

What *IS* Mindfulness Anyway?

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Benefits of mindfulness

- ✧ regulate emotion
- ✧ improve thinking patterns
- ✧ reduce negative mindsets
- ✧ reduce the negative experience of stress
- ✧ improve relationships
- ✧ enhance immune response
- ✧ reduce anxiety & depression
- ✧ enhance overall well-being

What Mindfulness is NOT:

- ✓ Blank mind / “no thought”
- ✓ Emotionless
- ✓ Seeking bliss nor escaping pain
- ✓ A religion or spiritual belief system
- ✓ Relaxation or passivity

What is mindfulness ?

- ✧ A Philosophy
- ✧ A Practice
- ✧ A Treatment Approach
- ✧ A Way of Being...

History of mindfulness

Philosophies, traditions and practices:

- ✧ Hindu yogic
- ✧ Taoist
- ✧ Islamic
- ✧ Judaic
- ✧ Christian
- ✧ Buddhist

Examples of Mindfulness Practice

- ✧ Christian practices
 - contemplative prayer
 - lectio divina (divine reading)
 - Centering Prayer

Examples of Mindfulness Practice

Nepsis -

vigilance of the mind
and
watchfulness at the gates of the heart

» Abbot Gregorios, Eastern Orthodox Christian

Examples of Mindfulness Practice

✧ Buddhist practices

various meditation practices including:

- Vipassana - insight, contemplation
- Shamata - calm abiding
- Samadhi - concentration
- Vajrayana - visualization for “training the mind”

Examples of Mindfulness Practice

❖ Mindfulness meditation – Sati

- awareness
- attention
- remembering to pay attention
- acceptance
- compassion

History of mindfulness

✧ For the moment,
what we attend to *is reality*

» William James (1842-1910)
“Father of American Psychology”

History of mindfulness

- ✧ The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.
- ✧ An education which should improve this faculty would be the education *par excellence*.

» William James, *Principles of Psychology* (1890)

Therapeutic Approaches

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction - MBSR

- Jon Kabat-Zinn (1990)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy - DBT

- Marsha Linehan (1993)

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy - ACT

- Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson (1999)

Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy - MBCT

- Segal, Williams, & Teasdale (2002)

Therapeutic Approaches

- ✧ Forms of mental training to reduce cognitive vulnerability to reactive patterns that heighten distress or perpetuate pathology.
- ✧ Approaches that focus on a new relationship to pain/emotions/behaviors instead of stopping them.

What mindfulness does...

- ✧ Enables a *reflective* response rather than a *reflexive* one.
- ✧ Changes habitual patterns – physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, relational.
- ✧ Reduces the “distress” instead of trying to eliminate “stress”.

What mindfulness does...

- ✧ Focus is on altering the *impact of* and *response to* thoughts, sensations, emotions, feelings.
- ✧ Does not attempt to keep them from happening!

What mindfulness does...

- ✧ Focus is on altering the *impact of* and *response to* thoughts, sensations, emotions, feelings.
- ✧ Does not attempt to keep them from happening!
- ✧ Gives us the opportunity to make a different choice.

Definitions of mindfulness

❖ The trait of staying aware;
attentive, heedful.

» The American Heritage Dictionary

❖ Taking heed or care;
being conscious

» The Oxford Dictionary

Definitions of mindfulness

- ✧ The capacity to maintain non-judgmental awareness in the present moment.
- ✧ A technique in which a person becomes intentionally aware of his or her thoughts and actions in the present moment, non-judgmentally.

» Dictionary of Complementary and
Alternative Medicine

Definitions of mindfulness

- ✧ The awareness that emerges through
 - paying attention *on purpose*,
 - in the *present moment*,
 - and *non-judgmentally*
 - to the *unfolding of experience* moment by moment.

» Jon Kabat-Zinn, Ph.D.

University of Massachusetts Stress Reduction Clinic

Definitions of mindfulness

- ✧ The self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment.

» Bishop et al., (2004)

Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition

Definitions of mindfulness

✧ A particular orientation toward one's experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterized by *curiosity, openness, and acceptance.*

» Bishop et al., (2004)

Mindfulness: A Proposed Operational Definition

What is mind?

- ✧ A process that regulates the flow of energy and information.
- ✧ It is both embodied and relational.

» Daniel J. Siegel, MD
UCLA Mindful Awareness Research Center

ATTENTION

What are you paying attention to?

*Are you paying attention to what you
are paying attention to?*

Attention vs Mindfulness

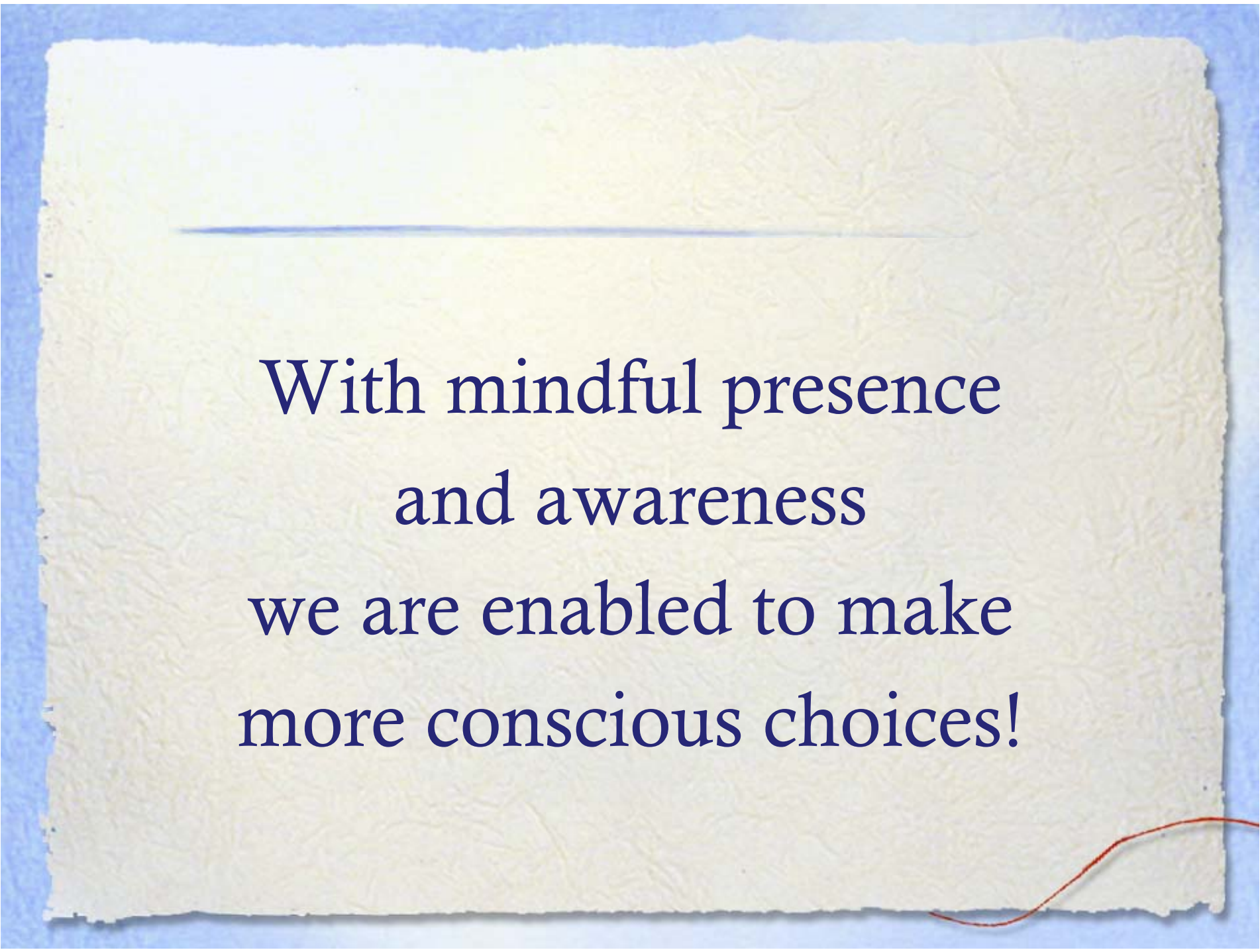
- ✧ Pure attention is stimulus driven
 - levels of focus and alertness vary

- ✧ Mindfulness includes
 - receptivity
 - meta-awareness
 - ethics

MINDFULNESS IN ACTION

Choosing **WHAT** you focus on,
and **HOW** you focus on it.

*Choosing **WHAT** you are present with,
and **HOW** you are present with it.*

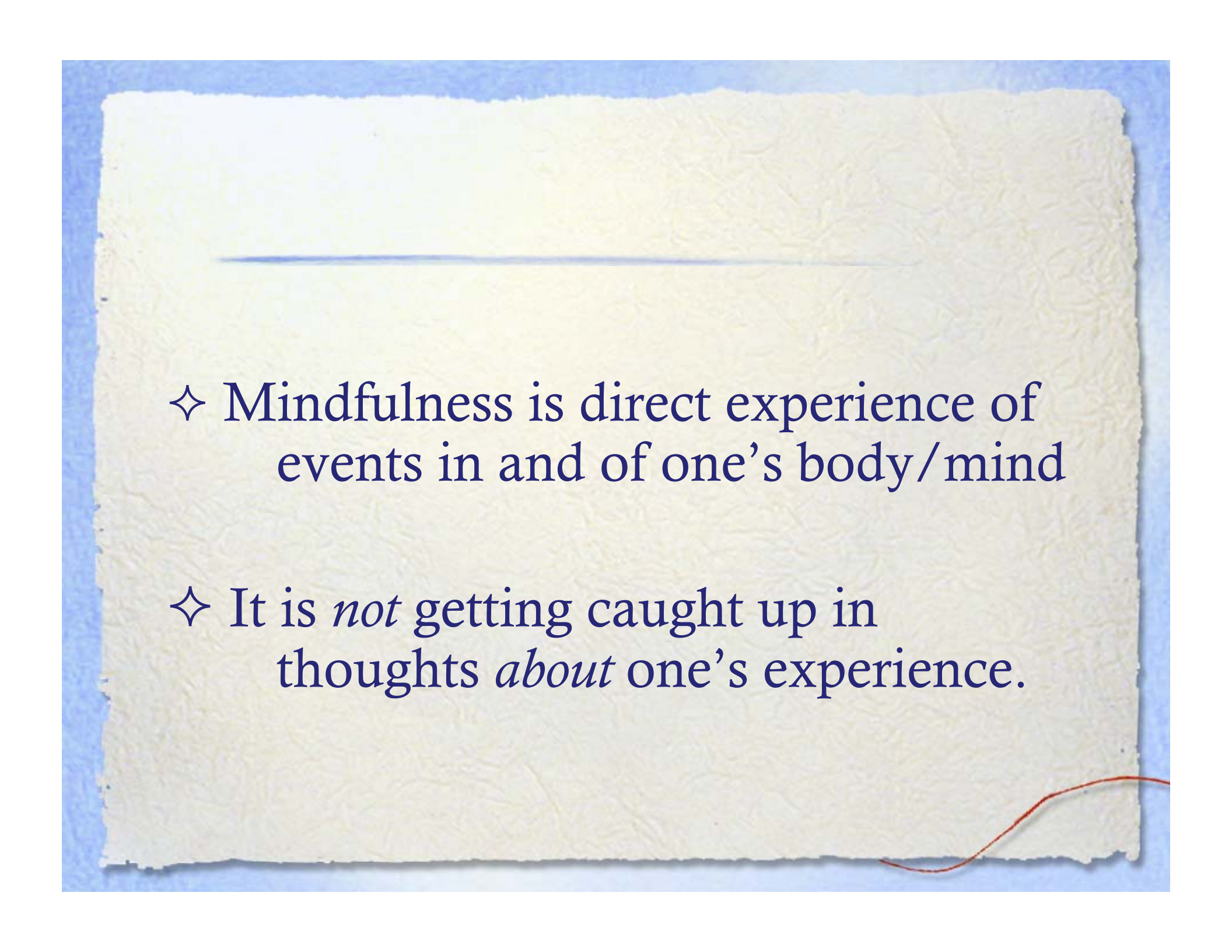


With mindful presence
and awareness
we are enabled to make
more conscious choices!

IT IS OUR
CHOICES
THAT SHOW US
WHAT TRULY
WE ARE
ARE FAR
MORE THAN
ABILITIES
ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

Qualities of Mindfulness

Presence

- 
- ✧ Mindfulness is direct experience of events in and of one's body/mind
 - ✧ It is *not* getting caught up in thoughts *about* one's experience.

Qualities of Mindfulness

Here and Now

Qualities of Mindfulness

Acceptance

ACCEPTANCE

=

Acknowledging what is

Acceptance is **NOT**
resignation or approval

Qualities of Mindfulness

Beginner's Mind

The greatest impediment to discovery
is not ignorance
but what we already know.

» Sylvia Boorstein, American Buddhist teacher

Qualities of Mindfulness

Non-Judging

MINDFULNESS

helps us discern the difference between
dislike, discomfort, or pain
and our **DISTRESS**
about feeling
the dislike, discomfort, or pain.

Qualities of Mindfulness

Letting Go

Your awareness is like
a gracious host
in the midst of unruly guests!

» Soygal Rinpoche,
Tibetan Buddhist teacher

Qualities of Mindfulness

Appreciation

Qualities of Mindfulness

Gentleness

Qualities of Mindfulness

Loving-kindness &
Compassion = open heart

Mindfulness = open mind

Between stimulus and response
there is a space.

In that space is our power to
choose our response.

In our response lies
our growth and freedom.

- Victor Frankl, M.D., Ph.D.
(1905-1997)

Mindfulness

✧ Requires *willingness*

✧ Do it over and over and over and over
and over and over and over....

Music communicates with the body
by speaking the language of
physiology.

Music is a process that happens *within us*,
not to us.

-- Schneck & Berger
The Music Effect (2006)

❖ The unique structure of music

- it exists only through time –
requires the individual to commit to the
experience moment by moment...

❖ The necessity for moment-to-moment commitment
by the individual rests in the music itself.

❖ William Sears, *Processes in Music Therapy* (1968)

- ❖ Once committed to the music, the individual's behavior... requires attention to the music through the duration of the musical experience, even if attention fluctuates.
- ❖ Because the time order of music is continuous, the individual's responses must be continuous... immediately observable, moment by moment.

❖ William Sears, *Processes in Music Therapy* (1968)

MUSIC THERAPY

- ✧ Phenomenological
- ✧ Embodied & Relational
- ✧ Requires *presentness*
- ✧ Temporal - in the flowing now
- ✧ Process oriented
- ✧ Non-judgmental
- ✧ Kindness & Compassion

MUSIC THERAPY

Engages multiple avenues of sensory perception

✧ Physical

✧ auditory

✧ kinesthetic

✧ tactile

✧ visual

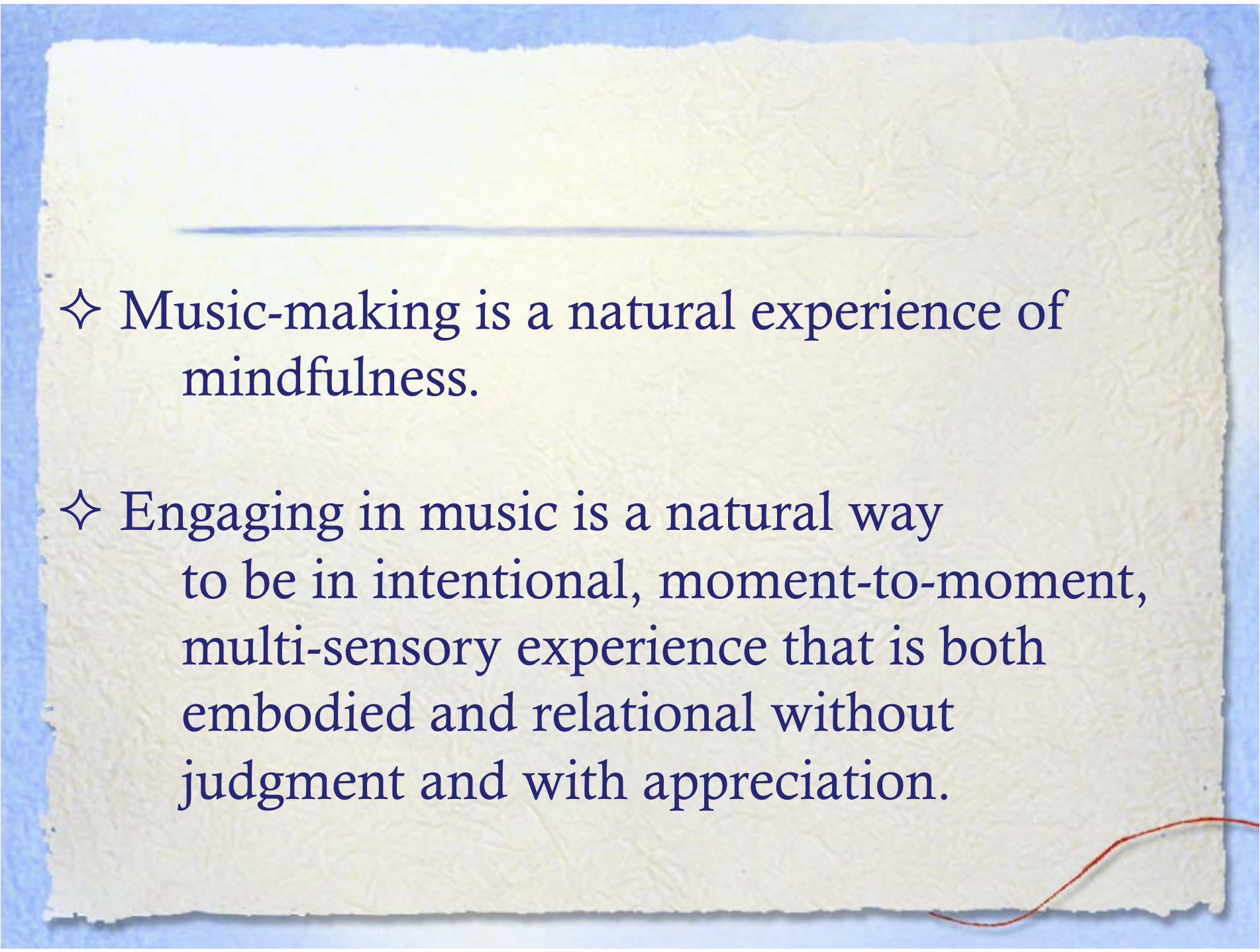
✧ Emotional

✧ Cognitive

✧ Intuitive

✧ Relational

✧ Spiritual

- 
-
- ✧ Music-making is a natural experience of mindfulness.
 - ✧ Engaging in music is a natural way to be in intentional, moment-to-moment, multi-sensory experience that is both embodied and relational without judgment and with appreciation.

RESOURCES

There are many resources on mindfulness.

To get started with the basics, I recommend the following by Jon Kabat-Zinn:

- ✧ *Full Catastrophe Living*
- ✧ *Wherever You Go, There You Are*
- ✧ *Mindfulness for Beginners*