Mindful Presence in Stressful and Uncertain Times
(or, How to be Present for Yourself and Others)

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“...THE OUTSIDE WORLD IS ONLY KNOWN IN RELATION TO AN INNER POINT OF VIEW.”
THOMAS MERTON

“KNOWING OTHERS IS INTELLIGENCE;
KNOWING ONESelf IS WISDOM.”
LAO TZU
Setting an INTENTION helps to facilitate ATTENTION

Simple Person Plan

- Based on this session, what is one thing to:
  - START___________________
  - STOP_____________________
  - CONTINUE/EXPAND__________
  - EXPLORE_________________
How Was Your Day, Dear?

- I survived!
- I was Busy.
- I was productive.
- I made a difference!

Daily Difference Initiative

- Set an intention each day to make a difference.
- Look for opportunities – they are everywhere.
- Reflect daily on your successes.
- Add this dimension to a Gratitude Practice.
Core Assumption, Caveats and Givens

- **Operate from a belief in a Core Goodness**
  - Life has “layered” over an essential foundation.
  - Recognizing this allows for our ability to Respond rather than React.
    - To the Person and not the Emotions.

Two Caveats

- **Mindfulness and trauma**
- **Systemic Stressors**
### Givens: Stress Management Starters

- Exercise
- Diet
- Sleep
- Relationships
- Work/Life Balance

### Recognize Our Personal Relationship to Stress(ors)

- Acute Stress
- Chronic Stress
- Toxic Stress
Mindful Presence

- The ability to be fully present to the moment, people, feelings and emotions in our lives.

- Developed through “Inward Training.”

- Exercised in “Compassionate Impact.”

- Requires us to “Empty our Bowls.”
Finding Space to Choose

React or Act

Body Sensations

Thoughts

Emotions/Feelings

Kindness

Equanimity

Compassion

React or Act

Thoughts

Joy
Working with Body Sensations

- Body Scan Breathing.
- Distinction between sensation and perception.
- Awareness of the sensations AND the narrative!
- [https://www.stcloudstate.edu/healthwellness/get-healthy/meditation.aspx](https://www.stcloudstate.edu/healthwellness/get-healthy/meditation.aspx)

Working with the Body

- Body Scan to center.
- Awareness of breath AND breath control.
  - Sympathetic NS
  - Parasympathetic NS
Check Your Balance

Being with Emotions

- Emotions are *perceptions of sensations* with a message.
- Emotional *sensitivity* allows for the awareness of emotions as they arise.
- Emotional *awareness* allows for the space to explore the message.
- Emotional *intelligence* allows us to choose how we ACT on the emotion.
RULER
Brackett: Permission to feel: Unlocking the power of emotions to help our kids, ourselves, and others thrive.

- Recognize the occurrence of an emotion in body, expressions, etc.

- Understand the cause of emotions and how they influence thoughts and decisions.

- Label the emotion with precise terms to increase self-awareness.

- Expressing the emotion means knowing how and when to display the emotion.

- Regulating the emotion involves monitoring, tempering and modifying to make skillful decisions.
Working with Emotions

- Emotional reactions are often habits used to facilitate and to protect.
  - Begin by recognizing a core goodness or divine spirit.
    - Life has “crusted over” that core and mindful practices help to begin to lift off the crust.
    - Caution: this may create a vulnerability

“That which we resist will persist.”

The Guest House

- This being human is a guest house. Every morning a new arrival.
- A joy, a depression, a meanness, some momentary awareness comes As an unexpected visitor.
- Welcome and entertain them all! Even if they’re a crowd of sorrows, who violently sweep your house empty of its furniture, still treat each guest honorably. He may be clearing you out for some new delight.
- The dark thought, the shame, the malice, meet them at the door laughing, and invite them in.
- Be grateful for whoever comes, because each has been sent as a guide from beyond.
Working with Thoughts

- Thoughts are the *narratives* we lay over the sensations and emotions.

- A full flight or fight emotional reaction lasts 90 seconds! (*My Stroke of Insight*)

- We chose to relive the emotion, over and over and over.....

Thoughts as Leaves on a Stream

- Create a space between “you” and the thought.

- I am not my emotions or my thoughts.

- Not: “I am angry.”
  - Instead: “I am having an angry thought.”

- Allow it to arise, be aware of it, allow it to float downstream.
Formal Practices

- Body Scan Meditation
- Sitting Meditation
- Hatha Yoga
- Breath Meditations
- Walking Meditation
- Tai Chi
- Eating Meditation
- Compassion Meditation

Informal Practices

- Mindful Moments
- One Minute Body Scans
- Breathing Space/Embodied Breathing
- Gratitude Awareness Meditation/Journal
- Humor!
Closing Compassion Meditation

Questions

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