Mindfulness & Meditation: Awakening Joy

CAMERON L. GORDON, PH.D.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY
&
SOUTHEAST PSYCH NASHVILLE
615-373-9955
Homework Review/Questions from Last Week

- Practice mindfulness meditation daily
  - Set your duration (how long you wish to meditate) and your intention (what you intend to focus upon) before beginning
  - Intentionally incorporate present awareness and curiosity
    - Eating, breathing, listening, watching, sensations in body, etc.
- Start with brief (5 minute) exercises
- When mind wanders, gently and persistently bring it back
  - Remember, you ARE NOT trying to hold your mind still or produce deep relaxation – we are training in skills of awareness, curiosity, and gentle persistence – and that is all!
Awakening Joy

- Cultivating mindfulness of pleasant things in life
- Transferring formal meditation skills into informal meditation
Actively Cultivating Pleasant Experiences

- Where does happiness come from?
  - Happiness is not a result of your environment
  - It comes from within

- You already have everything you need to be happy
  - The “seeds” of joy, contentment, love, kindness, etc. are already inside you
  - And so are the “seeds” of anger, doubt, resentment, fear, sadness, etc.
  - We must become mindful gardeners of our thoughts, actions, and emotions in order to water the seeds that we want to grow

- “If you water apple seeds you don’t get mango trees”
Watering Desirable Seeds

- Limiting exposure to violence, anger, selfishness, jealousy, etc.
  - TV/movies, books, hateful news, etc.
- Increasing exposure to love, kindness, altruism, gratitude, peace, etc.
  - Positive relationships, uplifting stories, inspiring music, etc.
  - Mindfulness of gratitude
    - Actively plan time to be mindful of...your tongue!
  - Meditation, noble silence, helping others, prayers of gratitude
- Adjust as needed to stay in rhythm with life circumstances
  - By doing so, practice *living from abundance*
Translating Formal to Informal Meditation

- **Formal Meditation**
  - Cultivates powerful skills of attention, awareness of the present moment, and curiosity/openness/nonjudgment

- **Informal Meditation**
  - Applies the skills cultivated in formal meditation to life as it naturally unfolds moment by moment
  - Conversations or even conflict with someone
    - Promotes patience, forgiveness, and love through understanding
  - Work and chores
    - Washing the dishes
  - Fun stuff!
    - Walking in a park, playing with grandkids, sipping tea, etc., etc.!
Homework

- Actively choose which seeds to water each day
  - pay attention to ways that life seems to change when you consciously water seeds of the things you want to experience
    - be on the lookout for things you do which cultivate experiences you may wish to minimize
    - adjust your involvement in these as life requires

- Practice, practice, practice
  - implement both formal and informal meditation daily
  - observe with curiosity the results of each

- Have fun, explore, be playful with your practice!
  - when we bring our full attention to anything, it becomes a richer experience...play with this idea!
Thank you!

Cameron Gordon, Ph.D.
drcamerongordon@gmail.com