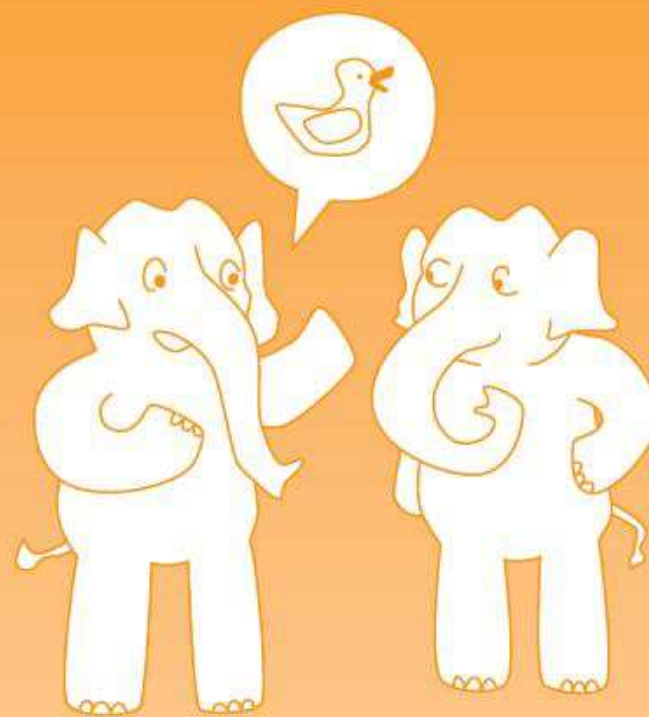


mind
the
moment



What might it mean for you to **mind the moment?**

It might mean...

...listening in a way that makes others know they are being heard.
...believing in the importance of respectful discourse to shape our world.
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**LOVE
YOUR
LIFE**

JUST THE WAY
IT IS



**Bari ▶
Tessler**
Author of
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TO DISCOVER MORE

mindful

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Bari Tessler on healing our relationship to money, p. 40



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On our cover: Bari Tessler, author of *The Art of Money*. Photograph by Danielle Cohen. Hair and makeup by Brie Leach.

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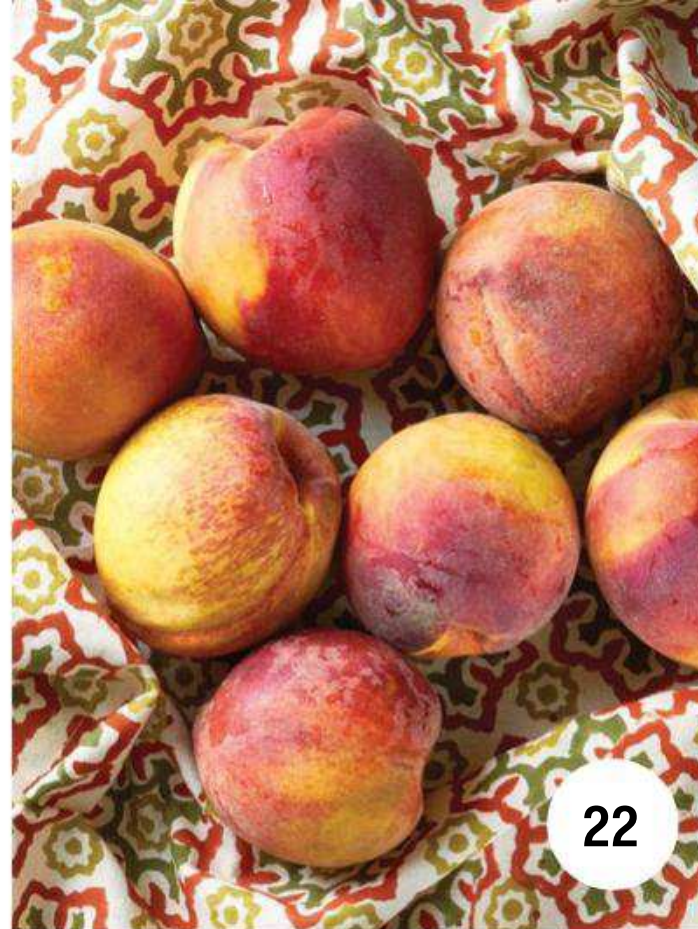
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A Nonjudgment Call



Barry Boyce

Editor-in-Chief

barry@mindful.org

Our must-read story this issue:

In “**Mind the App,**” reporter Sam Littlefair takes a serious look at the good, the bad, and the ugly in the explosion of mindfulness smartphone apps. On page 58.

Judges Concerned for Judges

provides Pennsylvania judges with information about stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns as a way to help them deal with the strain of their job. And make no mistake, being a judge—despite, or perhaps because of, its exalted status—is a highly stressful thing to do day in, day out. Dispassionately riding above the emotional turmoil in a courtroom is hard enough, but then there’s the matter of having to make certain judgments about uncertain things. You may be deciding not only how culpable someone is but what an appropriate response is to wrongdoing—and you’re doing all of that with imperfect information.

Lots of judges have participated in mindfulness programs, some of them specifically targeted for lawyers and judges, which is a little ironic, since the first principle they may encounter is that the practice of mindfulness involves “nonjudgmental” awareness. How exactly does *that* work?

The nonjudgmental part of mindfulness practice has to do with the very fact that the act of judging *is* stressful. The world is an uncertain place. We’re rarely totally sure. We survive on judgment calls. Only the know-it-all and the autocrat indulge in the luxury of certainty. The rest of us muddle through with some understanding that we’re always dealing with less than the whole picture.

But does nonjudgment mean that we never decide that something is wise or unwise, right or wrong, advisable or inadvisable? Of course not. How could we live without ever

making decisions? What the instruction in mindfulness practice is asking us to do is the following: During our practice session, when we encounter thoughts, emotions, and sensations arising, notice them without judging them as good or bad or otherwise. Just try to see them as they are. It’s about a pause, a space, a gap, where judgment is *suspended*.

That pause is key to mindfulness practice. It suggests to us that we can be a witness to what’s going on in our body and mind, without immediately trying to decide whether we like it or not and what we’re going to do about it. And in that pause, we have the opportunity to recognize—and perhaps even begin to embrace the fact—that we *don’t know for sure*.

And then the practice session ends.

When we get up and resume regular life, there may be an aftereffect of having spent that bit of time inserting the monkey wrench of a pause into the machinery of the mental process that wants things to be more solid and certain than they are. We crave a kind of instant security that the world isn’t built to supply. When we have a pause thrown in, the craving may lessen. We may tread more gently, probe more, listen more, touch more, and feel more, before we act or attack. In some cases, the nonjudgmental pause may cause us to act less and let be more.

And if we are asked to be a judge, we may be able to do so with more care, humbled by the daunting task of deciding the future for others—something we are all doing whether we sit on the bench or not. ●

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For What It's Worth

Answers from our reader survey on money

What's your top priority with money?

- "Paying off student loans."
- "The ability to spend freely and not worry!"
- "Living well and not outliving our money."
- "Investing to make my house sustainable."
- "I don't have money priorities."

What's the main thing you have saved up for in the past?

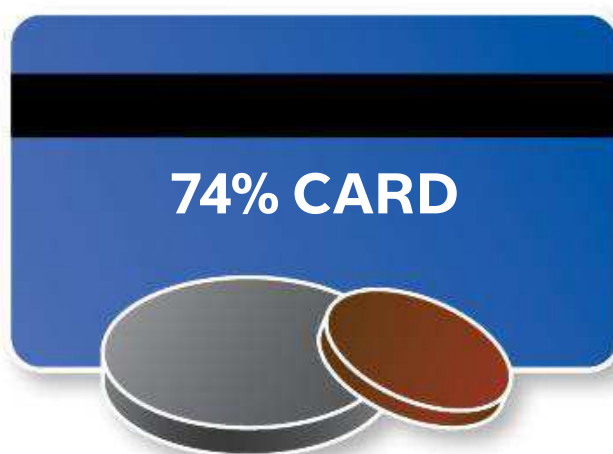
32%

OF RESPONDENTS SAID "BUYING a home," while **27%** saved the most for travel. Paying for their own or their children's education was top for **22%**. Another **15%** saved up for things like their wedding, retirement, or studio equipment, and **4%** saved for a major gift for a loved one.

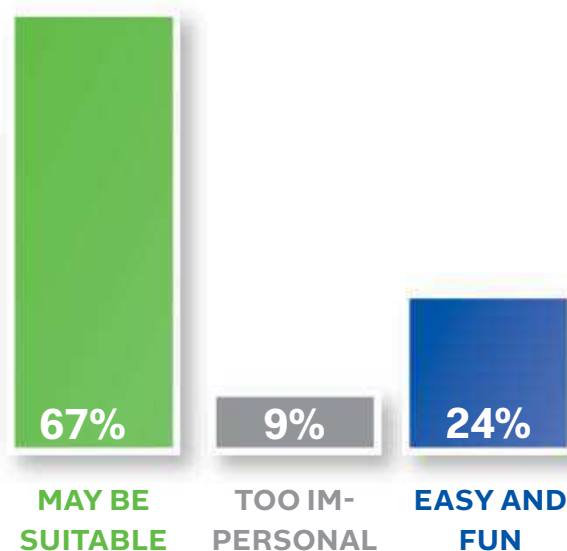
What's your attitude around money?



How would you rather pay: cash or card?



How do you feel about gift cards as presents?



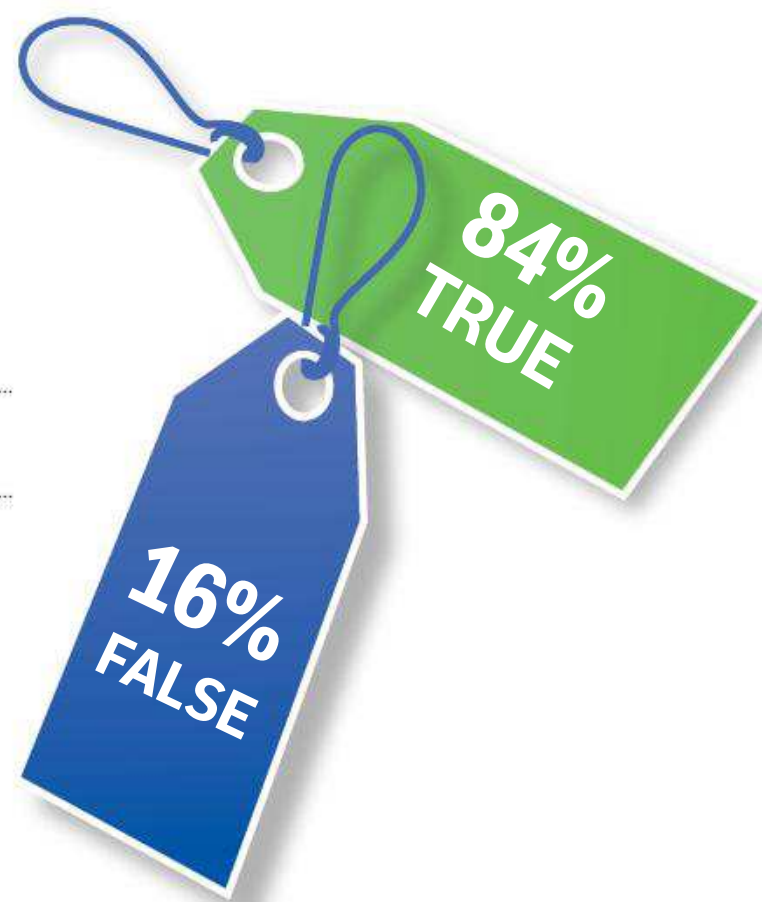
Would you be more content in your job if you made more money?

40%

SAY YES, THEY'D BE HAPPIER

making more money. For **17%**, they'd have to feel they earned it, and **26%** say it wouldn't make a difference to them. The last **17%** say it's not applicable.

Money can't buy happiness: For the most part, this is ...



What's the main thing you're OK with spending a lot of money on?

- "Paying off the mortgage."
- "Durable, essential items, such as appliances."
- "I prefer not to spend a lot of money on anything."
- "Continuing education."
- "Healthy, quality food."
- "Self-care."

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the mindful survey

Is it possible to use money mindfully?

YES, IT'S POSSIBLE
FOR EVERYONE **76%**

YES, BUT IT'S EASIER FOR THOSE ON THE
WEALTHIER END OF THE SPECTRUM **21%**

NO, MINDFULNESS DOES NOT
REALLY APPLY TO MONEY **3%**

"An hour on the cushion
would have been better than
an hour in the mall"

*Imagine that society
is no longer controlled
by economic factors.
What happens?*

MOST RESPONDENTS ARE
optimistic about this idea,
with **38%** believing society
would become more equal
and just, while a mere **2%** feel
things would fall into chaos.
To **7%**, it's likely that the value
of goods and services would
be unclear—and **53%** say
we'd have to redefine what
"value" really means.

*You won the lottery
jackpot! What do you do
with your winnings?*

42%
WOULD KEEP THEIR
family financially comfort-
able, and **8%** would support
a charity or cause. A modest
13% would quit their jobs to
follow their dreams. A lottery
win would funnel into debt
repayment for **24%**. The last
13% would divide their win-
nings between these goals. ●



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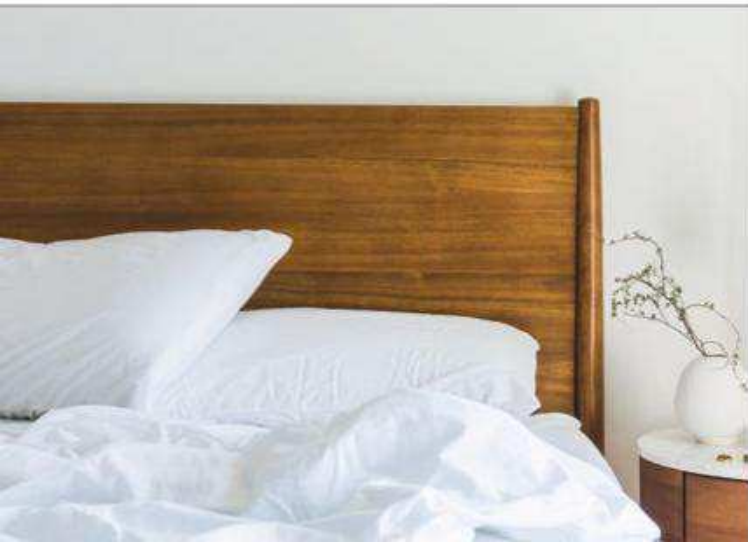
Music for mothers

In villages throughout India, women are singing about IUDs and iron supplements, saving the lives of countless mothers and their infants, as an aspect of Save A Mother. SAM is an NGO whose mission is to deliver crucial health information and resources to vulnerable Indian communities. Gita Gupta, a trained health activist with SAM, says she has often incorporated maternal health information

into traditional folksongs, because musicalizing the information makes it easier to remember.

Having a baby can be fraught with health risks in these rural areas, resulting in tragically high maternal mortality rates. While SAM has also aided in tuberculosis detection and increased acceptance of contraceptives, their education and advocacy programs are focused on pregnancy, nutrition,

immunization, delivery, and infant care. The organization trains volunteers, primarily women, to empower other women in their villages to be proactive about their health needs. Their goal is social change where healthier behaviors become the norm. Since 2008, they've worked with more than 2 million people in over 1,000 villages. In that time, maternal deaths decreased by 90% and infant deaths by 57%.



Frisky fun

Could mindfulness be linked to better sex? Australian researchers surveyed 800 adults about their “dispositional mindfulness”—a quality of

nonjudgmental attention to the present moment—and sexual satisfaction. Well, well: The more mindful people reported happier relationships and better sex lives.

MINDFUL AT WORK

WITH MICHAEL CARROLL

Q

A junior member of staff has asked for mentoring. What does this really mean? What does a good mentor do?

A

Mentoring is a private relationship between a mature, trusted leader and a talented, motivated protégé. The relationship requires periodic face time, so each party needs to be willing to be available to the other. It's best if the person being mentored can articulate up front—in writing—what they would like to learn.

Mentees should take an active interest from the very start in cultivating the relationship, rather than expecting their mentor always to lead.

Mentors should expect to offer guidance and encouragement on:

Culture: What does the enterprise value most? What are the unspoken rules that one should be aware of?

Politics: Who holds influence in the enterprise? How best can an aspiring leader contribute, inspire, and succeed?

Social intelligence: What is expected of successful leaders and how should they behave?

Above all, mentoring relationships are about mutual learning; it's not a one-way street. It's a collegial relationship bound by shared trust and respect.

MICHAEL CARROLL IS THE AUTHOR OF *FEARLESS AT WORK*.

Countering trauma two ways



Researchers at Rutgers University recently examined whether a program that combines meditation and aerobic exercise might ease trauma-related symptoms and depression better than meditation or exercise alone. In a pilot study, 32 women who had experienced sexual violence received either the MAP (Mental and Physical) Training My Brain program, meditation alone, exercise alone, or no instruction. At the end of six weeks, women who'd had MAP training reported significantly fewer traumatic thoughts and less rumination, as well as greater feelings of self-worth.



MAP training is unusual in that it activates both branches of the nervous system—one responsible for rest and repair, and one governing our “fight, flight, or freeze” response. Learning to intentionally engage and disengage these systems may be effective for those seeking to heal from trauma.



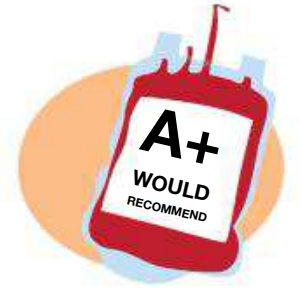
WHO recognizes the risks of gaming

The World Health Organization has added a new illness to its International Classification of Diseases: gaming disorder, which is marked by “a pattern of gaming behaviour [of] such a nature and intensity that it results in marked distress or significant impairment in personal, family, social, educational or occupational functioning.”

Medical professionals have said the addictiveness of gaming is “substantially similar” to that of cocaine and gambling. While many people game in moderation, acknowledging the addictive quality of video games could make it easier for therapists and medical experts to understand and treat people who do not.

what's new

EXTRA-ORDINARY ACTS OF KINDNESS



An Australian man who has a rare antibody in his blood has donated plasma 1,100 times in his life, saving 2.4 million babies.



An off-duty Houston cop paid to replace groceries stolen from an ill man who had collapsed in the store's parking lot.



Bermuda native Rodney Smith, while at university in the US, founded Raising Men Lawn Care Service, a nonprofit that helps youngsters volunteer in their communities by mowing lawns for those in need.



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what's new

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TODAY. LOOK AT
WHAT'S AT THE END
OF YOUR FORK OR
SPOON. APPRECIATE
IT. IT WILL TASTE
BETTER.



Open your mind, learn something new



What we already know can get in the way of learning something new, a phenomenon called *proactive interference*. Much of what we've learned is stored in the hippocampus, the brain's memory hub. Researchers in Boston were curious about whether mindfulness training might reduce proactive interference, as well as increase the size of the hippocampus—similar to the way a muscle grows with repeated exercise. So they randomly assigned 79 adults to four weeks of either web-based mindfulness training, or creative writing.

Each group had brain scanning before and after their training.

Those who'd practiced mindfulness showed significantly less proactive interference than the creative writing group. What's more, the lower rates of interference were directly linked to increases in the size of the hippocampus, suggesting mindfulness practices that focus attention on the present may improve learning and memory. These findings may help researchers develop strategies to better aid children with learning difficulties or prevent cognitive decline in aging adults.



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

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Posing no problem

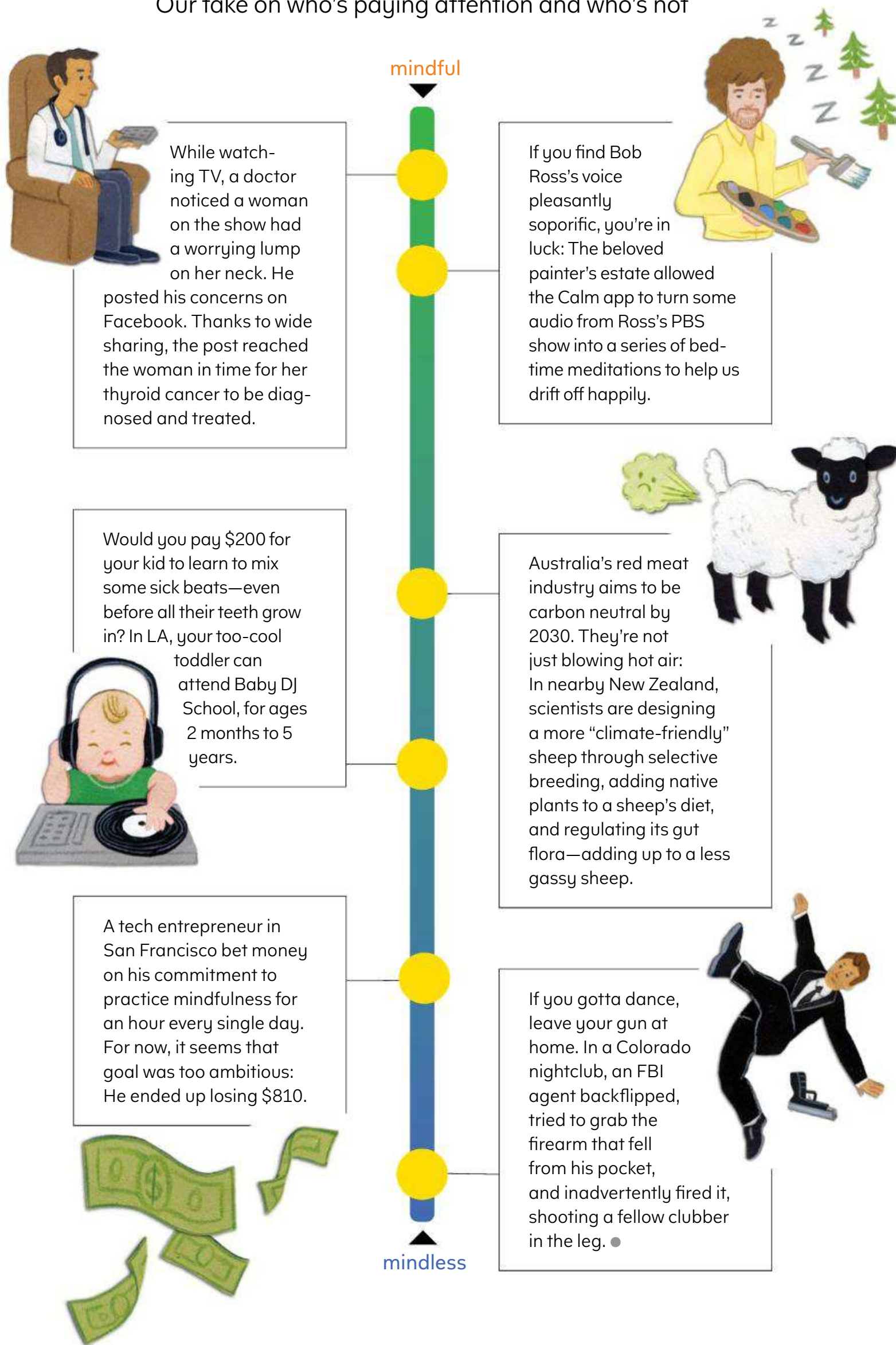
A Denver, Colorado, elementary school is replacing its detention periods with yoga class. The pilot program draws on research that suggests yoga can help kids pay attention to their breathing when they're mad or anxious, and may even ease symptoms of ADHD. School psychologist Carly Graeber hopes to leave behind the punishment paradigm in favor of "teaching kids social and emotional skills that they can use for their lives."

Making menopause easier

 The transition to menopause can be physically and emotionally rough. Chinese researchers compared women receiving either Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) training or menopause education. At study's end, while both groups had fewer menopausal symptoms, the MBSR group was significantly less anxious and depressed. ●

Mindful or Mindless?

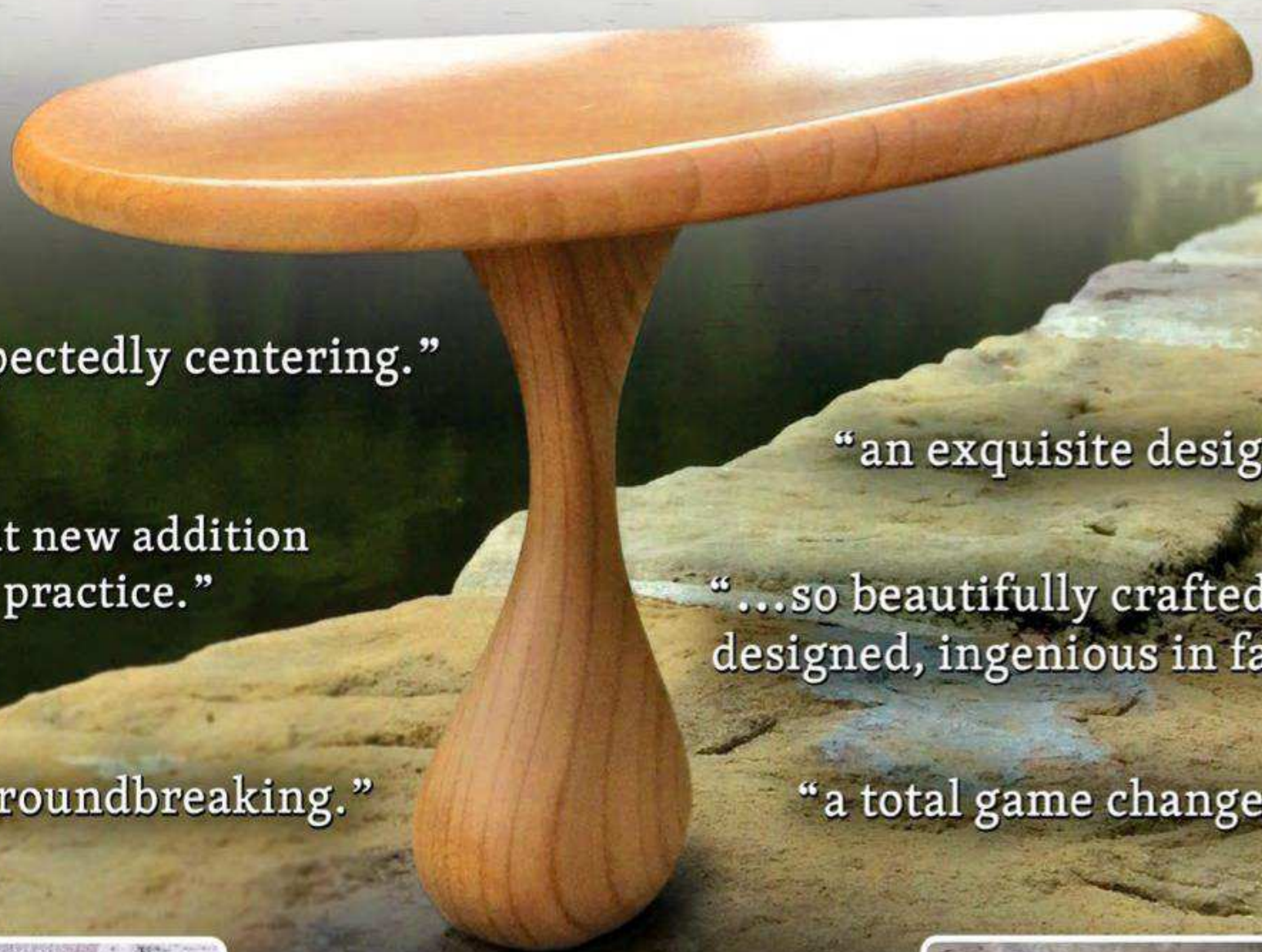
Our take on who's paying attention and who's not





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— **Soren Gordhamer, Founder, Wisdom 2.0**

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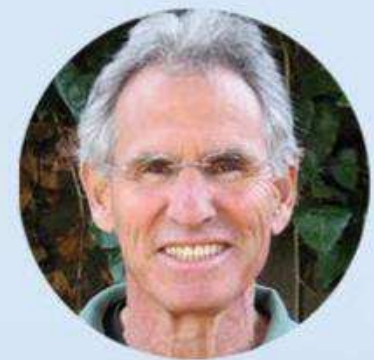
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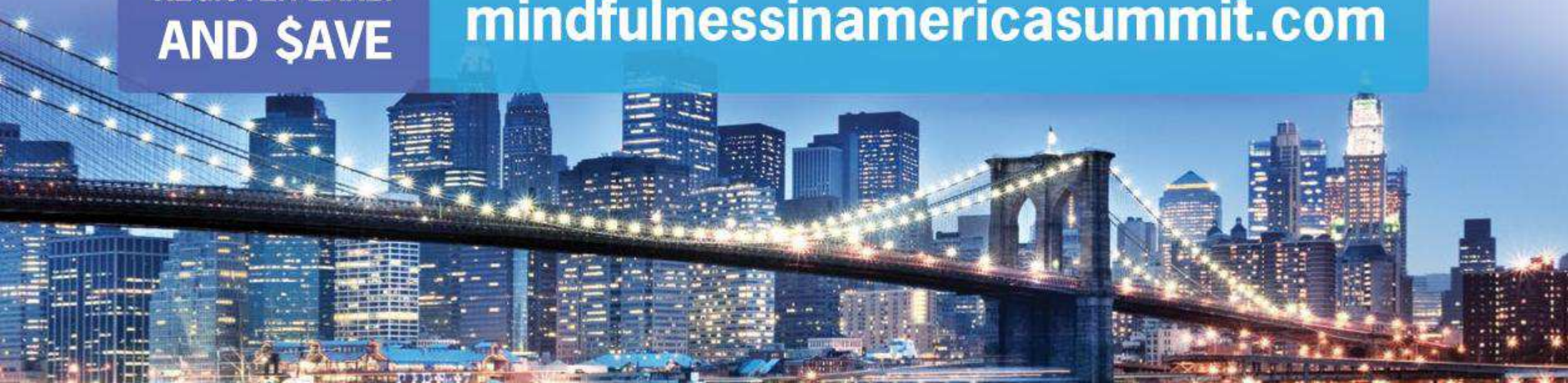


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"Only from the heart
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RUMI



Make a Change that Lasts

Turning over a new leaf in life can feel daunting, if not impossible. Here's how you can keep your resolve and follow through.

Making meaningful changes to create a life more aligned with who you want to be isn't that hard: To be more fit, you can exercise; to be a better writer, you can write more; to be more mindful, you can practice mindfulness. We know making these kinds of changes is good for us and even feels good. But making them stick? Well, that's another story.

To make lasting change, we need more than desire and willpower. It requires an understanding that our brains are wired to create obstacles that hinder us from making healthy changes, and that, thanks to technology, it's harder than ever to maintain focus. Maybe most importantly, we need to understand that we are not islands, and that our social and physical environments can make the difference between ongoing motivation and incessant procrastination. Once you understand these obstacles, you can begin to take simple steps to organize your life in a way that inspires the sustainable changes you want to make.

Here are the biggest threats to our well-intended efforts to change, and how to counter them mindfully.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elisha Goldstein is a psychologist, cofounder of the Center for Mindful Living in Los Angeles, and creator of the online mentorship program "A Course in Mindful Living."



NEGATIVITY RULES

From the dawn of our species, the human brain has been on the lookout for danger. Why? Because before you can work on being happy, you need to survive.

It's called negativity bias, and it still rules today. For example: You have a great idea for a new project. You ask 10 people what they think and nine of them say things like, "This is fantastic," or "This can really make an impact in so many ways." But one person says, "What's wrong with you? How could you ever consider this? This idea is sure to fail."

Which comment is stickier?

The brain's first job is to scan the horizon and anticipate any danger—and "danger" in brain-speak can be anything that causes even momentary discomfort, which also happens to be a natural and integral part of change!

In order to ensure your security (in this case, the status quo), the brain will conjure up all the potential pitfalls of this idea, from anticipated failure to doubt that it's going to make a difference. Well, from thoughts come actions, and from actions come consequences, so you have doubt and fear of failure showing up as laziness, procrastination, or "forgetting" to do the thing you planned to do in support of your change. This just leads to *more* thoughts confirming that you couldn't really make this change anyway. And... your motivation disappears.

What can you do? First, recognize that this old wiring is part of the human

experience. Be on the lookout for negative thoughts in response to your plans, and remember *Thoughts aren't facts (not even the ones that say they are)*. When they arrive, soften your body and take a deep breath. Ask yourself, "Do I know this thought to be absolutely true?" If not, visualize how you will feel after having made the change you want to make. Allow that feeling to propel you forward.

OUR FRACTURED ATTENTION

Just while writing this sentence, my phone has lit up twice, stealing my attention. (Yes, I'll put it away now.) Anybody with a smartphone knows the experience of *continuous partial attention*: It's what happens when you quickly switch between tasks—and the brain drain that can occur as a consequence. In our constantly connected world, where a device right in our pocket (or on our wrist) serves as a hub for work, personal life, fitness tracking, incessant news updates, and even meditation apps, for many of us, fractured attention is more the norm than not.

Unfortunately, this doesn't support the *sustained* attention needed to make lasting changes. When it comes to changing or adopting new habits, researchers say that, depending on the difficulty of the task, it can take between 20 days and more than 200 for a new activity or way of being to become automatic. In other words, it requires the ability to sustain your attention for a →

Take Inventory

Take honest inventories of your social and your physical environments to identify where you're supported and where you're not.

1

Write your name on the left-hand side of a piece of paper.

2

Draw three short lines to the right of your name, and continue doing that progressively, fanning the lines out to the right of the paper.

3

Write the names of the people you spend most of your time with on the lines closest to you and continue this until you write the names of the people in your life you spend the least time with.

4

Next to each person's name, write a number on a scale of 1-10, where 1 stands for least inspiring in respect to the change you want to make and 10 stands for most inspiring in respect to the change you want to make.

You may notice that many of the people you spend most of your time with may or may not be supportive in your life, but are not the most inspiring, and there are others on the periphery who are doing what you want to be doing, and could be inspiring to you, but that you're not spending much time with.

Consider how you might connect more with those who live the way you'd like to be living and draw them closer to you. If you find that you don't know where to find inspiring people, do a search in your area of local interest groups. While in-person is optimal, don't discount the power of having regular contact with inspiring people online, too.

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significant period of time on a particular task, whether it's exercise, meditation, writing, you name it.

We know mindfulness meditation is one of the best ways to increase focus and attention. So, in addition to putting your phone down (or, preferably, away, where you can't hear a vibration or see a notification), engage in simple, playful meditations whenever you have a moment. Try this: Sustain attention on a particular part of the body (nostrils, abdomen), and when your attention drifts, gently bring it back again and again. Remember, what you practice and repeat becomes automatic, and so it is with our attention, too.

LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT

Humans are inherently social; even from our beginnings we came together in clans to gather food and keep safe from potential threats. Strong communities also had a set of values and practices that were implicitly reinforced simply by the nature of being in a community. However, in our modern lives, we live

in little boxes, separate from one another, and our neighboring clans are no longer an immediate threat (for most of us at least). On top of that, with a few swipes of the finger we can order groceries to our doorstep without even seeing another human being.

As a result, most of us aren't spending a great deal of time around people who naturally inspire us toward our desired value or action. That doesn't mean you don't have good friends, family, or coworkers you care for and respect, but they may not be practicing the change *you* want to make.

This is not to suggest that you should abandon people who aren't living the way you want to live. Not at all! However, you should realize that your attention is an invaluable resource, and the people you attend to will greatly influence your ability to achieve the changes you want. So consider ways you might spend time with people who *do* represent the changes that you want. For example, you could try joining a gym or meditation studio, or finding (or starting) a writer's group.

Remember, working toward change is an imperfect process and you'll fall off the path many times. That's natural and part of our common humanity. See if you can hold all of this with a learning mindset. When you stray, forgive yourself for the time gone by, investigate with curiosity what brought you off track, and invite yourself to begin again with this new learning. Repeat this process indefinitely. ●

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Just Peachy

By Claire Ciel Zimmerman

Maybe more than any other fruit, peaches embody sensuality. The velvety, blushing skin, the luscious flesh—at once juicy and firm—gushing sweetness and just enough tang to keep it enticing with every bite. I could eat a dozen peaches in one sitting without a moment's pause. (In fact I have, much to the dismay of my stomach.)

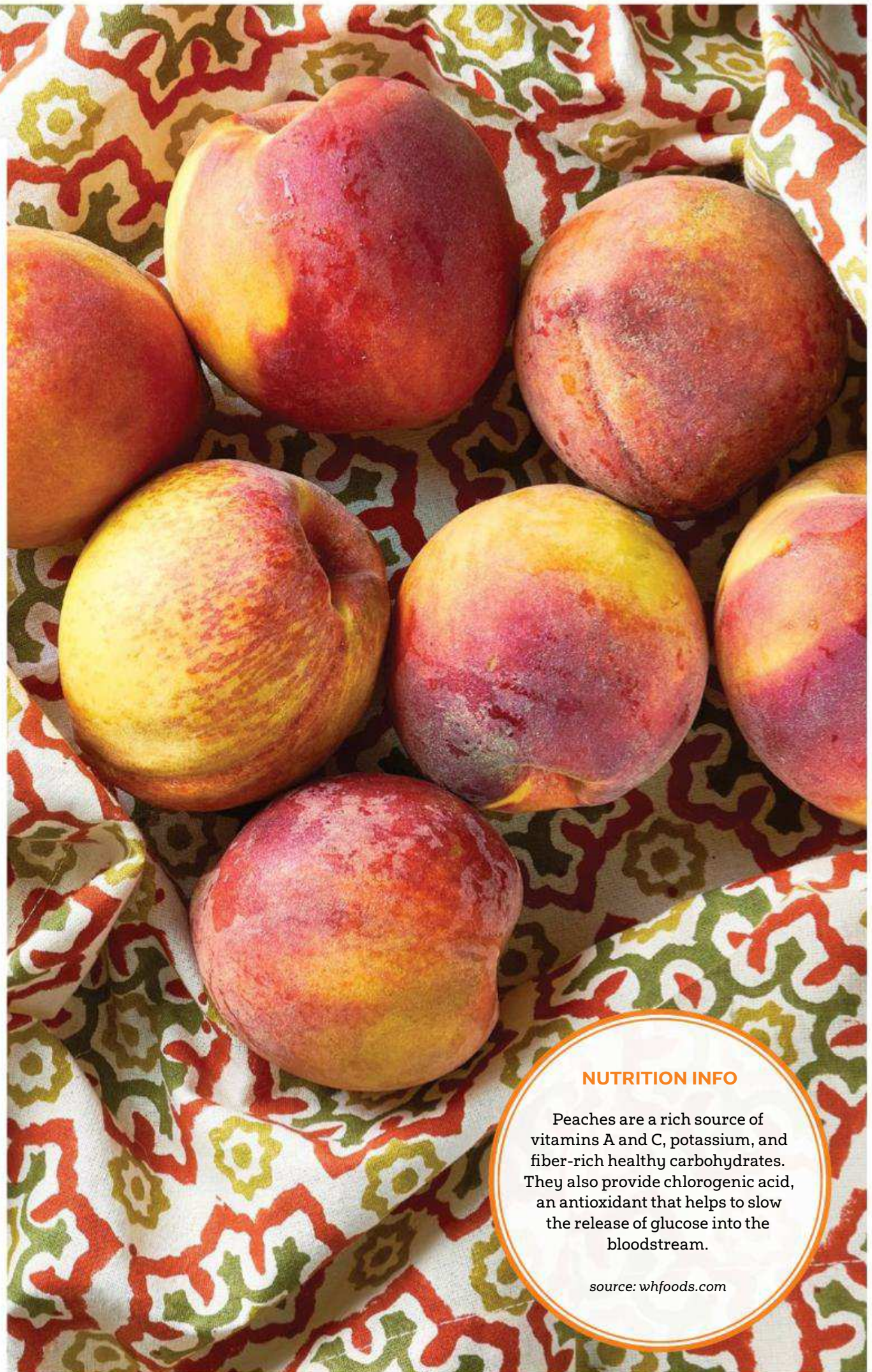
However, not all peaches are made equal. When not quite ripe or in season, peaches can be mealy, dry, and lacking in flavor. A sure way to improve the flavor and texture of less-than-ideal peaches is by cooking them, which helps loosen up their juices and soften their texture. Nothing beats a perfect peach, so for something truly spectacular, try this recipe with ripe fruit.

TRY THIS

Pit and slice some **peaches** to about half-inch thickness. Lightly brush each side with **your choice of oil** and place on a grill (or a stovetop griddle) set to medium heat. Grill for one or two minutes on each side. Enjoy them on a **salad**, with a bowl of **ice cream**, or on **plain yogurt with a drizzle of honey**. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claire Ciel Zimmerman is *Mindful's* Deputy Editor and Eater-in-Chief.



NUTRITION INFO

Peaches are a rich source of vitamins A and C, potassium, and fiber-rich healthy carbohydrates. They also provide chlorogenic acid, an antioxidant that helps to slow the release of glucose into the bloodstream.

source: whfoods.com

Afternoon ENERGY

Whole Grain and Pure Snacks
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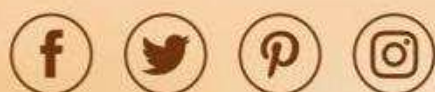


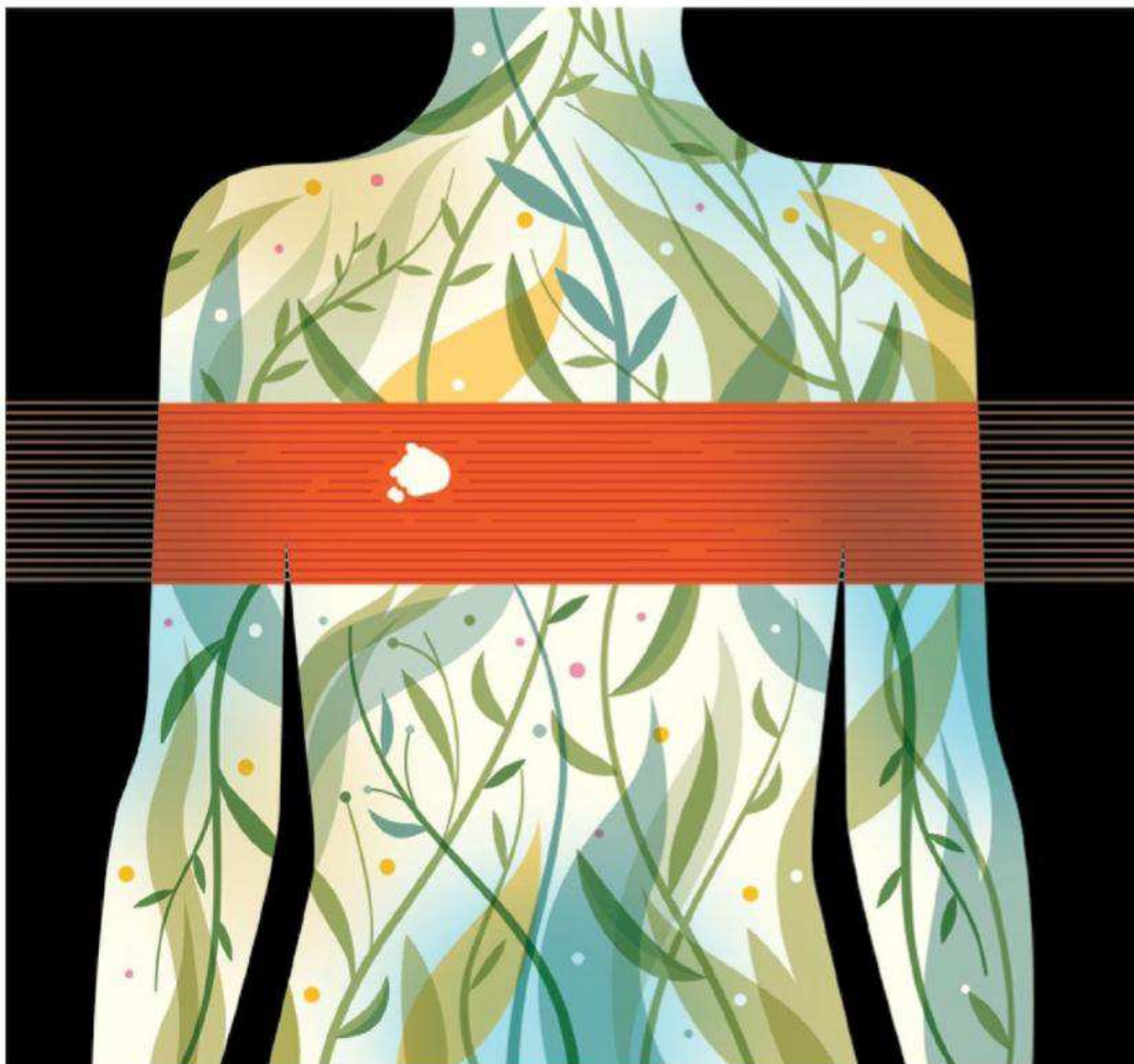
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INSTEAD OF
ASKING, “WHY
ME?” WHEN
DIFFICULTIES
ARRIVE, WE
CAN SAY, “WHY
NOT ME?”

Making Peace with Cancer

We don't always get to choose how our lives play out. While that's hard to accept, it's also the key to moving forward with a cancer diagnosis.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Patricia Rockman, MD, is a family physician with a focused practice in mental health. She is Senior Director of Education and Clinical Services at the Centre for Mindfulness Studies, Toronto, and an associate professor at the University of Toronto, Department of Family Medicine.

Catastrophic illnesses like cancer terrify us. You could argue, given their frequency, they should—although I have never found anxiety or worry to be particularly helpful in solving anything.

Every year, 250,000 women in the US learn they have breast cancer, and 1 in 9 women will be diagnosed in her lifetime. Each year, a staggering 12.7 million people worldwide receive a cancer diagnosis. Everyone will be affected by cancer at some point, either themselves or through caring for a loved one. So it wasn't really a shock when the yellow crusting on my

nipple turned out to be a malignancy that had taken up residency in my breast.

Even so, initially I was devastated. My life was about being up north in the woods, picking growing things out of the garden. It was about teaching and traveling to the ocean, about exploring faraway countries with my husband and family, about learning and giving to others. My life was not about breast cancer.

Author William Bridges developed a model of change and transition that has helped me negotiate everything life brings. In his model, change is often external, instantaneous, and →

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whether wanted or unwanted, it brings endings, loss: marriage, divorce, retirement, or the death of a spouse or child. Transition is the slower, internal process of adaptation to what is. I have found Bridges' approach useful because it speaks to the impersonal nature of experience, its universality and temporal nature. Life isn't fair and everything passes. Instead of asking, "Why me?" when difficulties arrive, we can say, "Why *not* me?" And then we can begin to move toward acceptance and decide what to do next. This is mindfulness in action.

Bridges begins with the "old familiar," which refers to our lives meandering in ways we recognize, changes occurring incrementally, perhaps even out of awareness. And then something ends. Maybe you find a lump in your breast, or (as in the case of my friend who had given up breast feeding long ago) you develop a case of mastitis that wasn't. Change throws you off a cliff into the unknown.

Then, when you fall into the role of the sick, you're pitched into the no-man's land of transition. We may get stuck in our resistance to what life is throwing at us, becoming sad, guilty, resentful, anxious, or just generally stressed. We try to hang on to what we were just a moment ago, like being a healthy two-breasted woman. This is also when you hasten to reestablish control in what are often uncontrollable situations, like when I bought a \$500 breast prosthesis before I even knew what surgery I was having. It remains in a drawer, as a reminder that not everything is urgent, even when you have cancer. Or like when I dropped a nonrefundable deposit of \$1,200 on a wig because I had some notion about passing as healthy once my hair fell out. I hated it. My friend said it looked like a head warmer. This was a lesson in letting go. Bald during chemo actually became beautiful, and I crowned my head with henna.

Cancer is a process, and the practice of mindfulness, while not a cure, can help everyone navigate the journey, wherever it leads. Remember, there is much we can do to help ourselves and others through such difficult times. We can welcome the opportunity to live vividly, one breath at a time. Slowing down can allow us to see what actually needs addressing and what can wait. Seeking knowledge, to understand what is happening and to make informed decisions, is invaluable. Lastly, make sure you have support and make a plan so you can take care of yourself and those around you, however rough the road ahead. ●



SELF-CARE

Mindful Medicine for Cancer

If your diagnosis feels overwhelming, it's useful to slow down and assess what actions can help you through it.

INNER WORK

When you can, **accept what is happening** without resignation. Riding the waves of low energy or appetite, nausea, pleasure or pain, irritability or contentment, sadness or joy awakens resilience. **Staying mindful of our thoughts** can prevent a spiral into a catastrophic future. The body is the boss, so you have to go with the flow. Well, you don't have to—but then you suffer more than you already are.

Learn ways to **nourish yourself**—by drinking smoothies when your appetite's gone or taking nausea medication. Losing your hair can be an adventure as well as a fashion statement—hats, scarves, henna, makeup, or nothing. When fatigue shows up, rest or ask for support.

OUTER WORK

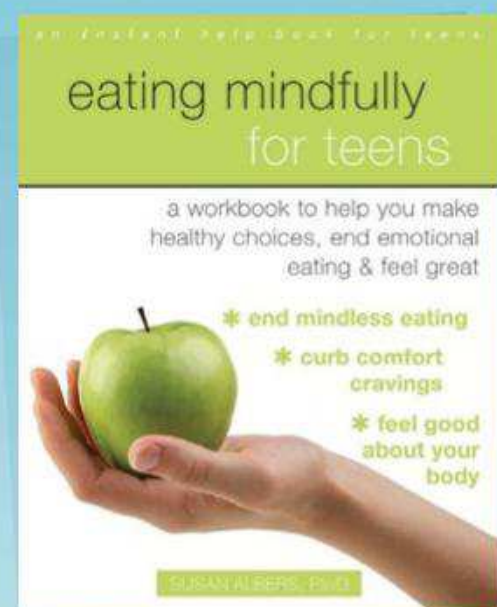
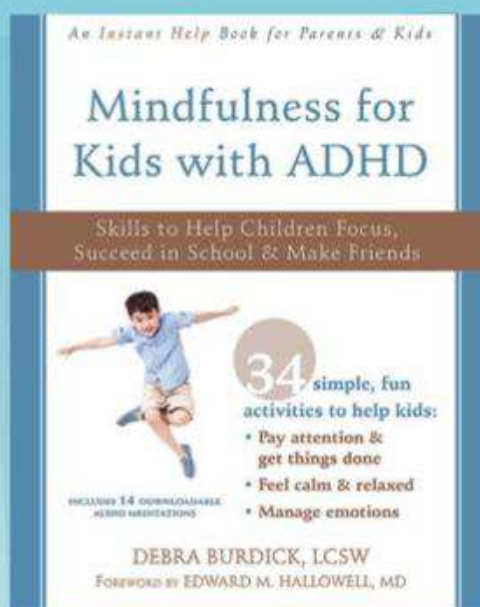
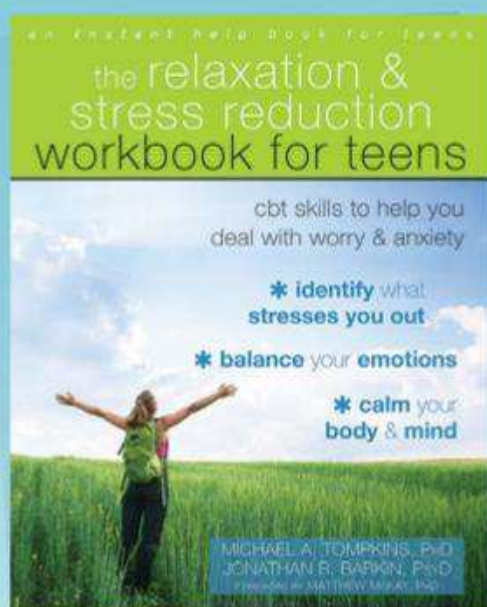
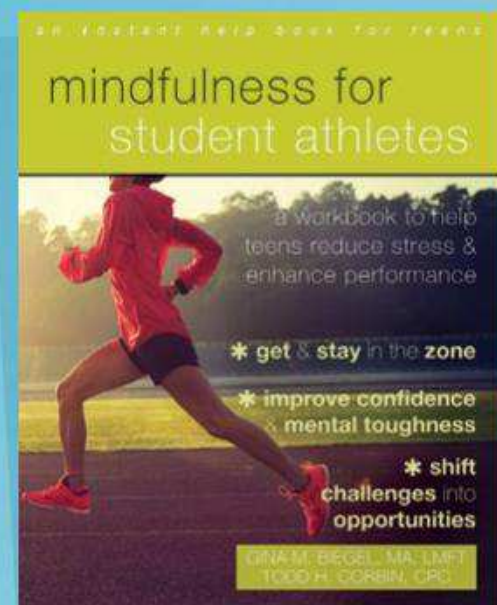
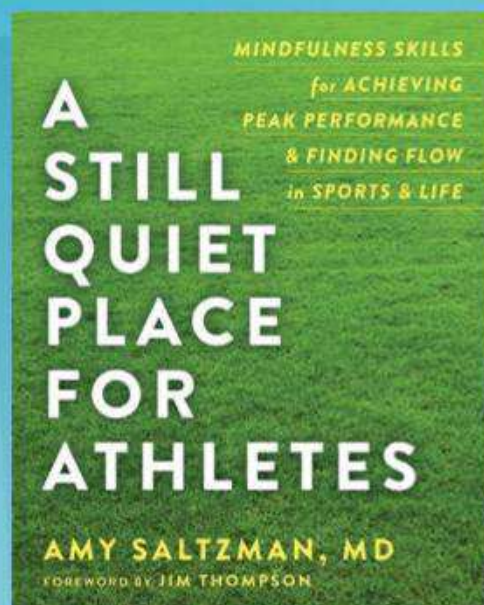
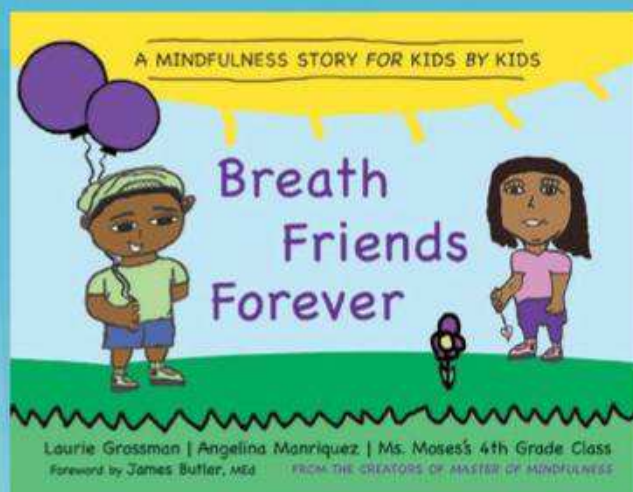
Do your research around cancer treatment options. If you aren't up for that, ask someone you trust to do it.

Slow down when you can around decision-making.

Move your body: Run when you can; walk when you can't. My oncologist told me that those who exercise before, during, and after therapy respond much better to the whole process.

Especially when we are sick, **community is better than isolation**. People want to help. Designate a family member or friend to coordinate a schedule for cleaning, gardening, driving, or cooking. **Send out regular email updates** on your condition so you can avoid retelling the same story. Illness is a part of life. We don't need to hide it.

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Take a Leap

We want to live our lives to the fullest, but sometimes it feels like the risks outweigh the rewards. Why not make putting yourself out there a practice?

Being a stand-up comic was one of my life's fantasies. So when the owner of a chain of comedy clubs saw my one-woman show and invited me to perform at his venue, I was pretty excited. But as the date drew closer I became increasingly restless. "Why?" I screamed into my pillow. "Why did I decide to put myself out there?!"

Whether you are posting a profile on eHarmony, joining a local ping-

pong club, or asking for a raise, moving into new territory takes bravery. This is especially true since there's no certainty that your courageous act will bring you the approval of others or anything at all that you think you might want.

So what's the appeal? Putting yourself out there can be the depth charge that breaks you out of harmful habits. The very habits you cling to that may seem like they are keeping you safe are actually just keeping you small. And as Nelson Mandela said, "There's no passion to be found playing small—in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

Step back from your life and recall any moments you couldn't imagine

surviving. Yet you did survive, and maybe your daring even became a turning point for positive change in your life.

DO YOURSELF—AND OTHERS—A FAVOR

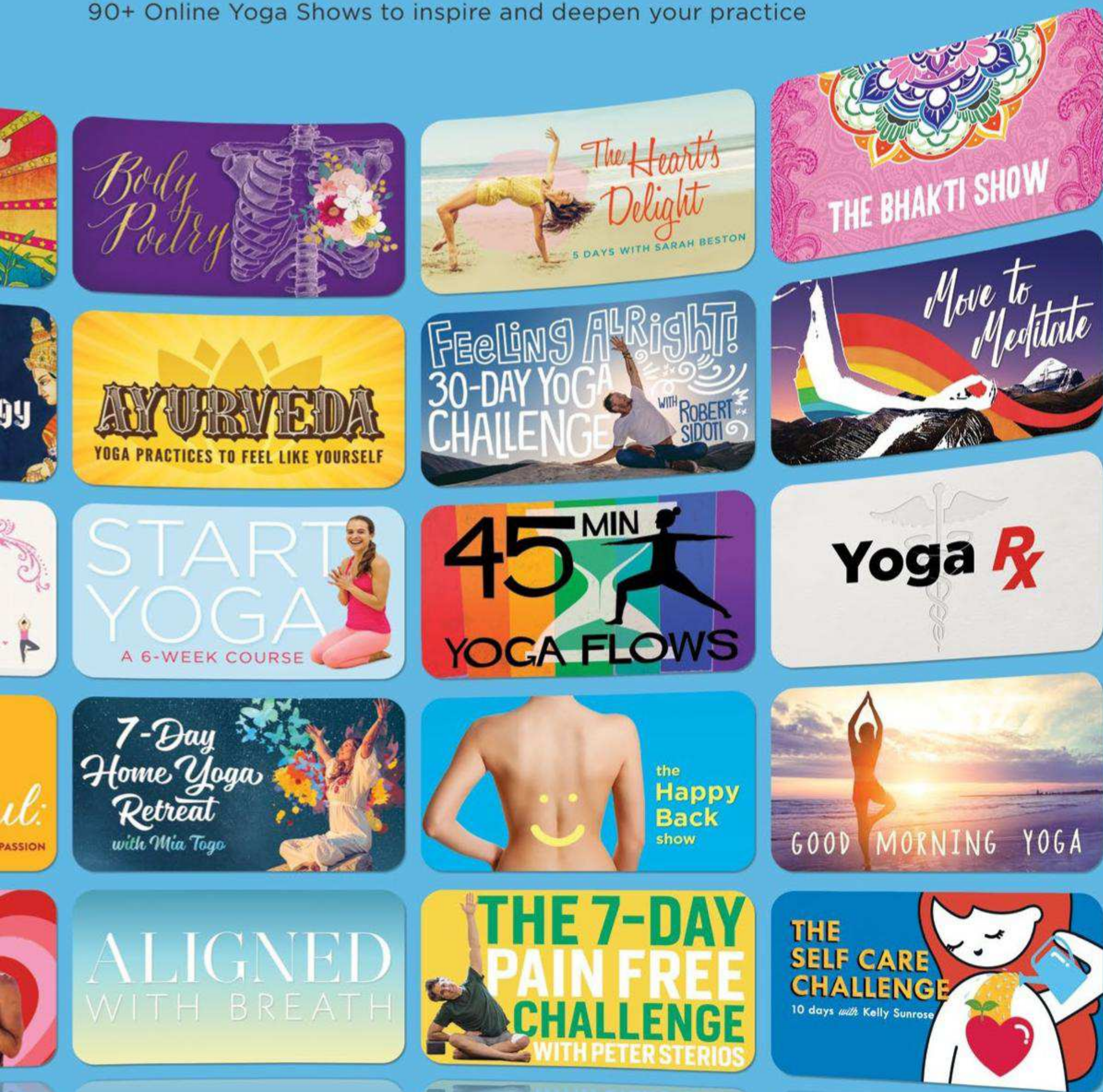
Dexter Manley has two Super Bowl rings. He played football in the NFL and faced the embarrassment of the world when he put himself out there and publicly admitted that he was illiterate. At 28, Manley became a role model for adult learning. By putting it out there, he changed the lives of many who, through his courage and success, saw possibilities for themselves. We have an immense power not just to change our own circumstances, but →

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.

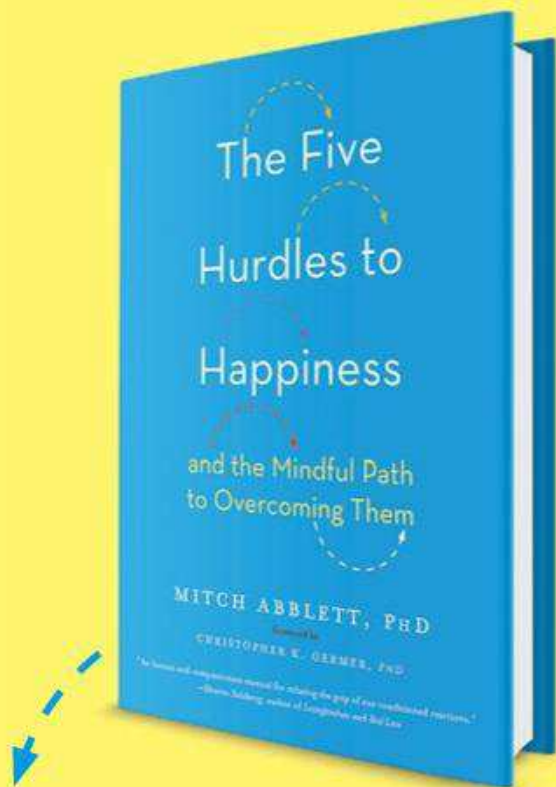
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FOR POSITIVE
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YOUR LIFE.

to inspire the people
around us.

Putting yourself out there can be dramatic, but it doesn't have to be. At its core, bravery just means allowing yourself to be vulnerable. I know a psychiatrist who is a very shy public speaker, incredibly reluctant, yet in demand. She told me the story of a recent speaking engagement of hers. Already feeling rocky because of a difficult situation in her family, and not very comfortable speaking in public at the best of times, she suddenly found herself paralyzed mid-sentence, unable to talk. At all. For several moments.

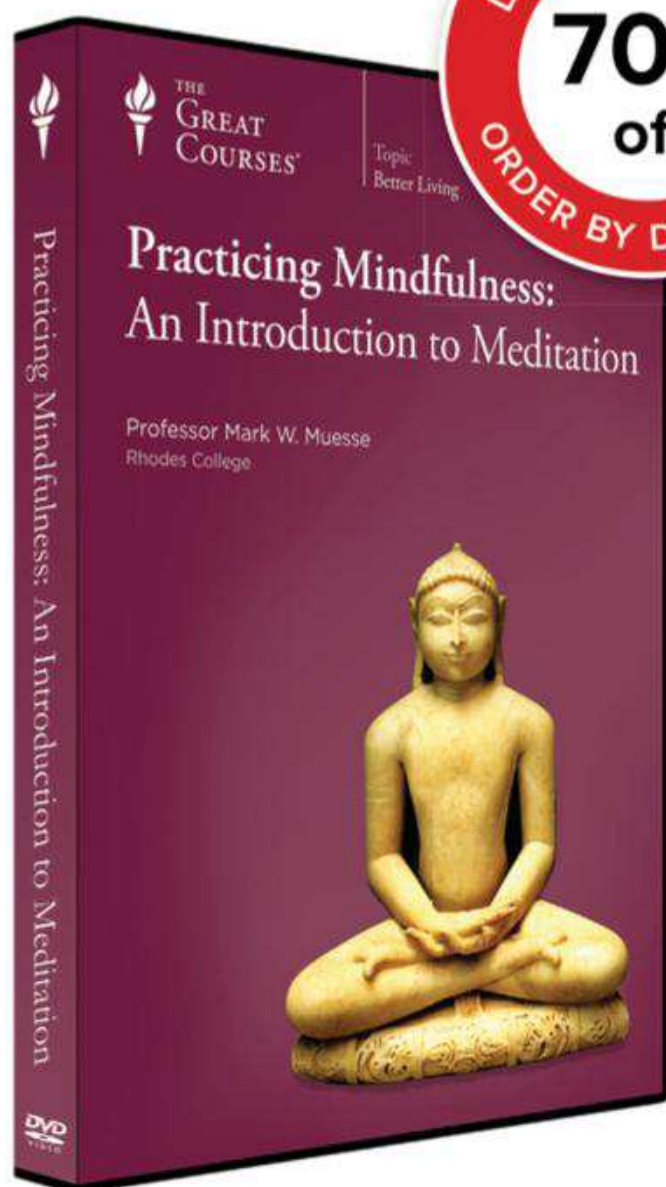
Do you notice that time never feels as long as those moments when awkwardness hangs in the air? After a not-so-delicious silence, she put herself out there and told the room about what was going on inside her. Many said that moment had the biggest impact of her whole talk. Who knew putting herself out there would include falling apart

in public, and that acknowledging it might be the big takeaway for her audience?

START SMALL, GO BIG

There are other ways that we can put ourselves out there that might not have the same adrenaline-triggering qualities, but can bring change anyhow, and strengthen our bravery muscle. We can simply say hello, or good morning, or take other small acts of daring kindness toward strangers. We can put ourselves out there by agreeing to chair a committee. We can put ourselves out there by letting people see us grieve or go gray. We can put ourselves out there by standing up or standing down for the greater good.

According to psychologist Rick Hanson, the primary way to cultivate resilience, compassion, happiness, gratitude, and confidence is “to have experiences that get encoded into lasting change in our neural structure or function.” In other words, if you want meaningful, lasting change in your life and you are seeking a way to open up to a wider band of color and choice, and if you are tired of settling for a life that keeps you small, you actually have to be somewhat outrageous. You have to take risks. And when we break the habit of playing small, we create possibilities for something new in our lives. Sometimes, when we take a leap, it leads to flying. But unless you put yourself out there and open to the possibilities that come with new experience, you'll never really know for sure. ●



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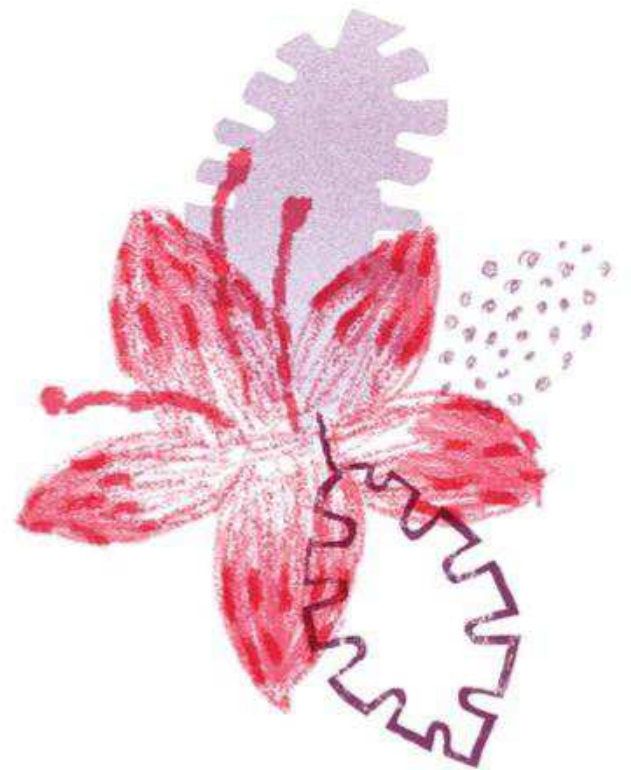
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Q

I heard meditating while looking into someone else's eyes can be good for developing empathy. Do you think that's true?

A

I first experienced this “interpersonal meditation” exercise when I brought my then-fiancée to a Jack Kornfield talk in Santa Monica, about eight years ago. We paired up, and it wasn't long before she was overcome by emotion and tears were streaming down her face as we two lovebirds gazed into each other's eyes. She says she fell in love with me all over again during that exercise.

These practices are often introduced to give people a direct, felt sense of loving-kindness, compassion, and empathy. They can be very powerful and often quite emotional (as my now-wife can attest!).

What's less clear is if engaging in such practices develops these qualities in an ongoing, sustainable way. It's also been reported that people who have experienced trauma have found the exercise of enforced empathy with strangers less than comforting, which suggests that it may

be a practice that should be introduced only in contexts where people are prepared for and have signed on for such a thing.

The good news is that we're able to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion all by ourselves by often calling to mind loved ones or people we admire or people we know are suffering or struggling and directing good wishes toward them for happiness and freedom from suffering. Doing so helps cultivate good will—not necessarily good feelings—and allows us to tap into *our* natural capacity and desire for happiness and freedom from suffering. No eye-gazing required! ●

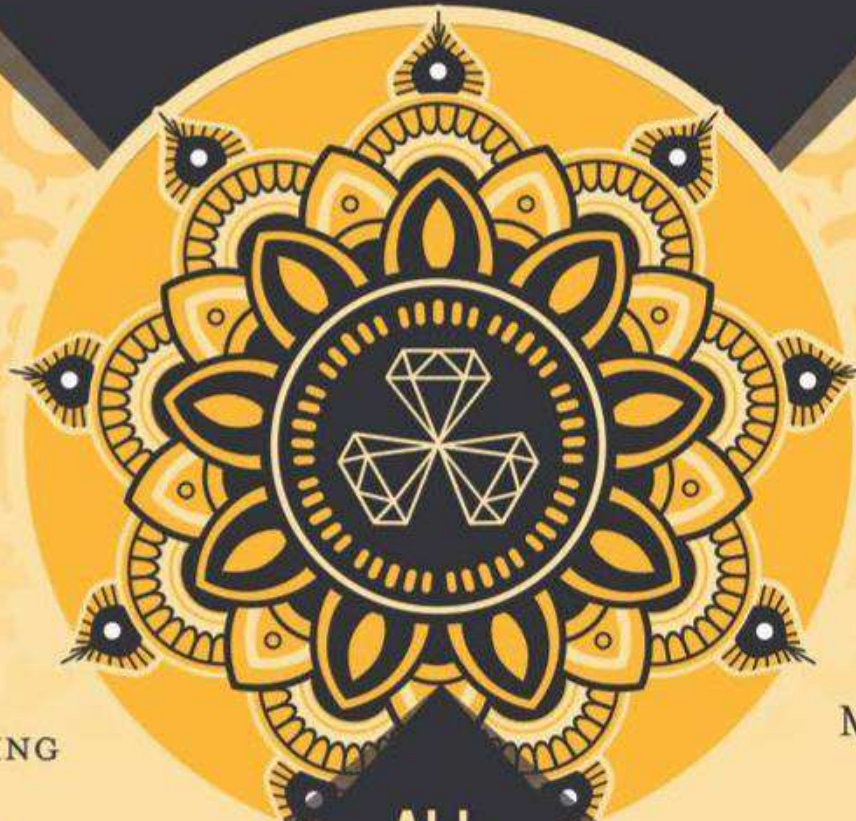
ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Steven Hickman is a clinical psychologist and founder of the University of California, San Diego, Center for Mindfulness and executive director of the nonprofit Center for Mindful Self-Compassion.



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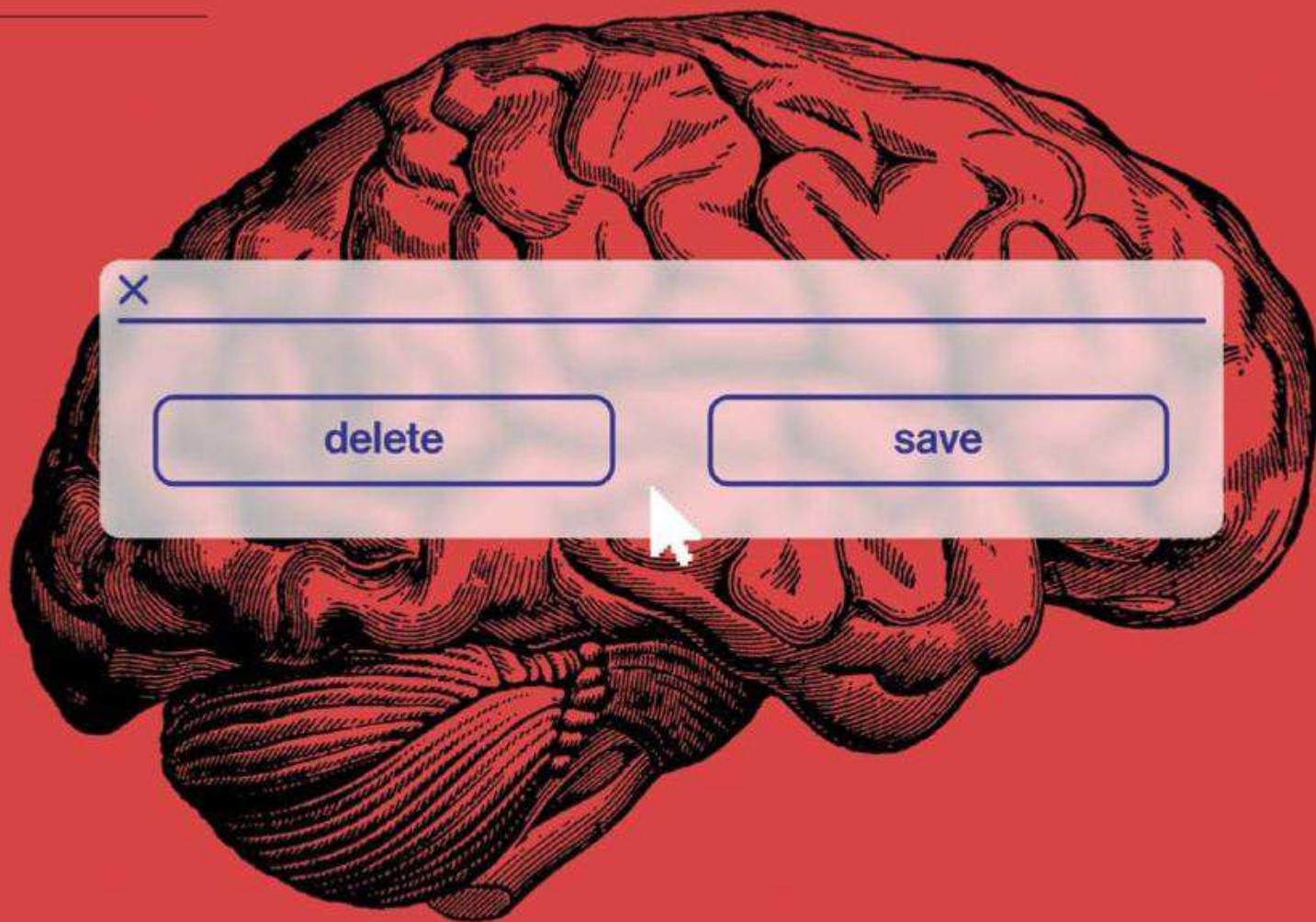
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Upload Your Brain

Talk of uploading our brainware—to reanimate our consciousness for future use—was once considered worthy only of fantasy and sci-fi. But now technology has made it just conceivable enough to raise serious questions.

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).

Earlier this year, when the Brain Preservation Foundation—headed by neuroscientist Kenneth Hayworth of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute—awarded a prize to researchers for preserving all the neural circuits of a pig's brain, Hayworth found himself in the media spotlight. The only problem was, the popular media simplified things a bit too far. They took the brain preservation technology to be all about euthanasia. Since the method used to preserve the pig's brain only works with a recently deceased brain, if the technology became available to humans, anyone wishing to preserve their own brains this way would need to die, ideally when the brain is in good shape. So, reporters reached the conclusion that the technology was about taking the opportunity to die knowing your brain would be preserved. As we shall see, that wasn't the point.

The sensational euthanasia angle crowded out the scientific story about the remarkable advances being made in connectomics—the

science of figuring out a brain's complete wiring diagram—and the once-absurd dream that it might one day be possible to upload a mind into the cloud, Ray Kurzweil-style, achieving cyber-immortality. Although “it will be at least 50 years before the first human mind is successfully uploaded and 100 years before it's routine,” Hayworth said, he regards it as not only scientifically possible but ethically imperative.

But first, the science.

Just as genomics studies genomes, so connectomics studies connections in the brain. The ultimate goal of this 21st-century biological cartography is to map the location of every neuron and every connection: the synapses that, neurobiologists believe, encode what we call “mind,” from every memory to every facet of personality, beliefs, and consciousness.

Determining the connectome—or, a connectome, since each brain's is unique—is the prerequisite for uploading and “emulating” →

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DHARMA OCEAN

SCI-FI | Heaven on Earth?

An unusually romantic view of connectomic innovation appears in the Netflix hit *Black Mirror*. In the episode “San Junipero,” two women meet in a simulated California party town (circa 1987): a paradise for the dead and dying, where, if they choose to have their minds uploaded, they can

leave behind their lonely end-of-life. San Junipero gives them not only good times, but a second chance at human connection, self-expression, and healing. The question remains whether this use of tech represents a far extreme of escapism or a compassionate, human-made heaven.

(presumably in silicon) a person’s mind, as Hayworth and others dream. A decade after scientists unveiled the first such wiring diagram—of the roundworm *C. elegans* (302 neurons, 7,000 synapses)—connectomics is hot in pursuit of its Everest: the connectome of the 86-billion-neuron, 100-trillion-synapse human brain.

Last year one of Hayworth’s colleagues, Davi Bock, led a team that obtained electron microscopic images of the fruit fly brain and its 100,000 neurons, the initial step in mapping the first connectome of an actual brain. (*C. elegans* has a primitive nervous system, not a brain.) At the Allen Institute for Brain Science in Seattle, neuroscientists are taking the first steps toward a mouse connectome: They slice a one-cubic-millimeter chunk of mouse brain into 25,000 pieces, imaging each with an electron microscope that shows the neurons and axons.

One cubic millimeter is one-thousandth of a mouse brain, or one-billionth of a human brain, Bock said. You begin to see why some scientists doubt this will ever work. The mouse project—again, just 0.1% of the brain, and 100,000 neurons—is costing tens of millions of dollars, and is only a baby mouse step toward a full mammalian connectome. But it took \$3 billion and more than a decade to sequence the first human genome, compared to hours and \$1,000 today. So, some would like to assume that massive technological advances will bring a human connectome within scientific reach.

To prepare for that day, a tech start-up called Nectome proposes to preserve brains with glutaraldehyde, as its founders did with a pig brain, winning an \$80,000 science prize from the Brain Preservation Foundation. Because, as noted above, synapses fall apart quickly once

life ceases, imaging a connectome requires a brain that’s just barely dead. This of course triggered the euthanasia fracas. Euthanasia is not, however, a requirement of this technology (should it ever come into being). People who die of natural causes could presumably have uploaders standing by.

Before you dismiss this as sci-fi nonsense, note that Nectome has a \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health for its preservation and connectome R&D. The preservation technique that won the prize from his foundation, Hayworth says, “appears to preserve the full range of structural and molecular features that modern neuroscientific theories postulate underlie the encoding of all of the types of long-term memories that make a person unique.” Someone undergoing the procedure “is electing to ‘hit pause’...in order to optimally preserve the full *informational* content of their brain.”

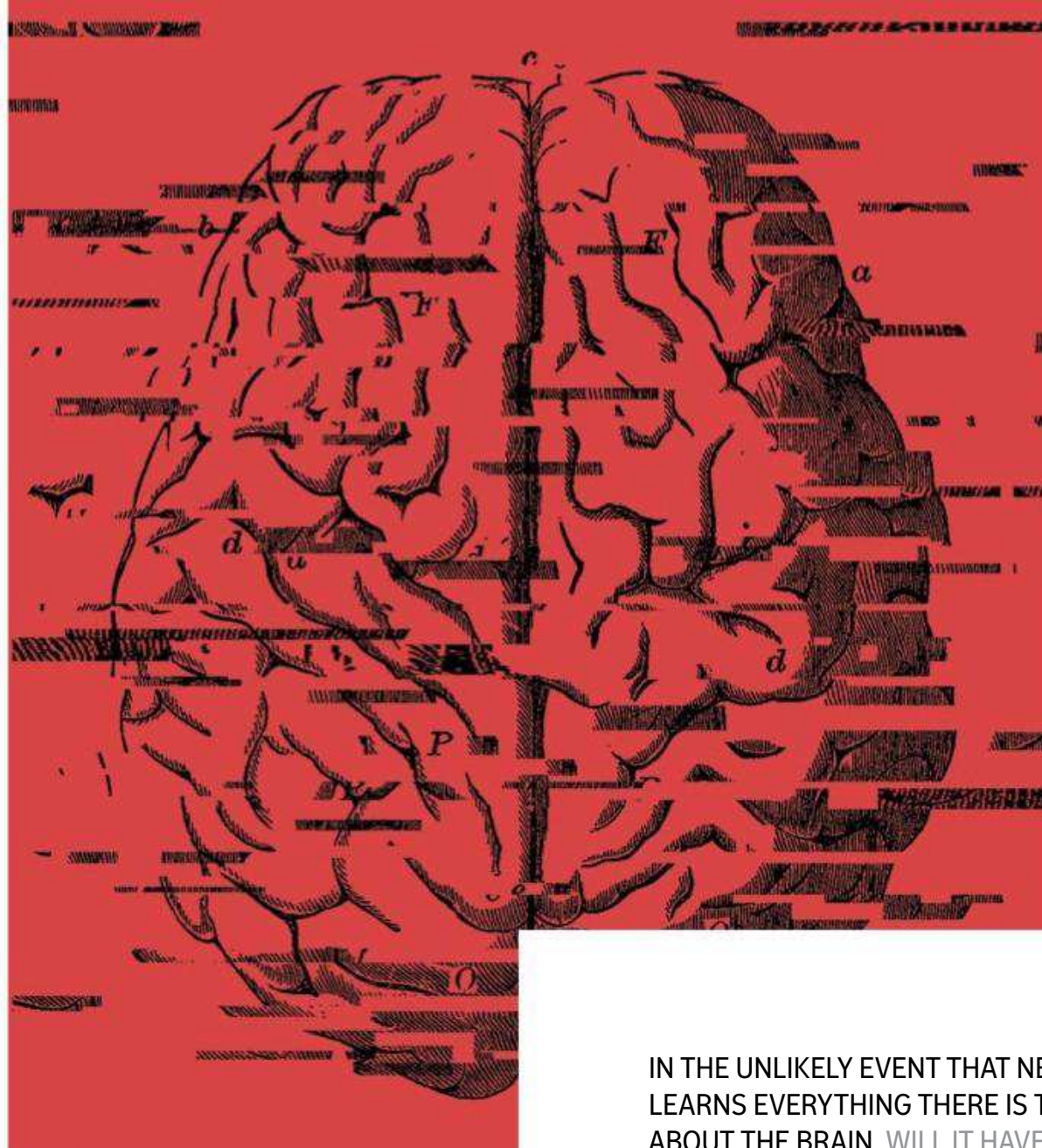
Just to be clear, we’re not talking about reanimation, cryonics-style. Hayworth and Nectome believe the future lies not in reviving the dead but in full-brain “emulation,” or recreating in digital form a brain’s wiring diagram and thus its information content. Nectome describes its mission as preserving a brain “well enough to keep all its memories intact: from that great chapter of your favorite book to the feeling of cold winter air, baking an apple pie, or having dinner with your friends and family. If memories can truly be preserved...we believe that within the century it could become feasible to digitize your preserved brain and use that information to recreate your mind.”

The scientific questions about brain emulation are as fascinating as they are unanswered. In addition to knowing which neurons connect with which—the basic connectome—do you also need to know the strength of each synapse? the firing patterns? the distribution of neurotransmitters? the subjective sense the brain’s owner gets when a particular synapse operates?

Oh, and one little detail: The information content of a cubic millimeter of brain tissue is about 1 petabyte of data, Bock says. An entire mouse brain comes to 1,000 petabytes. At 1 billion petabytes—1 petabyte being equal to 1 million gigabytes—the informational content of a single human brain exceeds the total storage capacity of the cloud today!

But would-be brain emulators don’t let such details deter them. Instead, they predict, as a 2018 study did, that “eventually the reading of memories...will become the daily routine of connectomics.” Those wiring diagrams, including

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in preserved brains, will “capture functionally relevant features of brain circuits from which mind and cognitive functions emerge”—possibly by 2075 to 2100—neuroengineer Randal Koene told the 2017 SharpBrains summit. But if brain emulations built from connectomes come to pass, is the emulation you? Or is it “just” a copy?

That and related questions echo those that I explored in my very first Brain Science column in *Mindful* in April 2013 (available at mindful.org/mind-vs-brain): Is there is a mind separate from brain? Is mind “only” what the brain does? In the unlikely event that neuroscience learns everything there is to know about the latter, will it have explained every ineffable mystery about the former? If someone does emulate a brain in silicon, will the silicon version of you sleep and dream, and if it doesn’t, will that degrade its information content? If the brain upload is in the cloud, does it have consciousness? If consciousness is an “emergent property” of brain activity (essentially a happy accident), then it might. Will it suffer something like the mental and sensory deprivation of solitary confinement? Will it wonder where it is and how it got there, tormented by existential despair? It boggles the mind!

Hayworth envisions installing the brain upload in a sensory-enabled robot, so as to avoid at least the last two questions. And to those who

argue that the upload couldn’t be the person whence it came, he asks, if C-3PO’s hard drive were transferred to a new droid, would anyone doubt that it is still C-3PO? No. How about if the hard drive were copied perfectly, and put into a second robot; would that be C-3PO also? Yes, he said: “Making copies of C-3PO doesn’t raise philosophical questions for most people. But if we accept the materialist neuroscience view (in which the mind is the brain), we have to accept that a simulation will be you.”

Failing to pursue research that might make brain emulation possible is therefore unethical, Hayworth argues. “There are moral implications to knowing you could have preserved the information content of a human brain but instead said, ‘nah, screw it’” he says. If we do not at least try to develop the technology to preserve the unique patterning of neural circuitry that encodes an individual, including “the memories and knowledge of Holocaust survivors before they all die, that, to me, would be as if we again burned the library of Alexandria” and lost an incalculable store of human experience. ●

Flying High, Staying Grounded

Jannell MacAulay knows a thing or two about the hard-driving life. A combat veteran and former commander with over 3,000 flying hours, MacAulay served in the US Air Force for 20 years before retiring in June 2018. But her hard work and ambition eventually led to burnout. 14 years into her career, she began doctoral studies on human

performance and encountered self-care practices like yoga and mindfulness. What began as academic research soon became a personal practice and, ultimately, a professional crusade: She brought mindfulness to her squadron and then to some 2,500 members of the 58th Special Operations Wing at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico.

Do you remember your earliest encounter with yoga or mindfulness?

Around 1999, I took my first yoga class, and I didn't like it. My mind didn't stop moving—it just kept accelerating through my worries, my to-do list. I felt that slowing down with yoga would be detrimental to my performance.

You were more comfortable with hard work?

My parents—my dad, a retired police lieutenant, in particular—instilled in me a drive for hard work. My father used to tell people I was going to be a submarine warfare commander or a fighter pilot. In the 1980s those jobs weren't open to women, but I had no idea about limits. I just knew that if I worked hard enough I could achieve my dreams.

And that approach worked—until it didn't?

That message from my parents was incomplete.

Somebody looking at me from the outside might have thought, “Man, she's successful.” But inside I was really struggling.

What happened?

My husband was on a one-year deployment in the Middle East. We had a two-year-old daughter, a house, a dog. And I was responsible for a flight-training unit. I was trying to be perfect and I was completely burned out. I had been flying for 13 years, but I still hadn't realized that I needed to secure my own oxygen mask first.

When the Air Force sent me back to school for two years, I started studying how we can perform better under high-stress situations, like combat. The research was compelling, and the idea of slowing down to speed up intrigued me. Mindfulness became my oxygen mask.

The idea of slowing down seems antithetical to the military mindset.


In a culture like the military, no one wants to be told, “Hey, you need help.” When I was in that go-go-go mentality, I know I didn't want to hear, “You need help slowing down.” People would say that I was making my unit weak or “just making people feel good.”

My answer was “Is there a problem with making people feel good? If they feel good, they're going to perform better.” So I focus my message on performance. We all can use more tools and resources to get better at what we do. Mindfulness is another resource to make you even more badass or more high-performing than you already are. That resonates with people.

How did you introduce mindfulness to your squadron?

I started by just exemplifying the behaviors of a mindful leader—someone who took care of herself, who was present in conversation.



A woman in a green military flight suit stands on an airfield. She has her arms crossed and is looking off to the side with a slight smile. In the background, there are several military aircraft, including a large one on the left and others further back. The sky is clear and blue.

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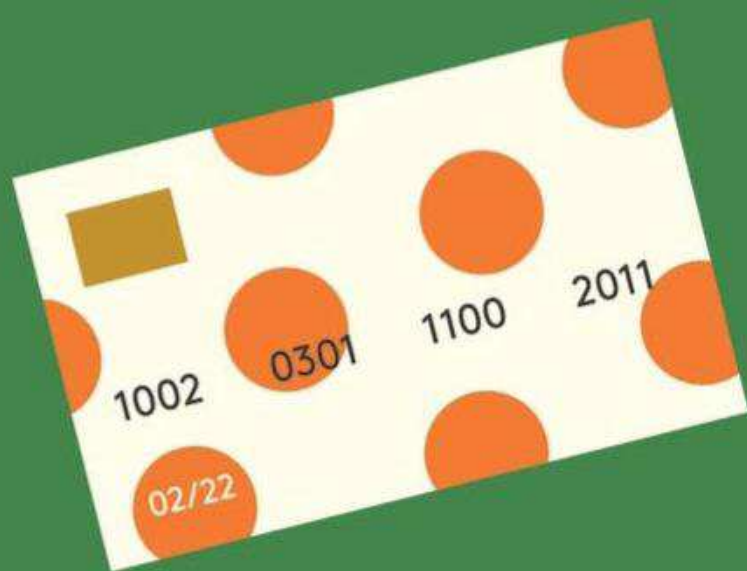
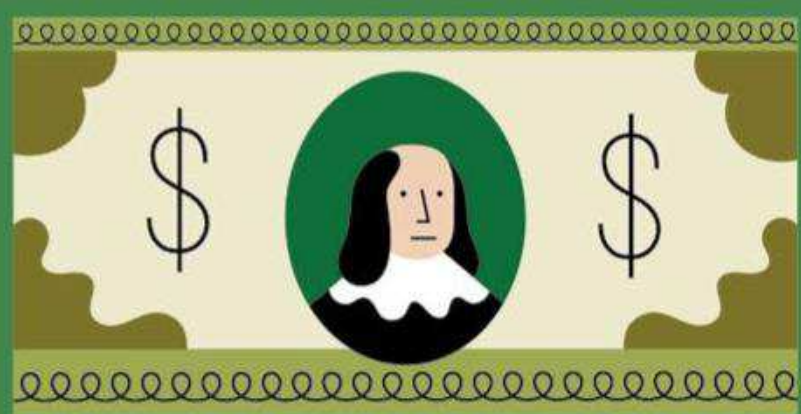
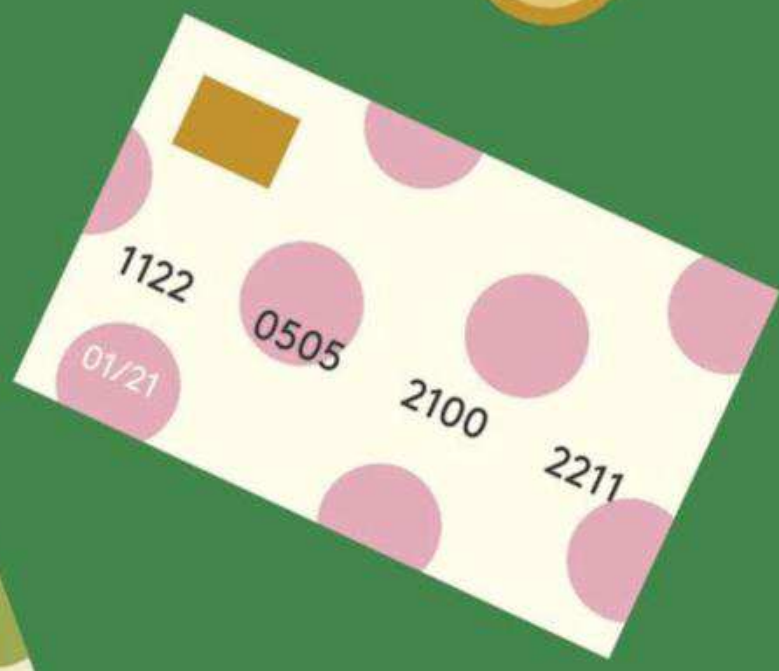
Eventually, we began to meditate at our monthly commanders calls and weekly leadership meetings. As a squadron, we practiced together once a month and, for people who saw me more often, once a week.

How can mindfulness help performance?

Maybe a student pilot doesn't have the best landing. The student takes off again and comes back around for the next one. As the instructor, I can tell if the student is still thinking about the previous landing. If they can't get that first landing out of their head, the second landing won't go well. You need a skill to help you recover. That's what mindfulness does: It brings our awareness back to the moment so we can perform at a high level, despite the mistakes we made two minutes earlier.

What will you do now that you've retired from the military?

The number one thing is being more present with my two young children and my husband. And I'll be consulting with the Air Force and other organizations on performance-related programs. I am passionate about building a culture that's more focused on performance and that recognizes mindfulness as a performance-enhancing tool. I'm also passionate about integrating self-care into our leadership model. ●



Easy Money

It's taboo to talk about financial struggles because our emotions about money run so deep—but maybe we should. Here's how you can start taking your life back from money stress.

By Bari Tessler

Illustrations by Asia Pietrzyk

When it comes to money, shame is present somewhere in us all, whether it's right at the surface or swept under the rug, prompting big changes or holding us back from even starting our money healing journey.

We all carry it. Women, men, black, brown, white, young, old, short, tall, gay, straight, billionaires and paupers, spreadsheet enthusiasts and number-phobes, self-made entrepreneurs, welfare recipients, and trustfunders. Money shame is an equal opportunity affliction, and it does not discriminate based on who you are, where you're from, how much money you earn, what percentage you save, whether you pay your taxes on time, or what your credit score is.

Your money shame might be tied to a specific experience in your life, your upbringing in general, or none of the above. Here are some variants I've heard:

"I'm just not good with money. I can't be trusted with it."

"I earn plenty, but I still seem to spend too much—how do I have this much debt?"

"I'm too right-brained, creative, and bad at math to be good with money." →

Money shame is an equal opportunity affliction, and it does not discriminate based on who you are.

“If I make a lot of money, I’m betraying my working-class roots.”

“I should be further along with my savings/earnings/debt payoff/investment.”

“People who have money are bad.”

“I should have more money by now—the fact that I don’t means something’s wrong with me.”

“I’m too reliant upon my parents/husband/daughter for money. Why can’t I be more financially independent?”

“People like me shouldn’t make money; it’s dirty and unethical.”

“I only deserve money if I work really, really hard for it. Lazy people (like me) don’t deserve money.”

“Wanting more than ‘just enough’ money is selfish.”

Back in my social worker days, one of the heaviest pieces of money shame I carried was the belief that I shouldn’t try (or even want) to earn a comfortable income: That would be too materialistic, shallow, and

un-spiritual. Instead, I told myself I should just do good work in the world and be happy with that. Unfortunately, this shameful money belief only fed into another: I was supposed to earn more money and “be a grown-up” about it. Satisfying both of these demands wasn’t just difficult; it was utterly impossible. Indeed, when we look directly at money shame, we can start to recognize all of those sneaky contradictions and impossible double-binds it puts us in.

EMOTIONS THAT COST YOU

Suzie was convinced she’d never be able to show her face in public again. The beautiful house she had bought the previous year was falling apart around her. The foundation was cracked, and years of rain damage had begun separating the entire front wall of the house from the rest of the structure. The repairs would cost more than the value of the house itself and were far beyond her means. She had sunk her entire life savings and a generous loan from her mother into the down payment.

As for many people, there was no legal recourse for Suzie; the only option she had was foreclosure and bankruptcy. Crushed and ashamed, she moved into a modest apartment a few blocks away. For the next several years, she couldn’t drive by the house without falling into despair. She cried at work, at home, and in public. She

even began avoiding her favorite people and places for fear she’d burst into tears. She berated herself for creating this mess: Obviously, she told herself, it was all her fault, because she was bad with money and didn’t deserve such a nice house.

Some money shame feels acute and all consuming, like Suzie’s. Yet there are also more subtle forms of money shame, and some of us only experience fleeting pangs of it here and there, when a memory surfaces or a late fee arrives, for example. One colleague shared that despite a huge leap in her earnings over the previous few years, she hadn’t saved more than a couple hundred dollars: As soon as money came in, like the tide, it went right back out. When she talked about money with others, considered buying a home, or projected long-term, her jaw tightened, her gut sank, and she wondered when she would ever “grow up” and learn how to save.

If we took all of the various flavors of money shame, put them in a pot, and simmered them down to their essence, it would be something like: *Something’s wrong with me. I’m not OK. I’m bad, deficient, not good enough. I’m doing something wrong in this area of life.*

While it’s often tempting to stuff down the unpleasant feeling of money shame, it is far more helpful to recognize it when it arises and call it by its name—no matter how huge or small it feels. By noticing, naming, and honoring even this challenging emotion, we crack a doorway into other, gentler, more reassuring states of mind. →

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bari Tessler is a financial therapist, author, and creator of the online Art of Money program at baritessler.com.

All the Ways We Feel Money Shame

How money shame shows up
in our bodies and our minds

Utter hopelessness
that you'll ever figure
it all out

Guilt, frustration, and
disempowerment in
your personal and
business life

Longing for someone to
swoop in and save you from
your money struggles or
issues

Feeling sleepy, bored,
“checked-out,” or out of your
body a little when you pay bills

Pangs of guilt when
you decide how much
to charge for your new
product or service

Rage toward the world,
your family, your boss,
etc., that you even have to
deal with this part of life

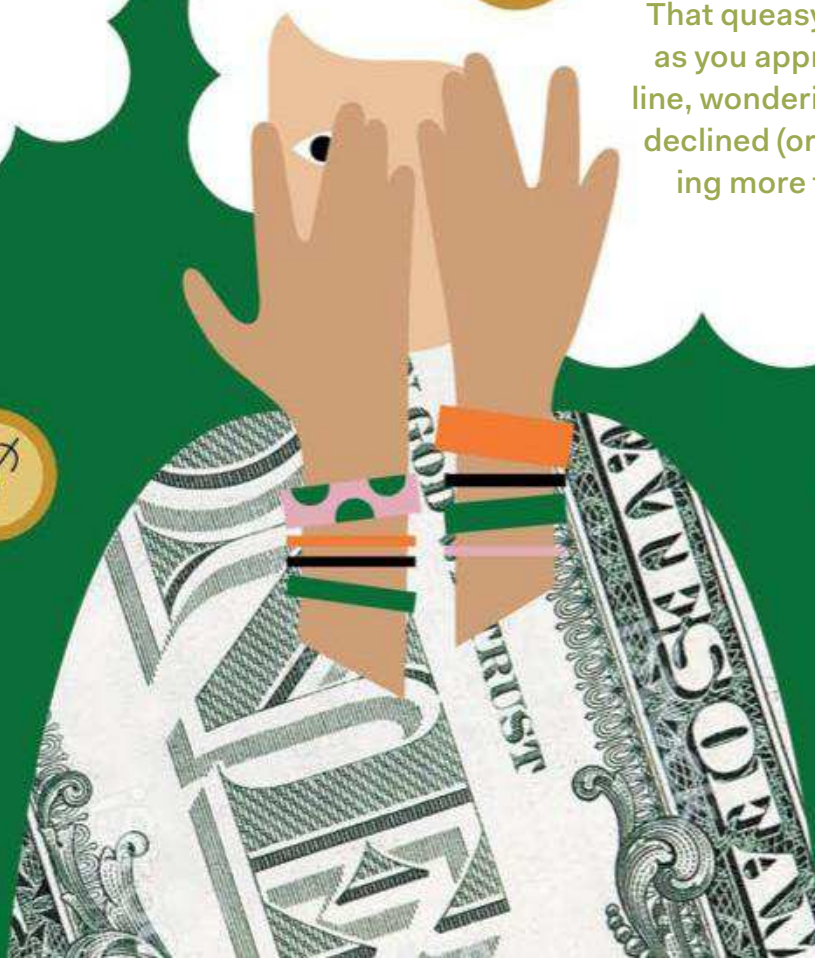
Fear or guilt
that you don't
have way
more saved
for your future

Procrastination, “freezing,”
or denial around paying your
taxes, setting up an estate, or
some other money-related item
on your To Do list

That queasy pit in your stomach
as you approach the check-out
line, wondering if your card will be
declined (or if you're simply buy-
ing more than you “should”)

A leaden cloak of
grief that's always
with you

Anxiety around
talking about
money





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NAME IT TO TAME IT

I've asked thousands of people: "Were you given a financial education, on an emotional, practical, or spiritual level?" The answer: "Nope."

Most of us were simply not taught about money: how to manage it, how to talk about it, and least of all how to navigate our feelings about it. In an ideal world, we would learn money skills and tools for understanding it and practices for relating to it and how to talk about it, all in incremental, age-appropriate ways, from grade school on up.

In the absence of this much-needed education, we project like crazy onto money: We conflate it with our identity, our sense of worth, our definitions of success and maturity, beliefs inherited from our community, lineage, culture, spiritual aspirations, and on and on.

Given that most of us simply were not taught how to make sense of money in any conscious way, is it any wonder, then, that we flounder and fall in this money territory?

As shame and vulnerability researcher Brené Brown explains, "Shame needs three things to grow exponentially in our lives: secrecy, silence, and judgment." We've already seen these three ingredients in action: Most of us keep our money shame to ourselves, never or rarely speak it aloud, and berate ourselves for even having it. Yet simply naming and speaking money shame aloud is an important step in healing it. As Brown says, "Shame cannot survive being spoken. It cannot survive empathy."

Shaming ourselves is an old, unconscious pattern. Telling ourselves, again and again, that we are not doing it right, that we're not good enough, or that we're unforgivable is self-directed violence. It's unhelpful and flat-out inaccurate.

The path out of money shame is not getting smarter or working harder or restricting your spending more harshly. The path out of money shame is finally putting down that lash, releasing those unrealistic standards, and cultivating every last drop of forgiveness, self-love, and compassion you can muster.

Shame thrives in the dark, silent lands of taboo, so bringing the light of consciousness and courageous truth-telling can dissolve even the deepest, oldest shards of money shame. There is such healing in speaking the truth about money.

SHAKING THE MONEY STORIES

In Barbara's earliest money memory, she was three years old, perched atop a miniature step stool, brushing her teeth before bed. Suddenly, a question popped into her mind, and she turned to her mother to ask, "Mama, how much allowance do you get?"

Her mother remained silent but gave Barbara a withering stare. In that moment, Barbara got the message and made the decision: One does not talk about money. Years later, as she navigated extremely difficult financial circumstances, she kept silent about them. Even in her sessions with a therapist, where she could talk openly about everything else, she couldn't bring herself to talk about money. This early memory, then, set Barbara on a path of neglecting money for many years—and ultimately paying a steep price for it.

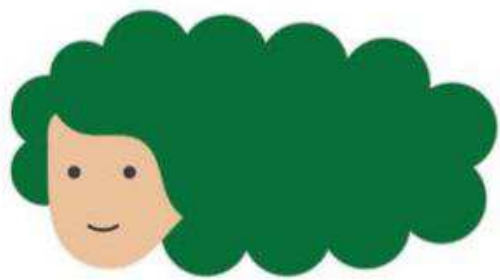
These earliest money memories are much like the first seeds planted in your money "garden," eventually growing into the central, imposing fixtures of our financial lives. They are the focal points, the towering oaks, around which whole ecosystems

Most of us were simply not taught about money: how to manage it, how to talk about it, and least of all how to navigate our feelings about it.



grow, even though we often remain unaware of their existence.

As pivotal as your initial money memories can be, there's much, much more to your relationship with money. Whether or not you could afford college, for example, and if you did go, whether or not you had to work when you were there, may be a big part of your story. You may have relied on a partner for part of your twenties, lost your financial footing due to a layoff, or received a big inheritance. You may have been financially self-reliant from the age of 16, or your money relationship may always have been intertwined with your family. Perhaps you turned your financial relationship around dramatically when you started your own business—or maybe you took a risk in the stock market and lost your life savings. →



Visualize Your Money Story

Create a safe, sacred space for this exploration. You may want to light a candle or pour yourself a cup of tea. Take your time. Move gently. Do a Body Check-In (page 48) before, during, and after. If you find yourself rushing, slow down. You may want to answer all of these questions at once, or you might insert a few moments or even days between each section. Explore with compassion and curiosity. Let this be an act of mindfulness and self-love.



1

DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH MONEY

It's always best to begin in the present moment. Spend a few moments thinking or writing about your current relationship with money. How do you feel about earning, spending, saving, giving, borrowing, loaning, and receiving money? What feelings or memories do these activities stir within you? Slow down. Do you notice any beliefs, patterns, or conditions attached to these areas?



2

VISUALIZE YOUR MONEY PAST

Get centered in your body and take a few deep breaths. From this grounded, mature place, let your mind travel back into your childhood memories. Look around, see your home and its surroundings. What did you learn about money, here? What beliefs did you receive? What decisions did you make? Do you recall others who had more or less money than you? What did you feel about that?

Now, think about your family. What was your mother's role, in terms of family finances? What messages did she give you about money, verbally and through her unspoken behavior and emotions? In what ways have you echoed her role or rebelled against it? Ask these same questions about your

father, your grandparents, your siblings, and anyone else significant to you in your childhood.

Did you receive messages about money from your religion, culture, or lineage? What were they?

Trace the ups and downs of your life in relation to money. Did you experience any big financial successes or hardships? How have they affected you, your life, and how you relate to money?



3

CONNECT THE DOTS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

How are you keeping the past alive in your relationship with money? Considering everything you were taught (and not taught) about money, how are you living out old or inherited beliefs, patterns, and stories? Have you repeated the past, rebelled against it, or struck out on your own?

How is your past Money Story affecting your relationships with your parents, siblings, friends, boss, clients, or larger community? How does it show up in your self-talk, in your behaviors, and in your thoughts about the future?



4

GIVE YOURSELF
A HUG

Congratulations! Even if you answered just a few of these questions, you deserve a huge pat on the back. However you might be feeling at this point—energized, angry, grieving, or overwhelmed—please know this: You are brave, you are awesome, and you are making great progress in your Money Initiation.

Please take time for self-care and integration after this significant exploration. Dance, draw, paint, sleep, hike, play with the dog—do whatever you love to do, to honor your courage and let these insights seep in.



This panoramic view of your past and present relationship with money is your money story. It's the entirety of your relationship with money, from the tiny details to the major events. It's as unique as your fingerprint and includes the whole shebang: the historical facts of your financial life; inherited patterns from your family of origin, lineage, and culture; how you take on or rebel against them and integrate your own beliefs and behaviors around money; and all the sensations and emotions that get stirred up in this terrain.

When I introduce people to the concept of a money story, I tell them to start by looking at their current relationship to money—then go back to the past. First, center yourself with a Body Check-In (see page 48). Then, look at your current relationship to money: how you feel about earning, spending, saving, and so on. Once you feel current and aware, you can begin the next phase of the journey, into the past. You can gently explore memories and lovingly turn over rocks. Clear the cobwebs and shine lights. Perhaps you can push even further into the past, examining what messages you've received about money from your religion, ancestral lineage, or culture.

Once you've assessed your current relationship with money and your past history with it, you can make the crucial leap of connecting the dots between the two, noticing if you're echoing spending patterns your mother taught you or rebelling against your grandparents' strict beliefs about savings by splurging any chance you get.

When we can clearly see the past and its influence on our present relationship with money, a whole new world of choice opens up for us. Perhaps you realize that the inheritance you received from your grandfather was created in ways you consider unethical—knowing this, you can choose how to be a conscious

steward of that wealth. Maybe your parents lost all of their money in a stock market crash, which instilled a deep distrust in you from an early age. Becoming aware of this inherited belief and understanding where it comes from and how it affects you sets the stage for liberated transformation: You can choose a new path for yourself and your future. Perhaps your immigrant parents each worked three jobs, teaching you that your worth equals how hard you work; becoming aware of this belief may free you to enjoy a deeper sense of your own value, just for being who you are, even if you only work one job and never miss your annual vacation.

If I have learned anything in my years as a financial therapist, it's that we have the power to rewrite our money stories. We can sift through our histories and distinguish the facts from our subjective experience, interpretation, and the meaning we've made of them. Through awareness, understanding, and un-shaming, we can heal our money stories, reframe old beliefs, shift patterns, and create utterly new, delightfully meaningful beliefs and practices around money.

We can't expect to exterminate our reactions or emotions around money. But we can tone down the emotions and soften the triggers. We can catch our reactions, honor them, work with them, be loving and gentle with them, learn from them, and be more fully present. In this way, your relationship with money will deepen and evolve. ●



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Let's Check In

My absolute favorite tool for conscious money work is getting in touch with the body. It helps us remain present, empowered, and conscious when things get tough (or when things are so fabulous, you can't believe it). It supports us along steep learning curves and through deep, inner exploration, two things money work demands of us frequently, and often simultaneously.

When confronted with an overdue tax bill, even the most mindful among us tend to get scattered, overwhelmed, or numb. That's why one of the first things we become aware of when we start practicing the body check-in is just how unaware we typically are. This is one reason the "just do it" approaches to money management often fail: How can you possibly stick to a budget or limit your credit card spending when you "check out" at the checkout counter?

Awareness comes first, then understanding, and finally, transformation.

Bari Tessler ▶
Financial Therapist



THE BODY CHECK-IN

It all starts with a pause. Stop whatever you're doing. Take a moment for yourself. Gather up all of your attention and turn your gaze within yourself.

Move at your own pace, as slowly and gently as you like. Give yourself permission to dip your toes into a feeling, see how you respond, and then wade in deeper only if it feels right.

A word of caution: If you encounter some particularly overwhelming emotions, old wounds, or trauma, please do not deny yourself the support you need and deserve.

Take a few deep, slow breaths. Close your eyes, if this feels good and helpful to you.

Adopt an attitude of openness and curiosity. Without judgment or any attempt to change anything, simply notice. Start with your physical sensations: **Become aware of how your body feels on your chair or how your feet rest on the earth.** Notice sensations of move-

ment and stillness: the breeze, the quiet stability of your pelvis. Notice how your breath feels, moving in and out: Is it deep, shallow, cool, tight?

Next, **gently observe the emotions moving through you.** Do you feel angry, anxious, annoyed, or awestruck? How do these feelings feel in your body? Is your jaw set in hot determination, or do you feel a flutter of excitement in your belly? Allow yourself to simply be aware of these emotions and how they feel in your body.

Also **notice any thoughts, images, memories, or self-talk.** Like clouds floating through the sky of your mind, simply notice them. No need to cling to them or push them away—simply acknowledge them. Are self-criticism, judgment, or other challenging sensations arising? Notice. Are elation, excitement, or other expansive sensations arising? Notice these, too.

As you scan your body, emotions, and mind, **you may like to ask yourself if**

there's anything you'd like to remove from or add to your situation. If you notice your jaw is tight, perhaps you'd like to wag it loose. If you notice your breath is shallow and quick, you might gently lengthen and deepen it.

Come home to your body, here. Follow your breath. This isn't about perfecting or even changing anything—it is simply about being aware.

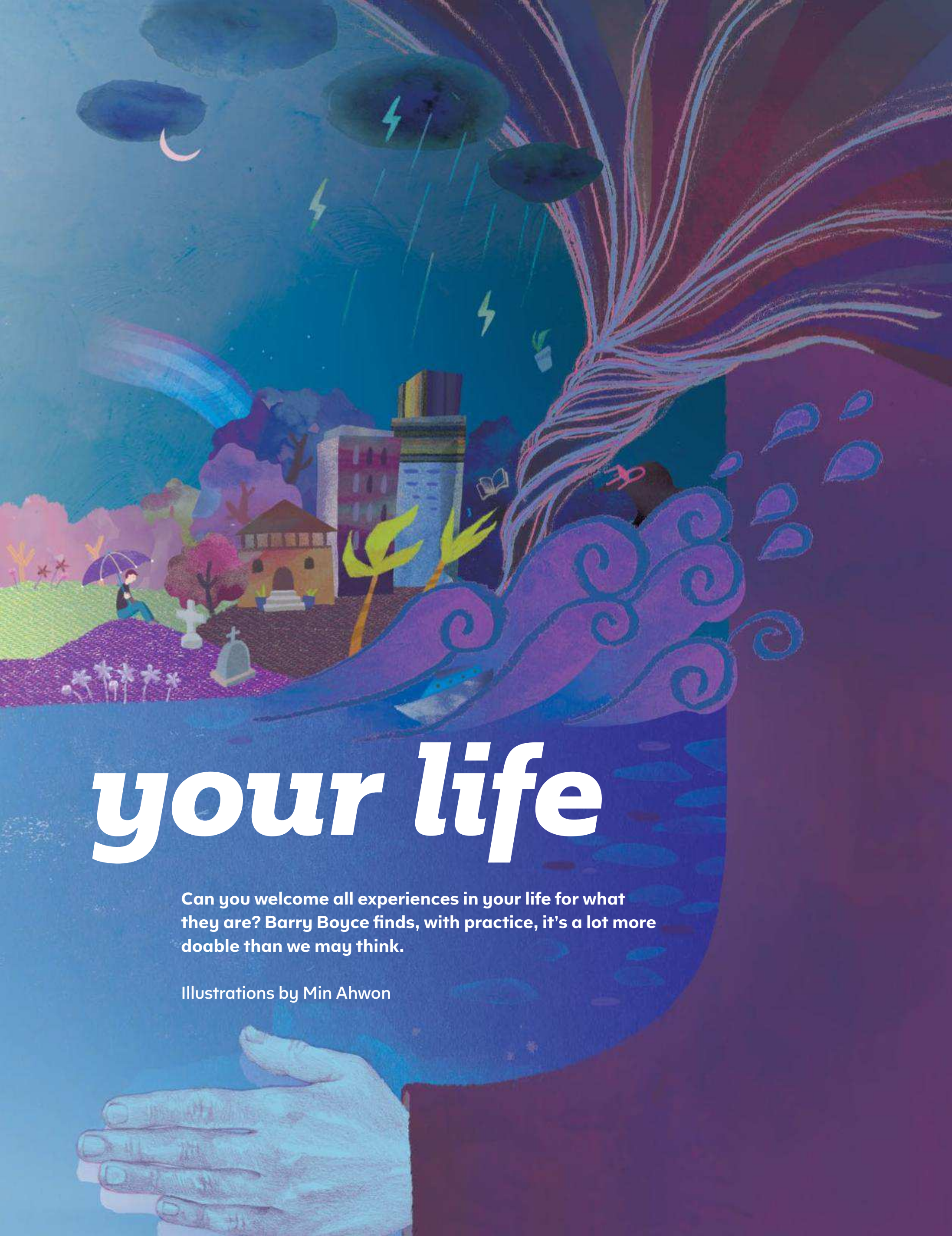
I recommend doing this before, during, and after every money decision or any of the money interactions you face throughout your day, from teensy to monumental: in the checkout line; before you go online to look at your balances and pay bills; after a stressful conversation with your credit card company; during a money conversation with your sweetheart or your business partner. Use it especially in tough times, when you're feeling triggered, stressed, or simply "off." ●

Stay tuned! Bari Tessler will be back with more money tips and insights in our December 2018 issue.

insight



embrace



your life

Can you welcome all experiences in your life for what they are? Barry Boyce finds, with practice, it's a lot more doable than we may think.

Illustrations by Min Ahwon

The word “savoring” crops up a lot in instructions for mindful eating, but why stop there? Inspired by the notion of taking more time to appreciate things, I recently decided to challenge myself to a week of savoring.

As I started out, I began to see that I was automatically leaving lots of things out—things that were, well, unsavory, less than pleasant—so the challenge had to undergo some immediate reengineering. It would have to become about savoring *everything*. Yikes.

That immediately led me to the understanding that if I was going to savor the unsavory I would have to be thankful somehow

for whatever came my way. I would have to make “thankfulness” the default mode. And not just a “Yeah, thanks,” kind of thankfulness, but a fully welcoming kind of thanking, what I came to call “savory thankfulness.” A mouthful, yes, but it captures the spirit of the thing.

If I were to do this, I would have to embrace the artificially sweetened (but still valuable) “attitude of gratitude.” It was a bit of a revelation. What I was prepared for was taking time to really enjoy things, in the present moment. What I *wasn’t* prepared for was how much it would challenge underlying attitudes and assumptions. When the week was over, I came to some conclusions about how savoring can reach into every area of life. Here’s a little of what I learned about savory thankfulness (some of which may just spill over into life during weeks when I’m not explicitly challenging myself).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barry Boyce is Editor-in-Chief of *Mindful* and loves things both sweet and savory.

1

WHEN THINGS ARE GOOD... *Savor the Joy*

This might seem like the most obvious. When things are good, it should be easy to savor them. In fact, that was not my experience. It took more effort to savor something I already appreciated than I would have imagined. Our office just moved from an old-fashioned downtown office building to a small, recycled building in a quasi-residential neighborhood, and now I can walk to work. I love it.

On my new walk, it was easy to savor the air and the light coming through the bare branches of trees

and to imagine the pleasure of slowly seeing the seasons change. A friend had been coaching me in Alexander Technique, which is used by a lot of performers and teaches you to appreciate the feeling of your own body parts working in alignment, of

inhabiting your body fully. It also taught me to walk with more spring in my step.

All right! I am savoring this. It’s delicious.

But then I started to notice just how focused I still was on *getting there*. The Carly Simon

WHAT I WASN'T PREPARED FOR WAS HOW SAVORING EVERYTHING WOULD CHALLENGE MY UNDERLYING ATTITUDES AND ASSUMPTIONS.



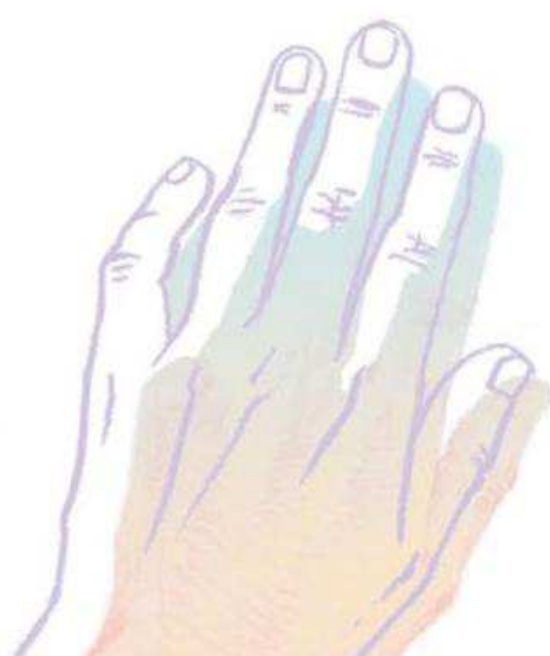
song “Anticipation” started going through my head. If I were driving, I would have pressed down on the accelerator, but when you’re walking and you push hard on the accelerator, you feel it. And *that’s* when the moment of joy came: in the sudden realization that the body is *always* in the present, no matter where my thoughts take me, and I can always return to that. That’s worth savoring.

2

WHEN IT'S EVERY KIND OF BAD...*Savor the Resilience*

When we were married my wife and I joined a “crystal club” at a department store. That’s the kind of thing newlyweds did 35 years ago. We both had always admired crystal wine glasses, so we scrimped and saved until we had a complete set. One Saturday recently we came home from food shopping to discover the shattered remains of our crystal glasses scattered on the floor. The shelf holding them had collapsed. Only a few remained, as mementos.

It hurt, but they’re only things. We can get real attached to things, but usually the pain passes after a little while and our resilience bounces us back. On the other hand, I find →



that some of the hassles we encounter getting through the day can actually have a greater impact on our psyche than we realize. We feel one of our most precious possessions is being stolen from us: our time. The other day, my bank made me come back three times to try to resolve a problem with my debit card, and the last time I spent over an hour there while a manager was on the phone with someone from the head office in a faraway city. After four hours invested, the end result was “Your account is too old to allow that function.” WTF! I hate this bank. I hate all banks.

This taps into some deep well of irritation with impersonal institutions. I can get right snappy, and a whole day can be ruined, and in the retelling I work myself up again. In the end, though, irritation with hassles is just that, irritation and impatience. In the grand scheme of things, the hassles amount to next to nothing. Bouncing back from hassles becomes easier when we snap out of the fixed notion that things are just supposed to go our way, and if we’re lucky enough, we can even start to let that chip on our shoulder fall off, so we’re not sniping at innocent tellers for just trying their best to do their job. (By the way, this doesn’t mean you stop advocating for bank reform, if that’s your cause. I’m not talking about being a jelly-hearted pushover.)

The big challenge comes with the really hard stuff to

bounce back from: ongoing pain and loss. The death of my father, my brother, my mother, the pains in various parts of my body that just won’t go away. These things do not respond to having a smiley face plastered on them. They want their due. They exact their toll. I find it hard to contemplate what to be thankful for on this score, what to savor. In a good moment, though, I can glimpse the fact that pain, whether physical or emotional, is something that lets us know we are alive. And as we try to manage it as best we can, we are humbled, we are vulnerable, we seek help. We find a way. We bounce back.

And, as we savor the equanimity, we learn to take the good and the bad—whichever is emerging right now.

3

WHEN IT'S BORING...*Savor the Freedom*

In my own hometown and when I’m traveling, I try as much as possible to use public transportation. It’s a good way to feel connected to other people, and when you’re above ground it’s a good way to see a place. But I will be the first to admit that throughout my life I have not been good at waiting. I can’t tell you how many times I have thought, “This bus is never



**WHEN I'M BORED,
WHEN NOTHING
IS OCCUPYING MY
MIND, I'M AFRAID
SOMETHING
IS GOING TO
BUBBLE UP
FROM INSIDE TO
UNSETTLE ME.**



coming; I should call someone to pick me up.” And then they came up with apps you can check and screens that tell you exactly when the next one will arrive. I am an avid user. I wish there was an app to tell me when I’m going to get done cleaning

the kitchen, because it’s starting to bore me.

I’ve come to realize, though, that when I’m waiting or doing something mundane like washing dishes, I am quite simply trying to *avoid* being bored, having nothing in particular to occupy my mind and afraid that something is going to bubble up from in there to unsettle me. It’s extremely typical in meditation: You end up waiting for the session to end and trying to calculate how soon that ending’s going to come, because you’re having trouble handling the boredom.

So, savor the boredom? Why?

Because, as we all keep discovering time and time again in meditation (eventually we will learn, I guess), we don’t really need to keep ourselves occupied with a lot of extra thoughts. It’s peaceful to take a break from that.

My savoring challenge helped me learn (once again) to savor the freedom from the need to entertain myself every minute of the day. I can just let my mind be.

4

WHEN IT'S CRAZY...*Savor the Laughter*

Sometimes things just get totally out of hand. One fall weekend some friends were visiting and the weather reports were saying that a hurricane was going to come through. I said to them, “Don’t worry, they always say that, but hurricanes don’t really come this far north with any real force.”

We woke up the next morning to find three-story-high trees uprooted, power lines down, water everywhere... And once I could make my way out of my neighborhood, after a day or two, I went to check on my office. The hurricane had ripped the roof off the building where my top-floor office was. After gazing through the former ceiling at the sky, I looked at a dripping wet computer and a collection of water-logged books, carpets, and furniture. All my work was now to be disrupted for months of recovery.

When things go haywire, the same tendency we have with hassles—to indulge in a huge dose of self-pity—can easily take over. But I’m starting to really appreciate that the antidote lies in the age-old advice my friends keep giving me: “Get over yourself.”

And then you can have a good laugh at the absurdity of trying so hard to keep it together in a world that is



beyond your control. Have a chuckle or a nice deep belly laugh about that. And, naturally...

Savor it.

5

WHEN YOU COMPLETE SOMETHING... *Savor the Reward*

My work, like so many people’s work, involves creating one thing after another after another. It’s unending. You’re in the middle of one thing and you can’t help but think about the next thing that’s looming (there’s that anticipation thing again).

It works this way with just about anything from building a bridge to cleaning house. It’s so easy when one thing is finished to immediately plow into the next thing, or to just collapse in exhaustion.

So, in my work, when a piece of writing is finished, when an issue is finished, when a book sees the light of day, I always make sure to have a moment to pause, to celebrate with teammates and friends and family, to raise a toast, to wear the laurel wreath, to take in the accolades—just for a little while—and then move on, not dwelling there.

A next thing will come along, but that pause to refresh ensures that your work doesn’t simply become one damn thing after another. →

6

WHEN YOU'RE WITH OTHERS...

Savor the Companionship

I have twin granddaughters who are eight years old and live far away, and one of our favorite topics of conversation—during the precious

times I have an opportunity to visit them—is their friends. They each can easily name three friends from their class, with relish. It's such a delight to watch how children make friends. They sort of sniff each other out and start tentatively to do a little something together, and then before too long they want to spend every day together. Few things are more poignant

IN THE RIGHT DOSES, BEING BY OURSELVES CAN BE DEEPLY RESTORATIVE. WE CAN DISCOVER CONTENTMENT DEEP WITHIN.

than that moment when one child asks another, "Do you want to be my friend?"

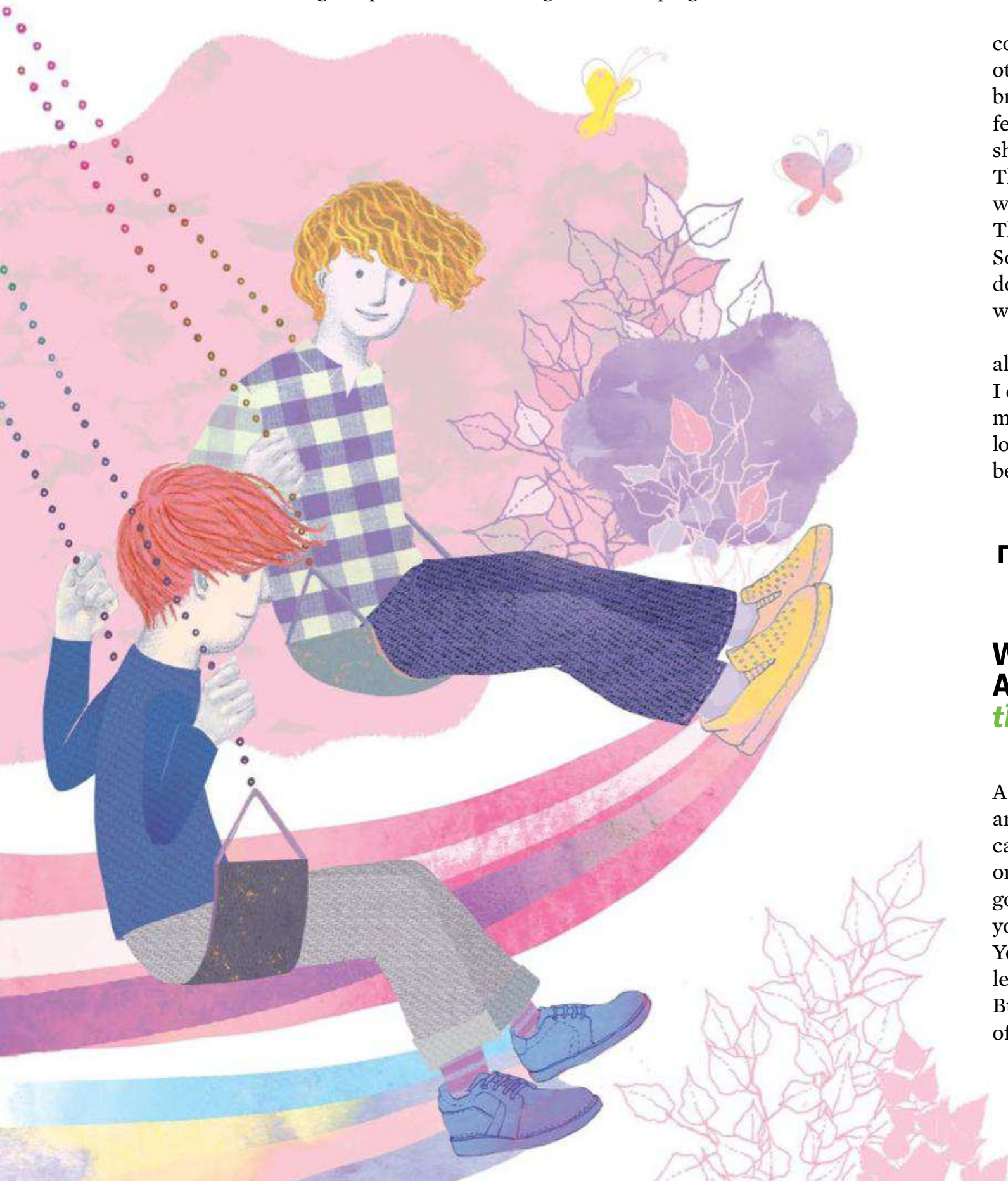
Neuroscientists in recent years have been talking about something called "brain coupling," whereby two people become so in sync while communicating with each other that they are like one brain. I'm sure we have all felt that with a friend. The sheer joy of a shared laugh. The moments of listening when you need to be heard. The shoulder to cry on. Someone to share ups and downs, without caring which it is.

I'm blessed with friends all over the world, people I can connect with within minutes no matter how long it's been. Other human beings... What's not to savor?

7

WHEN YOU'RE ALONE...*Savor the Space*

As wonderful as friends and companions and lovers can be, in some sense, no one can really know what goes on in your mind, who you are, and how you are. You can tell them. You can leave hints. They can intuit. But complete knowledge of our inner workings is



just something that is off limits to others. And that can make us very lonely sometimes. No one gets me. No one feels what I feel. No one is in here with me.

We all know how scary that can be, and when loneliness gives way to deeply lonely, and when that gives way to cut off and disengaged, we have real problems, which is why in the UK they recently created a minister for loneliness: to address the problem of people, often elderly people, becoming cut off and disengaged. We need community and companionship to live.

And yet, in the right doses, being by ourselves can be deeply restorative. It can help us discover a deep reservoir of contentment that does not need to be chased after. We can find a vast inner space where we are free from the need to talk, where poetry and creativity and compassion come from. It's a place where the emotion of awe resides.

That kind of space—a space of awe and wonder and simplicity—is well worth savoring. It may be the most savory treat of all. ●

One Thing at a Time

What often keeps us from savoring is speedy thinking. We've barely started drinking our tea or coffee before we're on to the next thing. Here are three simple ways to interrupt that habit and slow down.

When you drink, drink more slowly

A lot of beverages cross our lips during the day. Perhaps when we first take a sip, we notice how refreshing it is, but before long we're drinking on autopilot and our mind is elsewhere entirely. No need for a big radical shift; just tweak your attention slightly so you still experience heat or coolness, thickness or thinness, and the taste of the drink. You can still pay attention to what else is going on—even something weighing on your mind—but the very act of placing a little more attention on the liquid passing through your mouth can ground you and exhilarate you.

When you open a door, feel the handle

It's easy to barge into a room without taking much notice of the shifting landscape. Touching and grasping a doorknob can become a small stimulus that can signal us to slow down as we transition from one place to another. It can also help when we enter a room or step out

of a car to take a moment to have both feet on the ground and take a breath. The same goes for elevators. Stand to the side and let others out first. These little pauses may seem silly and contrived, but in reality, using the transitions of everyday life to return to the present is a key to savoring life.

When you get up in the morning, look out the window

Our speedy mind can jump into gear just as soon as we wake up. We're off to the races, figuring out and fretting about the day ahead. As we go through our morning ablutions, we may do so mindlessly—barely there as we plot and scheme about how to conquer the day. Thinking prospectively is not a bad thing. In fact, it's helpful. Taking a moment or two, though, to gaze into the distance, and maybe admire a tree or a bird or a cloud in the sky, may add a dash of perspective and help us build more slowly to the day ahead.





MIND THE APP

Could your smartphone addiction make you mindful?

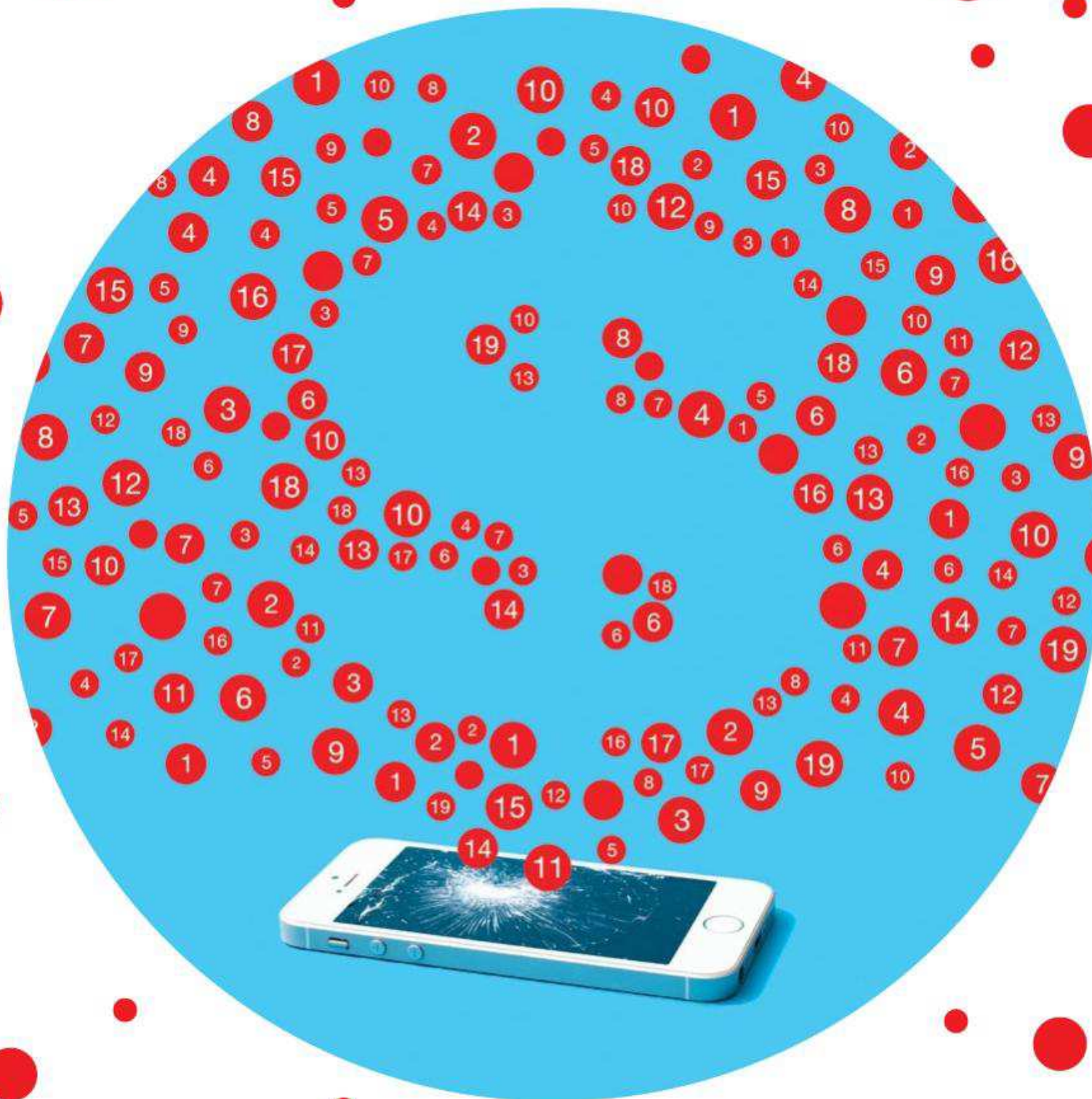
By Sam Littlefair

Illustrations by Kevin Van Aelst

In 2003 and 2004, 63 prisoners at a Seattle jail enrolled in a 10-day meditation course as part of a study by the University of Washington. For the duration of the course, the prisoners were not permitted outside contact and were only allowed to speak with instructors. Three months after each inmate was released from jail, the researchers followed up with them. Compared to their peers who hadn't meditated, the inmates who did meditate went on to consume significantly less alcohol, marijuana, and crack cocaine.

The findings of the study, published in 2006 by researcher Sarah Bowen—along with work conducted by her mentor G. Alan Marlatt—paved the way for the development of Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention and is widely cited in papers on meditation and addiction. In 2012, Headspace, which is one of the most popular mindfulness apps on the market, also took note of Bowen's research. On its website, the company touted science-backed benefits of meditation as reasons to use the app. Headspace also mentioned that meditation can reverse the progress of HIV, strengthen the immune system, and substitute for antidepressants. In a section on the science of meditation and addiction, the company wrote that meditation “has even reduced marijuana and crack consumption in trained prison inmates! So if you ever find yourself indulging a little more than you like, give mindfulness a whirl...and start getting some Headspace today.”

The last five words linked to a sales page for the app. Headspace later tweeted out the page with a claim that the app could help you give up drinking or smoking. →



To date, there is no scientific evidence to suggest Headspace can alleviate illness, depression, or cravings—let alone crack consumption. Sarah Bowen says that Headspace’s use of her research might comprise “an overinterpretation or misrepresentation,” because it suggests that using Headspace could have the same benefits as taking a 10-day intensive meditation course. “We don’t have data on that,” says Bowen.

Headspace knows this and has distanced itself from past claims that make it sound like a panacea. In 2014, Headspace removed the “Meditation for Addiction” section from its website. A Headspace representative said those sections were written by “early employees, who are no longer with the company” and that the statements “don’t rise to the level of scientific rigor

**Smartphone apps
become popular and
profitable by getting
users lightly addicted
to repetitive use.**

that we demand today.” Meanwhile, in the two years that the section was live, Headspace’s claims about addiction, depression, and health made their way across the internet, getting cited in blogs and tweets, spreading the idea that app-based mindfulness is a proven health treatment.

While many mindfulness apps do not use scientific claims to promote themselves or purport to teach users how to practice mindfulness, in the last decade, a number of apps have appeared on the market that do. Researchers say there is a serious dearth of evidence to back up mindfulness apps, even though they are increasingly perceived as proven treatments for mental health. So far, the preliminary research has suggested that some of the apps might show promise for treating stress, depression, anxiety, and craving. But it’s too soon to know whether or not the most popular apps on the market can achieve any of those aims. There isn’t even any research on whether these apps actually teach mindfulness.

WHAT'S IN AN APP?

The excitement and hype around mindfulness apps is having a big impact on the culture of mindfulness. For example, a 2017 study found that 1 in 20 mental healthcare providers in the UK’s National Health Service recommend Headspace for stress, anxiety, or depression—meaning they’re recommending an unproven treatment to patients and expecting it to alleviate real suffering.

In June, Headspace announced a new subsidiary, Headspace Health, to develop medical apps. The company said it would seek FDA approval—which requires rigorous scientific testing. Headspace Health will conduct randomized controlled trials on its new products in 2018 and hopes to have doctors writing prescriptions by 2020. “Health professionals have long

recommended Headspace as an effective tool in treating a wide variety of health problems,” wrote Headspace CEO Rich Pierson in the announcement. “Now we’re leading the effort to validate and deliver prescription meditation solutions to doctors and their patients for physical conditions.”

Richard Davidson, one of the world’s leading researchers on neuroscience and mindfulness, is working on a well-being app based on careful science, but he’s skeptical of what’s currently out there. “I don’t know of any scientific evidence to show that any mindfulness app ‘works,’” he says. By his reckoning, the research produced so far on mindfulness apps has been insufficiently rigorous to draw any conclusions on their efficacy.

So far, a handful of studies have been published on the efficacy of mindfulness apps, thanks in part to Headspace. In hopes of getting its app scientifically validated, the organization has partnered on more than 60 studies with 35 academic institutions. In the long term, scientists at Headspace say, they genuinely want to advance our understanding of mindfulness.

In the meantime, in lieu of research proving that apps work, marketers tend to draw a false equivalence to in-person meditation programs, drawing on their credibility to suggest—or outright claim—that meditation apps offer the same benefits as clinically validated mindfulness therapy. Headspace, for one, says that “online mindfulness training does produce results similar to in-person training.”

In fact, there is no research indicating that mindfulness apps have the same effect as in-person training. To back up the claim that they do, Headspace cites a research paper by Marion Sommers-Spijkerman that analyzed the effectiveness of 15 different web-based mindfulness programs. But Sommers-Spijkerman says that her study, which focused on desktop-based programs, offered no conclusions about phone-based mindfulness apps and didn’t investigate Headspace. “We cannot draw any conclusions regarding the specific

effects of app-based meditation or mindfulness training,” says Sommers-Spijkerman.

Davidson says when we talk about the efficacy of meditation apps, research on in-person mindfulness training is irrelevant. “There could be a plethora of research showing the impact of meditation, but that’s not necessarily relevant to understanding how—and *if*—an *app* may be working,” says Davidson. “It’s delivered in a completely different way, in a different context. It may procure the same effects, but we just don’t know.” On top of that, the Sommers-Spijkerman paper actually found that desktop-based programs were slightly *less* effective than in-person training at treating anxiety and depression.

Mindfulness apps have a big challenge. Mindfulness, at its core, is a tool for disrupting habits—especially unhelpful habits. If you get distracted easily, mindfulness helps curb the habit of distraction. If anxiety keeps you up at night, mindfulness might be able to mitigate the habit of anxiety. This is why researchers expected a 10-day meditation course might help drug users break their substance addictions. Addiction is another strong habit. But, in contrast, apps become popular and profitable by getting users lightly addicted to repetitive use. Whether it’s refreshing your Instagram feed, checking a notification, or sending an email, apps—and smartphones themselves—are designed to reward us with dopamine in exchange for usage, creating a habitual, if not addictive, pattern of craving and satisfaction. So, can an app really treat addiction, or is it inherently part of the problem? As of now, we don’t know the answer to that question.

The fact is, we know very little about meditation apps—good or bad. Pending further research, we don’t know what effect mindfulness apps might have on your brain. In the meantime, they are precipitating a much grander shift—a change in how mindfulness is understood and practiced around the world. →



DESIGNING A CULTURE

Meditation apps are insanely popular. Last year, Apple named Calm, a meditation app, its app of the year. At the same time, it declared that meditation apps were one of the top trends of 2017. Between 2012 and 2018, searches for “meditation app” increased tenfold. In 2012, they surpassed searches for “meditation timer.” In 2014, they surpassed searches for “meditation book.” And next year, they will likely surpass searches for “meditation center.” We seem to like learning to meditate with apps—maybe more than with humans. And we’re willing to pay for it.

In 2017, mindfulness apps made an estimated \$100 million, with most of

“For the vast majority of people, meditation apps are meditation. Full stop.”

ROHAN GUNATILLAKE

the cash going to the top two players, Calm and Headspace. In the first three months of 2018, earnings were up 150% over the same period of the previous year.

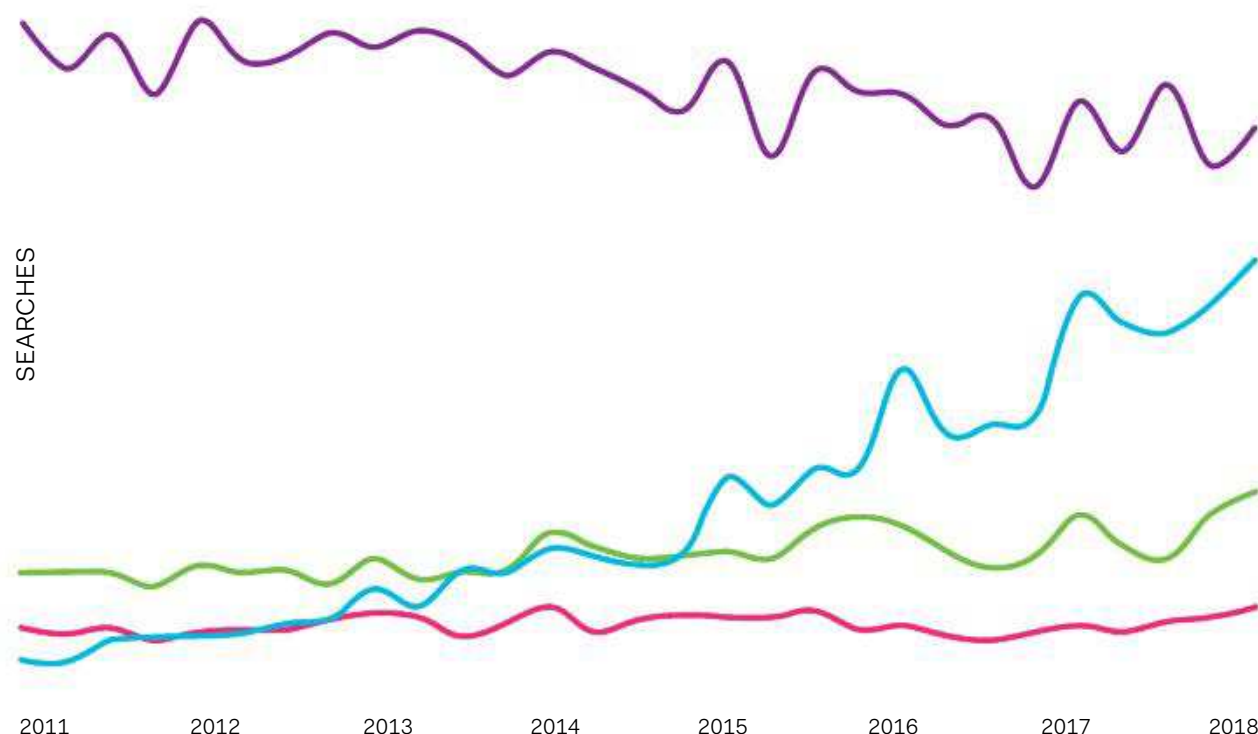
While Headspace tends to market meditation as a science-based tool for performance enhancement (“I meditate to crush it” reads one Headspace ad), Calm markets itself more as an aid for sleep and relaxation, incorporating soothing music and images and sounds of nature. Mindfulness teachers often teach mindfulness as a way to understand the mind,

Searching For Mindfulness

Apps are catching up to—and even outstripping—other sources for mindfulness, according to internet search data.

Google Search Terms

- Meditation center
- Meditation app
- Meditation book
- Meditation timer



cope with stress, let go of fixations, and experience the present moment. Apps more often promote the idea that meditation is simply about either productivity or relaxation.

“The whole globalized mindfulness culture has changed in the last five years,” says Rohan Gunatillake, creator of the mindfulness app Buddhify. “For the vast majority of people, meditation apps *are* meditation. Full stop.”

Along with creating Buddhify, Gunatillake founded a design studio, Mindfulness Everywhere, which seeks to integrate mindfulness into product design. As a leader in the field of mindfulness, he has sounded the alarm that the popularization of mindfulness apps may be having unintended consequences. Decisions at big companies like Calm and Headspace don’t just affect a product—they fundamentally affect our culture’s understanding of mindfulness.

“When we designed our apps, we were just designing apps,” says Gunatillake. “We didn’t realize we were designing a culture. When millions and millions of people have their first experience of meditation with an app,

the nature of the app platform influences how those people understand meditation. The so-called mindfulness industry doesn’t recognize that.”

To illustrate his point, Gunatillake points out how Silicon Valley has—intentionally or otherwise—changed the nature of international diplomacy. In 2018, we can’t talk about politics without talking about Twitter, and it’s become evident that Facebook has the power to tip elections.

Gunatillake points to four main ways he thinks apps are changing how people understand mindfulness. First, by using a subscription model (charging almost \$100/year in some cases), apps create a culture that relies on dependency and makes people think that mindfulness is a luxury good. Second, the medium of a smartphone encourages the idea that mindfulness is something you do on your own. Third, guided meditations make users think that mindfulness meditation is a passive, guided activity—not necessarily a tool for engaging in everyday experience. And fourth, the lack of diversity within apps might encourage the

idea that there are only a few kinds of meditation, rather than showing users that there are many varieties and formats of meditation and mindfulness practice.

Basically, for millions of meditators today, mindfulness means you pay \$10 per month for a mellifluous voice to guide you through a breathing technique on your smartphone. That’s a big shift from what the world thought mindfulness was five years ago.

Zindel Segal is one of the creators of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and a corresponding digital program still in development. When designing the program, Segal’s team decided to go with a desktop version to mitigate problems raised by technology, which, he believes, is in some ways inherently obstructive to quality mindfulness training.

“We’re told that people want everything on their phones and tablets, and they only have five or ten minutes to digest content,” says Segal. “Here you’ve got the crux of one of the issues of mindfulness and technology: The platforms available to deliver this material are shaped by the attention →

spans of people engaging with almost constant social media apps.”

When we practice mindfulness, we interrupt our habits of distraction by nonjudgmentally bringing our awareness back to the object of meditation. But smartphones aren’t designed to encourage us to hone our awareness—they’re designed to co-opt it.

“That might be fine if you’re playing a game,” says Segal, “but I believe there are some elements of mindfulness practice that require a more sustained, immersive experience.” Segal, a widely respected specialist in mood disorders, has also gone on record that he believes Headspace’s series of meditations for depression is not a responsible application for people with depression, who will not likely respond to the standard guided meditations “in the same way as people who haven’t had a history of rumination and critical self-judgment.”

Gunatillake warns that “manipu-

human instructor, a smartphone can’t guide you through a panic attack.

For a proponent of mindfulness, this might sound like the worst-case scenario: What if apps are creating a culture of mindfulness based on a training that not only doesn’t work, but actually makes us even more distressed and distracted?

THE POSSIBILITY OF PLACEBO

Some research has suggested that meditation app users may benefit from a placebo effect. In medicine, the most rigorous research trials employ placebo groups to control for the expectations of treatment. If you *think* mindfulness will make

comfortable sitting position,” instructs the narrator. “Now simply think about whatever comes into your mind. Let your mind wander freely without trying to focus on anything in particular.”

Noone and his colleagues scored the participants on critical thinking, well-being, and positivity. After 30 sessions, there was no difference between participants in the sham meditation and participants doing the meditation practice in the app, suggesting that the mindfulness instructions in the app were having no effect on these metrics.

Noone points to another, similar study, in which a group of participants was given access to written materials on mindfulness, with some participants also receiving guided meditations and a control group receiving no resources. While the participants with mindfulness resources showed benefits over the control group, the researchers found no difference with the group that also got the guided

Research on mindfulness struggles to simulate placebo conditions; after all, how do you give someone a fake mindfulness instruction?

lating attention is the default way of designing a digital product nowadays. It’s no coincidence you’ll see techniques and tricks used to manipulate attention in the context of mindfulness. People use the tools of the industry, not realizing they might be sabotaging what their product is trying to do.” In one extreme example, a Reddit user reported that his Apple Watch’s built-in mindfulness app, which sends regular reminders to take mindful breaks, was prompting him to stop and meditate every day while he drove to and from work. A writer at *The Guardian* reported that mindfulness apps gave her extreme anxiety. Unfortunately, unlike a

you stress less, that alone might be enough to *actually* make you stress less. Research on mindfulness in general—not just apps—struggles to simulate placebo conditions; after all, how do you give someone fake mindfulness instruction?

Chris Noone, a researcher at the National University of Ireland Galway, figured out a way. With help from Headspace, Noone created a “sham meditation,” delivered inside the app.

With the sham meditation, Noone recreated all of the conditions of app-based mindfulness training—a soothing narrator, a sleek interface, powerful brand messaging—minus the actual mindfulness. “Settle into a

meditations, suggesting the guided meditations had no unique effect.

The only thing science knows about mindfulness apps, says Noone, is that we don’t know their effect. He speculates: “I honestly think it’s very likely that there is no effect.”

Hypothetically, if there’s no effect, how would popular mindfulness apps in the App Store wind up with hundreds of thousands of reviews and a five-star rating? Psychiatrist John Torous proposed a hypothesis in a commentary in the medical journal *The Lancet*, which he called “The Digital Placebo Effect.”

“Many people have a high level of affinity for their digital devices,”

4 Ways Apps Are Changing Mindfulness

App developer Rohan Gunatillake on how mindfulness apps are changing the culture and popular understanding of mindfulness.

- 1 Most apps use a **subscription model**. “We’ve created a meditation culture where people perceive that mindfulness costs \$10 a month to do,” says Gunatillake. Subscription models rely on user dependence—reinforcing, rather than breaking, habits.
- 2 Apps encourage the idea that meditation is a **solo practice**, whereas in the past it was often learned in group settings.
- 3 It’s always guided—something you do **alone or with headphones in**. With prerecorded meditations, users can’t ask questions or get personalized instruction. This might be fine most of the time, but in some cases a meditation instructor can help to make sure you’re doing it safely and correctly. One journalist, for example, reported having anxiety attacks while using a meditation app. In moments like that, it can be helpful to have a human to talk to.
- 4 Meditation apps sometimes imply that their app’s brand of meditation is the **only style of meditation**. “If you try out an app and you don’t necessarily connect with the style of teaching, that doesn’t mean you don’t like meditation,” says Gunatillake.

writes Torous. “It is easy to envision how suited smartphones are to mediate the placebo effect when we take into account our high levels of expectation, trust, and personalization of these devices.”

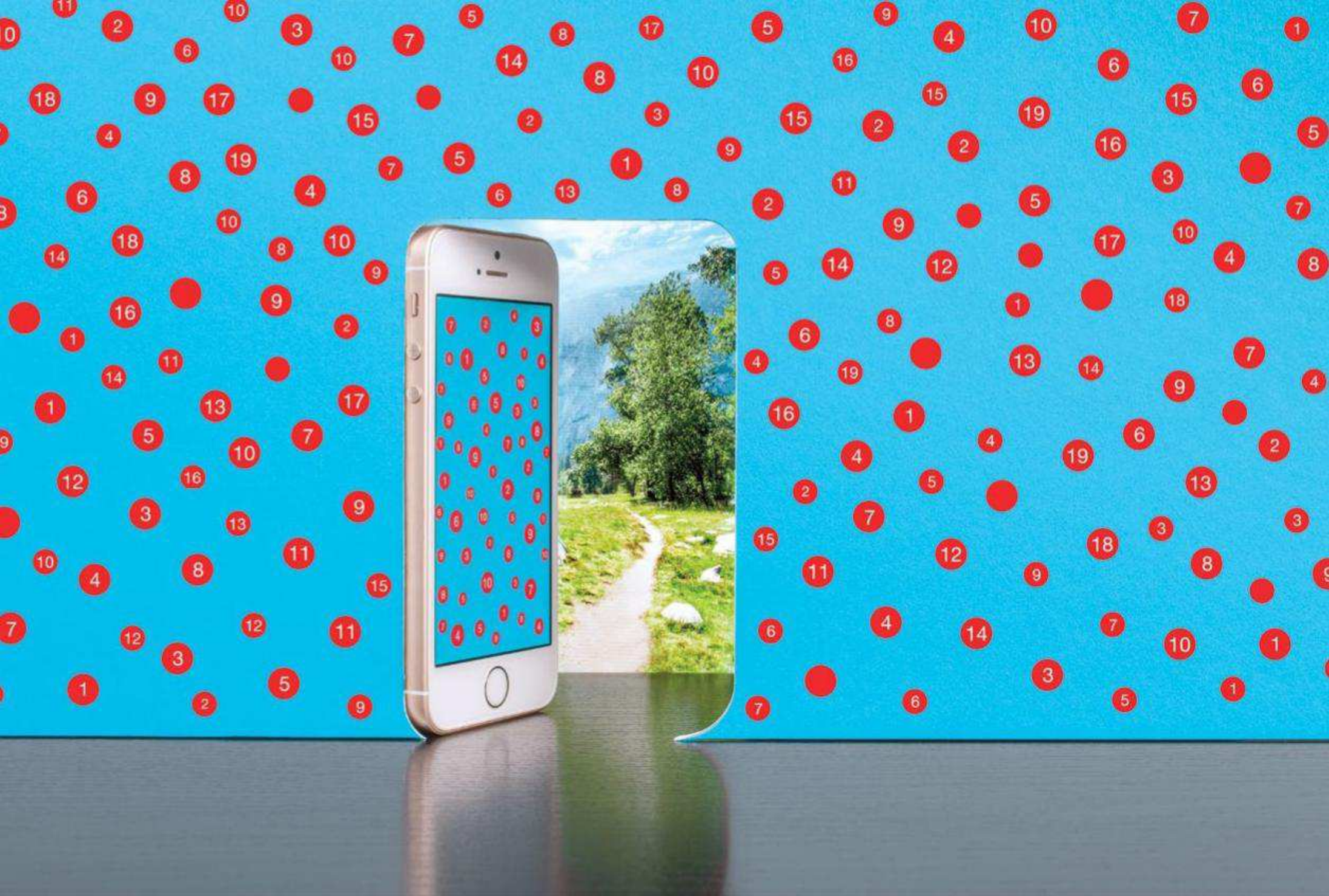
We are habituated to taking medicine, so when we take a placebo pill, it eases our back pain. We’re habituated to social media, so when we refresh our feeds, we get pleasure. Maybe we’re habituated to our apps, so when we do a smartphone meditation we feel like it’s relaxing.

A MATTER OF PRIORITY

While at present there is a dearth of scientific evidence validating apps like Headspace and Calm, there is promising research to suggest that, in theory, digital mindfulness training could be effective. Researchers say that online trainings are advantageous because they can be affordable, accessible, flexible, anonymous, empowering, and enjoyable.

Mindfulness experts Jud Brewer and Zindel Segal each developed mindfulness therapies (mindfulness training for addiction and MBCT, respectively) and then realized that it would take years to train a cohort of clinicians to develop training programs for them. They both saw apps as a more efficient and precise way to deliver their specialized treatments. So, they developed apps to deliver the treatments and then tested them scientifically.

Brewer’s company, Claritas Mindsciences, has launched three apps publicly and then started clinical trials on the apps: Craving to Quit, Eat Right Now, and Unwinding Anxiety. These apps take direct advantage of the habit of smartphone use in order to tackle other specific habits, namely smoking, snacking, and anxiety. His work is based on the theory of operant conditioning, which posits that habits and behaviors are reinforced by positive →



reinforcement or negative punishments—a process of learning that goes all the way back to sea slugs. We notice something that triggers our response, we act in a certain way, and we get rewarded for acting in that way. Thus we learn to associate that reward with the initial trigger. That’s how habits—like smartphone addiction—form.

In the context of habit, a smartphone can be more effective than a therapist because it can deliver therapy specifically in a moment of craving (right when you want a cigarette or another slice of cake) rather than when you’re sitting in a therapist’s office. “People don’t binge eat in my office,” says Brewer. “So, I can take my office and deliver it to them in context so they’re more likely to actually learn what they need to change their behavior.”

Segal’s app, Mindful Mood Balance, has been under testing and development for 10 years. Results from trials

of the app indicate that it is effective in preventing depression. The trials wrap up toward the end of 2018, but until they get the results from that study, Segal’s team has no plans to release the app to the public.

Perhaps the biggest distinction between apps like Brewer’s and Segal’s and popular marketplace apps is that they’re developed in the name of science, not profits. “If you look at the apps in the App Store, no one has been working on them for 10 years before they launched to market,” says Segal. “But we have different drivers. We don’t have venture capitalists saying, ‘You need to go to market, get users, double your users every month, come up with a different angle, add elements.’ I think that’s part of what was driving Headspace.”

The different drivers mean that specialized apps can spend years in development, focus on depth rather than mass marketing, and aim to help

users graduate from the app instead of encouraging dependency. For Brewer, that’s the goal. “They learn how their mind works, and then they don’t need us anymore. I’m not a business guy, so it’s probably not a great business model, but I don’t care. I’m a scientist.”

THE FUTURE

So far, there hasn’t been a lot of collaboration between scientists and businesspeople in the world of mindfulness apps. As that changes, it could produce a bounty of data. Where Brewer’s and Segal’s studies have dozens or hundreds of participants, studies conducted by Headspace could be exponentially larger.

“That’s why I took this job,” says Megan Jones Bell, who started as the

Apps could encourage users to contemplate how they'll incorporate mindfulness into their life outside of the app.

chief science officer at Headspace in 2017. “I’m interested in trying to advance the science of meditation. The research you are going to see come out of Headspace is going to have sample sizes upwards of several thousand people.”

Even though research means that Headspace opens itself up to negative findings, like in Chris Noone’s sham meditation study, Bell says the company is prepared for that. “We’re trying to advance the understanding of how Headspace can impact people,” says Bell. “It’s not going to be a panacea. We know that it’s helpful for a lot of different things. But part of doing the science and being transparent is publishing those negative results.”

Research findings can be used to advance society’s understanding of the mind and improve the apps themselves. Researchers have already started identifying areas for improvement in mainstream mindfulness apps. In one study, users reported features like notifications to be demotivating.

Gunatillake says it’s important for mindfulness experts and businesspeople to work more closely together. “Very few products are asking teachers to help create the product,” says Gunatillake. “That’s a big opportunity. If the meditation teachers were actively involved in the design decisions, they’d ask questions like ‘How does this notification system make you feel?’”

“As a mindfulness app developer, we have to ask: *How is everything we do*

in service of people’s well-being?” says Gunatillake. “When you ask that question, you have to include: *How does our notification system support well-being? How about our customer service, or our website, or our marketing strategy, or our email campaigns?* All of that is as much a part of the product as guided audio or a meditation timer or some teaching videos. There’s an opportunity to recognize that meditation is more than just content.”

Of the many ways to make mindfulness apps more inherently mindful, Gunatillake is most excited about improvements to social networking settings. Earlier this year, Buddhify launched what Gunatillake informally calls “karaoke meditation,” where people meditate in a room together while one of them reads a script off their phone. “We provide the expert content, and they provide the voice. We want to really create experiences for people face-to-face.”

Apps could also encourage users to contemplate how they’ll incorporate mindfulness into their life outside of the app. For instance, experts suggest that you set an intention up front. “Why are you interested in meditation in the first place?” asks Brewer. “Know what progress is and look for progress. Start with your pain points and see if your suffering is relieved. If so, great. If not, you might try something else.”

Meditation teachers also recommend trying different styles, including in-person meditation, and finding opportunities to ask questions. As

Richard Davidson explains, “Every shred of scientific research we have certainly indicates that one size will not fit all.”

Different programs and apps will show you how to use mindfulness in different ways. That variety can be good for maintaining a playful attitude about meditation and learning to integrate it into your life in different ways. Gunatillake says developers could include lessons on why mindfulness works and how to employ it in everyday life. If you understand how it works, “you can start applying it to everything,” says Gunatillake. “Every time you notice yourself being distracted by advertisements on the subway, you’re reminded to come back. These are things that an app can support you to do.”

The real value of apps might be in helping users see mindfulness as part of their lives. But when a meditation app becomes just another habit, like checking email, it risks becoming less mindfulness training and more so just another piece of technology taking up headspace. Learning to be mindful in the world is a habit worth cultivating—whether or not apps are the way to get there.

After all, Gunatillake says, “There’s no such thing as digital mindfulness. There’s just mindfulness.” ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sam Littlefair writes for *Mindful* about social trends and is the editor of LionsRoar.com.

An illustration of a woman with voluminous, wavy blue hair. Her hair is filled with various small, detailed scenes: a person's legs in red pants, a white bird, a small house with a chimney, a red apple, a car, a person's head, a black cat, a person's face, a bird, a flower, and a person's head. The woman has a yellow face, blue eyes, and pink lips. She is wearing a maroon shirt. Her right hand is raised, with fingers spread, near her face. The background is dark blue with small yellow stars.

psychology

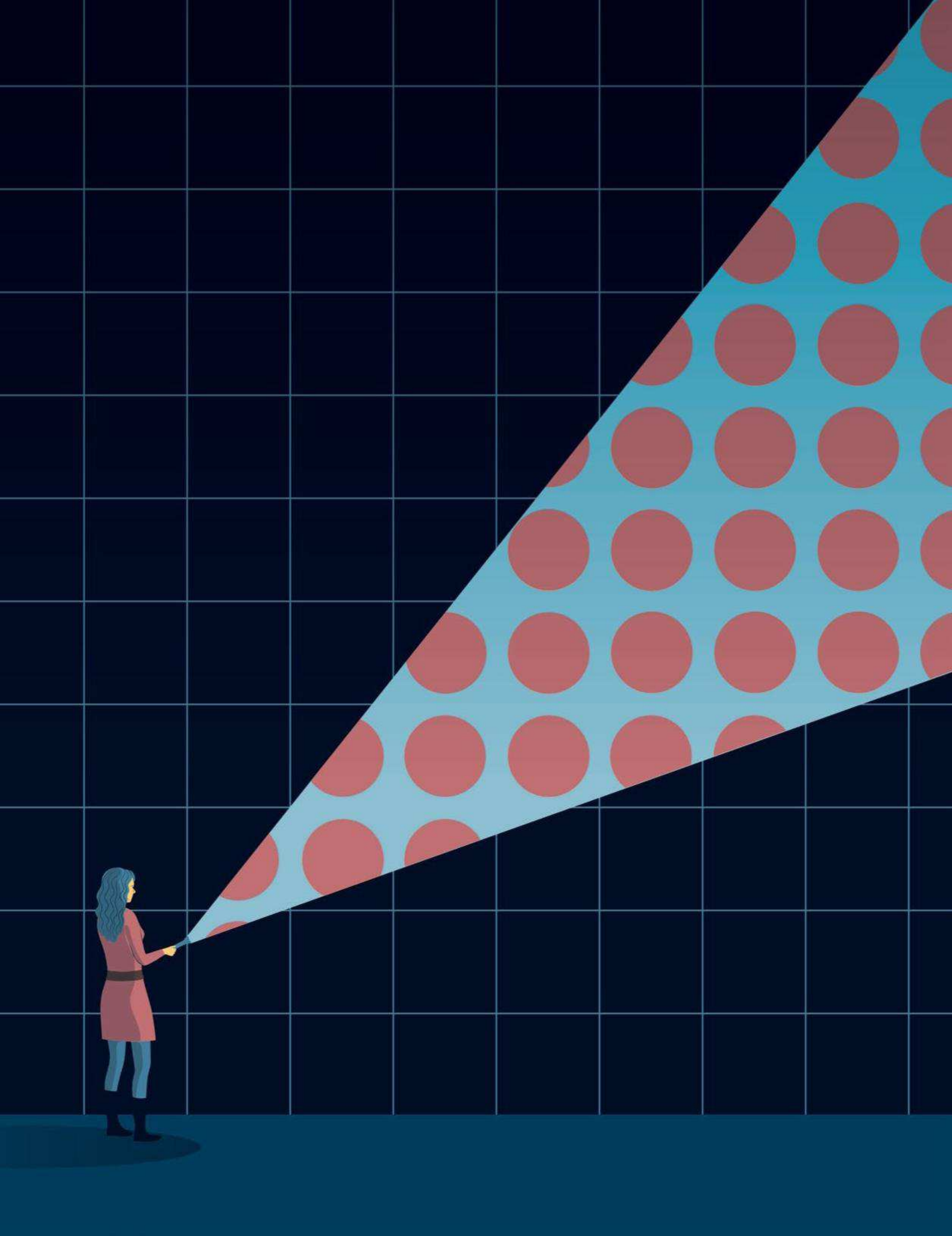
Check Your Blind Spot



We all have hidden emotions and beliefs that drive our unconscious impulses. By harnessing our untapped insight, writes Kelly Boys, we can discern those habits that may be keeping us stuck.

by Kelly Boys

Illustrations by Federica Bordoni



I was sitting in a session with a therapist

named Paul on a well-used couch in the trendy Mission District of San Francisco, staring at the antique toy fire trucks placed along his window-sill and balancing a glass of water in my lap. A friend had suggested that...just maybe...therapy would be a helpful thing for me to do. I was out of work and ending a relationship, and although I trusted that things were going to turn out okay, I was a bit at sea.

Paul listened to a synopsis of my entire life, including a short foray into my Ohio childhood, my marriage at 18 and divorce at 21, and a quick trip through 20 years in Germany, Japan, Canada, and England culminating in the Sausalito, California, café where I thought I was

“Do you want to look at your blind spot, or do you want to let these patterns repeat?”
That was it—that was the question that changed everything for me.

going out for a coffee and ended up getting fired. Then Paul studied me through his tortoise shell-framed glasses and asked, “Do you want to look at your blind spot, or do you want to let these patterns repeat?”

Boom!

That was it—that was the question that changed everything for me. I spoke from the depths of my being, and with trepidation and an unsuppressed laugh, when I replied, “Yes. Hell, yes.” In that moment, I was ready to hear my therapist’s words.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kelly Boys is a trainer with the United Nations Foundation, where she helped create a mindfulness and well-being program for UN aid workers. She is also host of “Mindfulness Monthly” on Soundstrue.com.

When you’ve been on the receiving end of random, difficult, or sometimes horrible life events, you develop a bullshit detector for people who blame the victim. This was not that. This was an honest and genuine question pointing out my own participation in my life patterns. I was undefended and ready to learn something new, ready to grow. I trusted that shining a light on my blind spots would be good and productive, although probably painful.

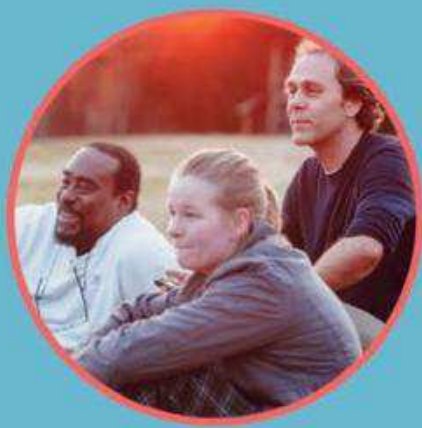
Up until that moment I had taken a random and fateful approach to the happenings and events in my life—shit happens, good stuff happens, and it’s how you navigate it all that matters. I had never thought of my hidden traits in this way before: so pointedly, urgently, and globally. I’d done plenty of work on my emotional life, like setting free self-limiting beliefs and getting in touch with self-compassion and self-trust through mindfulness meditation, but none of this had revealed Paul’s insight that something I wasn’t seeing at all—a blind spot—was driving my behavior. He helped me recognize that what I was missing was just past the edge of my own perceptual horizon. Realizing that this stuff was obvious to someone I’d just met, stuff that had been entirely out of view to me, woke me up.

What had I been missing?

What I discovered, with Paul’s gentle nudging, was that my biggest blind spot had to do with accommodating other people’s blind spots. I had “protected” certain important people in my life from the impact of their own unconscious behavior—that is, until I finally couldn’t take it anymore and blurted out their blind spots. That’s where the trouble happened; my unexpected and uncharacteristic speaking of the truth rarely went over well. In fact, it’s how I ended up in that coffee shop in Sausalito, shocked when I was let go from my job.

Survival of the biased

I know I’m not alone. Why is it that so many of us often suffer for no clear reason? What are the patterns (especially those we can’t perceive) that interrupt our healthy and sane functioning? Why are we all trying so darn hard to defend →



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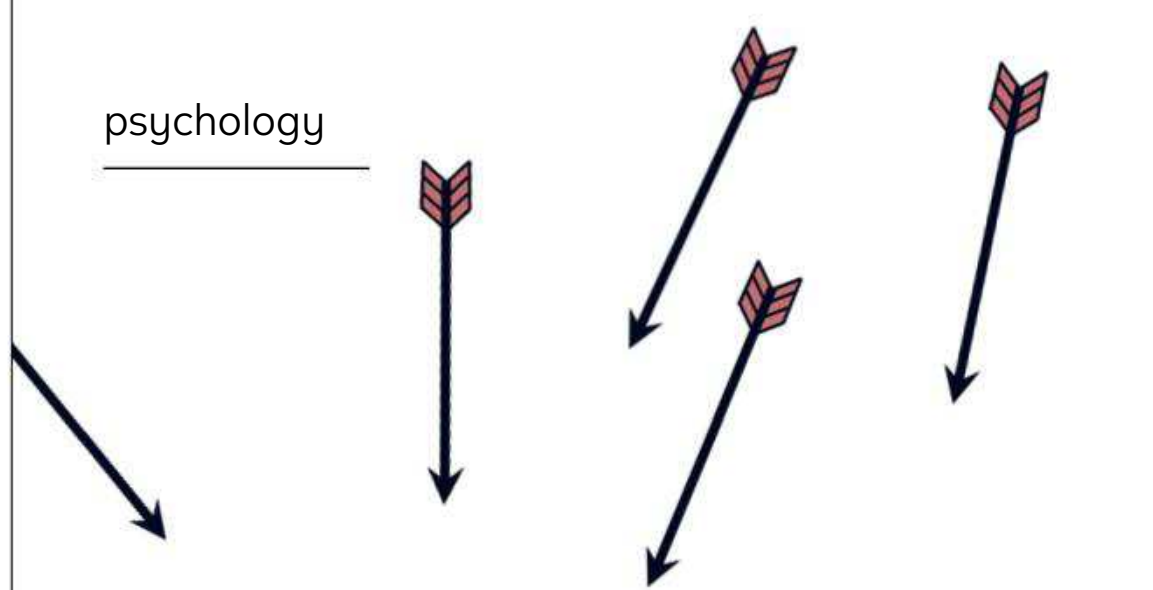
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psychology



To sustain our sense of self, get the love we want, and succeed in our vocations, we engineer all kinds of crafty ways to keep our self-image not only intact, but impervious to attack.



our ideas, self-images, and opinions even when doing so hurts us and the people around us? What is at stake here?

It turns out that *everything* is at stake. We are biologically wired for survival, and as humans we have developed a belief that our survival is contingent upon this thing called “me” at the center of our world. To sustain our sense of self, get the love we want, and succeed in our vocations, we engineer all kinds of crafty ways to keep our self-image not only intact, but impervious to attack. There’s nothing wrong with that; it’s natural...except that it’s also not natural because we’re defending an idea instead of something real. To make matters even more interesting, we develop lifelong beliefs that keep us from seeing any of this, including those beliefs. If what we want is to be accepted and loved, and to flourish, this doesn’t work.

I spent a few years teaching a meditation class at San Quentin State Prison. My favorite thing about going there was the kinship I shared with the people inside. As I walked across the prison yard among inmates jogging the track or crouched along the concrete perimeter in the California sun, I felt a sense of heightened alertness, but I was not scared to be there. That’s because I have been on the receiving end of violence and have firsthand experience with its dimensions and contours, which we all carry in some form inside ourselves, whether it’s acted upon or not. And I know I can show up with a fierce heart and compassionate boundaries. Some of these prisoners were the hyperbolic and unfortunate perpetrators of that shadow of hatred and anger, and some were the reflection of a racially divided, punitive system serving the privileged and punishing the innocent.

Most of the folks I worked with—lifers with the possibility of parole—were incarcerated for acting out of a blind spot. Often, the consequences were deadly. Most of the inmates I spoke with shared that the act that brought them to prison happened in mere seconds, with almost no forethought. When I asked a large circle of men to add up the length of their sentences, it totaled hundreds of years. The crimes that got them there? *The total was minutes.*

Blind spots, as I define them, are unconscious impulses, fueled by emotions and beliefs, that create habit-building patterns in relationship to ourselves and others. For instance, an inmate who can’t quite understand how his self-victimizing behavior keeps landing him behind bars and →

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Illuminating Biases

Gaining awareness of our patterned shortcuts and biases helps us illuminate the places where we go blind. Let's work with that now.

Recall a decision you are making or have just made, or an opinion you hold, and ask yourself:

1

As I reflect upon this decision or opinion, am I accounting for what I don't know?

2

Is there a story I'm trying to create to make this decision or belief feel right and true?

3

If I move beyond my surface ideas and biases and through to what I most deeply know to be true, what do I realize?

This third question is important because it speaks to the intuition and knowing that emerge when we see past and through our ideas and biases, and it surfaces what is currently hidden to us. We can use all these questions to open to a larger realm of possibility while perhaps finding a more balanced, spontaneous, and creative answer. However, we need to be at least a little comfy with ambiguity and uncertainty, and let go of trying to be an expert who has everything right. Easier said than done—I get it! Just think of an opinion that you don't want to let go of. It is so true and right, it makes you feel safe, and it makes your world feel organized. What if you loosened up on that one too? What would happen?

always blames someone else. Or an insecure person who talks too much and too fast so that everyone he meets thinks, *Wow...this dude is trying to prove something. When's he going to be quiet?*

Blind spots are *not* the things we already know about ourselves that we are working on, like being more patient with our children or more confident in social situations. Blind spots are not abstract ideas. They are ingrained beliefs and attendant emotions that drive us to play out patterns we don't see, all to avoid the obvious that is right in front of us. Who hasn't failed at something or been shocked by someone's behavior and asked themselves, *How did I not see this coming?*

What you see...and what you get

It was the revelation of my own blind spots that led me to explore and write about them. I've been studying the human condition like a scientist, albeit imprecisely, for two decades. I've taught meditation and emotional intelligence not only in prisons, but in a variety of places including veterans' hospitals, the Google campus, United Nations agencies, and on the front lines of conflict in the Middle East. I've come to realize that cinderblock prison walls, Silicon Valley corporate walls, and the walls of refugees' tents have a lot in common. They all hold passionate, vulnerable human beings who want to have their basic needs met, to be loved and accepted by their families and communities, and to share their gifts with the world. They also hold people who are trying to get ahead even when that means trying (at times desperately) to portray and defend a false image of themselves—an image they are blind to—in order to not be attacked, blamed, or judged.

I've discovered that each of us has at least a few wacky and creative ways of going about getting these needs met. There is nothing wrong with such strategies per se. But the related behaviors can be created and maintained by blind spots. Blind spots that are obvious to others while we, oblivious, coast through life never finding what we're looking for and leaving a wake of unmet needs behind us. Nobody is exempt.

What if seeing our blind spots could radically transform the way we live, work, and perceive reality? Have you ever looked at an optical illusion and been startled or scared to discover what your brain does to make sense of what →

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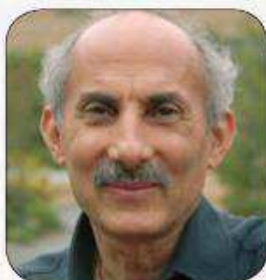
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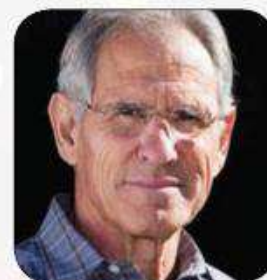
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you're seeing? For instance, you see a gray box even though it's actually white because of how it's positioned on a checkered background, or you see a triangle in a diagram where there isn't one because of strategically placed wedges and angles. Optical illusions point to how easy it is to fill in what we "see" based on memory, the biology of vision, and our brain's need for coherence, and they reveal how much our minds can trick us. Because we perceive the world with relative accuracy most of the time, we're surprised when we get duped. We believe that our senses are exact, so it shocks us when we find out that is not the case. It's the same with uncovering blind spots—and there lies the possibility for life-changing insights to appear.

The "easy way" is harder

One of the best things we can do is pull back the curtain on our unconscious operating systems. Once we've seen the inner workings of those systems—examining how we organize and filter information—we are far more likely to catch ourselves when we're falling into our own innocent little traps. Daniel Kahneman and his colleague Amos Tversky developed some groundbreaking insights into human judgment as it applies to behavioral economics: namely, that people who make decisions and form judgments under uncertainty make systematic mistakes that are common to all humans. Their findings have brought into question the long-held assumption of human rationality, and have had broad impacts across diverse domains, bringing to light ways our cognitive biases cause us to make errors in judgments and decision-making. As we have discovered, we humans tend to think we are rational most of the time. *It's that exact blind spot that is most in our way.*

Our blind spots are created through our unwillingness to question the fixed ideas and assumptions that we hold about ourselves, others, and the world around us. Some of the most problematic blind spots, however, are created and supported by the tiniest and most innocent of biases and moments, combining to form ideas and stories that keep confirming themselves and feeling believable.

Mental shortcuts are just such things. They are lightning-quick intuitive judgments that are common to all of us. They often work, but when they don't, they lead to cognitive biases

that obscure our seeing. These can take many forms, three of which I'll highlight here:

1

Believing ideas because they are readily available to us: *availability bias*

2

Finding data that confirms what we already believe: *confirmation bias*

3

Thinking we saw things coming when we didn't, which makes us think we are better at predicting the future than we are: *hindsight bias*

Mental shortcuts like these help us simplify things as we navigate the complexities and unknowns of life. But they hinder us when they cause us to gloss over or misperceive complexities that might actually require our attention, and that's bound to go wrong sometimes. When do mental shortcuts interfere with our ability to experience mindful awareness throughout our day? When do they back up untrue stories about ourselves or the world around us? Can seeing how our biases help us filter the world also help us see where we may have hidden blind spots?

Questioning biases and opening to a larger, more nuanced story doesn't have to destabilize us. Coming out of denial doesn't mean we need to act on our feelings. Rather, it can help us make wiser, more informed decisions and be more compassionate and understanding. It takes practice and experience to trust yourself enough to open to what you don't know, and realize that it's safe and important to do so. But don't worry—you're not going to die if you admit you don't have a clue! You don't have to exert effort all the time to check whether you are believing something untrue. Hacking these biases sets you up for a different autopilot: It opens you to the unknown, and in doing so, you move the arrow from blindness to mindfulness. It doesn't take much more than that! ●

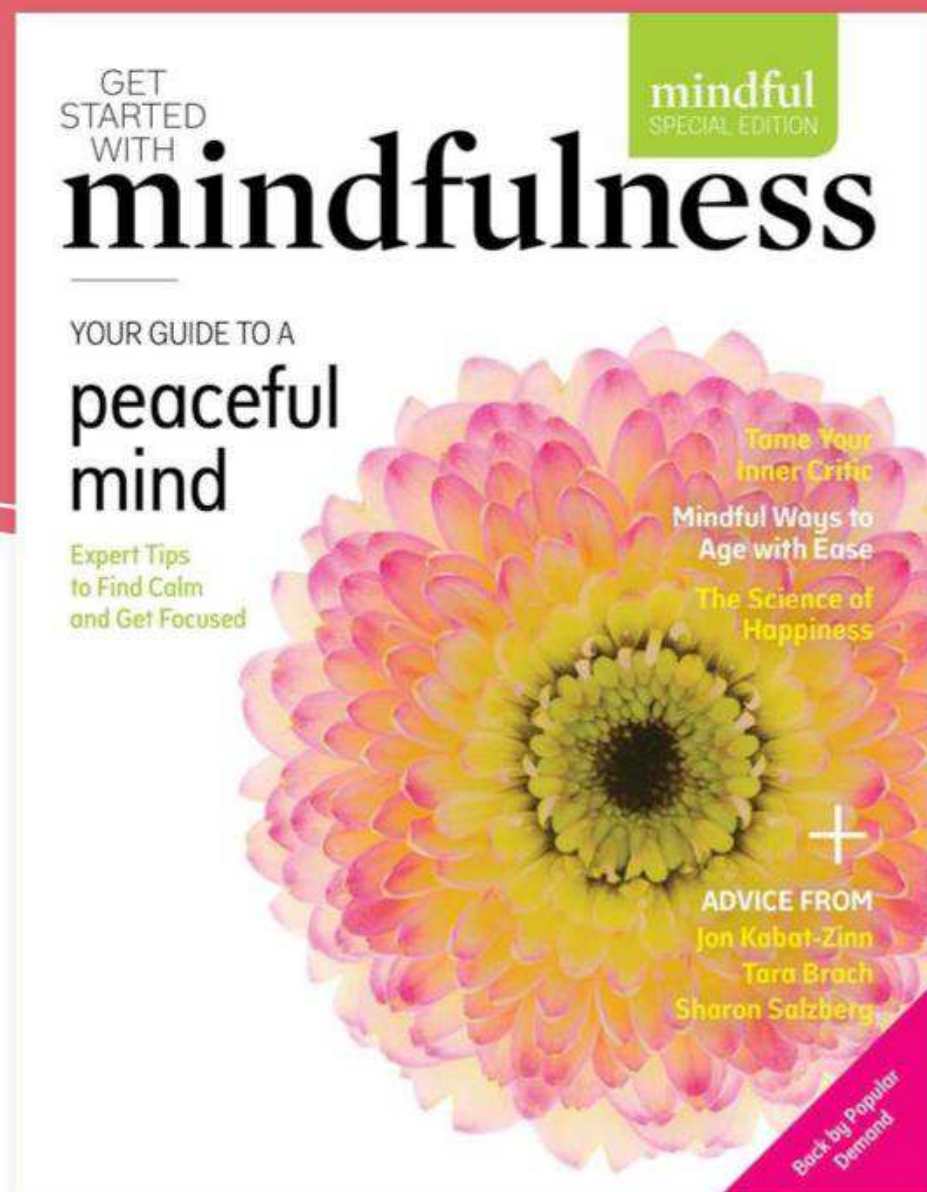


Adapted from The Blind Spot Effect: How to Stop Missing What's Right in Front of You by Kelly Boys. Copyright © 2018 by Kelly Boys. Published in July 2018 by Sounds True.

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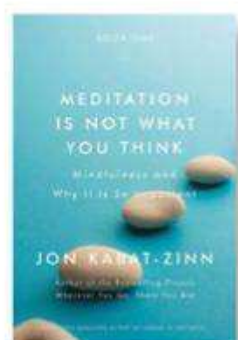


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**MEDITATION IS NOT
WHAT YOU THINK**
Mindfulness and Why
It Is So Important
Jon Kabat-Zinn • Hachette

In 2005, Jon Kabat-Zinn published his magnum opus, *Coming to Our Senses*. At 650 pages and years in the making, it was a monumental achievement. It allowed the founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction to put his life's work in a larger context. Mindfulness is not a mental trick, an adjunct to regular life. It's a basic human inheritance that is essential to life. We need to be optimally aware of who we are, where we are, how we are, if we are to survive individually and as communities, and even as a species in Kabat-Zinn's view. The book amounted to a bold call for us all to quite literally "come to our senses," to as often as possible experience where we are and what is going on within and around us—and to take up practices that cultivate our ability to do so.

Now Hachette has decided to reissue the book as four separate small books, starting with *Meditation Is Not What You Think: Mindfulness and Why It Is So Important*, followed by *Falling Awake: How to Practice Mindfulness in Everyday Life*, both of which are available now. The third and fourth books will come out late this year and early next.

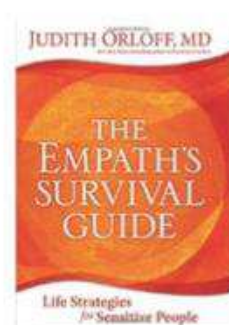
While the books overall are thick with references to and examples from science, literature, poetry, political thought, and more, the whole is presented in digestible chapters, which is almost certainly the best way to read these books, since trying to rip through them leaves not enough time to reflect and take in what you've read. They're like a box of fine chocolates. Eaten and savored one chapter at a time, they bring delight. If one eats half the box in one sitting, it may lead to indigestion.



RADICAL LOVE
Teachings from the Islamic
Mystical Tradition
Omid Safi • Yale University Press

This collection of ancient Islamic teachings reveals the roots and nuances of a mystical tradition that conjoins intellectual depth, spiritual humility, and bountiful sensuality. Together with the introduction by the book's editor and translator, Omid Safi, the writings offer a glimpse into Islamic cosmology and philosophy through the history

of a central tenet: radical love, or *eshq*. Safi, director of the Islamic Studies Department at Duke University, has disavowed "this idea that love is something private. Love is public. It is something that you do." His collecting, translating, and editing of these exquisitely poetic teachings should be viewed as a public act of love, of service.



THE EMPATH'S SURVIVAL GUIDE
Life Strategies for Sensitive People
Judith Orloff, MD • Sounds True

According to research cited by Judith Orloff, the MD who is the bestselling author of *Emotional Freedom*, one in five people are "highly sensitive." According to this understanding, "empaths" don't just feel empathy in the typical way. It's a kind of whole-body experience. And it can be difficult

to get through a world of pain in such a raw, open, state. Orloff offers advice for those of us who feel we're wearing our heart on the outside of our bodies: a way to live fully engaged and open to others without having to put on the thicker skin that so many people tell you is required.

mindful

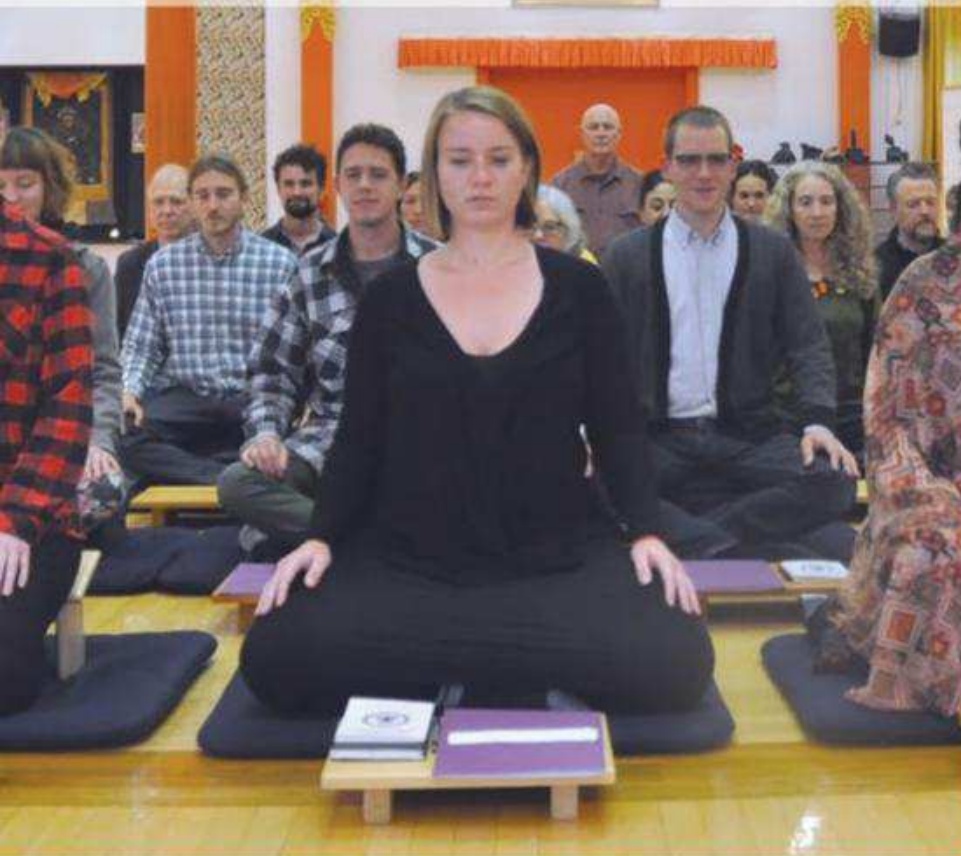
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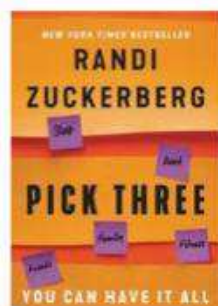


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reviews

"Had I chosen to be well balanced I wouldn't be where I am today. Thank heavens for living at a sloped angle!"



PICK THREE

**You Can Have It All
(Just Not Every Day)**

Randi Zuckerberg • Dey Street

Zuckerberg was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth, but she acquired one in 2004 at age 22 when her brother Mark asked her to join his little startup. In 2011, she left to start her own company, which led to *Dot Complicated*, a book about how the wired world has

changed everything we do and think. In her follow-on book, she shatters the myth of the "well-balanced" life: Things are just lopsided. Out of work, sleep, family, friends, and fitness, she says, "pick three." (daily, that is). Accept that, be choosy, and thrive.



PODCAST

THE GUARDIAN'S SCIENCE WEEKLY **A neuroscientist explains: the need for 'empathetic citizens'**

"Empathy is really about emotional resonance," says Francesca Happé, a researcher at King's College London. It's "the ability to feel *with* another person," an underrated skill that our increasingly fractured societies need. In studying how children develop empathy (beginning as young as seven months), Professor Happé finds that if we want a more empathic society, "children need to experience a wide range of emotions," safely, such as through the arts. This nurtures the capacity to recognize and relate to the same emotional states in others, including—most critically—others who seem unlike themselves. ●

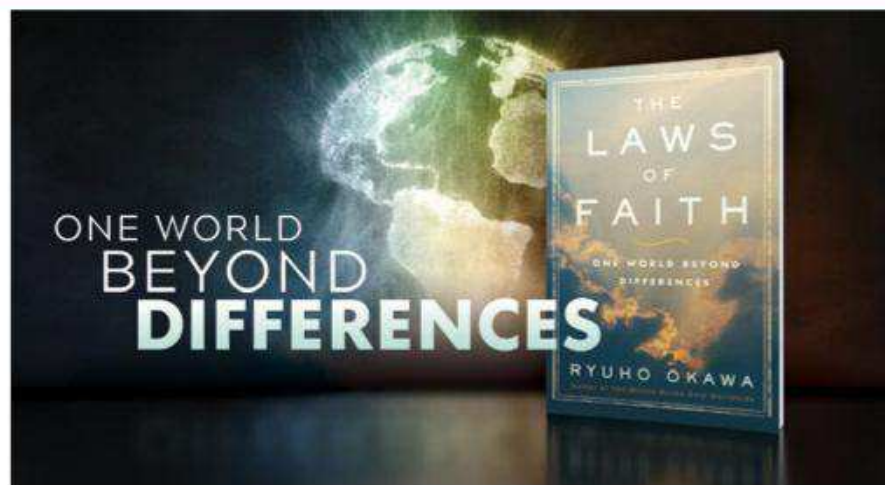


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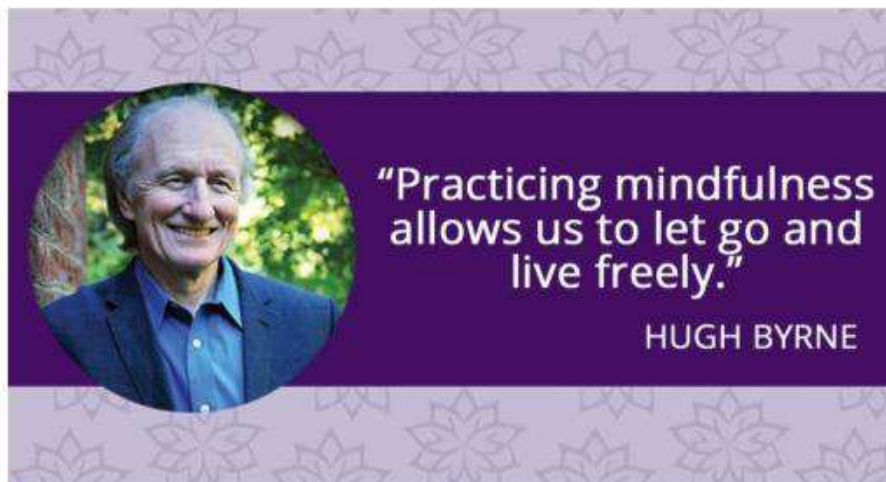


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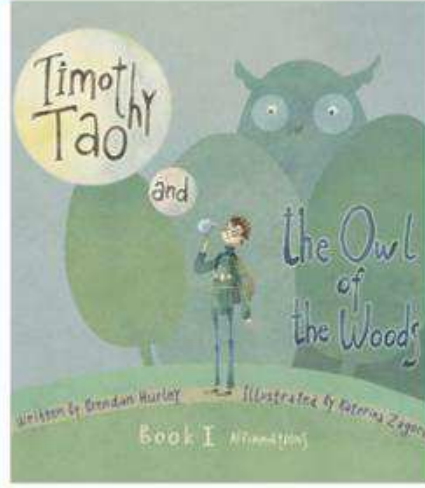
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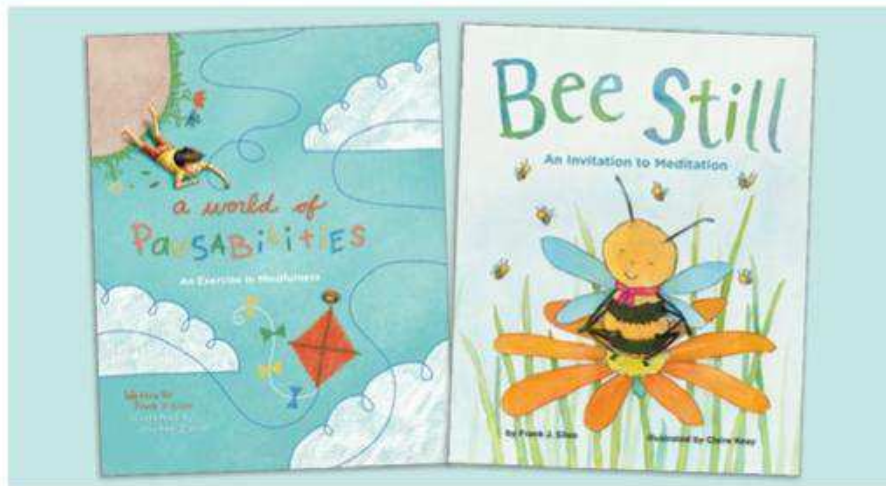
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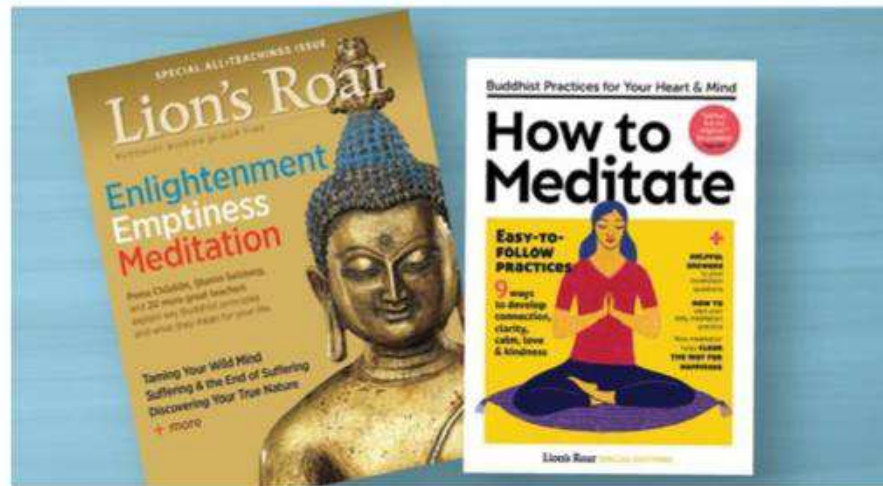


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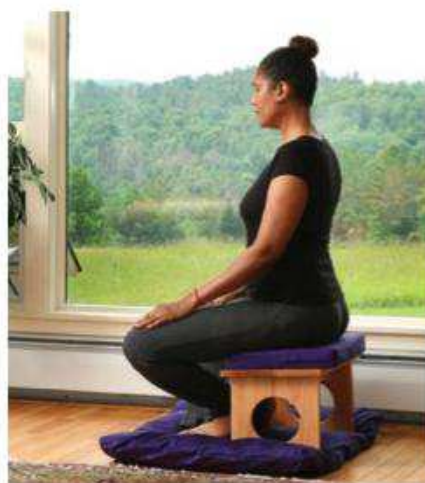


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Goodbye, leaves

They shielded me from the long summer sun. I loved to walk beneath them, filtered light dancing across my path.

Now the leaves are falling, each windy gust sending a shower down. Soon the trees will be bare, branches stoic against the big blue sky. Goodbye, leaves.

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