

Harnessing Mindfulness: Tailoring the Practice to the Person

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Therapeutic Mindfulness

1. Awareness
2. Of present experience
3. With acceptance

The Roles of Mindfulness

Implicit



Explicit

- Practicing Therapist
 - Relates mindfully to patients regardless of therapeutic intervention
- Mindfulness Informed Psychotherapy
 - Insights from mindfulness practice inform treatment
- Mindfulness Based Psychotherapy
 - Teaches mindfulness practice to patients

Decisions, Decisions

1. Which skills to emphasize?
2. Formal or informal practice?
3. Which objects of attention?
4. Religious or secular practices?
5. Narrative or experiencing mode?
6. Relative or absolute truth?
7. Turning toward safety or sharp points?

Forms of Mindfulness Practice

Core Practice Skills

1. Concentration
2. Mindfulness *per se*
3. Acceptance and Compassion

Concentration vs. Mindfulness

- Concentration
 - Choose an object and follow it closely
- Mindfulness
 - Attend to whatever object rises to forefront of consciousness

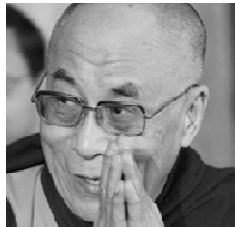


Acceptance



Loving-kindness Practice

- “Metta” practices
 - May I be happy, peaceful, free from suffering
 - May my loved ones be happy. . .
 - May all beings be happy. . .



Continuum of Practice

Informal Mindfulness Practice



Formal Meditation Practice



Intensive Retreat Practice

Informal Practice



Taillight Meditation



Formal Practice

(Results May Vary)

- Data supports effects of formal meditation
- Structural and functional brain changes.



Intensive Retreat Practice



Objects of Attention

Coarse



Subtle

- Feet touching ground
- Sights and sounds of nature
- Taste of food
- Sound of bell
- Breath in belly
- Mantra
- Air at tip of nose

Religious or Secular?

- “Spiritual” practices
 - Devotional and theistic
- Secular practices
 - Science grounded
- Seek cultural consonance

Narrative Mode

- Psychodynamic
 - Earlier, transference, other relationships
- Behavioral
 - How learned, how reinforced
- Systemic
 - Maintained by family, community, culture

Experiencing Mode

- How is it felt in the body?
- How does the mind respond?
 - Grasping
 - Pushing away
 - Ignoring

Relative Truth

- Human story
 - Success & Failure
 - Pleasure & Pain
 - Longing
 - Hurt
 - Anger
 - Envy
 - Joy
 - Pride



Absolute Truth

- Anicca (impermanence)
- Dukkha (unsatisfactoriness)
- Anatta (no enduring, separate self)



Processing Trauma

1. Open to painful emotions
2. Explore the facts of trauma
3. See it through lens of *dependent origination*
4. Develop compassion



Timing is Everything

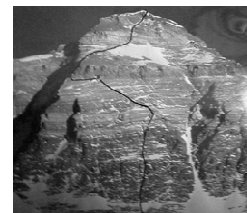
Turning toward Safety I

- Outer or distal focus
 - Walking Meditation
 - Listening Meditation
 - Nature Meditation
 - Eating Meditation
 - Open eye practices



Turning toward Safety II

- Inner focus
 - Mountain Meditation
 - Guided Imagery
 - *Metta* Practice
 - DBT techniques



Turning Toward the Sharp Points

- Moving toward anything unwanted or avoided
- How is it experienced in the body?
 - Pain, fear, sadness, anger
 - Unwanted images or memories
 - Urges toward compulsive behaviors



Different Strokes

- Need for frequent adjustment of exercises
- Elicit feedback both during and after practice
- Titrate between Safety and Sharp Points

When Focusing on the Breath Can Be Harmful

- When overwhelmed by traumatic memories
- When frightened of disintegration, loss of sense of self
- When suffering from psychosis



Life Preservers

- Concentration Practices
 - Stepping out of the thought stream
- Eyes open, external sensory focus
 - Ground, trees, sky, wind, sounds



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For mindfulness & psychotherapy resources, visit:

www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org

For tailored meditation practices, visit:

www.mindfulness-solution.com

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