

## MtM Session - Thoughts

- Q&A from last week's experiences.
- This week we will consider what to do with thoughts when they arrive in your mind
- But first let's do a warm-up meditation
  - *Simply Be* – Scott Lanston (1:40 minutes) followed by a continued 10 minute sitting
- The placebo effect is your healer from within
  - Let's do a *Short Body Scan* - smiling to myself Dzung Vo (4:52)

### HANDLING THOUGHTS

- Sitting in meditation is really about looking deeply into the chatter of the mind and becoming more aware of its patterns.
- Breathing is used as a method of tuning into the present moment, a place to rest your mind as you follow the breath. Breathing is a 24/7 activity; it is always occurring in the present moment. Being adept at following your breath helps to attune the mind being awake to the moment and not lost in the chatter of the mind.
- Work at minimizing thinking, do not think about yesterday or tomorrow rather just be here and now – just being present in the moment.
- If your mind begins to follow a thought, work at letting the thought go and return to sensing and following your breath.
- Thoughts do not need to be judged or evaluated as good or bad; they only momentarily exist, given you let the thought go and not follow, or embellish, the thought into a full blown story.
- You might consider using your imagination where thoughts are treated like clouds drifting across the sky, or thoughts as leaves flowing down a river or a stream. Maybe you are a scuba diver where the bubbles are your thoughts rising up in the water to surface and bursting.
- Another analogy is standing on the platform at a subway station. If you jump on you go on a trip versus watching the train leave and staying on the platform.
- When thoughts continue to come into your mind, it's alright—don't beat yourself up; you are who you are. By allowing time and practice sitting you will become stronger - patience is a virtue. Gently return to your sense of breath.
- Every time you catch yourself in thought, smile to yourself, "I'm back." and return to your breath. Each time you return to your breath, it is reinforcement to mindfully follow your breath and lesson the control of thoughts.

- The point is not to stop thought, rather be aware of the thought, then let the thought go; it takes practice, practice, practice returning to your breath.
- You might begin to experience a gap of time between thoughts; grow the time between thoughts by following your breathing.
- Again, being aware that you caught yourself in thought, and you returned to your breath is another step closer in becoming more mindful.
- As the neuroscientist Wolf Singer<sup>1</sup> famously said, “The brain is like an orchestra without a conductor.”
- Let’s do another meditation: *The True Nature of Awareness*, Echart Tolle (11:50 minutes) dealing with thoughts and accepting the moment.

#### CLOSING

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- There are several options that can be used to help you follow your breath.
  - *Breath Meditation with Counting* (5:06 minutes) Kelly Werner – long breaths counting to 5 then adjusting to your capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> Wolf Singer is Director at the Max Planck Institute for Brain Research in Frankfurt and Founding Director of both the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies and the Ernst Strüngmann Institute for Brain Research. His Recent research has revealed ways in which the brain effectively coordinates widely distributed and specialized activities to meet the needs of the moment.