

Mindfulness & Meditation



LESSON 3: AWAKENING JOY WITH MINDFULNESS

**CAMERON L. GORDON, PH.D.
MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY**

Homework Review/Questions from Last Week



- 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 the pain
 - Gently and persistently bring it back to curious and present observation

Awakening Joy



- **Cultivating mindfulness of good things in life**
- **Transferring formal meditation skills into informal meditation**

Actively Cultivating the Good in Life



- **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

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