DOING FROM BEING:
A Program for Creating Organizational Integrity through
Mindful Self-Leadership

Manual for Facilitators
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DOING FROM BEING

OVERVIEW

*Doing from Being: Creating Organizational Integrity Through Mindful Self-Leadership*, is a mindfulness curriculum for those who work in the organizational and business settings. The intention is to provide an accessible, long-term program that develops the whole person. The content is much more than a series of techniques or performance enhancement exercises, but rather a leadership development method that fosters change from the inside out. The theory is that in order to lead others effectively, we must first have the capacity and courage to lead ourselves. The broad working definition of a leader in this curriculum is a person who is in a position to influence another person. Essentially, everyone is a leader, no matter what organizational level.

The curriculum is built around a model (below) that begins with an inquiry into one's current value system. The intention is to understand how participants are living their values by examining current behaviors and actions. Participants must then decide if the values discovered are the values they would like to frame their lives around. If not, participants will then go through a process of uncovering what values they would like to emulate, how they want to live, and who they want to be in their personal and professional lives. Various exercises and practices will be used to achieve this, which are outlined below, and for those whose values have not changed very dramatically, there will be an opportunity to refine those values.

Organizational culture is commonly achievement oriented and many have no idea that they are living within unconscious belief structures. Everyone lives by a value system, whether it is conscious or not is the foundation of this program. Once participants have discovered and refined their values, they then attempt to intentionally live by them. They begin to pay attention to and notice how their new set of values are playing out. Creating new patterns can be quite challenging and it does not happen automatically. Because of the difficulty, plenty of support will be provided through this stage both through group and
individual coaching sessions as well as supportive practices designed for integration and confidence building. Mindfulness is naturally developed in this stage due to the constant attention that is required in order to monitor behaviors and actions. One of the main exercises of the program will be a daily journaling practice. Participants will be asked to review their day in order to see and understand the connection between their values and their behavior. After working with this over several weeks and months, new patterns of behavior are created that reflect intentional values and living by them becomes almost automatic. In the program I refer to this as an ‘intentional way of being’ or simply ‘being’. When one's way of being is consistent with one's values, one's doing arises naturally from this intentional space. This entire process is embedded in a field of mindfulness practice and reflection. By developing the skills of mindfulness and reflection, participants create a practice of checking in and being accountable to their own value system that they have created. The model below represents a continuous feedback loop of awareness that aligns participants to their deepest and most true intentions, which is the essence of Mindful Self-Leadership.

Introspection leads to identifying our values and core beliefs – living by our intentional values leads to an intentional way of being – our doing (actions, behaviors) naturally arise out of this new way of being.
The course of the program will take place over 8 weeks and will include a 360 assessment, two in-person group sessions (one at the beginning and one at the end), online individual coaching sessions, journaling, and mindfulness and reflection practice.

**360 ASSESSMENT INTRODUCTION**

360-degree feedback assessments offer participants a well-rounded view of their behaviors, work performance, and ultimately their perceived value structure. This offers rich and actionable feedback each participant can use to improve their performance but more importantly their quality of life. Meaningful competency models and well-designed assessment items are crucial in bringing forth the reality in which the employee is operating. So, whether implementing 360s for development or for formal appraisal, the 360 is an invaluable tool for employee assessment and approval. In the *Doing from Being* program, the emphasis is on development, but employee assessment also plays an important role in employee development.

Because every organization has unique characteristics, a distinct culture, and a wide variety of leadership needs, the 360-assessment structure will be customized in consultation with organizational management. Below is a general example of the questions and structure of a typical assessment, but first are some general principles followed when creating an assessment.

**GENERAL GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

1. Engage the right stakeholders from the very beginning—getting decision makers and business leaders on board early. This will improve buy-in and increase participation rates. It is best to begin with upper management and work down or have all levels participate at once. If lower-level management is asked to participate without commitment and participation of upper-levels, there is little chance for the program to succeed.
2. Keep both the raters and ratees in mind when developing the program. Don’t make the questions too personal, keep it professional.

3. Make sure the goal of your 360 drives the process. If the 360 is designed for development only, then the ratee can choose the rater, otherwise it should be anonymous.

4. The 360 is only given within the context of the Doing from Being program and will not be given separately.

5. A feedback-based culture is crucial for the success of the 360, otherwise unhelpful personal offense can be taken. If the culture is not in place, groundwork must be laid in order to carry the process along smoothly. This can take the form of simple guidelines and/or in a meeting or a series of meetings.

6. Clearly define and communicate how the success of the 360 program will be evaluated.

7. Ensure that follow-up and feedback is built in at the forefront of the program and set expectations for participants and leadership early on.

8. Base your 360 assessment on the values or mission statement of the company.

9. Ensure that confidentiality is built in, maintained and clearly communicated.

Raters provide more useful feedback when they know they cannot be identified.

SAMPLE MESSAGING

[Evaluator Name],

You’ve been asked to provide employee feedback in this 360-degree survey for [Subject Name].

Below are six items about key leadership principles that apply to [Subject Name]’s development.

Please provide your anonymous feedback by answering the following question...
SAMPLE RATING SCALES

360s for development

- Always
- Almost always
- Often
- Occasionally
- Rarely

360s for appraisal

- Among the leading 10%
- Among the leading third
- Typical
- Among the lagging third
- Among the lagging lowest

SELF-AWARENESS

1. Keeps his/her emotions under control, even in high-pressure situations
2. Demonstrates an awareness of how his/her actions and decisions affect others
3. Treats mistakes and setbacks as learning opportunities
4. Actively seeks feedback from others on his/her performance

What suggestions do you have to help [Subject’s Name] improve his/her self-awareness?

COMMITMENT TO RESULTS

5. Sets challenging goals for him/herself
6. Helps others achieve their objectives
7. Prioritizes his/her work based on the needs of the organization and its customers
8. Achieves his/her objectives even when faced with obstacles and challenges

What suggestions do you have to help [Subj improve his/her commitment?]
LEADERSHIP

9. Demonstrates the mission of the company as action
10. Takes team members’ ideas and opinions into account when making decisions
11. Helps team members resolve work-related problems
12. Holds team members accountable for achieving their objectives

What suggestions do you have to help [Subject’s Name] improve his/her leadership skills?

COMMUNICATION

13. Actively listens to others
14. Tailors his/her communication to the needs of the audience
15. Communicates clearly and concisely
16. Conveys credibility and expertise when he/she communicates with others

What suggestions do you have to help [Subject’s Name] improve his/her communication?

TEAMWORK

17. Works effectively in a team
18. Gives constructive and helpful feedback to others
19. Treats others with respect
20. Values and respects differences among team members

What suggestions do you have to help [Subject’s Name] improve his/her teamwork?

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

21. What is [Subject’s Name] greatest strength and what can he/she continue to do to grow?
22. What is [Subject’s Name] greatest opportunity and what can he/she do to improve in the area?
DOING FROM BEING

WEEKLY PRACTICES

Over the 8 weeks of the program, participants will receive a weekly email containing the following: a reflection for the week, a video with an expansion of the reflection and explanation of the week’s practices, a meditation recording to assist in daily formal practice, informal practice instructions, and journal prompts.

WEEKLY REFLECTION

The weekly reflection carries the theme for the week and is meant to be returned to throughout the week. It is designed to support the informal and the formal practices as well as the journal exercise. Each week builds on the next and the themes become more and more subtle through the duration of the program. We begin with the grossest most basic experience, the breath, and move toward more subtle activities of the mind. The curriculum is designed to be straight-forward and easily applied. It is essential to keep a constant reminder of the practicality of the practices, because they can easily become means for disconnection from the world. The application of the practices is essential to the success of the program.

VIDEO

The videos help keep a personal connection with the participants and to also help deepen participants understanding of the theme for the week. Since some people learn more effectively through listening and others through reading, it is essential to have both. Also, though the videos aren’t live, the connection made is much more meaningful than just a written reflection. The videos should be between 5 and 10 minutes. I have included a suggested script, but this is meant merely as a guide. The facilitator should feel free to be as creative as they would like, just as long as the theme isn’t lost.
MEDITATION RECORDING

This will be a recording of the formal practice for the week. The participant is meant to listen to this as their formal practice, every day (or more) for the week. Just as in the weekly reflections, the meditations will build upon one another and become more and more subtle in their focus. I have included a suggested script, but just as in the videos, the facilitator has freedom. I would suggest speaking slowly (but not painfully slow) and allow plenty of time for silence.

FORMAL PRACTICE

The element of formal practice is essential to the program. It requires that time is blocked out every day that is entirely devoted to internal investigation through stillness. This is where the participant will have the opportunity to become familiar with and confront their patterns and if necessary, work to change them. By setting aside time each day, the participant is prioritizing their investigation into their own lives, which makes it much more potent.

INFORMAL PRACTICE

The informal practice is where we put the formal practice and the reflection into action. The informal practices are inserted into normal daily activities. This fosters a heightened sense of awareness that allows the participant to see how their patterns play out, but it also allows the participant to understand the agency they have over how they act and react. This is where practice becomes action and the value-system that has been uncovered can be transformed through intention.

Daily ritual practice will also be included in the informal category, of which there will be 2: bed-breathing and mindful commuter check-in. The purpose of this is to mark the
territory throughout the participants day with mindful activity. These guideposts will ground the participant but also create mindful momentum, propelling them forward with the freedom of awareness.

◊ **Bed-Breathing:**

This practice begins the process of discipling the mind. The participant upon waking in the morning and before going to sleep in the evening, performs a breath-counting practice. It's best to begin with 10 breaths and work up to 20 eventually. This a really nice way to begin and end the day – coming out of and going in to sleep with mindful awareness - but is also a very important preliminary practice. Slow steadiness must be emphasized. It's not something to just get through, there's no reward for speed, but it's something to be right in the middle of. We are attempting to take back the reins of our minds, so patience is essential.

◊ **Mindful Commuter Check-In:**

With this practice, we are taking another normal daily activity and staking a mindful claim to it. Depending on how one commutes to work will depend on how the practice works. If someone drives a car or rides a bicycle (or a similar independent means of transportation), the commuter will, upon arriving at their vehicle, take their seat and sit, close their eyes, take a few deep mindful breaths, feel the steering wheel or handle bars, feel their feet on the ground and their seat, and then get on with the commute. It may take just a few seconds or perhaps a minute. Whether in a hurry or not, we encourage them upon entering and before exiting, to do this practice. If travelling communally in public transport or car-pooling, they'll do the same thing, only without the same control. Perhaps when arriving, social niceties must be performed, but once comfortable, go through the same process of breathing and feeling. It doesn't have to be a major display, in fact, someone on the outside may not even notice them doing anything.
Mindful Meals:

Another powerful practice that can have a major impact. Typical amongst many of us, is when it comes to meal time, we just shove our food down our throat as quickly as we can and then get on with our day. Or, we spend our meal time in conversation or on a device, barely paying attention to the act of eating. In this practice, we bring all of our attention to the simple act of eating. All of the senses will be employed in appreciating and taking in the meal of mindfulness. The smells, textures, the urges, the quality, everything is noticed when we eat our meal. It's best to do this without socializing but sometimes this can be difficult in the work setting. Close the eyes from time to time to appreciate. Chew slowly, take the meal in with all the senses.

Value Infusion:

Value infusion will take place gradually and will consist of applying the 4 value archetypes that begin to be uncovered during Group Facilitation 1. For 4 weeks, participants will actively infuse each archetypal value into their day to day life. One value will be focused on per week, and then all 4 values will be applied. The hope is by the end of the program, the values will be infused and become ongoing.

One of the journaling practices will be to track the value infusion to examine the success of the exercise. Value infusion will be introduced to the participants in the video beginning in Week 3 as well as in the Group Facilitation 1. What typically happens is that participants emphasize when they are unsuccessful and not so much when they are successful. This is normal because the values they are infusing are natural and may not be noticed. Contrast is much more noticeable, so it can seem to them that they are constantly failing. It's important that they focus on the work that they are doing and be consistent to be avoid discouragement. Participants
are encouraged to write notes to themselves as reminders and create archetypal symbols for the values being focused on. It can be helpful to put this symbol in common places such as a vehicle, wallet, bedside, meditation place, or even framing it and placing the symbol on their desk. They can get as creative as they’d like. The more involved the participant is, the more effective the exercise will be.

JOURNALING

Journaling is an opportunity for the participant to track their practice. There will be specific prompts each week but one of the threads through the entire program will be gratitude. Each day, at least 3 items of gratitude will be written down. There is a tendency to focus on what we don’t want rather than what we have. Listing what we’re grateful for gives us a new lens to see life through – from one of lack to one of abundance. At the end of each week, they will read through the week’s entries and from time to time it will be helpful to review from the beginning in order to see the progress that has been made. At times it’s difficult to see progress without a reference point, which can potentially derail efforts. Journaling offers this reference point. Journaling is especially helpful in uncovering thoughts, emotions, and feelings that don’t have the opportunity to present themselves over the course of a normal day. This practice can potentially be one of the more powerful practices in the entire program.
Dear *Doing from Being* Participants,

Welcome! The next 8 weeks hold an incredible opportunity. The goal of this program is to offer each of you, unique tools to assist in living more intentional lives. Yes, this is a program offered through your employer, but the intended outcome is to bring more consistency of intention into all aspects of your life.

The program begins with a 360 survey and a self-evaluation. The 360 will be completed by 5 anonymous coworkers. Both the 360 and self-assessment will be reviewed in our one-on-one meeting together. As we begin the process of value identification, it is helpful to know how others perceive us how this compares/contrasts with the values we perceive in ourselves? Once we identify these values, then we can decide whether these are values to build upon, refine, or change completely.

A central part of this program will be practicing various introspective and contemplative exercises, consisting of meditation, mindfulness, and journaling, the themes of which will be delivered weekly via email. We will explore a different theme every week. The exercises are designed to bring more concentration and calm to the mind and to also help us become more familiar with the workings of our mind. One of the habit patterns that is common in many of us is that of relating to our lives externally to the exclusion of our internal experience. When we exclude internal experience, we may find ourselves living on auto-pilot, with our habit-patterns and conditioning running our lives. As we begin to practice these exercises, we'll begin to notice just how much activity is happening in the mind, all the time. The influence the activity of the mind has on our behavior will become much more evident as we build more proficiency in our practice. When we understand the mind more clearly, we begin to see how much agency we possess over the ways in which we feel and act. This is extremely empowering. We are not reaction machines, we are sentient beings who have the ability to live intentionally, at all times.
Here is the model in which we will be working:

Introspection leads to identifying our values and core beliefs – living by our intentional values leads to an intentional way of being – our doing (actions, behaviors) naturally arise out of this new way of being.

We will have two in-person group meetings where we will familiarize ourselves with this model. These will be day-long facilitations where we will have the opportunity to explore the themes of the program with the added advantage of each participants’ unique perspective. During the sessions we will practice some of the exercises we have learned, be introduced to new ones, and participate in group exercises designed to identify and refine our values system.

In order for this program to be effective, we must be fully committed. This program cannot be a hobby or an afterthought. What we are attempting is a complete overhaul of our view of our self and our world in order to create a better life. This cannot be taken lightly. At times we may feel unmotivated, challenged or even uncomfortable, but this is normal. Naturally when attempting to alter patterns and conditioning there is resistance as
we create new, more supportive patterns. Part of my job is to support you personally and to provide tools to help you in creating a new way of being. You are expected to participate fully and if you cannot make this commitment or are not sure at this time, please contemplate whether Doing from Being is really for you.

Attached is a commitment form and your first preliminary exercises.

With Deepest Gratitude,

Adam Stonebraker

DFB COMMITMENT

I ________________________________, commit to the Doing from Being program, understanding that I am expected to participate fully, to the best of my ability.

__________________________ (signature)

__________________________ (print name)

__________________________ (date)
DOING FROM BEING

PRELIMINARY PRACTICES

EXERCISE:

◊ During our time together (and hopefully long past) we will be adding tiny rituals to our daily routine. We will also add formal meditation and inquiry practice in the first week, but before we officially begin, starting some informal practice will help prepare you for the program. Something I have found very effective are little practices performed throughout the day. This helps weave mindfulness into the tapestry of our lives. Little practices, done often have great effect. This will be a major part of our program moving forward.

DAILY RITUAL 1: Bed Breathing

◊ When you wake up in the morning and when you go to bed at night, take 10 mindful breaths. As you awaken, first notice the state of the mind right when you become conscious – be with it for a few moments, then take 10 mindful breaths and take your time. In and out 1, in and out 2, and so on. Be patient and slow about it. Notice the desire to get moving, to get on with your routine. Perhaps 10 breaths are too many in the beginning, so perhaps begin with 5, gradually working up to or maybe even 20! Notice how you feel as you do this. DO NOT HURRY – this is very important. After you are finished, go about your day.

◊ When you lie down for bed, take 10 mindful breaths. If you fall asleep during the exercise, great! Notice how you feel.

◊ Do both of these every day. Make the commitment. These aren’t suggestions, this is an essential part of the program.

JOURNAL:

◊ Is bed breathing difficult? Easy? What do you notice? Is it helpful? Does it seem pointless? Record general thoughts/reflections, critical or not. After doing this for a week, go back and notice if your experience with the practice has changed.
WEEK 1: Arrive Where You Are

REFLECTION:

Our practice over the next 8 weeks can broadly be termed as mindfulness practice. Mindfulness practice has been around for centuries, originating in ancient India, but hasn't reached broad audiences until very recently. The ancient word for mindfulness is the Pali word sati, which can be translated as “to remember”. What is it that we are to remember exactly? We are to remember presence, or put more plainly, to remember where we actually are, which is right here. Upon examination, we can come to realize that we can only be where we are – that it’s impossible to be anywhere else. But, if we pay attention, we'll notice that mentally, we are rarely exactly where we are. The thinking mind operates in the past and the future and when the thinking mind is in control, we begin to operate out of the past and the future. The mind is very powerful and typically holds sway over the physical body. When the mind imagines desirable food, the stomach may growl in response, or when we see or imagine an attractive person in our mind, the body responds. Our body has difficulty differentiating between what is pictured in the mind and what is perceived in our actual experience. So, when the mind is ruminating over all of the possible worst-case scenarios of a particular future event or obsessing over past failures, the body responds, typically with a stress response. Many of us operate under a constant state of stress because we don’t know where we are and our body perceives we are elsewhere – we haven’t arrived. Mindfulness is designed to ground us, our bodies and minds, in presence. Thinking about the past and the future is essential to learning, but from a place of grounded presence, our thinking becomes much more effective and useful. The thinking mind is a far better servant than ruler. When we are grounded in presence, thinking becomes an extremely effective tool that works for us, not against us.

In many Asian cultures, the thinking mind is considered one of the senses. Just like the other 5 senses - smell, touch, etc. - thinking is a tool that helps us navigate the world. As we de-centralize thinking, we begin to operate from a more grounded presence and a felt
sense of what’s happening in the here and now. Just as we never mistake our sense of smell or our hearing for being the totality of us, the same is true of our thinking. We are far more.

**VIDEO:**

- Mindfulness of Breath
- Suggested Script:

*The point of meditation is to free ourselves from what blocks us from being our authentic selves. To not be stuck in our constant reactivity. We are not adding to our lives or experience but actually removing what’s unnecessary. We are attempting to become more fully ourselves. When we become free of what’s extra, what we find underneath is a deeper sense of peace and calm, wisdom and relaxation.*

*Mindfulness, at its essence, provides an enhanced capacity to pay attention. I hope to be able to show you some basic ways to use your attention in an enhanced way and in a way that is useful in your life. As mentioned in the weekly reflection, we begin with mindful attention to the breath.*

*Mindfulness of the breath is the first thing most schools of meditation teach but even very accomplished meditators and masters use the practice. In fact, it is said that the Buddha became enlightened while practicing mindfulness of breath.*

Starting with something simple, like the breath, allows us to notice where our mind gets hooked. What we usually find when we first begin to sit is that the mind is constantly being drawn away and distracted very easily. This can be quite frustrating, but the very act of noticing means that the practice is working! We are beginning to notice! The cultivation of attention begins with noticing. This is what meditation is. Our goal isn’t to clear the mind but to be with what is, in the moment. Without the unachievable and burdensome pursuit of no-thought, we leave more space for the simplicity of presence. It is not through effort that we achieve calm and mindfulness, but through relaxing and unburdening ourselves.
DOING FROM BEING

It is also important to understand what is drawing our mind away. Being distracted isn’t a bad thing, it’s just how the untrained mind expresses itself. We must get away from conceptual labeling, our story, and just be with what is. In other words, to notice this - pay attention - what’s going on? Notice this, notice this. “Ah, I just got caught. I heard someone cough, and it reminded me that my friend is sick, and I wonder if I should visit her in the hospital, and I wonder how late the hospital is open, and am I a bad person if I don’t go?”

Etc, etc, etc... This is an example of getting pulled in. It’s an innocent example, but it could also be not so innocent. Rather than saying, “that shouldn’t have happened”, “I shouldn’t have had that train of thought”, what we try to do is to fold everything back into the attention. “Oh, look at that, that’s what a disruption is like. That’s what it’s like for the mind to get hooked, get carried away. That’s what it’s like. That’s what it’s like.” This is a VERY important concept - to be with, without judgement. There’s nothing that doesn’t need to happen.

This is what I hope you get a glimpse of over these next 8 weeks - the state of being outside of conceptual thinking. The state of attending to the self where you are not caught, trapped, oppressed, influenced, or driven by what’s going on, inside or outside of yourself. This is an incredibly empowering practice. We can learn to not be pushed around by our inner compulsions and outer pressures.

We begin with the breath and also the posture. We’d like the posture to be attentive. Like deer looking up when they hear a noise. Lifted and soft. The body as support for your attention. Setting ourselves up, in every aspect, for successful awareness.

The breath is natural and constantly moving and brings an easeful feeling to the body. Everything moves - nothing is completely static. We have eyes to see and a body to keep balance. It is easier for the mind to pay attention to something that is slightly moving, in a subtle way. We watch and follow the subtle changes happening in the breath.
Breathing is also very closely tied to our emotional life, our psychological life, our energetic life, our nervous system. Much of how we live is reflected in how we breathe. (when stressed, when scared, when sick, when happy, relaxed, etc.). We’ll learn more about this next week at our in-person session.

It is nice to become calm and peaceful, but we don’t want to hold this up as the great goal in our mindfulness meditation. Our goal is to pay attention. If we become agitated, we fold that back into the meditation, “right now I am practicing mindfulness of agitation”. When we let our guard down in meditation, sometimes things that we’ve been avoiding come through. “But I want to be calm!” and then judgement comes in and says, “you are a bad meditator”. This is the wrong approach. Just be with. Sometimes thoughts and feelings just want to be acknowledged. Just be with.

The breath helps us to stay in the present. When we get pulled away by something, we acknowledge it and we come back to breathing. The mind has a mind of its own. It will take you away. We are trying to train the mind to stay present so we can offer careful attention to what is happening in the present. From the Buddhist point of view, all wisdom, all insight, all the enlightenment that you need in your life will be found, can only be found, in the present. The breath is a great way to start doing this because it can only happen here, now. We start narrowly with breath and we expand out, week by week. And hopefully, by the end, you’ll have a sense of how to bring this really wonderful capacity of attention, this clear non-reactive, nonjudgmental attention to all aspects of your life. That’s our goal.

FORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ The most essential and fundamental characteristic of our lives is breath. We couldn’t go very long without it, but we rarely pay attention to it. The breath is our most profound tool for becoming more present and is vital to our practice. I like to think of the breath as tether that attaches the mind to the body. The body is always present,
therefore when our attention is on the breath, our mind is naturally present. We have already begun to use the breath as an informal practice now we will begin to add a formal practice. The formal practice can be in the morning or at night or some time throughout the day. Just try and be consistent about it.

1) Find a place that is comfortable and quiet where you can sit - a chair is fine. We will want to be consistent with our environment. If we keep changing up the environment, our mind tends to be less settled.

2) Listen to the recording all the way through.

MEDITATION RECORDING:

◊ Mindfulness of Breath – Formal Practice Begins

◊ Suggested Script:

- Please remember that the most basic thing we’re doing is simply noticing what is happening in the present moment Keep it very simple.

- A few deep breaths can be helpful at the beginning to settle and relax

- (silence)

- Are you trying to do anything more? Are you waiting for something to happen? Can this moment be enough?

- Make no effort to breathe in any special way, breathe as natural as possible. Can we simply observe the breath moving naturally?

- Scan your body. Is there anywhere that we can relax further (suggest places).

- Get a global awareness of the body and the space around the body.

- Become aware of how your body experiences breathing. How does your body know that you are breathing or feel that you are breathing? What happens in your body as you breathe? What moves, what changes, what shifts (chest, belly, nose)?

- Wherever you feel the breathing most predominantly, let’s settle there. We’re going to cultivate our ability to stay in the present moment for the experience of breathing in that place. Feel the shifts and changes – in and out.

- This may be difficult but try to stay relaxed about it. We just want to know that it’s happening. Just know, “I am easily distracted. I am easily concerned with other things”. The mind wanders, easily. When you notice, gently, with a sense of joy and maybe a little smile, come back to the breath, as if it’s home - a really nice place to be.

- Keep coming back, with a sense of determination.
- Various things may be vying for your attention, just allow them to stay in the background, softly. Stay with the rhythm of breath. Perhaps, even saying to yourself: “in, out”, “rising, falling”, just a quiet whisper in the mind.

- (silence)

- Just as we take the time to settle in, we take our time coming out. Take deep breaths, feel your body, open eyes softly, slowly. (end)

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Bed Breathing

◊ Try and bring attention to the breath throughout the day. Notice your breath while in meetings, on the phone, when in conversation, etc. Notice the changing patterns of the breath and how this relates to how you operate in the body and mind. Is it possible to de-centralize thinking as discussed in the reflection?

JOURNAL:

◊ Based on the 360 feedback and self-evaluation, objectively identify the values exhibited by your past work behavior. These may not be your ideal values or perhaps they are. What we want to do is, as honestly as possible, examine ourselves. In order for us to live our best lives, we must come to terms with where we are. This doesn’t have to be shared, don’t worry. Take time with this, sit with it. This can be the toughest part of the whole program. It’s time to do some serious self-examination. As you do this, try to be as objective as possible and notice how the mind can sometimes create a narrative or opinion that is pure speculation.

ONE-ON-ONE MEETING GUIDE:

◊ Personal Introductions


◊ Self-Evaluation

◊ Practice Questions/Review/Discussion
WEEK 2: Arriving – Mindfulness of the Body

GROUP FACILITATION 1

The initial group facilitation has a 5-fold purpose: 1) To introduce the program more thoroughly 2) To provide scientific evidence for the validity of meditation and mindfulness 3) To create community 4) To further the process of living intentionally by identifying and clarifying the values the participant would like to carry forward 5) To clarify all questions and concerns.

For many of the participants, this will be brand new material, so patience is of utmost importance. Introspection and inquiry can sometimes feel like learning a new language. Remember, this can be a radical change from how they’re used to relating to the world, and there can be a plethora of emotions that arise, especially in the group setting – expect some resistance. Try to keep the presentation and conversation light-hearted and information driven. Many who are in organizations are busy people with much to do and don’t want to waste their time with things that don’t work. This first group facilitation offers evidence that the practices work and work well, but we must reassure that the practices require patience – it is not a quick fix. Each participant signed a commitment form. We must encourage them to see this program through.
DOING FROM BEING

Creating Organizational Integrity through Mindful Self-Leadership

AGENDA

- 8:30-9am - Breakfast
- 9-9:15am - Meditation
- 9:15-10am - Introductions
- 10am-10:30am - Overview of Program/Model
- 10:30-10:45am - Break
- 10:45-11:15am - The Case for Change & How it Works: Evidence & Application
- 11:15-12pm - Active Listening Exercise
- 12-1:15pm - Mindful Lunch
- 1:15-1:30 - Meditation
- 1:30-2pm - Journal Exercise - Value Archetypes + Action Plan
- 2-2:15pm - Break
- 2-3pm - Big Board – Values & Archetypes
- 3-3:30pm - Introduce Body Scan + Meditation
- 3:30-4pm - Question/Closing
OBJECTIVES

• Learn, practice, and understand meditation practice
• Become familiar with mindfulness practice
• Strengthen listening skills
• Uncover and examine our current value system
• Hone in on the values we would like to exhibit
• Create an action plan
• Application of practice to life/work
• Clarify questions and concerns about the program
WHAT IS MEDITATION & WHY SHOULD WE PRACTICE IT?

THE AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

**Sympathetic**

- Prepares the body for stressful or emergency situations—fight or flight.
- The sympathetic nervous system (sns) corresponds with our “stress response”. During this process our body releases cortisol which increases our heart rate and interrupts processes such as digestion, critical thinking, and sleep in order to devote more energy to flight or fight.
- The sympathetic division increases heart rate and the force of heart contractions and widens (dilates) the airways to make breathing easier. It causes the body to release stored energy. Muscular strength is increased. This division also causes palms to sweat, pupils to dilate, and hair to stand on end. It slows body processes that are less important in emergencies, such as digestion and urination.

**Parasympathetic**

- Controls body process during ordinary situations.
- The parasympathetic nervous system (pns) corresponds with our “relaxation response”, which brings our body toward homeostasis and lowers cortisol levels.
- Generally, the parasympathetic division conserves and restores. It slows the heart rate and decreases blood pressure. It stimulates the digestive tract to process food and eliminate wastes. Energy from the processed food is used to restore and build tissues.
The vagus nerve runs through our diaphragm. Diaphragmatic movement affects the vagus nerve directly and it responds accordingly, signaling either the pns or the sns.
NEUROPLASTICITY - THE CHANGEABLE BRAIN

- The brain's ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout life. Neuroplasticity allows the neurons (nerve cells) in the brain to compensate for injury and disease and to adjust their activities in response to new situations or to changes in their environment.

Neurogenesis
Continuous generation of new neurons in certain brain regions

New Synapses
New skills and experiences create new neural connections

Strengthened Synapses
Repetition and practice strengthens neural connections

Weakened Synapses
Connections in the brain that aren't used become weak

MINDFUL LISTENING EXERCISE

- **STEP 1:** Invite each participant to think of one thing that brings stress to their and one thing that puts them at ease.

- **STEP 2:** Once everyone is finished, each participant takes their turn in sharing their story with the group.

- **STEP 3:** Encourage each participant to direct attention to how it feels to speak, how it feels to talk about something stressful as well as how it feels to share something positive.

- **STEP 4:** Participants are instructed to observe their own thoughts, feelings, and body sensations both when talking and listening.

- **STEP 5:** After each participant has shared, answer inquiry question, then regroup and discuss/debrief.
MINDFUL LISTENING EXERCISE

◊ **Step 1:** invite each participant to think of one thing they are stressed about and one thing they look forward to.

◊ **Step 2:** once everyone is finished each participant takes their turn in sharing their story with the group.

◊ **Step 3:** encourage each participant to direct attention to how it feels to speak, how it feels to talk about something stressful as well as how it feels to share something positive.

◊ **Step 4:** participants are instructed to observe their own thoughts, feelings and body sensations both when talking and listening.

◊ **Step 5:** after each participant has shared, answer inquiry questions. Then, regroup and discuss/debrief.

MINDFUL LISTENING QUESTIONS

1. How did you feel when speaking during the exercise?

2. How did you feel when listening during the exercise?

3. Did you notice any mind-wandering?

4. If so, what was the distraction?

5. What helped you to bring your attention back to the present?

6. Did you mind judge while listening to others?

7. If so, how did ‘judging’ feel in the body?

8. Were there times when you felt empathy?

9. If so, how did this feel in the body?
10. How did your body feel right before speaking?

11. How did your body feel right after speaking?

12. What are you feeling right now?

13. What would happen if you practiced mindful listening with each person that you spoke with?

14. Do you think mindful listening would change the way you interact and relate with others?

15. How would it feel if you set the intention to pay attention with curiosity, kindness, and acceptance to everything you said and everything you listened to?
ARRIVING HOME

Arriving home after a time of deep reflection can be a challenge. That's ok. Yes, things would be easier if we could escape to a paradise locale and live a responsibility-free life, but this isn't reality. As we get deeper into practice, we can begin to see life's challenges as opportunities for practice and to become more intimate with our experience. Notice how we can choose how we view the world. This is what living intentionally is all about. Sure, we slip up and lose our cool now and again, but we shouldn't feel bad about this. We're beginning to notice – this is the important part.

VIDEO:

- Mindfulness of the Body – Sensations
- Suggested Script:

  Last week we focused on the breath. If you think of the human being as a series of concentric circles, we start with breath at the center to stabilize ourselves. When we are centered, we are training ourselves to be present in the here/now instead of being caught up or lost in the mind. When we are lost, we have moved out of presence and in to future thinking, past thinking, fantasy thinking, etc. So, we start here.

  The next circle out is our own body, our physical experience, then feelings, emotions, then the thinking world, the mind, and then everything else. We want to fill the center, creating a steady, strong base which provides stability then to the other circles. Stuck in any of the outer circles without stability in the center creates imbalance. If we’re stuck in thinking, then we are subject to the ups and downs and scatterness of the mind which creates suffering in our self and in others. We must be grounded. What we are trying to do is to not stop thinking but to rather train our thinking to become more embodied, realistic, and connected.

  So, this week is physical embodiment week. We can think of it as taking up residence in our own bodies. The breath practice from last week, is essentially an
embodiment practice. This is important because if we contemplate our experience, we come to realize that it is impossible to not be present. Our thoughts, and mind may wander but our body is always present. This may seem so obvious, but it can be quite the realization. One of the main tasks of meditation is to bring mind and body together, so the two can be in harmony and are not at odds, or cross purposing. Since we cannot bring the body to the mind in a healthy way, our job is to bring our mind to our body. In Buddhism, this is called unification. A pretty simple concept, but like most things, in practice, it’s not so easy.

Often, what is confused with mindfulness is commentary, judgement, or an evaluation of experience. If you’ve ever watched tv, something that is really involved, like sports, with the sound off, it’s usually not that fun. But when you want to get really involved, you have to turn the sound on. The commentary and the sounds of the game draw you in. It’s not necessarily the game itself but everything surrounding it. The same could be said about a laugh track on a sitcom, or mood music in a movie. The commentary around the thing itself draws us in. A similar thing happens in the mind, but it can be difficult to notice because we are right in the middle of the drama, excitement, sadness, etc.! We hardly notice! The commentary of our thinking influences our experience and we often see it as integral to our experience. We may see a person enter the room and we immediately flash judgement toward that person and a whole narrative is created. This story can affect, positively or negatively, the way we see this person. It happens all the time. The person or situation become entangled with our commentary. The same goes for judgement toward oneself. We begin to focus on the breath, we get distracted, and the commentary begins, “I’m a bad meditator. Maybe I should be doing something different.” We find it difficult to separate the fact that the breath is very simple and that we have gotten distracted.

Gradually teasing apart our inner commentary from our actual experience is much of what we are attempting to do. Distinguishing between what’s happening and our
interpretation of it; what’s happening and our judgements about it; what’s happening and the meaning we assign to it.

Mindfulness is the choice to live in the world of what’s happening, not in the interpretation of it. There is a choice. I’m not suggesting that we don’t think, just not living from the thinking mind. Don’t get swept away. Have a silent awareness of all that is happening. When we see something really beautiful, like the sunset or a mountain, we’re just there. Nothing else.

So, our bodies are very important to who we are, parts of our human experience. Most are very disconnected from their bodies. Either because of the nature of their job (sitting at a computer all day) or simply because it’s a difficult place to be because things arise that may not be so comfortable. Being in the body may mean feeling feelings that we just don’t want to feel. But mindfulness works best if we are in our bodies. So, for many, mindfulness is a slow training to reawaken the body - to rediscover the. The more we can take up residence in the body the subtler our awareness becomes. We don’t check out, we check in, on a very profound level.

**FORMAL PRACTICE:**

◊ Practice the body scan as we practiced it together (with the recording provided), at least 3 times this week. Remember, the purpose of the practice is to become familiar with our experience and to become more refined in our awareness. If you fall asleep, it’s not a problem. You can practice in the morning or at night before bed or in lieu of the evening bed breathing practice. Stay with the formal morning practice of mindful breathing.

**INFORMAL PRACTICE:**

◊ Bed Breathing

◊ Notice Breath and Body in Daily Life

**RECORDING:**

◊ Body Scan (short) – once a day
DOING FROM BEING

◊ Suggested Script:

- Begin by bringing your attention into your body.

- Notice your body - feel the weight of your body sinking.

- Take a few deep breaths.

- And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen nourishing the body. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.

- You can notice your legs against the soft surface, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.

- Notice your back or belly against the bed.

- Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.

- Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.

- Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.

- Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.

- Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.

- Then notice your whole-body present. Take one more breath.

- Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Rest

JOURNAL:

◊ Notice what arises during the body scan. As you practice it more, does anything change? Are you noticing any changes in how you experience your body in daily life?

◊ General Practice Reflections
WEEK 3: Mindfulness of Feeling

REFLECTION:

We have already explored sensation of the body (and continue to do so), now we're going to get a bit subtler and explore feeling tone. It is typical for us to gravitate toward what is pleasant, push away what is unpleasant or uncomfortable and be unaware of neutral feelings. This makes sense! Why wouldn’t we want to do this? The simple reason is that life isn’t always going to be comfortable. When we avoid the unpleasant and the uncomfortable, we build a pattern of avoidance. But just because we avoid, doesn’t mean it ever goes away. In many cases, what we avoid becomes stronger. Within this pattern of avoidance, protective constructs build, and we can find ourselves in a constant battle. This can only lead to struggle and unhappiness. Why would we want to live this way? If we could control our life and its circumstances, avoidance may be a good way to live but we cannot. Similarly, if we require constant comfort for happiness, we’re going to be unhappy or at the very least disappointed most of the time. We become beholden to circumstances that we cannot control which can ultimately lead to a state of perpetual. This is an unnecessary and pointless pursuit, with end. With this understanding, it becomes clear that avoiding discomfort and seeking comfort leads to unhappiness and frustration. What are we to do? We must seek a deeper satisfaction. As you practice this week, can you sense something deeper? Is there a feeling that there is more than our circumstances? Can we get underneath our opinions, preferences, and judgments?

VIDEO:

◊ Mindfulness of Feeling – Feeling Tone – Mindful Eating – Value Infusion (1)
◊ Suggested Script:

Mindfulness of feeling, or feeling tone is the topic for this week. Feeling tone is different from feelings such as anger, happiness, fear, joy, or sadness. It is the tonality that we experience when coming into contact with our senses. When we hear, see, smell, or taste, and even think, how do we experience it? We experience in one of 3 ways: pleasant,
unpleasant, or neither (neutral). Whenever we are in contact with our experience, one of these tones is present, and this can greatly influence our life. When it’s a beautiful day or when a favorite food is placed in front of us, we experience pleasant feelings. If we injure ourselves, or if someone approaches us in a negative manner, we experience this as unpleasant. Though this is obvious, it is constantly operating on subtle and gross levels, and greatly influences our behavior. When pleasant experience stops, sometimes the tone becomes unpleasant without even noticing. Much of what we do in mindfulness is to make the unknown, known and become aware of the unconscious forces that can dictate our experience. Feeling tone is an interesting observation. This isn’t a scientific analysis, but rather it’s just another way to observe our experience.

Throughout this week, begin to notice this aspect of your experience and how it influences your behavior. You may find yourself avoiding necessary unpleasant situations in favor of pleasant but unnecessary situations. Many problems can arise from avoiding potential unpleasant experiences, one of which being the compounding and magnification of the unpleasant the longer we avoid them. Seeking only pleasure has its drawbacks as well. Take account of this during the week.

This week we begin our Value Infusion just as we talked about it at our Group Facilitation last week. We will begin with just one of our Value Archetypes and begin to actively implement it into all aspects of life. On your desk, or in your vehicle, or at your bedside, or all 3, place a symbol (a picture, emblem, note) that reminds you of the archetype you chose for this particular value. We want to saturate our experience with the value so that it begins to become effortless. Notice and observe this process and then journal about it at some point in the day. It’s important that you don’t judge yourself when your behavior doesn’t exactly represent your value. The important thing is that we are beginning to notice our behavior and our ability to change it.

We will also begin to add a mindful meal to our practice. This is a powerful practice that can have a major impact. Typical amongst many of us, is when it comes to meal time,
we just shove food down our throat as quickly as possible and then get on with our day. Or, we spend our meal time in conversation or on a device, barely paying attention to the act of eating. In this practice, we bring all of our attention to the simple act of eating. All of the senses will be employed in appreciating and taking in the meal of mindfulness. The smells, textures, the urges, the quality, everything is noticed when we eat our meal. It’s best to do this without socializing but sometimes this can be difficult in the work setting. Close the eyes from time to time to really appreciate the act of eating. Chew slowly, take the meal in with all the senses.

FORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Breath Practice (Week 1)

◊ Body Scan (3xs): Short, Med, Long – experiment with the longer body scans at least once this week

RECORDING:

◊ Body Scan – Medium, Long

◊ Suggested Script (Medium):

- Allow yourself to relax. Take a few deeper breaths, holding the breath at the top for just a moment and then letting it go. Do this a few times. Return to natural breathing. Breathing in...breathing out. With each out breath, allow the body to relax even more...let it go.

- Bring attention to the muscles of the forehead. Move your eyebrows a bit, just to get in touch with this part of your body. Relax these muscles. Allow the place between the eye brows to become soft, spacious, and smooth.

- Become aware of the eyelids – allow them to be comfortably heavy and still. The muscles around the eyes relax and soften. Notice your cheeks, jaw, and chin. Allow the hinge of the jaw to let go. The lips become soft and the space inside the mouth becomes like a cloud, the tongue floating in space.

- Allow this feeling of letting go move down into the muscles of the neck and shoulders. Take in an easy breath. Inhale...exhale. Allow the tension to be carried away as you exhale...again. Continue to follow the natural rhythm of breathing. Feel the body expand and contract, rise and fall. Settling more with each out breath. In...out.
- If thoughts arise, this is not a problem. Simply notice the thought, and return to the simplicity of the breath, the simplicity of the body sensations. Emphasize the exhale, perhaps even saying the word “relax” in the mind as the exhale lengthens.

- Now bring attention to the arms. Feel them weighted, heavy. Upper arms, forearms, hands, thumbs, fingers. Feel directly. You may even notice the subtle feeling of your heart beating in the palm of your hand. Just feel, notice, be with.

- Become aware of your back. Notice any tension that may be there in your muscles. Breathe into your tension and simply let it go. Maybe the tension isn’t ready to let go yet, this is ok. Just knowing that it’s there, informs our awareness. Letting go will happen in time. Relax anyway. Take some time to experience this, now. Feel deeply into the spine, moving from the neck, vertebra, by vertebra, by vertebra, all the way down to the tail bone. The entire top half of your body is completely relaxed now. Feel it deeply. Not thinking about it, rather feeling into.

- Feel the support of the body. There’s nothing to do, just simply be.

Breathe in........Breathe out

- Allow a relaxing, deepening sensation begin, like a wave, to enter into the lower half of the body – your hips, your upper legs, your knees, the back of your knees, lower legs, your calves, ankles, feet and toes. Feel the feet deeply. The lower half of the body is fully awake, fully aware, fully relaxed.

- Now, from the top of the head, all the way to the tips of the toes, is completely relaxed and aware. And now, simply be. However you feel right now is just fine. Be.

- Become familiar with these sensations. This complete embodiment. The more we become familiar with these sensations, the more regular and accessible they become.

- With every in breath, breathe in nourishment, with every outbreath allow cleansing and the release of tension. In...and out. Inhale....and release.

◊ Suggested Script (Long):

- Make yourself comfortable and close the eyes gently.

- Take a few moments to get in touch with the movement of your breath and the sensations in the body. When you are ready, bring your awareness to the physical sensations in your body, especially to the sensations of touch or pressure, where your body makes contact with the surface of sitting. On each out-breath, allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the seat.

- Now bring your awareness to the physical sensations in the lower abdomen, becoming aware of the changing patterns of sensations in the abdominal wall as
you breathe in, and as you breathe out. Take a few minutes to feel the sensations as you breathe in and as you breathe out.

- Having connected with the sensations in the abdomen, bring the focus or “spotlight” of your awareness down the left leg, into the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Focus on each of the toes of the left foot in turn, bringing a gentle curiosity to investigate the quality of the sensations you find, perhaps noticing the sense of contact between the toes, a sense of tingling, warmth, or no particular sensation.

- When you are ready, on an in-breath, feel or imagine the breath entering the lungs, and then passing down into the abdomen, into the left leg, the left foot, and out to the toes of the left foot. Then, on the out-breath, feel or imagine the breath coming all the way back up, out of the foot, into the leg, up through the abdomen, chest, and out through the nose. As best you can, continue this for a few breaths, breathing down into the toes, and back out from the toes. It may be difficult to get the hang of this just practice this “breathing into” as best you can, approaching it playfully.

- Now, when you are ready, on an out-breath, let go of awareness of the toes, and bring your awareness to the sensations on the bottom of your left foot—bringing a gentle, investigative awareness to the sole of the foot, the instep, the heel (e.g., noticing the sensations where the heel makes contact with the bed). Experiment with “breathing with” the sensations—being aware of the breath in the background, as, in the foreground, you explore the sensations of the lower foot.

- Now allow the awareness to expand into the rest of the foot—to the ankle, the top of the foot, and right into the bones and joints. Then, taking a slightly deeper breath, directing it down into the whole of the left foot, and, as the breath lets go on the out-breath, let go of the left foot completely, allowing the focus of awareness to move into the lower left leg—the calf, shin, knee, and so on, in turn.

- Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity, to the physical sensations in each part of the rest of the body in turn - to the upper left leg, the right toes, right foot, right leg, pelvic area, back, abdomen, chest, fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, neck, head, and face. In each area, as best you can, bring the same detailed level of awareness and gentle curiosity to the bodily sensations present. As you leave each major area, “breathe in” to it on the in-breath and let go of that region on the out-breath.

- When you become aware of tension, or of other intense sensations in a particular part of the body, you can “breathe into” them—using the in-breath gently to bring awareness right into the sensations, and, as best you can, have a sense of their letting go, or releasing, on the out-breath.

- The mind will inevitably wander away from the breath and the body from time to time. That is entirely normal. It is what minds do. When you notice it, gently
acknowledge it, noticing where the mind has gone off to, and then gently return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.

- After you have "scanned" the whole body in this way, spend a few minutes being aware of a sense of the body as a whole, and of the breath flowing freely in and out of the body.

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Bed Breathing

◊ Choose one value that you’d like to focus on this week. You can work on all 4 if you’d like, but we’re going to focus primarily on 1. On your desk, or in your vehicle, or at your bedside, or all 3, place a symbol (a picture, emblem, note) that reminds you of the archetype you chose for this particular value.

◊ Track Feeling Tone – Note what you push away, what you seek out, and things that you may not typically notice or care about.

◊ Eat a Mindful Meal

JOURNAL:

◊ Note each day how the value you focused on exhibited itself – give specific examples/stories.

◊ Begin Gratitude Journal Reflection: Review your day and simply note 3 things that you are grateful for. It doesn't have to be any major event. Maybe you are thankful for the air you breathe or the smile you received from one of your children. You can be anything.
WEEK 4: Mindfulness of Emotions

REFLECTION:

Broadening out from feeling tone, we now begin to look more closely at emotions. Emotions are connected to some of the most sublime, precious things that we as humans experience but also some of the most awful things we experience. But, whether positive or negative, emotions are a very central aspect of life. Given that, it is very important to be able to bring attention and mindfulness to our emotional life so we can see them more clearly and we can discover freedom in relationship to them as well as give freedom to them.

Freedom implies two sides: we give ourselves freedom and the emotions become free in turn. I like to think of this as creating space around the emotion.

One way to create this space is to notice our tendency to compound upon an emotion or situation. As you observe yourself this week, especially in dealing with people, notice the story or narrative created around situations and the emotions this brings up. We are rarely upset by situations themselves but rather with the narrative we create around the situation. The Buddha told an excellent simile in explaining this compounding, or narrative-making. It’s known as the ‘Simile of the Arrow’.

Once, when talking to a gathering of people, Buddha asked, “If a man is struck by an arrow, would it hurt the man?”. The assembly answered, “Yes, of course it would hurt”. Then the Buddha said, “Say the person is struck by a second arrow, is that even more painful?” and the people said, “Yes, one is bad, but two is even worse”. So, Buddha said, “Life sometimes brings you the first arrow, the second arrow is what you shoot at yourself.”

Interesting, right? If I’m walking down the street, and I trip over a curb and stumble a bit, that can be considered the first arrow, there’s nothing I can do about it but pay more attention in the future. The second arrow could be, as an example, telling myself, “man, you are the worst walker, how embarrassing”, “who put this curb here – I’ve never seen such a terrible example of civil engineering”, “I’m an idiot”, etc. This is suffering in the making and could feed an even larger narrative of criticism of self or another. The initial stumble is the
first arrow, and rather than laughing it off and moving on, I add on negative judgments about self and others. And sometimes the arrows don’t stop at two, we can easily keep compounding and creating, slinging hundreds of arrows at ourselves and others. But as we build and broaden our awareness, we begin to notice what we’re doing and only then do we have the ability to change it.

It’s important to make the distinction between life’s circumstances and what we add to it. This is a major component to mindfulness practice. Are we adding a second arrow? Are we attacking it, criticizing it, running away? How are we reacting to it that’s different from just letting it be there in its simplicity? It’s very important to also be aware of judging ourselves when we notice the multiple arrows. This is a sneaky way for self-judgement to arise. We are just now beginning to pay attention to these things, so go easy on yourself. Maybe we don’t begin to see until the 130th arrow, that’s ok! At least we’re beginning to notice. Keep a broad view and know that this practice is a process.

VIDEO:
- Mindfulness of Emotions – Value Infusion (2)
- Suggested Script:

We continue to work out from center to the emotions ring. Emotions are a really great topic because they are connected to some of the most sublime, precious things that we as humans experience but also to some of the most awful things the humans experience - a very wide range. But whether it is positive or negative, emotions are a very central aspect of life. Given that, it is very important to be able to bring mindfulness to our emotional life so we can see them more clearly and we can discover freedom in relationship to them and to also give freedom to them. Freedom implies two sides. We give ourselves freedom and the emotions become free in turn. We can think of this as creating space.

Meditation is great way to create this space because it is a place where we can have very deep trust in our emotional life. Rather than denying or repressing, we allow emotions to come through. It’s helpful to think of emotions as communicators. If we become angry
and we repress it, we aren't listening. We aren't listening to what needs to be learned or even noticed. This doesn't mean we act on it (sometimes this can be a form of denial) but we give it space to arise and become present with and open to it more deeply. Once we begin to allow this through developing mindfulness, an interesting thing begins to happen - there can be a transformation of the emotion itself. There is an evolution, sometimes a resolution, a movement that is clarifying and deepening, where we see not only the surface emotions of our lives, but we begin to see the depth of emotional life that is often not available so easily when we are just going about our normal lives.

There are a wide range of strong opinions about emotions in our society. From the idea that they should never be shown to you should act on every one of them. Many of us probably already have a relationship to our emotional life, consciously or unconsciously. And it’s very helpful in the process of mindfulness to reflect on what that relationship might be. Journaling can be so helpful with this - getting things out on paper - free-writing. If we can explore this relationship, the emotions are less likely to snag and prevent us from the simplicity of just noticing. Not attached, just noticing - anger is arising - happiness is arising - without acting them out, just allow them to be noticed. Be very simple with it.

Part of this practice is bringing wise attention to our emotional life. But it's especially important that we don't hold the emotions with a special value, as in holding them over physical or mental experience. From the point of view of mindfulness or awareness, it's all the same. There is no hierarchy. There is just open awareness - seeing things as they are. Not too little, not too much – think, radical appropriateness.

This week we begin to work with our second value infusion. We can continue with the first, of course, but we begin the emphasize the second, whether you consider last week’s infusion successful or not. Don’t filter this week’s exercise through the experience of last week – begin anew each week, each day, each moment.

Another informal practice that we’re adding this week is to notice the narrative that the mind conjures up in normal everyday interactions and encounters. Are we telling a story
about a person or situation that we actually know nothing about? If someone cuts us off in traffic, for instance, do we automatically judge this person’s character? When someone at work makes a decision that we don’t agree with, do we assume we know better than they do? Just notice what’s made up versus what is actually real in experience.

**FORMAL PRACTICE:**

- Continue Body scan
- Breath Practice then Recording – This week we begin to change up our formal practice slightly. We’ll continue with the breath practice but then we’ll move into a broadening of our observation into the emotional realm.

**RECORDING:**

- Mindfulness of Emotions
- Suggested Script:

  - Take an alert, comfortable posture. How are you? How are you feeling? How’s your emotional state, your mood? There is always an emotional state or mood present, even if you don’t recognize it. So, how are you? And how are you about how you are? How are you relating to that? What are your judgments, thoughts, ideas or reactions, if any?

  - Within your body, as part of your bodily experience, become aware of how your body experiences breathing.

  - See if you can compose yourself, your attention, your presence, around the experience of breathing around the place in your body where you feel the breathing as most pronounced. Settle around that area, compose yourself around it, and then begin to hang in there, hang out there, with the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out - expansion and contraction.

  - If your mind wanders away in thought, relax. Relax the thinking mind and begin again with your breathing. Let go of what you’re thinking about. If you can stay with your breathing and your thoughts are in the background, let them stay there in the background quietly. You don’t have to take care of them or attend to them, pick them up if in the foreground. You can stay with your breath, breathing in, breathing out.

  - Notice when you shift from a simple awareness of what’s happening to getting involved in commentary or getting involved in reactions. And if you can tease that apart, then return to the simplicity of your breathing.
If you find yourself reacting to what’s going on, it might be helpful to very calmly and softly in the mind name the reaction “reaction...reacting” or some other name. Maybe it helps free yourself a little bit from being caught in it. And then after a few moments of recognition come back again to your breathing. Trust that for now it's enough just to be aware of breathing.

So now, let go of the focus on your breathing and instead, again, notice what is the emotional state you have, the mood, the mental state, or if there is a reactive state that's present, very simply, see if you can recognize that reactive state and offer a very simple awareness, like you’re going to be there with awareness - feeling what’s happening and what you're feeling.

See if you can find out where in your body that emotional state or mood is most manifested, most expressed. What sensations or feelings in your body let you know that you’re having this emotional state? It could be you’re calm or agitated; it could be that you’re impatient or content; it could be that you’re peaceful, agitated, happy or sad, irritated, delighted, confused, or eager. See if you can notice how the emotional state is expressed through your body.

If your mood or emotional state changes or goes away, notice what replaces it. And as you do this, you can also very quietly label it or name it, letting the naming of it help you be simple with it, independent of it, but still feeling it.

So then for the last minute of the sitting, come back again to your breathing, and be with your breathing, as if it’s the most important place to be. Everything else can recede to the background.

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

- Bed Breathing
- 2 Mindful Meals
- Notice the narrative that the mind creates in your interactions.

JOURNAL:

- Record what stands out from your daily formal practice
- What stands out from the informal practice? Note especially stories that you found yourself weaving.
- Gratitude
ONE-ON-ONE MEETINGS: (into week 5)

The purpose of the midterm one-on-one meetings is for the participant to ask questions in order to receive clarity about practice and anything that concerns them. We want to find out how the program is proceeding for them and if they are finding benefit, not only in their work life but in their life as a whole. It's important that we don't offer deep psychological advice, these are not counseling sessions, but we want to offer as much support as we can provide so they feel comfortable moving forward. It is possible that the program can be overwhelming for some and this session is where we will receive this information. This information gives us the opportunity to personalize the program to the individual's needs, perhaps by giving them less to do or suggesting certain practices to emphasize over other.
WEEK 5: Mindfulness of Emotions – RAIN

REFLECTION:

Some years ago, meditation teacher Michelle McDonald began to share a mindfulness tool that is especially helpful when dealing with difficult or strong emotions. Known by its acronym, RAIN, it can be accessed in almost any place or situation. It directs our attention in a clear, systematic way that cuts directly through confusion and stress. The steps give us a support in painful moments, and as we use it more regularly, it strengthens our deepest capacities.

The 4 Steps are as follows:

◊ R – Recognize what is happening
◊ A – Allow life to be just as it is
◊ I – Investigate inner experience with kindness
◊ N – Non-identification

RAIN directly deconditions the habitual ways in which we resist our moment-to-moment experience. It doesn’t matter whether we resist ‘what is’ by lashing out in anger, by having a cigarette, or by getting immersed in obsessive thinking. Our attempt to control the life within and around us actually cuts us off from our self. RAIN begins to undo these unconscious patterns as soon as we take the first step.

VIDEO:

◊ Mindfulness of Emotions - Explanation of RAIN – Value Infusion (3)
◊ Suggested Script:

R.A.I.N. is a very helpful way to undo unconscious patterns and it can be applied to any mindfulness practice.

R=Recognize what is happening. “What is happening inside me right now?” Call on your natural curiosity with a focus inward. Try to let go of all preconceptions and just listen.
DOING FROM BEING

A=Allow. Let be. We attempt to not be in conflict with any emotion. We may have a natural state of aversion, or unpleasantness or a charge toward a particular emotion, but as said earlier, once we allow the emotion to be, it can transform to something more manageable where a different quality of attention can emerge. Our relationship with the emotion can change. Many people will use a mental whisper of “Yes” or “I consent” or “let be” or “this is happening”.

I=Investigate (with kindness). Sometimes just R and A are enough to create relief, but when the opportunity arises or when R & A aren’t enough, try to get to the bottom of the emotion. Sometimes we need more, especially when we are in the midst of a difficult situation. Investigation means calling on our natural interest - the desire to know the truth - and directing a more penetrated inquiry. Asking, “What is happening inside me”? may initiate recognition but with investigation, we become much more pointed. “What is requiring the most attention?” “How am I experiencing this in my body?” “What am I believing?” “What does this feeling want from me?” You may find all kinds of things under the surface, such as very deep-seeded core beliefs and these beliefs could be secretly running our lives. This is where kindness comes in to play. We can imagine that we are a child or that a loved-one comes to talk to us and is very upset. In order to find out what happened, a kind, receptive quality of attention must be offered. We must bring that same quality to our investigation.

N=Realize Non-Identification; Rest in Natural Awareness. This is a step but also a result. This means that we aren’t fused to or defined by limiting belief patterns, sensations, or stories. When we aren’t identified with small emotive self, we can rest in our natural awareness. Natural awareness actually arises spontaneously out of R.A.I.

Another way to work with the emotions is to notice how they are experienced in the body. What is the physical manifestation? Not only is it experienced by our body, but it is our body. In some cases, we wouldn’t even know what emotion we were having unless there was a physical sensation that corresponded with it. Fear manifests as tightness in
belly, lifted shoulders. Happiness manifests as softness, warmth. Sadness manifests as heaviness, droopiness. So, there's something that shifts and changes. Bring your attention to that felt sense of the emotion in the body. It's a good way of not getting caught in the story - the body isn't a story, it just is.

The body doesn't want to stay tense, it wants to relax. For those emotions that involve tension, there's a movement that the body wants to make. If the body's left alone, the body will relax. The body doesn't relax because the mind keeps reasserting its tensions or its resistance. If we can drop down into the body and feel the emotion as a physical experience, we're getting the mind out of the way and the body has a chance to open up and allow the emotion to take its course, eventually dissolving. The word “emotion” in English comes from the Latin word for motion, movement. The “e” part of the word means “out”. So, essentially emotion can translate as to “move out”. All emotions are processes that want to move out, unless they become stuck. Resentment is stuck anger. Left alone though, all emotions want to move through. This may be one of the reasons why when we experience certain emotions we say, “Well, I just have to give this some time.” If you give them time, things can sort out to some degree and take care of themselves.

If we can experience the emotion as an embodied experience, the emotional life has an easier time to move through us, to change and shift. These shifts happen in different ways. Sometimes emotions resolve and quiet down and at other times emotions get stronger before they become free. Say at some point you feel a little bit of irritation, and then that irritation, because you're present for it, explodes like a huge geyser of fury. The fury was very deep inside all the time and finally it had a chance to come out. This isn't a completely linear process at all. We don't just become mindful and then everything is automatically better. But the wisdom we gain, the inner movement that's allowed, the trust in the practice of mindfulness, can go in all kinds of different directions. If we want to practice mindfulness, we must have the courage to see what mindfulness uncovers. We
can consider this part of a healing or cleansing process. Stay present and allow the movement to go its natural course.

This week we begin another informal practice called Mindful Commuter Check-In. With this practice, we are taking another normal daily activity and staking a mindful claim to it. Depending on how you commute to work will depend on how the practice works. If you drive a car or ride a bicycle (or a similar independent means of transportation), you will, upon arriving at the vehicle, take your seat, close your eyes, take a few deep mindful breaths, feel the steering wheel or handle bars, feel your feet on the ground and your seat, and then get on with the commute. It may take just a few seconds or perhaps a minute. Whether in a hurry or not, upon entering and before exiting, perform the practice. If travelling communally in public transport or car-pooling, you’ll do the same thing, only without the same control. Perhaps when arriving, social niceties must be performed, but once comfortable, go through the same process of breathing and feeling. It doesn’t have to be a major display, in fact, someone on the outside may not even notice you doing anything. It can be very subtle.

FORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Mindfulness of Emotion practice from Week 4

◊ RAIN (as needed)

RECORDING:

◊ Guided RAIN Meditation

◊ Suggested Script:

R: As a strong emotion begins to arise, gently turn toward it, become present with it. Experience the emotion in a non-judgmental and open way. Just be with it. You may also notice the urge to turn away, to distract oneself. This is quite normal. Choose to stay.

-Tune in to the direct experience of what is happening in the body and mind. How does the emotion manifest in the body? What thoughts or stories accompany the emotion?
DOING FROM BEING

- It can be helpful to mentally label the emotion. For example, “I am experiencing stress right now” or “I am experiencing overwhelm in this moment”. This can create some separation from the emotion. Being mindful is different than what we are being mindful of. This recognition can create space around the emotion, making it more workable.

A: Let the emotion be as it is. Acknowledge and accept the present moment reality, as it is. This doesn’t mean we have to like the situation, rather we simply drop our mental resistance to what is actually happening.

- Again, notice any resistance to what is happening and allow anyway. Turning away or suppressing makes the emotion much stronger and can create future pain. The emotion will run its course but we must allow it to do so, as painful as we may believe it to be.

- You may even say to yourself “Yes” or “I am allowed to experience this”.

I: To continue past R and A is optional, but if you would like to continue, please do.

- I’m going to ask a series of questions, for inquiry: “Why do I feel like this?” “What may have caused the emotion?” “Are there physiological factors (such as being hungry or not getting enough sleep) that could have influenced this emotion?” “What do I need right now?” “What actions can I take to support myself at this time?”

- These questions help to bring more wisdom into how we feel. With more wisdom, we have more space to respond appropriately, rather than reacting out of the strong emotion.

N: Who you are is not defined by your thoughts and emotions. You are not your mind and you are not your emotions. Notice that you can be aware of thoughts and emotions. What is aware? What knows? This awareness, this knowing is what we want to identify with.

- When we realize and practice awareness, we become free! We realize that we aren’t stuck with how we feel. There may be a theme to our thoughts and emotions which makes them seem permanent, but once we begin to look more closely, we notice the illusion that they present. You are not your thoughts and emotions, you are the awareness itself.

- However stormy our emotions get, there is always I still, silent place. Behind the clouds, the sun is always shining.

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

- Bed Breathing
- Mindful Commuter Check-in
- 3 Mindful Meals
DOING FROM BEING

◊ Value Infusion (3)
◊ RAIN (as needed)

JOURNAL:

◊ Record what stands out from your daily formal practice
◊ What stands out from the informal practice and Value Infusion?
◊ Did you use RAIN informally?
◊ Gratitude

One-on-One meetings continue...
WEEK 6: Mindfulness of Thoughts

REFLECTION:

Many people think that the point of meditation is to stop thinking – to have a completely blank mind. If this were true, this chair we’re sitting on would be much more evolved than we are, because it has absolutely zero thoughts! Joking aside, though we may have periods where our mind becomes clear, this isn’t the point of meditation. Thoughts are a very important part of life, and mindfulness practice shouldn’t be a struggle against them. It is much more useful to make friends with our thoughts, then thinking about them being distractions. In mindfulness, we are not stopping thinking, rather we are overcoming our preoccupation we have with them.

Mindfulness is not topical, we aren’t contemplating, we are non-judgmentally observing our life in all aspects. In moments when thinking predominates, mindfulness is the clear and silent awareness that notices. Thoughts can come and go as they will, we as mindfulness practitioners can choose not to engage with them. We observe the arising and falling away of thought, unconcerned with the content.

The following poem by Rumi I found immensely insightful:

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.
Strong bouts of thinking are fueled largely by identification and preoccupation with thoughts. By clearly observing our thinking, we step outside the field of identification. Thinking will usually then soften to a calm and unobtrusive stream.

**VIDEO:**

- Mindfulness of Thoughts – Value Infusion (4)
- Suggested Script:

  There are two ways in which attention or mindfulness can free us. The first way is that we start to see what is actually going on in our mind. We can see the ways in which we get caught - the ways we are holding on or resisting experience. Seeing this clearly allows us to begin to let go – to relax and create space in life. If I notice that I’m clenching my jaw, I can release it. It’s really that simple. When I know that my actions are from a conditioned habit pattern, I can choose an appropriate and intelligent response.

  When we get really caught up, as when we’re in an argument, or when we’re waiting in line at the BMV, we may notice that we are standing awkwardly, or holding our body in an uncomfortable way, this can add to our frustration. We’re in a situation that we don’t necessarily like and in an uncomfortable body position. When we notice this, we can change it, and usually our whole attitude changes. So that’s the first one -we must begin to see and understand our behavior.

  The second way is in the attention itself. Mindfulness itself does not cling. What we are cultivating is a very simple, open awareness. As our awareness gets stronger, we begin to notice that there is a difference between our awareness and what we are aware of. If I am clenching or holding in my body, then I’m really concerned about this thing I’m holding on to. When I pay attention, chances are, my attention is tangled up in my desire, my wanting, it’s in there, mixing with it - attention and desire. But as we become more mindful, we start to see that mindfulness is separate from what we are mindful of. Once
DOING FROM BEING

we see this, we begin to understand that the nature of awareness is freedom. We don’t necessarily have to let go in order to sense this freedom or spaciousness or independence. As we grow in mindfulness a whole other way of being opens up. We aren’t beholden to the ups and downs of our desires, but rather our life begins to be lived more intentionally. Our current state of being leads to our way of doing.

The mindfulness we are developing includes all aspects of experience - breath, body, emotions, thoughts, the world. Sights, sounds, smells, everything. There is nothing outside the scope of awareness. This brings a certain amount of sacredness to life because nothing is seen as outside of ourselves. Many meditation teachers speak of ‘Big Mind’, a mind that holds all – an awareness that has the capacity to hold all experience, without excluding or shutting down or closing off or pushing away anything at all. This doesn’t mean we can’t say no, this just means that we keep a sense of open-heartedness at all times. We become an ocean that accepts all rivers.

In the 60’s there was an American who was practicing mindfulness in India and someone attacked her in the streets. Luckily, she managed to break free and run away. She went to her meditation teacher and said, “What should I have done?” He said, “With all the loving-kindness you can muster up, you hit the fellow over the head with your umbrella.” Perhaps it’s best not to go around hitting people over the head, but the principle is this: you can have an open heart and mind while making intelligent and appropriate choices in the world about how to act. You might say no to someone or lock your door when you’re not home, but you don’t close your heart or your awareness to it. In Buddhist thought, the ability to leave attention free and open while including everything is considered to be a sacred way of living. As we practice mindfulness more, our mindfulness becomes stronger and we are set free from the object we are mindful of.

A common pattern in our experience is if we have a strong sensation in the body, such as pain, we react to it - we’re against it, we clenched around it, we try to push it away – we have all these feelings of self-pity, anger, or despair that can arise simply because we
experienced a strong sensation. All of the strong reactions become connected, entangled with our sense of paying attention, of being aware. But, as mindfulness gets stronger, the mindfulness itself begins to stand independently from the sensation. The analogy that is used in Buddhism is that of a lotus flower. A lotus flower grows up out of the muddy water, but as it blooms it’s untouched by the mud. You have a beautiful white lotus that is sparkly clean. It’s rooted in the mud, but it’s not touched by the mud. It remains pure. As the mindfulness, the awareness, gets stronger and stronger, it has this feeling of being lifted out, of becoming free from the mud. We become more free of our attachments and what we cling to, the more mindful we become.

In the spirit of being all-inclusive, a very important part of mindfulness is being mindful of thinking. There are meditation techniques where we try and stop the thinking and concentrate on one object, such as the breath, but we are beginning to become more inclusive, subtler in our awareness. Some days, when the mind is very scattered and busy, more embodied practices, such as the practices from the first few weeks may be more appropriate, and on other days when the mind is more settled, we can do subtler things. This is the beauty of practice! It is adaptable to any situation or mind state. The goal is to be mindful at all times.

FORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Mindfulness of Thoughts

RECORDING:

◊ Mindfulness of Thoughts

◊ Suggested Script:

- Take a meditative posture and gently close your eyes. Give some attention to your spine, perhaps sitting up a little straighter, more alert, than you normally would. This more alert spine gives you a core of inner strength around which you can relax.

- Take a few slow, long, deep breaths. As you breathe in, expand outward, stretch your ribcage, your shoulders, back body, and then as you exhale allowing whatever possible to relax around that core of the spine. Keep the spine alert. As you exhale, soften the shoulders. As you exhale, allow the belly to be soft. And as you exhale, see
if you can soften the muscles of your face. Then letting your breath return to normal, scan through your body. See if there’s some way that you can set your body at ease.

- Now enter into the world of your breathing, into the way your body experiences breathing. For now, let go of your thoughts and concerns, so that you can better feel and sense the experience of breathing. Breathing in, breathing out...

- Give yourself over to your breathing completely, so that the breath has a chance to settle and calm you. The breath can help center you, as you center yourself around the breath.

- If you notice yourself thinking, for the next couple of minutes, let go of that and re-establish yourself in the breath. Just this.

- Now, with a certain degree of deliberateness and calm, let go of paying attention to breathing, and now simply notice when you’re thinking. You are welcome to think. There is no need to stop thinking now. But then, as you’re thinking, you are clearly aware that thinking is happening. Rather than letting go of thinking, look at your thoughts directly, head on.

- If your thoughts fade away as you watch them, just wait until they come back or go back to your breath until thinking begins again. When thinking comes back, look directly at it, see that it’s happening, be aware of it.

- Very softly, whisper in the mind, as you are aware of thinking occurring, label it or name it, “thinking, thinking.” Very softly.

- The content of the thoughts isn’t important for this particular meditation, only the simple act of thinking itself. But, as you pay attention to thinking in meditation, you might notice other aspects of the process of thinking besides the content. So, for example, if you’re thinking in words or in images. What is the quality of the inner voice? What is the quality of the pictures that you see? The inner voice that thinks, is it soft and gentle, or is it harsh and judgmental? Adamant? Is the inner voice critical? Accepting or, easy-going? Is there a great energy expenditure to the thinking? Is it subtle?

- Are there any emotions connected to what you are thinking about? The process of thinking, is it connected with or comes out of any emotion? If there is, then quietly note the emotion. Include that in the awareness.

- If thinking goes away as you watch it, relax into the space that’s left behind. Relax into the spaciousness of the quiet mind.

- And then as you notice your thinking, notice if there is any physical side to thinking. Is there any pressure, tension, or tightness in the body that could be connected to thinking? It could be pressure in the brain, in the forehead, tension around the eyes,
the jaws, holding in the shoulders, the chest. Is there some part of the body that feels activated in support of thinking, as part of your thinking?

- Then is it possible to relax, soften any tension or pressure connected to thinking? Perhaps as you exhale, relaxing the thinking brain, like you’d relax a muscle.

- Now can you let go of your thinking enough to re-center yourself on your breathing. Letting go of your thoughts, letting them recede to the background, and enter into the world of your breathing again. Be with the breathing. See if you can stay connected to a whole series of breaths in a row.

- Take a couple of deep breaths, and when you are ready, you can open your eyes.

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Bed Breathing

◊ Mindful Commuter Check-In

◊ 3 Mindful Meals

◊ Value Infusion (4)

JOURNAL:

◊ Record what stands out from your daily formal practice

◊ What stands out from the informal practice and Value Infusion?

◊ What did you notice about thinking?

◊ Gratitude
WEEK 7: Mindfulness of Mind

REFLECTION:

An ancient Indian story tells of the great god Brahma, overseer of the heavenly realm. He’s not just a great god but the greatest god, at the very top of India's mythological pantheon. One day, a yakksha (a little runty troll) came and sat on Brahma's great throne when he was away, travelling. This was a very big deal! The other gods in the court were very angered by this act. A little runty yakksha should NOT be sitting on the great god Brahma's throne! The gods approached the yakksha and said, “you must get down from that throne, at once!”. As they said this, the little yakksha began to grow bigger in size. This made the gods even more angry and they became even more emphatic in their demands, but the yakksha wouldn’t move. “Who are you to sit up there?” The gods became louder and louder and as they ranted and raved, the yakksha got bigger and bigger until he became a glorious, beautiful, giant yakksha. This confused the gods, so they went to find Brahma and told him the whole story. Brahma said, “I know exactly what to do”. Brahma returned, approached the yakksha, and bowed deeply. “It’s so nice to see you. I hope you’re comfortable up there. You should come visit more often, my dear friend”, said Brahma, reverently. At this, the yakksha began to shrink, getting smaller and smaller until he finally went “poof” and disappeared. Brahma returned to his throne. He said to his court, “that yakksha was an anger-eating yakksha. The angrier you get, the bigger and more beautiful it becomes. What you must do is bring kindness to it and then it goes away - it feeds on anger.

This is a simple, pretty ridiculous story, but it speaks to a great truth. Do you have your own anger-eating yakksha? What do you feed, and what gets bigger and more beautiful as you get angry?

This fable points to our relationship to our experience. How we relate to our experience has a massive impact on our lives. And it not only feeds our expression of the feeling, but it also conditions our mind and heart, and how we relate to the world. It begins
to color everything we do. We can be angry with one person, but it fills our entire mood with anger. We get into our car and suddenly everyone is a terrible driver but us – we become irritated, sometimes to an absurd degree. We’re not only feeding the moment but also a habit pattern.

There are other habits that we can feed, however. This is actually what this program is all about. We can create the life that we want by focusing on the way we want to be. Our values, through practice (Being), eventually begin to express themselves through our Doing. This is good news! When we practice kindness and peace, they begin to color our perspective and experience. If we are feeling relaxed and generous, this attitude affects how we see others and also how we see ourselves. This is how we condition our mind for the better.

**VIDEO:**

- Mindfulness of Mind
- Suggested Script:

  *The role of mindfulness is to place us in the present moment, and to be relaxed enough, calm enough in this moment to see the impulses and motivations that arise. It leads us to a way of being, where what we want to say, what we want to do, what we want to think is intentional. Our way of our being becomes our way of doing. Life begins to slow down to the point where we are able to track our impulses and make a choice whether to act on them or not. If we don’t slow down, or have strong enough mindfulness, then we don’t even see that there is a choice. Psychologist and holocaust survivor Victor Frankl famously said, “Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom”.*

  *Think of a situation where you are walking down the street and you smell coffee, which ignites a strong craving within you, and the next thing you know, you are holding a steaming hot cup of coffee in your hand. Was there a choice? Of course, there was a choice, but typically when in a situation like this, our mindfulness goes out the window and*
we don’t notice the pull of desire and it is acted upon in an almost trance-like state. This can occur even more clearly when a strong emotion such as anger arises. We can say things so spontaneously in anger that we would never choose to say, but we can become so worked-up, so triggered that things just come out of our mouths, uncontrolled.

In these situations, we don’t see choice. So many of us have no idea that there is a choice and if we aren’t able to see it, then we don’t have it. We aren’t free. If we see the choice, then we have a choice. This is one of the aims of mindfulness - to broaden our view in order to see how free we can become. This is the doing that comes from being!

Mindfulness positions us to make better choices.

Mindfulness of Mind is the theme of the week which could also be thought of as mindfulness of attitude, mood, or state. Before moving forward though, we must distinguish moods from emotions so we can recognize and be mindful of their difference to enable us to see each one more clearly.

Psychologist Paul Eckman has performed research concerning facial micro-expressions which has led to the ability to read emotions simply through watching the unconscious micro-expressions expressed in normal conversations. In his book, Emotions Revealed, he makes an interesting distinction between moods and emotions. Help us distinguish the two and open up a new arena of mindfulness. He says:

“This is a good place to distinguish emotions from moods. All of us have both of them but they are different. The obvious difference is that emotions are much shorter than moods. Moods can last a whole day, sometimes two days, while emotions can last a minute, sometimes seconds. A mood activates specific emotions. When we are irritable, we are seeking an opportunity to become angry. We interpret the world that requires or permits us to become angry. Another way to distinguish moods from emotions is that once an emotion arises and we have become aware of it, we can usually point to the event that caused it. Rarely do we know why we are in a mood. It just seems to happen to us.”
When we see someone who is angry walking toward us, we can sense it, likewise with someone who is light and carefree. We can sense their state. This is Mindfulness of Mind. It concerns our overall mood and the attitude with which we approach life. We have the ability to see this attitude ourselves, but it can also be invisible, especially when it becomes a significant aspect of our personality. Just as a fish in water doesn’t know it’s swimming or if someone gets used to their car having a dirty windshield, we can fail to notice it, until someone comes along and says, “Hey fish! You’re swimming!” or “You really need to wash your car”.

It’s the nature of being human to have problems. Does anyone not have problems? Problems are part of life. You have one problem, then another problem. Right now, maybe I have a car problem, hopefully next week it won’t be there. But then I’m sure I’ll have another problem; something else will come along. Some difficulty, something that I’ll have to take care of.

If we labeled our problems with the letter X [like in mathematics, equations may contain a variable X, which can represent any number], what can fill that space of X can change often, but the attitude or relationship that we have toward our problems can be constant. Some of us have common default attitudes every time there’s a problem: “Oh boy, not again, this is impossible” or “I’m not going to pay attention, I’m going to escape” or “I’m going to lash out and blame someone” or “I’m going to get depressed” or “This is too much” or “Oh boy, I love problems! I love problem solving! It’s like a puzzle, they’re great!” So, there’s X that changes all the time, and what changes less often is how we might relate to various problems. It’s easy to be blinded by the problems, and not notice the relationship we have with the problems. We may even have underlying, pervasive attitudes that we carry that affect everything we touch.

If a fly lands on an ant, it’s probably a big deal for the ant. The fly is heavy and bigger than the ant. The ant can’t move around easily and can’t get into its home because
this big thing is stuck on it. If the same fly lands on an elephant, the elephant could not care less. When you have problems, are you more like the ant, or more like the elephant?

To be sure, there are times when we are fragile, tense, vulnerable, upset, or any number of moods, and the smallest little thing can push us over the edge. Sometimes we’re like the ant and at other times we’re like the elephant. The attitude in which we hold ourselves, or the way in which we feel about ourselves, or the mood or state that we find ourselves in can have a major impact on how we relate to our world, our problems, and even the positive circumstances. It’s a variable that can be adjusted and changed. The mood, state or attitude, how we relate to things, how we are in relationship to all things is not fixed.

FORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Mindfulness of Mind/Mood & Breath Practice

MEDITATION RECORDING:

◊ Mindfulness of Mind/Mood

◊ Suggested Script:

- Take a comfortable, alert posture and gently close the eyes if you’d like. It’s helpful in the beginning of a sit to spend a little bit of time getting into your posture - sway back and forth, sideways, wiggle the spine, etc. Feel how the weight your body might move through the spine. Notice how the structure of the spine can support the weight of the body instead of the muscles.

- Take a few long, slow, deep breaths. As you breathe in deeply, feel the ribcage, shoulders, and belly stretch, almost like a massage from the inside. As you exhale, just relax, let go, and settle in. Notice how good it feels to breathe.

- Deep breath in... Long breath out...

- Let your breath return to normal. Take a few moments to scan through your body to see if there are any obvious places of holding or tension that you can. Sometimes
the tension doesn’t want to let go. In that case, attempt to create space around the tension.

- Become aware of the body’s experience of breathing. How does the body breathe? Feeling how the body expands and contracts - parts of the body lift and fall – the sensation of air entering and exiting the mouth or nostrils.

- Let go, as best you can, of your thoughts and concerns from the day in order to settle into the experience of breathing. As if the breathing is home – the most comfortable place you can be.

- When you notice that you’re drifting off in thought, notice it, be relaxed about it. Drifting happened, it’s not a big deal. Without commentary or judgment, begin again with your breathing. Begin again being aware. Breathe in and Breathe out.

[silence]

- As you sit here, what’s your overall mood or state? What’s the overall, general state of being? There are many things you might notice. Are you tired or alert? Do you feel contracted, or expanded? Calm or agitated? Fuzzy or clear, crisp? Anxious or relaxed? Interested or bored? Patient or impatient?

- As you are aware of this overall state, how does it affect you? How does it affect how you see what’s going on and how you relate to it? How are you influenced by the state that you’re in?

- As you’re mindful of this, can you shift your identity; shift what you identify yourself with? Can you shift from your mood or your attitude to the mindfulness itself? To the awareness that knows and recognizes the state you are in?

[silence]

- Now, shift focus a little bit, with whatever is happening now, what is your attitude towards that? How are you relating; what is your relationship to what is happening with meditation for you or the situation you’re in now, the thoughts you have, the
feelings you have? What’s the relationship or the attitude? Are you for it, or against it? Are you liking it, or not liking it? Are you enjoying it or are you resisting? Is there a wanting or not wanting? What’s your attitude towards what’s happening? It might even be your attitude to me giving you this question.

- Now, can you shift your identity; shift yourself from being the attitude, believing the attitude, to being mindful of it? Can you step out away from it and watch it?

- Take a deep breath or two. Return more fully to your breathing. For the last few minutes, just stay with your breathing as best you can. Don’t let yourself be swept away through your attitude, your mood, your state. Stay with your breath.

INFORMAL PRACTICE:

◊ Bed Breathing
◊ Mindful Commuter Check-In
◊ Mindful Meals (as many as you’d like)
◊ Value Infusion

JOURNAL:

◊ Record what stands out from your daily formal practice
◊ What stands out from the Informal Practice (especially mood) and Value Infusion?
◊ Gratitude
REFLECTION:

This practice may seem overwhelming, that there is so much to keep track of. It may seem as if the instructions I’ve been giving are prescriptive. “If this happens, I have to do this, and for this, this practice. I have to keep track of my body, my breath, my thoughts, my feelings, attitude, everything, all the time, Ahhhhh!!!” But this isn’t it at all. Rather than prescriptive, it’s helpful to think of these practices as descriptive. Meaning, that if you are present, these are the things in your life that you will notice. It’s up to us to understand it. It’s up to us to be open and to be here. Then we will notice our breath, our body, our feelings, our thoughts, etc. without trying. We will be familiar with the territory and we will just notice, naturally.

Reread the ‘Guest House’ poem from Week 6. The description of being human is that of a one-room house. The one-room house has 5 windows and a door. These are our senses, with the 6th sense being the mind that observes. Imagine that in the middle of the house there is an easy chair and you’re sitting there, relaxed, at ease, nothing to do, nothing to get, nothing to be, just sitting. The windows and the door are open, in comes a stray cat through the front door. It peaks in, and then goes away. A bird lands in the windowsill, looks at you and flies away. A squirrel runs across the door and you see some deer in the yard. Various animals come and go. Neighbors walk by. They all come and go. You could stay in your chair and just watch, or you could get up and follow something out into the yard. Or you could get up and peer out the door or get involved. The instructions for meditation are for us to just stay and watch, letting things appear. Let them be. Notice when objects appear and when they disappear. The emphasis is on being at ease. There is nothing we are trying to accomplish, we aren’t forcing anything.
VIDEO:

◊ Going Forward – Two ways to Practice – Mindfulness leading to connection

◊ Suggested Script:

We have so much more freedom, wisdom, and less stress when we are present for our life in a careful way. Life unfolds more gradually, and we are less phased by the ups and downs of daily experience. This is what meditation is teaching us. We are present for our breath, which can be so profound and may hold very deep aspects to it. We are present to our body. We live in our body, connected. We are present and connected to our emotional life, but not entangled. We are present for our cognitive life, our thoughts, memories, dreams, but not entangled in them. Where do we go from here? Is there more to meditation than just being present? There are two ways to move forward: deepen practice in daily life and develop more concentration and stability, together with mindfulness.

In daily life, the metaphor of the chair, mentioned in the reflection, works a little bit, but it also fails in that the suggestion is that we are to remain passive all the time. We just sit there and let life happen. But mindfulness isn’t about withdrawing. Mindfulness is actually allowing us to connect more intimately with life - to be present for our life as it’s actually happening. The most profound part of our practice is in its application. We shouldn’t limit our practice to meditation. In fact, the line between meditation practice and daily life is an arbitrary one. There should be no real difference. It is the same mind we are working with.

Mindfulness reminders such as signs, guideposts (car, computer, phone, traffic lights [what is happening as I’m waiting for the light to turn green], doorframe) can be very helpful. The idea here is that every time we see or hear one of the guideposts, it’s a reminder to come to the body, the breath. Our life becomes practice! This may seem burdensome, but it eventually becomes quite effortless. As we bring more presence to lives,
we give ourselves more choices. When we see that we have choices, we can make more wise decisions. Being leads to doing – this is intentional living.

Mindfulness in conversation is a very good practice. There is a lot to be learned about ourselves when we interact with others. How are we breathing? How do we hold our body? Am I listening or thinking how I’m going to respond? Am I talking too much? Am I trying to live up to an ideal or am I being authentic? All of this fall under the category of mindfulness. Mindfulness of speech ties right into this. Why am I saying this? How am I saying this? What are my motivations? Should I say this? Why do I feel the need to talk right now?

Being present for ourselves and noticing what our thoughts or feelings are, gives us tons of information to work with, and sometimes this information will save us from making mistakes. It’s said that it takes years to make a good friend and one sentence to lose a friend. Be careful, be present, and make wise choices.

Another way to deepen our meditation practice is to develop stronger concentration skills. Concentration provides stability and support, so that we aren’t just mindful, we’re also stable. We have all probably been with someone who is partially present, and there’s a big difference between this and being with someone who is fully present and connected.

How do we develop more concentration? Practice regularly. The regularity helps and supports the mind. The more we do it, the easier it gets. In our first group session, we talked about neuroplasticity – the brain’s ability to change and adapt, depending upon the lifestyle we choose to undertake.

Retreat practice is another way. I know this can be very difficult for some but it’s worth it to delve into uninterrupted. When we don’t have the responsibilities of our daily lives, we can get very deep into our conditioned patterns and see our lives in a whole new light.
Doing from Being

Mindfulness + Concentration. Concentration isn’t only about stability and clarity, but also about depth of understanding. One of the major aspects of our experience that it helps us see through are the concepts we tend to use to interpret our life. Much of life is filtered through concepts and ideas. Many of them are innocent enough and appropriate but some are unnecessary and unhelpful. There is a lot of pain in our society due to how people see each other through concepts and judgments. We have so many opinions of how things should be. Opinions, concepts, stories, the mind is a story-making factory. Part of the function of mindfulness is to help us cut through all the concepts, all the “shoulds”, and all the interpretations, so we can see what is underneath it all. Concentration helps us penetrate our experience and mindfulness helps us observe what’s there.

It’s a very freeing experience drop concepts that aren’t useful, all of the comparisons and judgments and ideas and shoulds and shouldn’ts. It’s freeing and it creates a much higher quality of being. It gives us a choice about which values to live by. Unless we’re mindful, some of these concepts just seem to be how life is naturally and we just go with it. They’re all constructions of the mind and it’s so freeing to cut through them. We emphasize values in this program because many of us have lived by values that we didn’t choose. By now, the values that we have chosen are sinking in, and you may notice a difference.

Formal Practice:

◊ Choiceless Awareness & Breath Practice

Recording:

◊ Mindfulness of All Phenomena

◊ Suggested Script:

- Take an alert posture. In the long term, and you may have noticed over the past 8 weeks, you actually become more relaxed in your body if you have an upright posture. It may seem counterintuitive, but the body adapts to our lifestyle the muscles strengthen and become more supportive over time. Notice your spine and let your spine be a little more lifted, not aggressively so, but perhaps more than
normal. Some find it helpful to wiggle around or rock back and forth a bit to help settle into the body, to create more connected.

- Take a few long slow deep breaths, using the big in-breaths as a way of connecting to yourself physically and as you exhale, relax more fully, let go, settle in.

- Much of what mindfulness is about is bringing the mind and body together, at the same place and time. If you’re thinking about earlier today or what’s happening tomorrow and your mind is elsewhere, it’s very difficult to bring your body to the past or the future, if not impossible. But what we can do is bring the mind here into the body so they are working together. Mind and body in the same place at the same time.

- Let yourself breathe normally. It can be helpful to scan through your body to see if there are any obvious places you can soften or relax. You can soften your belly, so the belly hangs forward. Soften around the shoulders and the shoulder blades. If there is any holding in the area of the heart, you can soften around that. You may carry tension in the muscles of the face, the jaw, the forehead. Relax if you can.

- Keep the spine lifted but see if from the inside you can ease up a bit. Be easy with any discomfort there is in the body. Hold the body and mind lightly.

- Connect to your breath. Notice how your body experiences the breath. See if you can just be with it, naturally. Track one breath after another. Allow the breath to help settle you, quiet you, bring you into presence with as little effort as possible. When the mind wanders off in thought, gently bring it back to the breath. Like a small flat rock, slowly sinking to the bottom of a pond, let your body and mind settle slowly. Here and now.

(silence)

- Stay with your breath, offering it the quality of presence that you would offer a good friend. Listen with care.

(silence)

- Continue to stay with your breath. When another experience becomes compelling or arises strongly, see if you can simply allow it to arise at the door or the window of your awareness. Let it be there. Be present for it, however long it wants to stay, be present. When it goes away, let it go. The sound of traffic arises, gets strong, it comes into your awareness, note it, be aware of it, let it go. Sensations of your body, feelings, and emotions. Don’t get involved in the thoughts or the environmental arising, just know that they are there. Let go of them. See if you can stay at ease with whatever happening. Be aware. Be present for what is.

(silence)
- If you find yourself drifting in thought, notice how different it feels to have been drifting in thought compared to knowing your thoughts with clarity. Be present with the knowing. Whenever you can, come back to presence, to awareness, to what is. In the middle of it all, breathe in mindfully, breathe out mindfully.

(silence)

- Notice how you are and the quality of your mind. Can you notice a difference between letting the mind be whatever way it is, your attitude be whatever way it happens to be, without awareness, versus really being present and knowing this is how it is?

(silence)

◊ 4-Part Awareness Outline

This meditation is a very valuable one that is extremely versatile. It can be used in a longer, more formal practice but I have found it most useful as a brief practice used throughout the day because it can be done in as little as a few seconds. You may use it when you arrive at your desk, arrive in a meeting, visit the restroom, really wherever. I know of some who do it every time they hear a phone ring or every time they hear someone sneeze. You can get as creative as you’d like. It’s a nice way to keep a continuity of presence and eventually it becomes almost automatic. The outline is designed in a progression and the last step includes all of the steps. Think getting more and more inclusive in your experience as you move through the steps.

1) **Attend to the breath.** The first step invites us to attend to the breath. Just as we did in the beginning of the course. Notice the quality and speed of the breath. Very narrow focus

2) **Attend on the body.** The second step invites us to attend to the body. Sensations, thoughts, etc. Feel feet on the ground, the chair beneath you, the space around. What is the experience of the body like?

3) **Attend to the environment.** The third step invites us to notice the environment – what the senses pick up. Sounds, light, temperature, smells, etc. Feel yourself as part of this environment.
4) **Attend to all it all.** This step includes all of the steps. Simply be without reacting. Breath, Body, Environment.

Now, get back to work!

**INFORMAL PRACTICE:**
- Bed Breathing
- Mindful Commuter Check-In
- Mindful Meals (as many as you can)
- Value Infusion

**JOURNAL:**
- Gratitude
The purpose of Group Facilitation 2 is to give all participants an opportunity to share their story and to have a formal closing to the program. Mindfulness practice and presentations will be interspersed, giving opportunities for reflection, active listening, and community building.

The presentations will consist of participants reflection on the 4 archetypal values and how they played out in their lives as well as their personal journey through the program, giving specific examples/stories. They will also be asked to describe how mindfulness practice impacted their lives and the people around them. In addition to this, there will be a brief question and answer period. The presentation should be no longer than 10 minutes with a 5-minute Q&A.

The presentations are a journey in and of themselves. They allow the participants to voice their experience which allows it to sink in even deeper. When they tell their stories, there is a broadening of perspective, where they can look back, see their journey, and recognize its impact. Even if they decide the practice isn’t for them, it is guaranteed to make a tremendous impact.
DOING FROM BEING

Creating Organizational Integrity through Mindful Self-Leadership

AGENDA

- 8:30-9am – Breakfast
- 9-9:15am – Meditation
- 9:15-10am – Check-In
- 10:00-12pm - Presentations
- 12-1:15pm – Mindful Lunch
- 1:15-1:30pm – Meditation
- 1:30-3pm – Presentations
- 3-3:30 – Strategies Moving Forward
- 3:30-4pm – Closing/Graduation