



The Journey You Own

THE JOURNEY YOU OWN: A DEEPER DIVE

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

with Jyothi V. Robertson, DVM, DABVP (Shelter Medicine)



Maddie's
Fund

SEPT
6
10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Creating Space

Reframed space as a possibility, a commitment, and a contemplation. Intention, lingering items, pausing

OCT
4
10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Contemplative Practices

What are practices you do in your life? Sharing tools for staying engaged with your practice. Looking at research related to specific forms of practice. Transformative engagement.

NOV
1
10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Values Alignment

How do we think about values and how do they show up in our actions? What do we do to align our values with our personal mission or goals?

DEC
6
10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Productivity

What does healthy productivity look like? How can you form habits that produce the space for productivity?

JAN
3
10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Communication in Action

What are specific ways to utilize language to create possibility? How does our listening impact our view? What are some ways to think about learning that can lead to wholeness.

Today, let's explore

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES

What are **contemplative practices?**

Contemplative practices are activities that help us stay present in the moment, and get out of our thinking minds and into our bodies.



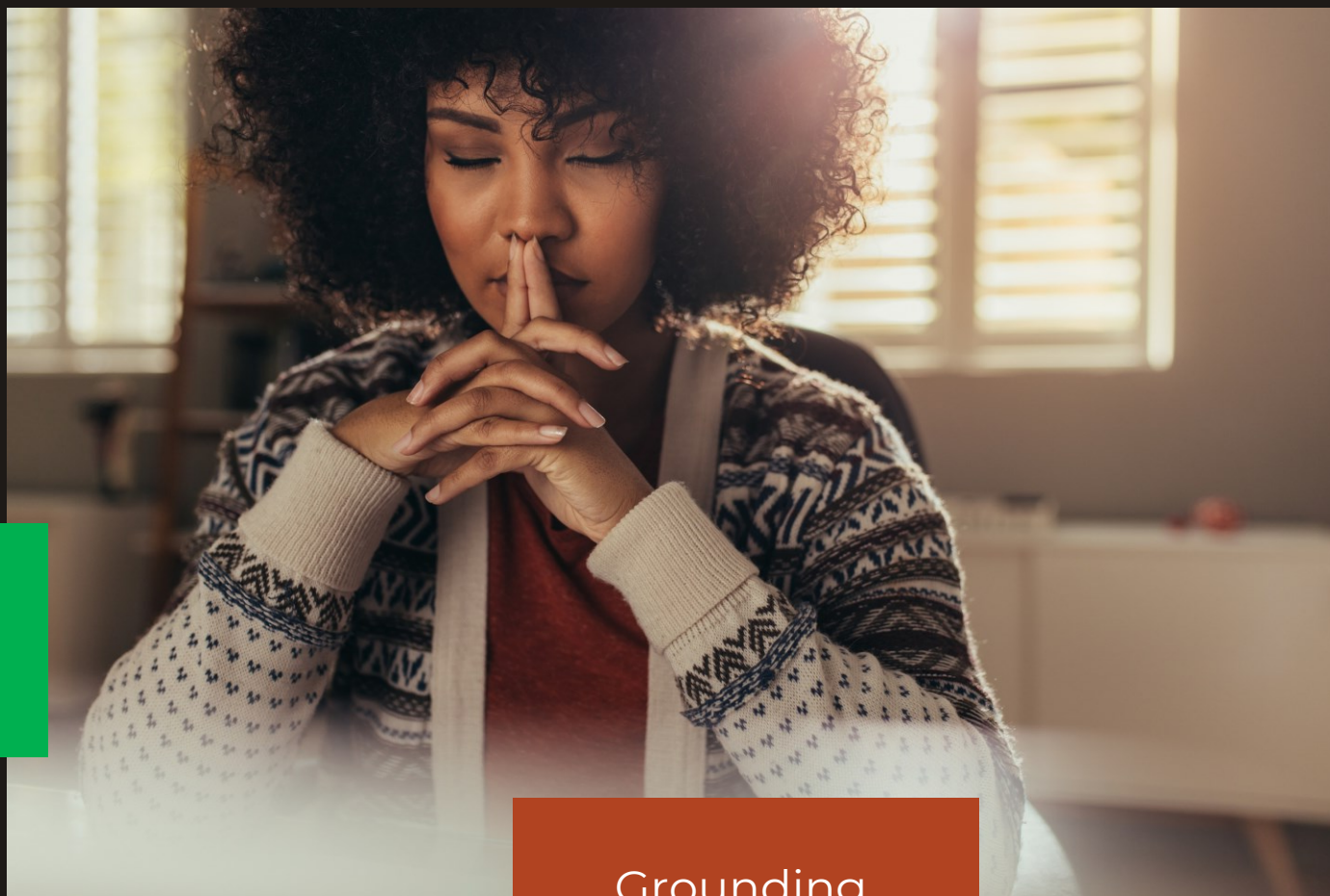
Focus of this session:
**How to integrate
contemplative
practices at work**

Equanimity

Discernment,
aspiration


Focus, clarity,
concentration

Grounding,
calmness



How do we **start and strengthen our practice?**

Five Practices and Two Tools

-  Anchoring
-  Body scan
-  Sensory
-  Labeling Thoughts
-  Visualization





But first ... a story





Turn back around...





Stop and notice...

Practice #1

Anchoring

The practice of “**coming back**”

breath

body

touch

physical sensations



Breath as an anchor.
Out of our heads
and into the
present moment.



A close-up photograph of a dandelion seed head on the left, with several seeds blowing away in the wind towards the right. The background is a soft, warm gradient of colors, transitioning from a light blue on the left to a warm yellow and orange on the right, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is peaceful and serene.

Counting Breaths

What came up for you?



Jot it down.



Breath as an anchor

Improve health

improve blood circulation
lower heart rate and blood pressure
reduce the risk of heart attack and stroke
increasing focus and concentration

Breathing Awareness Meditation (BAM)

Research

BAM is exercise one of the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program [25]. Practice involves focusing upon the moment, sustaining attention on the breathing process and passively observing thoughts. The individual sits upright with eyes closed and focuses on diaphragm movements while **breathing in a slow, deep, relaxed manner**. Ten-minute sessions were conducted during health education class and at home each week day. On weekends, **subjects practiced 10 minute sessions twice daily**. Self-reported compliance for home practice was $86.6 \pm 7.4\%$. Average in-school attendance was 79% of total sessions.

Results

Significant group differences were found for changes in overnight SBP and SBP, DBP and HR over the 24-hour period and during school hours.

References:

- Ohara, T. (2021). The Effect of Meditation on Regulation of Heart Rate. American Journal of Biomedical Science & Research, 12(2), 168.
- Gregoski MJ, Barnes VA, Tingen MS, Harshfield GA, Treiber FA. Breathing awareness meditation and LifeSkills Training programs influence upon ambulatory blood pressure and sodium excretion among African American adolescents. J Adolesc Health. 2011 Jan;48(1):59-64. doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2010.05.019. Epub 2010 Sep 24. PMID: 21185525; PMCID: PMC3026442.





Your Next Steps
on Your Journey

Practice with an anchor



Breath



Your feet as they
rest on the
ground



Sensation at
your fingertips



Back to my story...



Practice #2

Sensory



We can experience **our senses** with more nuances when we practice these techniques.

Lower blood pressure

Meditation appears to control blood pressure by relaxing the nerve signals that coordinate heart function, blood vessel tension, and the “fight-or-flight” response that increases alertness in stressful situations.

Enhanced tactile acuity through mental states.

Bodily training typically evokes behavioral and perceptual gains, enforcing neuroplastic processes and affecting neural representations. We investigated the effect on somatosensory perception of a three-day Zen meditation exercise, a purely mental intervention. Tactile spatial discrimination of the right index finger was persistently improved by only 6 hours of mental-sensory focusing on this finger, suggesting that intrinsic brain activity created by mental states can alter perception and behavior similarly to external stimulation.

How the mind sharpens the senses

A study conducted with experienced scholars of Zen-Meditation shows that mental focusing can induce learning mechanisms, similar to physical training. Researchers discovered this phenomenon during a scientifically monitored meditation retreat.



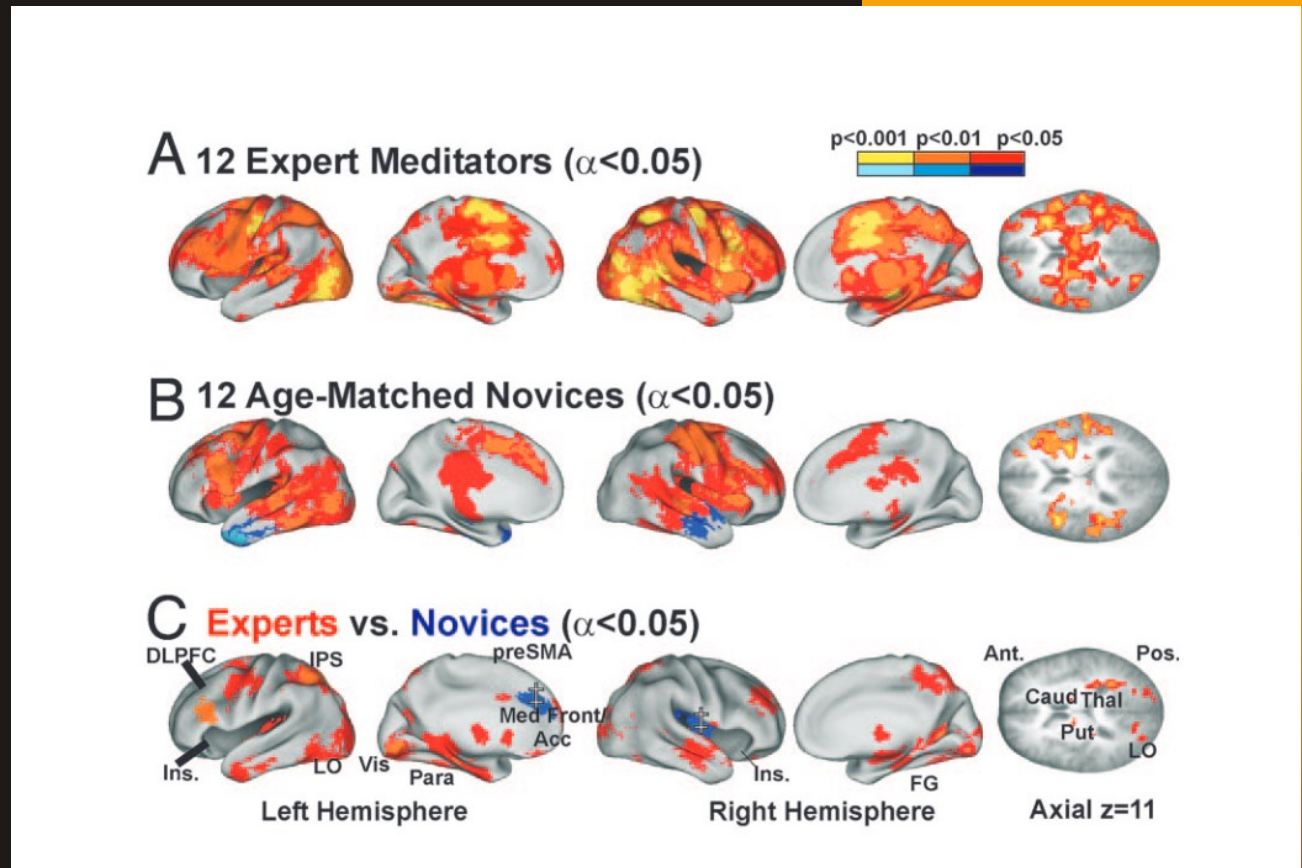
Reference:

- Olex, S., Newberg, A., & Figueredo, V. M. (2013). Meditation: Should a cardiologist care? *International Journal of Cardiology*, 168(3), 1805–1810. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijcard.2013.06.086>
- Sebastian T. Philipp, Tobias Kalisch, Thomas Wachtler, Hubert R. Dinse. Enhanced tactile acuity through mental states. *Scientific Reports*, 2015; 5: 13549 DOI: [10.1038/srep13549](https://doi.org/10.1038/srep13549)
- Ruhr-Universitaet-Bochum. (2015, August 27). How the mind sharpens the senses. ScienceDaily. Retrieved October 3, 2023 from www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2015/08/150827083659.htm

Neural correlates of attentional expertise in long-term meditation practitioners

Meditation refers to a family of mental training practices that are designed to familiarize the practitioner with specific types of mental processes. One of the most basic forms of meditation is concentration meditation, in which sustained attention is focused on an object such as a small visual stimulus or the breath. In age-matched participants, using functional MRI, we found that activation in a network of brain regions typically involved in sustained attention showed an inverted u-shaped curve in which expert meditators (EMs) with an average of 19,000 h of practice had more activation than novices, but EMs with an average of 44,000 h had less activation. In response to distracter sounds used to probe the meditation, EMs vs. novices had less brain activation in regions related to discursive thoughts and emotions and more activation in regions related to response inhibition and attention. Correlation with hours of practice suggests possible plasticity in these mechanisms.

Reference:
Brefczynski-Lewis, J. A., Lutz, A., Schaefer, H. S., +1, & Davidson, R. J. (2007). Neural correlates of attentional expertise in long-term meditation practitioners. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 104(27), 11483-11488. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.0606552104>





**Your Next Steps
on Your Journey**

**Notice which
sensation you
feel most
connected with.**





And the story continues...



Noticing how
emotions appear
in the body



Practice #3

The Body Scan



What came up for you?



Jot it down.



Practicing Body Scans and Mindfulness techniques can reduced **stress** and **pain**

Your perception of pain is connected to your state of mind, and it can be elevated in stressful conditions. For example, one review of 38 studies concluded that mindfulness meditation could reduce pain, improve quality of life, and decrease symptoms of depression in people with chronic pain.

Research in an 8-week study, a meditation style called “mindfulness meditation” reduced the inflammation response caused by stress. This inflammatory response can cause, among other things, fatigue and cloudy thinking.

Reference:

Hilton, L., Hempel, S., Ewing, B. A., Apaydin, E., Xenakis, L., Newberry, S., Colaiaco, B., Maher, A. R., Shanman, R. M., Sorbero, M. E., & Maglione, M. A. (2017). Mindfulness Meditation for Chronic Pain: Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 51(2), 199–213. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12160-016-9844-2>.

Rosenkranz, M. A., Davidson, R. J., MacCoon, D. G., Sheridan, J. F., Kalin, N. H., & Lutz, A. (2013). A comparison of mindfulness-based stress reduction and an active control in modulation of neurogenic inflammation. *Brain, Behavior, and Immunity*, 27, 174–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2012.10.013>





**Your Next Steps
on Your Journey**

**Notice where you
hold tension in
your body.**





Many different thought practices

Insight meditation with examining our thoughts – RAIN meditation.

Meditations to improve focus and let go of distractions.



Practice #4

Labelling Thoughts

All thoughts are just thoughts whether they appear to be “good” or “bad”.





Visualization

Reduced anxiety, depression, and pain

Mindfulness meditation has been shown to be especially effective at easing psychological stresses like anxiety, depression, and pain.

- Researchers from Johns Hopkins analyzed 47 trials they considered well-designed studies and concluded that mindful meditation can help ease psychological stresses like anxiety, depression, and pain.
- Researchers reviewed more than 200 studies of mindfulness among healthy people and found mindfulness-based therapy was especially effective for reducing stress, anxiety and depression.
- Another study in 47 people with chronic pain found that completing an 8-week meditation program led to noticeable improvements in depression, anxiety, and pain over 1 year.

Important Note: This should not be considered a replacement for seeking assistance from a mental health professional or a mindfulness expert with a trauma-informed approach.

Reference:
Goyal, M., Singh, S., Sibinga, E. M. S., Gould, N. F., Rowland-Seymour, A., Sharma, R., Berger, Z., Sleicher, D., Maron, D. D., Shihab, H. M., Ranasinghe, P. D., Linn, S., Saha, S., Bass, E. B., & Haythornthwaite, J. A. (2014). Meditation Programs for Psychological Stress and Well-being: A Systematic Review and Meta-analysis. *JAMA Internal Medicine*, 174(3), 357–368. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.13018>

Khoury, B., Lecomte, T., Fortin, G., Masse, M., Therien, P., Bouchard, V., Chapleau, M.-A., Paquin, K., & Hofmann, S. G. (2013). Mindfulness-based therapy: A comprehensive meta-analysis. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33(6), 763–771. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2013.05.005>

Rod, K. (2015). Observing the Effects of Mindfulness-Based Meditation on Anxiety and Depression in Chronic Pain Patients. *Psychiatria Danubina*, 27 Suppl 1, S209-211.





Your Next Steps on Your Journey

**Notice your thoughts. See if
you are drawn to a particular
visualization practice.**



Tree rooted in
the ground



Wave of the
ocean



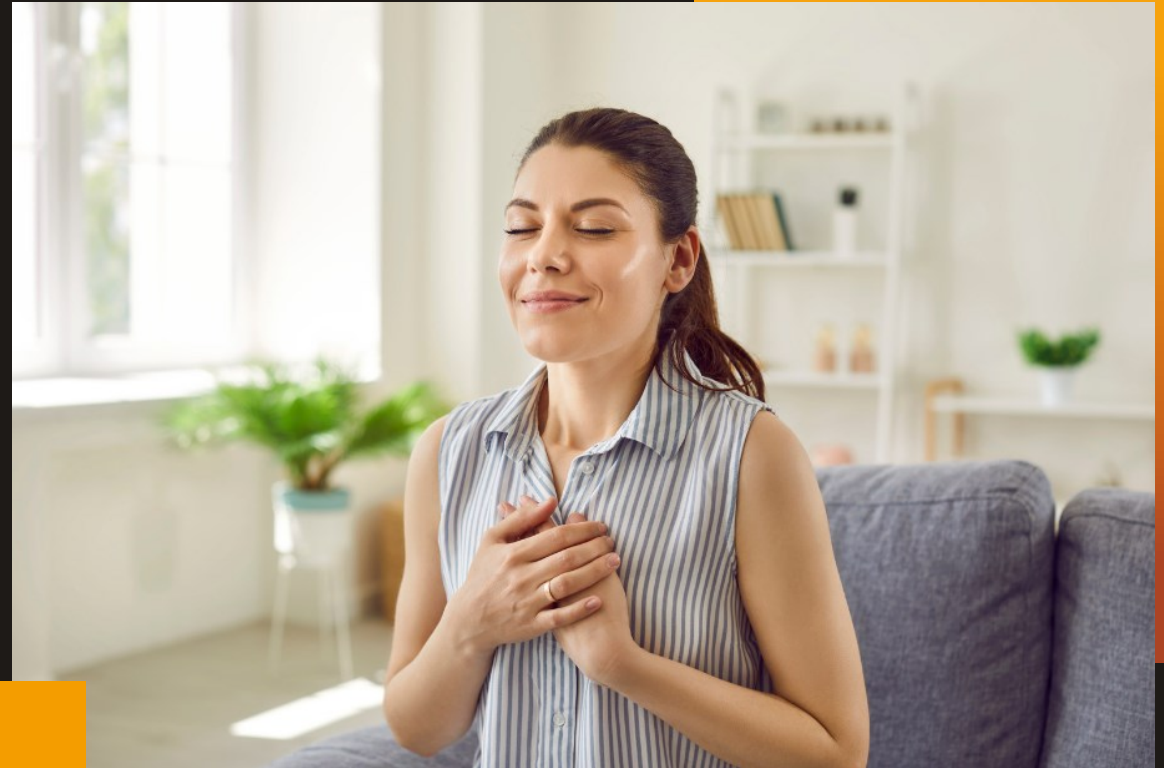
Sun rising



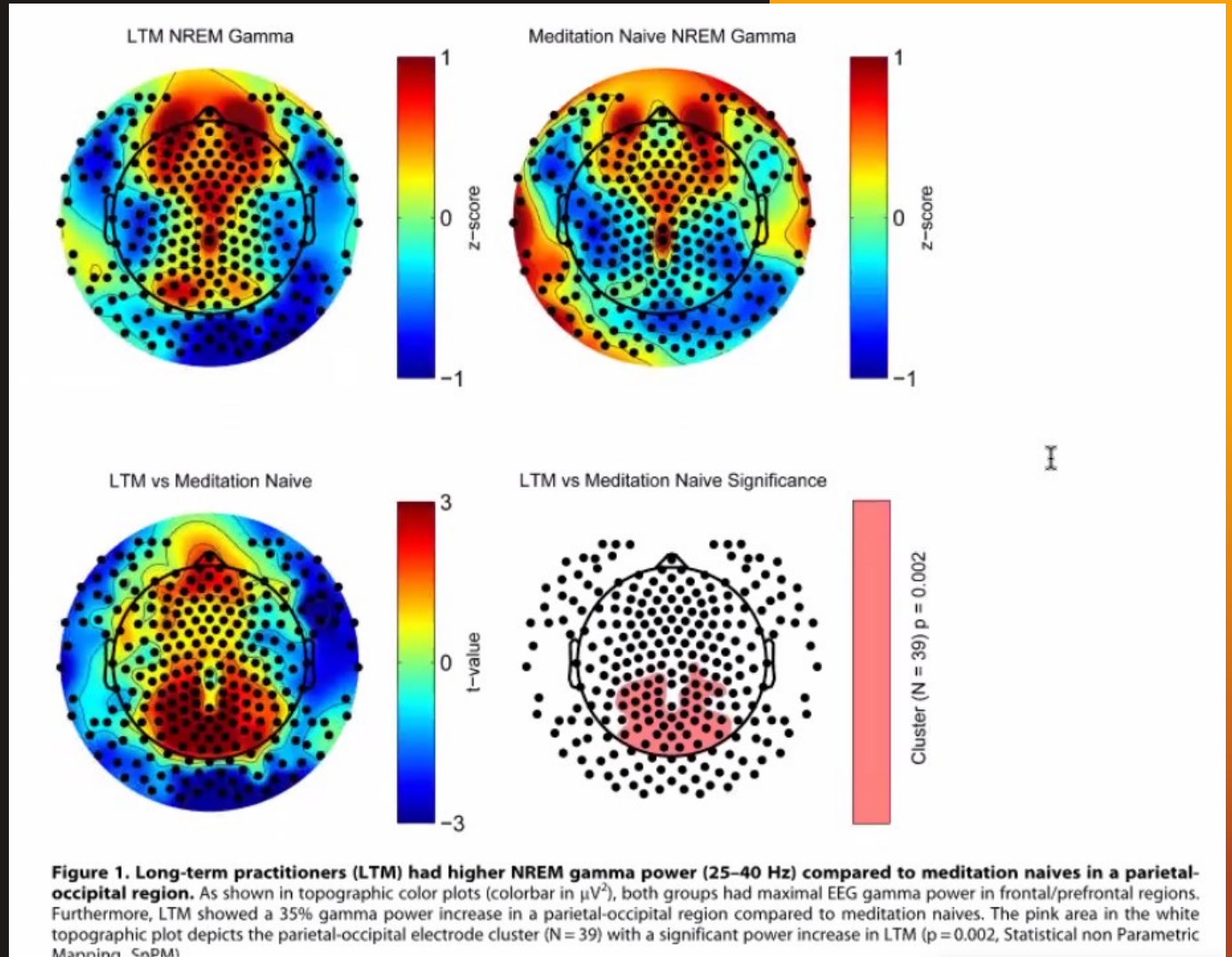
The Final Story – Changing Perspective

Gratitude Practice

- Generating compassion
- Many different practices including “loving-kindness” practice
- Offering well wishes to others



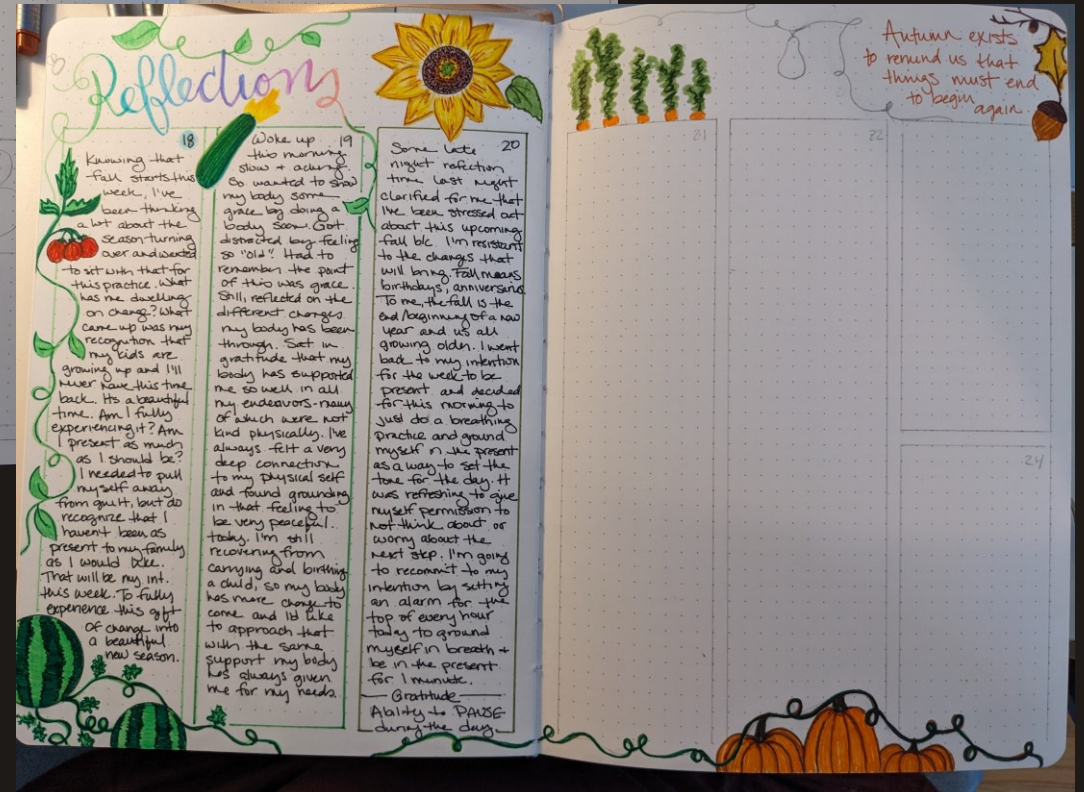
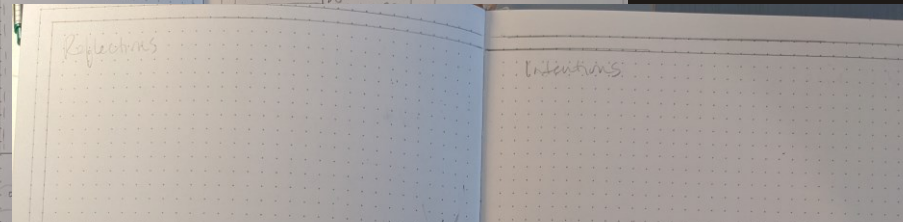
Functional neural plasticity and associated changes in positive affect after compassion training



Reference:
Klimecki OM, Leiberg S, Lamm C, Singer T. Functional neural plasticity and associated changes in positive affect after compassion training. *Cereb Cortex*. 2013 Jul;23(7):1552-61. doi: 10.1093/cercor/bhs142. Epub 2012 Jun 1. PMID: 22661409.

Tool #1

Journaling



Tool #2

Using an online tool for
journaling and gratitudes

www.dayoneapp.com

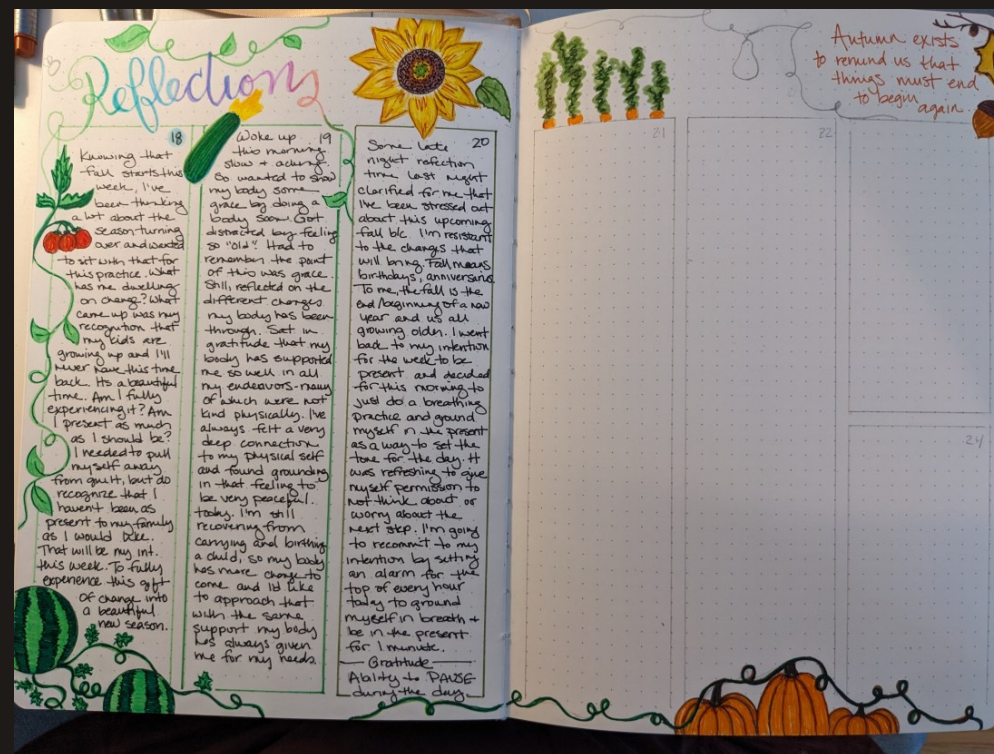




Your Next Steps on Your Journey

Capturing Your Experience

Notice what arises daily
or weekly for the next
four weeks.



Closing Out - Challenges when meditating to stay with the practice

Sleepy or
drowsy

Open your eyes,
count breaths,
choose a focus point

Too distracted

Close your eyes,
count breaths, create
a visualization that
engages the mind

Clinging to
thoughts

This is the practice –
when you notice, it's
coming back, keep
coming back – to
breath, to anchor.

Anxiety or
spiraling
thoughts

Open eyes, set an
anchor such as your
hands – one resting
on the other, consider
a visualization
practice or stop the
practice



Practice is the
journey itself.







**There's no right way
to meditate.**

**The only thing that a
meditation practice
requires is that you
show up.**



Engage with Us

Follow Dr. Jyothi Robertson on Insight Timer

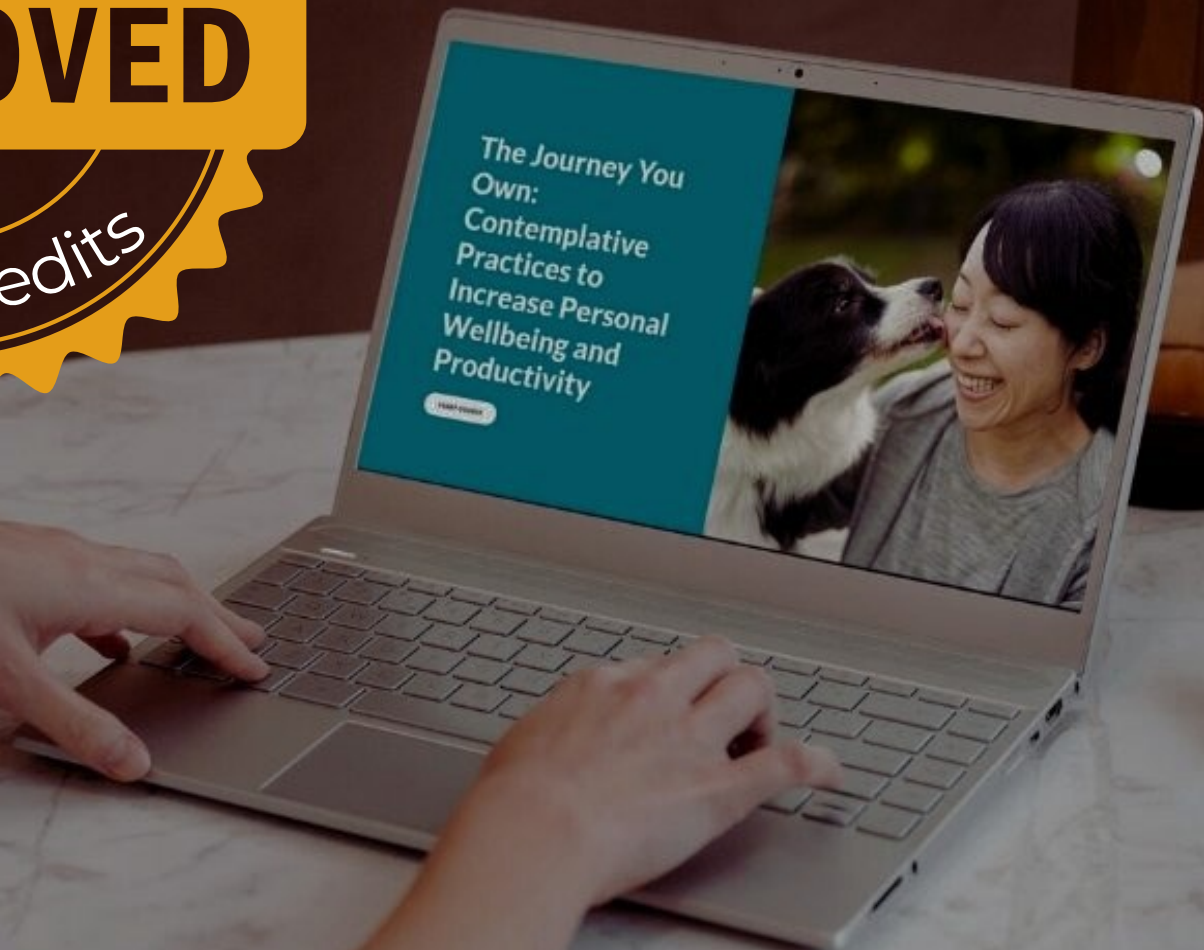
<https://insig.ht/azNIhnHQLwb>

Join the Journey You Own Monthly Meditation Gathering

www.jyo.world/meditation-gathering

The screenshot shows the profile of Dr. Jyothi Robertson, DVM, on the Insight Timer platform. The profile includes a profile picture, her name, and her location (San Mateo County, CA, USA). Below the profile information, there are several meditation tracks listed with their respective durations and titles. The tracks include: "Shamatha Meditation Or Peaceful-Abiding Practice" (4.8 hours), "The Power Of Labeling Thoughts For Mindfulness" (2.2 hours), "Sound Awareness Meditation for Openness" (3 hours), "A Guided Breath and Light Visualization" (4.5 hours), "5 Senses Meditation" (4.4 hours), and "Smile Meditation For Generating Kindness And..." (4.5 hours). The profile also shows that she has 35 followers and has been teaching on the platform for 9 months.

The screenshot displays the website for "Online Meditation Gatherings" by Journey You Own. The website features a navigation bar with "EXPLORE", "CONNECT", "ENGAGE", and "SUPPORT US" buttons. The main heading is "Online Meditation Gatherings" with a sub-heading "The Journey You Own Online Meditation Gatherings are free sitting meditation sessions held online via Zoom." Below this, there are three main sections: "BIPOC MEDITATION GATHERING", "MONTHLY MEDITATION GATHERING", and "MORNING MEDITATION PRACTICE". Each section provides details about the gathering, including the time, frequency, and a "REGISTER TODAY" button. The BIPOC gathering is a 1-hour session on the first Saturday of the month. The Monthly gathering is a 1-hour session every Thursday. The Morning practice is a 30-minute session every 2nd Tuesday of the month.





Quick Recap



Set an intention for how you want to show up for the world at the beginning of the week for the next four weeks. Reflect on it each Friday (using a sticky note on the computer with the phrase so you see it).



Think of some lingering items in your life. Commit to “completing” two to three items before our next session.



Practice the spaciousness meditation and see what arises for you.





Review of Next Steps on Your Journey

- Choose your anchor.
- Notice which sensation you feel most connected with.
- Notice where you hold tension in your body.
- Notice your thoughts. See if you are drawn to a particular visualization practice.
- Capturing your experience through journaling. Notice what arises daily or weekly for the next four weeks.



Coming up next month...

SEPT**6**10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

Creating Space

How does space appear in our lives?
Noticing space

OCT**4**10am PT
12PM CT
1PM ET

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What are specific ways to utilize language to create possibility? How does our listening impact our view? What are some ways to think about learning that can lead to wholeness.



The Journey You Own

Thank you!

Jyothi Robertson, DVM DABVP (Shelter Medicine)

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