

## Mindfulness & Compassion

### Tailoring the Practice to the Person

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## What is Mindfulness?

- *Sati* in Pali
  - Connotes *awareness, attention, & remembering*
- In therapeutic arena, also includes
  - Non-judgment
  - Acceptance
    - Adds kindness & friendliness

## Therapeutic Mindfulness

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

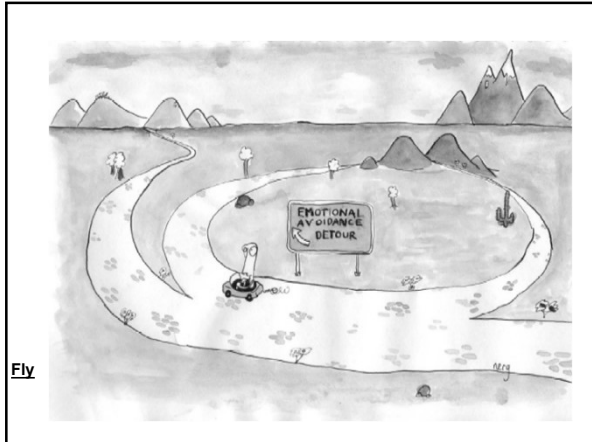
## Mindfulness *Practice* is Not:

- Having a “blank” mind
- Becoming emotionless
- Withdrawing from life
- Seeking bliss

## Breath Awareness



## How it Works

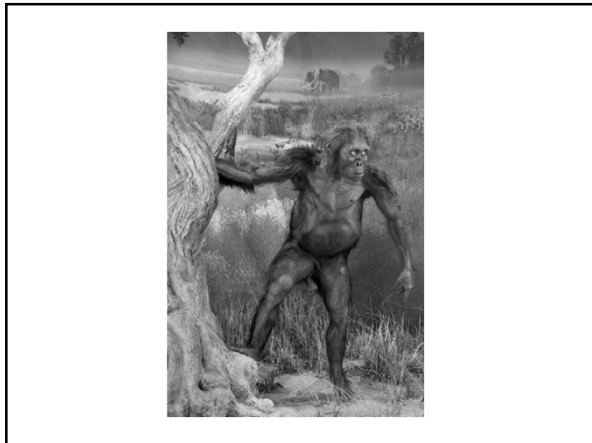


## Overwhelmed?



Intensity of  
experience

Capacity to  
bear experience



## The Thinking Disease

- Analyze past pleasure and pain
- Maximize future pleasure and avoid future pain



**Fitting the Practice to the  
Person**



## Decisions, Decisions

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

## Core Practice Skills

1. Concentration (focused attention)
2. Mindfulness *per se* (open monitoring)
3. Acceptance and Compassion

## Focused Attention vs. Open Monitoring

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

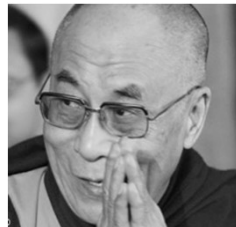


## Acceptance



## Loving-kindness Practice

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



## Continuum of Practice

Informal Mindfulness Practice



Formal Meditation Practice



Intensive Retreat Practice

## Telephone Meditation



## Taillight Meditation



## Shower Meditation



## Formal Practice

(Results May Vary)

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



## Intensive Retreat Practice



Resources at: [meditationandpsychotherapy.org](http://meditationandpsychotherapy.org)

## Objects of Attention

Coarse



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

Subtle

## Religious or Secular?

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

## Narrative Mode

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

## Experiencing Mode

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

## Relative Truth

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



## Absolute Truth

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



## Processing Trauma

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



## To Receive Free Materials

Send a blank email to:

[handouts@yahoo.com](mailto:handouts@yahoo.com)

Subject line: BRIEF THERAPY

## Timing is Everything

## Turning toward Safety I

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



## Turning toward Safety II

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



## Turning Toward the Sharp Points

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



## Different Strokes

- Need for frequent adjustment of exercises
- Elicit feedback about the experience
  - Both during and after practice
- Titrate between Safety and Sharp Points

## When Mindfulness of Inner Experience Can Be Harmful

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



## Alternate Techniques when Overwhelmed

- Eyes open, external sensory focus
  - Ground, trees, sky, wind, sounds
- Yoga practices to stretch and relax muscles



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For tailored meditation practices, visit:

[www.mindfulness-solution.com](http://www.mindfulness-solution.com)

email:

[rsiegel@hms.harvard.edu](mailto:rsiegel@hms.harvard.edu)

## About the Presenter

**Dr. Ronald D. Siegel** is an Assistant Professor of Psychology, part time, at Harvard Medical School, where he has taught for over 35 years. He is a long-time student of mindfulness meditation and serves on the Board of Directors and faculty of the Institute for Meditation and Psychotherapy. He teaches internationally about the application of mindfulness practice in psychotherapy and other fields, and maintains a private clinical practice in Lincoln, Massachusetts.

Dr. Siegel is coeditor of the critically acclaimed text, *Mindfulness and Psychotherapy, 2nd Edition*; author of a comprehensive guide for general audiences, *The Mindfulness Solution: Everyday Practices for Everyday Problems*; coeditor of *Wisdom and Compassion in Psychotherapy*; coauthor of the professional guide *Sitting Together: Essential Skills for Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy*; coauthor of the self-treatment guide *Back Sense*, which integrates Western and Eastern approaches for treating chronic back pain; and professor for *The Science of Mindfulness: A Research-Based Path to Well-Being* produced by The Great Courses. He is also a regular contributor to other professional publications and is co-director of the annual Harvard Medical School Conference on Meditation and Psychotherapy.

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For recordings of mindfulness practice instructions, including meditations for working with anxiety, depression, relationship issues, addictions, and other difficulties, please visit [www.mindfulness-solution.com](http://www.mindfulness-solution.com)

For additional recorded meditations, and patient handouts, please visit [www.sittingtogether.com](http://www.sittingtogether.com)

For information about mindfulness and psychotherapy programs, please visit [www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org](http://www.meditationandpsychotherapy.org)

For information about the *Back Sense* program for treating chronic back pain, please visit [www.backsense.org](http://www.backsense.org)