes into the pot, becomes part of the soup.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD

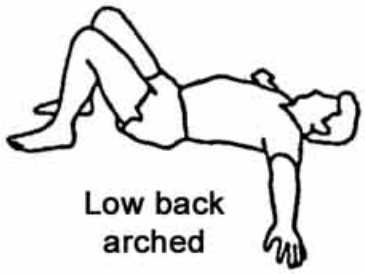


Using Yoga to Explore Stress Reduction and Being Present

- Listen to your body telling you its limits.
- Experiment with staying at your limit longer than you might otherwise. This will develop an ability to explore limits.
- After doing a pose (or anything else), momentarily bring the attention back to the breath as a means of letting go of distractions and being present in the moment.
- Look at the connection between flexibility, strength and balance in the physical sense and those qualities in the psychological. Explore the connection between your mind and your body.
- Lie still after each pose to tune into the consequences of having done the stretch. This reinforces your ability to connect cause and effect in regards to stress. Take time to see what you've done and what affect it has.
- Rest precise attention on the sensations of the yoga during each pose - nonjudgmentally, without commentary. This is useful for strengthening our ability to observe internal and external events clearly, aware of judgments, filters and distractions that color the experience of the events. This will help you be a more impartial observer of your life. It may be easier to see events from a slight distance than it is when you're swamped by them or running from them.
- Notice that even when you're intending to focus on the yoga you are distracted. Watch the distracting thoughts and their contents, without indulging in following them. Make an effort to let go of the distractions and bring the mind back to the experience of the pose to the moment. This is a way of becoming familiar with the activity and habits of the mind, which may be useful for seeing your stress in a bigger context
- Observe the experience of determining your own limits in contrast, possibly, to the instrutors' directives. Practice setting your own limits of how long to stretch, how far to extend the stretch. What kinds of questions do you find yourself asking? What kinds of comments run through your mind around setting your own limits? Does wanting to or deciding to do some thing different than the instruction cause judgmental thoughts?
- Practice dropping down into a state of relaxation. This is not a doing - but rather a non-doing. A cessation of activity. A letting go. One of the sen sations may be feeling how gravity pulls the body down.
- Remember that wherever you hit your limit is OK. It's where you are right now. Practice accetance of where/how/who you are in this moment. Let go of striving to get somewhere, or of wanting to be something in particular - even relaxed.
- Bring awareness to fatigue of your muscles during poses. Outside of yoga, this same awarness will help you see when you're fatigued and may help you see (in the moment) what's causing the fatigue. Practice tuning to subtle messages from the body.
- Notice your initial sense of your limitations. Ask yourself if they are actually your limitations or if they are reactions of some sort.
- Are there things in the yoga that "rub you wrong?" What are they? What's to be learned? Use frustration, anxiety and fear to instruct your self about yourself. Any sense of aversion (or attraction, for that matter) can be used as a learning experience if you're wiling to linger in it and look.



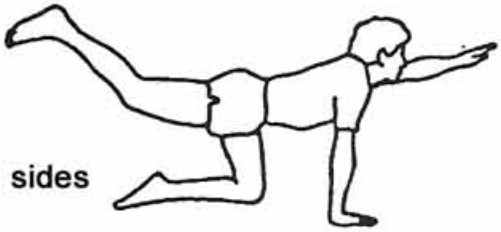
Low Back pressed against floor



Low back arched

Both sides

Both sides



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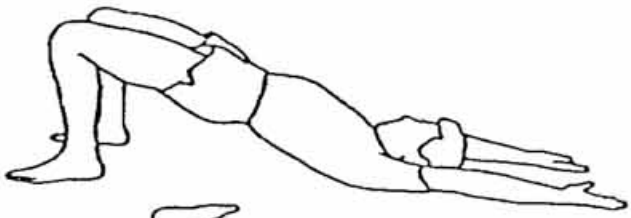

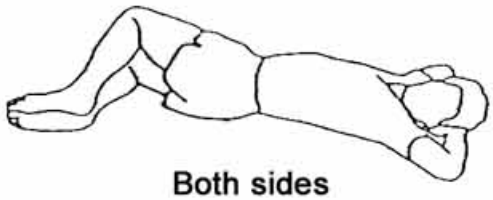

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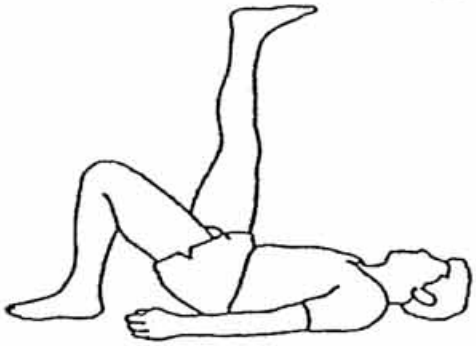

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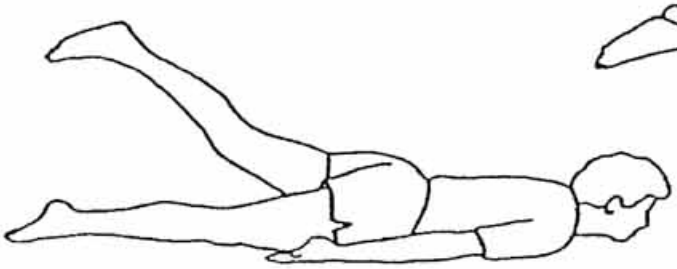

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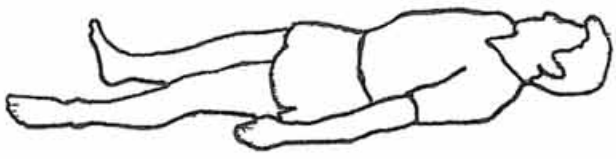


Awareness of Un-Pleasant Events Calendar

Instructions: One week be aware of one Unpleasant event or occurence each day while it is happening. At a later time record in detail what it was and your experience of it.

	What was the experience?	Were you aware of Unpleasant feelings during the event?	How did your body feel, sensations etc. in detail, during this experience	What moods, feelings, and thoughts accompanied this event at the time?
Day 7.				
Day 6.				
Day 5.				
Day 4.				
Day 3.				
Day 2.				
Day 1.				

Class 4
Theme and Homework

Theme:

Awareness of being stuck in one's life –in stress reactivity cycle. Looking at how we try to alleviate stress by escaping – using things that numb us but eventually backfire.
(alcohol, cigarettes, food, over-work, computer, TV, shopping etc.) Discovering how we sometimes add to our stress with our own reactions and thoughts. Finding our own simple and innate ability to break the cycle with our own awareness and our own breath. Seeing the importance of regular practice to change our old habits.

Homework:

Alternate Body Scan Meditation and Floor Yoga series 6 days a week
Practice Sitting Meditation 10-20 minutes a day
Be aware of stress reactions during the week, without trying to change them in any way.
Bring awareness to when you feel stuck.
Increase awareness of blocking, numbing, shutting off to the moment when it happens this week.

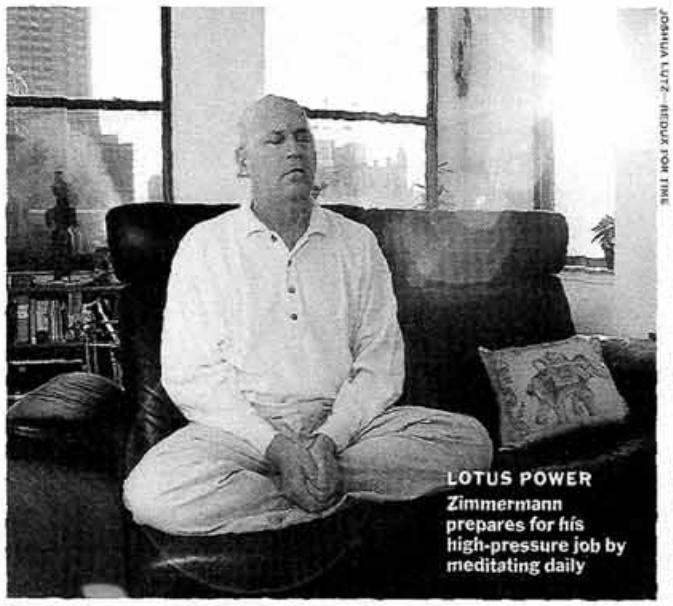
"No, Thursday's out. How about never ---- is never good for you?"

HOW TO GET SMARTER, ONE BREATH AT A TIME

Scientists find that meditation not only reduces stress but also reshapes the brain

By LISA TAKEUCHI CULLEN

AT 4:30, WHEN MOST OF WALL STREET IS winding down, Walter Zimmermann begins a high-stakes, high-wire act conducted live before a paying audience. About 200 institutional investors—including airlines and oil companies—shell out up to $3,000 a month to catch his daily webcast on the volatile energy markets, a performance that can move hundreds of millions of dollars. "I'm not paid to be wrong—I can tell you that," Zimmermann says. But as he clicks through dozens of screens and graphics on three computers, he's the picture of focused calm. Zimmermann, 54, watched most of his peers in energy futures burn out long ago. He attributes his brain's enduring sharpness not to an intravenous espresso drip but to 40 minutes of meditation each morning and evening. The practice, he says, helps him maintain the clarity he needs for quick, insightful analysis—even approaching happy hour. "Meditation," he says, "is my secret weapon."



JOSHUA LUTZ—REDUX FOR TIME

LOTUS POWER Zimmermann prepares for his high-pressure job by meditating daily

Everyone around the water cooler knows that meditation reduces stress. But with the aid of advanced brain-scanning technology, researchers are beginning to show that meditation directly affects the function and structure of the brain, changing it in ways that appear to increase attention span, sharpen focus and improve memory.

One recent study found evidence that the daily practice of meditation thickened the parts of the brain's cerebral cortex responsible for decision making, attention and memory. Sara Lazar, a research scientist at Massachusetts General Hospital, presented preliminary results last November that showed that the gray matter of 20 men and women who meditated for just 40 minutes a day was thicker than that of people who did not. Unlike in previous studies focusing on Buddhist monks, the subjects were Boston-area workers practicing a Western-style of meditation called mindfulness or insight meditation. "We showed for the first time that you don't have to do it all day for similar results," says Lazar. What's more, her research suggests that meditation may slow the natural thinning of that section of the cortex that occurs with age.

MORE AND MORE CORPORATIONS OFFER MEDITATION CLASSES

The forms of meditation Lazar and other scientists are studying involve focusing on an image or sound or on one's breathing. Though deceptively simple, the practice seems to exercise the parts of the brain that help us pay attention. "Attention is the key to learning, and meditation helps you voluntarily regulate it," says Richard Davidson, director of the Laboratory for Affective Neuroscience at the University of Wisconsin. Since 1992, he has collaborated with the Dalai Lama to study the brains of Tibetan monks, whom he calls "the Olympic athletes of meditation." Using caps with electrical sensors placed on the monks' heads, Davidson has picked up unusually powerful gamma waves that are better synchronized in the Tibetans than they are in novice meditators. Studies have linked this gamma-wave synchrony to increased awareness.

Many people who meditate claim the practice restores their energy, allowing them to perform better at tasks that require attention and concentration. If so, wouldn't a midday nap work just as well? No, says Bruce O'Hara, associate professor of biology at the University of Kentucky. In a study to be published this year, he had college students either meditate, sleep or watch TV. Then he tested them for what psychologists call psychomotor vigilance, asking them to hit a button when a light flashed on a screen. Those who had been taught to meditate performed 10% better—"a huge jump, statistically speaking," says O'Hara. Those who snoozed did significantly worse. "What it means," O'Hara theorizes, "is that meditation may restore synapses, much like sleep but without the initial grogginess."

Not surprisingly, given those results, a growing number of corporations—including Deutsche Bank, Google and Hughes Aircraft—offer meditation classes to their workers. Jeffrey Abramson, CEO of Tower Co., a Washington-based development firm, says 75% of his staff attend free classes in transcendental meditation. Making employees sharper is only one benefit; studies say meditation also improves productivity, in large part by preventing stress-related illness and reducing absenteeism.

Another benefit for employers: meditation seems to help regulate emotions, which in turn helps people get along. "One of the most important domains meditation acts upon is emotional intelligence—a set of skills far more consequential for life success than cognitive intelligence," says Davidson. So, for a New Year's resolution that can pay big dividends at home and at the office, try this: just breathe. ■

Class 5
Theme and Homework

Theme:

Exploring the difference between reacting versus responding to stress. Looking at the role of emotional reactivity in health and illness. Learning how we can compound our problems by not communicating needs/feelings effectively. Using mindfulness and awareness of breath and body sensations to respond and express ourselves more effectively hence changing old habitual reactions and alleviating their effects on our mental/emotional/physical health.

Homework:

Practice with Sitting Meditation recording and alternate with Body Scan or Yoga – 6 days a week
Mindful activities – using sensations, sound, taste, smell, touch, sight to bring us into the present moment.
Practice using the breath to slow down when you feel rushed/overwhelmed.
Bring awareness to moments of reacting and explore options for responding with greater mindfulness and creativity. Practice opening up space for more choices in responding to difficult things in our lives.

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Responding Mindfully

By responding *Mindfully* we can change from our habitual reactions.

River of Feelings *by Thich Nhat Hanh*

Our feelings play a very important part in directing all of our thoughts and actions. In us, there is a river of feelings, in which every drop of water is a different feeling, and each feeling relies on all the others for its existence. To observe it, we just sit on the bank of the river and identify each feeling as it surfaces, flows by, and disappears.

There are three sorts of feelings -- pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral. When we have an unpleasant feeling, we may want to chase it away. But it is more effective to return to our conscious breathing and just observe it, identifying it silently to ourselves:
"Breathing in, I know there is an unpleasant feeling in me. Breathing out, I know there is an unpleasant feeling in me." Calling a feeling by its name, such as "anger," "sorrow;' "joy," or "happiness," helps us identify it clearly and recognize it more deeply.

We can use our breathing to be in contact with our feelings and accept them. If our breathing is light and calm--a natural result of conscious breathing--our mind and body will slowly become light, calm, and clear, and our feelings also. Mindful observation is based on the principal of "non-duality": our feeling is not separate from us or caused merely by something outside us; our feeling is us, and for the moment we are that feeling. We are neither drowned in nor terrorized by the feeling, nor do we reject it. Our attitude of not clinging to or rejecting our feelings is the attitude of letting go, an important part of meditation practice.

If we face our unpleasant'feelings with care, alfection, and nonviolence, we can transform them into the kind of energy that is healthy and has the capacity to nourish us. By the work of mindful observation, our unpleasant feelings can illuminate so much for us, offering us insight and understanding into ourrselves and society.

Transforming Feelings

The first step in dealing with feelings is to recognize each feeling as it arises. The agent that does this is mindfulness. In the case of fear, for example, you bring out your mindfulness, look at your fear, and recognize it as fear. You know that fear springs from yourself and that mindfulness also springs from yourself. They are both in you, not fighting, but one taking care of the other.

The second step is to become one with the feeling. It is best not to say, "Go away, Fear. I don't like you. You are not me." It is much more effective to say, "Hello, Fear. How are you today?" Then you can invite the two aspects of yourself, mindfulness and fear, to shake hands as friends and become one. Doing this may seem frightening, but because you know that you are more than just your fear, you need not be afraid. As long as mindfulness is there, it can chaperone your fear. The fundamental practice is to nourrish your mindfulness with conscious breathing, to keep it there, alive and strong. Although your mindfulness may not be very powerful in the beginning, if you nourish it, it will become stronger. As long as mindfulness is present, you will not drown in your fear. In fact, you begin transforming it the very moment you give birth to awareness in yourself.

continued....

River of Feelings continued.

The third step is to calm the feeling. As mindfulness is taking good care of your fear, you begin to calm it down. "Breathing in, I calm the activities of body and mind." You calm your feeling just by being with it, like a mother tenderly holding her crying baby. Feeling his mother's tenderness, the baby will calm down and stop crying. The mother is your mindfulness, born from the depth of your consciousness, and it will tend the feeling of pain. A mother holding her baby is one with her baby. If the mother is thinking of other things, the baby will not calm down. The mother has to put aside other things and just hold her baby. So, don't avoid your feeling. Don't say, "You arc not important. You are only a feeling." Come and be one with it. You can say, "Breathing out, I calm my fear."

The fourth step is to release the feeling, to let it go. Because of your calm, you feel at ease, even in the midst of fear, and you know that your fear will not grow into something that will overwhelm you. When you know that you are capable of taking care of your fear, it is already reduced to the minimum, becoming softer and not so unpleasant. Now you can smile at it and let it go, but please do not stop yet. Calming and releasing are just medicines for the symptoms. You now have an opportunity to go deeper and work on transforming the source of your fear.

The fifth step is to look deeply. You look deeply into your baby-- your feeling of fear--to see what is wrong, even after the baby has already stopped crying, after the fear is gone. You cannnot hold your baby all the time, and therefore you have to look into him to see the cause of what is wrong. By looking, you will see what will help you begin to transform the feeling. You will realize, for example, that his suffering has many causes, inside and outside of his body. If something is wrong around him, if you put that in order, bringing tenderness and care to the situaation, he will feel better. Looking into your baby, you see the elements that are causing him to cry, and when you see them, you will know what to do and what not to do to transform the feeling and be free.

This is a process similar to psychotherapy. Together with the patient, a therapist looks at the nature of the pain. Often, the therapist can uncover causes of suffering that stem from the way the patient looks at things, the beliefs he holds about himself, his culture, and the world. The therapist examines these viewpoints and beliefs with the patient, and together they help free him from the kind of prison he has been in. But the patient's efforts are crucial. A teacher has to give birth to the teacher within his student, and a psychotherapist has to give birth to the psychotherapist within his patient. The patient's "internal psychotherrapist" can then work full-time in a very effective way.

The therapist does not treat the patient by simply giving him another set of beliefs. She tries to help him see which kinds of ideas and beliefs have lead to his suffering. Many patients want to get rid of their painful feelings, but they do not want to get rid of their beliefs, the viewpoints that are the very roots of their feellings. So therapist and patient have to work together to help the patient see things as they are. The same is true when we use mindfulness to transform our feelings. After recognizing the feeling, becoming one with it, calming it down, and relcasing it, we can look deeply into its causes, which are often based on innaccurate perceptions. As soon as we understand the causes and nature of our feelings, they begin to transform themselves.

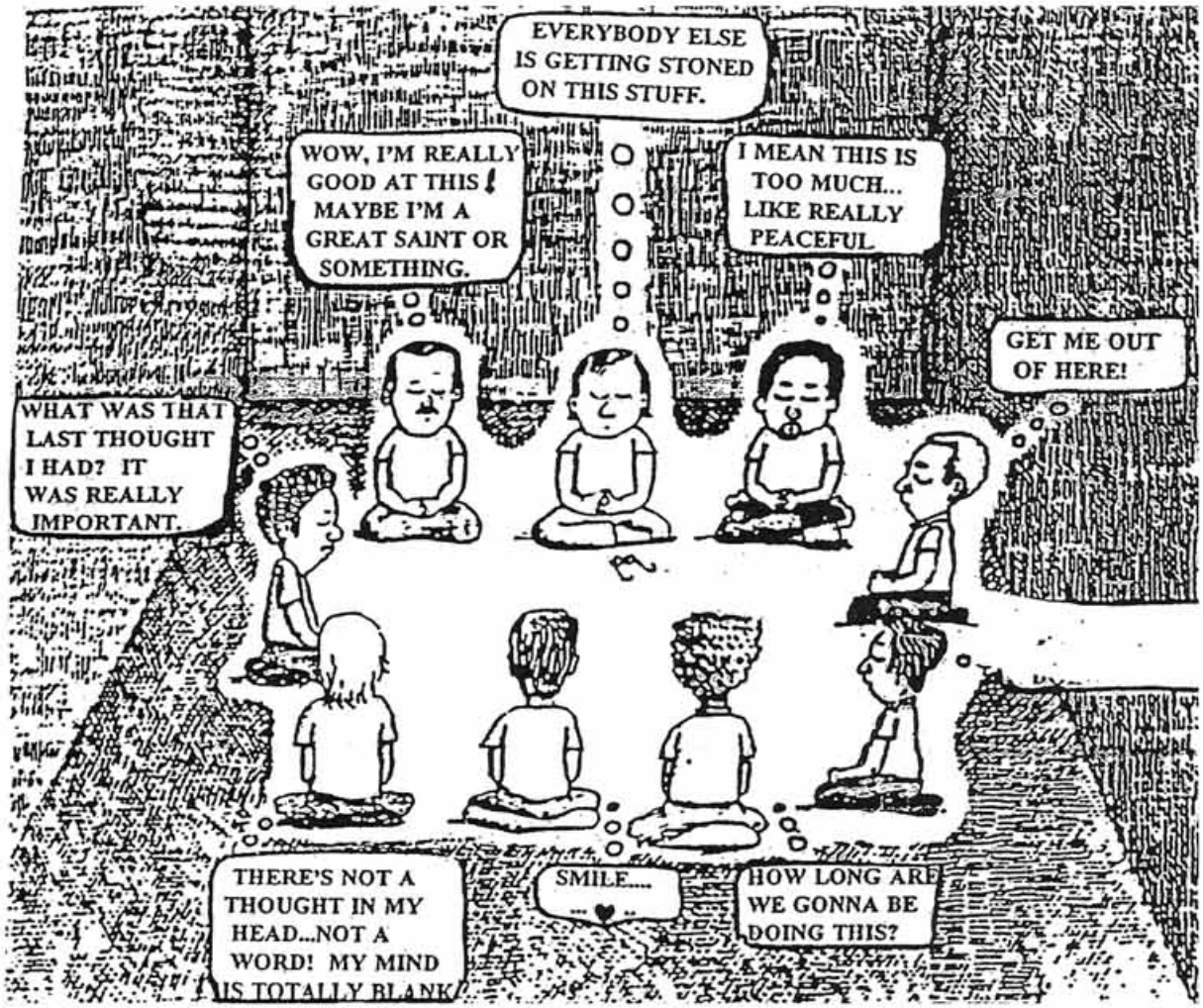
Class 6
Theme and Homework

Theme:

Importance of building inner and outer resources-support for coping with stress, pain, illness, and other difficulties.
Looking at the importance of knowing we have choices, and the ability to have an impact on our own lives and health. Asking how do we handle change? Appreciating our ability to change and adapt in healthy ways, through practice of meditation. Watching our thoughts, feelings, sensations come and go, being aware of the impermanence of all things, helps us be more resilient with the things we can't control.

Homework:

Practice with Sitting Meditation recording, and altenate Body Scan with either Yoga series 6 days a week.
Pay attention to what you put into your body and mind – food, drink, substances, images, information, sound, sensations, through the media (news, violent or negative TV, movies, news stories), the environment.
Notice silence in your life and your reaction to it.
Fill out Pleasant and Un-pleasant events calendar



From "We're All Doing Time" by Bo Lozoff, 1985,
The human Kindness Foundation

Walking Meditation

While meditation is usually associated with the sitting posture, meditation can also be practiced while walking. Walking meditation is essentially about the awareness of movement as you note the component parts of the steps. If you like, you can consider it *meditation in action.*

How to do it ...

Beginning by noticing the way your body feels while simply standing still, observe the feeling of your feet connected to the ground. Essentially, tune in, mindfully. You will need to find a walking path with a level surface on which to walk back and forth, or else consider walking at a more natural pace in a public area.

Allow your arms to hang naturally. Allow the eyes to gaze at a point about two feet in front of you on the ground to avoid visual distractions. Then as you walk keep the attention on the sole of the foot, not on the leg or any other part of the body.

In the beginning, you can note just three parts of the step: *'lifting', 'pushing', 'dropping'*. Then mentally note or label each step part by part building up the noting to its six component parts: '*raising*', *'lifting', 'pushing', 'dropping', 'touching'* and '*pressing*' - concurrent with the actual experience of the movement. These are the basics of walking meditation. Beyond this, bring in the same mindful component that you bring to sitting meditation or yoga: non-judging, noting your experiences, observing the pull of the thinking mind and the feelings that arise and pass through. When you find your mind has wandered off, you just bring it back. Above all, be kind to yourself.

Not judging yourself, not worrying about how well it's going, not striving to reach any goal, consider all the opportunities you have in your life to practice walking meditation.

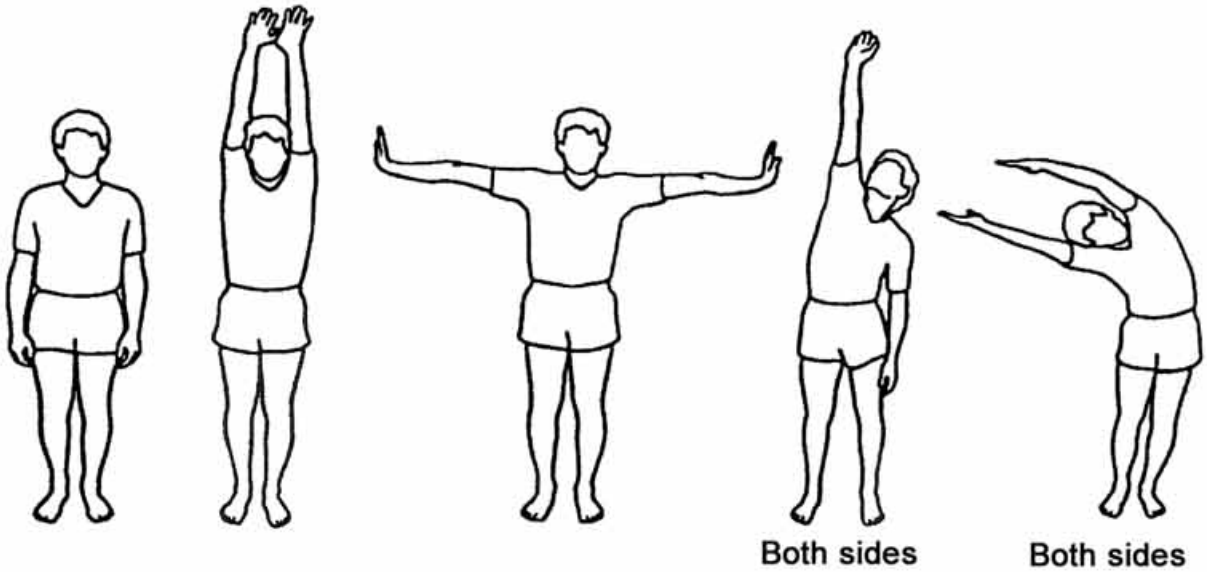
Mindful Yoga

Many of us are reluctant to exercise because it involves discomfort or strain, or requires special equipment or others to work out with, or going to a special place to do it. If this has been the case for you, then mindful hatha yoga may be just the practice you have been waiting for.

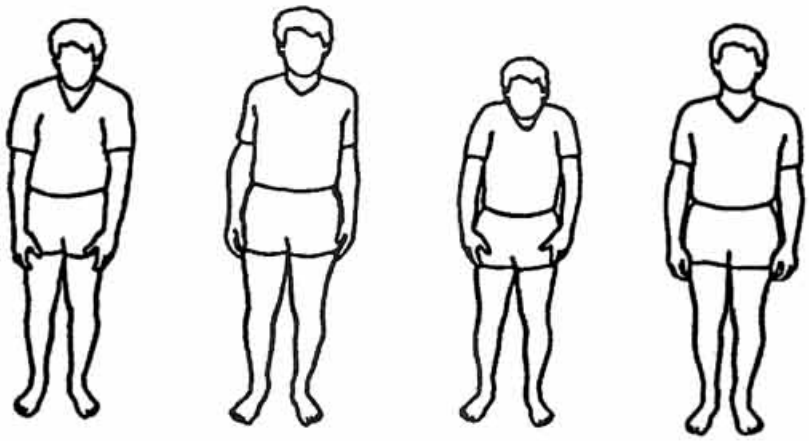
The word "yoga" means "yoke" in Sanskrit, and implies a harnessing together and a unifying of body and mind. Yoga is a form of meditation, and when done regularly, is an excellent mind/body discipline for people who wish to move towards greater levels of health. Hatha yoga consists of postures done mindfully and with awareness of breathing. They are easily learned and have dramatic effects if practiced regularly. The ones we are doing are extremely gentle. Regular practice will increase your musculoskeletal flexibility, strength, and balance, as well as help you to enter states of deep relaxation and awareness. Many people experience a greater serenity about life in general, improved circulation, a firmer, trimmer figure, and less illness as a result.

In practicing yoga, you are advised to practice in the same way that you do when meditating, namely maintaining moment to moment awareness, and not striving to get somewhere, just allowing yourself to be as you are, and letting go of any judging of yourself. Move slowly and consciously. Mindful yoga involves exploring your limits but not pushing beyond them. Instead, you play with dwelling at the boundary and breath. This requires honoring your body and the messsages it gives you about when to stop and when to avoid doing a posture because of your particular condition.

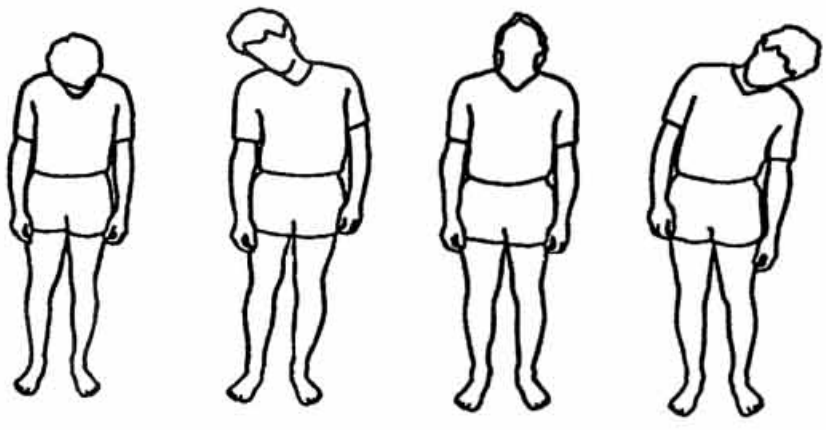
Yoga requires no special equipment and can be done almost anywhere. You can learn it from class and then go on to invent your own postures, and get other ideas from yoga books or from classes. It is fun to do yoga to slow music. Experiment mindfully.

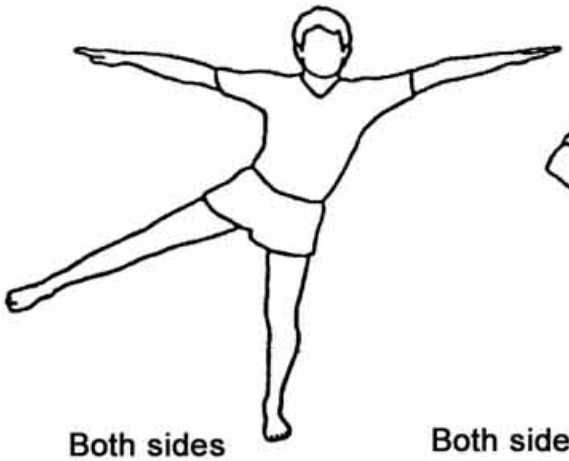


Shoulder rolls



Neck rolls





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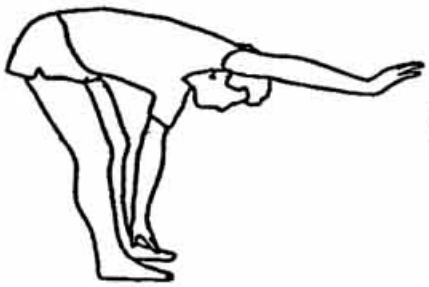

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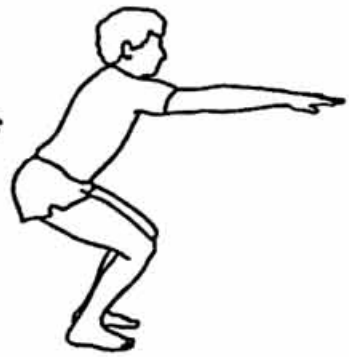

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Awareness of Pleasant Communication Calendar

Instructions: Be aware of one pleasant communication each day while it is happening.
At a later time record in detail what it was and your experience of it.

	Describe communication. With whom? Subject ?	Were you aware of pleasant feelings during the event?	What did you want from the communication? What did you get?	Have you resolved any related issue?
Day 7.				
Day 6.				
Day 5.				
Day 4.				
Day 3.				
Day 2.				
Day 1.				

Awareness of Un-Pleasant Communication Calendar

Instructions: Be aware of one Un-pleasant communication each day while it is happening.
At a later time record in detail what it was and your experience of it.

	Describe communication. With whom? Subject ?	Were you aware of Un-pleasant feelings during the event?	What did you want from the communication? What did you get?	Have you resolved any related issue?
Day 7.				
Day 6.				
Day 5.				
Day 4.				
Day 3.				
Day 2.				
Day 1.				

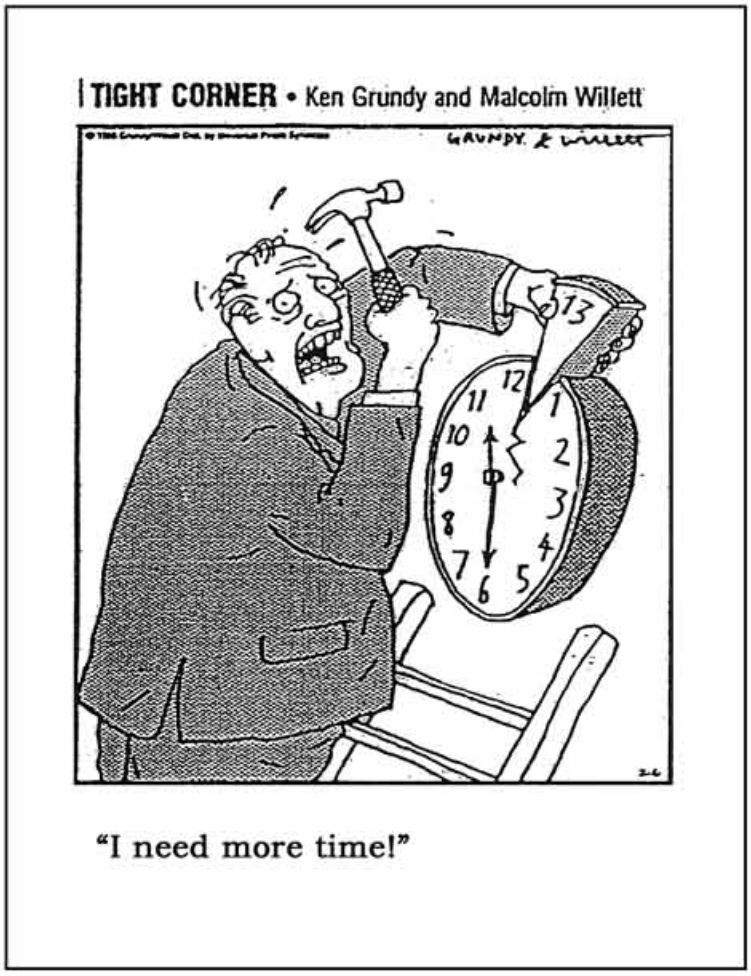
Class 7
Theme and Homework

Theme:

What is our relationship to time? How do we fight it, manipulate it, perceive it? Examining the way we judge certain activities in large chunks of time, hence missing all the small moments the activity or job is made up of. What are our deeply held convictions about time? Experimenting with the practice of meditation and mindfulness creating "more time" or perhaps more efficient, more peaceful use of time. Seeing how our thoughts about time create a lot of stress in our lives i.e. telling ourselves, we are running out of time, don't have enough, are wasting it etc. By seeing that these are all just concepts and judgements, we can really change our relationship to time and appreciate and enjoy the moments of our lives.

Homework:

Try doing the practices without any recordings. Alternate between a Self directed body scan and yoga from the diagrams. And do the sitting meditation 35 minutes each day.
Understand that it is ok to use the recordings if that feels better to you.
Workbook: Read handout on Time Stress
Continue to practice mindfulness in everyday life and observe if it has an effect on you. And if so what difference does it make? Write these observations down. Start to think about how to continue practice when the class is over.



"I need more time!"

Coping with Time Stress

The Antidote to time stress is intentional Non-Doing (meditation). If you are feeling overwhelmed by the pressure of "not having enough time", how could it help to "take" time to meditate, practice yoga or relaxation? Because when we do we connect with our inner peace- which is timeless. The calmness and centering that come from letting go of our driving thoughts about time and all of our activities, transform our experience of time when we step back into it. When we meditate regularly we're often more efficient, and we enjoy the moments more. We operate in more of a flow, rather than fighting with time or pushing ourselves and others. Notice your thoughts about time, and how much of our lives we are missing because we are so lost in our thoughts about everything we think we must do. By connecting with yourself outside time (meditation), you are doing the really meaningful work of developing peace with your own mind and connecting with your wholeness.

Four Ways to Free Yourself from the Tyranny of Time

1) Remember time is a product of thought. And it is relative. Notice the language you use around time, as well as your recurrent thoughts, and start to question them.

2) Practice being present- Mindfulness. We waste enormous s amounts of time and energy in our worries and preoccupations. Drop out of automatic pilot and focus on what is right in front of you. You may not have more hours in the day but you will have a lot more rich satisfying moments.

3) Take time each day to just be. (Meditation) Making the commitment to practice non-doing, and letting go of striving nourishes what is timeless in you.

4) Look for ways to simplify your life in certain ways. Consciously choose to give some things up. One of the benefits of a regular meditation practice – is we are more in touch with ourselves. It is easier to notice if there are activities, relationships, even magazine subscriptions or TV shows that aren't really supporting our quality of life, or reflecting our deepest values.

Class 8
Theme and Homework

Theme:

Keeping up the momentum and discipline developed over the past 7 weeks in the meditation practice. The eighth week is the rest of your life. Appreciate the benefits- large and small from having a regular practice, and having more awareness.

Homework:

Go back to working with the recordings. Create a daily practice that you can use with a commitment to yourself, and your life.
Write down 3 short-term goals (3 month) and 3 long-term (3 year) goals, and Include potential obstacles to reaching these goals and what your strategies might be for working with them to keep the momentum of your practice moving and growing.

Perceived Stress Questionaire End Term

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts since beginning the SR class. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way.

Name _____ Date _____ Age _____
Gender (Circle): M F Other _____

0 = Never 1 = Almost Never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Fairly Often 4 = Very Often

1. Since taking the SR class , how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? 0 1 2 3 4

2. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? 0 1 2 3 4

3. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"? 0 1 2 3 4

4. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems? 0 1 2 3 4

5. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt that things were going your way? 0 1 2 3 4

6. Since taking the SR class, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? 0 1 2 3 4

7. Since taking the SR class, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life? 0 1 2 3 4

8. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? 0 1 2 3 4

9. Since taking the SR class, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control? 0 1 2 3 4

10. Since taking the SR class, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?.....0 1 2 3 4