

Mindfulness and Other Daily Practices

**Leading & Living Authentically: A Spiritual Leadership
Luncheon/Workshop
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Survey of Business Leaders

- ◆ **Work is a primary source of personal stress.**
 - ◆ 88%
- ◆ **My leadership role has contributed to higher levels of personal stress.**
 - ◆ 75%
- ◆ **I am more stressed at work than I was five years ago**
 - ◆ 65%
 - ◆ [The Stress of Leadership](#)

Stress

- ◆ (noun)

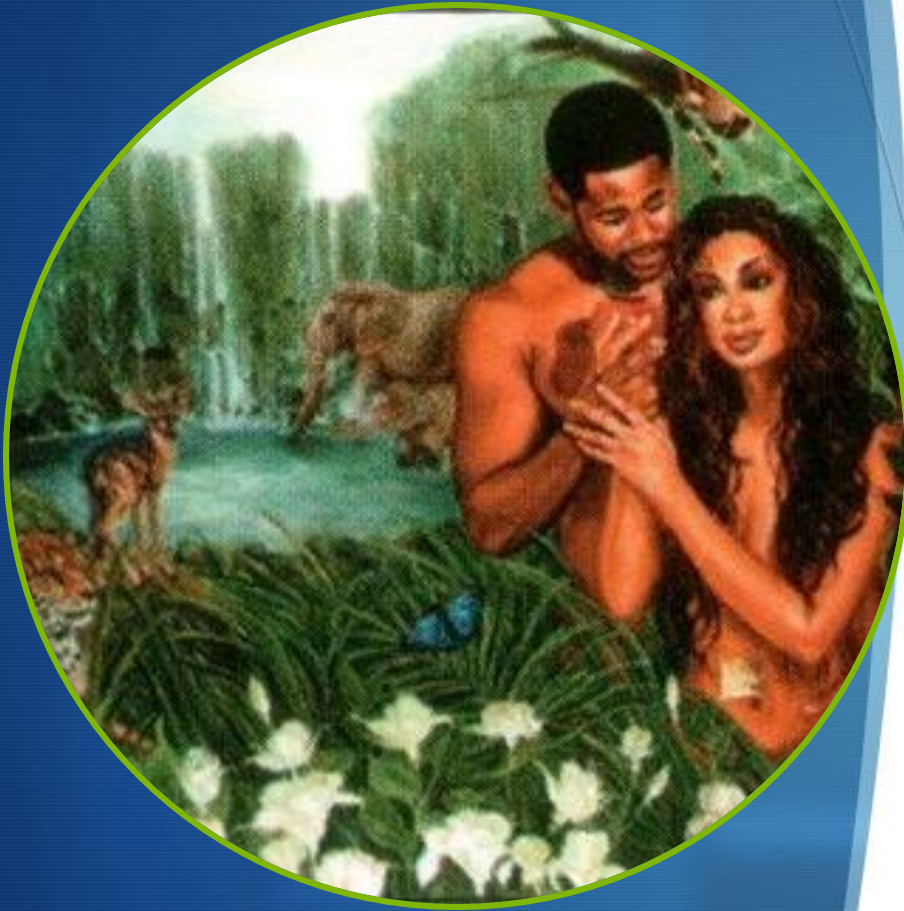
- ◆ a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

Living under Stress

- ◆ Stress → unhealthy individual
 - ◆ Poor mental health
 - ◆ Poor physical health
 - ◆ Poor work performance
 - ◆ Poor leadership abilities
 - ◆ Poor relationships
 - ◆ Low quality of life



Stress...in Religious Terms?



Most religious traditions describe the original human existence as a paradise ... an existence of peace and serenity. Of harmony and community.

Stressful living is NOT paradise.

Stress ... as sinful living?

◆ **Stress = Sinfulness**

- ◆ Stress: a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances
- ◆ Sinfulness: a state resulting from an immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law or plan

Living under Stress/Sin

◆ Stress → unhealthy individual

- ◆ Poor mental health
- ◆ Poor physical health
- ◆ Poor work performance
- ◆ Poor relationships
- ◆ Low quality of life

◆ Sin → individual not meeting divine ideal

- ◆ Poor mental health
- ◆ Poor physical health
- ◆ Poor work performance
- ◆ Poor relationships
- ◆ Low quality of life

What is “sin”?



- ◆ Traditional Western theology:
- ◆ Separation from divine will/law due to:
 - ◆ Pride
 - ◆ Independence
 - ◆ Will-to-power of self (against God)

But what is “sin” today?

- ◆ **Underdevelopment or negation of the divinely-created self through**
 - ◆ **Triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness**
 - ◆ **Lack of an organizing center or focus**
 - ◆ **Dependence on others for one’s own self-definition**
 - ◆ **Inability to respect the boundaries of privacy**
 - ◆ **Gossipy sociability**
- ◆ *Valerie Saiving, **The Human Situation: A Feminine View** (1960)*

Temptations today?



- ◆ Seeking “*success*” in your career
 - ◆ Long hours, emails, meetings, reports, projects, travel
- ◆ Trying to “do it all”
 - ◆ Having the perfect home
 - ◆ Being “Fit”
 - ◆ Socializing
 - ◆ Developing well-rounded kids
- ◆ Social media 
- ◆ Easy access to entertainment (Netflix, video games)
- ◆ Busyness



Mindfulness

“contemplation”

“meditation”

What Is “Mindfulness”?

Practice: Engaging in mindfulness practice itself

State: The outcome of practice; being in a state of mindfulness

Trait: A dispositional characteristic; a person's tendency to more frequently enter into and more easily abide in mindful states



Mindfulness

“**paying attention** in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”

–Jon Kabat-Zinn (Professor of Medicine Emeritus and Founder of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School)

Mindfulness

“a way of being in which one is **highly aware and focused** on the reality of the present moment, accepting and acknowledging it, without getting caught up in the thoughts that are about the situation or emotional reactions to the situation”

–Mirabai Bush (Co-Founder and Senior Fellow, Center for Contemplative Mind in Society)

Where Does Mindfulness Come From?



Contemplative practices are found in many religious and philosophical traditions around the world.

Mindfulness derives specifically from Buddhism but has been adopted and practiced by Jews, Christians, and others for centuries.

Mindfulness in Buddhism



Meant to allow one

- to tame the mind
- to be present in the moment
- to observe mental and physical phenomena as they happen
- to cultivate compassion
- to gain insight into the nature of reality, the self, and suffering--its cause and elimination

The Buddha taught followers to try to see things and ourselves for what they are—transitory and interrelated—in order to cease our desires for selfish gain and experience true fulfillment, i.e., nirvana.

How do I become mindful?

STOP

BREATHE

FOCUS

REPEAT

**... it's a practice aimed at developing
a state of living**



What are Mindful Practices?

Intentional

Focused

Regular



Meditation or Contemplation

Can be done in many forms



You can seek mindfulness

In many ways

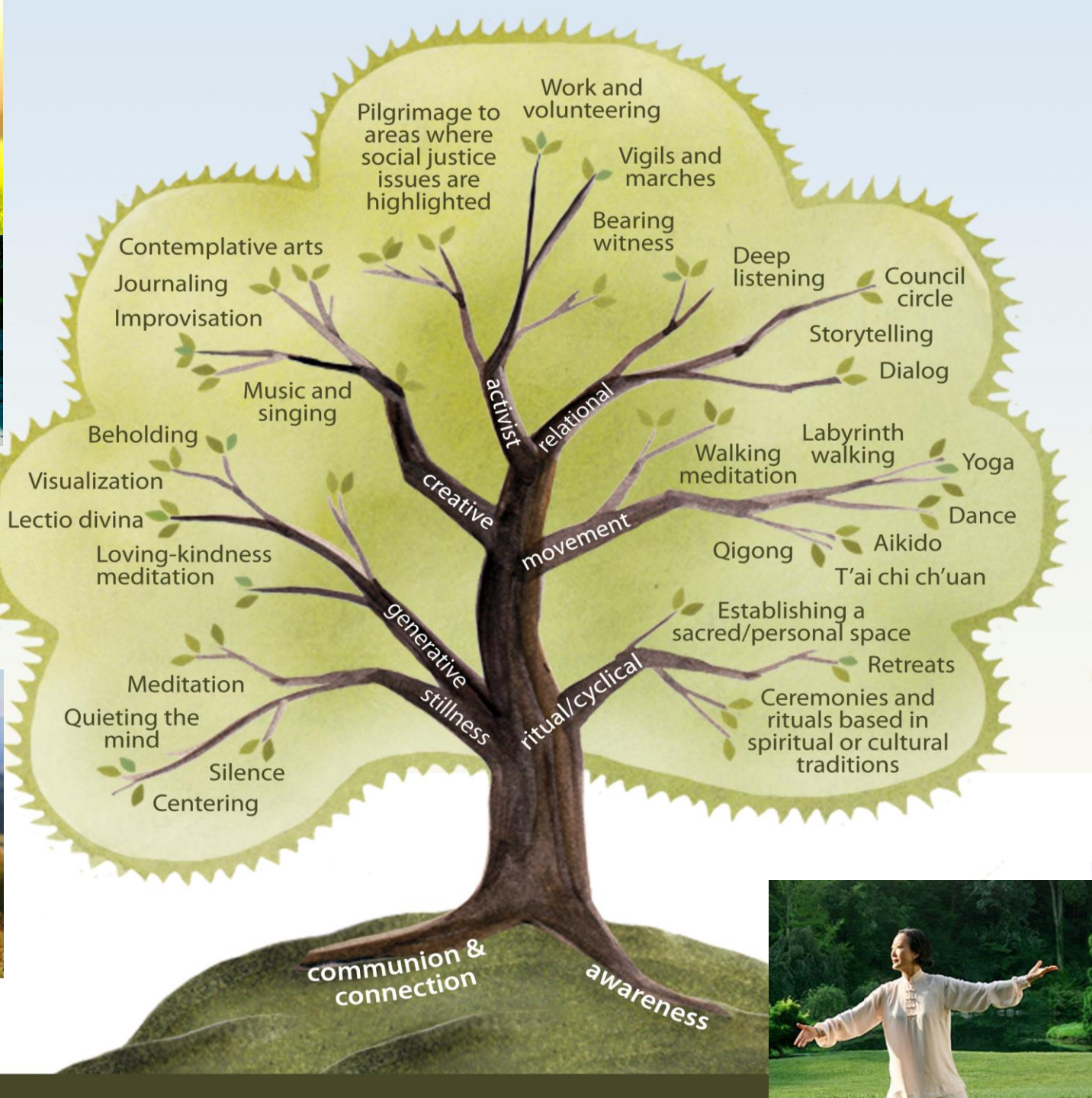
In many places



You can learn to focus

Throughout your day





Potential Benefits

- ◆ Stress-reduction
- ◆ Emotional regulation/Control of anxiety and depression
- ◆ Increased self-awareness
- ◆ Increased focus, attention, patience
- ◆ Increased energy
- ◆ Increased creativity
- ◆ Pain management
- ◆ Increased tolerance and acceptance of others
- ◆ Increased empathy and compassion for self and others
- ◆ Ethical living/Living with purpose/Self-empowerment



Find your focus

Stop

Breathe

Focus