

The Problem

- “Your mind can be your best friend or worst enemy.”
- “My mind is like a bad neighborhood. I try not to go there alone.” – Anne Lamont
- Catastrophizing Cycle
 - Difficult circumstances,
 - Label and judge,
 - Blame (self or others),
 - Emotions (guilt or shame),
 - Physiological impact (blood pressure),
 - Dramatizations,
 - Diminished reasoning,
 - Self-destructive decisions and actions
 - Second arrow (making the situation worse because of our own reactivity)
 - The cycle continues.

The Solution

- Awareness - Mindfulness and Meditation
 - Paying attention, on purpose to the present moment non-judgmentally
 - Meditation - Formal practice – Without disturbance
 - Cultivates the concentration to be mindful.
 - Mindfulness - Informal practice – Being aware in everything that we do
- Letting Go
 - “Life is not the way it is supposed to be, it is the way it is. The way we cope with it is what makes the difference.”
 - “No one, no thing, can take your peace, your joy, your adequacy, away from you. You have to give it up voluntarily. And we give it up so easily, for just about anything: other people’s opinions, late meals, long lines, red lights.” ... Cheri Huber
- Compassion
 - If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy practice compassion.
 - Everyone needs to be honored, valued and appreciated. When you encourage and inspire them, they will more likely be kind to you.
 - For others
 - “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a battle.” -- John Watson
 - For ourselves
 - “Our attitude towards others, determines their attitude towards us.”
 - “He who angers you conquers you.” ... Elizabeth Kenny
 - Listen Seek first to understand then be understood.
- Asking the right questions
 - Awareness - Are my thoughts true? Are they helpful?
 - Letting Go - How can I make the best out of this situation?

Using meditation to cope with stress

- Compassion for Self and Others
 - What would it be like to be in their shoes?
 - Can I find a mutually nurturing compromise?

Pain

- Pain is two problems: Physical sensations, Mental agitation (meditation can help)
- Approaches
 - Acceptance - Focus on the part that hurts. Be curious about the pain. The intensity. The location. The changes. Focus on EXPERIENCING IT rather than thinking about it.
 - Avoidance – Focus on something that doesn't hurt.
 - Distractions - Body Scan

Meditation – Key instructions

- Noticing the thoughts not stopping them.
- Curiosity and interest
- Patience – It takes time and practice
- Difficulties strengthen you – noises, bored, distracted
- Focus on experiencing bodily sensations
- Attitude / disposition during and after meditation
 - Kind attention
 - Letting Go – Acceptance
 - Compassion

What Next - All on BeingMindful.com

- Any questions – Stan@StanleyMerrill.com
- 28 Day Challenge (4-week challenge menu link)
 - 10 -15 minutes a day to review different meditation types.
 - Suggested micro practices on a daily basis
 - Personalize your practice
- PDF with the foils of this class
- Meditation Groups in Houston (free)
 - Insight Meditation Houston
 - Led by Ginger Clarkson. Every Monday 7 pm to 8:30 pm
 - West University Seniors
 - Led by Stan Merrill.
- Links to other guided meditations - sleep, compassion, Insight Timer
- Sign up for future newsletters
- For Free - will teach a 1 hour introductory class “Why meditate” at schools, groups, organizations or corporations.