

Mindfulness Matters: (Slide Presentation)

Slide 2) Susan Aglukark – an Inuk musician who blends Inuit folk music with country and pop songwriting. She acts as a spokesperson for aboriginal and Inuit youth. She sees herself as an artist with a universal message of self-respect and strength to which she hopes that people of all cultural backgrounds can relate.

'O Siem' means welcome and is a welcome gesture of the Coast Salish First Nations of BC. It means expressing joy when meeting with family and friends.

Slide 3) What is Mindfulness? Jon Kabut-Zinn says it is paying attention in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally. It involves the capacity to be aware, to be fully present to events and experiences as they unfold. Amy Saltzman, both a medical doctor and educator adds paying attention with kindness and curiosity. There are many definitions essentially all meaning the same thing. Focussing may not be with the intent of kindness but mindfulness is.

Slide 4) Many Kinds of Mindfulness:

a) Mindful Listening - being fully present helps us to create resonance, a quality that can draw others to us. We should strive to be fully present, pay close attention to what others say, and to their attitudes and needs.

Activity: listen to the Zen chime – first relax the body by focussing from head to toe and they concentrate on listening to the sound until it dissipates. Continue to do so for four or five tappings of the chime.

b) Mindful tasting and eating – Digestion starts in the mind. The mind signals the body that food is coming thus the body prepares to secrete saliva and other digestive enzymes. The mouth starts the digestion as saliva starts the process and on it goes. If we gulp down our food our digestion is impaired and physical problems can occur. This helps you to be more energized and optimistic.

Activity: Take an orange, look at it, smell it, peel it and smell the odor, eat a wedge slowly rolling it in your mouth to feel its texture, let your taste buds dwell on the taste, chew it and then swallow it. Juicing is fine but then saliva does not play much of a part in the foods' digestion.

c) Mindful walking and moving – Walking is very beneficial to the mind. When you walk you can concentrate on your feet hitting the ground. You can concentrate on one of the following: your breathing, sounds, colours, movement of trees, etc.

d) Mindful Smelling – Be aware of the smells of different foods, flowers, trees, etc. This will heighten your senses.

e) Mindful touching - Touch different textures in cloths. Feel the petals of flowers, leaves. Touch your skin feeling the texture and feeling the sensation. Touch therapy is used in hospitals to sooth patients. It may be just holding the hands above the body to send

vibrations and warmth or physically touching the patient so they feel the vibrations and warmth.

f) Mindful playing (of an instrument, sports or general playfulness) - Preparing mentally for the action is just as important as the action. Try to prepare for the action and see what a difference it makes. The mental preparation is a must for athletes and musicians. Children playing mindfully will be aware of actions that may cause harm.

g) Mindful breathing – This relaxes the whole body and makes one more open and receptive to new learning and accepting of others’ opinions. (See slide 5 for directions.) Students who do mindful breathing before writing a test do better.

h) Mindful meditation - This can be done focussing on breathing, sounds, a candle, sound of a chime, making a chanting sound such as ‘ohm’, etc. This can help smooth out the bumps in life and there will be bumps.

Mindful meditation can help in the ability to focus sharply.

Activity: Sit in a quiet setting for five minutes each day. Repeat it in the evening for five minutes. Thoughts will come and gently dismiss them. This quieting of the mind is necessary because of all the demands made on a person in the daily routine. Too much diverse sensory stimulus can blur our focus. If you can’t do five minutes try one minute, then increase to two, working up to five. Consistent practice is the key.

Eighty-four year old Sister Madonna Buder finished the Ironman Canada. When asked how she did it she said, “All I was concentrating on was getting the job done.”

j) Mindful Communication – concentrating on the speaker fully in a non-judgemental way.

Activity: Turn to the person beside you and tell them something you don’t think they know about you. Then the other person does the same.

Fully concentrate and see what a difference it makes. Do not think of a reply just listen.

Slide 5) Mindful Breathing

Slide 6) Effects of Mindful Meditation on the Brain;

- a) Can change the mental state and perceptions. It can help those with depression, control of emotions, control negativity, change to positivity, perceive the impossible to the possible.
- b) Can change the structure of the brain – can rewire to make more connectivity, increase of cells measurable
- c) Can change the way brain cells interact – can grow new pathways
- d) Can increase grey matter in the hippocampus, our emotional centre, as well as other areas of the brain – measurable through brain scans
- e) Can generate new brain cells (neurons) – an event called neuroplasticity
- f) Can make your brain measurably bigger and stronger

The changes in grey matter are generally believed to result from **repeated activation** in these brain areas, thus consistent practice is needed to make permanent changes.

Slide 7) Mindfulness Benefits our Health and Our Lives

Research shows this.

- a) It helps one to control the mind so one doesn't become stressed
- b) A relaxed mind and body enables one to work more efficiently e.g. When Gandhi had a great deal to do he would go for a walk to enable him to work more efficiently.
- c) Illness – body can fight diseases more effectively. Depression can turn to brighter outlook. Anxiety can be subdued. Hostility can be quelled.
- d) The immune system can be made stronger so you don't become ill
- e) The mind is quieted and relaxed.
- f) A focussed mind is sharper and not scattered. It is open to feel others. Compassion and empathy can be enhanced as we can look outside ourselves.
- g) We can control our emotions better and self-regulate
- h) It can rebalance our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system
- i) It can result in a more positive self-representation, higher self-esteem, and higher acceptance of oneself.

Example 1: A little girl drew a picture that took her a long time and proudly showed it to her little brother. He took it and tore it up. She would have previously gone into a rage but with her mindfulness training she had at school she told herself, "I will just draw another!"

Example 2: On being told I had glaucoma I proceeded to do mindful meditation and was able to lower my eye pressure.

Example 3: A grade two class was scheduled to go to music class. The teacher decided to prepare them to go and walked them through a one minute mindful meditation. When the music teacher saw them come in the room and sit down quietly she was astounded. What had happened to this jumpy, out of control class? She asked the teacher why the students were quieter and more receptive in music class – what had happened? The teacher said what she had done to make the difference – one minute of mindful meditation.

Slide 8) Mindfulness Benefits our Health and our Lives

Reconnecting our bodies with our minds:

1. Practice mindful breathing- beneficial results in in mind, body and interpersonal relationships when you practice consistently.
2. Approach something for the first time – drinking something, smelling, tasting, touching, seeing, listening, etc.
3. Practise mindful gratitude – feeling grateful for what is happening right now as well as the past. This changes anger, frustration, resentment and resistance into openness to accept the next step.
4. Practise mindful walking in nature. Focus on your movement, smells, sounds, heart beat, etc.

Example 1: When you relax your body and mind you are now open and accept new ideas. Introducing new ideas to people gradually, helps people feel at

ease. We don't accept new ideas unless we are prepared for them and neither do other people. They need to feel at ease.

Example 2: We are concerned about our external environment, which we should be. But we need to be concerned about our internal environment. What could be more important than our own psychological and spiritual environment?

Example 3: Walking outdoors can have physical, emotional and mental benefits. For example, my ears were plugged from flying and I felt I had cotton in them. Only when I went for a walk did they unplug.

Example 4: Dr. Masley encourage his heart patients to do exercise every day. They had high powered jobs and said they didn't have time. It is proven that you can be 25% more productive when you exercise so Dr. Masley said how could you not exercise if you are going to be 25% more productive?

Slide 9) Reconnecting our bodies with our minds (cont'd)

1. Practice singing, humming, chanting, and toning to calm your breathing and calm both mind and body.
Example: Monks chanting and toning. Many religions use sound **to connect.**
Example: Elderly woman playing bridge, (partially blind) was humming as she played.
2. Incorporate yoga, tai chi, swaying, dance, and any mindful movement into your day. Any bodily movement makes us more aware.
3. Surround yourself with beautiful things. Find a quiet place to center yourself. When we look mindfully beauty fills our senses!!

Slide 10) Connecting in your Personal and Professional Lives

This list can be incorporated into your day.

1. When we are fit we are able to contribute, cooperate, and collaborate as we are more open.
2. We are in charge, able to self-regulate and able to help meet the needs of others.
3. Our standards and perceptions are ours and not necessarily another persons. We should continually strive to up our standards continually and not focus on what other peoples' standards are. People from different cultures and backgrounds have different standards. Focus on similarities - doesn't matter what it is.
4. Mindful acts of kindness can happen every day. Example: a lady left her cup of coffee on top of her car. I saw she was going to drive off and ran to give her her cup of coffee. She was very grateful. I in turn was happy that she was happy. A policeman saw me driving with my \$1500 ukulele on top of my car. He put on his siren and pulled be over. I was stunned when he handed me my ukulele - a mindful act of kindness! I was happy and I am sure I made him happy with my happiness!

Slide 11) Being Mindful of the Power of NOW

- 1. Our voice is the audible expression of the unique light and energy inside each one of us.**
 - Let your voice be heard
 - Let your light shine
- 2. Be mindful of your own gifts – we have all been given gifts – now we must use them.**
- 3. Meditation is a natural medication. Medicate yourself through mindful meditation.**

We can't erase yesterday or know what will happen tomorrow. We only have NOW. Stay in the present. Don't miss out what is happening now.

Slide 12) “Interdependence is and ought to be as much the ideal of man as self-sufficiency. Man is a social being” Mahatma Gandhi

Steve Jobs: “Great things in business are never done by one person, they're done by a team of people”.

We need to cooperate, collaborate and coordinate in order to get to a higher level.

To go fast – go alone

To go far - go together

To go nowhere - do nothing

Failure to engage effectively is the first step down the rabbit hole. To do engage effectively we must be mindful of others' needs.