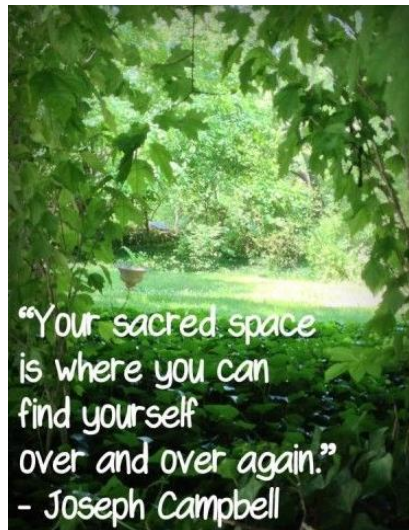


Mindfulness 8 week course

With Ellen Shilling



Week 8:

Your mindfulness toolkit &

Sacred Space

www.Xhale.ie

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First I was dying to finish high school and start college.
And then I was dying to finish college and start working.
And then I was dying to marry and have children.
And then I was dying to get the next promotion, complete the next big
project.
And then I was dying to retire.
And now, I am dying...
And suddenly realize I forgot to live.
- Anonymous -

Sacred Space

Your sacred space (also called your inner resource) is a place in your imagination that you go to in meditation, when you need a break or when you're life becomes overwhelming. It can be based on places you've visited before, somewhere that is purely of your imagination or a combination of both. It is always somewhere you feel safe, comfortable and peaceful.

It generally tends to be in nature however it doesn't have to be, it can be on your bed at home, in your granny's sitting room or in your childhood home, this is your place and there is no right or wrong.

Your sacred space can change over time also.

Why do we create a sacred space in Mindfulness?

Any time that life becomes difficult, challenging, overwhelming or a combination of them all, then you have access to a place in your imagination for you to visit; to breathe, take a moment, centre and ground yourself.

I have clients that use this when they're having a particularly stressful day. They take themselves off to a room at work, take a few deep breaths and go to their sacred space. They have all said that it helps them enormously.

The more often that you visit this place the easier it will be to find it in those moments when you need it most.

Play with it, let it unfold and know that there are no rules in your sacred space, you can have dolphins flying in the sky, lions swimming, trees growing in the sea and fish walking around. Please do not worry about what it looks like or about getting it right, just let it unfold.

As you visit places on your holidays or in your leisure time you might like to add aspects of those places to your sacred space. It's a continuously evolving place, but it is *always safe, calming and nourishing*.

Time to reflect...

This brings us to the final week of the course, well done!! If you have been reading the material and doing the practices, you have accomplished a lot! As a result of your dedication, learning and practice, it's likely that there have been some changes in you since you began, so now might be a good time to ask: **What changes have you noticed since you began the course? Are there differences in the way that you react now? What have you let go of?** The changes may be different than you expected (and what you put down on the sheet I sent you out all those weeks ago!) and they might not be monumental. They could be subtle shifts, such as discovering that you are sometimes able to breathe in the middle of a busy day, or that you are a little more resilient in encounters with others, or you're just a little kinder to yourself in difficult situations. It's often the subtle changes that are actually most profound.

Review: Over the last 8 weeks we have covered:

- 🌀 The definition of mindfulness and the Scientific evidence
- 🌀 Dispelling the Myths: Mindfulness isn't about controlling your thoughts.
- 🌀 What you practice grows stronger. Neuroplasticity
- 🌀 Present moment awareness and autopilot. Realising that this moment is the only moment that's important
- 🌀 Multitasking v's single tasking
- 🌀 *"All that's happened it's over, I'm ok, and just for this moment I can breathe."*
- 🌀 Your breath. Why it's so important in Mindfulness.
 - Anchor point
 - Changing your breath changes your physiological and mental states
 - We take over 20,000 breaths every day
- 🌀 Making your outbreath 2 beats longer than in breath takes your body off high alert
- 🌀 Body Scan – mind/body connection, tuning into your gut feeling, bringing harmony, healing and balance into your body, as a tool to reach your physical goals.
- 🌀 Emotions – “this too shall pass” learning to no longer suppress but to greet, own and feel into them so they pass.
- 🌀 Compassion / befriending meditations. The Metta Bhavana to help you to let go of people who trigger you & the RAIN for when you become stuck in an emotion. Both for compassion.

“Love and compassion are necessities not luxuries, without them humanity cannot survive” The Dalai Lama.

- 🌀 Acceptance = acknowledgement and not resignation.

*“Whatever you accept completely, you go beyond. If you fight it, you're stuck with it.”
Eckhart Tolle*

- 🌀 Non Judgement: Remove the labels.
- 🌀 Formal practices: Body scan, RAIN, Breath, Metta Bhavana, Sacred Space etc
- 🌀 Informal Practices:
 - PNB – Pause, Notice, Breathe
 - Bringing presence into your day
 - Single tasking
 - Things we do on autopilot
 - Mindful eating
 - Mantras:
 - May I be well, May I be happy, May I be at peace
 - I am here / this is now
 - All that's happened is over, I'm ok and just for this moment I can breathe.
 - Mindful listening

Types of mindfulness meditations and when to use them your life:

All of the practises we've covered can be used at any time in your life. Go with your gut feeling and pick the one that you enjoy the most and that you feel will be of most benefit to you at that time. Some suggestions are:

- ॐ Mindfulness of breathing – for overall calm, grounding and centering. Change your breath and you change your physiological and mental state.
- ॐ *"All that happened, its over, I'm ok and just for this moment I can breathe / I am safe"* For after a trauma or a particularly stressful day/event.
- ॐ Body Scan – for developing the Mind- body connection. Learning to work *with* your body.
- ॐ Metta Bhavana – cultivating compassion. Befriending yourself. Reduces self-criticism. For times when you're giving out to yourself a lot. For releasing people from your head & heartspace.
- ॐ RAIN – for self compassion and navigating emotions.
- ॐ Sacred Space – to feel safe, happy and calm.

Developing a practice of your own

The eighth week starts now but does not really have an end! So you may want to consider now: **How will you continue practicing mindfulness in your daily life, on your own?** Everyone's answer to this question will be different; some will continue with formal practices, others will bring it into their Yoga classes and others will use the informal practices in their everyday lives. Whatever you decide, make it easy for you to achieve and something that you look forward to doing rather than feel that you have to fit in.

The tipping point for me came after missing my practice for a while, I suddenly had the urge to sit, just for 10 minutes and the difference that made to my whole self was incredible. So much so that ever since that day I prioritise it as much as I can.

The important thing to remember is to be flexible. Sometimes life will get in the way and you just won't get to it, how you respond is vital. If you beat yourself up chances are you will, over time, become reluctant to practice. It will become a chore. However, if you practice self-compassion you simply start again and it's all ok, no judgement, no expectation, no pressure.

Drop in classes

I hold regular drop in classes that are listed on my website they are a great way of keeping in touch with the practice. I also plan to hold a day mindfulness retreat in 2019 and hopefully some early morning drop mindfulness sessions also.

Recommended Reading

- ॐ The power of Now & A New Earth - both by Eckhart Tolle
- ॐ Wherever you go, there you are and Full Catastrophe Living by Jon Kabat Zinn,
- ॐ Mindfulness, a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world” Mark Williams and Danny Penman
- ॐ When things fall apart by Pema Chodron
- ॐ Mindfulness for busy people by Dr Michael Sinclair & Josie Seydel
- ॐ Loving Kindness Sharon Salzberg

Thank you for attending these classes; it's been an honour and a privilege to teach you about Mindfulness. Let this be the beginning of a beautiful journey.....

Love After Love

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome,
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you
all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.



Derek Walcott