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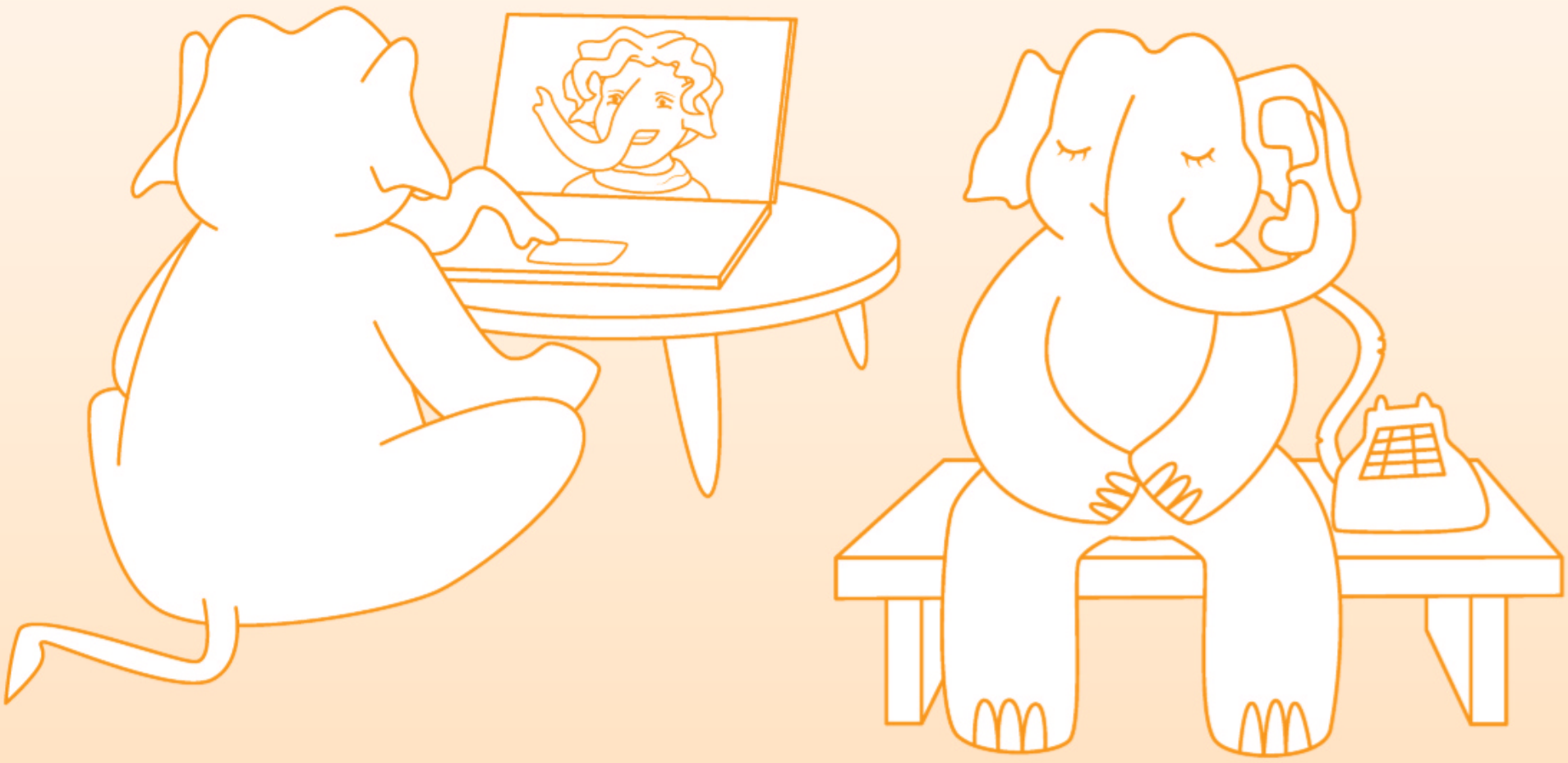

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FEATURES

On our cover: Shelly Tygielski, self-care activist and mindfulness teacher. Photograph by Stephanie Diani. Hair, makeup, and wardrobe by Jan Tinkley. Wardrobe provided by Bloomingdale's Aventura.

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEPHANIE DIANI

ON THE COVER

CONTENTS

june

Mindfulness, as Peter Good shows, can mean being deeply in tune with the cycles of growth and renewal in a garden: "its undercurrents, the smallest and most elusive details." Explore how the garden path can also be a contemplative one, on page 45.

28

DEPARTMENTS

Members of the "Sand Tribe" delve into a bucket of good intentions, offered by Shelly Tygielski (below, right), before a group meditation on the beach. Read about Shelly's self-care activism on page 36.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BLAKE FARRINGTON, STEPHANIE DIANI. ILLUSTRATION BY HECTOR GIACOMELLI.

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Hello

...and welcome to the June issue. I joined the Mindful team a few months ago and have been busily editing the magazine behind the scenes. I'm thrilled to introduce this issue's cover person Shelly Tygielski—mindfulness teacher, self-care activist and heartfelt supporter of the Parkland community in Florida—because I think you'll find her practice and passion both powerful and inspiring. I am also delighted to have Jillian Pransky sharing her insights about how we hold tension in our minds and bodies and her encouragement to pause, deeply listen, release and relax, and discover a deep, almost liquid, full-body peace. (I hope you will melt with one of her practices.) And, of course, I am honored that Mindful was invited on an intimate tour of the San Francisco Botanical Gardens with master landscaper and contemplative gardener Peter Good. What a beautiful way to wake up our senses and fine-tune our appreciation of spring.

As I begin to edit the magazine, I welcome any and all suggestions, questions, or comments. I imagine you might have a few already:

1) Where's Barry? Barry Boyce and his beloved Point of View column have proudly taken up residence on the back page for easy finding. Barry is also expanding his Point of View podcasts (thoughtful, sometimes hilarious and raucous conversation with veteran radio host and now Mindful production editor Stephanie Domet). Barry has even launched a new series of guided meditations so please tune in at **mindful.org/pov**.

And 2) What about putting a man on the cover? Yes, we will be featuring men on the cover and have amazing profiles already in the works. Stay tuned.

At Mindful, we talk about the "me and we" of mindfulness, our connection to self and our interconnectedness with others and the world around us. So, from my heart to yours and to all of ours, may we find our own centers of calm and compassion, and may we find ways to extend that to all we meet.

With love,

Anne

What's on your mind?

Please share any thoughts or ideas you have.

Anne Alexander
Editor
editor@mindful.org

Anne Alexander is a longtime meditator, yogi, and editor. She is the author of two *New York Times* best sellers and has had a hand in shaping magazines, books, apps, and websites for Rodale, National Geographic, and more.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHANIE DIANI

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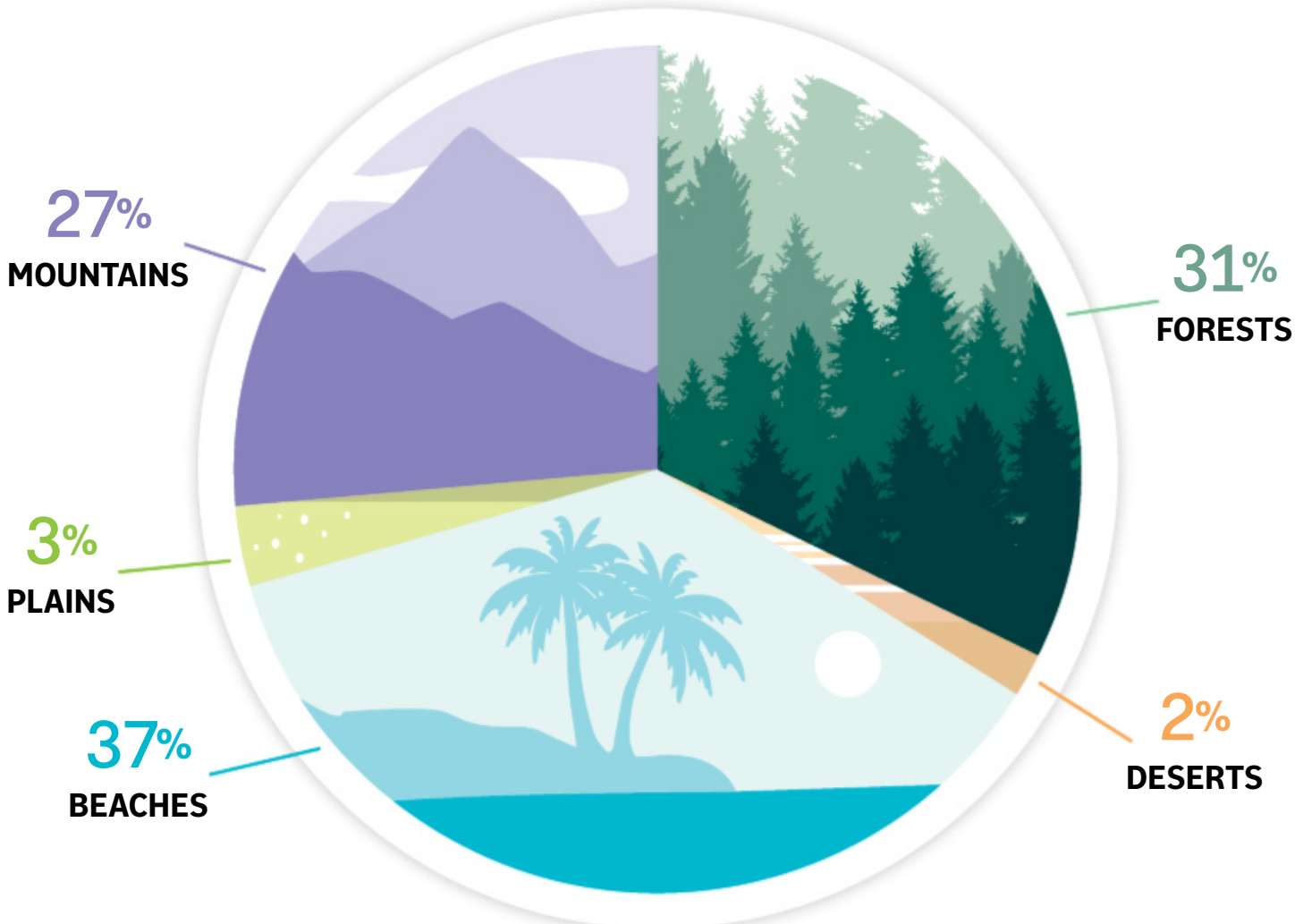
1% FOR THE PLANET — MEMBER —

Being Close to Nature

We go outside to seek adventure, or solitude, or awe, or comfort—maybe even to meditate. Here's how *Mindful* readers reflected on their love of nature.

What's your favorite type of natural setting?



74%

of respondents wish they could be outside more

Do you meditate outside?

"When I meditate outdoors, the flow of energy is so palpable. It fills me with peace and gratitude."

How do you spend time in nature?

"I live in the woods, walk in the country, boat, fish, and kayak on a lake in the summer."

"I meditate daily in nature and lead mindful walks for my community."

"Collecting rocks and leaves, enjoying the sunset."

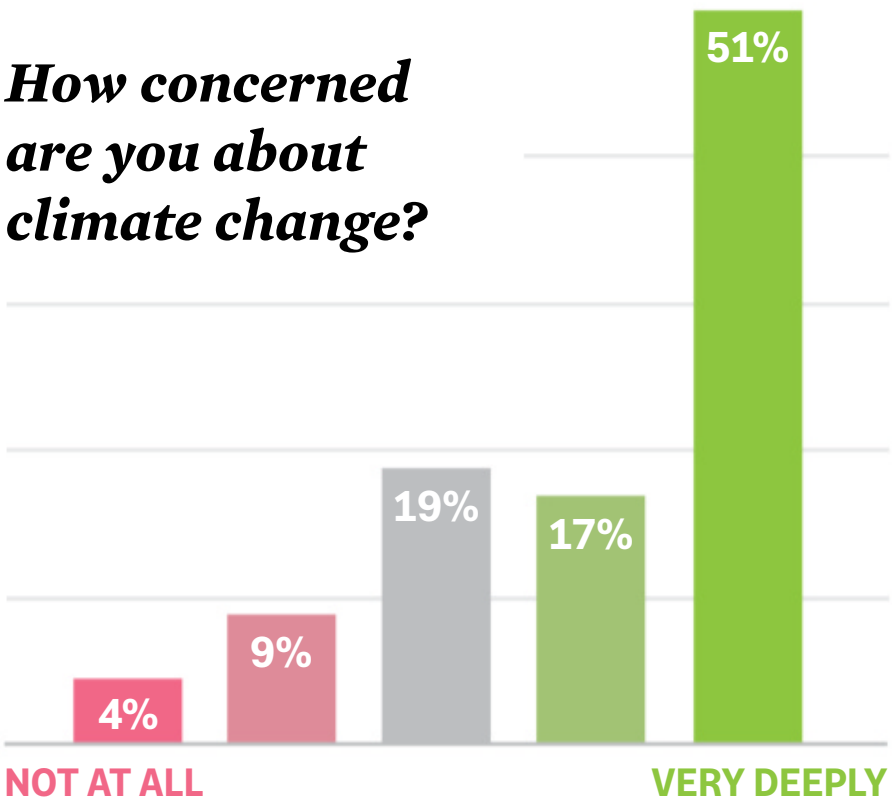
"I've planted a garden everywhere that I've lived."

"I walk the local trail every morning around 6 a.m., with a coffee in hand."

"I like to walk and sit silently, soaking in nature and connecting with the nature in me."

"Sitting still, finding one tiny activity in progress, such as a bug crawling on a leaf or a flower blowing in the breeze."

How concerned are you about climate change?



Healthy Mind, Healthy Life

Welcome to mindful

Did you know Mindful is a nonprofit? We are dedicated to inspiring and guiding anyone who wants to explore mindfulness to enjoy better health, more caring relationships, and a more compassionate society.

By reading *Mindful* and sharing it with others, you're helping to bring mindfulness practices into the world where the benefits can be enjoyed by all.

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Top of Mind

Keep up with the latest in the world of mindfulness.

English Schools Try Mindfulness

More than 350 schools across England are taking part in a study, launched by the UK government, that will see students and teachers learning a variety of practices for emotional wellness, including mindfulness, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques, guided by experts. The two-year study will yield data on what works best in schools to support young people's mental well-being.

Sensory-Friendly Shopping

The sensory onslaught of large, busy stores deters many people with autism from buying groceries. Inspired by a class of 4th-graders who learned about sensory challenges and autism and then wrote letters to the Canadian grocery chain Sobeys, a partnership between Autism Nova Scotia and Sobeys is making space for "sensory-friendly shopping." During Sunday evenings, at stores around the Canadian Maritimes, lights are dimmed, music and loud noise is hushed, and extra staff are present. Sobeys workers report appreciating the calmer mood as much as their customers. Executive Director of Autism NS Cynthia Carroll says it's an exciting step toward allowing those with sensory processing challenges to move through their communities with greater ease and autonomy.

Sensory-Friendly Shopping

Mindful Aviator

In the world of aviation, mental health is a tricky subject: A pilot who is diagnosed with depression or anxiety and doesn't disclose it to their airline is at risk of prosecution from the Federal Aviation Administration. A pilot who's diagnosed and does disclose it faces immediate grounding. Carl Eisen was in that exact predicament in 2007, when, in his midforties, his doctor prescribed him antidepressants and recommended therapy. Eisen was grounded for a year, during which he discovered meditation. "I understood immediately that that's what had been missing." He meditated for 20 minutes a day, and after a month his "anxiety level was almost to zero." More than a decade later, Eisen is now a certified mindfulness teacher and runs Mindful Aviator,

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN NEALE / UNSPLASH, RAWPIXEL

Mindfulness in Arabic

an online resource that makes mindfulness and meditation accessible to airline pilots.

Eisen hopes talking openly about mental health will someday be as common among pilots as any other topic. "With the drug and alcohol program, they introduce it at training. But we do not have conversations about mental health in training. We just need to have the conversation for real, out in the open."

Mindfulness in Arabic

Mindfulness in Arabic, a free online program, aims to provide trauma-informed mindfulness training in Arabic to refugees fleeing violence in their home countries. Developed by JuDitta Ben-David, a mindfulness teacher and therapist specializing in trauma, the effort has been supported with input from leaders in the mindfulness community, social workers on the front lines of refugee relocation efforts, and Arabic language specialists. The eight-week program is designed to be used by aid workers at refugee camps as well as by refugees who have online access—some of whom are in transit, and others who have relocated to cities around the world.

Eyes Off the Road

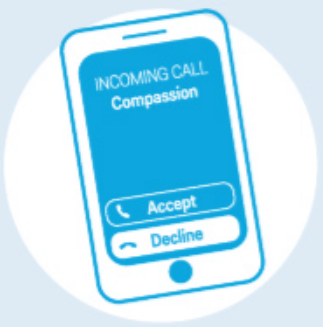
People often say they *want* to meditate but can't find the time. Ride service Uber, partnering with meditation app Calm, is solving that modern dilemma by giving British passengers the opportunity to experience 3- to-30-minute mindfulness sessions en route, without a moment's disruption to their busy lives.

TAKE A MOMENT

Relax—in a chair, on the floor, on the bed. Be aware of your body resting and the feeling of being supported.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MINDFULNESS IN ARABIC

ACTS OF *kindness*



When Twitter user Michael Beatty made a jab at comedian and actor Patton Oswalt in response to a politically charged tweet, Oswalt first responded with a lighthearted joke. He then checked out Beatty's Twitter feed, only to discover the man was a Vietnam vet who had recently set up a crowdfunding campaign seeking $5,000 to pay medical bills resulting from sepsis, diabetic ketoacidosis, and a coma. Oswalt donated $2,000 and shared the campaign with his massive online following. Within 24 hours, the campaign had raised more than $35,000.

Ron and Sharleen Gillies were driving to see Sharleen's dying mother when they got into a minor car accident. A man named Dean Moore noticed the couple by the side of the road and stopped to help. Hearing their story, Moore drove the Gillies 200 miles out of his way so the couple could say goodbye to Sharleen's mother, who died the next day.

27-year-old Altavious Powell noticed the home of his 93-year-old neighbor, Maria Cabral, was on fire. He rushed over and smashed a window with the cast on his broken arm to rescue her.

Research News

by B. GRACE BULLOCK

Research gathered from Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley, Center for Healthy Minds at University of Wisconsin–Madison, Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical School, and American Mindfulness Research Association.

MANAGING CHRONIC DISEASE

People with chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma, cancer, and heart disease often experience anxiety and depression. Both can interfere with self-regulation, which makes managing medications and maintaining healthy habits challenging. Researchers in Boston asked 92 adults with a chronic illness combined with anxiety and depression to participate in an 8-week program that included mindfulness, self-compassion, mindfulness-oriented behavior skills, and developing a self-management action plan. At the end of 8 weeks participants showed significant improvements in disease management compared to a wait-list control group. Even better, the program was covered by health insurance.

MINDFUL PARENTING PAYS OFF

For a study examining how mindful parenting affects teens, more than 400 families of 6th- and 7th-grade students either attended a mindfulness program designed for parents and families, or were asked to read two parenting booklets. After seven weeks, increases in mom's and dad's mindful parenting were linked to more positive parenting and higher quality parent–teen relationships across groups. Looking at moms and dads separately, fathers in the mindful parenting group showed significant gains in emotional awareness of their teens. The teenage children of more mindful dads were also less aggressive. "Changes in positive parenting strategies can enhance relationships at a time when parent-child interactions typically increase in conflict," said the study's lead

author, Doug Coatsworth, PhD, professor and director of the Applied Developmental Science Program at Colorado State University. "The biggest thing that a parent can do to be more mindful is to pay careful attention to what their child is saying and doing, but also to their own reactions."

A MINDFUL BRAIN BOOST

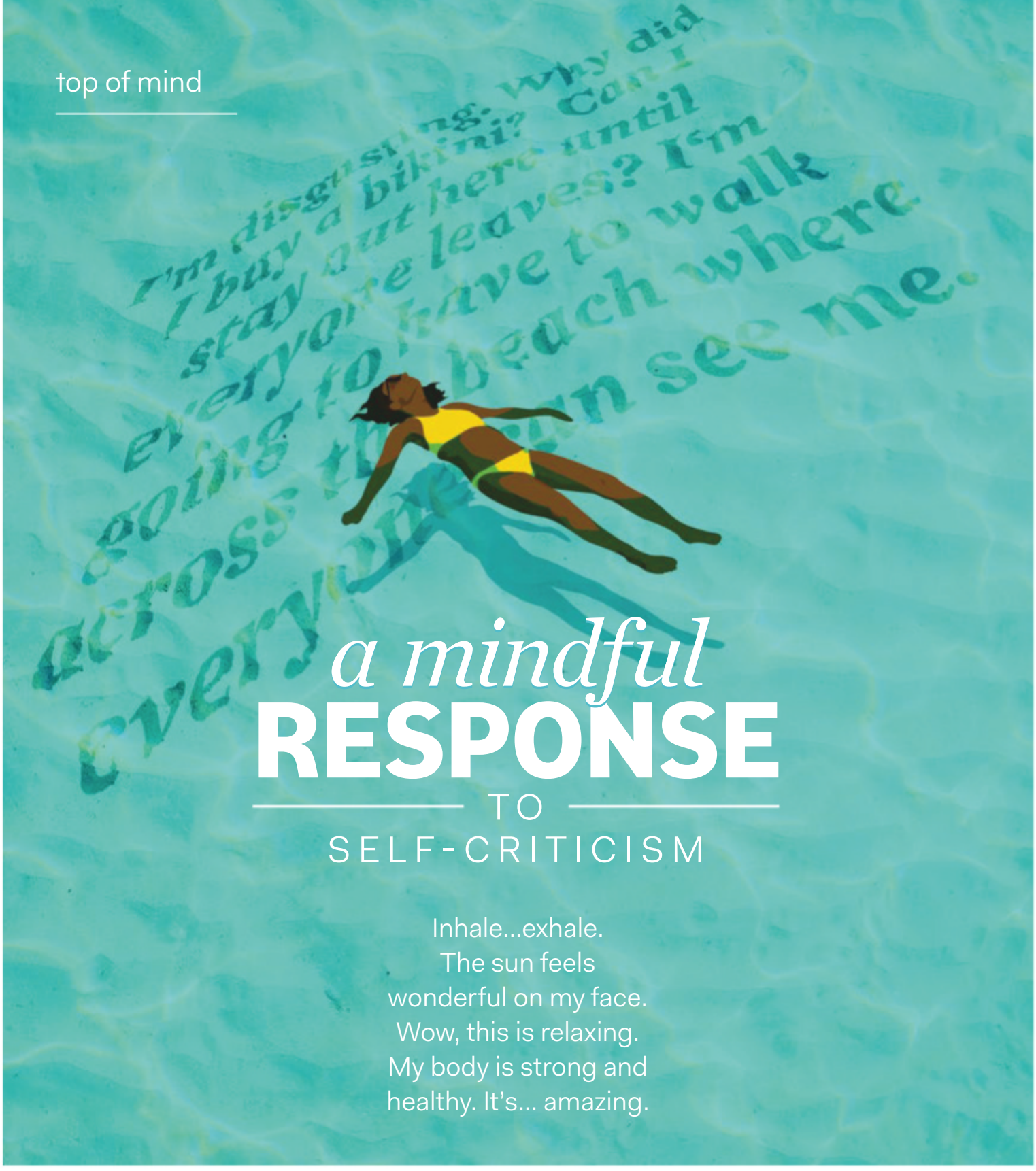
We're often told that people who are inherently mindful are better at focusing their attention. bridge that gap, researchers at Michigan State University asked 63 female college students with no prior mindfulness training to rate their level of mindfulness. They then measured the students' brain activity and had them complete a computerized attention test. The goal was to see if students' mindfulness correlated to attention-related brain activity and better performance on tasks requiring focused attention. That's exactly what they found. More

Mindfulness may boost both our brain's efficiency and performance on undertakings that require heightened focus.

Although a number of studies show that mindfulness is related to functional and structural changes in brain regions related to attention, few studies link those brain changes to behavior. To mindful individuals demonstrated greater speed and accuracy on tests requiring focus. Their brain activity was also more efficient, meaning they were less distractible and took less effort to complete the tests. This suggests that mindfulness may boost both our brain's efficiency and performance on undertakings that require heightened focus.

HAPPINESS IN THE PRESENT MOMENT?

Living in the present moment is one thing, and accepting it is another. Happiness, a new study finds, may be tied to the latter. A team of researchers randomly assigned 153 adults to 8 weeks of training in monitoring and accepting their experience, or just monitoring without acceptance, or no instruction. Positive mood increased only in the group that learned acceptance skills, though groups who learned to monitor their experience also reported fewer negative moods.



a mindful RESPONSE TO SELF-CRITICISM

Inhale...exhale.
The sun feels
wonderful on my face.
Wow, this is relaxing.
My body is strong and
healthy. It's... amazing.

QUIZ

WHAT ARE THEY SELLING?

We've noticed that the slogans marketers use to sell soft drinks, cars, medicines, and food are not all that different from what is used to sell mindfulness. Can you spot which of these is selling consumer products and which is peddling peace of mind?

1. The Power of Softness
2. Rest. Unwind. Renew.
3. Live for Now
4. The Journey is the Destination
5. Discover Calm
6. Grace. Space. Pace.
7. Healthy Mind, Healthy Life
8. Stop Suffering, Start Breathing
9. Live Every Moment
10. Choose Happiness
11. Explore the Power of You
12. Brilliant things happen in calm minds

Answers: 1-Wonder Bread; 2-Omega Institute; 3-Everyday Mindfulness; 4-Pepsi; 5-Calm meditation app; 6-Jaguar; 7-Mindful magazine; 8-Allegra; 9-KIA Stonic; 10-Coca-Cola; 11-Kripalu; 12-Headspace;

GERMANY GOES GREEN

Countries around the world have set goals to switch to renewable energy sources. This past year in Germany, renewables outstripped coal as the country's main source of electricity, accounting for a little over 40% of the nation's power production.

COAL MINES TO BEEHIVES

The phasing out of coal bodes well for the environment, but in the US has led to the loss of many thousands of jobs. In West Virginia, where unemployment is among the highest in the country, the nonprofit Appalachian Beekeeping Collective is training former coal miners to work in greener pastures: as beekeepers. While this work doesn't compare financially to coal mining, it does provide some income and helps protect a critical aspect of the world's ecosystem.

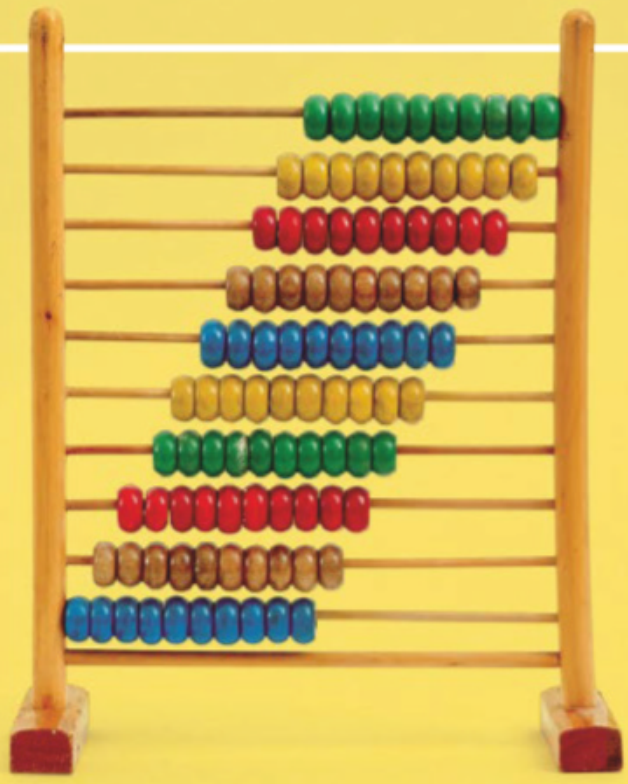
mindful FAQ

Q **Is it OK to count my breaths while I'm meditating?**

A Many people find breath-counting useful when they are still developing a personal practice of mindfulness meditation, because it provides a kind of anchor or rudder to keep them on task. Think of it as scaffolding around a building. It can serve a useful, supportive purpose at the beginning, but you may want to let go of it when the structure (practice) is more established and solid.

The practice I have heard most often is a process of counting each breath at the completion of the outbreath and going until 10, and then starting again at one. (Any time that you lose track of which number you were on, you go back to one and start again.)

Steve Hickman is a clinical psychologist and founder of the UCSD Center for Mindfulness and executive director of the nonprofit Center for Mindful Self-Compassion.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CRISSY JARVIS / UNSPLASH, JANA KISER

Jana Kiser

PUERTO RICO TRAUMA RECOVERY ORGANIZER

When Hurricane Maria bore down on Puerto Rico in September 2017, destroying the island's infrastructure and claiming more than 3,000 lives, the world watched in horror. For Jana Kiser, living thousands of miles away in San Francisco, not being able to get news about her loved ones or help her community was excruciating. "I felt so far away and powerless," she says.

In the aftermath, Kiser, who works in nonprofit aid and collective-impact organization, was moved to act. Reaching out to friends and colleagues, including fellow Puerto Rican Andres Gonzales of the Holistic Life Foundation (HLF), she launched Bajacu' Boricua (*baja-coo boor-ee-qua*), a pilot project to offer free training in meditation, mindful movement, and music therapy, with the goal of supporting resiliency as Puerto Ricans "do the big work of recovery."

In January, she and members of HLF, movement teacher Leslie Booker, and María José Montijo, a California-based Puerto Rican sound therapist and harpist, embarked on a 10-day tour of the island. They were joined by guest mindfulness teachers Sharon Salzberg and Sylvia Boorstein, as well as a professional clown. Everywhere they went, Kiser says, "dozens and dozens" of people came out to participate.

Importantly, Kiser explains, each workshop opened with participants naming someone they would share these new tools with, and closed with an acknowledgment that "people already have a full bank of resources to help them survive."

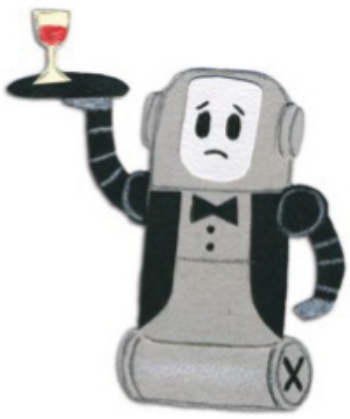
"We didn't want to be people from outside the community coming in with solutions for others, as if they were empty vessels," she says. "People are resilient and are surviving. They are making it, right now. Our intention was to just add to the bank, to make a deposit, to offer tools that are really doable and tangible to support that. And taught in a way that it could be shared with other people."

MINDFUL OR MINDLESS?

Our take on who's paying attention and who's not

by **AMBER TUCKER**
illustrations by **JESSICA RAE GORDON**

An astonishing (and highly illegal) stash of 1,529 turtles and tortoises were rescued from an airport in Manila, Philippines. Smugglers had wrapped the reptiles in duct tape and stowed them in suitcases, but then abandoned them.



Automation of human jobs may not be as imminent as feared. Japan's quirky "Robot Hotel" ended up retiring more than half its robot staff, because they failed to transport guests' luggage, scan passports, or answer simple questions. The hotel hired more people instead.

Staff from the Chicago Public Library are reading, singing, and playing games with children who accompany their parents to 14 laundromats in underserved communities. The new program entertains kids but also supports families by modeling important ways they can support child literacy and learning development.

MINDLESS — MINDFUL

In Wichita, a man at Home Depot commented to other customers that they should leave the building because he was "fixin' to blow it up." He meant that he needed the restroom badly, but someone took the joke as a bomb threat and called 911.

An Oklahoma courthouse had to be evacuated when a lawyer sauntered in, blissfully unaware there were insects falling out of his clothes. The verdict? Bedbugs.

A two-year-old deaf girl in Newton, Massachusetts, couldn't communicate with most of her neighbors—until her whole neighborhood hired an ASL instructor and learned sign language. ●

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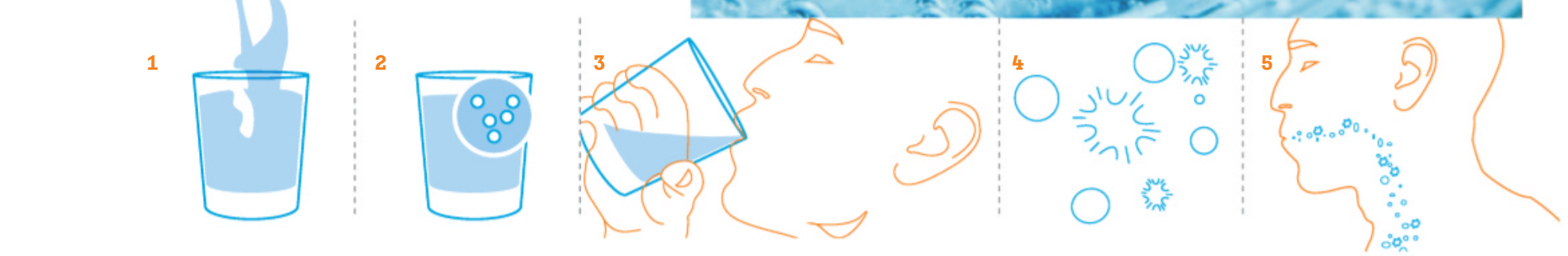
Feel the Sparkles

By Claire Ciel Zimmerman

Once a product of nature found only in mineral springs, sparkling water is now produced through both mechanical and chemical processes as well, and it has become a staple in households around the world. In France and Italy, some water fountains even offer free eau pétillante or acqua frizzante to all (there's a fountain conveniently located outside the Colosseum in Rome). Tingly, and sometimes a little sharp, not all bubbly waters are made alike. Some have distinct mineral flavors, while others are all about the bubbles. The size of the bubbles affects the intensity of the sparkling sensation, with smaller bubbles creating a smoother texture and larger bubbles creating a stronger texture. Try this mindful drinking practice to savor the sensations of sparkling water.

Add a hint of flavor with a few berries, a squeeze of lemon or lime juice, or some muddled mint leaves.

MINDFUL DRINKING PRACTICE:



1 Pour yourself some sparkling water, preferably into a clear glass. **2** Take a moment to observe the bubbles in the glass, noticing whether they move at a consistent speed or change speed with time. **3** Put your nose to the glass and feel the bubbles bounce up on your skin, then take a sip. **4** Pay attention to how the bubbles move around in your mouth. Consider the texture as it first hits, and what happens if you let the water linger for a few moments. **5** Does it feel different on the roof of your mouth than it does on the insides of your cheeks? As you swallow, feel the bubbles move to the back of your throat and then down, paying attention for the moment you stop feeling them. ●

PHOTOGRAPH BY FRANK MUCKENHEIM / PLAIN PICTURE

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Just 20 minutes a day can help trigger your brain's pain-relieving power.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sara Altshul is an award-winning journalist who has covered natural and alternative healing for over 20 years. Her articles have appeared in magazines including *Prevention*, *AARP*, *Arthritis Today*, and *Health*. She is the author of *Kitchen Cabinet Cures*.

"This probably isn't going to kill me, but it'll hurt," Danny Penman remembers thinking back in May 2006. Moments earlier, Penman had been floating serenely over England's Cotswold Hills when a blast of wind collapsed his paraglider. He somersaulted head over heels through the air before slamming into a hillside some 30 feet below.

An agonizing pain engulfed him as he realized his leg was shattered. He slipped into shock; near-seizures shook his body. That's when Penman deployed his secret weapon: He'd learned meditation as a student in England. In sheer desperation, he gave it a try.

Forcing himself to breathe slowly and deeply, he focused on the sensations his breath made. He envisioned himself in a beautiful garden and imagined breathing its tranquil air. Gradually, his perception of the pain shifted, so that it became less "personal" and intense, as if he was watching it on TV rather than experiencing it directly.

Over the next five months, Penman needed three operations to rebuild his leg. The pain—plus the insomnia, irritability, and anxiety—was excruciating, he recalls in his book, *You Are Not Your Pain*, written with Vidyamala Burch.

The powerful pain meds provided by his doctors weren't much help, and nausea was an additional problem. Some three weeks after he left the Bristol Royal Infirmary, Penman came across a newspaper article about a form of →

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By Sara Altshul

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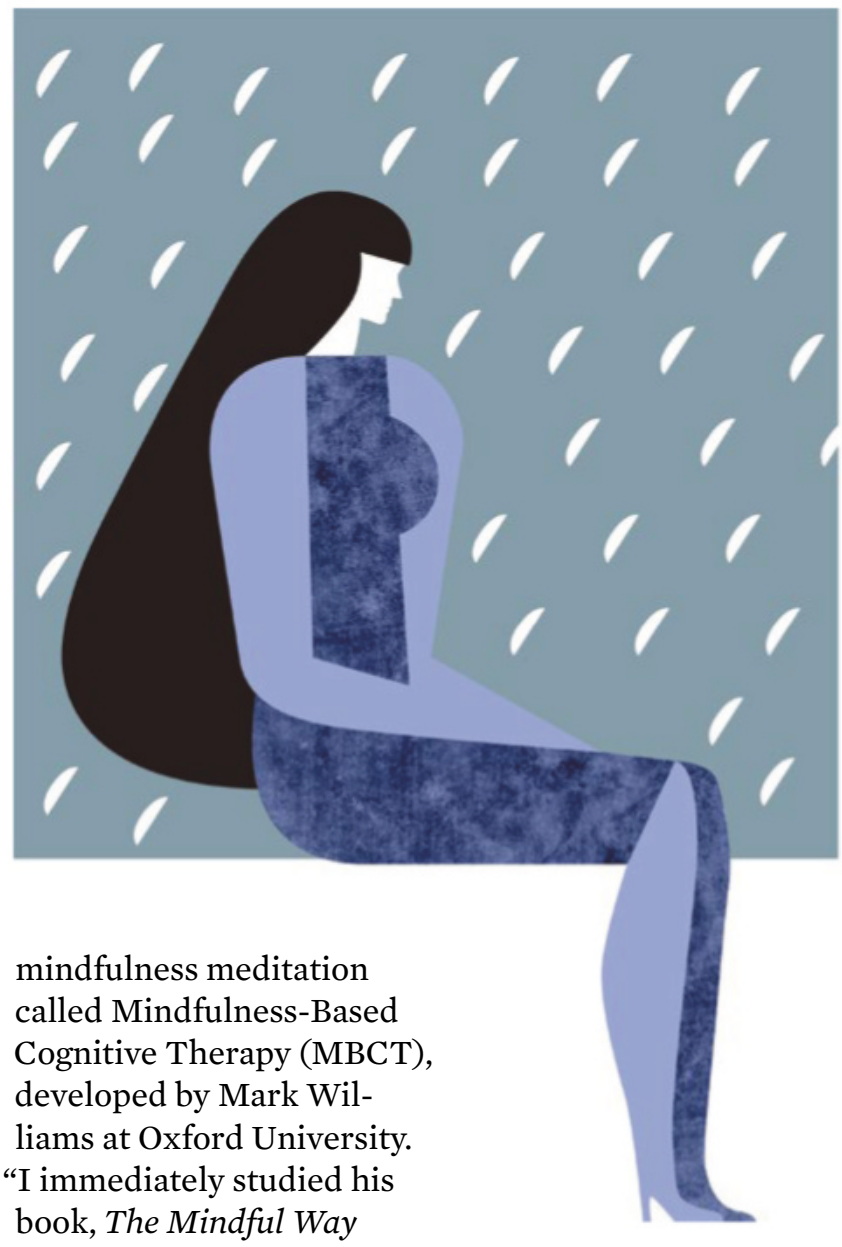

mindfulness meditation called Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT), developed by Mark Williams at Oxford University. "I immediately studied his book, *The Mindful Way Through Depression*. And then I had Dr. Williams teach me personally," says Penman.

"My pain subsided and I slashed my intake of painkillers and other drugs by two-thirds about a month or so after the accident—I was initially taking 40 pills a day," he told *Mindful*.

Penman's healing was so complete that he eventually hiked Britain's 630-mile South West Coast Path—a goal he'd envisioned while in the hospital. He also became a meditation teacher and author of *Mindfulness: A Practical Guide to Finding Peace in a Frantic World*.

CHRONIC PAIN—A SILENT EPIDEMIC

Chronic pain has been called our "silent epidemic," says Fadel Zeidan, PhD, assistant professor in the Department of Anesthesiology at the University of California San Diego. Pinning down numbers of people suffering from chronic pain is tricky, because pain is subjective and we have no good way of measuring, he says. Official estimates range from over 25 million to 126 million Americans struggling with chronic pain each year—and Zeidan thinks that number could be significantly higher.

Any pain that lasts more than three months is considered "chronic," according to the National Institutes of Health. It can be caused by an illness or an injury and can last for months or even longer. Chronic pain can also bring sleep disturbances, fatigue, and appetite and mood changes. And it can limit your mobility—being in constant pain stunts your ability to take even a short walk, much less get to the gym or the yoga studio. As a result, your flexibility, strength, and stamina can take a nosedive.

Zeidan is a mindfulness researcher (and teacher) who, through his clinical studies, has discovered that mindfulness affects the way the brain processes pain. In one study, for example, his team exposed mindfulness meditators to painful stimulation. Through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), they discovered that mindfulness affects areas of the brain that influence pain, including the subgenual anterior cingulate cortex, the orbitofrontal cortex, and the right anterior insula. Mindfulness meditation, they found, reduces both the intensity of pain and self-reported feelings of the pain's unpleasantness.

HOW MINDFULNESS MEDITATION COMBATS CHRONIC PAIN

Mindfulness triggers a neurological, pain-relieving response. But what also weaponizes mindfulness meditation against pain is that it helps you cultivate a nonjudgmental, accepting attitude toward the pain, says Sara Lazar, PhD, Associate Researcher in the Department of Psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. "Pain is both mental and physical, and meditation is excellent at changing the mental aspect of it," she says. "You change your relationship to pain so that it no longer rules your life," she adds.

What's more, meditation promotes relaxation and combats the muscle tension and psychological stress that worsen pain, says Lazar. In Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) was, in fact, originally created to ease chronic pain.

"The key thing about using mindfulness to ease pain is to have no expectations about changing the pain itself," says Lazar. If you focus on getting rid of the pain, you won't. But if you focus on reducing your stress and becoming mindful, the pain will lessen as a result of your practice.

"PAIN IS BOTH MENTAL AND PHYSICAL, AND MEDITATION IS EXCELLENT AT CHANGING THE MENTAL ASPECT OF IT."

SARA LAZAR, PH.D.

Experts agree that you don't have to spend hours in mindful meditation to ease pain. "Many people gain some relief almost immediately, but it will return unless they continue to meditate for 10 to 20 minutes a day," says Lazar.

"Mindfulness helps you turn down the 'volume control' on the brain's pain-sensing networks," says Penman: This ends up reducing the amount of pain you consciously feel. ●

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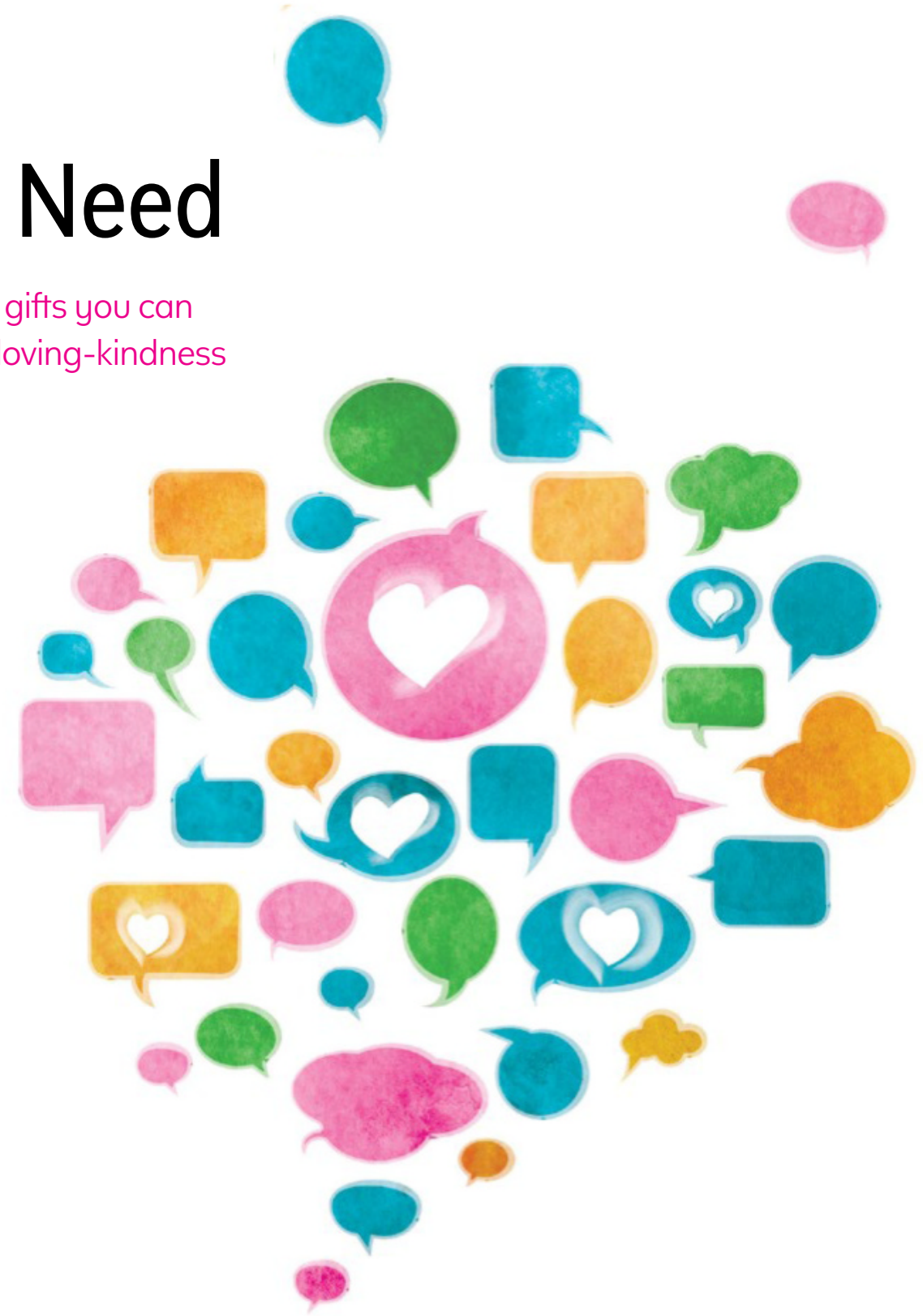
Say What You Need

Self-compassion is one of the greatest gifts you can give to yourself. Use this guide to craft loving-kindness phrases that feel meaningful for you.



Many of the traditional loving-kindness phrases used in meditation (*May I be happy, May I be free from suffering...*) have been handed down over centuries, so it's not surprising they can be a bit hard to connect with. For this reason, we believe that it is important to find phrases that resonate. This is especially true when we want to generate feelings of loving-kindness for ourselves: What we say must feel authentic to have impact.

The aim is to find language that evokes the attitude of loving-kindness and compassion. Here are some guidelines:

Phrases should be simple, clear, authentic, and kind. There should be no argument in the mind when we offer ourselves a loving-kindness phrase, only gratitude.

You don't need to use "may I." Loving-kindness phrases are wishes. "May I" is simply an invitation to incline the heart in a positive direction, meaning "If all the conditions would allow it to be so, then..."

The phrases are like blessings. They are not positive affirmations (for example: "I'm becoming healthier every day"). We are simply cultivating good intentions, not pretending things are other than they are.

The phrases are designed to evoke goodwill, not good feelings. A common reason for difficulty with loving-kindness meditation is that we have expectations about how we're supposed to feel. This practice doesn't directly change our emotions. However, good feelings are an inevitable byproduct of goodwill.

The phrases should be general. For example, "May I be healthy" rather than "May I be free from diabetes."

The phrases should be said slowly. There's no rush—saying the most phrases in the shortest time doesn't win the race!

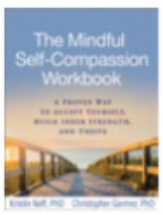
The phrases should be said warmly, like whispering them into the ear of someone you truly love.

Finally, you may address yourself as "I" or "you," or use your proper name ("George"). You may also use a term of endearment, such as "Sweetheart" or "Dear One." Addressing yourself in this way supports the attitude of kindness and compassion.

FIND YOUR LOVING-KINDNESS PHRASES

Chris Germer leads you through a guided meditation designed to help you discover loving-kindness and compassion phrases that are deeply meaningful to you.

mindful.org/find-loving-kindness-phrases



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Kristin Neff, PhD, is Associate Professor of Human Development and Culture at the University of Texas at Austin. **Christopher Germer, PhD,** is a psychotherapist and a lecturer at Harvard Medical School/Cambridge Health Alliance.

PRACTICE

1

Put a hand over your heart, or elsewhere, and feel your body breathe. Now take a moment and allow your heart to open gently—to become receptive—like a flower opens in the warm sun.

Ask yourself this question, allowing the answer to arise naturally within you:

What do I need? What do I truly need?

Let the answer be a universal human need, such as the need to be connected, loved, peaceful, free. If this need has not been fulfilled in a given day, your day does not feel complete.

When you are ready, write down what arose for you.

2

Now consider a second question:

What do I need to hear from others? What words do I long to hear? If I could, what words would I like to have whispered into my ear every day for the rest of my life—words that might make me say, "Oh, thank you, thank you," every time I hear them?

Words that we would like to hear from others again and again are qualities we would like to actualize in our own lives. For example, longing to hear "I love you" probably means that we wish to know we are truly lovable.

Open the door of your heart and wait for words to come. Allow yourself to be vulnerable and open to this possibility, with courage. Listen.

When you're ready, write down what you heard.

3

Take a moment to review what you have written and settle on two to four words or phrases you would like to use in meditation. These are gifts you will give yourself over and over again.

If you heard that you need "kindness," "to belong," or "more peace in my life," maybe the wishes can become:

May I begin to be kind to myself

May I know that I belong

May I live in peace

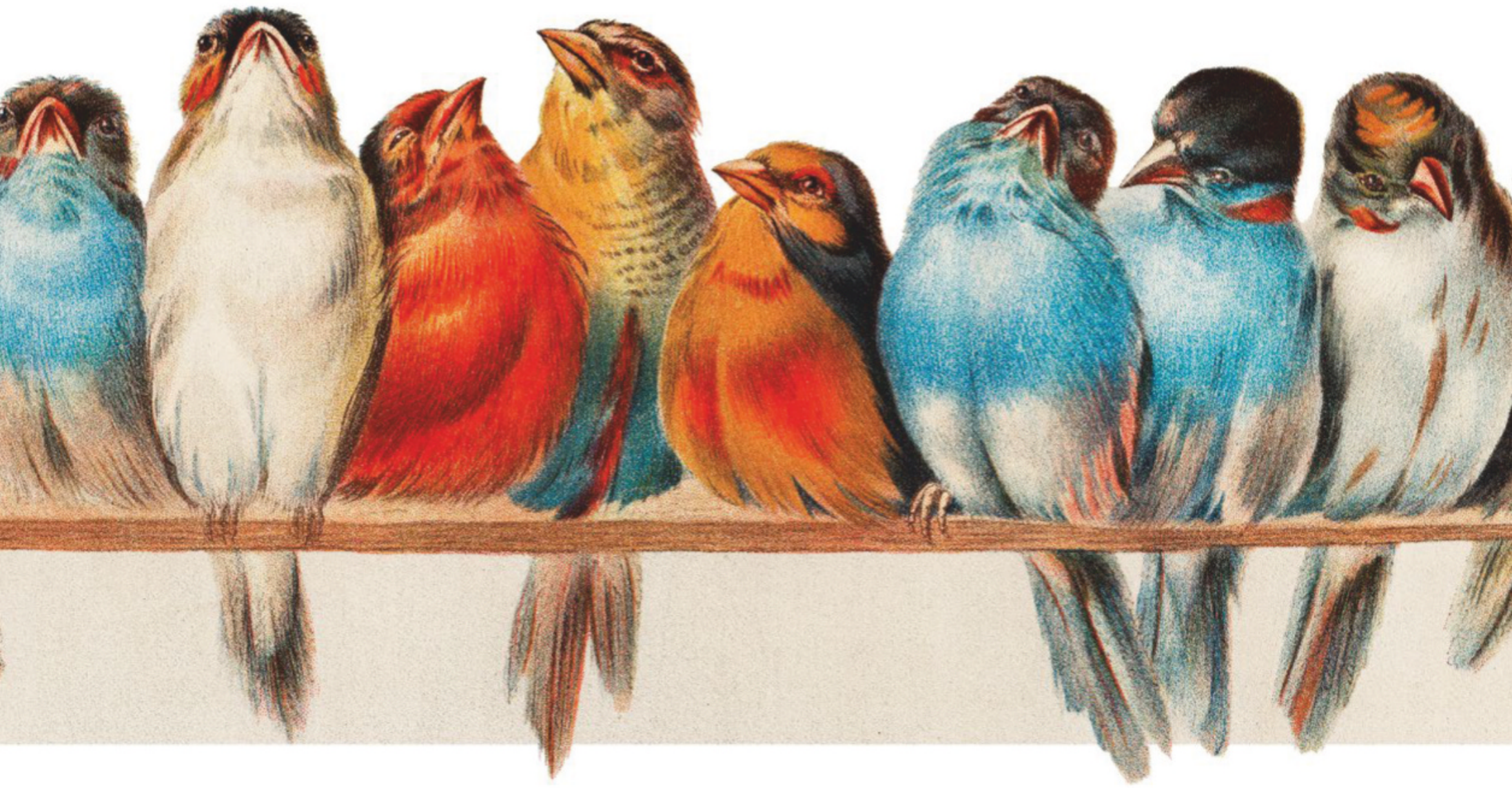
"I love you" can become the wish *May I love myself just as I am.*

"I'm here for you" can become the wish *May I feel safe and secure.*

"You're a good person" can become the wish *May I know my own goodness.*

4

Finally, try out your phrases to see how they land. Begin saying them over and over, slowly and gently, allowing them to fill your being, if only for this one moment. Then gently release them and rest in the experience. ●



Longing to Belong

We're more connected than ever, yet we often feel disconnected from the people around us. With a little shift in attitude, we can find a sense of belonging wherever we are.

I didn't fit in at my high school. I yearned for the admiration and embrace of my classmates, but always felt different and distant from them. Among my desperate attempts to fit in was the time I showed up to prom in a dress I hoped would bring me my Cinderella moment, when I would finally feel that I could hang with the cool kids. The reality? The same old me in a monstrosity of wispy mint that left me embarrassed and more alienated than ever. Would I ever belong?

Belonging is complicated. There are many places we can find belonging, that feeling of identifying with and being part of a group that's bigger than we are: families, clubs, ethnicities, secret societies, political parties, and football teams, to name a few. Feeling that we are part of a wider group can give purpose and meaning to our lives, and research suggests that belonging to a community correlates to better mental and physical health. But even if your sense of belonging is strong in some arenas (say, your book club), what happens when you wind up in a place where you don't feel you belong (such as, say, your job)?

Today, many of us venture beyond our places of birth and away from our families, carving out lives on our own terms. As a result, we lose access to some of the ready-made forms of belonging that we might have had if we stayed closer to the nest. At the same time, ironically, life *appears* even more connected thanks to our constant digital companion, the smartphone, with its real-time updates from the diaspora we tap into through social media.

Maintaining real, deeply personal connections over time and space, however, is hard, and reaching out to make future friends out of strangers isn't easy for all of us. In our ever-more globalized, mobile world, we risk winding up lonely and disconnected in new and challenging ways.

Retaining a deeper sense of belonging, no matter where we are, starts with feeling at home within ourselves. When we know and accept ourselves, →

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elaine Smookler is a registered psychotherapist with a 20-year mindfulness practice. She is a senior faculty member at the Centre for Mindfulness Studies in Toronto.

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By Elaine Smookler

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RETAINING A DEEPER SENSE OF BELONGING, NO MATTER WHERE WE ARE, STARTS WITH FEELING AT HOME WITHIN OURSELVES.

we rely less on others to affirm our identity, which in turn allows us to shed some of the insecurities and fears (*What if I get rejected? Or say something stupid? Or don't fit in?*) that hold us back from connecting with others. From there we can plant small seeds of belonging, like saying hello to a stranger who looks like they could use a little acknowledgment, or sending a kind note to a colleague. Friendliness helps everyone feel they belong. You never know how those seeds might sprout, grow, and bloom.

Decades after my prom disaster, I was one of a dozen fortunate guests invited to an exclusive retreat at a summer cottage. Most of the women were shy and unknown to one another, and our host graciously arranged activities to help ignite connection and belonging within the group. As the week went on, I didn't always want to participate. I didn't want to do yoga. Or dance. Or cook. Or go into town with the gang. Yet I still felt like I belonged.

Eventually it struck me that, thanks to my mindfulness practice, I belonged *in my own skin*. This allowed me to feel a sense of belonging with others, in the silences, the laughter, the one-on-one conversations. I belonged to a larger feeling of safety and connection.

When we are not quite sure if we belong, we might think that we have to dress a certain way, do particular things, or share the right views so we can be part of the water-cooler conversation. But with awareness, we can know that we belong to our own life—exactly as we find it. And our life is woven into the entire fabric of humanity. From there, it might be easier to reach out and say hello. ●

Stop. Be. Connect.

When you find yourself feeling out of sync in your surroundings, or even in your own being, try this practice to bring you back to yourself:

1 **STOP** and take note of your emotions.

2 **BE** in the moment, noticing the space around you and whatever is unfolding in your presence. You don't have to fix or change anything. Simply noticing can accomplish so much.

3 **CONNECT** with your body. Take a few deep breaths and feel what physical sensations arise. Then, use your senses as tentacles to connect with your surroundings. You might see cars passing by, or hear birds chirping—things that link you to the world outside yourself. In this subtle way, you have found belonging.

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IF PEOPLE CAN UNDERSTAND WHAT MAKES (OR BREAKS) A DECENT APOLOGY, THEY MIGHT OFFER MORE OF THEM.

Why Is It So Hard to Apologize?

"I'm sorry." Those two little words can be so hard to say. Research reveals why many of us struggle to apologize.

Apologies are the Brussels sprouts of relationships. Research says they're good for us, and, like a dinner of the green stuff after a lunch of burger and fries, they can erase or at least mitigate the ill effects of a transgression. But there's something about both apologies and tiny bitter brassicas that makes us often choose something else on the menu, thank you very much.

When psychologist Karina Schumann began studying apologies, she noticed something odd: Psychologists had barely investigated why they can be so hard to make. Studies have focused almost exclusively on the victim's perspective, especially how apologies can trigger forgiveness and healing.

"It's been less about the transgressor," said Schumann, an assistant professor at the University of Pittsburgh. "That hasn't been completely ignored, but what causes someone to apologize or not has been a much more recent area of study."

It's about time. If people can understand what makes (or breaks) a decent apology, they might offer more of them. Bring on the healing, forgiveness, and stronger relationships.

The Likely Offenders

There are many reasons why people don't apologize. One is the →

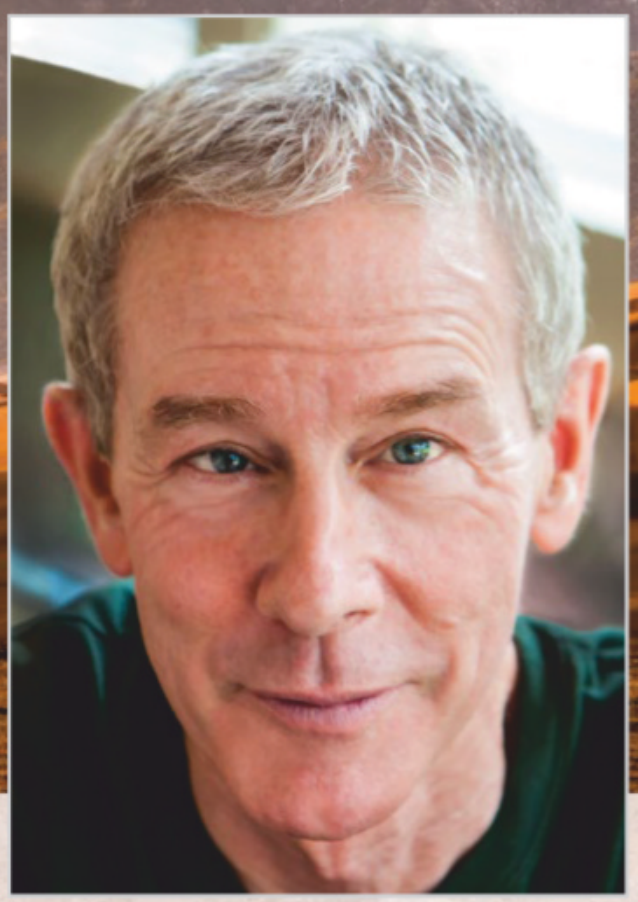
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sharon Begley is senior science writer with *STAT*, a national health and medicine publication. She is also author of *Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain* and most recently *Can't Just Stop: An Investigation of Compulsions* (2017, Simon & Schuster).

By Sharon Begley • Illustrations by Edmon de Haro

awakening the body

the way of somatic meditation



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"magnitude gap" between how each side describes an offense. Compared to victims, transgressors are more likely to justify their transgression, describe it as inadvertent, or minimize the resulting hurt. Believing the offense was a mere slip-up (But I remembered your birthday every other year!), understandable (I've been so busy at work), or the victim's fault (If you gave me more freedom, I wouldn't feel the need to be dishonest) reduces the emotional and cognitive impetus to apologize.

Another reason an apology might be MIA is that the transgressor simply doesn't care. Apologies can be a way to reconnect with the victim and repair a damaged relationship by communicating remorse and sympathy. If you're not concerned with any of that, there's no motivation to apologize. Did the boss make you work late into the night, weekends, or holidays without so much as a "sorry" (or "thank you")? She likely doesn't really care about your dinner plans or vacation time with family.

Then there's narcissism. Lack of empathy and an inability to recognize personal missteps (Me? Impossible!) are traits that make narcissistic people less likely to apologize than those who aren't as self-absorbed. People who don't or can't see things from another's perspective (How could my saying that dress makes you look fat hurt your feelings?) and those who believe personality is fixed rather than malleable also tend to apologize less.

As Schumann reeled off these barriers to apologizing, I thought, *Not me, nope, not that one either.* Then, there it was: Apologizing, she explained, is hell on one's self-image as a decent, caring, sensitive, moral person.

A Long, Hard Look in the Mirror

If a wrong reflects poorly on something insignificant to a person's sense of self, it's easier to apologize for it. For most of us, having the body control of a ballet dancer isn't critical to our sense of self, so accidentally bumping into someone usually triggers an immediate "I'm sorry, excuse me."

"If the transgression doesn't reflect on your character or your morality, it doesn't threaten your self-image to acknowledge it with an apology," Schumann said.

But failing to help a loved one, insulting a friend, not living up to expectations—there's a long list of misdeeds that can reflect poorly on

WHEN PEOPLE FOCUS ON THEIR CORE VALUES, THEY SEEM TO BECOME MORE WILLING TO SINCERELY APOLOGIZE.

our sense of who we are, or who we wish we were. "To the extent that something you did threatens your self-image, especially as a moral person or a good partner, apologizing puts you in a tough situation," Schumann said. "It calls additional attention to negative aspects of your behavior" (bad enough that you did it; now you're reminding someone of it) and keeps it front-of-mind, where it can insidiously and insistently declare, That's what you're like; stop fooling yourself!

Apologies bring us face-to-face with the fact that we have something to apologize for, triggering a sense of guilt and its close partner, shame. While it's true that after an apology we tend to feel better and have a stronger sense of integrity, the prospect of apologizing undermines the sense that the apologizer is a good person. Saying sorry puts one's shameful behavior out there for all (or at least the victim) to see. "That's why transgressors often view an apology as threatening to their self-image and consequently hesitate to offer one," Schumann said. Or, viewed the other way, that's why withholding an "I'm sorry" is an effective way to mitigate the threat to one's self-image as a decent person.

The self-image hit explains why people with a fragile sense of self-worth are also less likely to apologize: If you don't have much to begin with, something that reduces what you have is especially painful.

People who failed to apologize saw a rise in self-esteem and an increased sense of control and power over others, compared to people who did apologize, a 2012 study found. (In both cases participants followed instructions from the researchers, not their own druthers.) Why? It gives the recipient of the "I'm sorry" an opportunity to twist the knife (Ha! You realize you were in the wrong!). It also undermines "value integrity," the confidence in one's goodness and the soundness of one's core beliefs.

The Chance to Move Forward

This long list of barriers to apology, which Schumann explored in a 2018 paper, shouldn't be taken as a convenient excuse or as cause for despair. Instead, it might be leveraged to make apologizing easier.

For instance, when people focus on their core values, they seem to become more willing to sincerely apologize. In one of Schumann's studies, she and her colleagues had participants write about why the personal value they ranked most highly (e.g., justice, love, compassion) was important to them. That simple exercise has been shown to boost self-image as a moral person by affirming commitment to a treasured value. Compared to the participants who did not do this self-affirmation exercise, those who did offered more sincere apologies for remembered transgressions when writing what they would say to the person they hurt.

This was an artificial, laboratory setting rather than a real-world one; people knew they were in a psych experiment, which can skew their behavior. So we should take it with a grain of salt. But by understanding the many barriers to apology—indifference to another's pain or to the fraying of a relationship, or avoidance of a threat to self-image—we can glimpse what's holding us back from saying "I'm sorry" in a particular situation. From there, we have the opportunity to change course and let the healing begin. ●

THE THREE PARTS OF AN EFFECTIVE APOLOGY

Sociologist Christine Carter explains why saying "I'm sorry" isn't enough.

mindful.org/effectiveapology

THE TAKEAWAY

HOW TO MAKE A GOOD APOLOGY

A high-quality apology has three elements:

1. It accepts responsibility for the wrong and doesn't even hint that outside forces, or the victim, caused the offender to do what they did.

   What to say: I'm sorry I didn't show up to help you move when I said I would.

   What not to say: You were asking too much of me and I just couldn't do it, so I flaked.

2. It's unqualified. If the apology contains a "but," it fails. There's time later—after the injury has had time to heal—to bring up any qualifications that might be relevant to future interactions.

   What to say: I broke your trust and was inconsiderate of your feelings.

   What not to say: I'm sorry I made you feel abandoned, but I didn't realize how big a job it was and I had other things I needed to do that day.

3. It offers to make amends, such as offering help to someone you previously blew off or making a sincere effort to avoid the transgression in the future.

   What to say: I know I bailed on the move, but can I help you unpack or clean up? If not, next time you ask me for help I won't leave you hanging. I will do everything I can to be available, and if I can't make it I will tell you well in advance.

   What not to say: Can we both try to be better about communicating next time?

MINDFULNESS

IN ACTION

Grassroots activist Shelly Tygielski's mindfulness practice has developed from free meditations on the Florida beach to taking mindfulness to the heart of trauma, helping the families of Parkland cope with unimaginable loss.

INTERVIEW BY KARIN EVANS • PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHANIE DIANI

Each Sunday, **Shelly Tygielski** can be found on a beach 40 minutes from her home in Lighthouse Point, Florida, leading a free meditation session for whoever shows up. At first, when she began in November 2015, just a few people came—and then hundreds, and then a thousand. She calls the group, now a part of her social activism, the "Sand Tribe." A former corporate executive, Tygielski came to meditation as a way to calm herself after learning she had an eye condition that could lead to blindness. Although she calls herself "an unlikely meditator," she now leads meditation groups full time, sharing her devotion and enthusiasm with thousands of people in some unusual settings.

Tell me about a typical meditation of the Sand Tribe.

People walk onto the beach and hear music before they see anybody. I have an interesting playlist, composed of songs that might make you think you're back in 1969, songs with a strong message about happiness or hope.

After people find their places on the sand, I walk around with a bucket filled with intentions written on cards, words like *courage*, *compassion*, *self-love*. The bucket says, "Take what you need." I always like to tell people that the intention chooses you, you don't choose it. People close their eyes and dig, and normally they chuckle or laugh.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karin Evans is a journalist and author based in Berkeley, California. She explored overcoming bias for *Mindful* in August 2015.

The "Sand Tribe," in reality, represents anything but *tribalism: Shelly Tygielski's meditation sessions on the beach welcome all people, and they're free of cost. Simple suggestions written on cards, above, are handed out before the guided practice to provide a focal point and inspiration for each meditator.*

Recently we met near the Marine Environmental Education Center, where we raised money for a sea-turtle rescue project. We meditated among the sea turtles, which was really cool. About 300 people showed up, and we raised a fair amount of money.

I usually give a talk and do a guided meditation on a chosen topic. The talk during the sea turtle event was about the environment, how it's important to protect it, to commit to a small action, because small actions done consistently over time make a big impact.

We end with a bell ringing or a "Namaste," and a song, something like Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." Afterwards I stay around and people come up and share an experience they've had. Sometimes people are crying and just want a hug.

How do people at your beach sessions respond?

The beautiful thing about the beach and the thing I love most about our community is that there is no typical person. Sitting in front of me last time were two African-American women who are a lesbian couple, and they were sitting next to a white guy who is tattooed head to toe, wears T-shirts with rainbows and unicorns, and rides a motorcycle. Nearby was a group of older women from a Jewish community in South Florida, all originally Long Islanders. Behind them was a person I knew from corporate America.

I remember one woman who was very outgoing, and when I asked what had brought her here, she said, "My parents are older and very ill, and I'm their caretaker. It's been really hard. I lost my husband a few years ago, and today is my birthday." She said she had hesitated, that she wasn't sure she should come, that she had tried it before and her mind never quieted. I said to her, "You're totally in the right place. Your thoughts are never going to disappear. You are just going to learn to coexist with your thoughts." She was crying at the end and thanked me profusely, and she →

"BEING ABLE TO CONNECT WITH PEOPLE FROM ALL DIFFERENT BACKGROUNDS, GENERATIONS, AND RELIGIONS ALWAYS KEEPS ME POSITIVE. IT GIVES ME HOPE."

Shelly Tygielski

has been a member ever since. Her father has since passed away, and her mother isn't doing well, but she says this meditation has given her an anchor. She has a practice she does every day. She's a flight attendant and even uses meditation while she is up in the air.

You call yourself an unlikely meditator. Why?

I grew up in an Orthodox Jewish family and was born in Israel. I lost several family members to acts of terror, war, and violence, and by all accounts I should be a pretty angry person. When I was eight, I saw the realities of war, and I felt I had to do something to fix the world. I discovered meditation when I was in college. Yet, when I began meditating, in the late 1990s, I was really resistant. I wasn't sure I would fit my own ideas of what a meditator looks like. Certainly, as someone who'd been raised an Orthodox Jew, I almost had to sneak around. God forbid someone saw me walking into a meditation center!

What changed?

I think it really has to do with just being able to connect and see the humanity in other people. To recognize that I had that capability early on made me feel very empowered. People have this fear of speaking to the "other." When we finally get over that fear and have a cup of tea, break bread, have a conversation with someone who not only disagrees with us, but has a different set of principles—someone who we might even find scary—that's huge. I grew up in an insular community, but when I realized that there is a whole other world out there and one not looking to harm me, that was a huge thing for me. Being able to connect with people from all different backgrounds, generations, and religions, always keeps me positive. It gives me hope.

You've led groups in some surprising places—a Miami Heat basketball game, for instance.

That happened because a person in the Miami Heat organization approached me. It was a challenging event to put together, since the sports team doesn't own the venue, and we had to work through a lot of red tape. But it turned out to be (as far as we know) the largest mass meditation at a professional sporting event.

My hope is that we will see more collective mass meditation on a grand scale in unlikely venues.

It sounds as if you sense a hunger for meditation practices just now.

Yes, absolutely, especially for activists. After the Women's March of 2016, there was a lot of activism fatigue and burnout. Self-care isn't a pillar of activism. So when the Women's Convention happened in 2017 in Detroit, the organizers asked me to teach a class, which I did. My topic was "Self-Care Is an Act of Resistance." It was incredible to connect with people who needed to hear that they had permission to be not just caretakers, but self-caretakers, too. It was important to provide them with a really good toolkit to incorporate into their lives.

How about your own self-care?

I connect to nature. I love being in the ocean. The water just calms me. I also have a really great group of friends and we hold each other accountable. If I am feeling angry about what's happening in the world, talking about it really helps. When I am willing to be vulnerable about what I am going through, I get a sense of relief. Activists can be viewed as the strong ones, carrying everyone on our backs. It's nice to put that down once in a while.

You've done work with the young survivors of the 2018 Parkland school shooting tragedy.

I got involved with this group because my son is in 11th grade and played lacrosse with kids from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. Being a community organizer, within 24 hours of the shooting, I immediately started working with a bunch of other parents, who would eventually form the March for Our Lives movement. The activism part of me was activated. We wanted it to be a student-led movement, but we helped with permitting and arranging bus rides to Tallahassee. Then, when the shock wore off, the meditation teacher and mother in me started wondering, how do we heal from this? That's when we started to offer Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. A network of incredible practitioners from all over the place asked how they could help. So we worked with teachers and staff who would be going back into the classroom. It's ongoing.

One of my teachers, Sharon Salzberg, reached out to me after Parkland and asked how she could help. We put together a half-day workshop, all centered around the power of love and loving-kindness meditation. The response was incredible. Parents who had lost children came, as well as teachers and students.

Sadly, as we have seen from the recent suicides of three people in the Parkland and Sandy Hook communities, for some people the challenges can become too hard to overcome. The trauma never goes away. The best we hope for is that it becomes manageable and that they land in a space where they can coexist with the immense void and also function. →

Holding Space for Healing Trauma

Watch the Mindful Interview with Shelly Tygielski and Parkland community members Ivy Schamis, Samantha Novick and Fred Guttenberg. **mindful.org/holding-space**

A mother and daughter who both meditate with the Sand Tribe: Sharon Cutler, above, teaches at Marjory Stoneman Douglas and is a survivor of the 2018 school shooting. Samantha Novick is an alumnus of MSD who served as the adult coordinator/chairperson of March for Our Lives in Parkland. Hear Samantha's story at mindful.org/holding-space.

FIVE WAYS TO CULTIVATE COURAGE

By Shelly Tygielski

Courage is the savior that marches alongside us when fear shows up. It can inspire bursts of boldness that help us speak our minds, follow our hearts, and bare our souls to others. Without it, we can't grow or thrive.

Sometimes we get caught up in the mistaken notion that being courageous means overcoming fear. But courage isn't looking past fear; it's recognizing and even embracing it. Recently I've witnessed this seeming paradox in families affected by the unspeakable trauma of losing a child to a mass shooting.

Courage is not the absence of fear. It's being scared, worried, unsure, and ready to run, and yet still finding a way to do what you really want to do, what others need you to do, or what you believe is right—despite all that fear.

Here are a few tips that help me cultivate courage:

Make fear your friend

Stop blaming fear for stopping you and recognize the strange paradox that exists: Your fears will never completely disappear, and you will never win the battle against them. When you can finally accept fears and invite them in, it makes courage more accessible.

Embrace courage as a mindful response to fear

Fears are necessary—they can propel us to new heights if we choose to respond to them mindfully instead of react to them blindly. Doing this allows us to become bigger than our fears and act thoughtfully despite them. If you use your meditation practice to help resist the default fight-or-flight response, you'll likely feel your courage rising up in the silent pauses.

Take the Mindful Self-Care Course

Explore Shelly Tygielski's 8-part course and discover why self-care is a radical act of love.
mindful.org/self-care

Choose to be bold by simply committing to action

Even if you don't believe (yet!) that you will take the steps necessary, announce (to yourself, to others) that you are committed to taking action. By speaking it, owning it, and having others hold you accountable and inviting them to lift you in support, you will eventually work up the courage to act on this bold commitment. The first step is not actually taking action, it's setting the intention to act.

Be vulnerable

It leads to courage. Sharing your fears and anxieties with others can make them seem far less scary and insurmountable. You'll soon realize you're not alone, and once you feel the strength of a community surrounding you and the empathy of others who understand your situation, it'll be easier to take that leap.

Do it for others

The struggles of friends and loved ones, or the challenges faced by communities in crisis, present opportunities to show up and be brave in entirely unselfish ways. Sometimes that's what it takes to find our courage. When our actions impact more than our own lives, the ripple effect, including inspiring others to move to action, can provide us with a great sense of empowerment.

Our intent is to have a quarterly event, not just for Parkland, but for any survivors of mass shootings, because unfortunately there will probably be more in the future, and our idea is to have something in place. The communities who have suffered this way are all interconnected: Aurora, Sandy Hook, Parkland. All the parents know each other and reach out to each other.

What's next for you?

My son will be going off to college soon, so I am careful not to make too many plans. I want to see where he'll end up. If I could imagine doing anything, I have always wanted to get an Airstream and have this moveable community and go up and down the coast and make the practice available to more unlikely meditators. But that is really pie in the sky. I am looking to the 2020 election and I want to offer as much to the activist community as possible. I want to make sure we're not fatigued. An incredible community has formed around the Parkland kids, and I'd like to use that as a model for trauma-based mindfulness training, and also have some sort of center or program that is specifically available to mass-shooting survivors when they need it.

You're also at work on a book.

Yes, I write daily and share my journal entries online and on social media. A lot of the content is based on an intention. I wake up and set my intention before heading to the meditation cushion. I'm interested in how we treat these abstract words—*love*, *courage*, *presence*—that we see on T-shirts. Everyone says, "I want happiness. I want courage," but where is the road map? That is what my writings are about.

The working title is *If Only for Today*—if only for today I could be more kind, more patient, more present, what would that look like? It gives us permission to try something out.

An Oriental sycamore's branches (Platanus orientalis) *grow wide, shading the Moon Viewing Garden (this page). Opposite, Peter Good regards a passion fruit vine* (Passiflora edulis).

The Secret Garden

Touring the San Francisco Botanical Garden with master landscaper and contemplative gardener Peter Good reveals what curiosity and attention can teach us about gardens—and gardeners.

By Karin Evans | Photographs by Blake Farrington

I've spent some happy moments in my own small garden, down on my knees, gently pressing the earth over a handful of seeds or nurturing a young plum tree to bear fruit. I've known for a long time that whatever effort I give to my garden, the gifts that I get back are nothing short of miraculous: food for body and soul.

But today, as I tour the 55-acre San Francisco Botanical Garden with master landscaper Peter Good, I discover the gifts of gardening on a completely different scale.

Soft-spoken and handsomely weathered, Good regards this urban oasis in the midst of Golden Gate Park as his spiritual home. "This garden is my touchstone," says Good, who has spent decades working here. And no wonder. The botanical garden houses 8,500 kinds of plants from around the world, and everywhere I look, there is something spectacular to see: rich purple blooms on the rhododendrons, pastel azaleas, and golden South African lilies.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

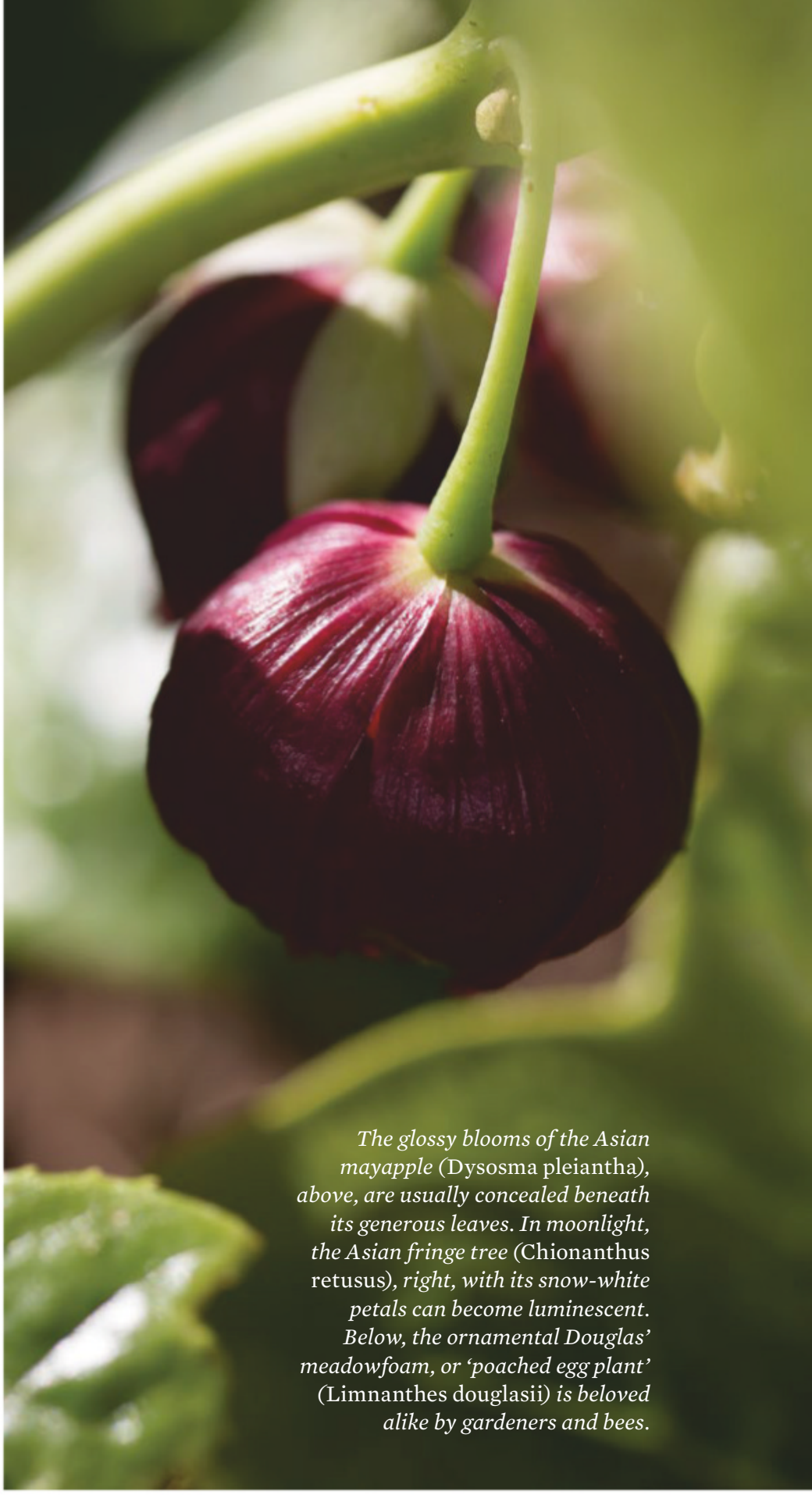
Karin Evans is a journalist, author, and aspiring gardener. She lives with her family in Berkeley, California.

On Garden Time

Good and I start by strolling along slowly, stopping to finger a branch, sniff a flower, or gaze high up into a tree. On my own, I'd probably walk briskly through this garden, seeing the obvious sights, but today I deliberately slow down to match his leisurely pace. Reducing the speed, it seems, is part of Good's secret to gardening; slowing down allows the mysteries to unfurl.

I watch as he pauses, kneels down, and lifts a broad green leaf on the edge of the garden path to reveal a tiny hidden bloom, cradling the delicate blossom in his gnarled hands. It's rose-colored and exquisite, hanging upside down from a slender stem. I follow his gaze and peer at what I would have missed—not just the blossom itself, but the beads of moisture on the sheltering leaves, bright and reflective as little balls of mercury, and the shiny trail on another leaf, left by a snail.

"Asian mayapple," Good says, turning the small flower over so I can see its full beauty, the waxy petals, the delicate yellow stamens. "This plant is from China," he adds and softly ticks off →



The glossy blooms of the Asian mayapple (Dysosma pleiantha)*, above, are usually concealed beneath its generous leaves. In moonlight, the Asian fringe tree* (Chionanthus retusus)*, right, with its snow-white petals can become luminescent. Below, the ornamental Douglas' meadowfoam, or 'poached egg plant'* (Limnanthes douglasii) *is beloved alike by gardeners and bees.*

Take a Mindful Garden Walk

Explore the San Francisco Botanical Garden with Peter Good and Editor-in-Chief Barry Boyce. **mindful.org/garden-walk**

Getting Close to Nature

Seven ways to appreciate the natural world

Slow your steps

Take your pace down to Peter Good speed. Think saunter or strolling for pleasure, not getting to a destination in a hurry. Slow down and enjoy.

Savor through your senses

Tune in using your whole body: the warm air on your face, the sound of birds, the fragrances of flowers and earthy smell of soil, the texture of leaves. Feel each sensation.

Think small

A photographer for *National Geographic* once spent time lying on his stomach in the desert, photographing flowers he called "pinhead flowers," blooms that were the size of a pencil dot. When he enlarged the photographs, they were stunning.

The tiny flowers of the umbrella plant (Darmeria peltata) *emerge early in spring, growing in globe-shaped clusters called corymbs.*

Notice tiny details

Author Jane Anne Staw wrote *Small* after she had an epiphany about concentrating too much on the big picture and missing the small one. One day she noticed a single dried leaf on the sidewalk, and focused all her attention on that leaf. "Suddenly I felt awareness course through me...my whole body hummed with pleasure...."

Change your point of view

Poet Mary Oliver said that she could walk the same path every day and always see something new. Vary your gaze: Look up, look down, sweep your eyes from left to right. And use more than just your vision. Listen to the crunch of your feet as you walk.

Go lightly
When you are out in nature, nothing is required but your presence. Put away your need to *do* anything and completely mute your cell phone. Unlike electronics, plants don't demand us to click on anything; they signal subtly, so look for their clues.

Stay awhile
Biologist David Haskell spent a year observing one square meter of earth in order to write *The Forest Unseen: A Year's Watch in Nature*. Pick your spot, get comfortable, and resist the urge to move on. The garden will reward you and so will the rest of life.

—Karin Evans

the names of the other plants we will soon see.

"Plants are our travel agents," he says with a smile. "They take us places. And everything has a story and a companionship with the whole ecosystem: the soil, the rocks, the trees." To walk through the garden with Good is to discover the garden's undercurrents, the smallest and most elusive details.

As we visit one plant after another, Good talks about each like an old friend. I watch as he lovingly runs his fingers along the branch of a bush, kneels down to look underneath a plant, scratches at the soil to check the moisture content. I follow his pointed finger to glimpse a flitting bright-blue butterfly. It soars, dips, circles, settles on a leaf for a moment in the sun, then spreads its wings and drifts away. "There goes a pipe-vine swallowtail," Good says. "And over there is the pipe-vine plant, where it lays its eggs."

Good knows this garden so well that he can see what is not yet there. He points to a tall stalk with buds along its length. "This," he says, "will soon have flowers that will emerge as an unworldly crystal blue, as if we were in *Avatar*!"

Paying close attention is Good's way of caring for this garden, for hearing its messages. It's how he spots the signs of a tree in distress or makes sure there are enough native plants to keep the bees and butterflies happy. When he pauses by a dry creek bed, he leans down to point out some tiny green shoots lying partly underneath the rocks—unnoticed by an average visitor, of course. "It's quiet here now," he says, "but that will change." The little shoots will soon push their way out. In fact, Good adds, shoots like these could push their way through asphalt if they needed to!

On my own, I'd probably walk briskly through this garden, seeing the obvious sights. Today I deliberately slow down, allowing the mysteries to unfurl.

Hide and Seek

Watching and listening, I begin to sense the hidden power of this garden, the invisible, fierce force of nature that is at every moment nudging each plant along its own course. It reminds me of the line in a Dylan Thomas poem: "The force that through the green fuse drives the flower." It's spring and those green fuses are all sizzling. The garden is full of raw energy, more going on beneath the surface than I'd ever imagined. →

The huge 200-year-old Monterey Cypress by the park's entrance is impressive enough above ground, but beneath the soil the tree's roots are an equally powerful presence. Underneath our footsteps, Good tells me, those tree roots are communicating with each other.

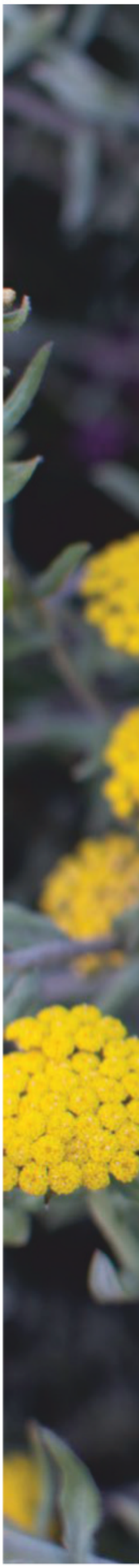
The garden is full of raw energy, with more going on beneath the surface than I'd ever imagined.

"Plants are also tactile," Good says, stopping beside a massive tree with thick rusty-brown tangled skeins of stiff plant material hanging down in bunches. I'd never seen—or fingered—anything quite like it, and on my own I would have passed it by. "Aerial roots," explains Good. "It's a New Zealand Christmas tree, and these bunches of roots reach down to grab the earth and help stabilize the tree when it grows on precipitous slopes."

The more I slow down and linger, the more I see: a ladybug climbing up a stalk, a beetle slowly making its way into the grass.

"When you slow down like this, the real garden is uncovered," writes Wendy Johnson, who started the gardens at Green Gulch Farm Zen Center in Muir Beach, California. "And so is the real gardener," she adds. "You unfold together. →

Master landscaper Peter Good in his "touchstone," the San Francisco Botanical Garden. Offering food to butterflies, strawflower plants (Helichrysum dasyanthum)*, right, are native to South Africa, while the Monterey cypress* (Cupressus macrocarpa)*, below, is a California native and is considered a vulnerable species.*



Good for the Gardener

The health benefits of gardening may be a reason to nurture your green thumb.

Gardening gets us moving, fills our lungs with fresh air, is naturally meditative, and can be deeply nourishing, both literally and figuratively. But research also shows that in getting some dirt—with its bacteria and other microscopic denizens—under our fingernails, we may also boost our gut health.

The gut has earned the nickname "second brain" among some experts. Much of that is thanks to the 300 to 500 different types of bacteria, along with other friendly microorganisms, that make up our intestinal microbiome. From breaking down dietary fiber to making vitamins K and B7, the microbiome does a lot of heavy lifting in maintaining our well-being. A 2013 study at Oregon State University also found that gut microbes communicate back and forth with the vast number of immune cells that live in our gut, helping to decide when the immune system needs to spring into action—say, in response to invading bacteria—and when it isn't needed.

What, then, does gardening have to do with our gut? Soil naturally contains probiotic microorganisms that support gut health. For example, *Mycobacterium vaccae*, a bacterium found in soil, appears to aid the release of the chemical serotonin, which may alleviate anxiety and depression. "Gardeners inhale these bacteria while digging in the soil," says microbiologist Dorothy Matthews from Russell Sage College in Troy, NY, as well as on "their vegetables, or when soil enters a cut in their skin."

However, as modern science starts to discover the benefits of these probiotic microorganisms, our mainly indoor, sanitary lifestyles threaten their very existence and the delicate role they play in our bodies. Natalia Shulzhenko, PhD, who reported on the 2013 study, says our gut flora face "increasing disruption," due to "modern lifestyle, diet, overuse of antibiotics, and other issues. With that disruption, the conversation is breaking down."

All the more reason to go outside; get our hands dirty; breathe deeply; enjoy wholesome, natural foods; and care for the earth we all depend on.

—Amber Tucker

"When you slow down, the real garden is uncovered, and so is the real gardener. You unfold together."

Wendy Johnson, in *Gardening at the Dragon's Gate*

This takes time and a willingness to sit still past the moment when you get bored, or past the moment when you think of at least 30 worthy garden tasks that you need to accomplish immediately. Instead, give yourself all the time in the world, and don't move."

I think of the biologist David Haskell, who spent a year studying just one circle of earth, a meter in diameter, and found enough going on there to write a whole book about it, *The Forest Unseen*. I'm beginning to get the barest hint of how he found enough material.

My own garden has held surprises, too. Once, I moved a rock to find a moist little salamander hiding underneath. As the warmth of the sun reached it, the small brown creature moved one delicate long-toed foot, then the other, completely vulnerable to any careless movement of the rock that had provided shelter. I gingerly put the rock back in place, delighted to have shared such a rare private moment.

Good and I walk along a path into the Botanical Garden's primitive plants area, where shady clumps of horsetail ferns grow, along with other age-old plants, the kind that formed the fossil matter of our modern fuels. He points to a Wollemi pine, a tree species dating back millions of years and until recently thought to be extinct. But a specimen was found in a remote canyon in Australia, he tells me, and seeds and cuttings have since been carefully distributed to various areas of the world, to reestablish the species. He sees this as a hopeful sign.

"Even in dark times in history," Good says, "nature is still there, still bountiful, still providing comfort."

I take in his words, savoring their meaning and the calm that has enveloped me while in this lush landscape. After a long pause, we walk slowly back into sunlight and sit on a bench. "Look up," says Good. A drooping profusion of exquisite white blossoms is gently swaying overhead. "It's a Chinese fringe tree, and we are here at the perfect moment."

After saying goodbye, I leave the garden moving far more slowly than my usual pace, having seen far more than I usually see. I look forward to getting home to my own small garden, to see what secrets I can discover in my own patch of earth. ●

*A Monterey cypress tree, right, can reach over 130 feet, with a trunk diameter of eight feet. Its needlelike foliage has a lemony scent. At left, a Tasmanian tree fern (*Dicksonia antarctica*) can thrive for hundreds of years. The tropical pincushion protea (*Leucospermum 'Veldfire'*), bottom left, is an evergreen shrub whose long, vibrant flowers resemble fireworks.*

Deep Listening

*Yoga, mindfulness, and somatic awareness expert **Jillian Pransky** shows how tuning in to your body can unwind tension, de-stress the mind, and open your heart.*

BY KELLE WALSH

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JILLIAN PRANSKY

When you really pay attention to your breath, it's astonishing how much you notice. As I follow the sensation of cool air flowing into my nose, I feel a gentle expansion, a widening through my nasal cavity, back into my skull, and down my throat. My collarbones rise and spread; my ribs separate and widen like a bellows.

Exhaling, my diaphragm contracts into the cave of my abdomen, my spine curling ever so slightly around it. All the while, my body feels as if it's sinking into the floor. My mind follows the gravitational pull, its perpetual whirl slowed to a pleasant hum.

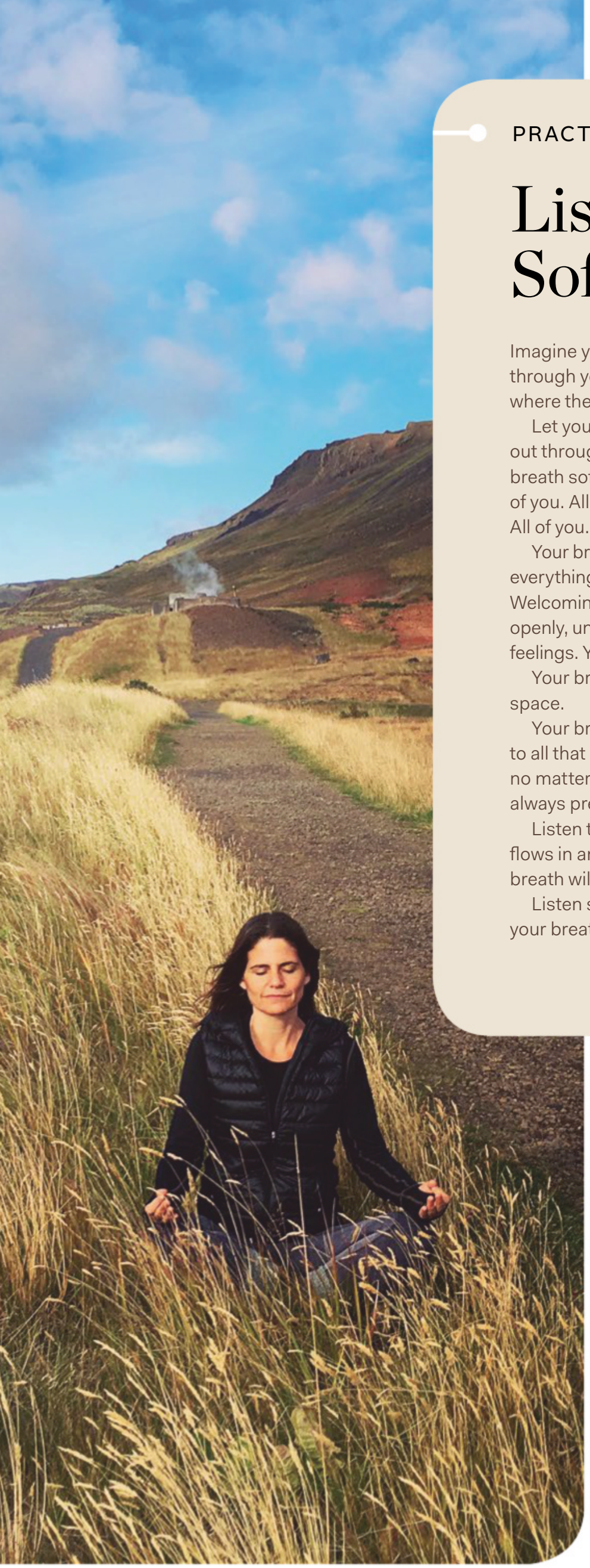
This single breath cycle takes less than 20 seconds, but an hour could easily have passed. It occurs to me that it's like that movie *Interstellar*—as if I've left the normal time–space continuum and awakened to a whole new world of sensation inside, as I lie here, covered in blankets, a weighted pillow across my hips, drinking in this wildly restorative substance called air.

I'm not normally so observant of my breath. But I'm following Jillian Pransky's voice, a bit raspy, slow and clear and incredibly relaxing. She's guiding me through her signature Deep Listening practice, which, in this moment, I could honestly describe as liquefying. As in, it feels like my muscles have separated from my bones and both are suspended in some viscous substance, my mind contentedly floating alongside.

"Let your breath arrive in your body," Pransky says, and if I could, I would nod in assent: *I think it's here.* But I really don't think I can move. And then a tiny thought bubble rises up from the deep: *Thank goodness I don't have to drive right away.*

I've come to meet Pransky to experience her body-based relaxation system that blends yoga, mindfulness, and somatic awareness into a delicious

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JILLIAN PRANSKY



PRACTICE

Listening Softly

Imagine you could breathe directly through your heart. Imagine this is where the air flows in and out of you.

Let your breath flow freely in and out through your heart. Let your breath soften you. Uncovering layers of you. Allowing room for you to unfurl. All of you.

Your breath tenderly receiving everything it comes in contact with. Welcoming your deepest feelings openly, unwaveringly. Welcoming all your feelings. Your joys and your sorrows.

Your breath is a gentle listening space.

Your breath listens wholeheartedly to all that it meets, staying with you no matter what arises. Your breath is always present. Always listening.

Listen to your infinite breath as it flows in and out of your heart. Your breath will teach you how to listen.

Listen softly. Listen to yourself as your breath listens to you.

—Jillian Pransky

low-tech stew—a nourishing and welcome response to our hyper-connected and overstimulated lives. It might just be the antithesis of popular modern yoga styles—no overheated room, no endless Chaturangas-to-Up-Dog vinyasas, no orders to in-*hale!* ex-*hale!*

Instead we move slowly and deliberately, warming up with a few gentle poses. With calm assurance, she is beginning to direct our inner attention to how we hold ourselves in our bodies, before we head back to lie down on our mats, surrounded and comforted by the support of bolsters and blankets. As we lie in postures designed to encourage the gentle release of tight and shortened muscles, we "receive" the breath as it enters the body. Then, we mentally trace where our feet, legs, back, arms, and head touch the floor, like kids making body outlines they'll later paint in art class, and imagine expanding the imprint with our awareness.

We invite the breath to meet any hard or stuck places in the body, washing over and around them like water, releasing the tension and pain held there. In a contemplation she calls Making Space, Pransky gently urges, "Let yourself be opened by your breath."

Welcome the breath with a receptive belly. Your breath will gently unravel the tension it meets. Your breath will tenderly expand you inside. Allow your breath to unwind you, unfurl you.

From Go-Go-Go to Slow-Slow-Slow

Twenty years ago a different yoga attracted Jillian Pransky. A different life. Absorbed in a busy marketing career with a major publishing house in Manhattan, she was a go-getter, a climber, focused on success and her ability to create it. "Jillian the Achiever. Jillian the →

Letting Go of Tension

Helping the psoas muscle to release tension, to lengthen to its optimal state, is an important step in deep listening, according to Jillian Pransky. This is done through supported long-held poses that open the front of the hips, and by welcoming the breath into the body.

The psoas is the longest and strongest of the hip-flexor muscles, connecting the lumbar vertebrae to the femur on both sides of your body. It helps stabilize the spine and support your internal organs, while supporting the movement of blood and lymph through your cells. It's involved with almost every motion, from bending to twisting to walking and running. And, it's intimately connected to the breath, sharing space with the diaphragm and contracting when you feel afraid or stressed. Sitting for long periods of time, excessive movement, or any repetitive motion that compresses the

front of the hip, contracts and shortens the psoas.

"Our gut environment has to feel safe. If it's squeezed because of our six-pack abs, if it's squeezed because we don't want to feel it, if it's squeezed because the psoas is short, as it is constantly from walking and riding and running and driving and sitting, then all of that inhibits our ability to calm ourselves," she says.

"When the belly can soften, when we provide a place for the breath to move at ease, we create an environment where we can feel more, know more, receive more guttural, preverbal cues that inform us on what would really be most wise. Insight and wisdom are then available in a way that they're not when we're rushing around and not seeing a bigger perspective."

—Kelle Walsh

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JILLIAN PRANSKY

We invite the breath to meet any hard or stuck places in the body, washing over and around them like water, releasing the tension and pain held there.

Tenacious. Jillian the Succeeder," she writes in her 2017 book *Deep Listening*. "All the foundational ideas I had about myself were validated by my job."

She was also athletic, pushing herself through any physical challenge. She played soccer throughout school, and as an adult she taught aerobics in addition to her day job. She tells how she began running, proudly finishing a five-mile race soon after. Then someone suggested she should run a marathon, so she did...just five months later. "Because I had cultivated a mind-over-matter attitude, I was actually able to cross the finish line," she writes. "But then I was sick for a year. I had pushed myself too much, although I didn't make that connection at the time."

When she discovered yoga, it became an obsession. She practiced at the studio across from her Flatiron Building office at lunchtime and again after work. She became certified to teach, and started doing that in her off hours. →

"I loved how powerful my body felt when I practiced yoga," she writes. "I loved the sensations of openness and expansiveness when challenging my physical boundaries. I did headstands so I could feel mighty and successful and strong."

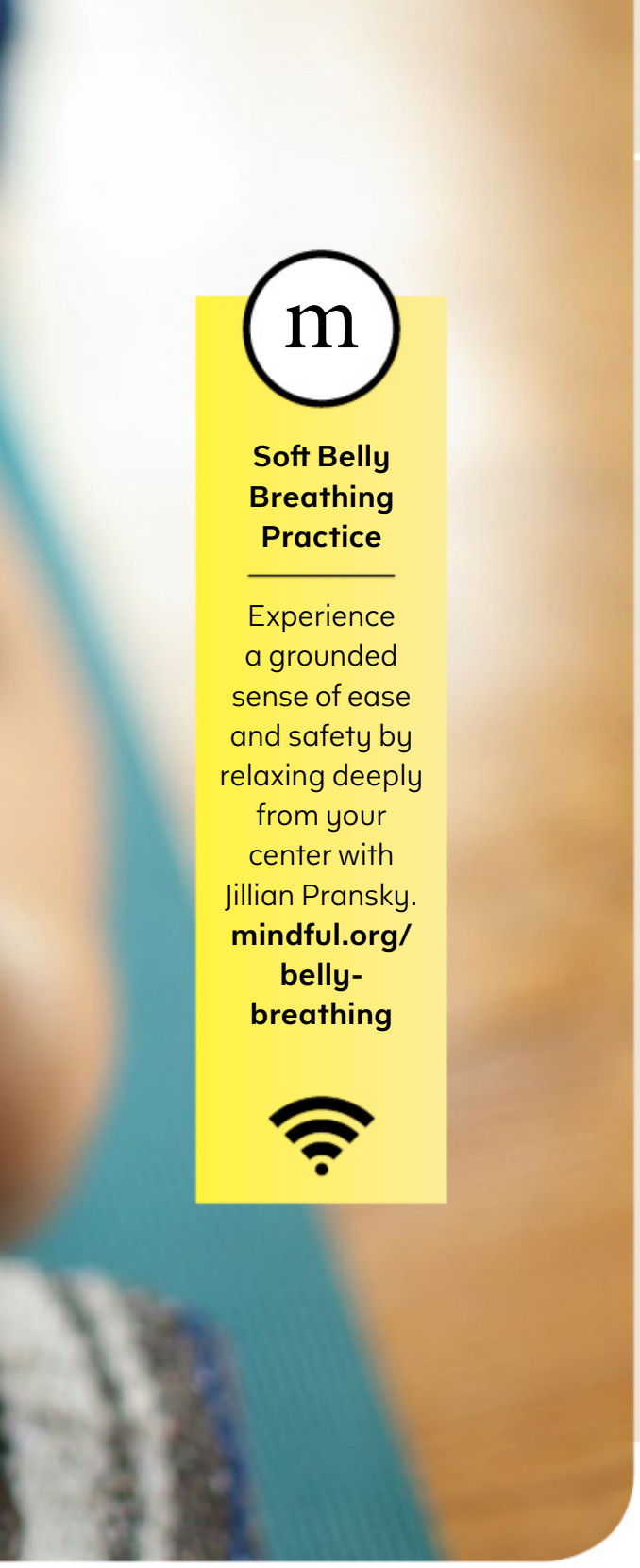
Then her world turned upside down. Her beloved sister-in-law, Lisa, was diagnosed with lung cancer, and died just three years later. The shock of it deeply impacted Pransky; alongside the pain and loss a harrowing truth was revealed, she writes: "We are not really in control of our life."

> As we just notice, just rest, just listen, we offer ourselves a great kindness that makes us feel cared for.

Not long afterward she experienced her first panic attack, sending her to the emergency room and followed by the development of debilitating fears. "I was scared to ride the subway, scared to fly in a plane," she writes. "I felt as if I were forever running away from danger."

The yoga that had made her feel strong and powerful didn't help. "In the wake of Lisa's death, I suffered from both anxiety and exhaustion. As my health faltered, I realized that the yoga practice I had created to make myself feel solid and secure was not the type of practice I needed to become a more active participant in my own well-being."

Somewhat ironically, it was a yoga class that changed the trajectory of her practice, and as it would turn out, of her entire life. During Savasana, the finishing "corpse" pose where you simply rest in meditation and allow the practice to sink in, she became aware of how hard she was working, and how frustrated she was that her



Soft Belly Breathing Practice

Experience a grounded sense of ease and safety by relaxing deeply from your center with Jillian Pransky. **mindful.org/belly-breathing**

Soft Belly Breathing

Sit in a comfortable position on the floor or in a chair. Close your eyes, if you wish. Take a few long breaths, inhaling through your nose and exhaling through your mouth.

Let your body land on the ground. Let your breath arrive in your body.

As your breath flows in, feel it move down into your belly. As your breath flows out, let your belly be effortless.

On your inhale, think, "soft," allowing your belly to receive your breath.

On the out breath, think, "belly," letting go of any holding and resistance.

Inhale, "soft."

Exhale, "belly."

Each inhale, imagine your belly being cared for by the breath. Each exhale, let the breath loosen any solidity. Let your breath make room. Let thoughts, emotions, sensations rise and fall in and out of a spacious belly.

Since our belly is our emotional center, when we soften it, a variety of feelings, thoughts, images, and memories may bubble up. Welcome all that rises and falls. If you find yourself in conversation with a thought or feeling, simply acknowledge that observation, meet yourself kindly, and draw your mind gently back to the flow of your breath.

After 5 to 10 minutes, place your hands on your belly. Feel your breath meeting your hands. Little by little, expand your awareness into the space around you.

Close your practice by setting an intention to stay connected to your breath and your belly as you move slowly out of the meditation.

—Jillian Pransky

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF JILLIAN PRANSKY

teacher did not acknowledge her efforts during class. An uncomfortable realization began to dawn on her: Underneath all her pushing was a pervasive longing for approval, a deep desire to be "seen."

"It was one of the big pivotal moments for me that made me ask, *Why do I push so hard?*" she says.

That realization prompted an exploration to understand her need to be recognized and validated, why she drove herself to exhaustion and even to the point of illness. She dove deeply into the study of somatic therapy, structural and functional anatomy, and mindfulness. She worked with a Gestalt therapist, "starting to peel the onion" of her personal history, discovering how a troubled relationship with her chronically ill and volatile father fueled much of her drive.

"With my training in yoga and somatic therapy, I had tools available to work with to go deeper, and to finally listen."

Our Stressed Minds and Bodies

Pransky understands firsthand the stress faced by the people who come to her classes and workshops. She recognizes those driven by ambition, those buckling under the weight of their responsibilities or barely balancing on the edge of overwhelm. And she knows well the anxiety that lies just beneath the surface. Anxiety about the future or what's on the news. About keeping their jobs or about their kid getting an F and whether he'll get into college.

"I have rarely met someone who doesn't say they're somewhere on the spectrum of anxiety," Pransky says.

She also hears the opposite, she says, when people believe "stress is their friend." She relays the story of a former client, the founder of a big nonprofit who began working with her after an accident left him unable to use his legs. "He said, 'I haven't felt this at ease and this relaxed in, like, I forget. I forgot this →

PRACTICE

Open Sky

Use this reset practice while looking at an open sky.

Stand outside or in front of a window, or gaze at a photograph that features an expansive sky.

Pause and sense where your body meets the ground. Soften excess gripping in your face, neck, and shoulders. Feel yourself landing completely.

As you bring your attention to the flow of your breath, gaze into the openness of the sky.

Follow your next three breaths as they come in from the space around you and expand into your body. Follow them as they move from the space inside you back out into the world around you.

Notice the continuum of your breathing flowing from outside in and inside out.

Feel how your breath connects you to the space around you.

To finish, notice your feet on the floor and imagine your head—and your heart—in the shape of the sky. Move into your next moment grounded and open.

—Jillian Pransky

PHOTOGRAPH LUKE MATTSON / STOCKSY UNITED

place,'" she recalls. But just two sessions later, he told her he couldn't continue. "He was overwhelmed with the possibility of what real relaxation would mean for him," she says. He told her, "It's going to make me lose my edge. If I relax too much, how am I going to have the command and respect that I need to do what I do?"

She was able to convince him to continue, but she recognizes how difficult it was for him "to get over to that place where relaxation didn't mean surrender, loss of power." Instead, she says, he learned how it could help him be "more deliberate about how he used his energy, and how he took his rest, so he could be less reactionary and more purposeful."

Uncovering Tension

Whether we consciously choose to hold tension or our bodies and minds do it for us, when we do, Pransky says, we feel in control. "When we relax, we feel vulnerable."

Tension becomes our armor, holding the fear, worry, and vulnerability at bay. But eventually, inevitably, it fails us. With stress hormones coursing through our bloodstream, as we hold ourselves so tightly to stay "safe" that we forget to take a deep breath, we're just one fender bender, one work crisis, one sad and senseless loss away from falling apart. That's when we get sick. Or stop sleep-

No matter what else is going on, these things—the breath, the body, and the steady support of the earth itself—are always there, solid and real, for every single one of us.

ing through the night. Or blow our stack at someone we love, or suffer a panic attack and become afraid to live our lives.

Before we can release tension, however, we have to know where we hold it. And it's not always obvious where it resides, Pransky says. "We're so used to living with it, we *think* we are relaxed while, in fact, we are still harboring tension."

Lying with my head and back supported by a bolster, my mind idly following my breath as it moves through my limp body, I'm suddenly aware of a sensation of opening deep in my core, and something seems to shift within. As my breath sinks into this new space, I feel a sense of sadness. I feel how weary I am. I've been traveling for almost two weeks, and it's been emotional, visiting with older family members and coming face-to-face with how much has changed, and how much more change is still to come. I've spent hours on planes and trains and in cars, and I haven't done any yoga or much exercise at all. I'm ready to go home, but some things there too are uncertain. I miss my dog.

"Just welcome the breath," Pransky is saying, and as the emotions fill me, I'm grateful for this guidance. I touch the sadness lightly with my breath, exploring its shape and size, its texture and density. After what could be a few moments or an hour, it starts to grow lighter, thinner, and more transparent, until...it's gone. *I* feel lighter, my mind suddenly alert, yet my body is still deeply relaxed.

Wow.

This experience is why Pransky is a proponent of pairing mindfulness with somatic awareness. When we engage in restorative poses, opening the anatomy and welcoming the breath deeply into the body, we not only trigger the relaxation response, we uncover those deeper areas of tightness and holding. And as we just notice, just rest, just listen, we offer ourselves a great kindness that makes us feel cared for. "It sends our mind a signal that right now, in this moment, we're OK," she says.

She describes it like a plane coming in for a landing. Before the plane can touch down, the pilot needs to receive a message: "Welcome! It's safe to land here." Having the embodied sense of being supported by the ground, of being safe in our own bodies, we can start to lay down the armor of tension. "And our mind can begin to shift into a new conversation: 'I'm OK here on the ground.'"

The more familiar we are with how and where we hold tension, the easier it is to notice "how we are closing down or opening up to the current conditions in our lives," she says.

This is where Deep Listening becomes a tool for life. We're building resilience "over time, making more space and capacity to stay open with whatever arises."

The Power of Softness

Releasing our tension requires softness.

It does not require knowing all the answers to whatever may come up. We don't need to figure everything out. We just need to give ourselves kind and friendly space to receive not only our first uncomfortable thought or feeling but every uncomfortable thought or feeling. If we can trust the ground to support us, we can open more fully to what we discover. It's like allowing our breath to come in. We don't have to do anything. We simply need to welcome it.

—Jillian Pransky in *Deep Listening*

When she teaches, Pransky uses cues, simple words or phrases that seem to bypass thinking and land right in your body. She talks of a "spacious belly" and "effortless legs." She asks you to "imagine the breath flowing in through the front of your heart and out through the back of your heart. Washing through your chest. Softening you."

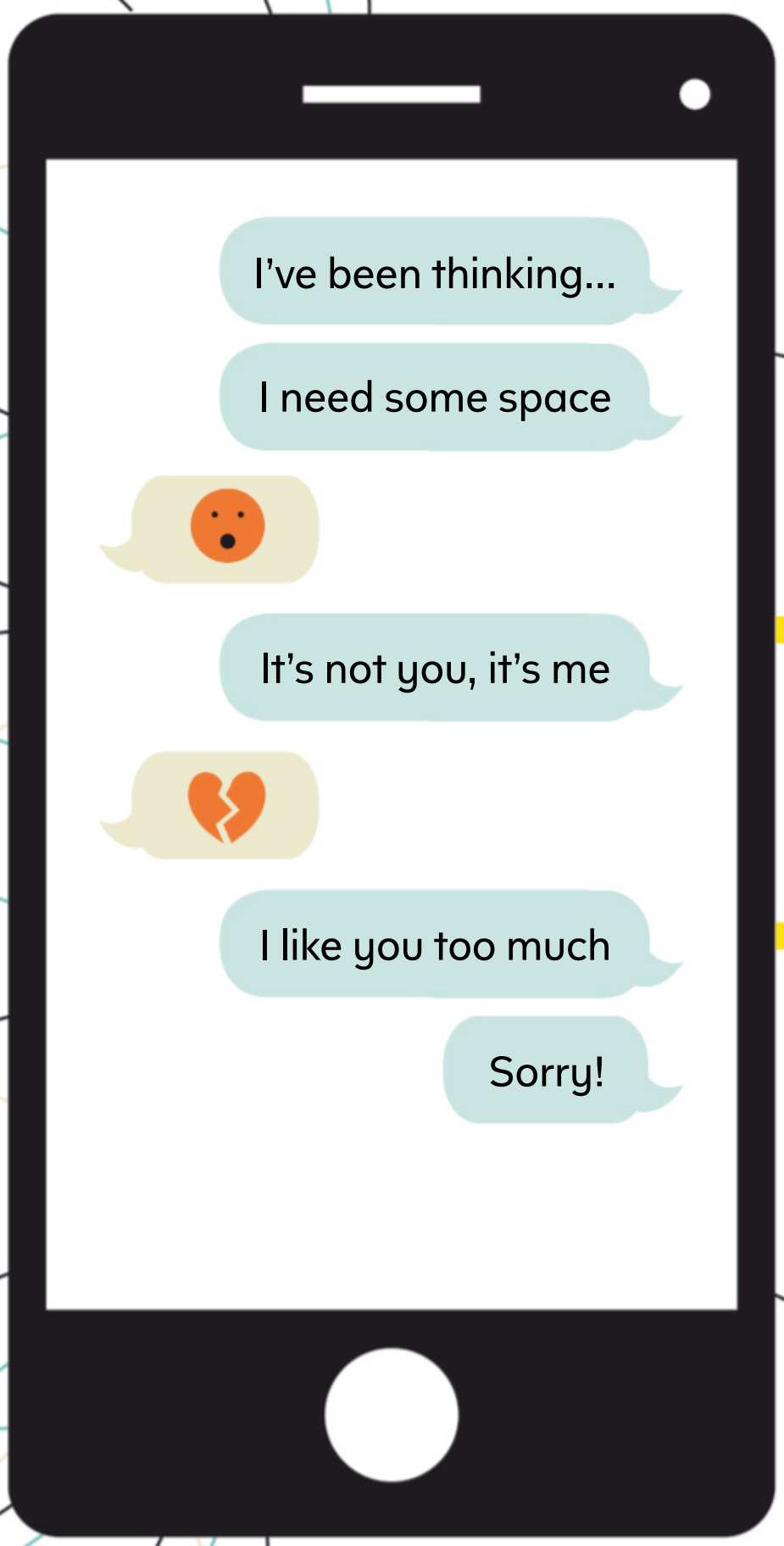
And she refers to the body, breath, and the earth as "family." During our session, as I lay in repose, no tension left anywhere, this notion immediately hits me as so simple and beautiful and true that I feel my heart melt. No matter what else is going on, these things—the breath, the body, and the solid support of the earth itself—are always there, steady and real, for every single one of us.

"Similar to the way we learn to rely on the support of the ground, becoming aware of our partnership with the breath reinforces our experience of connectedness. Of not feeling alone," Pransky explains. "The breath is always there for us, without question. It is our life partner. Really, it's family."

And this feeling of belonging, of safety, helps you to stay soft. To stay open. To let in the good while knowing that you are also strong and stable, supple and responsive to whatever comes. You are listening, deeply. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

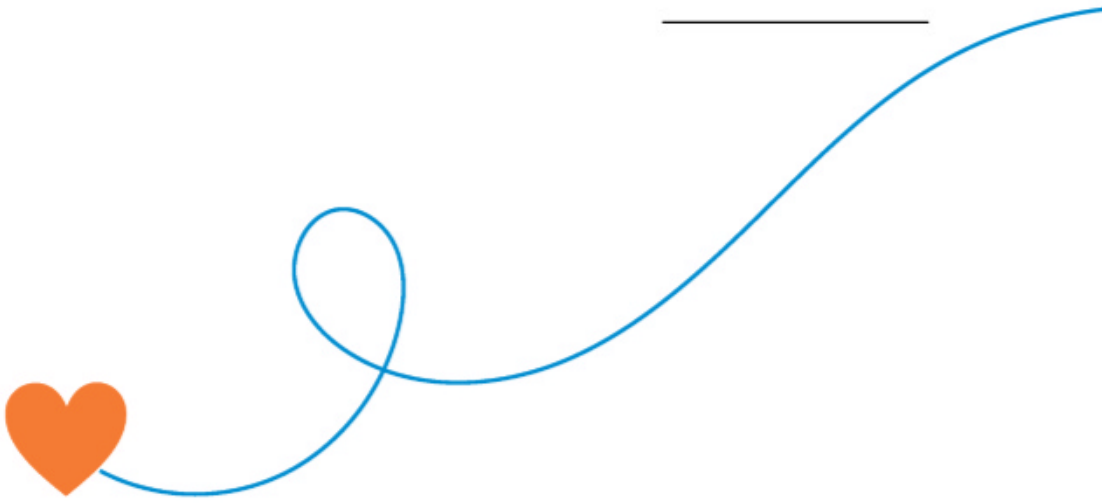
Kelle Walsh is a senior editor at *Mindful*. She writes and edits from Boulder, Colorado, where she loves running trails, doing yoga, and deeply listening to her breath to melt her psoas muscle.



It's Time You Broke Up with Your Phone

Catherine Price shares a seven-day plan to replace technology overload with clarity and intention.

Illustrations by Asia Pietrzyk



Codependent. If any word captures the relationship between phone and user, it's that one. And not just because we depend on our phones and our phones depend on us. Too often our "codependence" is an unhealthy and unbalanced relationship with a sleek, seductive sliver of technology. The tell-tale signs: cramps in our "texting thumbs"; sleep lost to round-the-clock games; conversations with friends and partners that go nowhere because our eyes—and attention—are plugged in elsewhere.

With tech addiction, as with all kinds of dysfunctional relationships, identifying the problem doesn't automatically make it better. The American Psychological Association's 2017 *Stress in America* report, which surveyed over 3,500 American adults, revealed that 65% believe they *should* periodically unplug or do a digital detox to improve their mental health. However, only 18% report actually doing so.

Phone addiction is real.

The reason lies partly in our neurochemistry. As smartphones keep us informed, connected, and distracted, our brains get used to a steady flow of stimulation. Over time, merely picking up the phone triggers the release of dopamine, that tiny blip of excitement and satisfaction. Like any high, the feel-good sensation doesn't last and our brains hunger for the next hit. *Ping!* and we're reaching for another fix: an addiction cycle that plays out, on average, 47 times per day.

The brain's modern craving for constant connection—with one-time acquaintances, total strangers, and your cousin's cat's Instagram—can leave us disconnected from the people and the things that really matter.

The brain's modern craving for constant connection—with one-time acquaintances, total strangers, and your cousin's cat's Instagram—can leave us disconnected from the people and the things that really matter. A 2018 study found participants who were highly preoccupied with their phones showed greater absent-mindedness and difficulty focusing on tasks. They also experienced less well-being and life satisfaction. Sadly, we've become so convinced that we *need* our phones all the time—to assuage our FOMO—that we're lulled into missing out on real life. Our own well-being and relationships take a backseat.

These are the problems journalist Catherine Price set out to solve. Troubled by her own phone habits, Price researched what undergirds our tech relationships and tested ways to transform them. As described in her most recent book, *How to Break Up with Your Phone*, Price devised a Technology Triage that is a gentle yet motivating warm-up for creating healthier phone boundaries. You'll jump-start the practice of mindfully noticing how you relate to your phone, and learn to shift from self-sabotaging phone habits to new patterns that leave time and mental freedom for the people, experiences, and dreams you really care about. →

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Catherine Price is an award-winning writer and science journalist whose work has appeared in many publications, including the *The Best American Science Writing* and the *New York Times*. Her previous books include *Vitamania: How Vitamins Revolutionized the Way We Think About Food* and *Mindfulness: A Journal*.

Three Mind Tricks That Keep You Addicted to Your Phone

Tech companies use psychology hacks to keep us craving, scrolling, and lingering longer. Here's how to get unhooked. **mindful.org/mindtricks**

MONDAY

Download a Tracking App

The first step is to compare the amount of time we think we're spending on our phones to how much time we're actually spending on them. Start by jotting down your answers to these questions:

• If you had to guess, how many times a day do you think you pick up your phone?

• How much time do you estimate that you spend on it per day?

Next, download a time-tracking app that will automatically monitor how often you reach for your phone and how long you spend on it. (Use a third-party app or a built-in tracking feature, such as Screen Time for iOS, to determine how much time you are spending on your phone each day, and on which apps.) Don't try to change anything yet about your behavior; our goal is just to gather data. We'll touch base about your results in a few days.

TUESDAY

Assess Your Current Relationship

Now that you've got a tracking app up and running in the background, pull out a notebook or create a new email message to yourself (or just get a pen and write in the margins) and write a few sentences in response to the following questions:

• What do you love about your phone?

• What don't you love about your phone?

• What changes do you notice in yourself—positive or negative—when you spend a lot of time on your phone? (Depending on how old you are, you can also ask yourself if you've noticed any changes since you got a smartphone.) For example, you may have noticed that you automatically start reading news and checking apps, instead of observing what's going on around you. Maybe your attention span is shorter and you don't bother to memorize details, since you can always look them up. Maybe you have pain in your neck or thumbs from texting.

Next, imagine yourself at the end of your breakup. What would you like your new relationship with your phone to look like? What would you like to have done or accomplished with your extra time? What would you like someone to say if you asked them to describe how you'd changed? Write your future self a brief note or email describing what success would look like, and/or congratulating yourself for achieving it.

WEDNESDAY

Start Paying Attention

The next step is to pay attention to how and when you use your phone, and how you feel when you do so.

Over the next 24 hours, try to notice:

• Situations in which you nearly always find yourself using your phone. (For example, waiting in line, in the elevator, in the car.)

• How your posture changes when using your phone. (Is your back hunching? Do your shoulders tighten up?)

• Your emotional state right before you reach for your phone.

• Your emotional state right after you use your phone. (Do you feel better? Worse? Did your phone satisfy whatever emotional need caused you to reach for it?)

• How and how often your phone grabs your attention (via notifications, texts, and the like).

• How you feel while you are using your phone—as well as how you feel when you realize that you don't have your phone.

• Moments—either on or off your phone—when you feel some combination of engaged, energized, joyful, effective, and purposeful. When that happens, notice what you were doing, whom you were with, and whether your phone was involved.

• How and when other people use their phones—and how it makes you feel.

Lastly, I'd like you to choose several moments in your day when you seem to pick up your phone the most often, and see if you can identify a consistent trigger that makes you repeat this habit. For example, maybe you check your phone first thing in the morning because you're anxious. Or maybe it's just because it's on your bedside table. Maybe you check your phone in the elevator because everyone else is also checking their phone. Maybe you check it at work because you're bored with whatever you're supposed to be doing.

We're not trying to put a judgment on any of these triggers; we're just trying to become aware of them so that we can begin to identify patterns. Personally, I've noticed that while it can initially be pleasant, I hardly ever feel better after I use my phone—an observation that has helped me catch myself when I'm about to pick it up out of habit. →

Subscriber Extra: A Seven-Minute Mindful Phone Practice

Psychologist Chris Willard guides you through an awareness meditation on the emotions and body sensations that arise when you use your phone. **mindful.org/phonepractice**

Shift Your Mindset

Here's an interesting psychological trick for you: Researchers have found that the vocabulary you use to describe a new habit has a strong effect on the likelihood that you'll stick with it. To be specific, saying that you "do" or "don't" do something—framing an action as part of your identity—is much more effective than saying that you "have to" or "can't" do something.

So when you feel the urge to open or reinstall one of the apps, don't try to resist it by saying that you "can't" or aren't "allowed" to do so. Instead, simply describe your current reality: "I do not keep social media apps on my phone." This simple shift can make a surprising difference.

THURSDAY

Take Stock and Take Action

By now, we've tracked our phone usage for a few days. Now that we've gathered this data, let's analyze it.

1 LOOK AT THE RESULTS FROM THE TRACKING APP YOU INSTALLED

The tracking data may not be entirely accurate, but that's okay—we're just trying to get a general sense of how our guesses match up to reality.

How many times per day did you pick up your phone, and how much time did you spend on it? How does this compare to your guesses? What, if anything, surprised you?

2 NOTICE WHAT YOU'VE NOTICED

Next, review the list of questions from yesterday and consider what you've noticed over the past 24 hours about when and why you typically use your phone. What patterns did you notice? What, if anything, surprised you?

3 CREATE YOUR FIRST SPEED BUMP

One of the most effective ways to regain control over our phones is to build speed bumps: small obstacles that force us to slow down. By creating a pause between our impulses and our actions, speed bumps give us the chance to change course if we decide we want to take a different route.

This first speed bump is an exercise that I call WWW, which is short for What For, Why Now, and What Else (you might want to consider putting "WWW" on your lock screen as a reminder).

WWW: What For, Why Now, and What Else

Any time you notice that you are about to reach for your phone, take a second to ask yourself:

What For? What are you picking up your phone to do? (For example, to check your email, browse Amazon, order dinner, kill time, and so on.)

Why Now? Why are you picking up your phone at this moment? The reason might be practical (I want to take a photo), situational (I'm in the elevator), or emotional (I want a distraction).

How to Ride Out Your Phone Cravings

Studies of people trying to quit other addictive habits, such as smoking, have suggested that if we simply acknowledge our discomfort without trying to fight against it—in other words, if we ride out the wave—our cravings will eventually fade on their own.

For example, let's say you catch yourself reaching for your phone. Practicing mindfulness means that instead of trying to fight your urge or criticizing yourself for having it, you simply notice the urge and stay present with it as it unfolds. As it does, you can ask questions about it. What does the craving feel like in your brain and in your body? Why are you having this particular urge right now? What reward are you hoping to receive, or what discomfort are you trying to avoid? What would happen if you reacted to the impulse? What would happen if you did nothing at all?

The next time you find yourself tempted to look at your phone, pause instead. Take a breath and just notice the craving. Don't give in to it, but don't try to make it go away. Observe it. See what happens.

What Else? What else could you do right now besides check your phone?

If you do your *W*s, and then decide that you really do want to use your phone right now, that's totally fine. The point is simply to give yourself a chance to explore your options for that particular moment, so that if and when you turn your attention to your phone, it's the result of a conscious decision.

Identifying your goal ahead of time also prevents an impulse to share a photo on social media from devolving into another 30 minutes spent absent-mindedly scrolling through your feed. →

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FRIDAY

Delete Social Media Apps

Social media is like junk food: Bingeing on it makes us feel bad, and yet once we start consuming it, it's really hard to stop. So let's take control of it by deleting all social media apps from your phone.

I'm serious. Do it now. Put your finger on an app icon until it starts jiggling, and then press the *x* in the corner. The app, panicking, will respond with a manipulative question ("Are you really sure you want to delete me and all my data?"). Say yes and then shake your head in disgust: Everyone knows that Facebook didn't really delete any of your data. It's all still lurking in the cloud, ready to be used against you and reinstalled/downloaded at any time.

I'm not trying to get you off of social media entirely; I just want you to check it through your phone or computer's internet browser instead of on an app. This creates a speed bump, because browser versions of social media platforms often have fewer features than their apps and are clunkier to use. So they provide lots of opportunities to ask yourself whether you really want to be checking social media at that moment.

If you decide that you do, define your purpose ahead of time (Are you posting something? Looking for something specific? Just scrolling for fun?) and decide how long you want to spend. You may even want to set a timer. When you're done, log out and close the window so that it won't open automatically the next time you launch the browser.

Lastly, make a point of taking some of the time you usually spend on social media and spending it with people you care about instead—offline. Call a friend. Invite someone to coffee. Have a party. (Yes, you can use social media to help you organize.) Notice how you feel afterward, especially compared to how you usually feel after spending time on social media.

SATURDAY

Come Back to (Real) Life

If you use your phone less, you're going to end up with more time. Unless you have some sense of how you want to be spending this reclaimed time, you're likely to feel anxious and possibly a bit depressed—and you'll be at risk of sliding right back into your old habits. That's why we need to get back in touch with what makes us happy in our offline lives. We're going to start with a few prompts. Just jot down whatever comes to mind.

- I've always loved to:
- I've always wanted to:
- When I was a kid I was fascinated by:
- If I had more time, I would like to:
- Some activities that I know put me into flow are:
- People I would like to spend more time with include:

Once you're done, use your answers to those questions to make a list of fun, off-phone things you could do over the next few days. For example: Do a crossword in a café. Go on a day trip. Sign up for a class. Plan a game night. Go to a museum. Our goal here is to come up with ideas—and plans—for fun things ahead of time, so that when you find yourself with free time, you'll be less likely to reach for your phone.

SUNDAY

Get Physical

Most of us weren't very good at mind–body integration even before smartphones came into the picture—and with every screen we add to our lives, we're only getting worse. So today, make some time to get back in touch with your body by doing something physical and enjoyable—a chance to remember you are more than a brain sitting on top of a body. And, as a side note, there's strong evidence suggesting that increased blood flow also helps to strengthen your cognitive control.

SOME IDEAS

• Go for a walk (without your phone). Pay attention to your breath and the feeling of your body as it moves.

• Play catch.

• Get a massage (get in touch with your body by having someone else get in touch with your body).

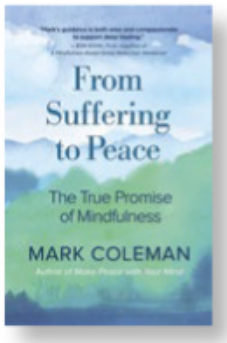
• Play one of those video games that require you to jump around a lot.

• If you usually listen to music while you exercise, try turning it off for a bit and tuning in to your body and breath.

To practice, put down this magazine, take a deep breath, and slowly stretch your arms above your head. Bring them back down as you exhale. Notice how it feels.

Bookmark This

read...listen...stream



FROM SUFFERING TO PEACE

The True Promise of Mindfulness

Mark Coleman • *New World Library*

Longtime meditation teacher and naturalist Mark Coleman—author of *Make Peace with Your Mind: How Mindfulness and Compassion Can Free You from Your Inner Critic* and *Awake in the Wild: Mindfulness in Nature as a Path of Self-Discovery*, among others—is at pains to demonstrate in his new book that mindfulness is definitely, incontrovertibly *not* about finding an escape from the pain we find in the midst of everyday life.

The book, in fact, is filled with poignant stories of students who have come to him in immense pain. One woman, for example, arrived at a retreat having, over a two-year period, lost her sister in a car accident, her brother to a heart attack, and her father to cancer. Shortly thereafter, her only living aunt died, and weeks before the retreat, following several agonizing months, her mother passed away in a state of dementia.

Stories like this from students demonstrate that the "true promise of mindfulness" in the subtitle is that if we turn *toward* pain, rather than seek escape routes in temporary states of mind, we may find ourselves on a path toward genuine, sustainable peace. Maybe not overnight. But over time.

The 36 chapters in *From Suffering to Peace* are short, and all end with a practice or contemplation. They're divided into four parts corresponding to four areas of practice. The *body* section asks us to explore what it means to have a body (and to know that at some point "we" won't). The *mind* section focuses on thoughts and our conception of a self. The *heart* section treats of our emotions, while the *world* section explores our relationships with those around us and the natural world. It's a very filling meal.

THE GREEN CURE

How Shinrin-Yoku, Earthing, Going Outside, or Simply Opening a Window Can Heal Us

Alice Peck • *CICO Books*

In *The Green Cure*, author Alice Peck offers a compelling argument for incorporating nature into any personal health quest. Citing research examining the health benefits of nature—for example, how walking among trees lowers blood pressure—Peck provides ample evidence that a "green cure" isn't merely a poetic notion. She also offers practical ways to tap these benefits: creating terrariums, using light and color therapy to mimic nature's light and color spectrum, and more. Peck shows us that tapping into nature's healing power doesn't require us to live by the ocean or in a forest. It's all around, wherever we begin.

ALPHABREATHS

The ABCs of Mindful Breathing

Chris Willard, David Rechtschaffen, and Holly Clifton-Brown • *Sounds True*

"Spread your arms like a butterfly, imagine blowing out the candles on a birthday cake, or be still and silent as a ninja." Psychologist Chris Willard and Mindful Education director Daniel Rechtschaffen—each having written several previous titles on bringing mindfulness into children's lives—offer 26 imaginative ways for kids and their adults to pay attention to the breath all day, from *Alligator Breath* to *Zzzz Breath* (no prizes for guessing that this last one involves bedtime). Accompanied by adorable, vibrant, homespun illustrations, the wide variety of exercises will help kids associate mindful breathing with play and with learning about ourselves in relation to the wider world. Not a bad way to understand mindfulness at any age.

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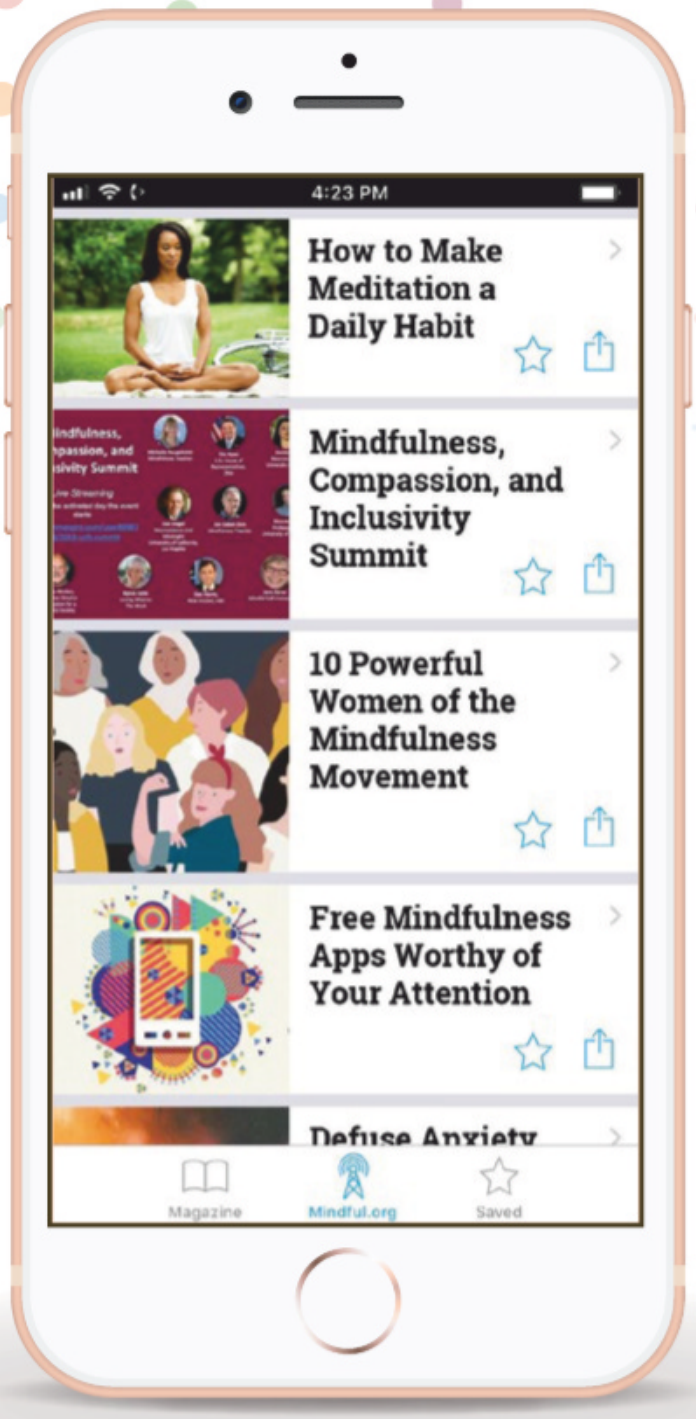

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INVISIBILIA
Episode: The Fifth Vital Sign

The more attention you give something, goes the aphorism, the bigger that thing becomes. In this episode of NPR's *Invisibilia,* host Alex Spiegel explores the power our attention wields in the realm of the body. It introduces us to Devyn, an American 16-year-old who finds inexplicable chronic pain taking over her life. The narrative also lights on a medical system—within an oppressively stressful, pain-inducing society—that's grown obsessed with "killing" pain (as in, taking "pain killers"). Plus, a pocket of the medical community claims that we're understanding and treating physical pain in all the least helpful ways. Trying so hard to get rid of every trace of pain, says rheumatologist Dr. David Sherry, serves to amplify it rather than curing it: "There's some suffering that people just need to live through." Is pain, "the fifth vital sign," an enemy to be vanquished at all costs? Or is debilitating pain a matter of misplaced focus? It may be that our body knows the answers we need better than we do. We ought to be listening.

CBC'S SUNDAY EDITION
Episode: Too Long, Didn't Read: How Online Reading Is Hurting Our Brains

Although "hurting" may be a tad alarmist, research shows the digital revolution is literally changing our brain circuits. Tufts University professor Maryanne Wolf, author of *Reader, Come Home: The Reading Brain In the Digital World*, describes how reading has, for centuries, allowed us to engage in "deep reading, sophisticated processes like analogy and inference," as well as "critical analysis and empathy." But these skills developed while our most pervasive forms of media were printed books, newspapers, and magazines. Reading on our phones, we tend to merely skim—a habit that suits whizzing through emails or Twitter but hurts when we want (or need) to read, say, business reports, or Steinbeck. Reading on screens doesn't encourage taking the "precious milliseconds" required for those deep-reading processes. Our brains quickly lose patience with it. For Wolf, we've reached "a moment of cognitive choice": If we don't practice reading slowly, deeply, with intention, the literary skills gained over countless generations will continue to fade.

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3 MEDITATIONS TO TAKE OUTSIDE WITH YOU

1 A Daily Mindful Walking Practice
from Mark Bertin

Move. We spend so much of our time trying to get from Point A to Point B. Mindful walking meditation provides an opportunity to strengthen and focus your awareness, so you can break out of autopilot and begin to pay more attention to your movement. Whether you're walking to work, taking the dog around the block, or just going for a stroll, this meditation encourages you to savor the journey.

2 Turning Sounds into a Meditation Practice
from Bob Stahl

Listen. We often think that meditation requires peace and quiet, but you can also use sounds as the object of your focus. This meditation helps you recognize sounds as they come and go, without labeling them as 'annoying' or 'disruptive.' Find a spot outside to sit or lay down and notice what you can hear: children playing, lawn mowers humming, birds rustling in the trees. With mindfulness, you can shift your relationship to these sounds.

3 A Guided Meditation to Encourage Deep Breathing
from Shamash Alidina

Relax. There's nothing more calming than taking a deep breath of fresh air. This meditation leads you through a cycle of long, conscious breaths by breathing in for a count of three, and breathing out through a count of five. Repeating this pattern triggers your body's relaxation response, putting both your mind and body at ease. You can use this meditation any time you notice stress building, or if you simply want to feel more relaxed. ●

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Three Award-Winning Children's Books on Mindfulness

Dr. Sileo's newest children's book *Bee Calm: The Buzz on Yoga* tells the story of Bentley Bee noticing his friends doing some funny poses in the garden. It's yoga! He learns what that is and does several poses in this kid-friendly introduction to yoga.

Bee Calm is a companion book to Dr. Sileo's award-winning *Bee Still: An Invitation to Meditation*. This book teaches children how to use meditation to focus, feel calm, and soothe difficult feelings.

His Award-Winning book, *A World of Pausabilities: An Exercise in Mindfulness,* teaches children how days are filled with endless opportunities to take a mindful pause, and ways they can apply mindfulness every day.

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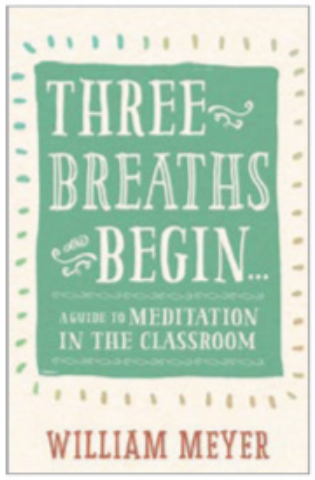

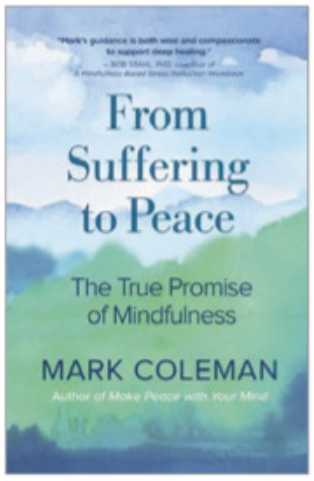

Cultivating Peacefulness for a Happier and Less Stressful Life

Mark Coleman, author of *Make Peace with Your Mind*, weaves together up-to-the-minute neuroscience and mindfulness-based practices into a fascinating study of how to engage with and transform pain in his new book, *From Suffering to Peace*.

But what about the use of mindfulness and meditation in children's education? Teachers who incorporate moments of stillness, breath awareness, and calming images know just how potent these practices are for creating focus and facilitating learning. *Three Breaths and Begin* is written by a schoolteacher who has shared these practices with students, teachers, and parents in a variety of real-world settings.

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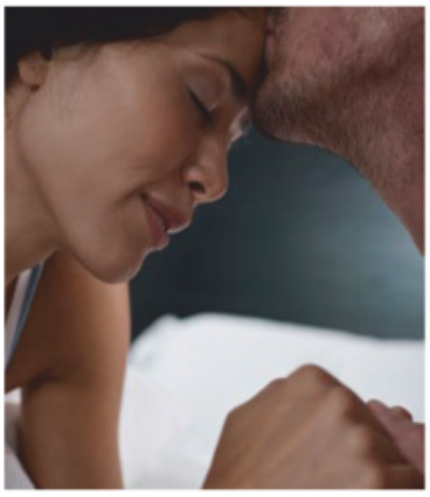

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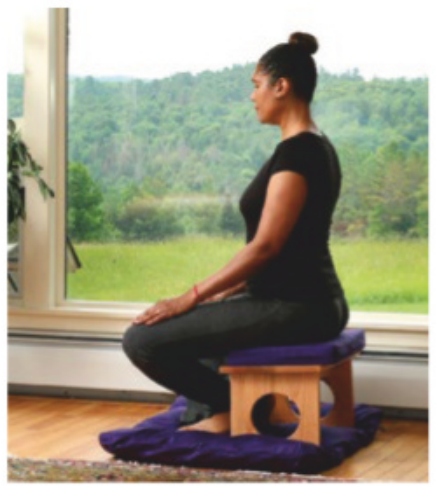

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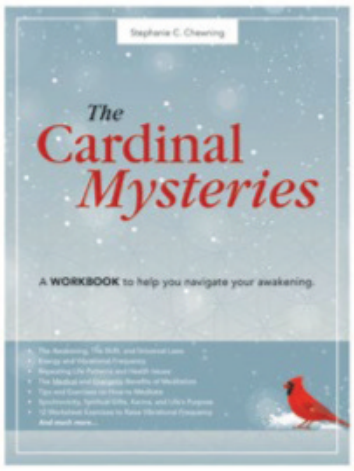
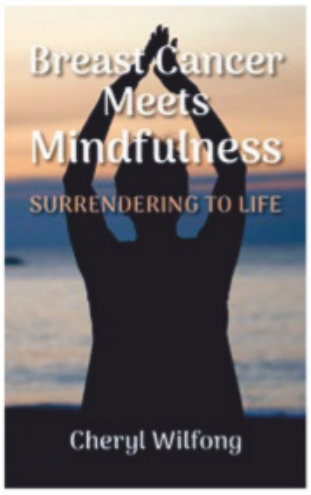


The Cardinal Mysteries Workbook

Meditation and mindfulness practices often activate energy in the body, increase synchronicity, and awaken extrasensory abilities. This workbook explains the principles of energy and provides exercises to help you navigate the sometimes difficult awakening process.

To purchase: Amazon.com
To learn more about Stephanie Chewning:
www.ChewningMindBody.com/workbook



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PIECE OF MIND

by BARRY BOYCE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Over the year-end holidays last year, my wife and I rented an apartment near where our children live, and our twin granddaughters had several sleepovers there. We decided to get them something to absorb their attention, and time, for several weeks: a 1,000-piece jigsaw puzzle. These have never been my thing. I'd look at one taking shape in a corner on a table, a profusion of tiny pieces lying higgledy-piggledy. Insanely tedious, I thought. Searching for yet another patch of sky-blue in an irregular jigsawed shape looked excruciating.

Dive in deeper with Barry Boyce and production editor Stephanie Domet in the Point of View podcast. **mindful.org/pov**

My granddaughters, though, took to it with vigor and rigor. Starting first thing in the morning, patiently and gleefully piecing it together. With the whole family joining in, after several weeks, the picture began to reveal itself. So proud were they of what they were accomplishing, they wanted it framed.

Me? Still not so much into it.

As we neared completion, it became clear that 10 pieces were missing! The maker informed me that there is a form online to fill out. It happens often enough that there's a form to fill out? Really? I imagined whole retirement communities pulling their hair out, questioning their sanity.

We dismantled the puzzle and, once home, started assembling the new one the company sent, so we could frame it. Now I had to pitch in, and I became obsessed. Nights passed when I lost track of time, staying up searching for pieces. Weekend afternoons and early mornings before work were gobbled up. But the puzzle was puzzling me. I handled every one of 200 remaining pieces without finding the piece I sought. I convinced myself that this piece was missing. The damn company had done it again!

When we look at others, do we take time to really see them—or just try to fit them into our puzzle?

When only 20 pieces were left, it turned up. A dawning realization hit me: I'm not seeing what is there; I'm seeing what my mind is telling me to see! It was a stark reminder that the world is not what-you-see-is-what-you-get. Searching for a piece, I looked for what it should look like, what I wanted it to look like. I'd known about this phenomenon from observing perception through years of meditation and from reading about top-down mental processing, whereby preconceived constructs in our brain often govern what we perceive more than the data coming into us from our sense organs, from the "bottom up." It's why we look at clouds and easily imagine animals. We call that imagination. But when we look at someone and see them as inferior—because that's what a construct deep in our brain told us to see—that's not so imaginative.

When we look at other people, are we taking the time to really see them, whole, or are we eagerly trying to fit them into the puzzle we're constructing? The world, and everybody in it, does not present itself to us in a fully formed picture. We piece it together like our own personal jigsaw puzzle.

It's an imperfect picture, but we take it for concrete reality. That bears remembering. We could become humbler, appreciating what we do not know rather than rapidly filling in the blanks with what we are driven to see, what our brain is telling us to see.

The beauty of mindfulness and awareness practice is that it can, at the best of times, slow down the mind enough so we can actually see our attempts to quickly piece the world together based on our biases, preconceptions, and (often flimsy) received ideas. In a sudden glimpse, we may see the world afresh. And to stretch the metaphor, we may see that everyone is a piece of the puzzle. No one can be left out for the entire thing to be complete. If we leave people out of the picture, there is no form to fill out online to make it whole again. ●

Barry Boyce is Editor-in-Chief of *Mindful* and Mindful.org and author of *The Mindfulness Revolution*. He has been an avid mindfulness practitioner for over 40 years.

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"We all face challenges in our daily lives. It affects how we act and react to everything and everyone. It's easy to get off track without even realizing it, especially for caregivers who primarily focus on others," explains Thom. "Mindfulness is a way to hit the reset button – and something anyone can learn." That's why Thom's goal is to help UMass Memorial employees find their way to mindfulness, adding it to their everyday routines for overall health and well-being.

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