

Session 6-Using What You Have Learned

Thich Nhat Hanh, the world renowned Vietnamese mindfulness teacher and activist for peace, points out one reason we might want to practice mindfulness is that most of the time we are unwittingly practicing its opposite. Every time we become stressed we get better at being stressed. Every time we lose our patience we get better at losing our patience. Practice does make perfect.

Time spent practicing mindfulness helps train the mind to “wake up” to when it gets lost in unconscious patterns. Mindfulness can help shift and change our mode of mind from “doing” to “being” – tapping into a mode of mind that is sometimes wiser and gentler than our ‘thinking mode’. When we practice being aware of our experience, we get better at being aware. And the good news is that when we become aware of our thoughts, and the package of emotions, physical sensations, and impulses to act that come along with those thoughts, the thoughts often shift and change on their own, or we have the space to decide on an action step.

Decide, right now, what your regular pattern of practice will be, and stick to it as best you can. Some people will adopt a regular formal practice, such as a daily awareness of breathing meditation or even the loving kindness meditation. Others might choose to use the three-minute breathing space during more stressful moments. Or, you might prefer informal practices, such as walking mindfully or really observing what you are looking at or listening to. Your practice might literally just require a moment in the day or before you go to sleep to check in with your experience. Whatever you choose, remember **that your breath is always available to you as an anchor to the present moment and an opportunity to begin again.**

Resources

Center for Mindfulness Studies

For those interested in ongoing programs, The Centre for Mindfulness Studies is a charitable social enterprise founded in 2011 located near Dufferin and Queen, as well as at satellite locations in the GTA and across the country. It is the leading professional development and service delivery organization for mindfulness-based interventions in Canada and one of the world leaders as well. In addition to formal programs, the center also provides day-long silent retreats on weekends as well as other opportunities to practice. Visit the link below for additional information:

<https://www.mindfulnessstudies.com/>

Web Links to Online Meditations and Resources

If you would like to further explore the Loving Kindness Meditation we used in this final session, you can read more about it here: <https://emmaseppala.com/18-science-based-reasons-try-loving-kindness-meditation-today/> Dr. Seppala is the Science Director at The Center for Compassion And Altruism Research And Education at Stanford University.

Rick Hanson, <http://www.rickhanson.net/> Practical Neuroscience of Lasting Happiness and biweekly inspirational email that is really great: <http://www.rickhanson.net/writings/just-one-thing/>

Mindful Magazine, link <https://www.mindful.org/magazine/> Provides weekly blogs for free and lots of information to support practice.

UC San Diego <http://health.ucsd.edu/specialties/mindfulness/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx> This site provides a selection of free meditations/recordings from the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program.

Dr. Kristen Neff. Self-Compassion: A Healthier Way of Relating to Yourself website with resources including guided

meditations and readings. <http://www.self-compassion.org/>

Best Meditation Apps for 2018: <https://www.healthline.com/health/mental-health/top-meditation-iphone-android-apps#10-happier>

Insight: Peace in our Timer. www.insighttimer.com

Books

Full Catastrophe Living: Using the Wisdom of Your Body and Mind to Face Stress, Pain and Illness by Jon Kabat Zinn PhD; Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life. by Jon Kabat Zinn PhD

Buddha's Brain by Rick Hanson

Finding Peace in a Frantic World. Mark Williams Ph D and Danny Penman PhD

Hardwiring Happiness, Resilience, Buddha's Brain, books by Rick Hanson

Making Peace With Your Mind, by Mark Coleman

The Wise Heart and many others, like A Path with Heart. Jack Kornfield

The Miracle of Mindfulness Thich Nhat Hanh and many other books.

When Things Fall Apart by Pema Chodrun and many other books.

The Mindful Way Through Depression. Teasdale, Williams and Segal. Also, check out the Mindful Way Workbook and online programs.

The Mindful Way Through Anxiety. Orsillo and Reimer – also has resource page with free meditation downloads to accompany the book found online.