



The Pennsylvania State University

Prevention Research Center

FOR THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

*Next Steps in Promoting the Science
and Practice of Mindfulness for
Children, Their Families, and Schools*

CCFW – Seattle - April 2013

Mark Greenberg

mxg47@psu.edu

Good Afternoon and
Gratitude to CCFW!



My Awakening to Mindfulness

University of Washington – 1970's

Meditation and Psychotherapy

(Alan Marlatt and Judith Gordon)





"Never, ever, think outside the box."

Preventive Intervention

The Big Picture: Improving Public Health

Undesired Related
Outcomes

Poor School
Achievement
Poor Mental Health
Aggression/Violence
Early Substance Use

Underlying Shared
Constraints

Impulsive Action
Emotion Dysregulation
Insecure Relations w/
Parent, Teachers, Peers
Dangerous Neighborhoods



Resilience Factors that create Well-Being for Children

- ❖ Self-Control/Emotion Regulation
- ❖ Cognitive Abilities - Problem Solving Skills
- ❖ Building Attention and Learning Capacity
- ❖ Healthy caring relations
with peers and adults
- ❖ Safe, Welcoming, Caring
Classrooms

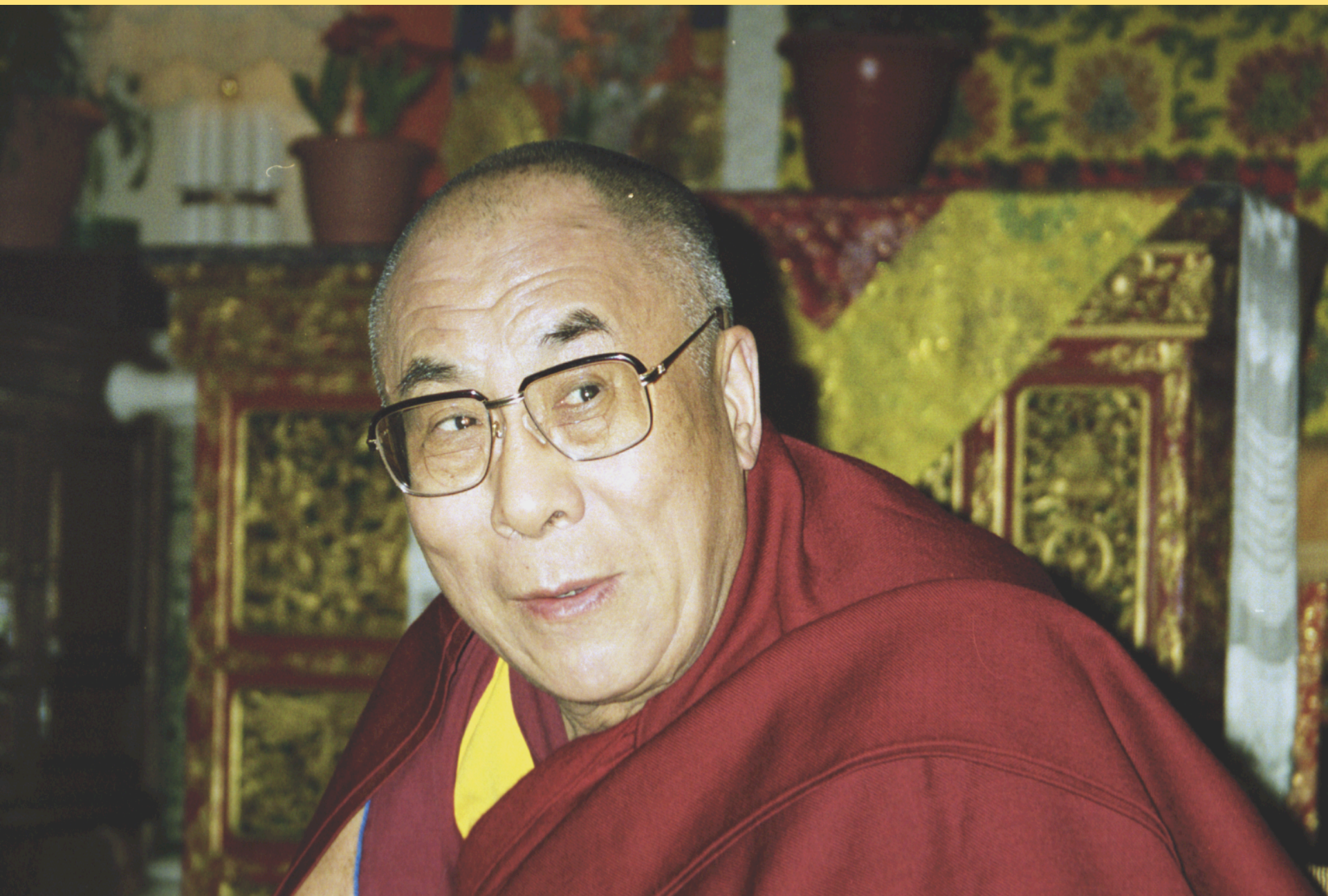


The PATHS Curriculum

“Living” The Golden Rule

“Treat Others the Way you Want to Be Treated”

- Awareness of emotions states in oneself and others
- Putting feelings into words
- The ability to calm oneself down when feeling highly emotionally aroused
- Planning ahead and considering the effects of your behavior on others
- Developing greater empathy/compassion for others



Destructive Emotions -- Mind & Life Institute - 2000

How Can Mindfulness and
Contemplative Practices Allow for
Deeper and More Meaningful
Change??

2000 Mind and Life Meeting in
Dharamsala

Nurturing mindfulness in schools

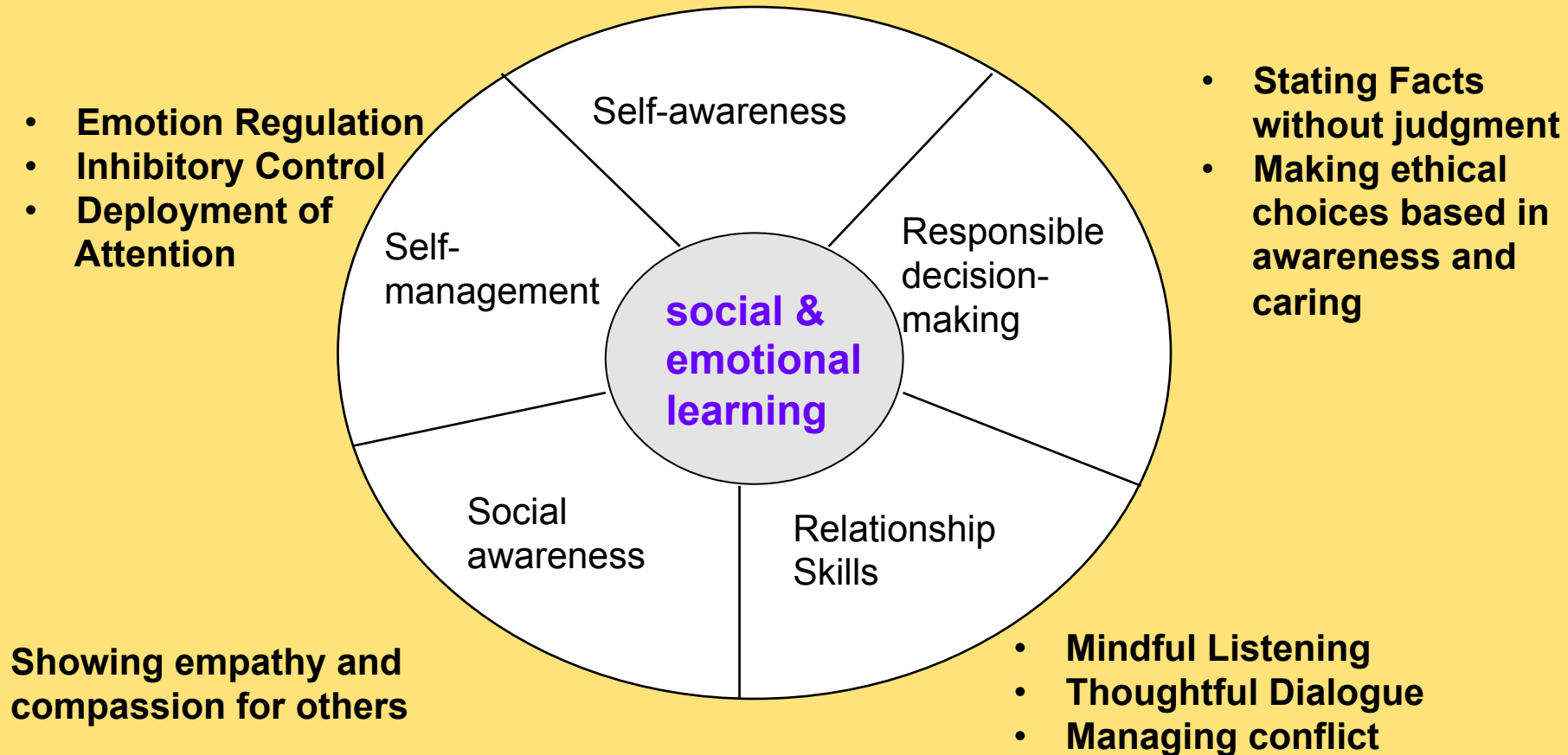
- Part of the larger domain of Social and Emotional Learning
- The Field is changing rapidly
- Lots of new ideas coming to fruition
- Still very little, high quality research but excellent new examples today!!
- Very few well-designed studies with any follow-up across time (need to rapidly publish studies discussed today!!)

Core SEL Competencies

Focus on Mindfulness



- Understanding the Nature of Mind
- Emotional Awareness



SEL SKILLS REQUIRE SELF-REFLECTIVE FUNCTIONS

Language/Communication Skills

Inner Awareness

Inhibition/Self Control

Distress Tolerance

Planning and Problem- Solving

Observing/Describing Emotion

What is needed, rather than running away or controlling or suppressing or any other resistance, is understanding fear; that means, watch it, learn about it, come directly into contact with it. We are to learn about fear, not how to escape from it.

Krishnamurti

How Can Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices Deepen SEL- type Programs?

1. Specific Focus on Refining Attentional Capacities
2. Focus on Practice and Repetition for Learning
3. Focus on Acting with Wisdom & Compassion



"Thanks to yoga, I now gently stretch to conclusions instead of jumping to them"

What is Mindfulness?

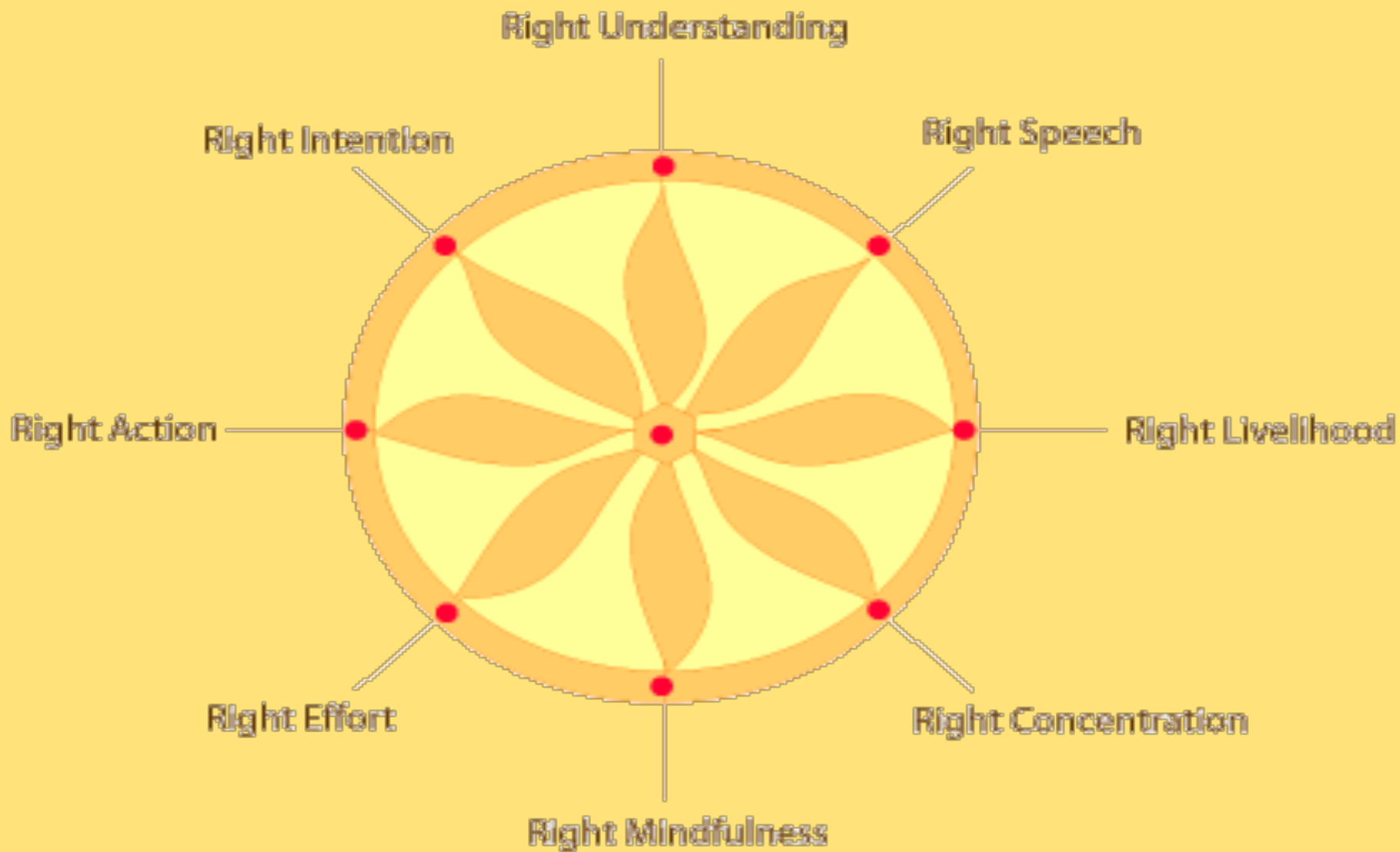
- Mindfulness is: ***paying attention, in a particular way, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally.*** --*Kabat-Zinn, 1990*
- An awareness of one's conduct and the quality of one's relationships..... are intrinsic elements of the cultivation of mindfulness.
- Mindfulness in everyday life is the ultimate challenge and practice.

Kabat-Zinn 2011

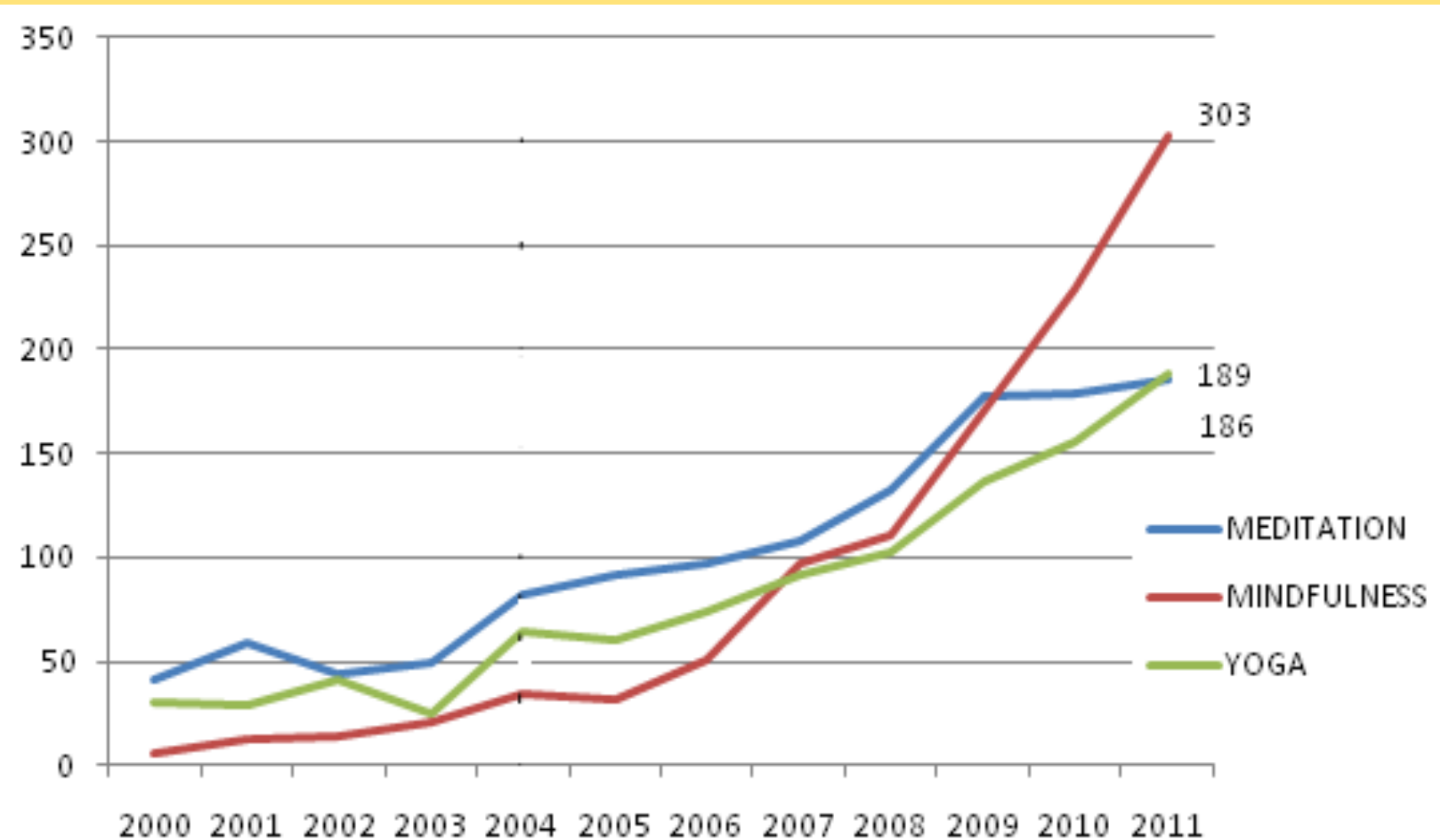


Mindfulness, Ethics and Cognition

- Engaging in mindful awareness means not only being aware in the present, but it also means reflecting on and living a set of *ethics* including “*not to harm others and to engage in wholesome actions*”
- This involves recollecting and reflecting on one’s actions with discrimination, evaluation and mature judgment – **rather than being reactive.**
- Mindfulness is seeing things as they really are – with clear comprehension and intentionality.
- This allows “right view, right effort, right speech, right concentration, right action, right livelihood



Peer-reviewed Research on Contemplative Practices 2000-2011



Research on Effects of Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices

- Major Focus has been on
 - Symptoms (pain, stress)
 - Brain Activity (activity)
 - Psychophysiology
 - Self-Reports of Mindfulness
- Still Little, but A Growing Focus on
 - Our Interpersonal Awareness
 - Our Interpersonal Behavior
 - Being Compassionate



"Can I call you back, Ed? I'm in the moment here."

What are Indicators of Mindfulness in Interpersonal Contexts?

- Listening with full attention to children and colleagues
- Present-centered awareness of emotions experienced by self and students during interactions
- Openness and non-(low?) judgmental acceptance and receptivity to child's thoughts and feelings
- Self-regulation in teaching /parenting- Low reactivity and Low automaticity in reaction to normative child and adolescent behavior
- Awareness of and responsiveness to child's individual needs – “teachable moments”
- Compassion for self and students

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"Damn it, Gloria, here I am meditating and attaining all this inner peace and joy, and you interrupt just to find out what the hell I want for dinner?"

Ways to Facilitate Mindfulness in Interpersonal Contexts: A Taxonomy

Types of Mindful of Contemplative Practices

Intrapersonal Activities

Forms of Sitting Meditation
Walking Meditation
Forms of Yoga
Forms of Prayer

Interpersonal Activities

Deep Listening
Story Telling
Contemplative Dialogue/Discourse
Council Procedures in Groups
Forms of Martial Arts
Forms of Service Learning
Contemplative Art and Music
Contemplating the Natural World
Awareness During Daily Activities

Explicit Combinations of Both

Types of Outcomes

Intrapersonal Outcomes

Brain Activity/Physiology
Symptoms (pain, distress)
Self Reports of Intrapersonal
Mindfulness

Interpersonal Outcomes

Improved Interpersonal Relations
Self-Awareness in Everyday
Interactions
Self-Regulation in Everyday
Interactions
Self- Report of Interpersonal
Mindfulness
Compassion for Self
Compassion for Others



?

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IF PEOPLE SAT OUTSIDE
AND LOOKED AT THE STARS
EACH NIGHT, I'LL BET THEY'D
LIVE A LOT DIFFERENTLY.

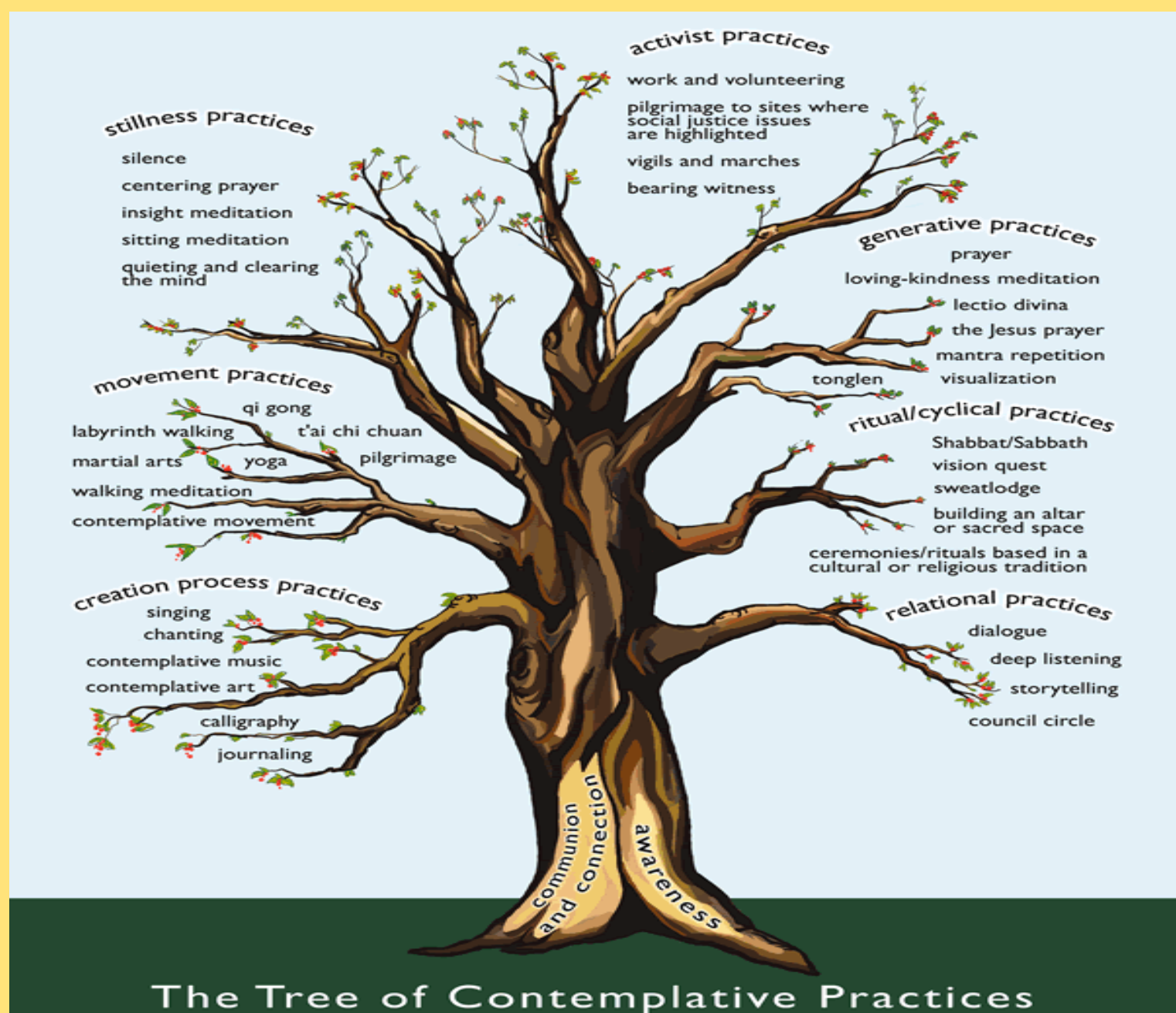


HOW
SO?



WELL, WHEN YOU LOOK
INTO INFINITY, YOU
REALIZE THAT THERE
ARE MORE IMPORTANT
THINGS THAN WHAT
PEOPLE DO ALL DAY.





The Tree of Contemplative Practices

From Center for Contemplative Mind in Society



"Nothing happens next. This is it."

Strategies for Deepening SEL and by Adding Mindfulness?

1. Developing New Interventions Based in Mindfulness Models
 - MindUp
 - Yoga Interventions
 - SMART and CARE
2. Adding Mindfulness to Current Interventions
 - Mindful Parenting
 - Adding Components to SEL Programs or Teacher Training
3. What is the role of the teacher? For child programs (MindUp/Yoga,etc) what training do teachers need?

What are the Active Ingredients in
Different Mindfulness and
Contemplative Practices?

Three Components of Change?



too busy to meditate?
try The Buddha Patch!

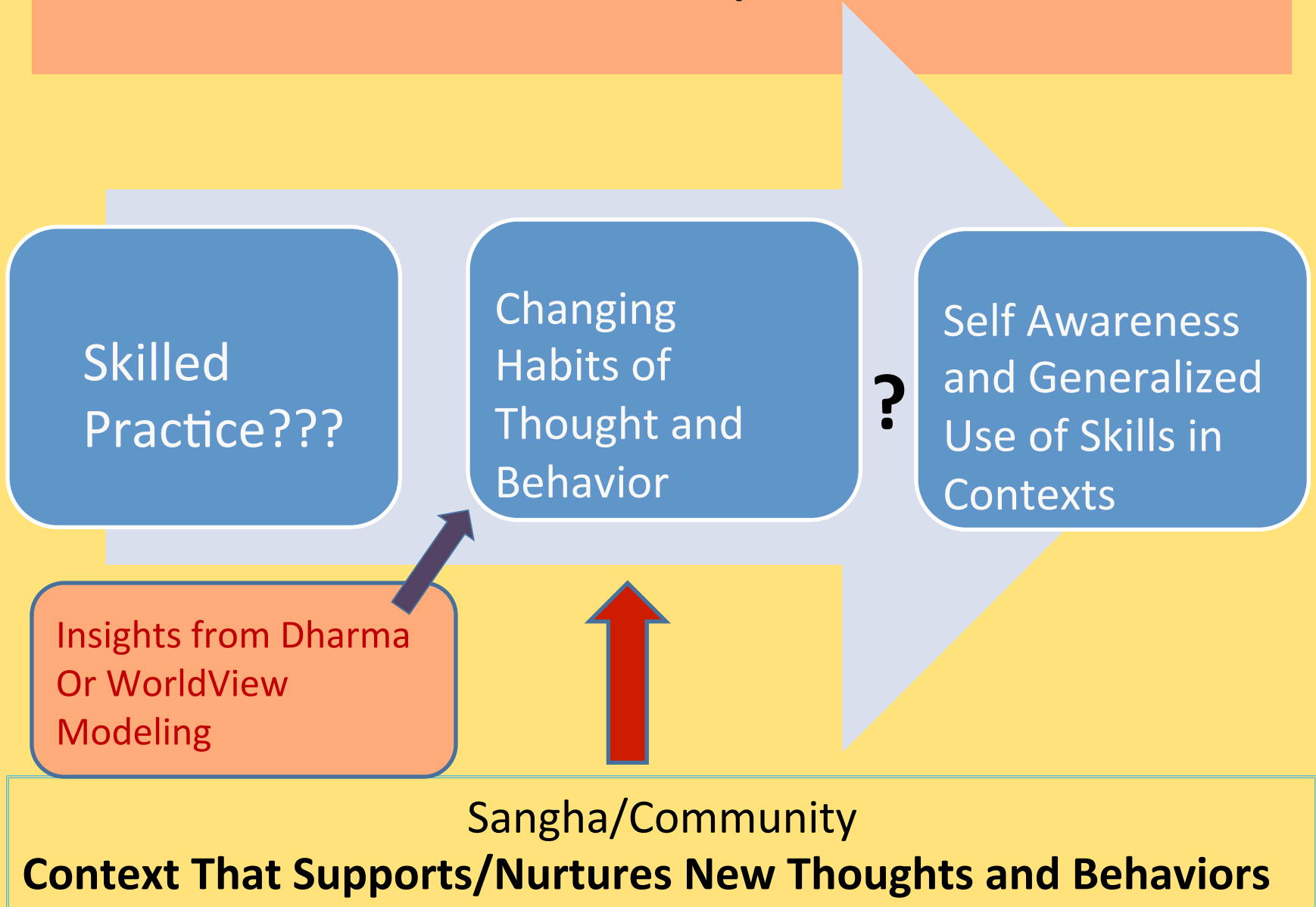
I'M ACHIEVING
ENLIGHTENMENT...
WHILE I CLEAN MY
TOILET!

©2003 Stivers

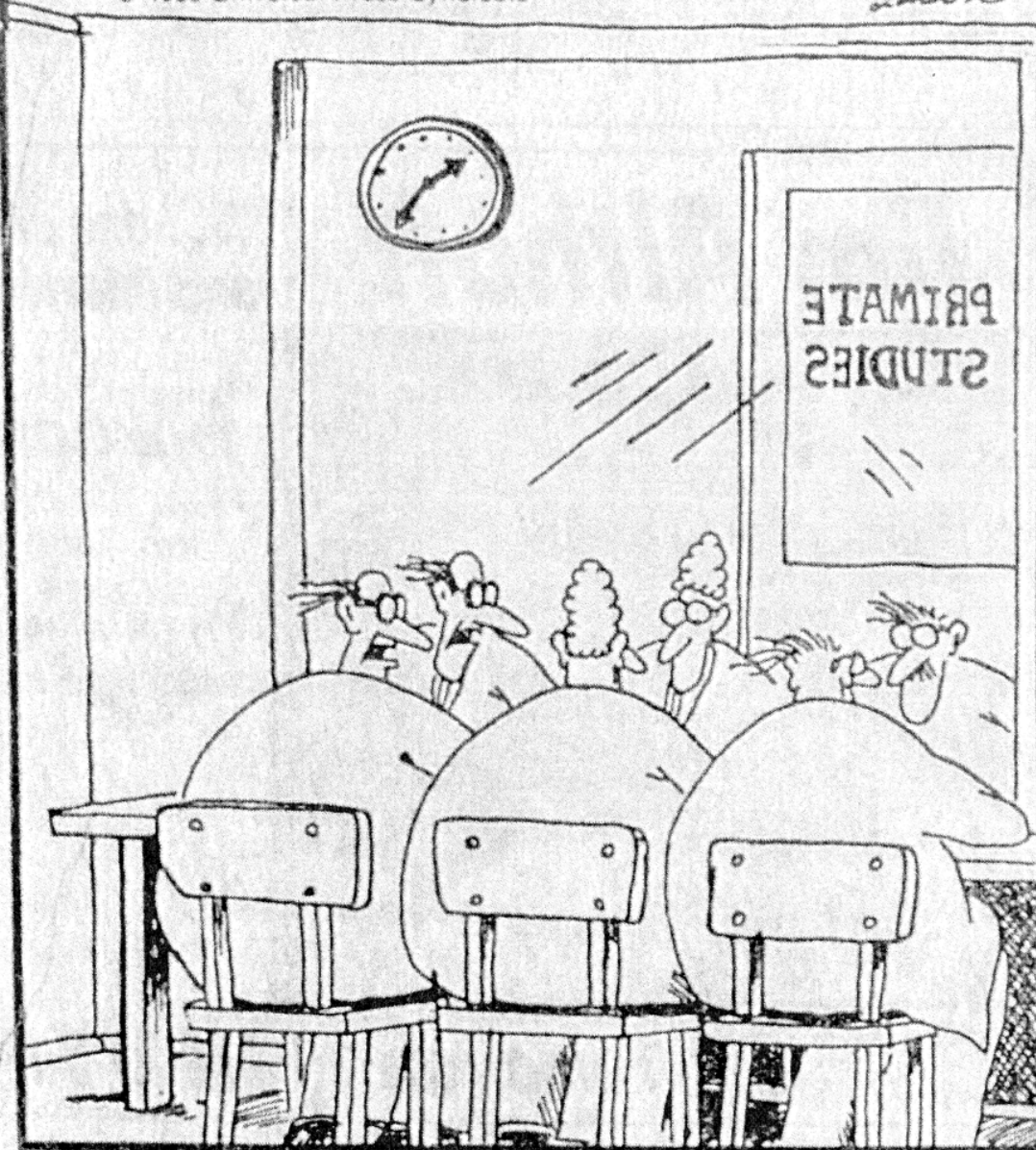


also available in capsule, gel, and suppository

Model of Skills Development in Context



Does Mindfulness Make a
Unique Contribution?
The Importance of
Active Control Groups
or
Comparative Effectiveness Trials?



"For crying out loud, gentlemen! That's us! Someone's installed the one-way mirror backward!"

Measuring Processes and Outcomes

- Self-report (first person phenomenology)
- Reports of Others (teachers, peers, parents, spouses)
- Cognitive Testing
- Hypothetical Vignettes (social cognitions)
- Observations that are Naturalistic (Operationalizing Interpersonal Mindfulness)
- Observations of Social Task Performance (interpersonal “tests” /behavioral economics, etc)
- Observed Reactions in Virtual Reality Contexts
- Psycho-physiological Reactivity and Regulation
- Immunological Function
- Neural Activity
- Health and Wellness (medication, absenteeism, etc.)

Questions to Ask When Examining a Practice

- What are the Goals/Outcomes?
- What Can Be Measured and How?
- What Practices or Activities Increase Mindfulness (intrapersonal & interpersonal)?
- How do the Goals/Outcomes, Measurements, and Practices/Activities change with age and context ?

We Need Clear Description of Interventions

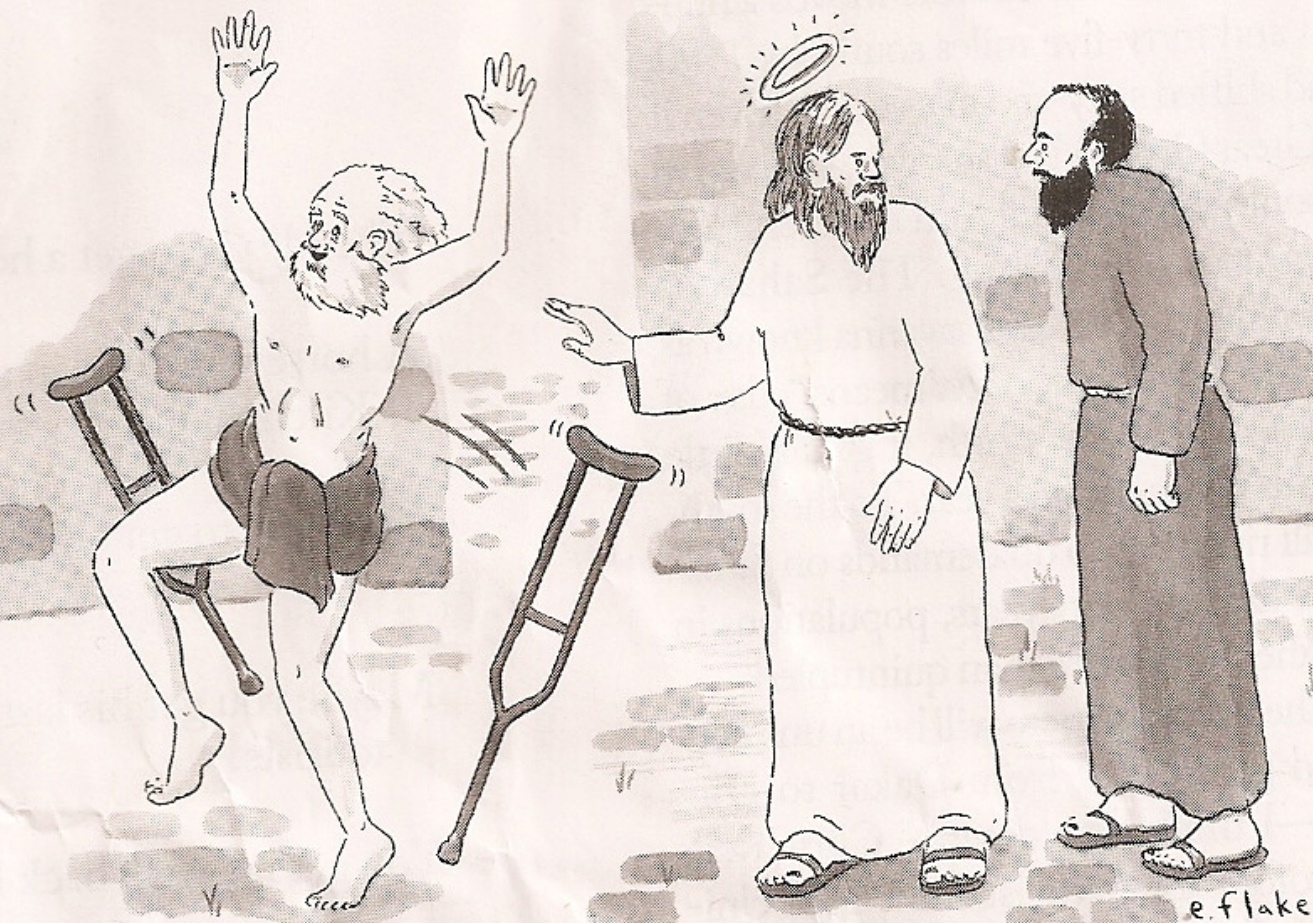
- Rich description of intervention
 - Specific instructions
- What is the source(s) of intervention?
- Has it been modified to be age-appropriate?
- Who is instructor? What is their training?
- What is the dosing – frequency?
- Are there out of session assignments?



"According to the people in R & D,
the hard part was getting it to stay in the box."

What Can Mindful Practices Do

- May Have Quite Different Outcomes Depending on the Practices (Breathing, Yoga, Compassion Focus, Attention Focus)
- May Depend on the Population
- Having a clear theory of change is critical and this needs to be contextualized



"Yeah, but good luck getting it peer-reviewed."

Next Steps

1. Better Designs with Longitudinal Follow-up
2. Broaden the nature of Contemplative Practices that Might Be Investigated
3. Bring Measurement of Interpersonal Action to the Center of Mindfulness Research

Partners:

Garrison Institute

Contemplation & Education Leadership Council

Holistic Life Foundation: Travelling Yogis

Johns Hopkins – School of Public Health

Numerous Public School Districts

Funders:

Garrison Institute

Mind and Life Institute

1440 Foundation

Attias Family Fund

Johns Hopkins Ctr on Violence Prevention

PSU Prevention Center

U.S. Department of Education

National Institute of Drug Abuse

“To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. *What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives.* If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places - and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act, and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction.

And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. *The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory.*

Howard Zinn

