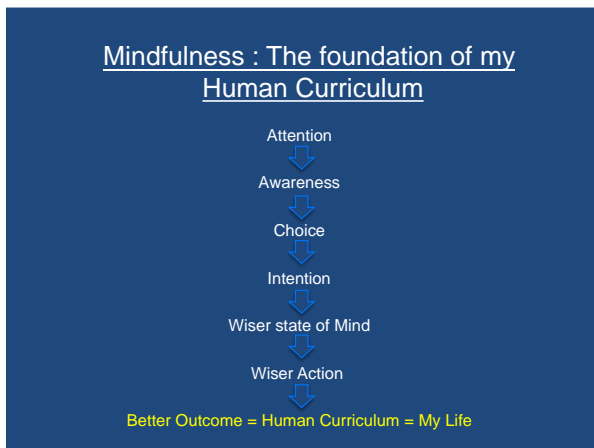


Mindfulness as a Path to Joy:
It's much more than just relaxing and getting through the yucky stuff
January 25, 2018

While much of Mindfulness practice is learning to be present with whatever arises in your life, and while much of that can be unwanted or unpleasant, Mindfulness can also harness the gift of Joy which lies hidden just below the surface.

Suffering is when things are not the way I want them to be and don't accept it.
Happiness is born from letting go.

*“Words strain,
Crack and sometimes break, under the burden,
Under the tension, slip, slide, perish,
Decay with imprecision, will not stay in place,
Will not stay still.”*



1. What Joy is not and does not attempt to do
 - Joy is not happiness, excitement, fleeting or superficial

- Joy does not attempt to replace, ignore, push aside nor deny any experience or feeling
- Joy is not the opposite of pain or suffering but can live right along side them, taking it's place of honour at the table of life.

What is Joy and Happiness?

- What do we have right now ? (Participants answer) **
- It is a natural, resting state and always available
- Contentment, peace, spiritual nourishment, beauty, fulfillment, purpose, love and connection)

Why bother looking for it?

- It is one of the heartfelt responses to suffering
- Because of the pain
- It reminds us of the power of choice
- We can offer it to others
- It is one of the 4 stations of the heart (Compassion, Loving kindness and Wisdom)

What does Joy do?

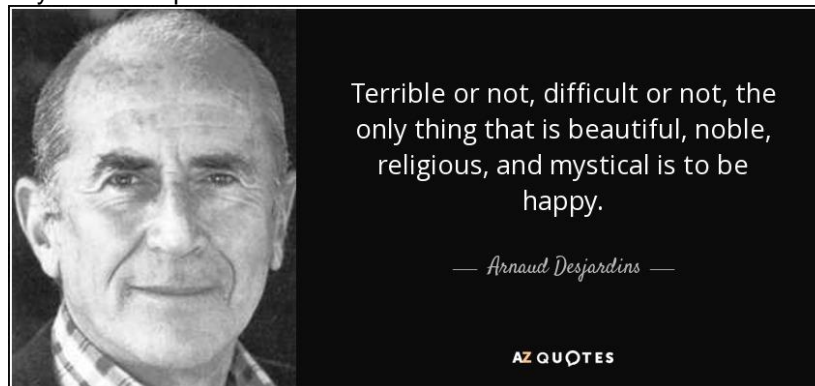
- It restores a sense of life
- It brings balance to situations of darkness
- It gives a reminder of impermanence and that all things pass
- It restores hope ("something makes sense ")

How do we find it?

- Make a conscious choice
- Set intention
- In ourselves and with community

What false beliefs gets in the way of finding it ?

- I should be miserable
- I don't deserve it right now
- Victimhood or misery is a virtue
- I get lots of attention and support by suffering
- I need to be miserable longer
- Feeling disloyal or false is we engage in it
- Joy trivializes pain



How to cultivate Joy and Happiness.

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- Right Effort related to Joy and Happiness by doing 4 things
 1. Help a positive seed come up and water it. What needs to show up?
 2. Once it has come up, keep it there. How can I keep it there?
 3. When negative is not there, don't let it come up
 4. If negative is there, don't feed it
- What Positive seeds can I plant?
 1. Smiling on purpose
 2. Do something for others
 3. What am I Grateful for now ?
- Dostoyevsky *"Man is unhappy because he doesn't know he's happy; only because of that. It's everything, everything, whoever learns will at once immediately become happy, that same moment..."*

KINDNESS Naomi Shihab Nye

Before you know what kindness really is you must lose things, feel the future dissolve in a moment like salt in a weakened broth.

What you held in your hand, what you counted and carefully saved, all this must go so you know how desolate the landscape can be between the regions of kindness.

How you ride and ride thinking the bus will never stop, the passengers eating maize and chicken will stare out the window forever.

Before you learn the tender gravity of kindness you must travel where the Indian in a white poncho lies dead by the side of the road.

You must see how this could be you, how he too was someone who journeyed through the night with plans and the simple breath that kept him alive.

Before you know kindness as the deepest thing inside, you must know sorrow as the other deepest thing.

You must wake up with sorrow. You must speak to it till your voice catches the thread of all sorrow and you see the size of the cloth.

Then it is only kindness that makes sense anymore,

only kindness that ties your shoes and sends you out into the day to gaze at bread,

only kindness that raises its head from the crowd of the world to say,

It is I you have been looking for and then goes with you everywhere like a shadow or a friend.