

Mindfulness & Meditation: Interbeing



CAMERON L. GORDON, PH.D.

MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

&

SOUTHEAST PSYCH NASHVILLE

615-373-9955

Homework



- Practice mindfulness meditation daily
- Start with brief (5 minute) exercises
 - Practice observing physical and emotional pain as it is, without trying to make it something else
 - ✦ This takes courage! It is okay to be afraid!
 - Practice expanding your awareness to the good that is always occurring, even in the midst of suffering
- When mind wanders, elaborates, or wrestles with pain
 - Gently and persistently bring it back to curious and present observation

The Progression of Curiosity



- When we remain present and curious about anything (e.g., a raisin), we see things we did not see before
 - A raisin is not simply a raisin, it is....
 - ✦ ...a dried grape!
 - Keep looking...it is also the product of effort from a farmer, etc.
 - The raisin cannot “be” by itself
 - It depends upon other conditions to occur in order to allow it to manifest as a raisin
 - ✦ If it is warm, has sun and water, etc., it can become a grape, and then be dried into a raisin...if any of these variables is missing it cannot be a raisin
 - The raisin’s very existence depends on other conditions

Interbeing



- “Interbeing” (aka “dependent origination”) refers to the concept that everything is not only connected to, but is actually a part of, everything else (Thich Nhat Hanh, *Peace is Every Step*)
 - Any two things inter-are
 - ✦ A rose becomes garbage, and garbage becomes a rose
 - ✦ A parent gives birth to a child at the same time the child gives birth to the parent
 - ✦ Happiness and misery inter-are as well!

Mindfulness of Interbeing Meditation



YOU!!!

water

Everyone involved with production
packaging shipping distribution and sales

clouds

Coffee maker

Peaceful government

My wife

Southeast
Psych and my
clients

rain

sunshine

The people who
made the cup

Costa Rican
Farmers

MTSU

UNC-CH

Livestock or machines used
to plant and cultivate it



Hawaiians

My electrician

soil

My parents, who
drank it black

Thich Nhat Hanh

My plumber

Ancestors of all involved

waves

My alarm clock & everyone at Verizon

Interbeing is More Than Just Coffee!



- Using the same principles, we can gain a deeper insight about loneliness
 - We are always a part of, connected to, influencing, and receiving influence from the world around us, thus loneliness does NOT represent a true reality of actually being alone
- This also changes our relationship with basic concepts of birth and death
 - When was my daughter born? In 2017?
 - When did my mother die? In 1998?

Implications of Interbeing



- Once we realize the nature of inter-being in our world, the natural results are:
 - Increased compassion, understanding, and patience
 - A sense of belonging/a decrease in loneliness
 - Humility and gratitude
 - Increased sense of responsibility for the health and well-being of others, our planet, etc.
 - ✦ Our actions literally impact, shape, and reverberate much farther than we can ever measure
 - ✦ Thus, we all have a great capacity to create long-lasting positive change in the world...
 - ✦ And we must do so! (even if only for our own sake) 😊

Homework



- **Consciously create a better world through your awareness of interbeing**
 - resolve to soothe negativity you receive rather than passing it on to others
 - develop gratitude for your “dependent origination” that leads to altruism
 - build something beautiful in the world that begins with a simple smile or a compliment
- **And most importantly...**
 - have fun, explore, be playful with your practice!



Thank you!

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