The Beauty Myth
Why do we buy into it?

How Meditation Helps
Firefighters Brave the Flames

4 Steps to Create
A BETTER WORKPLACE

mindful

taking time for what matters

Starting Out Right

Expectant Parents Learn Lessons We Can All Benefit From

You Are Smarter Than Your Phone

3 Tech Insiders On How to Take Control

AUGUST 2013
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Features

"Mindfulness doesn't give you the birth experience you want. But it gives you a way to fall in love with the birth experience you get."

Nancy Bardacke

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEAL, ILLUSTRATION BY MARIKO JESSE

Departments

ILLUSTRATION BY TANG YAU HOONG, PHOTOGRAPH BY SAM ADAMS

On our cover
Learn how mindfulness is improving mothers' birth experiences and helping parents prepare for the biggest job of their lives **page 42**

Photograph by Michael O'Neal

you asked

Your "In Practice: Techniques" section is quite detailed. I think of meditation as a chance to quietly relax, so why do I need to think about what I'm doing with my posture and my eyes and hands and so forth?

M.J. WATSON
Fairhope, Alabama

Relaxing can be a tricky notion. Indeed meditation, in all postures and forms, involves a strong element of relaxation. But it doesn't mean the kind of relaxing that is just about flopping or slouching or sleeping. It's relaxed attentiveness. It's relaxation that bristles with awareness. And this type of relaxation is a little more challenging. It's simple, but not necessarily easy. Postures and techniques that we carefully try to attend to are aids to promote attention—and even intensity, at times—within relaxation. In that way, the naturally relaxed quality of our mind can emerge even when we're moving through the ups and downs of our daily lives.

you answered

How do you use mindfulness in your day to day?

"In the service of others. After 12 years of practicing medicine, I have found that being truly present for my patients helps them feel heard and helps me make a more accurate diagnosis."
Catherine Wergin Schweikert
Sacramento, California

"When I play guitar or piano late at night when the house is still."
Simon Nuttgens *Naramata, British Columbia*

"I have learned to extend mindfulness, this presence, throughout the day. I'm older now, and find I have to sometimes pay close attention to tasks involving fine motor skills or pay the consequences. Life is a joy when I am present for it."
Dennis Zimmerman *Lititz, Pennsylvania*

"My 15-year-old son attended a mindfulness meditation retreat last summer. He returned calm, collected, and tuned in. He's an athletic kid who would rather play soccer than do much else, but this experience had a lasting effect on him."
Lara Patriquin *Albuquerque, New Mexico*

you wrote in

I was surprised to see that Edward Wilson was given credit for the idea that we have an innate emotional connection with nature ("Up the Garden Path," June 2013). I would think that it be more appropriate to credit Carl Jung, who discussed that idea between 50 and 80 years ago. Jung was born 50 years before Wilson and wrote numerous papers and letters on this topic, and also spoke openly about the connection and alienation from nature as well.
Theresa Hubbard *Liberty, Missouri*

Loved the article about the Holistic Life Foundation in Baltimore ("Raising Baltimore," April 2013). I love the fact they are teaching young people coping and chilling-out skills. Keep up these amazing articles.
Lesa Cox *Shelbyville, Tennessee*

It was great hearing about The Recycled Orchestra ("Sound Garden," June 2013). In North America kids often complain when they don't have the latest stuff. And these kids from Paraguay are turning trash into something amazing.
Tiffany Harris *Wheeling, West Virginia*

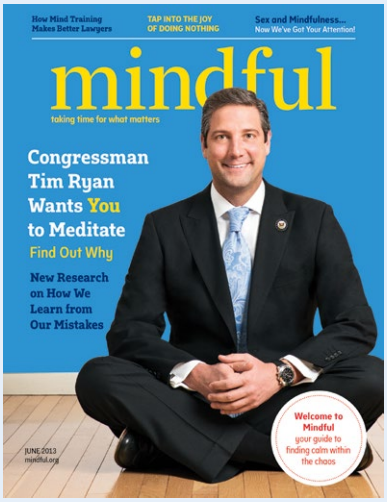

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ILLUSTRATION BY JASON LEE

Grow Mindful Kids

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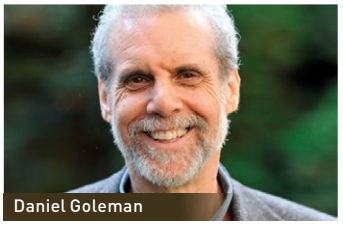
Dan Siegel


Linda Lantieri


Daniel Goleman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Jyoti Subramanian addresses bullying among teens at Challenge Day
Daniel Rechtschaffen founding director of the Mindful Education Institute
Lama Dawa Tarchin Phillips founder of the Institute of Compassionate Awareness
Leslie Booker teaches incarcerated youth through the Lineage Project

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Katherine Ellison

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist (and Imelda Marcos biographer) Katherine Ellison started paying more attention to the sounds in her life after interviewing percussionist Evelyn Glennie (p. 52). "Learning to listen, to slow down enough to really hear what's being said, to hear all the interesting noises around you is a wonderful practice," says Ellison. Her most recent book is *Buzz: A Year of Paying Attention*.

Rich Fernandez

How does Rich Fernandez, senior people-development lead at Google, introduce mindfulness? "I say, 'Let's talk about an evidence-based form of mental conditioning that will have measurable effects on your happiness, productivity, and your overall well-being. Who's in?'" We're in. On page 34 Fernandez talks with Irene Au, vice president at Udacity, and Arturo Bejar, director of engineering at Facebook, about getting the most out of our technology.

Mariko Jesse

Mariko Jesse's illustrations accompany our story about listening (p. 52). She says people recognize both her Anglo and Japanese heritages in her art, depending on where it's being seen. "A lot of people in London think it looks very Eastern, but when I show my work in Hong Kong they say it's so English. I think it goes both ways. I get inspiration from everywhere I travel."

Susan Freinkel

Though her youngest is off to college soon, Susan Freinkel, who wrote our cover story on mindful childbirth (p. 42), loved reporting on couples just starting families. "I felt very lucky to see these couples starting something that for me has been a wonderful phase of my life. I really feel the mindfulness training they received is a great foundation for good parenting. I wish I'd had that." Freinkel is the author of *Plastic: A Toxic Love Story*.

Michael O'Neal

Michael O'Neal, a former creative director at Apple, took the photos for our mindful childbirth story (p. 42), including this issue's cover. "I usually do lifestyle, fashion-y stuff," he says, "but this was a fun experience. The instructor, Nancy Bardacke, is 70, feisty, and fun. It was really interesting to see her in action, making a difference in these couples' lives."

Michael Carroll

Michael Carroll is the author of several books on mindful leadership, most recently *Fearless at Work*. He has worked as both a corporate executive and an organizational consultant. "Mindfulness practice helps us connect with other human beings, which is good business," Carroll says. "It also introduces us to the vastness and presence of what it means to be human." In this issue he talks about how to be a good mentor in our In Practice: At Work section (p. 67).

Illustrations by Jessica McCarthy and Mariko Jesse (self-portrait)

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Making Space

What does mindful leader-ship look like? That's what I wondered as I traveled to upstate New York for a retreat led by Janice Marturano. She's the founder of the Institute for Mindful Leadership, and its slogan is "finding the space to lead."

At *Mindful* we're trying to create an organization that does just that: leaves space for ideas and best practices to emerge. So I was intrigued to find out how this four-day retreat might inform my own role as a leader.

The truth is, when the pressure's on at work (or any other area of my life), I fall under an all-too familiar spell: the feeling that *everything* is urgent. And then when I'm operating at top speed, I'm dogged by the sense that I'm missing something important. It's not ideal. In fact, it's the opposite of spacious. But it's the way the world seems to work, isn't it? As leaders, we don't just have to keep up, we need to speed ahead of the pack, right?

So the idea of creating time and space to step back and gain perspective can often feel like a pipe dream. It sure felt like that as I and the other 16 leaders on the retreat reflected on our packed calendars.

But as Janice guided us through a series of discussions, meditations, and exercises, I began to feel once again what it's like to slow down. I learned to really listen to the person seated across from me. And I noticed how much better I communicate when all that awareness is brought to bear.

Thinking or talking about the advantages of slowing down and being more aware is one thing. It always *sounds* like a great idea. But by actually *doing* it—making the space, taking a pause—I began to really understand what I'm missing when I don't.

I confess: I like to get things settled. I like crossing things off lists. But learning to pause and reflect on what's happening inside of me, while taking note of what's going on around me at any given moment, has me convinced. Whether I'm leading at work, with my family, or in my life in general, my decisions as a leader are only as good as the information I am open to receiving.

I was a little off track, then, wondering what mindful leadership *looks* like—it's how it *feels* that matters. And it's not just good for the person doing the leading. Guaranteed: other people will notice—and benefit—too.

—Tracy Picha, Editor
tracy@mindful.org

PHOTOGRAPH BY MEGUMI YOSHIDA

mindful

taking time for what matters

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"Firefighters often experience tunnel vision: their sensory field narrows. Mindfulness training helps them bounce back from that."

Jim Saveland, program manager for risk management at the USDA Forest Service

Photograph by Sam Adams

Contents

FOOTFALLS Next time you walk, notice each foot as it meets the ground and as you lift it and swing it. No need to look down. Don't bump into anyone. Find more on Twitter @mindinterrupter

In the Face of Fire

They were an experienced crew of smokejumpers—firefighters who parachute in to fight forest fires—and they were battling an out-of-control blaze in the Los Padres National Forest of California. But while they rushed to tackle a spot fire in front of them, they didn't notice that a vertical plume of flame and smoke had burst above them, cutting off their only path to safety. Trapped, they resorted to the small cocoon-like shelters they each carry to protect them from the intense heat.

Fortunately, no one was killed that day, but three of the firefighters needed treatment for burns. One was in hospital for a week.

"They got caught in tunnel vision," says veteran firefighter Jim Saveland (pictured on previous page), who studied the 2008 fire as part of his work in risk management at the US Forest Service. For Saveland, who is a smokejumper himself, the incident raised an important, potentially life-or-death challenge: how to help firefighters maintain situational awareness, especially in the midst of dangerous, high-stress situations.

"So we developed a mindfulness course," Saveland says, "and piloted it with some crews in the West."

Saveland, 59 and a longtime meditator, has gone on to develop a series of programs with mindfulness elements to reduce work-related injuries and death in the Forest Service, which averages six fatalities a year. "I think a mindfulness practice can help folks be a little bit more cool, calm, and collected in high-stress situations," he says. "Are you just reacting or are you bringing some deliberate decision-making to the process?"

Saveland has looked at U.S. military studies showing that in high-stress situations, the neocortex—the part of the brain that manages higher functions, spatial perception, and motor commands—can go offline. Firefighters and armed forces personnel face many of the same physical and emotional challenges.

"When fighting fires you may experience auditory exclusion, where you don't hear certain things," he says. "With mindfulness training the neocortex remains online longer and comes back online quicker."

Saveland also sees mindfulness as a means to build emotional resiliency and to help people recover from job-related stress and trauma—key for those who fight fire for a living.

> "Are you just reacting or are you bringing some deliberate decision-making to the process?"
>
> **Jim Saveland**

A Boston native who moved to Georgia at a young age, Saveland spent several years at the Air Force Academy, where he was on the parachute team, then went on to serve as an Airman during the Vietnam era. He earned his master's in fire ecology at the University of Idaho.

"Early on I read about these crazy people who jump out of airplanes into forest fires," he says. "It sounded like something interesting to pursue, to become a smokejumper."

Saveland has had a mindfulness practice for years and is also proficient in aikido. Taking Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction program helped him introduce mindfulness in an institutional setting. "Most of my meditation these days is when I find a spare moment off duty outside or go for a hike and find a place," he says.

Using his experience with mindfulness as an inspiration, Saveland is spearheading other pilot programs at the Forest Service, including Yoga for Firefighters. His office is funding research at Oregon State University about attributes that make for good leaders in firefighting crews. The researcher there has come up with something called S.H.A.R.P., which Saveland describes this way:

Stop: Take a moment; what's happening, what's going on? *Here*: Am I present? *Act*: What are my actions at the moment? *Respond*: How am I affecting the situation? *Person*: Am I taking care of myself?

Not a bad strategy for being in the heat of any moment, flames or not. ●

OVERHEARD

"A life is not important except in the impact it has on other lives."

Jackie Robinson, engraved in the rotunda at Citi Field, New York City

PHOTOGRAPH BY SANDY HUFFAKER/GETTY IMAGES

Kindness Evolution

When we think of "survival of the fittest," Darwin's theory of evolution comes to mind. But have you heard of "survival of the kindest"?

Dacher Keltner thinks that's more accurate. He's director of the Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, which has been keeping track of research into prosocial behavior—actions that promote mutual well-being—since 2001. Keltner says he's now seeing "a sea-change in scientific literature" on evolutionary psychology. In contrast to the dog-eat-dog view of human nature, new research is showing that people are inherently altruistic and cooperative. "We're equipped with mechanisms for care and nurturance," says Emiliana Simon-Thomas, Greater Good's science director. "And they're as original as any we have for self-preservation and competition."

In a recent paper discussed in Greater Good's online magazine, Harvard researchers David Rand, Joshua Greene, and Martin Nowak (coauthor of the book *SuperCooperators: Altruism, Evolution, and Why We Need Each Other to Succeed*) examine how we behave in social dilemmas—that is, where our short-term "selfish" interests conflict with long-term community interests. Their conclusion? "Although the cold logic of self-interest is seductive, our first impulse is to cooperate."

Researchers in neurology are also finding ways we're programmed for altruism. When we give something away we get a shot of dopamine, the neurotransmitter that helps control the brain's reward and pleasure centers. Mirror neurons also play a role, says Keltner, enabling us to take on other people's pleasures as our own. "That's a powerful cognitive mechanism."

Keltner's own work shows that self-interest is overrated. Greed is, in fact, *not* good. "We know scientifically that if we prime people to focus on materialistic things and themselves, they're less cooperative." But trying to make it on your own is not the key to success over the long run.

And as the planet's population grows, figuring out how we can live together peaceably and effectively is key, says Simon-Thomas. "Really solid skills in communicating, understanding, and working well with other people are your biggest assets."

It turns out even Darwin didn't believe we're all selfish—he argued that sympathy is our strongest instinct. And Keltner says, "a lot of the data today lends credence to that view. It shows we have a default tendency to share and give." ●

Interested in further research on cooperation? Go to mindful.org/cooperate

Illustration by Gavin Potenza

Free from Falls

Your mom was right. An ounce of prevention *is* worth a pound of cure. Now maybe she needs a reminder.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, falls are the leading cause of death by injury for adults age 65 and older. Falls are also the most common cause of hospital admissions for trauma among that group. In 2010, 2.3 million older Americans were treated for fall-related injuries and more than 662,000 were hospitalized.

With this data in mind, the fall-prevention program at Stanford Hospital & Clinics introduced Mindfulness in Fall Prevention, a new component that offers these great tips to stay safe:

- Whenever you change positions (lying down to sitting, sitting to standing), bring your attention to how your body is feeling before, during, and after. Ask yourself, "How is my body feeling right now? Am I dizzy or light-headed? Do I feel pain or weakness?"
- When you're walking, try to focus solely on walking. Distraction increases the potential for falls.
- Use the awareness of your breath to keep your attention in the present moment.
- Slow down. Try to bring attention only to the task at hand.
- Use everyday objects and sensations—say, the sound of wind chimes—to help bring your attention back to the present. ●

PHOTOGRAPH © CULTURA PHOTOGRAPHY/VEER

Mindful Governance

In March, Jon Kabat-Zinn, founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction, addressed British members of parliament who had taken part in the first mindfulness course offered to government officials in Britain. The 12 MPs spent 75 minutes a day for eight weeks meditating and learning how their bodies and minds respond to stress.

"Mindfulness is being discussed now at really quite senior levels in parliament," says Chris Cullen of the Oxford Center for Mindfulness. He helped organize the visit and says Kabat-Zinn spent two days talking to officials about integrating mindfulness into education, health care, and other sectors. ●

Kick the Habit

Studies show that smoking addiction ranks right up there with addiction to hard drugs. And it can take considerably longer to shake a cigarette habit. "You hit rock bottom a lot faster with alcohol and cocaine than you do with smoking," says Judson Brewer, the medical director at Yale's Therapeutic Neuroscience Clinic.

With this in mind, Brewer has developed an app to assist with smoking cessation. It's a three-week, mindfulness-based program called Craving to Quit.

"We did a study comparing it to the gold-standard program for quitting smoking—the American Lung Association's Freedom From Smoking—and we found that Craving to Quit was twice as effective," he says.

Brewer's study found that 36% of participants following the Craving to Quit program did not return to smoking after four weeks, compared to only 15% from the Freedom From Smoking group. And after 17 weeks, 31% of those from the mindfulness group still weren't smoking, compared to only 6% for Freedom From Smoking.

Craving to Quit starts by helping users acknowledge how smoking connects with not just pleasure but stress. The goal is to notice how we fall into "habit loops": when a certain stimulus arises, we have a set response, such as lighting a cigarette.

"When you get yelled at by your boss, notice how you get a craving to smoke," says Brewer. "And then notice that smoking doesn't fix your problem with your boss. It's also important to notice what it's actually like to smoke—what it tastes like, what it's like to suck fumes into your lungs."

Brewer says people start to see that smoking is not as pleasurable as they thought it was, and that it doesn't necessarily help them address or fix problems that arise in life.

The app goes further by encouraging self-compassion, which short-circuits the judgments that can come when we try to make difficult changes in our lives. "When people have a craving, it's good to notice if they're resisting or beating themselves up," says Brewer.

Part of the Craving to Quit program includes access to a closed online community for questions or peer support. "This isn't a magic pill," says Brewer. "You have to do the practice and you have to want to quit smoking. This isn't going to work if you're ambivalent about it. But then, I don't think anything will work if you're ambivalent." ●

See an app demo and more from Judson Brewer at mindful.org/cravingtoquit

Illustration by Gavin Potenza

HYDRATE Pour yourself a glass of water. Enjoy the sound of it pouring into the glass. Go off and drink it someplace. Do nothing else. Find more on Twitter @mindinterrupter

Breath Care

How often are you aware of your breathing over the course of a day? (Aside from those meetings that are so boring you wonder if you've stopped breathing altogether.)

Probably your answer is not often, or never. But paying attention to how you're breathing at any given moment can be a powerful tool in dealing with stress. And now a breath-measuring app is being tested that could help you track how you're doing throughout the day.

"You can think of Breathware as a pedometer for your breath," says Neema Moraveji, director of the Stanford Calming Technology Lab and cofounder of Breathware.

The app measures breath rate through a sensor that you wear at your waist. It sends respiration information to your smartphone, and if your breathing becomes erratic or you're holding your breath—"which we often do," says Moraveji—the app sends you a notification and offers a practice to bring your breathing back to a normal rate. Normal, Moraveji explains, just means what's comfortable. "There is no universally good way to breathe."

Moraveji says that increasingly popular "self-tracking" devices—wristwatches that monitor heart rate, mobile apps that measure stress through the phone's camera lens—are still "pretty preliminary" ways of measuring body changes. And they often supply readings of things we can't control, he notes.

But breathing is different. With the information at hand, you can alter your breathing, your thinking, or both. "The way you breathe relates to the way you're thinking," says Moraveji. "If you're breathing kind of shallow or fast and erratic, the brain is doing the same thing. If you're breathing smoothly and deeply, the mind is operating in a similar fashion. The breath is mirroring the thought pattern."

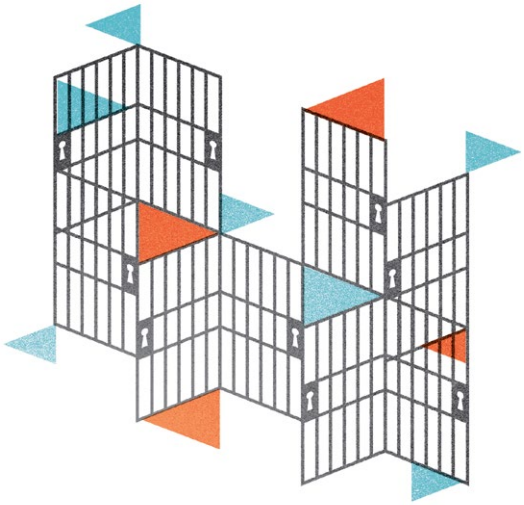
OVERHEARD

"Stress impacts our body, but it's our mind that takes us out of the present. Learning to be present is a difficult thing to do. We get sleepy, we get restless, we get frustrated. But the fact is, we just keep coming back. This is the tool: just keep coming back."

Diana Winston, TEDx, Sunset Park

Watch a video at mindful.org/breathware

PHOTOGRAPH: COURTESY OF WWW.BREATHWARE.COM



Mindful on the Inside

Are America's prisons preparing people to return to society? The high number of released prisoners who end up back behind bars suggests not.

According to a Pew Center report called *State of Recidivism: The Revolving Door of America's Prisons*, of the two million Americans in the correctional system, 40% return to state prisons within three years of their release.

The Prison Mindfulness Institute thinks it may be able to help. PMI's flagship program is Path of Freedom, a curriculum for both prisoners and prison staff. It teaches mindfulness practice, cognitive behavioral training, and social and emotional learning.

The program helps participants understand the connection between attitudes, thoughts, feelings, impulses, and behaviors. "Prisoners' minds tend to be more disorganized than most," says Fleet Maull, who started this work in 1989 while he was serving a 14-year sentence for drug trafficking. "They have minimal attention stabilization and tend to have very poor emotion regulation." Most prisoners grew up in chaotic environments and were exposed to a great deal of trauma. Many have been diagnosed with ADHD.

"Through mindfulness training you can learn to recognize that moment when you can catch yourself in the middle of a pattern," says Maull. "A mindfulness practitioner can think, 'Oh, I recognize where this goes, and I'm not sure I want to go there this time.' I recognize this moment of freedom when I can make a new choice, one that will lead to a different outcome. "

Path of Freedom is offered in prisons in several states, and in some prisons in Canada, Sweden, and Chile. More than 200 facilitators have been trained to lead the program.

Maull believes it belongs in the mainstream of correctional programming. PMI moved its headquarters from Colorado to Rhode Island to be near a cluster of correctional facilities and began research projects to assess the impact of its mindfulness-based programs. One five-year study, launched in 2011, will measure the success of Path of Freedom.

Executive director Kate Crisp says she's collected thousands of quotes from prisoners highlighting their positive experiences in the program. In the words of one prisoner, "After meditating I feel so much clearer—like my mind has more logic. It was like something opened up and other possibilities were there for me." ●

Illustration by Gavin Potenza

SAVOR Find an orange or a tangerine, something nice and juicy. Peel. Eat. Yummm. Find more on Twitter @mindinterrupter

Child's Play

If it feels like a lesson, children won't be interested. If it's a game, they'll love it.

That's what Alfred James says about mindfulness for kids. The author of *Pocket Mindfulness* and its accompanying blog suggests that parents come up with mindfulness exercises they and their children can do together. It's about finding ways to be truly present with your children, rather than mutually distracted.

Here are a few of his ideas:

- Out on a windy day, maybe at the beach? Bust your kids out of quiet time and **roar into the wind**. James says it's about celebrating our interconnection with nature. (And yelling just feels good.)
- We know kids like to use magnifying glasses to turn the sun's rays into laser beams of destruction. They might be surprised to learn they can also be used to observe interesting things. **Look at ants.** See how much they can carry. How they navigate giant obstacles. How they work as a team. (Just make sure not to fry them.)
- Choose a plant—outdoors or indoors—and take time to **notice its growth**. You can record the changes by taking photos and comparing them.

What could be better than sharing a little aha moment with a child? ●

OVERHEARD

"We must try to contribute joy to the world. That is true no matter what our problems, our health, our circumstances. We must try. I didn't always know this and am happy I lived long enough to find out."

Roger Ebert, film critic and journalist, 1943-2013

PHOTOGRAPH ©ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/POLLYROSE

Research Roundup

Listen up, college preppers: meditation may help boost SAT and GRE scores. Researchers from the University of California–Santa Barbara recently wondered whether reducing mind wandering could improve performance on standardized tests. They found evidence it does. After a group of undergraduates went through a two-week intensive mindfulness training program—which included practices to reduce distractedness and improve working-memory capacity—they performed better on the verbal-reasoning section of the GRE. [1]

Know thyself

How well do you know— *really* know—yourself? It's hard to be objective about your own personality, but a study from Washington University in St. Louis suggests mindfulness can help with that. The key is nonjudgmental observation and attention, which is central to mindfulness practice. The researchers found that learning to notice and question our positive and negative biases means greater clarity when it comes to understanding who we are. [2]

Focusing on the present can lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol, say researchers from the UC–Davis Center for Mind and Brain. Volunteers filled out mindfulness questionnaires before and after a three-month meditation retreat, while researchers compared the cortisol levels in their saliva. People whose mindfulness score increased during the retreat showed a decrease in cortisol levels. [3]

Talking on a hands-free phone in a car while doing a task as simple as making a left turn may be more dangerous than previously thought. Researchers studying drivers' MRI scans reported that "the distracted brain sacrificed areas in the posterior brain important for visual attention and alertness." [4]

Mindfulness meditation as a stress reliever has been studied extensively, but there's been little evidence that it helps those suffering from chronic inflammation conditions where psychological stress plays a major role. Now a study by University of Wisconsin–Madison neuroscientists suggests mindfulness meditation techniques may help people suffering from rheumatoid arthritis, inflammatory bowel disease, and asthma, and "offer a lower-cost alternative or complement to standard treatment." [5]

[1] *Psychological Science*, March 2013.
[2] *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, March 2013.
[3] *Health Psychology*, March 2013.
[4] *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, February 28, 2013.
[5] *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, January 2013.

Special thanks to *Mindfulness Research Monthly* and *Greater Good: The Science of a Meaningful Life* for highlighting notable research.

ART WORK Find a painting. On a wall, a calendar, a restaurant, side of a building. Do some impromptu art appreciation. Rinse (your mind) and repeat.
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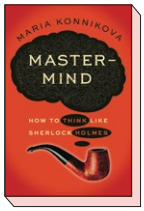

MASTERMIND

How to Think Like Sherlock Holmes

By Maria Konnikova

The reasoning mind and the meditative mind are often thought to be at odds. Not so, says Konnikova: meditation gives you "the quiet distance you need for integrative, imaginative, observant, and mindful thought." Just like Sherlock Holmes. Okay, he probably didn't meditate every morning, but he did perfect the quiet-distance thing. This book is fun—particularly all the quotations and references to Conan Doyle's stories—and it gives good guidance about how to unfuzzy your thinking.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS

Then & Now

By the editors at Conari Press

The 20th-anniversary edition of this classic holds the same power as the original: readers can expect a boost to their overall happiness and also experience a strong urge to go out and commit some kindness. As the original author, M.J. Ryan, suggests, reading these stories in the midst of a busy life still has the power to soften and warm the heart—and help us "remember to enjoy the moments rather than just race through them."

THE STILL POINT OF THE TURNING WORLD

A Mother's Story

By Emily Rapp

Most parents agree on one thing when it comes to raising children: it's the letting go, in all its various forms, that demands the most of us. Emily Rapp's experience of letting go was tragically accelerated: at just nine months old her son was diagnosed with the rare and fatal degenerative disorder Tay-Sachs disease. In this elegant memoir, Rapp tells us how she and her husband faced the heartbreak and managed to find the tools—calling on everything from literature to meditation—to live within the almost countable moments they had left with their first born.

IMPROV WISDOM

Don't Prepare, Just Show Up

By Patricia Ryan Madson

Say yes, start anywhere, be average, pay attention: these are a few of the lessons Patricia Ryan Madson has culled from a lifetime of practicing and teaching improv. And she suggests we try them on for size—right now. Improv is "not only about comedy, it's a way of doing things," she says in her introduction to this just-released audiobook. It's relevant stuff for anyone—entrepreneurs, cooks, engineers, educators, caregivers, you name it—who is faced with the unending unpredictabilities and challenges of life. We're always called upon to improvise. So here's how.

The Short List

LEARNING TO BREATHE
A Mindfulness Curriculum for Adolescents to Cultivate Emotion Regulation, Attention, and Performance
By Patricia C. Broderick

THE SEXY VEGAN'S HAPPY HOUR AT HOME
Small Plates, Big Flavors, and Potent Cocktails
By Brian L. Patton

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO MINDFULNESS
The Essential Companion to Personal Growth
By Albert Tobler and Susann Herrmann

JOURNEY INTO MINDFULNESS
Gentle Ways to Let Go of Stress and Live in the Moment
By Patrizia Collard

UNCONDITIONAL FORGIVENESS
A Simple and Proven Method to Forgive Everyone and Everything
By Mary Hayes Grieco

NO ORDINARY APPLE
A Story About Eating Mindfully
By Sara Marlowe
Illustrated by Philip Pascuzzo
For children

EMBRACING THE SHADOW (CD)
Discovering the Hidden Riches in Our Relationships
By David Richo

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Directed by Saki F. Santorelli, EdD and founded by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, for thirty-four years, the Stress Reduction Clinic – the origin of mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) - and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society have pioneered the integration of mindfulness meditation and other mindfulness-based approaches into mainstream medicine and healthcare.

Mindful–Mindless

Our take on who's paying attention and who's not

mindful

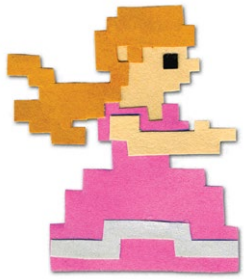
Mike Mika's three-year-old daughter wasn't thrilled that the damsel, Pauline, in the Donkey Kong video game was always in need of rescue by Mario. One Nintendo hack later (thanks, Dad!) and Pauline is doing the rescuing.

Billy Ray Harris, a Kansas City homeless man, returned a diamond engagement ring that accidentally fell into his cup. The ring's owner and her husband didn't think a simple thank you was enough, so they set up an online fund for Harris. At press time, donations were at $190,000.

The small town of Camden Point, Missouri, is getting a new fire hall, a ballpark, and $50,000 toward a sewage-treatment plant. Just an example of good government? No, this time it's the work of one Missouri couple who won big in the lottery and decided to share it with their community.

Tired of smartphones and video recorders held up in the air at concerts? So is New York rock band the Yeah Yeah Yeahs. A sign at their recent shows reads, "Please do not watch the show through a screen on your smart device/camera...as a courtesy to the person behind you and to Nick, Karen, and Brian. Much love and many thanks!"

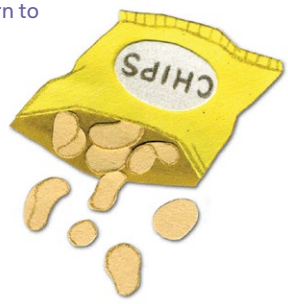
A whole new way to get back to the land: When planning your funeral arrangements, consider having your ashes placed in a biodegradable, seeded urn. Bury the urn and its seeds will grow into a tree.



mindless

New internet services are offering virtual immortality. With Dead-Soci.al, your Facebook updates and scheduled emails and tweets will continue even after you die. We gotta learn to let go, people.

Do you know your Bliss Point? Fast-food makers sure do. That's what they call the sweet spot where the right amount of sugar, salt, and fat blend to create something you just can't get enough of. And you wondered why it's so hard to eat just one potato chip.



We love our pets, but here's an unsettling statistic from the ASPCA: between five and seven million unwanted pets enter animal shelters nationwide every year. Of those, approximately 60% of dogs and 70% of cats are euthanized.

Just when you thought it was safe to cross the street: According to a recent study, New York pedestrians are most often hit by cars when they're in the crosswalk and walking with the signal.

And you thought urinal ads were bad. In April, urinal gambling was installed at a minor-league ballpark in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Men play the game by peeing to the left or the right. Because we need one more thing to do while we're busy doing something else. ●

Suggestions for Mindful–Mindless?
Send them to mfml@mindful.org

Illustrations by Jessica Rae Gordon

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Recipes and photographs by Béatrice Peltre. Find more of her work at latartinegourmande.com

A Bowlful of Wild

By Angela Mears

In the world of leafy greens, arugula and iceberg lettuce are complete opposites.

Arugula is peppery, assertive, and wild; iceberg is crunchy and polite. Arugula is rich in vitamin C and potassium, while iceberg has little nutritional value, containing mostly water. Despite this, iceberg is the most popular lettuce in the United States, while arugula was little known in North America until recently.

Which, aside from painting a rather puritan picture of the American palate, is just a damn shame. Arugula—or *salad rocket*, as it's known in much of the English-speaking world—is one of the meanest, tastiest greens there is.

Its history is suggestive. As early as the first century CE, arugula was documented as an aphrodisiac. Virgil wrote of its libido-inducing properties, and its leaves and seeds were used in lusty concoctions rumored to spice up life in the bedroom.

Since then, arugula has come to stand for less stimulating virtues. In an unexpected turn, it has recently been evoked as a symbol for elitism and effete refinement—a perception at odds with its racy personality.

Arugula, it seems, is widely considered an ingredient reserved for highfalutin foodies. When presidential hopeful Barack Obama uttered the word to a handful of Iowa farmers in 2008, it attracted enough attention to make the cover of *Newsweek*.

For many, Obama's arugula moment was a ripe symbol of his failure to connect with the plumbers of this world. But it seems even more remarkable, in hindsight, that so much meaning was invested in—and so much handwringing suffered over—a salad green. Usually anxiety of that magnitude is reserved for the kind of rocket we send into space.

I love the stuff because it makes salad burn.

Imagine the story retold with romaine or iceberg. It would seem absurd. Yet arugula has no more claim to cultural or culinary loftiness than those more familiar greens. But it does possess more character than any lettuce out there, so it shouldn't come as a surprise that we would imbue it with such power.

I love the stuff because it makes salad burn. Truly good arugula bites back—not at all like the limp, sterile, prewashed lettuce you might come across in the produce section. So treat it with a firm hand. Puree it into an intense, garlicky pesto. Wilt it over a bubbling-hot pizza. Or serve it in a hearty salad with a potent combination of Dijon mustard, vinegar, shallots, and chives.

At its best, arugula is cruel, intense, nose-burningly spicy, and heartbreakingly good. It doesn't taste like refinement or courtesy or class. It tastes like wildness. It tastes like rockets. ●

Angela Mears writes about food at thespinningplate.com.

Arugula Pesto with Walnuts, Lime, and Coriander

Makes 1¼ cups pesto

Sea salt and pepper
1 garlic clove, peeled and halved
½ lime zest, finely grated
½ tsp ground coriander
⅓ cup walnut kernels
½ cup Parmesan cheese, finely grated
2 cups packed arugula leaves
½ cup packed coriander leaves
⅔ cup olive oil
Squeeze of lime juice

- In the bowl of a food processor, combine a pinch of sea salt, pepper, lime zest, garlic, ground coriander, walnuts, Parmesan, arugula, and coriander leaves. Work into a fine paste.
- While the machine is running, pour the olive oil gradually until you reach your preferred pesto texture.
- Transfer to a clean jar and stir in a squeeze of lime juice. Can be enjoyed with pasta or bread or used as a pizza base.
- Keep in the refrigerator for up to a week or freeze.

Arugula and Millet Salad with Orange, Feta Cheese, and Prosciutto

Serves 4 people

For the dressing:

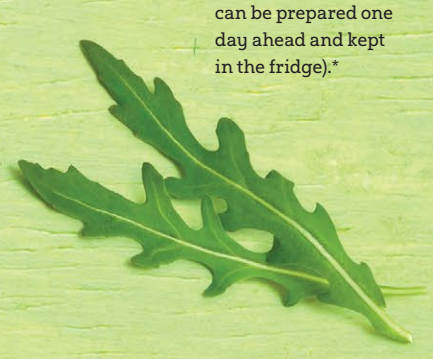
Sea salt and pepper
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp honey
3 tbsp white wine vinegar
6 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp shallot, finely chopped
1 tbsp chives, chopped
1 tbsp coriander, chopped

For the salad:

2 tbsp olive oil
1 cup millet (makes 4 cups cooked)
4 oranges
4 cups baby arugula leaves
4½ ounces feta cheese, crumbled
12 slices prosciutto
3 tbsp pine nuts, dry roasted

- In a small bowl, add sea salt and pepper to the mustard and honey, then stir in the vinegar. Add the olive oil and whisk to emulsify. Stir in the shallot, chives, and coriander. Set aside.
- In a pot, heat 1 tbsp olive oil over medium heat. When warm, add the millet and stir to coat for 1 minute. Add 2 cups water, 1 tbsp olive oil, and season with salt. Simmer, covered, for 20 minutes or until the liquid is absorbed. Remove from the heat and let rest for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork and let cool (this can be prepared one day ahead and kept in the fridge).*
- With a sharp serrated knife, peel the skin and pith from the oranges. Thinly slice the fruit; set aside.
- In a salad bowl, combine the arugula and cooled millet, and toss gently with the dressing. Arrange in four dining plates.
- Add the oranges slices, crumbled feta, and 3 slices of prosciutto on each plate. Add the pine nuts and serve immediately.

* To avoid mushy millet, don't overcook (it is best al dente).



Name: Alexandra Caluen
Age: 47
Activity: ballroom dancing
Location: Los Angeles, California

Let's Dance

Alexandra Caluen talks about the magic that happens when it all comes together on the ballroom dance floor.

As told to Carsten Knox
Photograph by Jennifer Walters

When it all comes together, ballroom dancing is like flying. Every part of your body is moving all the time, every part engaged and energized.

I remember one Saturday night when I was out dancing with my husband, Phil. It was a social dance at our instructor's studio. The floor wasn't very crowded, so we had plenty of room to move. We took our positions and started to glide along the floor as the waltz played. I moved lightly, curving in and out of Phil's arm as he led me into turns. As he did, I had space to pull through the move and go past him—dancing in unison and in the same direction as the other pairs, as the whole group charted a big circular course around the room.

It's pure pleasure to follow your dance partner. It's the one time in your life when you're not supposed to be thinking. As women, we're used to taking care of business and getting the job done, and it can be quite hard to turn that off and just follow. But when you're able to do it, it's a real joy.

My husband and I are part of a large and active amateur competition circuit. We met in a beginner class in '97 and took part in our first ballroom dance contest in the spring of '99. We weren't very good, but we thought we were fabulous. We had a lot of fun.

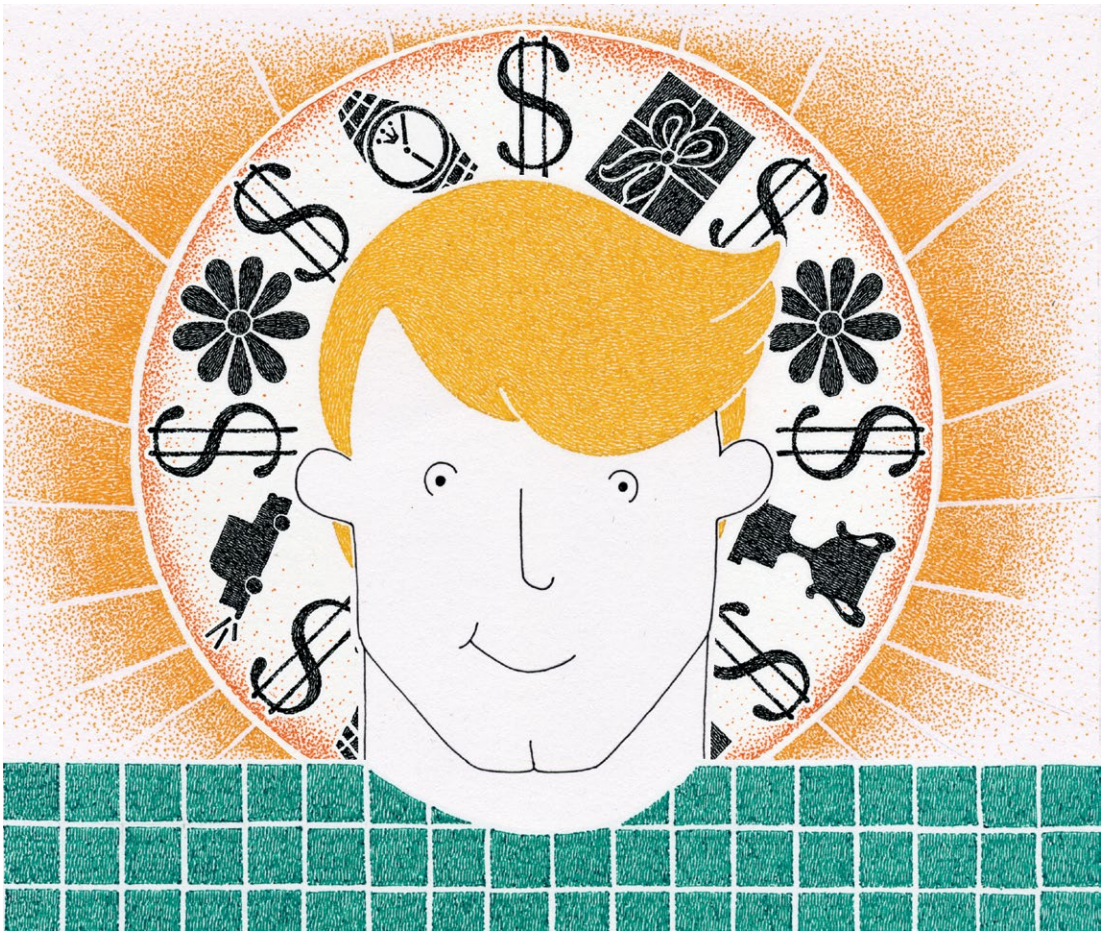
Over time I've discovered that the more integrity you have in your movement—and that takes concentration—the more satisfaction there is. You're moving in three physical planes, you're moving in time, and you're also reading the input you're getting from the muscular to and fro from your partner. You're acting but also reacting. It's wonderful when you're really in tune. Phil and I aren't always utterly in sync, but generally we dance together well.

The more we danced, the more we noticed what was going on in our bodies. We detected tension and stress in various places and came to see the kind of habitual responses we were falling into. I tended to collapse my left shoulder, and this was partly in response to a habit Phil acquired of dropping his shoulder as we tried to get through traffic on the floor.

We went through a stage when we were both frustrated by the experience of social dancing. We were trying to improve our technique and move around more freely on the floor. But you can't always do that in a social dance, where not everyone is on the same level or leaving you enough space to move. My reaction was to think "Get out of my way!" but I had to realize that not everyone has the same goals. We found other places to dance where we could really extend ourselves, but we also realized we owed it to ourselves to find enjoyment in whatever dance environment we're in.

For a long time, I felt I had to think hard to interpret the information—the lead—I was receiving. Now, after enough years of study and practice, I don't try to manage it anymore**.** The less I think, the more successful we are. I let my body do the interpreting and just enjoy it. ●

The Beautiful and the Good



What are our brains doing when we assume that someone who's beautiful on the outside must be beautiful on the inside? Sharon Begley investigates.

Sharon Begley is the senior health and science correspondent at Reuters, author of *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain*, and coauthor with Richard Davidson of *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*.

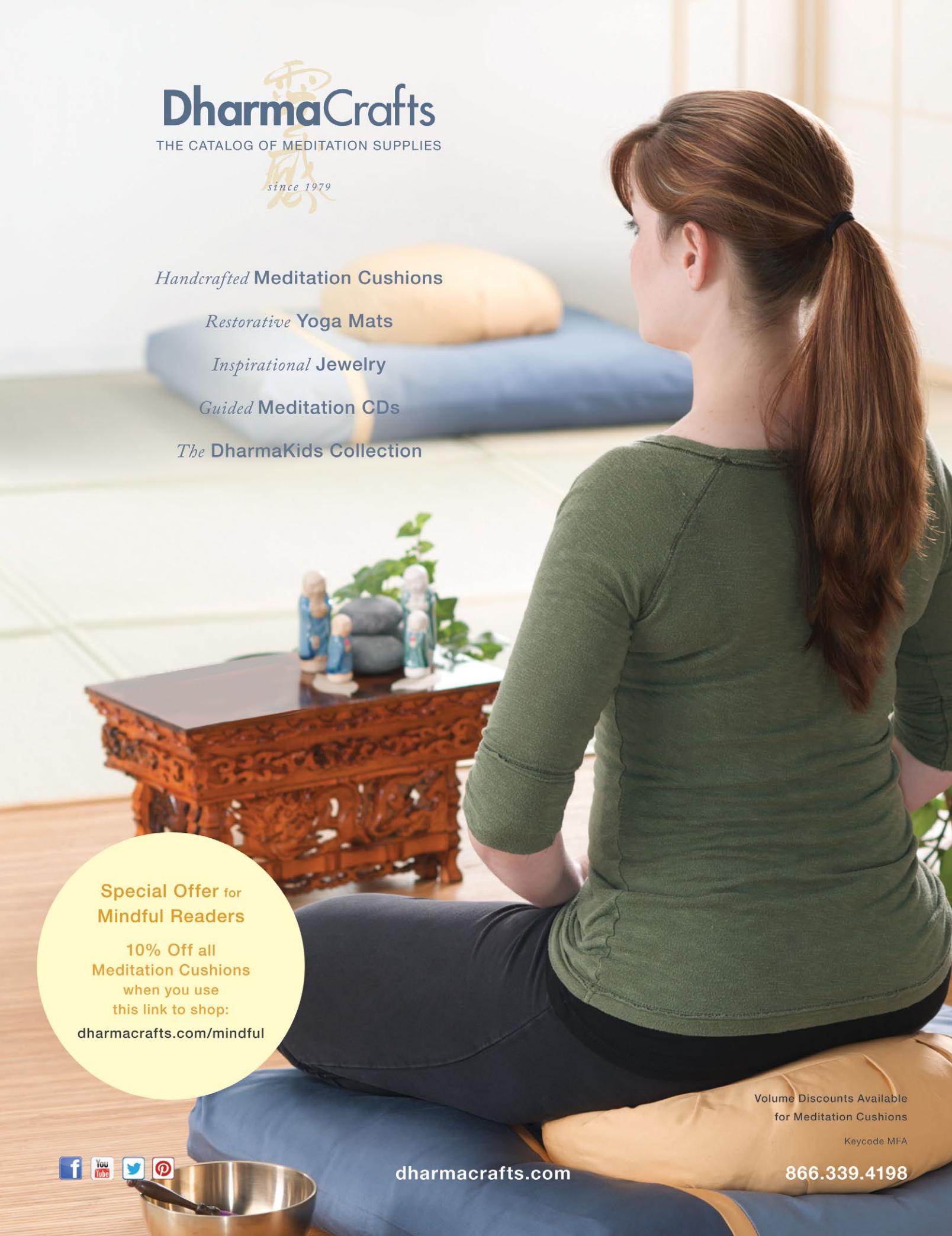
Of the many entries under the heading "life is not fair," surely one of the most egregious is the "what is beautiful is good" stereotype. One of our strongest cognitive biases, it makes us ascribe to physically attractive people a formidable array of positive traits. According to studies going back 40 years, we assume that attractive adults are more competent, better adjusted, powerful, mentally healthy, intelligent, and more socially skilled than less attractive ones.

This "what is beautiful is good" stereotype manifests in a slew of real-life situations and is by no means a one-study wonder: it has been documented in piles of research. Taken as a whole, the studies show that this is one of the more robust cognitive biases operating in the human mind. It may also be one of the oldest. The Greek poet Sappho is credited with first asserting, 2,600 years ago, that "what is beautiful is good," while in 1882 the German romantic poet Friedrich Schiller wrote that "physical beauty is the sign of an interior beauty, a spiritual and moral beauty."

To conduct studies of attractiveness bias, researchers don't try to solve the culturally laden mystery of why people in particular cultures find some faces "attractive" and others not. Their assumption is simply that in any given time and place, some faces are generally deemed beautiful, others are regarded as so-so, and still others as decidedly unattractive.

To probe whether people associate physical attractiveness with positive →

Illustration by Malin Rosenqvist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traits, they determine which faces those in a particular study—urban, educated Westerners living in the early 21st century, say, or rural-dwelling Japanese in the late 20th century—will find attractive. To do that, they ask a panel of adults from the same demographic to score faces—science's version of "who's hot and who's not."

Once people have decided that an individual is attractive, the mental gates are thrown open to a plethora of beliefs and assumptions. In a groundbreaking 1972 study, people guessed that attractive strangers possessed a range of desirable personality traits, venturing that they were probably sincere, honest, altruistic, exciting, genuine, warm, sociable, kind, and more. The subjects also expected the attractive strangers' lives to be happier and more successful than those of less attractive strangers.

In studies where participants did not know they were part of a research project, people were more willing to help an attractive person than a homely one mail a university application and donated more to attractive people who had an emergency. Subsequent studies have found that we even give attractive people more room on sidewalks, are less likely to ask them for identification when they want to purchase alcohol, and, in mock rape trials, are less likely to judge them guilty. In real life, attractive defendants get more lenient sentences, according to studies going back to the 1980s.

Something more than cultural learning is going on here, since even babies manifest a version of the beautiful-is-good stereotype. In one classic study, researchers led by psychologist Judith Langlois of the University of Texas at Austin showed one-year-olds a cartoon in which a ball trying to climb a hill is helped or hindered by a square. Just outside the frame of the cartoon were two photos of faces, one beautiful and one not. When the square was helpful, the little kids' eyes shot to the pretty face. When the square blocked the ball, they looked at the ugly face, apparently associating positive events with attractive people and negative ones with unattractive ones.

Why do our minds work this way? One clue is that babies as young as two months old prefer to look at attractive faces, found Langlois. At that age, children haven't had much opportunity to absorb their culture's aesthetic ideals; it's probably safe to say they haven't been exposed to *America's Next Top Model* yet. Instead, the preference might reflect something about the mind's information-processing machinery: that the mind prefers objects that require the least processing effort by the visual regions of the brain.

Studies have found that people are more willing to help attractive people and even give them more room on sidewalks. Attractive defendants are less likely to be convicted, and when they are, they get more lenient sentences.

And attractive faces are easy on the brain. Both preschoolers and adults can identify an attractive face—that is, they can tell that it is indeed a face and not, say, a plate of fruit—more quickly than they can correctly categorize ugly faces. When Langlois displayed faces that had been manipulated by a computer to be unattractive, adults and kids both took a few fractions of a second longer to recognize the unattractive faces as faces than to do so for attractive ones.

This lends support to the idea that processing homely faces requires more cognitive resources than processing pretty ones, but Langlois and her colleagues then got even stronger evidence: when they measured the electrical activity in the brains of adults and four-month-olds, they found higher activity when the participants looked at unattractive faces. It is a rule of thumb in neuroscience that higher brain activity during a task is a marker of more effort being expended.

If beautiful faces take fewer cognitive resources to process, as this research suggests, that may lay the foundation for the beautiful-is-good effect. "When something is good in one measure," says psychologist Lihi Segal-Caspi of Israel's Open University, "we attribute other good traits to it."

Oddly, research on the beautiful-is-good stereotype hadn't gotten around to asking if it's accurate. Maybe beautiful people truly are kinder, more sociable, conscientious, and all the rest? One could imagine that being beautiful in a society that values beauty might give you the self-confidence to be sociable and open to novel experiences, as well as the positive life experiences to be conscientious.

To probe how well the positive traits we ascribe to beautiful people correspond to reality, scientists in Israel ran a study in which they recruited 118 female college students to play "targets" and 118 students (of both sexes) to be "judges." Each target entered a room, walked around a table, and read a weather forecast. Each judge watched a videotape of this and then evaluated the target's attractiveness and guessed her personality traits.

Women rated as attractive "were perceived as having more socially desirable personality traits, such as being agreeable, extroverted, open to experience, and conscientious," said Segal-Caspi, who led the study. Score another for the what-is-beautiful-is-good stereotype.

But were the judges correct? No. When the researchers compared the targets' actual (self-reported) traits to judges' guesses about them, it was one big mismatch, the researchers reported last year in the journal *Psychological Science*. Attractive women were no more likely to have desirable personality traits, though the judges believed they did. "Attractive and less attractive women didn't differ in their personality traits," says Segal-Caspi.

We may not be able to stop our minds from making the illogical beautiful = good leap, but being aware of this deeply ingrained habit of thought can be the first step in reining it in. This isn't just about fairness; it's also about not being snookered—by the attractive used-car dealer steering us toward a lemon or the gorgeous saleswoman on the verge of saddling us with a four-figure pair of sunglasses. Knowing about the mind's cognitive biases gives us a chance to override them. ●

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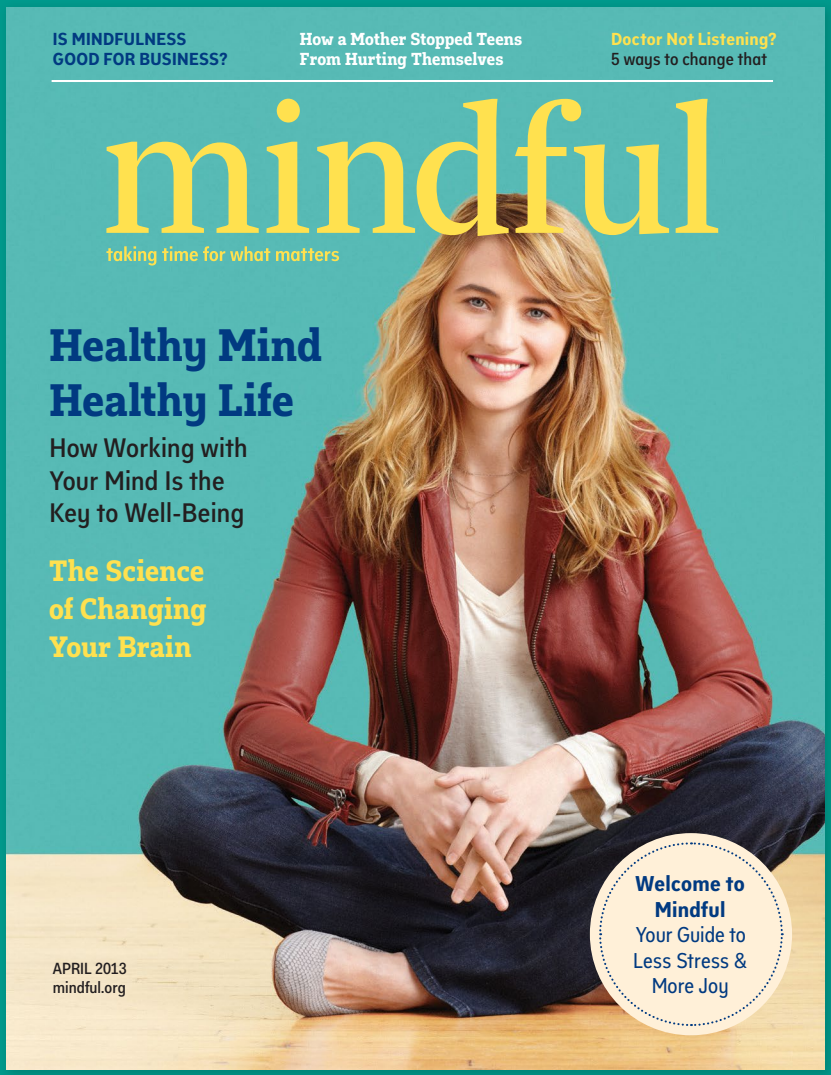

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A user's guide to living well in screenworld

Rich Fernandez of Google sits down with Arturo Bejar, director of engineering at Facebook, and Irene Au, vice president of product and design at Udacity.

The topic? Making digital communication work for us, not the other way around.

Illustrations by Andrew Bannecker

Digital technology is woven into nearly every aspect of our lives—how we work, how we play, how we raise and educate our children. It brings great opportunities for us to communicate and connect with each other, and it also raises challenges.

Technology is something that we must learn to master, rather than letting it master us. By applying mindfulness, care, and attention in how we work with our devices and screens, we can avoid a state of "continuous partial attention" and disconnection from our own lived experience, our bodies, and the people around us.

For a few years now, a number of people in the tech world have been incorporating mindfulness into both their personal and professional lives. Irene Au and Arturo Bejar are two leaders in the field with whom I've had the pleasure to work and practice mindfulness. We talk about getting the best from our technologies while remaining mindful in the midst of busy lives.

—Rich Fernandez

If my attention is fully focused on the morning rituals—getting dressed, having breakfast—that grounds me and recharges me. If I wake up and check my email right away, my attention is divided and the day gets started on the wrong foot.

Arturo Bejar

Rich Fernandez: Digital technology has made many good things possible. Skype is connecting families over long distances, social media is creating widely distributed communities of interest, and the information flow is freer and more empowering, as we witnessed during the Arab Spring. At the same time, digital technology can disconnect us from ourselves and each other, as we spend time experiencing our world through screens. So how do we use this technology to maximize its benefits and minimize its negative effects?

Irene Au: Technology is here—in multiple forms—and it's not going away. It has contributed to our quality of life tremendously, but like anything new we need to incorporate it in a way that doesn't disrupt our quality of life. This requires our mindful attention and making conscious choices about when, where, and how to use our devices.

For me, there are times that are sacred, so to speak. In yoga class, I don't expect anyone to be texting or answering the phone. When my family is having dinner together, there are no phones or video games or iPads at the table.

If you stop and think about it, it's just a matter of applying to the new technology the same basic principles about how people should spend time together. For example, if family dinner is a sacred time, a time for interaction, it's not appropriate for the children to bring a book or toys to the table, or for me to be reading a newspaper. It's about more than the new technology. It's about understanding our intention in that moment and respecting that intention.

Arturo Bejar: We need to make it a practice to continually be aware of our relationship to technology and the place it holds in our lives. Then we can use it consciously, rather than automatically. This has always been true when a new communication technology emerges. We go through a process of learning how it can connect us to our loved ones and help us manage our lives, and how it can distract us.

No one exerts overall control over how technology is used and what habits people will develop. There's a big element of personal responsibility. Being aware of how you use the technology will allow you to make conscious choices so your relationship with your devices is what you would like it to be.

RF: In some ways, it's seems like these tools are intentionally designed to capture our attention, more than technologies prior to the digital explosion. Our devices reward us and set off our brain chemistry in ways that keep us coming back.

IA: I'm not sure I completely buy that. TV shows have always been designed to keep our attention riveted. Novels are written to keep you absorbed. With the internet, though, you're more in control of what →

Take Control of Your Tech Habits

Commonsense strategies for keeping digital devices from ruling your life

Information overload

CHALLENGE
A flood of data, info, news, gossip, messages, humor, and requests can overwhelm us and make us spend more time online than we want.

STRATEGIES
In the information blizzard, it's not possible to keep up. Accept that. Choose your sources wisely, budget the time you spend there, and when you feel your mind tiring, move on.

Constant distraction

CHALLENGE
You're so caught up in checking and responding to email messages, texts, and phone calls that you have too little focused quiet time.

STRATEGIES
Come back to your body, to doing one thing at a time and knowing why you're doing it. Plan times and situations when you connect and times to unplug. Stick with the plan.

Friends, partners stuck on their devices

CHALLENGE
The people you want to spend time with are too busy spending time with people who aren't there.

STRATEGIES
It may seem petty, but it's essential to agree on when it's acceptable for each of you to be on your devices and when it's not. And with partners, it's key to have times when you're unplugged together.

Social media anxiety

CHALLENGE
The number of connections becomes more than you can manage and the friendships can get awkward.

STRATEGIES
It's so easy to say yes in social media. You might be left out, and a rising friend count can make you feel more connected, but just saying no can add space to your life.

Children spending too much time staring at screens

CHALLENGE
You can never get your children's attention because they're always absorbed in texting, social media, or web surfing.

STRATEGIES
Accept your children's digital life, take a strong interest in it, talk about it. Then, it's a shared thing. You're also in a better position to impose limits to screen time and social media habits, if you need to.

you're consuming, so you can be a more interactive participant. Maybe that's part of the addiction you're talking about. Why wouldn't you want to be engaged in something where you have more control?

RF: In social interactions, we have less control over where things will go, so perhaps we're tempted sometimes to withdraw into a space where we can exert more control over what we're taking in.

AB: I don't think most technologies we use today are like junk food, designed to make us come back for more. It's not the intention of designers to create something that people will do all the time to the exclusion of other things they need and want to do.

At Facebook, our aim is to connect people with each other over distance and time. Of course, people choose how they engage with that, just as they do in any sphere. Each of us makes our own choices and takes responsibility for them. I can choose to put the phone down because I've learned it's important for me to be present in the circumstances in my life. I can choose not to be thinking about something else when I'm having a conversation with my daughter.

I'm grateful for technology's ability to keep me in touch with my loved ones. I love it when I get a text message that lights up my day. And when I'm with my family, I also appreciate having time when I interact directly. It's great to have both.

RF: So setting clear intentions about how we use these compelling technologies is important to our quality of life, because while they may not be specifically *designed* to distract us, it's easy for us to let them do that.

We worked out a protocol. I pledged not to get offended when he picked up the phone, and he agreed not to let the phone make him forget I was there.

Irene Au

IA: Yes, but I don't think it helps to be Draconian about it. You need to negotiate the space you share. My husband has a job in which lots of people rely on him to be available 24/7. When we first got together, I could have taken offense at his lack of attention, but I realized it wasn't about me. It was about the job, and we had chosen that kind of life. So we worked out a protocol. I pledged not to get offended when he picked up the phone, and he agreed not to let the phone make him forget I was there. It could be as simple as saying, "Excuse me for a moment please."

It's also important for us to have times when we truly unplug. We do that on vacation and when we go on yoga retreats. That's one of the rules there, and we happily follow it.

AB: I recognize key times when it's important for me to pay attention. It's important not to check email first thing in the morning. If my attention is fully focused on the morning rituals—getting dressed, having breakfast, helping get the day started—that grounds me and recharges me. I start the day with my feet on the ground. If I wake up and check my email right away, my attention is divided and the day gets started on the wrong foot.

RF: It sounds like a real practice for you. Are there specific situations where you've found that more awareness has changed the way you use digital technology?

AB: If I get an email, particularly an important one, it's best to be in a position where I can give it my full attention. That's why I strive not to check email in situations where I won't be able to respond effectively. It makes no sense to be checking emails while I'm pumping gas.

I've been working on arranging my day so that I have times I dedicate to email and times when I just don't do it. I've increased the transition times between different parts of my day—especially between meetings—so I have a space to check and respond to messages. It's a real practice to carve out dedicated time, but it pays off. When I had back-to-back meetings and I would pick up the phone in the middle of one of them, or check my email just before I got home, it put a strain on what I did next. Now I give myself 10 minutes to check and respond to the one or two pressing things, and then I arrive in the next place better able to pay attention.

RF: You plan your day at that level of detail?

AB: Absolutely. If you want to minimize disruption, telling yourself to stop is probably not enough. Planning is key. First, observe the relationship you have with a technology, and then tweak the structure of your day to increase your focus and minimize the distraction. →

Read/Watch/Click

Resources for getting the most out of technology

Cognitive Surplus: Creativity and Generosity in a Connected Age by Clay Shirky

Net Smart: How to Thrive Online by Howard Rheingold

The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains by Nicholas Carr

The Huffington Post Complete Guide to Blogging by the editors of *The Huffington Post*

Connected, But Alone? Ted Talk with Sherry Turkle, author of *Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other*

For information on Internet issues, attitudes, and trends, visit the Pew Internet & American Life Project pewinternet.org

For conversations on mindfulness and technology, visit the Wisdom 2.0 conference archives wisdom2summit.com/videos

For information on how to use social media platforms, Mashable.com publishes Facebook and Twitter guidebooks with how-tos, tips, and instructions:
mashable.com/guidebook/twitter
mashable.com/guidebook/facebook

For more resources on technology, go to mindful.org/technology

RF: Even if we do all that, though, the intense absorption we bring to our screens can mean we're not paying enough attention to our bodies.

IA: I have become the poster child for bringing the body back into work. It's really important. I've had a standing desk for years and I'm also a proponent of walking meetings, because there is a strong correlation between cognition and movement. We're more creative when we move.

When my designers are presenting mockups here at Udacity, we could just project the screens on the wall and sit around and talk about them. Instead, we tape printouts of the screens on the wall, and ask everyone to stand up and come look at them. When people are more actively engaged, when they get their body involved, it sparks a different kind of brain activity.

A lot of research has shown that you build relationships differently with someone you're walking with than with someone you're sitting beside in a conference room, particularly if you're both looking at a screen. Out walking, you're exploring the world together, encountering new experiences together. I've worked in some walking wastelands in Silicon Valley—no sidewalk, no scenery—so sometimes we would just do some laps around a local department store to get the blood moving.

RF: Both of you have children. There has been lots of discussion about whether children spend too much time looking at screens and engaging in social media in unhealthy ways. What are your thoughts?

AB: I don't think having a good childhood and spending time on screens is mutually exclusive. I spent a fair amount of time on screens as a child, and for the most part I think I turned out okay.

Parents have always needed to take a strong interest in what their children are doing, and the same applies here. If their digital world is a strange black box to you, you can't be very helpful.

Arturo Bejar

We need to get up from our desks and move. There is a strong correlation between cognition and movement. We're more creative when we move.

Irene Au

IA: These are the technologies we use to run our world these days. There is not much point, in my view, in going Luddite around your home. You miss an opportunity to model for your children good habits of using technology in ways that enrich our lives.

AB: Whatever I've learned about being a parent generally, I try to apply when it comes to technology. Children and teenagers are not going to make a big dividing line between social interaction digitally and in person, as some of their parents might. Part of their life is being played out in a digital realm. For us to understand and support them, we need to embrace that and try to see from their perspective. Just because something seems unnatural to us, it doesn't mean it's unnatural to our kids. Norms change.

Based on that attitude, we can apply our values and guidelines as we would in any other sphere. You tell your children not to talk to strangers. When you have a digital device that makes communication with strangers possible, the rule still stands. Don't make friends with people to whom you haven't been properly introduced by someone you know and trust.

IA: My children, who are 8 and 11, approach technology with a sense of moderation. That's partly because I have set limits for them ever since they started going online. They're allowed no more than 30 minutes a day on the computer, with extra time if they're doing something educational.

Another thing we've done is to put the computer the kids use in a space that's shared with the rest of the family. We want to be able to glance over and see what they're seeing, and some cool things have happened as a result. If we're videoconferencing with my nephew, we all gather around. If there's an interesting video that my husband has seen, we'll all enjoy it together. It's become a social device—a way to bring everybody together rather than to alienate people from each other.

AB: We need to be mindful of the problems that can occur online, but the solution isn't to ban the technology that kids use to connect with each other. Bullying online can have the same dynamics as bullying in person. We need to help our children understand how not to be hurtful, even unintentionally, and how to deal with it when other people are doing the hurting. We can help our children understand that disagreements don't get resolved easily at a distance. It helps to see and hear each other, so don't try to do it by texting.

The mechanisms we use in the world at large need to be mirrored in the online world. Parents have always needed to take a strong interest in what their children are doing, and the same applies here. If their digital world is a strange black box to you, you can't be very helpful.

RF: Both of you put a premium on staying present in whatever you're doing. What about multitasking versus serial processing? Can we effectively multitask from your perspective, or are we better doing just one thing at a time, fully present and fully engaged?

AB: For myself, I've noticed a big shift when I pay attention to being present for whatever it is I'm doing. I seem to see things more clearly. I'm better able to envision what needs to be done and how to do it, support the people I work with, and create something meaningful. It can be hard sometimes to introduce formal mindfulness practices, but I think people start to access mindfulness when they understand how good they feel when they're fully engaged, without distraction. It starts there.

IA: Before I started practicing yoga and mindfulness, my life was unsustainable. So it's been transformational for me. The core mindfulness practices that emerge in our daily life are intention—knowing what you're trying to achieve and what kind of relationship you're trying to have with those around you—and presence—attending to what needs to be done, now. That includes watching your own reaction if something feels threatening, taking a moment to understand where that's coming from, and noticing what's going on in your body. That's really bringing yoga practice off the mat and into what we're doing wherever we are.

My daughter said they did a mindfulness practice at school for five minutes the other day, and she could see a difference in herself and in how the other children behaved. I think the importance of paying attention to where we are is seeping into our culture, and it's going to change how we do things.

parenting with presence

*Reporter **Susan Freinkel** follows two expectant couples from their first class in mindfulness-based childbirth to the blessed (not to mention painful) event. They learn things on their journey to parenthood that can help us all navigate life's transitions.*

Photographs by Michael O'Neal and Christine Alicino

"This isn't your usual childbirth-preparation class," Nancy Bardacke announced to the 23 expectant mothers and fathers seated in a circle on a late September evening in San Francisco. Bardacke won't be showing birth videos or demonstrating how to diaper a baby. During this first session of her Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting course she hardly talked about labor at all. Her lesson began with a raisin.

"You've all seen a raisin before, but you've never seen *this* raisin," she said as she passed out samples for the exercise she has long used to introduce her students to mindfulness. "One of the first practices we learn is beginner's mind—to see things anew." To see, in fact, the way a newborn would—without judgments or preconceptions. Examine the raisin closely, she urged, use all your senses to take it in. People squinted at the raisin in their palm, rolled it between their fingers, held it close to their noses to inhale its sweet, musky aroma.

The class has drawn a diverse group of parents-to-be, and some are more at ease with this encounter with the raisin than others. There are strait-laced lawyers, right-brain scientists, a mortgage broker, and a free-spirited couple who sell their own brew of *kombucha*. Some are planning conventional hospital births attended by obstetricians; others are →

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEAL

Kateryna Rakowsky, a mother in Nancy Bardacke's Mindful Birthing program, cradles her daughter, Taia Wetmore.

going a more alternative route, with doulas or midwives or even home births. Some have years of meditation under their belts, while others are utterly baffled by instructions to pay attention to their breathing and notice the quality of their thoughts. "I don't know what I'm supposed to be doing," one of the prospective dads complained one night.

Amy and Arnold Wong closed their eyes in deep concentration as they explored their raisins. Amy, petite and blonde, is a life coach with the bubbly, optimistic personality to match. Arnold is quieter and more reserved. Though he has done less formal meditation training than his wife, as a chef he appreciates the idea of bringing one's attention to food.

While everyone else in the class are first-time parents, the Wongs already have one child, now 4, who is a daily reminder of children's effortless ability to be in the moment. Their son's birth was stressful, sterile, and filled with interventions that Amy never questioned until after the fact. Like the epidural that hit a nerve, causing searing back pain "that was so consuming I couldn't breathe to push." By the end, she recalled, "I was so delirious, I don't even remember him coming out." To avoid a repeat of that experience, they are hoping to deliver at home with a midwife. This time around, Amy wants to be fully present, as sharply aware of what is happening as she is of the tang of the raisin on her tongue.

Across the room, Ariana Mohit and Zed Bates seemed flummoxed by Bardacke's directions. Zed, a quality auditor, grew up in a hippie household and has little patience for what he calls "new-agey stuff." Fidgety and anxious by nature, all he really wants is the nuts and bolts on labor to quell his worries. But Ariana, a lawyer, signed them up for this class precisely because she wanted more than the basic facts. She's thinking about parenthood and is worried her impatience, high expectations, and Type A penchant for control could be a problem in raising a child.

"I want to bring some calm and acceptance to my parenting style," she explains. If tonight is any indication, the course will prove to be a challenge. Zed popped his raisins into his mouth immediately without any scrutiny, while Ariana lost one and after minutes of frantically searching, quickly looked at the other and then handed it to her husband. She never liked raisins and didn't want to eat it.

Nancy Bardacke doesn't care whether people love or loathe raisins. The point of the exercise was to raise their sense of awareness. She wanted them to experience the raisin simply with their senses, without preconceptions or judgment. "Mindfulness is being in the moment," she said. "And guess what? That's where childbirth is!"

Over the next nine weeks, Bardacke would be teaching them a variety of ways to cultivate that kind of awareness, including meditation techniques, a body scan (a head-to-toe check-in with oneself), and basic yoga poses. But the core practice would always be the simple yet powerful action of paying attention to the breath. Following it would keep these parents-to-be moored in their bodies and provide an anchor to the present.

"Whatever is going on, the instruction is always the same," she would say. "Be with it and just breathe."

Bardacke has been leading expectant parents through these kinds of exercises since 1998. At 70 she moves with the energy and ease of someone much younger. She has a gentle voice, stylishly cut short grey hair, and the nurturing if slightly noodgy air of a Jewish grandmother (which she is). She was already a longtime meditator and nurse-midwife when she attended a workshop led by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who pioneered the use of mindfulness meditation for patients suffering stress and chronic pain. Listening to him, Bardacke had one of those electrifying life-altering moments when she realized that she could combine her life's two passions: meditation and midwifery. She spent several years learning Kabat-Zinn's curriculum and tweaking it to address the specific needs of expectant parents.

Tonight marks the start of Bardacke's 69th course, and it will be one of her last. She's begun training Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting (MBCP) instructors in San Francisco and

Nancy Bardacke, founding director of the Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting program, currently offered at the University of California–San Francisco's Osher Center for Integrative Medicine. The program has attracted the attention of other professionals working with childbirth and parenting who are looking for innovative ways to counteract the persistent medicalization of birth.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL O'NEAL

Bardacke leads her class through some exercises on the yoga mat. She says mindfulness practice can make all the difference in managing the emotional stresses and uncertainties of pregnancy and the sudden plunge into parenthood.

elsewhere. Her recently published book, *Mindful Birthing: Training the Mind, Body, and Heart for Childbirth and Beyond*, makes it possible for people who can't take the course to do the program on their own at home. It has also attracted the attention of other professionals working with childbirth and parenting who are looking for innovative ways to counteract the persistent medicalization of birth and help parents-to-be make a deep human connection to what they're going through.

Pregnancy offers an ideal time to begin practicing mindfulness. Bardacke says it can make all the difference in managing the emotional stresses and uncertainties of pregnancy, the physical pain of childbirth, and the sudden plunge into parenthood. "It's the best tool I know," she says, for navigating enormous life transitions. Her confidence is grounded not only in the anecdotal experiences of more than 1,000 parents who've taken her course but also in a growing body of scientific research.

Decades of studies document the harmful effects of stress on expectant women and newborns. Pregnant women who suffer high levels of stress are more prone to having miscarriages, preterm births, and C-sections. They're more apt to deliver babies with lower birth weights, smaller head circumferences, and lower Apgar scores (which is an assessment performed on newborns based on their appearance, pulse, grimace, activity and respiration). The effects on fetuses are far-reaching, possibly affecting their motor skills and cognitive, social, and emotional development. In one example, Canadian researchers following children born to women who were pregnant during a disastrous ice storm found that those whose mothers were most traumatized by the event had lower IQs and verbal abilities at age five than children whose mothers were less stressed out by the emergency. Stress is also a contributor in child abuse and neglect.

The research shows that mindfulness meditation can effectively reduce stress and its harmful effects. There is also increasing evidence that it can help alleviate intense pain and reduce anxiety and recurrent depression. All can be issues in pregnancy and parenting that ultimately affect a child's well-being. (It's estimated that 7% to 12% of new mothers suffer postpartum depression.)

The two small studies that have looked directly at the use of mindfulness for pregnancy and childbirth—one coauthored by Bardacke—found it helped relieve expectant mothers' anxiety and negative feelings. Given that evidence, says Larissa Duncan, a researcher at the University of California–San →

Some of the families who took part in the Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting program in the fall of 2012, from left: Ross, Abby and baby Samuel Harold Davisson; Rana and Aaron Lehmer-Chang with baby Justice Tabriz Lehmer-Chang; Erin Hetrick-Hohenner and Andy Hohenner with baby Éire; Dan Wetmore and Kateryna Rakowsky with baby Taia Wetmore; Mike and Deanna Horner with baby Elaney Ryanne Horner.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEAL

Bardacke encourages expectant parents not to get too attached to plans when it comes to their babies.

Francisco, teaching mindfulness to new parents may be a way to shift the entire "developmental trajectory." That's because how much attention parents bring to the critical months just prior to and just after the birth can be a big determinant of the child's future mental and physical health, as well as the family's long-term well-being.

That doesn't mean mindfulness is a guarantee against having complications or ending up with a C-section, as Bardacke is the first to admit. In fact, a notable part of the MBCP program is reminding couples not to get too attached to plans when it comes to their babies. When and how they deliver will often be influenced by factors beyond their control. What they can control is how they deal with the unexpected and how they feel about what happens. As Bardacke likes to say, "Mindfulness does not give you the birth experience you want, but it gives you a way to fall in love with the birth experience you get."

A few weeks into the class, Ariana and Zed found themselves struggling with the very issue of plans and hopes. They wanted to have a home birth—true to form, Ariana felt it would allow her more control. But her doctor decided hospital delivery was necessary because of a medical condition that makes Ariana prone to bleeding. She was devastated by the decision. It took her a few days to pull herself together and realize she could still have a natural birth without interventions. She began looking for a midwife and doula to work with, determined "to find a way to →

Arnold and Amy Wong with their son Aidan and daughter Aila. The couple was worried about repeating the rough experience they had during the birth of their son.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINE ALICINO

make this hospital birth mine." Still, acceptance was hard for her, as she admitted in class one night. "But I'll get over it," she said.

"Don't get over it," Bardacke advised. "Just be with it."

Just being with it can be a tall order when you're pregnant and your whole life feels canted toward the future. As they tape the sonogram pictures to the fridge, furnish the nursery, and make lists of names, expectant parents can't help but think ahead—and that includes fast-forwarding to the inevitable and dreaded pain of childbirth. Fear of that pain, combined with the desire to avoid painkilling drugs, is a major reason most had signed up for Bardacke's class.

That's why she urged them not to miss the class in which she dissects the physiology of labor pains. Standing before a whiteboard, Bardacke asked for words associated with pain. The expectant parents offered a veritable thesaurus of discomfort: tearing, stabbing, burning, throbbing, cramping, searing, pressure, stretching, sharp, aching.

"How many will you feel in childbirth?" Bardacke asked. Her surprising answer: only four—cramping in the early stage, stretching and tightening in the second stage, and burning as the baby's head emerges.

"That's it!" she said with a laugh, perhaps underselling the intensity of those sensations but putting them in perspective nonetheless.

"See ladies," one father-to-be in the class joked, "it's no big deal."

Next, Bardacke drew an oscillating line to represent what happens during contractions. For much of labor, she said, contractions come about five minutes apart and last about 60 seconds each. "That means in one hour you will have exactly 12 minutes of pain. Can you handle 12 minutes of pain? To get your baby? Of course you can."

Pain, she explained, isn't only a sensation in the body. It's also an experience of the emotions and the mind. We anticipate the pain and worry it will never end, and that mental rehashing and rehearsing causes its own, additional suffering. Mindfulness helps you separate the experience in the body from the reaction or overreaction in the mind, Bardacke said, so pain can be experienced simply as intense physical sensations, arising and passing. "That changes the nature of the experience entirely," she said. Mothers might even discover that between the contractions are moments of rest, even pleasure.

Bardacke has faith that this message can profoundly change the way couples see childbirth, and indeed, many left that evening feeling newly

empowered. "I can do *anything* for 12 minutes," said Ariana. Amy felt it helped explain why her last labor was so difficult: She was so involved in remembering the agony of each past contraction, while bracing herself for the next one, that she never gave herself a chance to notice, much less enjoy, the downtime in between. She found Bardacke's lecture so inspiring she repeated it to all her pregnant friends.

Bardacke has a special term for the stressful situations that all people—pregnant or not—encounter daily: "contractions of life." Just as mindfulness can help labor contractions, it can help us deal with those reactive spasms of fear, anxiety, or anger we feel in body and mind when we encounter difficulties such as a traffic jam, a new job, or a tantruming two-year-old. Over the next few weeks, it became clear that many in the class were starting to use their newly learned mindfulness techniques to get through these contractions of life. One needle-phobic woman told the class how she focused on her breath to deal with the very long needles used for amniocentesis. Another told of her realization that tracking time stresses her out. "So I started actively covering my clocks." She tapes an index card over the clock in her car, which helps keep her relaxed when she gets delayed in traffic.

Even Zed, who was still fidgety during the in-class meditations and rarely practiced at home, was seeing some benefits. When traveling for work, he usually grew restless and irritated by how long it would take to get off the plane once it landed. But during a recent trip, he closed his eyes, took some deep breaths, and was able to stay calm.

One late October evening, Bardacke had everyone sit in a circle on the floor. She presented a picnic-sized cooler.

"Is it full of raisins?" one expectant father teased.

Bardacke laughed. "I'd like you to take a nice handful of pain," she said, as her assistant moved around the circle distributing pieces of ice. Bardacke had them hold it for a period of time without doing anything special (but if you've ever tried gripping an ice cube for an extended period of time, you'll know it's no picnic). The room filled with groans. This "pain practice" is the best she can get to inviting contemplation about pain in preparation for labor.

She had them hold the ice a second time while focusing on their breath. The room grew quiet. Many were certain the second time was shorter. To their surprise, Bardacke informed them that both stints lasted 60 seconds.

"Nothing changed except how you were using your minds," she said. Then she had them repeat the exercise several more times trying different techniques to focus, like counting, visualizing a baby, or concentrating on the center of the pain. "There's no one right way. It's finding out what works for you." During one round, Ariana reached out to hold Zed's hand and realized something she hadn't recognized before: touching him was soothing. →

It Takes As Long As It Takes

Childbirth doesn't answer to the clocks that run so much of our lives. And there's a lesson in that for all of us.

For all the scientific research on pregnancy and childbirth, it is still not known what triggers the normal labor process for a particular woman. It can be unsettling to realize that the certainty of a baby's due date is an illusion, so I encourage couples to begin their mindfulness practice by becoming a bit more tentative about their due date, and maybe saying, "We're due sometime at the end of March," or "maybe around mid-April." This is a practice in itself, a way of beginning to live in "don't-know mind" and of getting a bit more comfortable living in the truth of uncertainty about the future.

Looking deeply at due dates is an opportunity to discover that pregnancy and childbirth take place in a kind of time that most of us, unless we tend a garden, are unfamiliar with: the realm of horticultural time. This kind of time is measured in a slower arc than we're accustomed to, a time span that is in harmony with the biology of living things: plants and their seasons, and humans in their life cycles of birth, growth, aging, and death. Whether or not we harvest a beautiful crop of tomatoes from our garden or apples from our apple tree depends on a multitude of causes and conditions—with many of them well beyond our control.

Unfamiliar and perhaps somewhat uncomfortable with this more organic kind of time, we try to put pregnancy, childbirth, and the growth and development of our children in the time frame we're more familiar with: industrial time. This kind of time is based on the clock, with its exact calculations of seconds, minutes, and hours. Living on clock time often means living in the fast lane, which, while it may seem invigorating for a short period, usually feels pretty stressful.

The very existence of your due date can prevent you from seeing pregnancy and birthing as being in harmony with another kind of time frame, because you may see your due date in the same way you view a meeting at work, a scheduled airline flight, or an appointment for a haircut. Because industrial time fosters the illusion of certainty—after all, people do arrive at an appointed time for a meeting, airplanes do arrive on schedule more often than not, and you usually show up for your haircut on time—we may create stress for ourselves by imposing the standards of industrial time on this biological process occurring in our body. Due dates, while undoubtedly helpful, can also encourage you and others around you to worry about the future—when the birth will actually happen, how many hours your labor will take, and so on.

When the body begs to slow down during pregnancy, when we realize we cannot predict the exact date of our birthing, when our baby needs us to be in harmony with his or her rhythms of hunger and sleep and growth and change, we are being asked to slow down and enjoy living in the kind of time that isn't measured in seconds, minutes, and hours.

Adapted from Mindful Birthing: Training the Mind, Body, and Heart for Childbirth and Beyond, *by Nancy Bardacke, CNM, reprinted with permission of HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.*

"At one point I had a catheter, an IV, and an oxygen mask—a most unnatural birth. But my spirits were up."

Ariana Mohit

Over the next few weeks, Bardacke upped the pain-practice ante, culminating in a class where she had the women hold their hands in a bowl of ice water. Arnold pressed his hand into Amy's back and then against her forehead as she leaned over the bowl. She breathed deeply and told herself that the ache wasn't pain for pain's sake, but in service of having a baby. That helped. Arnold knew he could be remote, pulling back into the hard shell he needs for his work, and the class was helping him "to be softer" and more connected in his touch. "That's good," Amy murmured.

Others were shaken by the intensity of the ice water. One mom-to-be leaned into her husband and started weeping as she felt herself losing focus. She knew it wasn't helpful but she couldn't stop herself from thinking, "If I can't handle ice, how am I going to handle a baby?" Ariana and Zed, usually a touchy couple, were standing apart. Bardacke walked by and urged Zed to touch his wife. He shook his head and whispered that Ariana didn't want him to. He had missed the previous class in which they practiced ways the men could support their wives and now he didn't know what Ariana wanted him to do. She was irritated by his cluelessness but didn't want to break her concentration to give him directions. "That was a huge wake-up call," she later said. They began doing the ice practice at home, trying all the techniques Bardacke had taught them. Both felt they finally were forming what Zed called "a partnership to manage pain."

By the last class in late November, the baby bumps had grown into basketball-sized bellies. One couple had delivered early, and others were just weeks away. Bardacke is "not a ritual person," but she likes to end each class with a closing rite. As part of it, she asked participants to come up with one word to summarize what they would take away for the future. People mentioned gratitude, bravery, excitement. Amy and Ariana had started in different places, but they arrived at the same word: choice. Both said they now felt they could choose what kind of experience they would have.

Amy had spent a lot of time preparing for a birth at home but when her labor pains started, it took her a while to see what she really needed. She later described it as having two labors. In the first she thought she wanted family and friends present, but then couldn't help but tend to them. "I'm asking questions like, 'Can I get you something to drink?' and saying, 'I'm sorry it's taking so long.'" After 12 hours, her midwife checked her and found she had barely dilated. Amy burst into tears. "I lost it. I felt embarrassed, stupid, upset." She realized all the guests were an unhelpful distraction and asked everyone to leave. Once she and Arnold were alone, she was able to start focusing on having the baby.

The lessons of mindfulness helped her get through this second labor. She fastened herself to each moment. In contrast to her son's birth, she didn't experience nonstop pain. But she also never experienced the moments of rest Bardacke talked about. So she labored without anything that felt like a break but was able to stay with her breath and avoid looking to the past or the future. Until the very end. For the last 10 or 15 minutes, Amy says, all the mindfulness tools went out the window. "I just did what I had to do to get through it."

Which is actually as mindful as you can get, says Bardacke. The whole point of the program and these

Body awareness is a cornerstone of the Mindfulness-Based Childbirth and Parenting program. Here, Kristin DeMarco and Derek Mansfield share an intimate moment during one of the program's classes.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL O'NEAL

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINE ALICINO

Ariana Mohit and Zed Bates wanted to have their baby at home, but complications forced them to induce labor early and deliver at the hospital.

practices is to prepare people to be present and engaged during the joyful moments that we too often easily miss and the tough moments we push away, which only make them tougher. Labor for Amy was no cakewalk—it is for few—but she says the birth of her daughter "was worlds better" than her son's. It was "a magical, beautiful, sacred experience. It was so full of the joy that was absent before."

If Amy got close to the birth she wanted, Ariana was going to have to find a way to love the birth she got. Her water broke on a Sunday afternoon, and then she spent the rest of the evening and night waiting for contractions that never came. This can be dangerous because the open amniotic sac puts the baby at risk of infection. For two days Ariana waited for her body to go into labor and struggled with her caregivers' escalating pressure for interventions. First, it was checking into the hospital before she'd gone into labor. Then, it was the fetal monitor the nurses insisted she wear. Then it was the drug her midwife wanted her to take to get the labor going. After eight hours of using all her mindfulness skills to get through the intermittent contractions, she was still barely dilated and her midwife feared that if things didn't progress Ariana would have to have a Caesarean. Next, she had to wrap her mind around getting Pitocin, an intravenously administered drug that induces powerful contractions. Which meant a catheter and eventually an epidural for the unnaturally intense pain that "hit like a Mack truck."

At each step Ariana started to resist and then checked her lifelong impulse to dig in her heels. She made herself calmly listen to the rationale for each deviation from the natural birth she wanted and then accept it. "At one point I had a catheter, an IV, and an oxygen mask—a most unnatural birth. But my spirits were up and I felt very accepting." Sixty-three hours after her water broke, she delivered a healthy daughter.

Zed had his own experience with acceptance: he left Ariana's room at one point and ran into another expectant father from the class in the hallway. Like Zed and Ariana, the other couple had wanted to have their baby at home, but complications forced them to induce labor early and deliver at the hospital. She, too, was on Pitocin, facing an epidural, but was at peace with the change of plans. Her husband handed Zed a little clay heart that someone had given them. Across the front was the word "acceptance." When Zed brought it in to share with Ariana, she jokingly said, "I don't want to accept."

"I've given you the heart now," Zed replied. "You have to." ●

tune in
turn on

Can a profoundly deaf musician teach us to listen better? **Katherine Ellison** talks to percussionist Evelyn Glennie, who wants us to wake up to the soundscape that is always around us.

Illustrations by Mariko Jesse

PHOTOGRAPH © JAAK NILSON/SPACES IMAGES/CORBIS

When Evelyn Glennie plays the snare drum, her lithe body sways like an antenna. Her intense concentration is striking even in the ultra-focused world of solo musicians.

But one thing you should know about this Grammy-winning percussionist: she is profoundly deaf.

That doesn't mean she can't hear at all. She can. But she does it differently than you and I do, and her intense focus helps her make sense of the sounds she experiences.

Learning about the way Glennie hears can help any of us become better listeners. While garden-variety courses in listening generally focus on hearing what other people are saying, Glennie asks us to go deeper and broader—to explore how we hear and what we hear. She encourages us to make life more splendid by tuning in to soundscapes we've become accustomed to tuning out.

Glennie began to lose her hearing at the age of 8, and was wearing a hearing aid at 12. Soon she discovered that by taking the gadget off, she would hear less but *feel* more. Ever since, she has practiced the art of "touching sound" with her whole body, a discipline she says has enriched her world.

"My mission is to teach the world to listen," Glennie says.

That raises the inevitable question, though: Don't most of us already know how?

There's listening—most of us do that without even thinking—but then there's "active listening," according to the auditory neuroscientist Seth Horowitz, author of *The Universal Sense: How Hearing Shapes the Mind*. He explains the latter as "throwing extra brainpower at sound." We do this with attention circuits from another part of the brain that translate background noise into consciously integrated information.

That's how attention makes the difference between the sense of hearing and the skill of listening.

In Glennie's case, she expands that skill like few of us do, describing her performance style as "opening up my body as a resonating chamber."

She often plays barefoot, to better feel the stage floor vibrate. Tilting back her head, she lets the sound hit her sensitive neck. As a young girl, she learned to appreciate the mechanics of sound by pressing her palms against the wall of the room where her music teacher was playing timpani. She says she feels the lowest sounds in her legs and feet and the highest ones on her face, neck, and chest. "You can almost reach out to that sound and feel it," she explains. "Sometimes it almost hits your face."

Glennie asks us to explore how and how much we hear, encouraging us to make life more splendid by tuning in to what we've become accustomed to tuning out.

Glennie was born and raised in Aberdeenshire, Scotland, and speaks with a faint brogue. In recent years, she has become an international star, famed as one of the first people in musical history to successfully pursue a full-time career as a solo percussionist. Her celebrity has grown from a 2003 TED talk she gave in Monterey, California, to her 2007 receipt of the title Dame Commander of the British Empire to her live performance at the opening ceremony for the 2012 Olympics in London.

Glennie's fame helps her evangelize for quality listening. In the stirring 2005 documentary *Touch the Sound*, the camera follows her as she plays the drums in a huge empty factory and later in New York's Grand Central Station, where she attracts a spellbound crowd. As the movie shows street scenes, seemingly through Glennie's eyes, it conveys a kind of wonder at the sounds of cars honking in traffic jams, a pigeon flapping its wings, and the crowds of people walking along with earphones on, removed from the auditory magic all around them. →

10x

Hearing is 10 times faster than visual recognition and the only sense still active when we're asleep.

ILLUSTRATION BY MARIKO JESSE / PHOTOGRAPH © ISTOCKPHOTO.COM/ANDREAROAD


whistle
screech
clunk
flutter
CREAK
chirp
whistle
ow
flip flap
eeek
scratch
swish
rustle
rustle
chirp
chirrup
chirp
flick
Squish
SQUEAK
grunt
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GURGLE
plok
pitter patter
Rustle
nibble nibble nibble
CROAK
rustle
ribbit
hisss
scamper

Evelyn Glennie performs at DaDa Fest, Liverpool.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEVE GOUDIE

TOUCH THE SOUND

Documentary
English • 99 minutes

Thomas Riedelsheimer's documentary about the world-renowned percussionist Evelyn Glennie has what you would expect, given the subject matter: gorgeous audio design, especially in footage of Glennie's collaboration with musician Fred Frith. Speaking in her gentle Scottish accent, Glennie helps us understand how she interprets the music in her life. "I want to be open to absolutely everything that comes my way," says Glennie, whose hearing has been impaired since childhood. "The most interesting thing to a musician is the sound journey."

As we observe how she absorbs and makes music, Glennie seems a restless spirit, forever searching through her own personal soundscape—using her body to "hear" sound through the physical sensation of her instruments' vibrations as she plays them. Given her inability to hear in a conventional way, Glennie's talent for music seems like a magic trick. But it's really the simplest thing: she's always listening with everything she's got.

—Carsten Knox

"I see a world where we're drowning in sound," Glennie says. "Even toys are now electronically enhanced, so that they squeak and squawk and beep. There are many layers, and this sound-drenched world is wearing on our patience. To find a place where there is little sound is quite rare. That's pretty worrying. It's almost as if there were food in front of you 24 hours a day, and you couldn't escape it. How would that be? How would you react?"

Seth Horowitz, whose research in comparative and human hearing, balance, and sleep has been funded by the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, and NASA, points out that throughout the day and, to some extent, the night, sound provides us with a steady barrage of information we normally filter out of our consciousness. Too often we only notice it when it signals imminent danger. He views sound as much more than a means of interacting with others. Hearing is our "alarm system"—roughly 10 times faster than visual recognition and the only sense still active when we're asleep.

Horowitz points out that sound affects us even when we're not consciously aware of it. Sound "gets under our conscious radar system" via the most primitive parts of our brain, which is why it's so good at triggering our emotions. In *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*, the renowned neuroscientist Oliver Sacks describes how the brain reacts when we listen to music, stimulating memories and evoking emotions with an immediacy beyond any other sense except smell.

Most of the time, Horowitz explains, our brains act like noise-suppressing headphones, and there's a good reason: they're blocking out an endless stream of potential distractions, most of which we need not heed. In contrast, complete listening requires much more energy and skill—but it's a skill that can be trained.

"I want people to take off their headphones and pay attention to the sounds of their environment," Horowitz says. "If you don't, you get a Twitter version of the world around you."

To that end, Glennie and Horowitz have now teamed up in an ambitious venture called The Just Listen Project, a kind of manifesto about how to make one's way through a sound-saturated world. With producer Brad Lisle, they

aim to produce a series of products, including a 3-D IMAX film combined with live-streaming audio from rain forests and other ecosystems around the world, linked to a new science curriculum for middle and high school students. The film is still in development, but they plan to release it to science museums in 2014.

A former high school teacher, Lisle hopes the project will help get kids excited about science and math, showing them how to explore the world with their ears. One aspect of the project, a collaboration with Purdue University, focuses on "soundscape ecology." Lisle describes this as a new branch of science that goes beyond individual sounds and studies the symphonies that ecosystems produce, such as when frogs and crickets interact.

Attending to sounds in this new way, Lisle says, can involve kids more emotionally in the natural environment. In one part of the IMAX film, audiences listen to the noise of boats passing near a pod of whales off the tip of Cape Cod. In another, they can hear sounds subtly altered by a changing climate, as they attend to the noise emitted from a healthy coral reef off the coast of Fiji, followed by the near silence of a dying one.

Horowitz tells of his own, somewhat less dramatic listening experience during a recent snowstorm near his home in Rhode Island. "I was figuring out the outside temperature by how many ice chunks were hitting the roof of my car," he says. He experienced a period of deafness as a child and attributes some of his fascination with hearing to his own experience of regaining it. He admits he can get lost in sound, like when he's raptly listening to music, but often extracts useful information out of subtle sounds that others might ignore.

Horowitz has diligently trained his ears to be an extra-sensitive alarm system. While driving, he usually listens to the sounds his car is making instead of the radio. After owning a string of "at least partial clunkers," he got into the habit of tuning in closely for sounds that something is wrong. Following the method that old-school mechanics used before the era of computer diagnostics, he hears problems developing long before the little lights go on that signal real expense. He also tunes in to the sound of the printer in his office, alert to a change in the pattern that warns of a future malfunction. →

The Sounds of Silence

Susan Gillis Chapman helps us appreciate the music of everyday life

The most common instruction for mindfulness meditation is to pay attention to your breath. But the breath is not the only thing you can notice when you sit down to meditate. Whether you use a small gong or an app on your phone, ringing a bell is a good way to start and end a meditation session. The sound is not just a timer. It reminds us that mindfulness is about creating space for silence *and* for listening. By letting go of our usual distractions, we make room to appreciate the sounds around us.

Here are three types of sounds to appreciate as you sit in "silence."

1 Background sounds

One of the first things you will notice once the sound of the opening bell fades away is background sounds: traffic noise, the whirring of a ceiling fan, murmuring voices in the hallway. As you notice each one, let go of the habit of naming and judging it and dive into the pure sensation of hearing. In this way, everything you hear is treated as equal—beyond being pleasant or unpleasant.

2 Melodic sounds

Sounds that form a melody tend to arouse emotions, which is what we love about music. When we sit quietly, we will inevitably notice melodic sounds. A chorus of birds greets the dawn. A siren wails in the distance. A pitter-patter of rain softly taps the windowpane. Listening to the rise and fall of these sounds can arouse feelings that don't need to be named or clung to. Melodies can make us feel sadness, joy, or both. Try to find the dividing line between the sound and your emotional response. It's challenging, but listen loosely. If something melodious moves you, stay with it and notice how it affects your body.

3 Abrupt sounds

Sudden, shocking sounds that interrupt us can also bring us back to awareness. Someone sneezes—*achoo!*—and we're back to the now. The sudden arising of a sound can wake you up to the present moment when you've been lulled into habitual thought patterns. When sitting quietly, we're not trying to fall into a trance. Relaxed awareness is the thing, like a deer on the alert for something new.

When the closing bell rings at the end of your session, let the sound relax you. Rest in it for a moment. As the reverberation fades away, let it help you transition into everyday activity. Every moment there are sounds inviting us to listen. Being open to them is just another way to appreciate the world around us and appreciate one another. All the conversations in our life begin here.

Susan Gillis Chapman is the author of *The Five Keys to Mindful Communication*.

Read an excerpt from *The Five Keys to Mindful Communication* at mindful.org/5keys


snap
flap
flap
Vrooom
cough cough
Beep
la la la
Ha
HA
ha
meowwwwwwww
crunch
murmur
mumble
whisperrrrr
hmmm
SLAm!
time to come in!
squeak
swish
SNIP
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
RUSTLE
munch
roll roll
drip
sprinkle
PLOP

Glennie has worked to train her auditory skill in a different way, which she described in a 1993 essay. Sound, she noted, is simply vibrating air. The ear picks up the vibrations and converts them to electrical signals, which are then interpreted by the brain. But hearing isn't the only sense that can perceive those vibrations. Touch can, too. "If you are standing by the road and a large truck goes by, do you hear the vibration or feel it?" she asks. "The answer is both. For some reason we tend to make a distinction between hearing a sound and feeling a vibration. In reality they are the same thing."

The theory is controversial—most audiologists, as Horowitz confirms, would say people hear with their ears, not their feet or necks. Yet he says that so strict a view ignores the fact that you can hear quite well by passing vibration through your skull, which in turn stimulates the inner ear's hair cells. (That's the basis of one type of hearing aid.) There's also a great deal of evidence pointing to the brain's "plastic" adaptation, where one sense is lost and another compensates. Blind people, for instance, often learn to map their environment with sound. As Horowitz explains, "They are building a 3-D world without their eyes. But it's still spatial and what sighted people would think of as 'seeing,' if there were a way to map the blind person's internal map onto their own."

To be sure, whether you end up "hearing" with your ears or your feet, the difference remains on the margins of what Glennie, Horowitz, and Lisle intend when they urge the rest of us to "just listen." What they're really talking about is a deliberate, aware way of going about life that they fear is becoming more rare.

"If you are standing by the road and a large truck goes by, do you hear the vibration or feel it?"

Evelyn Glennie

Frank Diaz, a researcher at the University of Oregon, has studied how meditation can improve our ability to appreciate music. As he described in the January issue of the journal *Psychology of Music*, he tested two groups of students who listened to a 10-minute excerpt from the opera *La Bohème*. The group that engaged in a brief mindfulness exercise beforehand found that it enhanced their experience.

"If you're a symphony player, you've probably played Beethoven's *Ninth* 10,000 times. Your response is so habituated that you don't get any pleasure out of it anymore," Diaz told the website PsychCentral. In contrast, he said, meditation seems to renew our enjoyment.

Glennie is not a meditator herself. "I'm not the sort of person who separates this out," she says. "I don't want to say to myself that I have to do five minutes of meditation or I'll be in a worse state." But she returns frequently to her belief that most people are becoming less conscious and purposeful in their lives—deficits she feels can be overcome with a thoughtful practice of listening.

She wants people to know that "we do have a choice. We always have a choice. Sound is always all around us, and it's amazing how we control how much we eat, what we see, what we smell, but somehow when it comes to listening, we're bombarded in such a way that it's not the same as with the other senses.

"But we do have a choice. If you were to analyze your day, would you be saying to yourself that this or that sound is totally unnecessary? Was this or that sound like indulging in a piece of chocolate—was it a fast-food sound? Really, I'm just suggesting we can control what we listen to and how we listen."

Brenda Gillian, Glennie's longtime assistant, has seen this kind of focus in action. In December 2010, the two climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in a group that Gillian says included half a dozen disabled people, counting Glennie (who for her part adamantly does not consider herself disabled). The goal was to raise £10,000 (about US$15,400) for Able Child Africa, a London-based charity for disabled children.

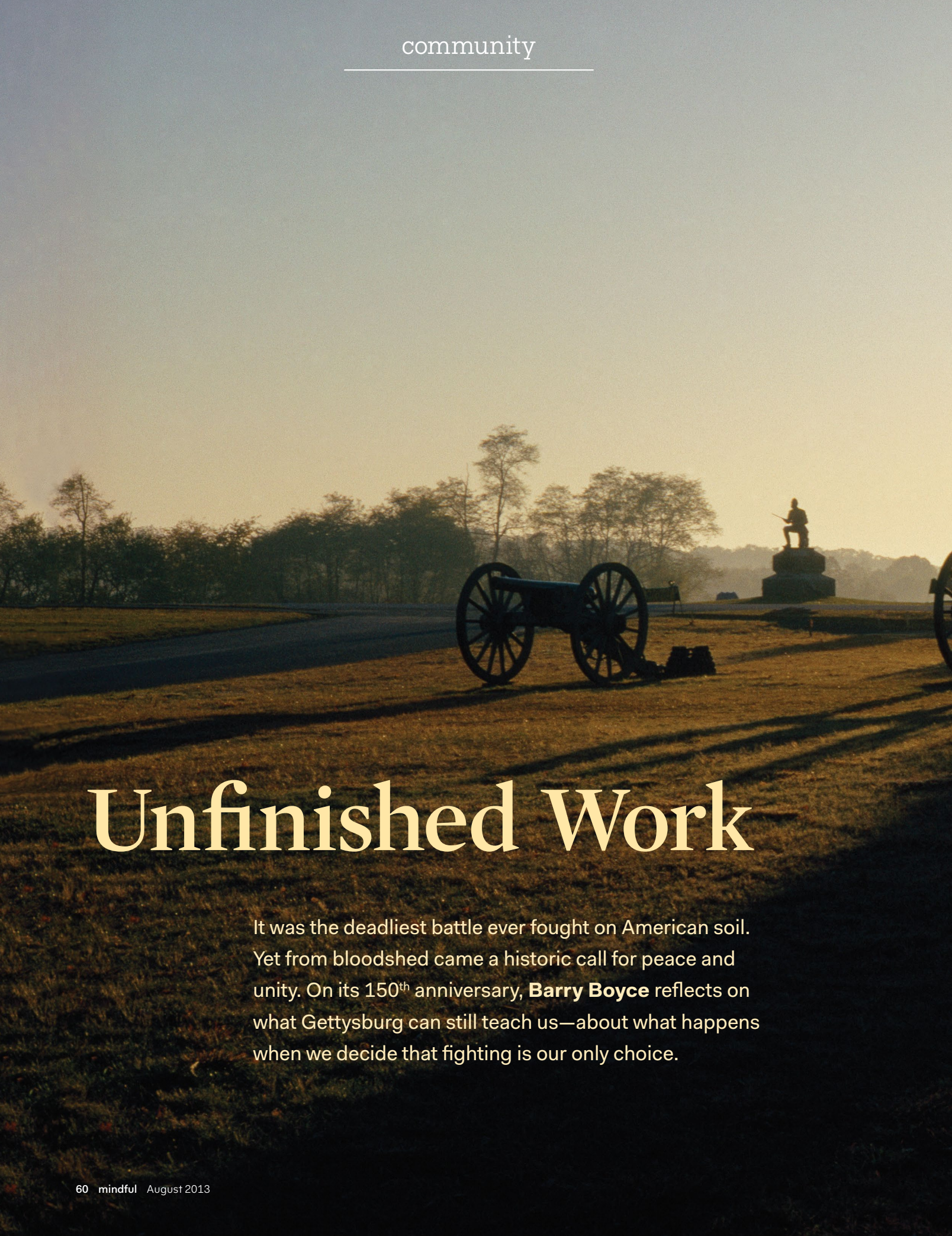
During the six-day climb, Gillian recalls, the temperature dropped precipitously, from 95 degrees to 13 below. The hikers slept inside small, cramped nylon tents that often had layers of ice covering them.

Gillian already knew that Glennie was an unusually driven person but marveled at her determination—and concentration. As they hiked up the mountain, Glennie kept her eyes on the path, politely ignored chitchat, and saved her breath to get to the top. "She's disciplined in a way I don't see in normally hearing people," Gillian says. "She'll just focus and get the job done." ●

50k

All 50,000 vertebrate animals can hear, but not all, such as cave fish, can see.

Katherine Ellison is the author, most recently, of *Buzz: A Year of Paying Attention*. See more of her work at katherineellison.com.



Unfinished Work

It was the deadliest battle ever fought on American soil. Yet from bloodshed came a historic call for peace and unity. On its 150th anniversary, **Barry Boyce** reflects on what Gettysburg can still teach us—about what happens when we decide that fighting is our only choice.

PHOTOGRAPH © ROBERT S. PATTON/NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC STOCK

When I was a boy, the battlefield at Gettysburg was a playground to me. We lived over the mountain from this famous hallowed ground, and my friends and I went there to play war, as boys are wont to do. We wore pretend uniforms of blue and gray. We climbed over and around the rocks at Devil's Den, pretending to be sharpshooters. We clambered bravely and valiantly up the slopes of Little Round Top, huffing and puffing and spewing out bloodcurdling cries. We re-enacted Pickett's Charge and came to an untimely end in the Peach Orchard and the Wheatfield.

We didn't think of the place by its official name, The Gettysburg National Military Park, a carefully tended monument to the bloodiest three days in American history. More than 160,000 soldiers battled there from July 1 to 3, 1863, and almost a third of them were killed, wounded, or missing over those three days. Gettysburg would turn out to be the climax of four years of national bloodletting, resulting in an estimated 750,000 dead, mostly young men and boys—a generation depleted and demoralized. A deep wound. At Gettysburg, you feel it up close.

Our war was different. When we fell in battle, we did so with silent-movie histrionics. But soon we would rise again, uttering the magic formula, "I'm a new man." Then, it was time for lunch. →

PHOTOGRAPH © BRUCE LEIGHTY/PHOTOLIBRARY/GETTY IMAGES

"It is for us the living... to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced."

Abraham Lincoln

A boy's view of war is a fool's view of war. Perhaps that's why in America and in countless countries across the world, we send mothers' sons (and now daughters), still baby faced, to killing fields to settle our scores and reconcile our differences. We deploy the logic of boys playing at war.

But real war is for keeps.

Of those who survive, many are physically or mentally disfigured. In America today, 22 veterans a day commit suicide. The families and communities the combatants come from are devastated; cities and towns in the way of battle are transformed beyond recognition; Predator drones and pipe bombs maim and kill in sudden indiscriminate bursts. This is the terrible cost of conflict by violent means. And yet the cost is so easy to forget when anger takes hold.

As I grew older, I stopped going to the battlefield to play at war. Sometimes in high school and college a group of us would go there at night and drink and carouse in the big open spaces, drawn by the eeriness of the landscape but oblivious to its sanctity. Eventually, after my father died and all my siblings had moved away, my mother left the area. My trips to Gettysburg stopped and my memories of the place receded.

Decades later, my mother moved back to live in a nursing home nestled on the side of the mountain just west of Gettysburg, near the spot where General Robert E. Lee set up headquarters just prior to stumbling into the worst fight of his life, the one that would prove his undoing.

I began stopping in Gettysburg on my way to see my mother. In the quiet of the evening I would look over the field where the Confederates charged ceaselessly, senselessly, to their deaths, wave upon wave grinding against the fearsome metal fired at them from Union guns and cannon trained down on them from the gentle incline of the justly named Cemetery Ridge. I walked amid the grave markers at the cemetery dedicated by Abraham Lincoln in his Gettysburg Address.

I started taking my mother with me on excursions to the battlefield, trying to learn more precisely what took place there. The battlefield guides working with the National Park Service gave us the lay of the land on three-hour tours. I read *The Killer Angels*, Michael Shaara's novelistic treatment of the battle. I watched the movie *Gettysburg* and Ken Burns' epic documentary, *The Civil War*, built on first-person accounts. I read the lofty, elegiac prose of Shelby Foote in his account of the battle, *Stars in Their Courses*. I studied Thomas Desjardin's *These Honored Dead: How the Story*

Barry Boyce is the editor-in-chief of *Mindful*.

of Gettysburg Shaped American Memory, which makes clear that not long after horrific events we paper over the rawness with storytelling that makes a tidy package of what was, in truth, a chaotic mess. Our national myths demand it.

I was deeply saddened by what I read, by what I saw.

Now, when I looked on these fields, I saw something that the boy who played war had not seen. I saw death, occurring repeatedly, brutally, and in large numbers. And not by accident or calamity, but systematically, by design. If you know what you're looking at, as you gaze upon this well-preserved open-air museum and linger there, you can see the 8,000 dead and the 4,000 horses rotting alongside them in the midsummer heat. You can understand why Abraham Lincoln was so sad and so mortally exhausted by this war that he would say, "Nothing touches the tired spot."

When Lincoln traveled to Gettysburg four months after the battle, the area was still devastated, a horror show of makeshift graves, dug up from time to time by marauding hogs. The town remained enveloped in the stench of war. It was not a scene that inclined one to think of glory or heroism. And Lincoln did not dwell there in his little three-minute speech. He went deeper. He redefined the country's past, implying that the phrase "all men are created equal" must now include *all*. And he offered an agenda for the future:

> "...It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom..."

As Yale history professor David Blight has written, Lincoln called out to the living, proclaiming that they were (and we are) "compelled to remember, and from the stuff of memory, create a new nation from the wreckage of the old."

It's worth contemplating on the 150th anniversary of the Gettysburg Address what *unfinished work* we still have to do, not just Americans but everybody seeking to find some peace and unity in the wreckage of a divided, chaotic world. It is worth remembering the spirit of those 270 words: that we are equal despite our many differences, and if we cannot resolve those differences except through violent means, we may not long endure. We cannot let our differences make us forget our fundamental equality, that which unites us all. Can real contemplation of the facts of a place like Gettysburg strengthen our resolve to continue this unfinished work?

Forgetting the toll aggression takes is so much easier than remembering it. Aggression can start small, but it escalates. Gettysburg is a still portrait of what that escalation can lead to.

On my visits to Gettysburg over the years, I've encountered many people from many different places. Under the torch of the eternal peace light memorial—inscription: Peace Eternal in a Nation United—a nine-year-old girl tugs at her father's sleeve and asks, "How do you know who wins or loses?" Tour groups in multicolored commemorative T-shirts pour off buses bored and sweaty, dazed, unsure what you're supposed to do for amusement at a battlefield. A middle school history teacher from Hawaii remarks on how much less abstract the war is when you visit the battlefield up close, and "how sad it must have been for these boys to fight and die so far from home, how lonely." A college professor from Maryland muses that the young people he teaches are the same age as the thousands who were mowed down in the field before him. A high school teacher from Massachusetts notes that we "see the thing as a whole now; those young men only saw their little piece of it." After listening to an historian describe Pickett's Charge in detail, an older man pauses, turns away, takes off his Ray-Bans, and wipes his eyes. A black bus driver from Richmond, Virginia, tells me that this is where civil rights in America were born and "the fact that we are one nation instead of just many states was established here. Lincoln knew that was the reward, but he also knew the terrible price that had been paid. You go to Disney World to be entertained. You come to Gettysburg to learn, to stand here and gather a sense of what this nation is."

Visit Gettysburg. If you have children, take them. Don't breeze through. Stay awhile. Camp there. Don't be pulled away by the cheesy commercial distractions of ghost tours and wax museums. Hire one of the guides to give you a tour and show you what transpired. You will be shocked and moved. By all means, let your children appreciate the bravery of those who fought there—it was monumental. But don't let this lesson be lost: we will inevitably dispute—and deeply—with each other, but the results are catastrophic when we ignore how interconnected we are and leave ourselves no means other than aggression to navigate our differences.

Aggression can start small, but it escalates. Gettysburg is a still portrait of what that escalation can lead to.

These are lessons not for American history class alone. Forgetting the toll aggression takes is so much easier than remembering it. It's easier to justify fighting as the solution to our inevitable opposing interests and viewpoints. The ultimate reason to remember Gettysburg is not so much to replay the exploits of the victors and the vanquished. It is to remember, to mourn, how much is lost when we, each of us, choose to fight to the death. ●

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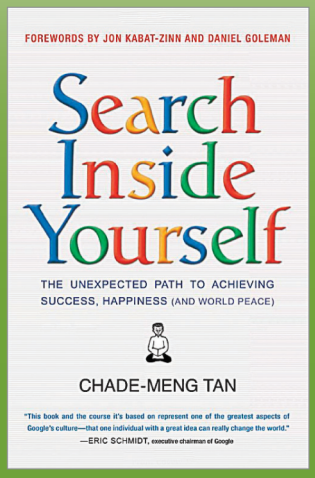

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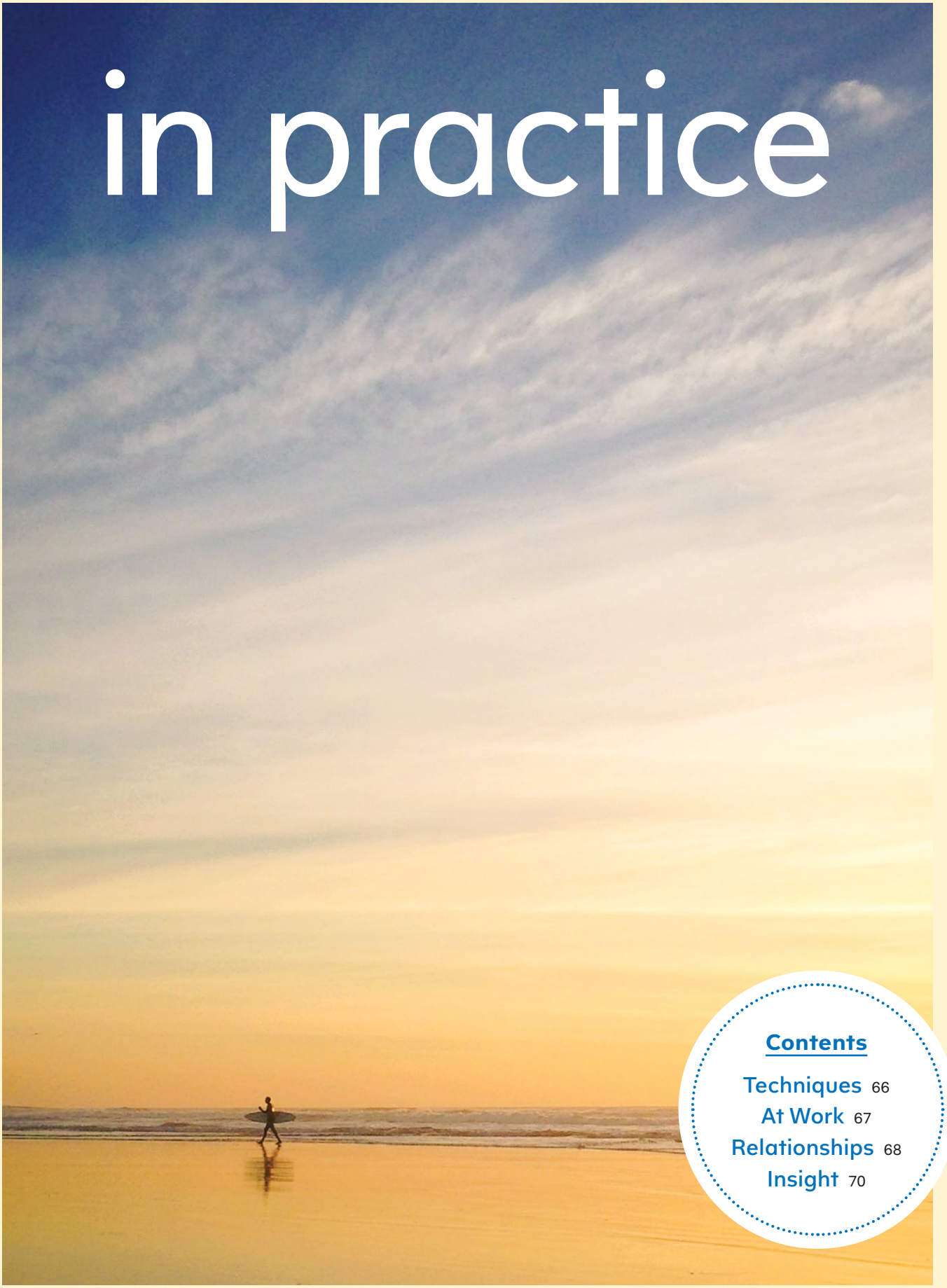

Contents

Photograph by Michael O'Neal

Stressing Out? S.T.O.P.

Time: 1 to 3 minutes

Two-thirds of Americans say they need help for stress. But stress itself is not the problem. It's how we relate to stress.

The stress response is critical to our survival. It can save our lives or enable a firefighter to carry a 300-pound man down 20 flights of stairs. Of course, most of us don't encounter a life-or-death threat all that often. We usually experience stress reactions in response to thoughts, emotions, or physical sensations. If we're actively worried about whether we can put food on the table or get the perfect exam score, presto: the stress reaction activates. And if the bodily systems involved in stress don't slow down and normalize, the effects can be severe. Over time, we can succumb to, among other things, high blood pressure, muscle tension, anxiety, insomnia, gastrodigestive complaints, and a suppressed immune system.

Creating space in the day to stop, come down from the worried mind, and get back into the present moment has been shown to be enormously helpful in mitigating the negative effects of our stress response. When we drop into the present, we're more likely to gain perspective and see that we have the power to regulate our response to pressure.

Here's a short practice you can weave into your day to step into that space between stimulus and response.

Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist and the author of *The Now Effect* and coauthor of *A Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook*.

S **Stop** what you're doing; put things down for a minute.

T **Take a few deep breaths**. If you'd like to extend this, you can take a minute to breathe normally and naturally and follow your breath coming in and out of your nose. You can even say to yourself "in" as you're breathing in and "out" as you're breathing out if that helps with concentration.

O **Observe** your experience just as it is—including thoughts, feelings, and emotions. You can reflect about what is on your mind and also notice that **thoughts** are not facts, and they are not permanent. Notice any **emotions** present and how they're being expressed in the body. Research shows that just naming your emotions can turn the volume down on the fear circuit in the brain and have a calming effect. Then notice your **body**. Are you standing or sitting? How is your posture? Any aches or pains?

P **Proceed** with something that will support you in the moment: talk to a friend, rub your shoulders, have a cup of tea.

Treat this whole exercise as an experiment: Get curious about where there are opportunities in the day for you to just STOP—waking up in the morning, taking a shower, before eating a meal, at a stop light, before sitting down at work and checking email.

You can even use your smartphone's message indicator as a reminder to STOP, cultivating more mindfulness with technology.

What would it be like in the days, weeks, and months ahead if you started stopping more often?

—Elisha Goldstein

For more on mindfulness practice, go to mindful.org/inpractice. To submit questions about techniques, the workplace, or relationships and home life, email inpractice@mindful.org

Figure It Out Together

Two mindful business advisors answer your workplace questions

Scenario

A fantastic employee in a leadership role is pregnant and will be on a 12-week maternity leave. While wanting to retain her and even increase the scope of her leadership, her manager is worried she might leave for good.

Categorize under:

Work–life balance

Advisor

Janice Marturano

We won't get the kind of great leadership our society needs if we only look to the members of the population who don't bear children. So we need more thoughtful dialogue on this topic. Having a child redefines life for mothers *and* fathers, but it doesn't preclude anyone from becoming an excellent leader. There are factors that make the journey a bit different for women, and it's a great first step for managers to recognize that.

First, take some time to prepare for a conversation with your employee, bringing awareness to any stories you may be telling yourself. Why are you worried you might lose her? Are you concerned she won't be as motivated or committed to the organization once she has a baby? Can you meet the organization's needs during her absence and still keep investing in her leadership potential?

Second, invite her to share her thoughts and plans for the future. How does she want her career to unfold? Ask her if she'd like to help develop ways to meet the organization's needs while she's away. Let her know you value her as an employee and share your thoughts about expanding her leadership role. What does *she* think about that?

While this is an immediate concern that needs to be addressed, leadership development is a long journey. If you think this person has potential, an open dialog is your best investment right now.

Janice Marturano, of the Institute for Mindful Leadership, is the author of the forthcoming *Finding the Space to Lead*.

Scenario

A junior member of staff has asked for mentoring. What does this really mean? What does a good mentor do?

Categorize under:

The next generation

Advisor

Michael Carroll

Mentoring is a private relationship between a mature, trusted leader and a talented, motivated protégé. The relationship requires periodic face time, so each party needs to be willing to be available to the other.

It's best if the person being mentored can articulate up front—in writing—what they would like to learn. Mentees should take an active interest from the very start in cultivating the relationship, rather than expecting their mentor always to lead.

Mentors should expect to offer guidance and encouragement on:

Culture: What does the enterprise value most? What are the unspoken rules that one should be aware of?

Politics: Who holds influence in the enterprise? How best can an aspiring leader contribute, inspire, and succeed?

Social intelligence: What is expected of successful leaders and how should they behave?

Above all, mentoring relationships are about *mutual* learning; it's not a one-way street. It's a collegial relationship bound by shared trust and respect. ●

Michael Carroll is the author of *Fearless at Work*.

Illustrations by Jason Lee

Ask Ms. Mindful

Mindfulness calms things down, but it also stirs things up.

I'm new to mindfulness, and it's really helping me break some old patterns. My partner, not so much. How do I handle it when I'm trying new approaches but he's still stuck?

Maybe mindfulness should come with a warning label. Yes, it calms things down (and who doesn't want to be calmer?). But it also stirs things up. And that's the tricky bit.

It's great that you're breaking these old patterns, but a breakthrough for you may be a threat for your partner. He or she may be afraid these old patterns are the very thing holding your relationship together.

The harder you push with your breakthroughs, the more your partner may dig in. And the more stuck he or she gets, the more angry and frustrated you're apt to become. As far as patterns go, it's a doozy.

So here's a new breakthrough to ponder. Instead of trying to fix your partner, it might be more fruitful to apply your mindfulness practice to understanding your own frustration. It's a great area to examine where you might be a bit stuck, too.

I'm 45 and got married two years ago to a wonderful woman. But a terrible car accident several months ago has left her paralyzed on her right side with little chance of full recovery. I love her deeply, but I'm having great difficulty rethinking our future together, which will not be what either of us planned.

The future? It's helpful to think about what that is.

The future doesn't exist, except as an expectation about how things will go. In reality, our hopes and plans can, and do, disintegrate.

You and your wife have had a massive lesson in that fact. A recent one, too—a few months isn't long to come to terms with major shock, fear, and change.

Consider what's really been lost. Your wife has lost control of half of her body; you seem to be mourning an idea, a future expectation about how life was supposed to play out.

Don't punish yourself for wishing the accident never happened. Instead, when you notice those thoughts—pining for a lost future or a different past—see them for what they are: impossible. Come back to what's actually happening. The present may not be an easy place to be right now, but it's real. It's where you and your wife will find healing.

For years my sister has relied on me for advice (you could call it non-professional therapy), and it's pretty much at the root of our connection. I guess I've been getting something out of it too, but now I want to move the relationship forward. Can I do it without losing her?

How do you stop being a therapist to your sister? By being a better therapist.

Rather than cutting her off when she asks for advice, gently redirect her to her own resources and help her develop the confidence to rely on herself. That's one of the best things a therapist can do.

And instead of falling into your usual pattern, you could reverse roles and make it a point to ask your sister for her advice.

Changing habits isn't easy. You and your sister both got something out of this for years. Your sister has become attached to external confirmation and you were attached to being her advisor. If you're the kind of person people generally come to for advice, it will be hard to escape that role.

You value this relationship with your sister. From that positive foundation, you can begin to bring it into a healthier balance. ●

Illustration by Alessandro Gottardo

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Putting Mindfulness to Work

***Tara Healey** of Harvard Pilgrim Health Care suggests four steps to bring mindfulness to your workplace. Everyone will benefit—you, your colleagues, and your organization.*

Office politics. Dictatorial bosses. Coworkers' emotions bouncing up and down and sideways. Hi-tech tools that keep changing and updating. An uncertain economy and a volatile job market. Escalating levels of expectation. Loss of direction. Too much to do. Too little time. Not enough sleep.

Whether you work in a traditional or progressive environment, on your own or in a sea of cubicles, work life is full of challenges. Most of us are beholden to the income we receive from our jobs, and beyond that, we get up and go to work because we have a real desire to contribute to the greater good. Turning away from work is not an option for most of us, so we buck up and throw ourselves into the challenges of the workplace. Some of us are doing well, successful and satisfied. But too many of us are not happy at work. We're stressed out and quite possibly confused. We may appear to be effective, but gnawing issues like those above can make work secretly (or not so secretly) a drag. That's not great for us and it's not great for the people we're working with. So where do we begin if we want to improve our work life for ourselves and those around us?

I suggest starting with the mind. Ask yourself: what is the quality of my mind at work? What's happening in my mind as the hours at work go by day in and day out? Is my mind working at its utmost?

The mind contains untold resources and possibilities—for creativity, kindness, compassion, insight, and wisdom. It's a storehouse of tremendous energy and drive. And yet it can also be a nattering annoyance, an untamed animal, or a millstone that drags us down. Sometimes we would like to just shut it off so we can get some work done or have a moment's peace.

Yet our mind is the one thing we can't shut off. So why not make the most of it instead? Why not put it to good use? Through mindfulness, we can train our minds to work better.

By training us to pay attention moment by moment to where we are and what we're doing, mindfulness can help us choose how we will behave, nudging (or jolting) us out of autopilot mode. Here are a few suggestions for how to bring mindfulness into our workplace. This won't just give us some relief from stress; it can actually change, even transform, how we work. →

Tara Healey is the program director for Mindfulness-Based Learning at Harvard Pilgrim Health Care.

Illustrations by Tang Yau Hoong

Check Your Lenses

Do we see what is really there, or is what we experience filtered through our own thoughts and preconceptions? Maybe we should check *how* we're seeing before we try to change *what* we're seeing. First, we need to make sure our lens is clear.

Much of the suffering and discomfort we experience at work—and elsewhere—stems from our deeply held views, opinions, and ideas that become lenses through which we perceive the events of our lives. No doubt the machinery of perception each of us has developed has served us well for the most part, guiding and supporting us at critical junctures. But the burden of adhering to set patterns of perceiving while we grapple with the drama and minutiae of everyday life can be limiting and, frankly, an invitation to misery.

When we're convinced things ought to be a certain way and they're not, we suffer. When someone refuses to act in the way we think they should, we suffer. When we don't get what we want, when we want it—or when we get what we don't want, anytime—you guessed it: we suffer. The workplace, such a microcosm of life in its entirety, is rife with opportunities to march straight into suffering. What we need to explore is whether our distress really derives from the workplace itself or instead from how we apply our default ways of perceiving to the challenges we face at work.

Whenever you detect yourself falling into an old, familiar pattern, stop and examine what is actually going on.

The mind will try to force any situation it meets into its favorite ways of perceiving and will react with distress when it meets resistance. Many years ago I had a coworker who consistently got me riled up. She had a way of doing things that just got under my skin. I would think to myself, "If she would only act *this* way instead of *that* way, we would all be happier and more productive." This was pretty much a daily, and sometimes hourly, occurrence.

Of course, what I was really feeling was that if she acted differently, *I* would be happier and more productive. I was seeking the comfort of the familiar and the expected and yearned for my coworker to act in a way that precisely supported my needs. However, as soon as I realized that I was caught up in a particular way of perceiving, I found I could alter my perception and apply real choice to how I felt about her. And when choice entered the equation, I quickly realized I no longer needed my colleague to change—because I had.

It can be difficult enough to be open-minded toward others, but it is even more difficult to be open-minded toward oneself. It takes real training. To discover the ways of perceiving you're apt to blindly apply, experiment with keeping yourself curious, attentive, and receptive.

Whenever you detect yourself falling into an old, familiar pattern, stop and examine what is actually going on. Notice the physical sensations in your body; notice the emotions that have bloomed; notice what stories your mind is generating that make your body tense and inflame your emotions. But it's important not to disparage yourself for falling into an old and unhelpful pattern. Recognize the potentially explosive negative charge generated by your body, thoughts, and emotions. Accept that it has arisen, then make the decision to be in control of it instead of being controlled *by* it.

Put Some Space Between You and Your Reactions

You may notice how the pounding heart, sweaty palms, and tightened shoulders you just experienced slip away along with the storyline you just let go of.

Inflexible patterns of perceiving inevitably prove too small, too confining, for all that our minds need to encompass and accomplish. Inflexible patterns of reacting squeeze the life out of us. Each of us has our own pet scenarios that chafe against our expectations. When they pop up, they threaten to stir up jealousy, anger, defensiveness, mindless striving, and a stew of other possibilities. We may end up saying or doing something hurtful, something we'll regret later and may have to apologize for. We leapt before we looked.

Conversely, when we stop to examine how we typically respond to situations, we create space for more creative and flexible responses. Ultimately, as we build the habit of mindfully examining our responses in the moment, mindful awareness becomes our new default mode.

Let's take an example that hopefully is not *too* familiar. You've been working tirelessly with a coworker on a project, but when it comes time to receive accolades for the project's success, your partner manages to take all the credit. You're now entering that decisive moment when you have the chance to become master of your reactions. Or, to put it another way, *to meet your experience*.

Becoming aware of the impact the slight has had on you is the first step. Separate yourself *from* yourself just enough to allow you to examine, free from rote reactions, how your body, emotions, and thoughts are combining to gear up for a response.

By decoupling what's happening from your *reaction* to what's happening, odds are you will prevent yourself from simply being carried along by the experience and instead will prove yourself capable of getting ahead of it.

In examining your thoughts, you'll probably see a story forming, something along the lines of how you heroically brought the project to completion, only to have it stolen away at the last minute. Once you can see this narrative open out before you like a book—once you have become the reader of the story instead of its protagonist—you have put yourself in position to let it evaporate. You may notice how the pounding heart, sweaty palms, and tightened shoulders you just experienced slip away along with the storyline you just let go of. You gently shift to a state that is more relaxed and, as a result, more confident. States of being, which can seem so permanent and monumental, are not in fact static. They shift moment to moment, and they can change in response to our awareness of them. It's amazing how easily a grimace can morph into a smile.

There's no need to assume that mindful self-examination means you have to allow your coworker to take credit where credit isn't due. Rather, its goal is to allow you to respond in a new way that frees you from old, ingrained, automatic patterns. →

Pay Attention to the Small Stuff

Consciously, confidently meeting experiences, instead of being carried away by them, is a practice you can apply in all situations. It is helpful not just in emotionally charged events like the one above, but also in situations that may seem insignificant, but which could become more significant if left unexamined.

Let's say you've taken the attitude that the tasks assigned to you are unimportant or undervalued. Ask yourself if you feel that way because it is true. Or do you feel that way because you're so used to telling yourself it's true that you can't think of it in any other way?

Think even smaller. Imagine something as routine as the way you hoist the phone to your ear when it rings. By really examining this action—seemingly so inconsequential, so unworthy of examination—you feel like it's something you're doing for the very first time. You may detect anxiety traveling down your arm and tension as you pick up the phone. Experiencing everyday actions up close in this way is not about being self-conscious. It's about bringing choice, attention, and awareness back into things that you've allowed to become automatic. By opening up to the tiniest habit, you make it possible to crack open the larger habits, which seem more resistant to change. You can look at every action and interaction freshly.

The more you understand your own mind, the more you can understand the minds of others. If you come to understand your own body language, you can read the body language of others better. Mindfulness doesn't give you a crystal ball, but it tends to increase your empathy, your ability to put yourself in someone's shoes with greater understanding. It enhances your connection with other people and supports you as you build relationships. No action, reaction, interaction, or relationship ever feels uninteresting or unworkable if a curious mind is brought to bear on it. You can actually transform that feeling of, "Oh man, here comes John, my supervisor—I bet he wants me to change my work, again" into "Here comes John again. How can I see and hear him, without judgment, as though we were interacting for the very first time—just dealing with what comes up in the moment?" →

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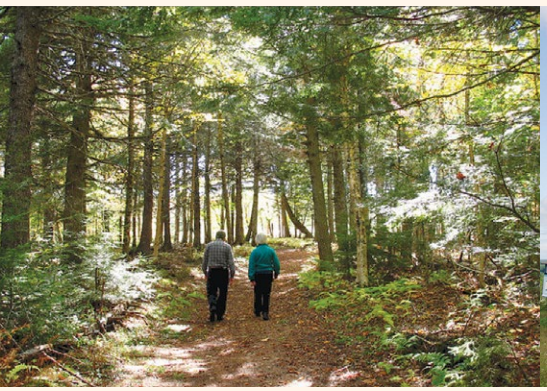

Make a Habit of It

For mindfulness to work at work, it helps to have both a formal practice of mindfulness and informal practices that extend mindfulness into everyday life. Formal practice involves learning a basic mindfulness meditation such as following the breath and practicing it on a regular, preferably daily, schedule. Informal practice, no less important, can literally take place any second of the day. It involves nothing more than focusing the mind on whatever is happening in the present moment, outside of the shopworn patterns we have built up over a lifetime.

Mindfulness interrupts the conditioned responses that prevent us from exploring new avenues of thought, choking our creative potential. Each time we stand up against a habit—whether it's checking our smartphone during a conversation or reacting defensively to a coworker's passing remark—we weaken the grip of our conditioning. We lay down new tracks in the brain and fashion new synaptic connections. We become less likely in the future to default to patterns that can trap us into being satisfied with ineffective and outmoded strategies. We take steps to improve not only how we are at work but the work environment itself.

In this way, mindfulness is not just personal. It has a contagious quality that will change the culture in an organization—not necessarily in big, sweeping ways but gradually, incrementally. ●

We lay down new tracks in the brain and fashion new synaptic connections.

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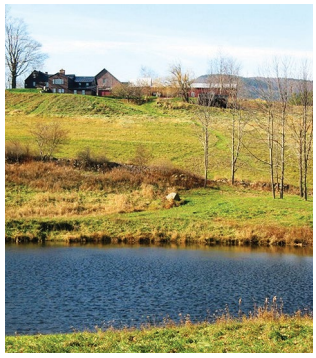

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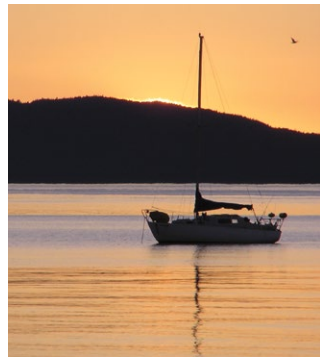

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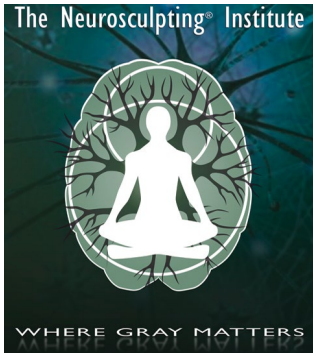

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Fernando is now an independent consultant, teacher, and trainer in the USA and internationally.

2013 trainings:
FOUR STAGES OF MINDFULNESS
Spanish: September 15 to 20, Monasterio de Poblet, Tarragona, España
English: October 13 to 18, Krotona Institute, Ojai, California

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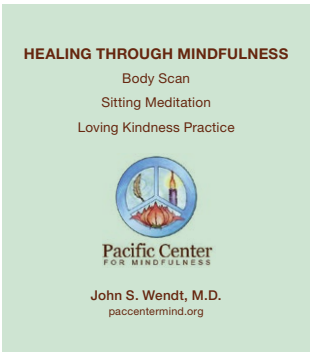

Healing Through Mindfulness

This MP3 album (downloadable for less than $10 from major distributors) is an invitation to engage in mindfulness practices: body scan, sitting meditation, and loving-kindness with gentleness and self-compassion. For testimonials about these recordings and the 8-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course, please visit paccentermind.org.

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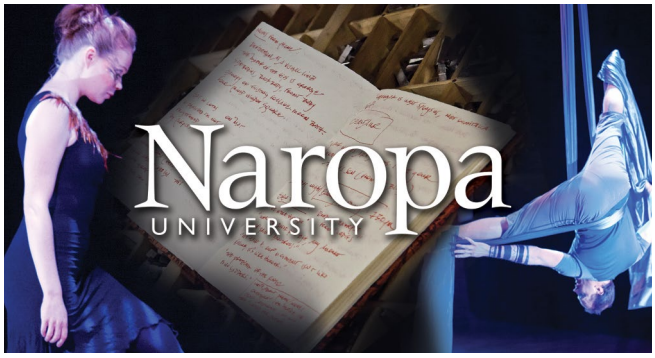

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mindspace

by maira kalman

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