



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout January 16, 2022

Mindfulness

Mindfulness, the practice of bringing your attention to the present moment, originated from ancient eastern and Buddhist philosophy that dates back about 2500 years. T'ai Chi is a practice that is similar to the concepts and principles of mindfulness without using the phrase, mindfulness. So, mindfulness is not a new concept but it has become an integral part of the healing and wellbeing culture in the US.

In 1979, Jon Kabat-Zinn founded the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program at the University of Massachusetts to treat the chronically ill. Dr. Kabat-Zinn, Ph. D is Professor of Medicine Emeritus at the University of Massachusetts Medical School.

He identified 7 principles of mindfulness: Here is a shortened version of his list:

1. Non-judging. Be an impartial witness to your own experience without self-criticism
2. Patience. A form of wisdom. Patience demonstrates that we accept the fact that things sometimes unfold on their own time.
3. Beginner's Mind. Remaining open and curious allows you to be receptive to new possibilities and new learning
4. Trust. Develop a basic trust with yourself and your feelings.
5. Non-Striving. The goal is to be with yourself in the here and now.

6. Acceptance. See things as they are
7. Letting Go. Pay attention to your inner experience and discover thoughts, emotions and situations your mind wants to hold onto. Allow yourself to be in the moment.

These concepts are probably recognizable as we employ them when learning and performing T'ai Chi. The other similarity of Mindfulness and T'ai Chi is the deep relaxation we strive for when we quiet the chatter in our brain, what we call the monkey brain. As we learn and perform Ta' Chi we attempt to quiet the random and sometimes disquieting thoughts that impede our ability to learn and to have fun.

Walking also shares these principles and benefits. As you walk or perform T'ai Chi try to engage these principles. There are many benefits to mindfulness and you may notice that some are the same as our "5 Breaths Qigong".

Mindfulness and T'ai Chi Benefits

1. Connects You More Deeply with the Environment
2. It Gets You Out of Your Head
3. It Allows You to Commune with Nature
4. It Helps You Get to Know Your Body
5. It Slows You Down
6. It Strengthens Concentration
7. It Increases Your Awareness of Intention
9. It Helps You Connect to the Present Moment

If you want to learn more about mindfulness, you might want to tune into a TED talk by mindfulness expert Andy Puddicombe. He even references the "art of doing nothing."

Peace, *Linda*