The Lighter Side of Mindfulness: 7 Simple Practices to Expand Awareness and Fulfillment

1) Introductions

2) Mindfulness
   i) Definition
   ii) Research findings

3) The power of habits and habitual thinking
   i) Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
   ii) Cognitive restructuring
   iii) Awareness is curative! By learning to mindfully notice behaviors and thoughts:
       - A man who is overweight can recognize that he is eating beyond the point of being hungry.
       - A social worker can notice that she is working harder than her clients.
       - An athlete can recognize signals from his/her body that it’s time to take a water break.
       Group sharing of additional examples

4) Identify 3-5 mindless habits
   Disclose to a partner
   Release and accept through laughter

5) 7 Simple Practices to Expand Awareness and Fulfillment
   i) **Kindle Kindness** - create some light-hearted self-talk that encourages rather than berates
   ii) **Embracing Ambiguity** - shift concern with the unknown to laughter in the face of it
   iii) **Ask, Don’t Tell** – learn how to pose simple questions to empower interpersonal relationships
   v) **Hit the Snooze Alarm** – (AKA positive procrastination) intentionally suspend judgment and postpone decision-making until you can see things more clearly
   vi) **Predict the Future** – what do you already know about a person, event, place or thing to help you anticipate the likely outcome?
   vii) **Befriend NO!** - **partner up** to practice saying “no” clearly, loudly, and with conviction.

4) Questions, comments and take-aways
7 Simple Practices to Expand Awareness and Fulfillment

1. **Kindle Kindness** – experience and discovery
   Step 1: List 3 terms of endearment. Hint: Think of words you would use to speak to a small, wide-eyed, innocent child (dear one, precious, sweetie, darling, punkin’, cutie-patootie).
   
a) _________________________________________
b) _________________________________________
c) _________________________________________

   Step 2: Recall an occasion when you judged your unskilled behavior with less than complimentary thoughts/language
   Step 3: Complete the following: “________________ (address yourself with one of the endearing terms), when you ________________ (describe your unskilled behavior), you missed the mark. In spite of this error, (insert endearing term), you are loved and you are forgiven.
   Step 4: Recall an occasion when you reacted to another’s unskilled behavior with less than complimentary thoughts/language.
   Complete the following: ________________ (address your friend/spouse/co-worker/stranger with one of the endearing terms), when you ________________ (describe their unskilled behavior), you missed the mark. In spite of this error, (insert endearing term) you are loved and you are forgiven.”

2. **Embracing Ambiguity** - shift concern with the unknown to laughter in the face of it
   **What do you know without a doubt?** ______________________________
   **What don’t you know that you don’t want to know** (e.g. how to change a spare tire)? ______________________________
   **What do you wish you knew?** ______________________________
   **What would help you accept not knowing (for now)?**
   a. ______________________________
   b. ______________________________
   c. ______________________________
   Say, “I don’t know what to do about XXX”…. and then laugh out loud!
3. **Ask, Don’t Tell** – learn how to pose simple questions to empower interpersonal relationships (AKA resisting the temptation to tell other people what they should do!). When a friend/co-worker/family member is in a pickle, try one of these (Hint: Be sure to wait for a response):

**What do you most need right now?**
**How could you get clarity about that?**
**When would be a good time to test that idea?**

4. **Mind Your Body** –
Techniques to recognize signals for hunger/thirst/fatigue and your body’s need for movement/activity/stretching.

5. **Hit the Snooze Alarm** –
When asked unexpectedly for a commitment of time or money, I can say

____________________________________________________________

Instead of arguing when someone doesn’t do what I want them to do, I can stop and remember

____________________________________________________________

Instead of becoming anxious when I need more information before reaching a decision, I can request

_____________________________________________________________

6. **Predict the Future** – what do you already know about a person, event, place or thing to help you anticipate the likely outcome?

**What happens if you spend more than you make?**
**What can you predict as you wait at the coffee shop for a friend who is habitually late?**
**What do you notice about communication when parties are Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired?**

**Befriend NO!** – Partner sharing:

7. **In which circumstances or relationships could you better honor your values by befriending your “no”**?

a. _________________________________________________________

b. _________________________________________________________

c. _________________________________________________________
Bibliography


