

# Mindfulness & Meditation



## **LESSON 4: INTERBEING**

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

# 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!

# 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
  - 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

Frieling french  
press

Peaceful government

My wife

Vanderbilt  
and OLLI

rain

The people who  
made the cup

sunshine

UNC-CH

Costa Rican  
Farmers

MTSU

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](mailto:drcamerongordon@gmail.com)**