



WELL-AWARE-NESS Living & Health

MINDFULNESS BASED COGNITIVE THERAPIES~COUNSELLING~ MEDITATION: COURSES, CLASSES, WORKSHOPS & RETREATS

Health Psychologist & Mindfulness Meditation Teacher John Barter
Presents

Being Well & Living Well with 'Mindfulness'

*'A healthy mind is the greatest gain.
Contentment is the greatest wealth. A trustworthy friend is the best of kin.
Unconditional freedom is the highest bliss'.*

The Buddha: DHAMMAPADA, V.204

The Most Important Thing

- If we ask ourselves "What is the most important thing?" hopefully we would answer that it is 'Life!'
- The most important and precious thing that we have is life itself, before we can even start to talk about 'Being Well and Living Well' we need to talk about and appreciate being alive.
- It is not enough just to think 'Yes I am alive' we need to actually 'Feel it'. To be alive we need to feel alive!
- So how alive do we feel? Have we felt more alive than we do now?

Realising Where We Belong

- Not feeling quite alive can be accompanied with the feeling of being estranged from our life, not feeling connected.
- We might feel as if we don't quite belong in our self, to our self, in our life, to life itself!
- Why is it that we feel like we can't quite connect to our self, our life, to Life itself?
- Maybe we have been living as, and living where, we don't belong?

Coming to our Senses

- How do we know we are alive?
- We know we are alive by experiencing life; which for us as human beings is not just by thinking it, but by actually seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching and feeling.
- Our 5 senses are only sensitive to experience what is happening in the present: NOW.
- To really experience our life and to feel alive we need to be present for it, otherwise we miss out!
- To feel alive we need to 'Come to our Senses' both Metaphorically – coming to clarity and awareness; and Literally – connecting with our senses, getting in touch with our direct experience not just what we think, wonder or worry about it.

The Runaway Brain

- How present and conscious do you feel in and of your life?
- Our contemporary culture has evolved to the point where we live exceedingly busy and fast paced lives.
- Much of our life is lived on 'automatic' just 'going through the motions'; we can often live our lives days / weeks ahead of our self; no wonder we don't feel connected to where we belong.
- There is a great difference between feeling that our life is full and actually feeling that our life is fulfilled.

Finding Alignment and Balance through connecting back to Being

- To Be Well and Live Well we need to live with alignment, balance and harmony in our life.
- So often physical injuries and psycho-physical illnesses relate to a lack of alignment of mind and body, a lack of balance and harmony in ones life.
- As a Psychologist and Mindfulness Meditation Teaching I find that most patients issues and illness in some way relate to them not 'living consciously', not being aware and present for their life.
- Living unconsciously, with a lack of mindfulness hinders and harms every aspect of our life and wellbeing.

Conscious Living = Living Consciously = Mindful Living

- Much of the meaning, joy and worth of our lives – relates to both being well and living well. Being well and living well generates our health and performance and resultant well-being in life.
- The secret to Being Well & Living Well is Conscious Living: living mindfully, with awareness, with attention, with attunement and alignment to the present moment, with an appreciation of our intention as we engage into our ongoing and unfolding life experience; living, learning and loving more fully into our life.
- Mindfulness is the quality or factor that allows us to Live Consciously and have a Conscious Relationship to our ongoing experience, whether it is happening around us or within us.

Mindfulness: 'The X Factor' for Being Well & Living Well

- Mindfulness as the term denotes is a fullness of mind, fullness of awareness, presence of mind, attention, conscious clarity, a knowing-ness.
- Without Mindfulness we would live mindlessly, our mind fragmented, distracted, distorted, diminished.
- Mindfulness is that quality that collects and connects us to our experience, to what is going on, to our Life.
- Engaging Mindfulness means 'To Care': being Careful and being Caring ie. engaging Mind and Heart
- Mindfulness is the added value, the added extra, the X Factor that enhances what ever we are doing or experiencing.
- Mindfulness is: Life Giving; Life Guiding; Life Guarding; it is the real health / life insurance we need.
- Elements of Mindfulness include: Present-Centered; Attentive; Objective; Receptive; Non-Personal

Developing Mindfulness through Mindfulness Meditation

- Whilst we all have a degree of Mindfulness it can be developed both by using Mindfulness when we engage in our life, or more especially through the exercise of Mindfulness Meditation.
- Of all the forms of Meditation, Mindfulness Meditation is the most applicable and apply able in the context of our contemporary culture given that it does not require any religious beliefs or practices to accompany it.
- Mindfulness and Mindfulness Meditation has been studied and practiced for over 2,500 years through Buddhism. Mindfulness is the core teaching of the Buddha and at the heart of Buddhist Psychology. Much of the Buddha's teachings

evolve out of the development of mindfulness through meditation, and revolve around the application of mindfulness in daily life for the development of wisdom and compassion.

- Mindfulness Meditation is the practice and process of developing a quality of sustained awareness leading to inner calm and tranquility as well as insights into the nature of our mind and the cause of suffering.
- Mindfulness Meditation is best practiced daily in a quiet place for approximately 30 minutes, bringing mindful attention to the body and the ongoing sensation of the breath, strengthening and stabilising the mind.

Mindfulness and Mind-Body Medicine; Neuro-Science and Neuroplasticity

- Medical Science has recently become incredibly interested in Mindfulness, especially the new medical paradigm of Mind-Body Medicine (Pert 1999) that sees the mind and body as two parts of the one whole.
- Due to technological advancements in brain scanners and imaging (MRI, EEGs) and the ground breaking work in the area of Neuroscience by Davidson (2004) research shows that our mind can change our brain.
- Neuroplasticity is the term used when neural connections change in response to experience. Neurogenesis occurs whereby new neurons grow even in adults, enhancing the structure and function of the brain.
- Mindfulness practice appears to enhance neural plasticity and especially strengthen neural connectivity in the left prefrontal cortex of the brain which significantly relates to enhanced psychological wellbeing and physical health.

Psychological Health Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

- Research shows that exercising mindful attention through meditation enhances important regions of the brain associated with increase in positive emotions as well as quicker recovery from negative ones. (Davidson 2004)
- Mindfulness appears to enhance Serotonin reducing depression and anxiety; studies show that most psychological disorders are significantly reduced through Mindfulness practice. (Siegel 2007)
- Mindfulness Practices show increase in interpersonal skills and quality of relationships (Siegel 2007)

Physical Health Benefits of Mindfulness Meditation

- Research shows that Mindfulness Meditation through left prefrontal lobe activity enhances physical health through reduction in stress and increased immune function. (Hassad 2000, Siegel 2007)
- A great body of research by Kabat-Zinn and colleagues shows Mindfulness Practices (MBSR) reduces subjective states of suffering (especially chronic pain), improves immune function and accelerates healing.

Mindfulness based Therapy and Psychotherapy

- Whilst all worthwhile modes of counselling and psychotherapy engage mindfulness, the specific use of mindfulness as a therapy and specifically psychotherapy has recently developed being termed 'Third Wave Cognitive Behavior Therapy'.
- 'Third Wave CBT' includes: Mindfulness based Stress Reduction (MBSR) (Kabat-Zinn 1990); Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) (Linehan 1993); Mindfulness based Cognitive Therapy for Depression (MBCT) (Teasdale et al.2000); Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) (Hayes 2000); Core Process Therapy (Sills 1990).

Mindfulness and Spiritual Practice

- Mindfulness is at the heart of spiritual practice.
- Mindfulness connects us to our life in the present moment in a special way, helping us to see with clarity and discernment the way things are; to understand and let go of fear and confusion, finding and realizing freedom.
- Mindfulness is at the heart of the Buddha's teachings and is the essence practice for actualizing our spiritual potential.

Concluding Reflections

- The real SECRET to Well Being, to Being Well and Living Well, is MINDFULNESS; not simply getting what we want but knowing how to experience and appreciate fully what it is we have.
- If we are to Be Well and Live Well, to feel good and function well; to have health, happiness, experience peace and joy we can only experience those things where we are; here, now this present moment.
- Mindfulness helps us to arrive in our life and connect consciously to the present moment, the place and point of existence, the only place to live our life, the place to realize and live from freedom.

Readings in Mindfulness

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John Barter: is a Psychologist and Mindfulness Psychotherapist, University Lecturer (UNSW, UTS) and Mindfulness Meditation Teacher. John brings to his work nearly 30 years of continuous study and practice of mindfulness disciplines, 10 years of which he was an ordained Buddhist Monk of the Theravada Forest Tradition, living and practicing in Australia, Thailand, Britain and Europe. John is the director of WELL-AWARE-NESS Living & Health, a Sydney based health practice through which clients see John for individual clinical sessions. Throughout the year John runs numerous Mindfulness based Meditation Classes, Courses, Workshops and Retreats in Sydney, the Byron Coast, and Gold Coast Qld.



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