

The Power of Connection

Today is the 19th in a series of articles on mindfulness. To review, mindfulness is a form of stress reduction. In the simplest terms, mindfulness is paying attention to the present moment without judgment. It focuses our attention on the only moment in which we are alive, which is right now. Paying attention in this way can reduce stress, depression, anxiety and even potentially bring about healing.

It is time to wind down our examination of mindfulness as far as this series of articles. In the next article two weeks from now, I will conclude the exploration of mindfulness. So look forward to one more article from this series. I will continue to write articles, however, they will change to a new direction. I would like to take this time to formally thank all of you dear readers for your gracious support of these articles and for your interest in mindfulness. Today I will cover how the practice of mindfulness cultivates a greater connection to the body, mind and spirit.

One point I have mentioned before but deserves repeating is how easy it is to live life on autopilot. It is quite possible to miss all of life, and some people sadly do. If we are not attentive to our life, or living unmindfully, it is likely we are out of touch with what is really happening. A veil of unawareness can cloud over the richness of our experiences. This may be no big deal for one day, but what if you are inattentive for a few years, or decades? What a shame it would be to have ten years go by and you say to yourself, “Wow, what happened?”

A good attitude to develop while practicing mindfulness is a sense of oneness and connectedness. As you become more mindful both the body and the mind integrate which leads to feelings of wholeness and well being. These emotional states are the foundation for healing.

Healing occurs out of silence and stillness. It leads us to a sense of feeling at home in our mind and body. A quote from Bill Moyer of PBS really embodies this concept of wholeness and connectedness when he expressed: “Healing is possible, even if a cure is not.” With mindfulness you can feel whole and connected even if you have a serious condition, such as cancer.

Another attitude worthy of cultivation is humility. There is great wisdom in the discovery that as we go through life, we know less, not more. When we are quiet in meditation, for instance, we see how the mind can move from one irrational thought to another, making absolutely no sense whatsoever.

We see that the mind at times cannot be trusted. Humility naturally follows because we discover there may be elements to life we don't understand. Mindfulness teaches us not to be seduced by the pride of always wanting to be right. It reduces the seduction that we think we know everything. This realization is truly a gift.

In one of the earlier articles in this series we ate a raisin mindfully. One observation when you do this exercise is to notice on one end of the raisin there is a scar from where the raisin was connected to the vine. I bring this to your attention to give evidence of the raisins prior connection. The raisin did not come from nothingness; it was connected to a vine, which was connected to a branch. The branch was connected via the stalk, which connects to the roots. There would be no raisin without the appropriate conditions of water, soil and light. A long chain of events must all fall into place for our raisin to appear.

We also have a point of connection, our naval. We also did not appear from nothingness. A long chain of previous events all had to fall into place in perfect order for our life to exist. Mindfulness teaches us to honor that long chain of events. It makes us grateful for all of life and deepens our respect for our connections to others, the world, the universe, and ourselves.

The mindfulness exercise for this week is to notice the interrelatedness and connectedness of elements in your life. Let nothing go unnoticed, even the mundane. Honor the long chain of previous events that all had to fall into place for you to be where you are. Observe the Sun, Moon, Clear Lake, and Mt. Knonocti with this new awareness. Spend some time in silence and stillness and then contemplate how it is all connected in some mysterious way. The beauty of connectedness is conveyed in this poem by Henry Blake, which says, "To see the world in a grain of sand. A heaven in a wildflower. Hold infinity in the palm of your hand. An eternity in an hour."

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