



Mindfulness: A Tool For Psychotherapy and Treatment

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Introduction

- 2000 and following
 - Neurobiology
 - FMRI - Since early 1990's
 - Mindfulness
 - Research involving all the above on how the brain functions in a state of Mindfulness

II. Formation of Self Concept

- D. Freud: described the best outcome of psychoanalysis as “Ordinary human unhappiness.”
- E. Has psychology helped us find True Self that is beyond the ordinary human unhappiness?
- F. Our ego self: who we see ourselves to be based on previous conditioning & experiences.

II. Formation of Self Concept

- 1) Our world view.
- 2) Our paradigm – our map
- 3) Our story reveals how we made agreements (adaptations & adjustments) with our environment.
- 4) Mind is a camera – recording significant pictures of our reality.

Formation of Self Concept

- “....each of us literally chooses, by his way of attending to things, what sort of a universe he shall appear to himself to inhabit.”
 - William James – Varieties of Religious Experience




Formation of Self Concept

- Davidson and Goleman, p. 125
- “One downside of this brain dynamic: we habituate to anything familiar – the pictures on our walls, the same dish night after night, even, perhaps, our loved ones. Habituation makes life manageable but a bit dull.”



Formation of Self Concept

- We are not actually aware of what is happening in the present moment but often retreat to a “default mode” of the brain.
- “The default mode turns on while we chill out, not doing anything that requires focus and effort; it blossoms during the mind’s downtime. Conversely, as we focus on some challenge, ..., the default mode quiets.” p. 151 of Goleman and Davidson

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- “This is called implicit memory, and it includes your expectations, models of relationships, emotional tendencies, and general outlook. Implicit memory establishes the interior landscape of your mind – what it feels like to be you – based on the slowly accumulating residues of lived experiences.
 - Hanson and Mendius, p. 67, (2009)

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II. Formation of Self Concept

J. This mind (ego) is a program system of our reality – it is placed on a disc – inserted in the computer.

1) All we can do at this point is review the past &/or project it into the future.

2) When we use this level of mind for self reflection or to solve self issues we will only reproduce a new version of the old self.

II. Formation of Self Concept

- ⦿ “Egocentrism comes naturally to us because of the way our brains process information, yet none of us feels that our perspective contains biases. The way we see things simply seems correct. The problem with this belief is that our vision of reality and sense of conscious control are mere illusions.”
 - › Louis Cozolino – [The Making of a Therapist](#)

Formation of Self Concept

- “It is the afflictions of our own minds that lie at the root of our mental troubles, not the material world, not other people, not our bodies, not intangible spirits or demons, and not God.”

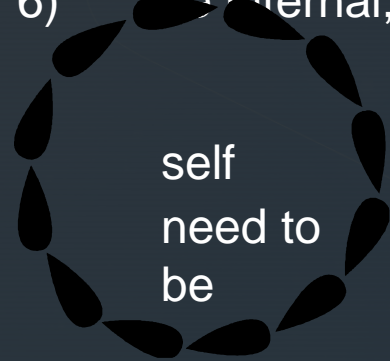
B. Alan Wallace – Balancing the Mind

Gambling: An Altered State of Consciousness

- ◎ “In both the pre-modern and modern eras, the gambling experience can result in a distorted perception of space-time, which is the result of an altered state of consciousness and even a loss of sense of self. In addition, in both periods, gambling takes place in designated spaces, where the gambling sphere is separated from the real world”.
 - › P. 163, Zangeneh, Blaszczyński, Turner.

II. Formation of Self Concept

6) The internal, inadequate self seeks forces to find well-being.



x Love from others

x Money – value of things

x Status

x Accomplishments

. Formation of Self Concept

- According to Nigel Turner, (2000), “our minds are designed to find order, not to appreciate erroneous beliefs about the nature of random events”.
 - P. 72 (Zangeneh, Blaszczyński, and Turner)

III. The True Self

Amit Goswami: in the ego self there is always an element of the True Self.

Goswami summarized the ego self or brain mind: The Self-Aware Universe:

- 1) The universe is self-aware through us.
- 2) Each experience, learned response, reinforces the probability of the same response over again.

III. The True Self

- 3) In other words, learning biases the brain mind.
- 4) With learning, conditioned responses gain greater weight over other possibilities.

A. Definitions of True Self

- 1) From “What the Bleep Do We Know” – the observer – the consciousness that sees but isn’t seen.

III. The True Self

- 2) The Atman – the self of the pure-awareness experience (Goswami)
- 3) To live in the part of our brain/universe that doesn't rehearse the past.
- 4) It is the energy that makes us alive.
 - China – Chi (life force)
 - India – Prana – breath
 - Old Testament – Ruach – the breath that creates life
 - New Testament – Pneuma – Spirit – wind.

III. The True Self

5) The Tao:

The natural path of conscious energy.

The Watercourse way

“The Tao that can be named is not the true Tao.”

6) Jung

a. Acceptance of our personae

b. Integration of conscious self with unconscious mind.

c. Through path of individuation – we find our True Self – usually after mid-life.

d. Letting go of our personae – the masks we show to others – Latin – “actors mask”

III. The True Self

7) Mindfulness Psychology – an energy insight into “no self” = experiencing ourselves in constant flux, a field of movement, always changing (Germer, Siegel, Fulton).

8) Fred Alan Wolfe hints that True Self awareness drops the concept of being separate. I-ness – “In order to break free, in order to have a new experience,...we have to break free of the illusion that we are separate from anything else...”



III. The True Self

9) For this presentation the True Self is: the observer self that lives in relationship and from the essence of the life force energy. Conscious awareness and connection tunes us to Life's pathway.

10) Yet, the ultimate goal is a realized state of "emptiness". No person or other object of reality exist of it's own cause. Everything is dependent on something else.

III. The True Self



Basic life needs and desires are by-products of inner connection to what makes us alive.

B. The True Self – Living from Inside-Out

- 1) The Energy that makes us alive:
 - a. Is energy in motion
 - b. Has its own awareness/consciousness
 - c. Has a path or direction.
 - d. Is guided by LOVE. Fred Alan Wolfe – Learning to see love & to express that love is the purpose of living this life.
 - e. Creates constant change.
 - f. That which animates all things.

III. The True Self

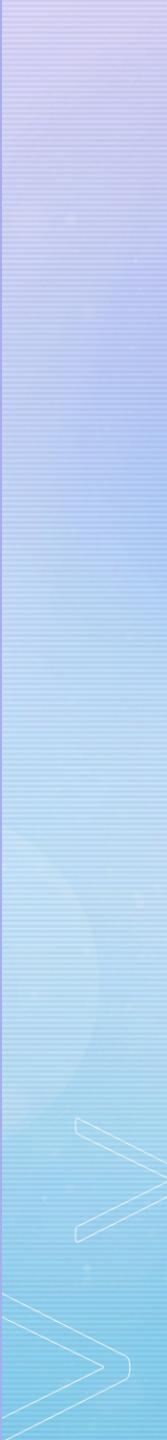
- “But here’s the problem: your brain preferentially scans for, registers, stores, recalls, and reacts to unpleasant experiences; as we’ve said, it’s like Velcro for negative experiences and Teflon for positive ones.”
 - Hanson and Mendius, p. 68, (2009)

III. The True Self

- Dan Siegel
- “What we need to embrace is uncertainty. Learning to thrive with uncertainty is the root of creativity”.
- “Though security is not a guarantee of a trouble-free life, secure attachment does provide a source of resilience in the face of stressors in the future”.



Spirituality:

- A living art of being present while living from a place of connection to that which makes us alive.
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Connection

- “In order to break free, in order to have a new experience, we have to break free of the illusion that we are separate from anything else.”
 - Fred Allen Wolfe



Definitions of Mindfulness

- B. Alan Wallace
 - “Mindfulness is the ability to attend to a chosen object with continuity and without distraction. Mindfulness is a state of stable attention that may be wide open and spacious or tightly focused, as one desires.”



Definitions of Mindfulness

- Ron Siegel
 - “Mindfulness is a particular attitude toward experience, or way of relating to life, that holds the promise of both alleviating our suffering and making our lives rich and meaningful. It does this by attuning us to our moment – to – moment experience and giving us direct insight into how our minds create unnecessary anguish.”



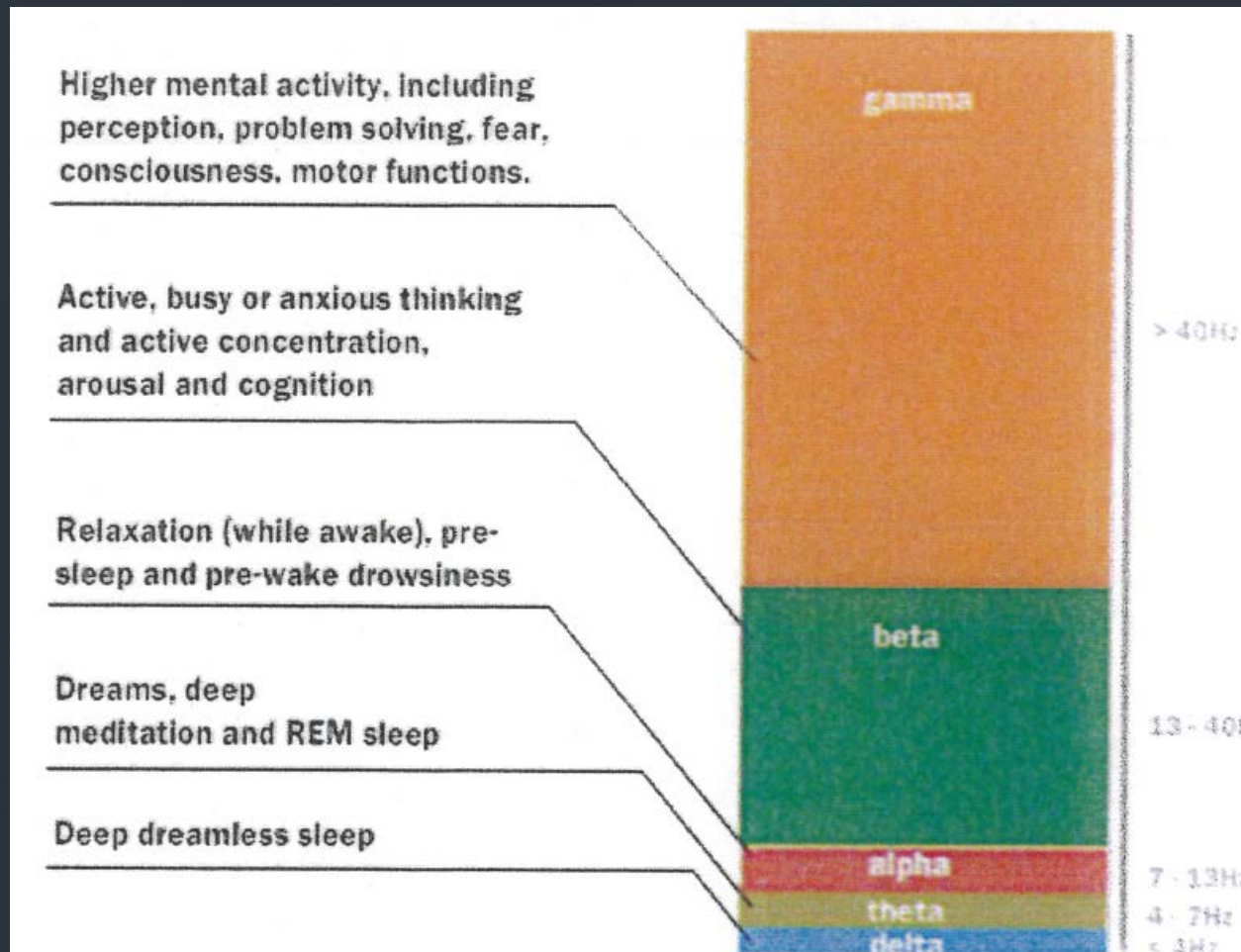
Definitions of Mindfulness

- Jon Kabat-Zinn
 - “Mindfulness is about love and loving life. When you cultivate this love it gives you clarity and compassion for life.”
 - “Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally”. P. 273 The Monastery and the Microscope.

Gamma waves

- Ricard, Matthieu
 - “It turns out that like meditation on altruistic love, the practice of open presence also gives rise to a notable increase of brain waves in the gamma frequencies, accompanied by increased connectivity and synchronicity between various parts of the brain.”

Mindfulness and Gamma Brain Waves



Mindfulness

- “Mindfulness in everyday life is the ultimate challenge and practice.”
 - McCown, Reibel, Micozzi – Teaching Mindfulness

Mindfulness

- Developing your own practice
 - Mindfulness of Breathing
 - Settling the Mind in it's natural state
 - Maintaining Awareness of Awareness itself
 - Alan Wallace – “The Attention Revolution”

Qualities of Practice

- Loving-kindness
- Compassion
- Empathetic joy
- Equanimity

Two Obstacles

- Dullness
- Agitation

Daniel J. Siegel, M.D. – The Mindful Therapist

- 9 middle pre-frontal functions:
 - 1. Regulating our bodies
 - 2. Attuning to others (attuned communication)
 - 3. Having emotional balance
 - 4. Calming fear (fear modulation)
 - 5. Pausing before acting (flexibility of response)
 - 6. Having insight
 - 7. Having empathy
 - 8. Being moral in our thinking and actions
 - 9. More access to intuition



Interpersonal Neurobiology

Daniel J. Siegel

- “The functions of the middle prefrontal cortex are found as outcome measures for both mindfulness practice and for (the first eight of the nine) secure parent-child *attachment*”. P. 6-4
- Gambling hijacks the prefrontal brain and heightens the lower brain or limbic brain.



Interpersonal Neurobiology

Daniel J. Siegel

- “These nine middle prefrontal functions are a result of *neural integration*- and so these findings suggest that mindfulness, *secure attachment*, mental health, and living a wise and kind life may each be the result of and also cultivate neural integration”. P. 6-5

Mindfulness:

- ① The practice of being present with self, others, and creation because there is no real separation.
- ② “Mindfulness involves the skillful use of attention to both your inner and outer worlds. Since your brain learns mainly from what you attend to, mindfulness is the doorway to taking in good experiences and making them a part of yourself...”
- ③ Hanson and Mendius, p. 13, (2009)

Mindfulness: Daniel Siegel

- Mindful Awareness: “Awareness of present-moment experience, with intention and purpose, without grasping on to judgments. Traits of being mindful are having an open stance toward oneself and others, emotional equanimity, and the ability to describe the inner world of the mind”.
 - P. AI-51.

Mindset

- Henslin (1967) – “Once totally involved in gambling, the gambler may reach a mood of mystical experience and get a sense of transcendence or becoming one with (God)”.
- J.M. Henslin (1967), “Craps and Magic”. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 73, 316-330.

FLOW

- Refers to the state of being immersed in an activity and losing one's sense of self-consciousness as the boundaries of self and activity become permeable and one gets lost in an experience. P. AI-32
 - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – “FLOW”

Flow

- “The same applies to “flow,” the state where people perform at their best. Paying full attention to what’s at hand, flow research tells us, rates high on the list of what puts us into – and sustains – a joyous state. The self, in its form as mind-wandering, becomes a distraction, suppressed for the time being.”
 - Davidson and Goleman, p. 152



True Self

- Our effort as helpers is to help clients find the True Self, thus developing the observer self that lives in connection with life, the life energy, and in relationship with all people and things.

True Self

- Traits we develop to overcome normal suffering:
 - Virtue
 - Mindfulness
 - Selection

By following the fundamental functions of:

- Regulation
- Learning
- Selection

Mindfulness

- Mindfulness is harmony and balance practiced by the therapist in the counseling session, producing an environment of:
 - 1. nonjudgmental.
 - 2. equanimity (evenness of temper even under stress).
 - 3. awareness of what is happening as it is happening.
 - 4. ability to describe with words our internal world

Mindfulness

In turn, our clients develop:

- 1. Flexibility
- 2. Adaptive
- 3. Coherence
- 4. Energized
- 5. Stability

People Change because of Connection

© Louis Cozolino (2006)

- “Those of us who study interpersonal neurobiology believe that friendships, marriage, psychotherapy, in fact, any meaningful relationship can reactivate neuroplastic processes and actually change the structure of the brain”.



Daniel Stern

“ Moments of meeting cannot be planned – they happen. The moment of meeting is the event that rearranges implicit relational knowing for both the patient and the therapist”.



Kathy Steele (2009)

- ⦿ “If we pour more information and interpersonal experience into the neuroplastic mind – it strengthens synapses, alters neural networks and increases regulation of neurotransmitters and hormones”.
- ⦿ This quiets the old rehearsed/familiar neural pathways of self, creates a pause and allows room for something new.



Richard J. Davidson

- “Instead, the brain has a property called neuroplasticity, the ability to change its structure and patterns of activity in significant ways not only in childhood, which is not very surprising, but also in adulthood and throughout life.”

The Role of the Therapist

- Philip Flores – Addiction as Attachment Disorder
 - “Addiction hijacks the attachment system”.
 - “Long term recovery requires ongoing attachment relationships to ensure Central Nervous System homeostasis”.



Dopamine vs. Oxytocin

- ⦿ Passion (Who) always outweighs reason (what and how)
- ⦿ Our addictive clients are operating from the deep limbic brain (emotion/survival) and at the same time by-passing the frontal cortex (logic/reason).
- ⦿ We must reach them on the level where they are.
Relationship/Connection is the only way.

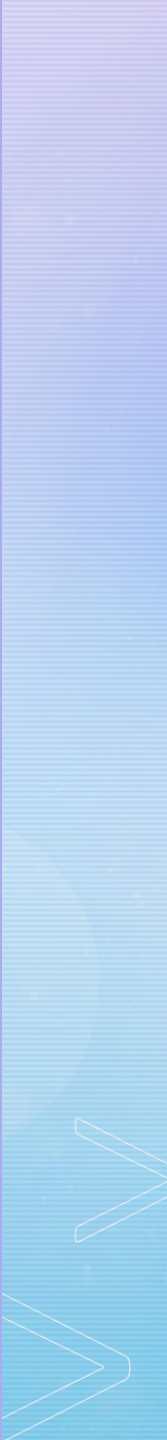
Dopamine vs. Oxytocin

- Philip Flores

- › “Addiction is a disease of isolation”.
- › We find our clients who are willing to take the “dopamine effect” and ignore the experience of relationships/connection which is the natural experience of **Oxytocin**.
- › Example of the mother rat
- › Where is my son, daughter, husband, wife, etc.



Stress and Trauma

- “A word about the amygdala, which has a privileged role as the brain’s radar for threat: it receives immediate input from our senses, which it scans for safety or danger. If it perceives a threat, the amygdala circuitry triggers the brain’s freeze-fight-or-flight response, a stream of hormones like cortisol and adrenaline that mobilize us for action. The amygdala also responds to anything important to pay attention to, whether we like it or dislike it.” p. 87 Goleman and Davidson.
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Stress and Trauma

- “Constant stress and worry take a toll on our cells, aging them. So do continual distractions and a wandering mind, due to the effects of rumination, where our mind gravitates to troubles in our relationships but never resolves them.” p. 172 Davidson and Goleman.

Dopamine vs. Oxytocin

- Philip Flores

- “Until an addict, alcoholic, or gambler, develops the capacity to establish mutually satisfying relationships, they will remain vulnerable to relapse and to the continual substitution of one addiction to another”.

- **P. Ornstein**

“Being understood as an adult has the same effect as being held as a child”.

Dopamine vs. Oxytocin

- ⦿ Drugs/Alcohol/Gambling hijacks the individual's ability to have genuine relationships. With conditioning – the addict will choose the “dopamine” effect over the oxytocin until the pain of the addiction is greater than the chase.
- ⦿ Dopamine and Oxytocin flow along the same brain pathways. If we substitute dopamine it prohibits oxytocin and actually prefers the dopamine.

Dopamine vs. Oxytocin

- J. Panksepp (2012)
 - “The dopamine driven system has no intrinsic morals. ... it is just a super efficient get-up and go-get-it system”.
 - Dopamine is more about anticipation than reward. Yet, in the natural world – rewards usually come only with effort and after delay.

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