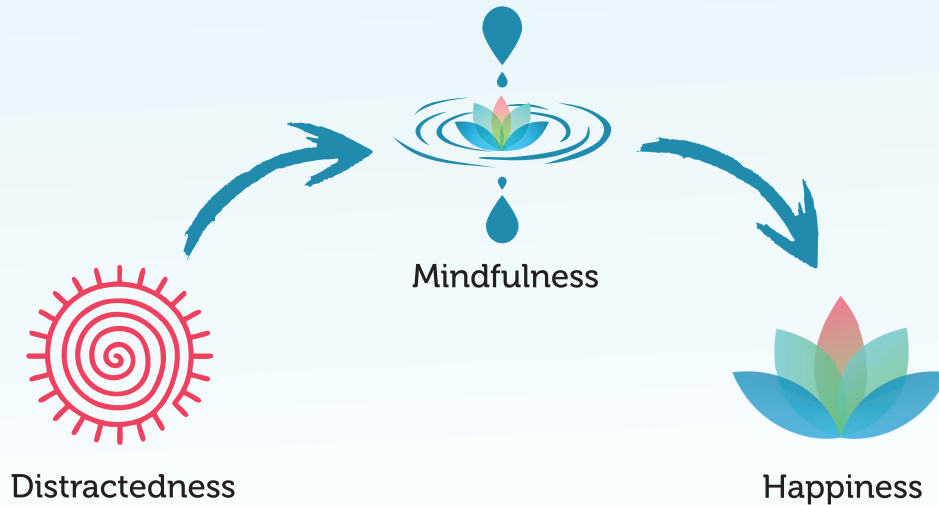


The Mindfulness Model

How Meditation Can Transform Us



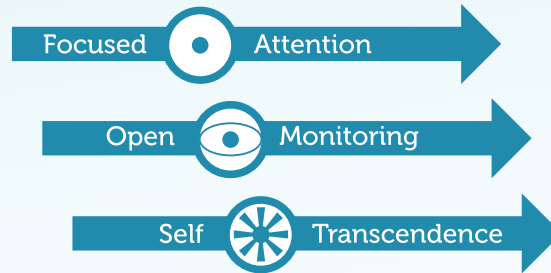
Manoj Jain M.D.
Mark W. Muesse Ph.D.

The Mindfulness Model

Too often, our lives are filled with distractedness and confusion. However, it does not have to be this way. Practicing meditation allows us to transform ourselves towards a life of happiness and contentment. This booklet shows a simple path to move from distractedness to mindfulness to happiness.



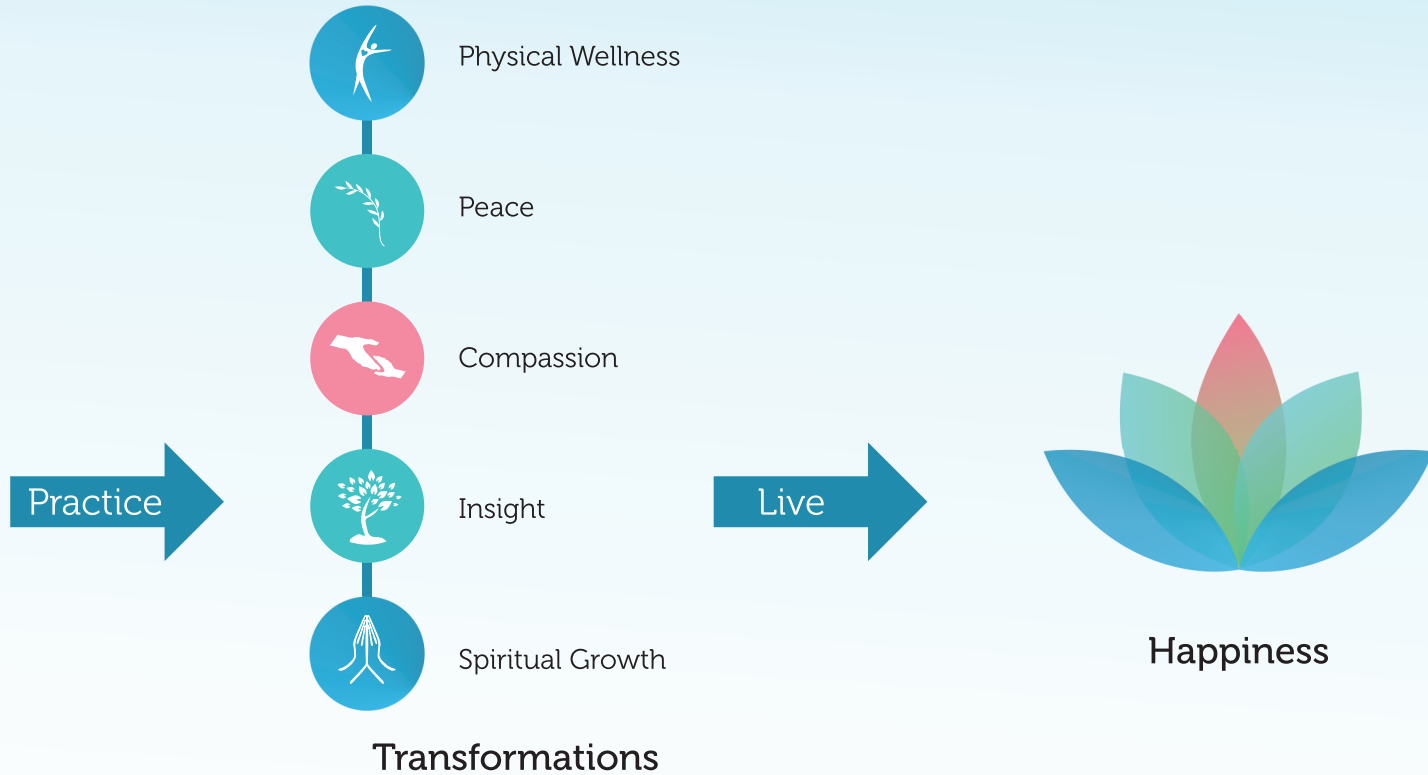
Distractedness



Meditation



Mindfulness





Distractedness

When we are distracted, our mind wanders and we lack awareness and insight. With the techniques of meditation, we can change that.

Distractedness

Our ordinary mental condition is distractedness, in which our minds constantly churn up swirls of thoughts entangled with comparisons and judgments. In distractedness, our minds leap from thought to thought, subject to subject, always seeking something new and often responding without reflecting. Our minds replay the past and rehearse the future, seemingly out of our control.

This mental condition makes it very difficult to be fully attentive to the experiences of our lives. We can't turn off our thoughts, and we can't always make our minds do what we want. Voices, images, emotions, sensations, and other mental phenomena seem to arise unwelcomed. Far from being in control of our minds, our minds seem to be in control of us.

Our distractedness comes from a failure to understand the mind and how it works; most of us are simply not trained to observe the operation of our mind. We often feel overwhelmed with the details of daily life and pay little attention to our mental and emotional well being. And the cost of that inattentiveness is restlessness, distress, and, ultimately, unhappiness.



Mindfulness

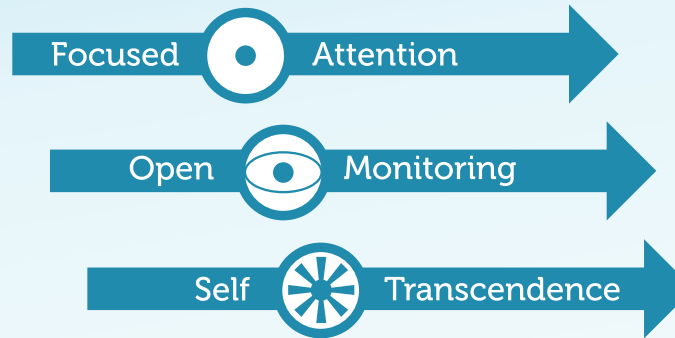
To overcome distractedness, we can realize mindfulness.
Mindfulness is moment-to-moment awareness without judgment.

Mindfulness

Fortunately, the dynamics that lead to distractedness can be gently redirected. we can cultivate the quality of mindfulness and mindfulness is not a state of mind but a way of being. develop mental states that will be conducive to our happiness. Mindfulness is a particular kind of awareness in which one is deliberately paying attention to what is occurring as it is happening without the usual overlay of commentary and conceptualizing.

Mindfulness allows us to become keen observers of ourselves and gradually transform the way our minds operate. With practice, mindfulness makes us more attentive to our experience and less captive to the whims that toss our minds around. Because we're not judging our experiences as right or wrong, good or bad, mindfulness is also characterized by a high degree of openness, receptivity, and inquisitiveness. With this open and attentive attitude, we're able to perceive ourselves more clearly, observing the dynamics and details that often escape our notice.

Mindfulness is not about removing thoughts from our minds—not even judgmental thoughts. It is about knowing when we're thinking and recognizing thoughts as momentary events that float through our minds. Because mindfulness is based on the universal human faculty of awareness, we've all had brief, spontaneous experiences of mindfulness. We may have experienced mindfulness when walking along a beach or hiking on a mountain top, when our minds feel clear and we are simply enjoying the present moment. The perception of slowed time in these instances is related to the sharpening of conscious activity as the mind frees itself from distractions and judgements and achieves moment to moment awareness. The lucid memories of these occasions are based on heightened awareness.



Types of Meditation

There are three types of meditation:

Focused Attention - concentrating on a word or activity such as breathing.

Open Monitoring - observing our thoughts without discrimination.

Self-Transcendence - experiencing pure consciousness.

Meditation

Meditation is a learned skill that fortifies mindfulness and cultivates the transformations that lead to physical wellness, peace, compassion, insight, and spiritual growth. Meditation is to mindfulness as exercising is to physical strength. Meditation is a workout for the mind.

Over the last four millennia, sages from the East and West have invented and refined hundreds of meditation techniques. These practices include activities such as attending to the breath, walking, visualizations, focusing on bodily sensations, and the repetition of words or phrases. Within this great diversity of techniques, however, all forms of meditation fall into three basic categories: (1) focused attention, (2) open monitoring, and (3) self-transcendence. Just as weightlifting is one technique to gain physical strength, focused attention is one technique to cultivate mindfulness. And just as running complements weightlifting, open monitoring supplements focused attention. These three groupings are based on different types of awareness, behavioral outcomes, and neurophysiologic and brain wave responses.

Although meditation practices fall into three distinct categories, these methods may easily transpose into each other. Concentration may become open monitoring and vice versa, and either may become transcendence. It is not unusual for a meditator to experience two or even three forms during a single meditative experience.



Focused attention is concentration or sustained attentiveness to a single activity, word, or sensation to the exclusion of other objects. Since the mind often wanders from thought to thought in unpredictable ways, focusing on a single thing helps calm mental agitation and reestablish natural serenity and clarity. Concentrating on the breath is one of the most common and effective techniques in this form of meditation. Other techniques in this category include visualizing a pleasant image, reciting mantras, and attending to sounds or silence. Scientists have measured beneficial changes in the brain waves of people who do focused attention meditation.

Whereas focused attention narrows our awareness, open monitoring allows consciousness to attend to a broader spectrum. Focused attention is like laser light shined on a single object, while open monitoring is like the radiance of the sun, whose scattered rays illuminate wide swaths of awareness. The key in open monitoring is allowing thoughts, sensations, and experiences simply to arise without evaluating, judging, or linking them to further thoughts and experiences. In this mode, we observe our thoughts and sensations as if we were watching boats passing downstream. During open monitoring, our brains exhibit changes associated with lowered anxiety and stress.





Transcendence is the experience of going beyond thought, or being conscious without an object of awareness. Some practices, for example, allow one to achieve a state of awareness without thoughts. At this level of experience we surmount all our thoughts, preconceptions, and judgments. Meditators appear to have less control over the transcendent mode than over focused attention and open monitoring; transcendence cannot be willed or coerced. Yet meditative practice may be a condition for it. Some have called self transcendence as “experiencing pure consciousness or pure awareness”.





Transformations

Practicing mindfulness allows us to transform our lives.
Living these transformations can bring us happiness.

Physical Wellness



Medical and scientific research conclusively shows that mindfulness and various types of meditation promote physical wellness. Meditation can reduce our blood pressure, our respiratory rate, heart rate, and oxygen consumption. Meditation leads to significant reduction in anxiety, depression, and pain. Recent studies have found that meditation impacts our genes in lengthening the ends of the DNA thereby leading to longevity of a cell. Meditation has an impact on hormone production: it decreases cortisol level, which diminishes stress; it increases insulin like growth hormone, which helps repair cellular damage, and it reduces neuropeptide Y, which decreases tissue damage.

Peace



Mindfulness and meditation promote peace, both within the individual and in the world at large. Peace is the absence of conflict as well as a feeling that "all is well." Mindfulness makes us peaceful by making us more aware of three core activities over which we can gain greater control: our thoughts, our actions, and our speech. The first step towards achieving peace requires awareness of our thoughts. The second step is not to react immediately to a situation simply by taking a few deep breaths. The third step is reflecting on the moment by remaining silent. The last step is to respond in a nonviolent and thoughtful manner so as not to perpetuate a cycle of violence. This simple mindful technique can diffuse an escalating argument or a retaliatory response to an angry email. Mindfulness allows us to cultivate an inner serenity, a calming of mental turbulence, characterized by less anger and hostility. Gaining inner serenity naturally inclines us towards a diminishment of physical and verbal violence and better relationships with our family and friends and ultimately towards everyone we encounter.

Compassion

Mindfulness deepens our compassionate nature. Compassion is the desire to alleviate suffering. Compassion is the highest stage of kindness. It is beyond pity in which we are disconnected from suffering, beyond sympathy in which we understand others suffering, and even beyond empathy in which we simply feel others' suffering.



Compassion is when we act to actively alleviate others suffering. Like the quality of peacefulness, compassion has both a personal and a more universal dimension. Mindfulness helps us become compassionate towards oneself and towards others. The mindful practice of compassion begins with one's self. Through continuous practice of mindfulness, we learn to manifest compassion towards ourselves by not causing harm through stress, addiction, low self-esteem, and other detrimental thoughts and actions. From self-compassion, mindfulness leads inevitably to compassion for others – family and friends, even strangers and adversaries.

With mindfulness, we become compassionate towards all living beings. Behavioral research studies show that an eight week course on mindfulness, can double or triple the number of people acting compassionately in a given situation. Mindfulness helps us recognize that we are part of an interconnected world in which our own suffering is inextricably bound to the suffering of all beings. Thus embodying compassion for others leads to our own flourishing.

Insight



Mindfulness not only sharpens our brains, but also enhances our insight and wisdom. Wisdom is our ability to see reality as it is, and insight is the process through which that occurs. We've all had moments when things suddenly become clear, the haze dissipates, and what was there all along becomes obvious. This is insight. Though we may have analyzed the data and facts for days and years using our mental acuity, it's only when we have insight that it all fits together. Mindfulness practice promises these unmistakable moments of insight when something within us moves, and we see things differently. Insights come because mindfulness brings stillness to our minds. We cannot coerce insights, but we can use meditation to clear the way for them to arise. Insights come because meditation practice enables us to recognize our ideas and beliefs, accept them for what they are, and remain unattached to them. Mindfulness allows us to see the world from various perspectives and relinquish our own absolutist view. Meditation allows us to develop greater tolerance, open-mindedness, and acceptance. Ultimately, this process yields wisdom.

Spiritual Growth



Mindfulness leads to spiritual growth. For centuries, meditation practice has been associated with human religiousness, both for Eastern and Western religions. Ancient texts suggest that meditative skills were initially developed to enable individuals to commune with divine beings and to gain a path to heaven or salvation. Today, the mindfulness movement in the West is largely a secular phenomenon that occurs outside traditional religious contexts. But this secular movement is neither devoid of spiritual elements nor incompatible with traditional religion. For many, the practice of meditation and becoming mindful is a path to spiritual growth.



Happiness

Happiness is not momentary pleasure;
it is contentment with meaning and purpose in life.

Happiness

For many, the ultimate goal of human existence is happiness. Most of us seek happiness in two basic ways: the first is by acquisition, which is the preferred method in the modern world, and the second is by aversion, which is trying to avoid unpleasant situations. Both strategies or approaches or tendencies are based on the pleasure principle—grasping for the things that we enjoy and evading the things we don't. And yet even after we have acquired all we want or avoided what we do not want, we are still not happy. In fact, we confuse happiness and pleasure. Genuine happiness is contentment or fulfillment with meaning and purpose in life. Happiness can be realized by practicing meditation which helps us become more mindful and helps us become more mindful and cultivate physical wellness, peace, compassion, insight, and spiritual growth in our lives.

The mindfulness model is predicated on the conviction that it is not necessary to live at the mercy of an untamed mind. By coming to understand the way our minds work, we can learn to shape our mental functions in ways that will remove the frantic, distracted, and semiconscious qualities from our lives and open us to true happiness and equanimity.

About Advancing Mindfulness

The vision of Advancing Mindfulness is to help us experience joy and happiness in our daily lives. It is a journey that can be achieved through knowledge, awareness, and practice.

At Advancing Mindfulness:

-  We teach classes on-line to help advance mindfulness in our communities, in our nation, and in our world.
-  We conduct in-person classes at college campuses, churches, and workplaces to provide personal meditation experience.
-  We hold weekend retreats to bring like-minded people together to experience the happiness and joy of mindfulness and to carry it with them into their daily lives

In collaboration with other leaders in the field, such as Jon Kabat-Zinn and Congressman Tim Ryan, we have engaged the United States Surgeon General on working towards a strategy to bring mindfulness to the mainstream in America. Advancing Mindfulness is about how we can create a world beyond violence, beyond anger, beyond ignorance, beyond greed, and beyond ego. Advancing Mindfulness is about how we can transform our lives toward greater physical wellness, peace, compassion, insight, and spiritual growth.

**Please join us. Register online at www.AdvancingMindfulness.com.
Contact us at - Info@AdvancingMindfulness.com or +1-(901)-681-0778**

About the Authors



Dr. Manoj Jain

Manoj Jain, MD, MPH is a physician, writer, and national leader in healthcare quality improvement. Dr. Jain writes regularly for the Washington Post and Huffington Post, and Tennessee papers. He has been interviewed by CNN and National Public Radio. He received his engineering, doctorate, and public health degrees from Boston University and is an adjunct assistant professor at Rollins School of Public Health at Emory University. He teaches meditation, has conducted research on spirituality and medicine with Herbert Benson, and co-moderated a White House Roundtable Discussion about meditation, alongside pioneer Dr. Jon Kabat-Zinn. He is the founder and chairman of the

annual Gandhi-King Conference on Nonviolence. His most recent publication is a children's book titled: *Mahavira: The Hero of Nonviolence*.

Mark W. Muesse, PhD has been a practitioner of mindfulness meditation for over thirty years. He is the W. J. Millard Professor of Religious Studies at Rhodes College, where he focuses on philosophy and spirituality with a special interest in Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, and Confucianism. Dr. Muesse earned his baccalaureate at Baylor University in English. He then went on to Harvard University, where he received a Masters of Theological Studies and a PhD in The Study of Religion. He is the author of several books, including *Redeeming Men: Religion and Masculinities*; *The Age of the Sages*, and *Four Wise Men*; *The Lives and Teachings of Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad*. He is a longtime faculty member of The Great Courses, which has released his bestselling *Practicing Mindfulness: An Introduction to Meditation*.



Dr. Mark W. Muesse

There is little doubt we are in the midst of a “mindfulness revolution.” Yet as we move through this seismic culture shift, many are confused. “What is mindfulness?” they ask. What is the difference between mindfulness and meditation? What changes can a state of mindfulness bring to our daily lives? And can such transformations actually bring us happiness?

We present a simple mindfulness model—that explains the process of becoming mindful and its effects on our lives. The model ties together what we know about mindfulness through science, philosophy, and personal experience.

“Drs. Jain and Muesse's Mindfulness Model presents a very clear and straightforward guide to both practicing and understanding meditation. This is a great starter book for those who want to dive right into it.”

—Tim Ryan, United States Congressman and author of *A Mindful Nation: How a Simple Practice Can Help Us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance, and Recapture the American Spirit*



Advancing Mindfulness

Copyright © 2016

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

www.AdvancingMindfulness.com

US \$4.95