

12 Cultivating Mindfulness in Relationship

Insight Dialogue and the Interpersonal Mindfulness Program

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Humans are inherently relational beings; human interactions carry enormous power to hurt or to heal. Even in therapy—that is, in relationships guided by finely honed methods intended specifically to foster healing—the outcome has been shown to depend mostly upon the character and quality of the therapist–client relationship (see Lambert & Simon, Chapter 2, this volume).

Yet the disciplines that train therapists—medicine, psychology, social work—have generally succeeded better at teaching theories, concepts, and techniques of therapy than at fostering the quality of therapeutic relationship. To borrow Nasrudin’s famous parable, this situation is reminiscent of looking for one’s lost keys where the light is good, rather than looking for them in the place where one dropped them. That is, we continue refining the elements we know how to refine, even though they don’t show the highest correlation with outcomes, while we give less attention to the element that most influences outcome, the therapeutic relationship itself—perhaps because we haven’t quite seen how to address it.

The meditative practices that are roughly grouped under the heading of mindfulness are able to address this training gap in important ways. That is the thesis of this book, and we heartily agree. Teaching therapists and therapist trainees such forms of meditation is almost guaranteed to help them become more self-aware, more accepting and reflective, more available to the client in the present moment, and more able to choose their responses skillfully.

Nevertheless, while basic mindfulness meditation is able to improve the quality of the therapist–client relationship, it has a limitation parallel to that of the academic helping disciplines. Traditional meditation techniques like those discussed by Steven Hick in Chapter 1 of this volume have sought to develop mindfulness either in solitary formal meditation or in informal situations that are not interpersonal. Examples of formal (or “extraordinary”) meditation are meditating alone at a set-aside time or meditating on retreat in a room full of others with whom one carefully avoids interaction. Remembering to be mindful while dressing or brushing one’s teeth is an example of informal (or “ordinary”) meditation, as is the use of some stimulus in the environment, like red traffic lights or the sound of a passing train, to recall one to inner recollection. Most approaches to meditation stay within these nonrelational options. Moreover, traditional individual meditation can sometimes reify the sense of an isolated and autonomous self, though this is not its intention. When this happens, it is difficult to connect meditation to everyday life or to therapeutic practice.

Searching in solitude for the key to the demands of a particularly challenging type of relationship bears some resemblance to Nasrudin’s quandary. It relies on the premise that new habits and responses developed in private meditation will reappear spontaneously in the heat of interactions with other people. This transfer works well enough that solitary meditation has unmistakable benefits for human interactions. But as social beings, humans find interactions with each other uniquely distracting—and uniquely challenging. While most can develop some measure of tranquility, mindfulness, and compassion in solitude, transferring these gains into the give-and-take of real-time human interactions is a second, largely unsupported, challenge.

Because Insight Dialogue (ID) is a formal practice of dialogic meditation, it supports this challenge directly. Based in *vipassana* or insight meditation practices, ID is revolutionary in that it breaks the paradigm of individual, private meditation by cultivating mindfulness while in relationship. Engaging in disciplined, mindful dialogue with one or more other people is the form of this meditation practice—just as sitting or

walking, attending to the breath or to the body, are the forms of other practices. In interpersonal meditation we are able to observe our relational hungers (cravings) in real time. We are able to see how suffering arises with those hungers. We learn to support each other, and to be supported, in releasing those hungers.

The benefits of interpersonal meditation transfer easily into everyday life with others. The stimuli offered by everyday interactions are not so different from the stimuli that have been worked with in meditative practice. New skills and habits learned in meditative practice are already adapted to the challenges of relationship. Because of these differences, ID can foster changes in the quality of relationships—including the therapeutic relationship—much more directly than solitary approaches to the cultivation of mindfulness.

The first section of this chapter describes in some detail what ID looks like and how it works. ID exists in a number of forms—retreat practice, weekly groups, online dialogue (both real-time and asynchronous), and in an important offshoot, the Interpersonal Mindfulness Program (IMP). This program, modeled loosely on the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction program (MBSR), presents the basics of ID in a structured course designed to be accessible to people with no background or interest in the Buddhist roots of ID. Although the IMP presents the same ID practice, its history and norms have developed differently.

After considering the nature of the practice, we will examine how specific orientations and qualities needed in the therapeutic relationship are fostered in ID. As we shall see, the guidelines and contemplations of ID support greater therapist self-awareness and acceptance of dysphoric experience, greater presence to and acceptance of the client, and provide concrete practice in exploring the present moment, with respect and curiosity, with another person.

While ID is an accessible practice that brings important resources to therapist training and the development of the therapeutic relationship, it remains deeply rooted in the larger context of Buddhism. This larger context also has important contributions to make to the practice of therapy. At the simplest level, Buddhism can be considered as a sophisticated psychology, tested over millennia. We give some attention to how this ancient psychology can extend, deepen, and clarify the contemporary secular and Western understandings of mindfulness.

A variety of options for learning and practicing ID are available to the therapist. In a concluding section, these will be considered and weighed from the perspective of the therapist wishing to enhance his or

her capacity to enter the therapeutic relationship mindfully and skillfully.

CULTIVATING MINDFULNESS IN RELATIONSHIP

A clear impression of ID practice will lay the foundation for considering how this new practice can enhance the quality of the therapist–client relationship.

A Snapshot of the Practice

In a group gathered for this practice, participants begin by calming down. They are invited to sit quietly and to become mindful of moment-to-moment bodily sensations. Then a meditation instruction or guideline is offered, along with a contemplation topic.

The guidelines provide needed support for awareness and letting go amid the challenges of relationship. The guidelines work together, synergistically, but are introduced one at a time in a careful sequence. They can be worked with separately, or used as reminders in daily life. Perhaps the guideline for this session is *Pause*. The facilitator might say, “I invite you to slow down, to find the present moment—here and now. Pause from habitual thoughts and reactions, Pause for a moment from being caught up in thinking; notice the body. What is the posture of the body now? What is the shape and form of the body? You might notice any sensations or tensions. Notice the sense of letting go of whatever you were doing or thinking. Pause.”

After some individual meditation, participants are invited into pairs or larger groupings, and a contemplation topic is introduced. Perhaps this session’s topic is aging. Participants might be told, “Each of us is subject to aging. Our bodies are changing; everyone we know is growing older: our parents and our children, our friends and our colleagues. How do you experience this? What does aging bring up for you right now? As you enter into dialogue, please remind yourself to *Pause*: to step out of reactions to your own or your meditation partner’s story and become mindful of the body and of passing thoughts, and enter the relational moment fresh and awake. *Pause* into mindfulness as you explore the shared human experience of aging.” When a bell is rung, the participants begin their dialogues. During the dialogue, the teacher or facilitator occasionally rings a bell to bring the meditators back to silent mindfulness and to help them further establish the meditative quality of their interactions. Participants are simul-

taneously cultivating the mindfulness of Pause and exploring an essential aspect of human experience.

The IMP and ID both involve a clearly defined role for the teacher or facilitator, who shares the guidelines, maintains the practice environment, and models the practice in how he or she relates to others. He or she works to create and sustain a safe container in which kindness, honesty, and commitment to practice can become the norm. In both settings, the teacher also rings the bell as a call to silence, offers short talks, and leads interludes of physical movement.

The classic lovingkindness meditation (outlined by Bien, Chapter 3, this volume; see also Salzberg, 1995) is used at the close of each IMP class period and at the close of ID sessions or days of practice. Like the contemplation topics and their consideration in dyads, lovingkindness meditation emphasizes acceptance and acknowledgment of kindness toward self and others, focusing the mind on the shared human experience. Participants begin to comprehend on a deeper level the fact that all beings share similar experiences, including pain, ease, and clear awareness. These insights support the capacity of lovingkindness practice to shift participants' perceptions of self and others.

Guidelines and Contemplations

The meditation instructions or *guidelines* and the use of *contemplations* form the core of the practice. ID (and its offshoot the IMP) are rooted in and shaped by the use of guidelines and contemplation topics. These guidelines are *Pause*, *Relax*, *Open*, *Trust Emergence*, *Listen Deeply*, and *Speak the Truth* (see Table 12.1).

Pause refers to a temporal pause from habitual thoughts and responses and an attitude of mindfulness toward experience in the present moment. In *Pause*, the practitioner becomes aware of himself or herself, and of the meditation partner(s), in a way that is less identified with emotional reactions. Reminding oneself to *Pause*, one steps out of the complex web of conditioning that arises in relationship and learns to create a space between what is heard, seen, or thought and one's responses, thereby developing the inner resources for stability and for making calm choices. *Pause* opens a doorway beyond relational habit patterns, through which one may step into nonclinging.

Relax invites the meditator to calm the body and mind, and to accept whatever thoughts and feelings are present in the moment. *Relax* points to an attitude of acceptance of difficult thoughts and emotions. *Relax* ripens into concentration and the unconditional acceptance of lovingkindness.

TABLE 12.1. Insight Dialogue Guidelines

Pause	Temporal pause; step out of reaction and identification; mindfulness.
Relax	Bodily calm; acceptance; tranquility; concentration; kindness.
Open	Extension of mindfulness from internal to external; spaciousness; mutuality of practice.
Trust Emergence	No agenda; flexibility; note impermanence of thoughts and feelings; “don’t know” mind.
Listen Deeply	Mindfulness while relating to others; receptivity; listen to meaning, emotions, and energetic presence.
Speak the Truth	Mindfulness of speech; clarity of meaning, authenticity of emotion, and nonidentified presence; discernment of what to say amidst the universe of possibilities.

Open invites the participant to extend mindful and kind awareness beyond the boundaries of the mind and body to the external world, both environment and people. In *Open* one becomes aware of others with simple acceptance. *Open* is the spacious extension of meditation into the relational moment.

Trust Emergence means entering practice without any agenda; it engenders mental flexibility and appreciation for the impermanence and contingency of moment-to-moment experience. *Trust Emergence* points to “don’t know mind” and to the vibrating quality of all phenomena. *Open* and *Trust Emergence* are explicit guidelines in ID but are not presented specifically in the IMP. The orientations they point to are embedded in the verbal instructions given during the IMP course, however.

Listen Deeply and *Speak the Truth* are a call to bring the authenticity and attunement of full presence into the moment of relationship. *Listen Deeply* begins with mindful and attuned listening. It ripens into full energetic presence and unhindered receptivity, to both words and other elements of interaction. When participants *Listen Deeply* to another, they are able to process information with less bias and to learn from what is spoken. A communication loop is created and maintained (Kramer, 1999, 2006).

Speak the Truth begins with the articulation of the simple truth of one's subjective experience. Discernment of what to speak and mindfulness while speaking are both elements of the guideline to Speak the Truth. Attunement to self and other is enhanced. Speak the Truth ripens into an acute sensitivity to the voice of the moment that "speaks through" the meditator.

Contemplations are the second central element of ID practice, and hence of the IMP also. The contemplations are topics of conversation drawn from Buddhist tradition, from other wisdom traditions, and from more modern framings of carefully observed human experience. They are selected to encourage a reevaluation of one's assumptions and behavior patterns and to foster deeper insight into the human condition. They also provide a present moment conversational basis for meditators as they use the guidelines to cultivate mindfulness, tranquility, adaptability, compassion, and the ability to respond authentically. The contemplations help guide the practice toward deeper recesses of experience, as revealed by mindfulness. They help the practitioner remain present with aspects of experience that he or she would just as soon ignore.

The contemplations are chosen to highlight significant elements of the shared human experience. They all have the implicit theme "What are the nature, dynamics, and qualities of my life?" Aging, disease, and death, lovingkindness and compassion, and the hungers for pleasure, recognition, and escape are all contemplation topics drawn from classical Buddhism. Traditional topics are used alongside topics like the roles assumed at work, at home, and in one's intimate relationships. Such topics are rarely discussed with others in an authentic yet nonreactive way. The act of discussing the contemplation material, the discovery of the universal nature of the stresses involved, and the meditation partner's calm acceptance all have a steadying effect on the participant.

The guidelines and contemplations work together synergistically. Self-knowledge deepens in relation to the contemplation themes as participants become more mindful and physiologically and emotionally more calm. The contemplations in turn foster engagement, which supports steadier mindfulness and calm. Trust builds among group members as each individual feels more at ease and realizes that individual responses to the contemplations are shared by others. Trust yields greater flexibility of mind states and deeper tranquility. Meditative mind states begin to arise in participants even while they are relationally engaged. Mindfulness, alertness, energetic presence, and investigation are balanced by kindness, tranquility, joy, concentration, and equanimity. Par-

ticipants begin to recognize the causal relationship between grasping and suffering. With each moment of practice, they learn to choose ease and compassion over stress and self-identification.

The Emergence of ID and the IMP

Insight Dialogue rests on an understanding of the dharma that is very traditional, as well as a vision of interpersonal meditation and an interpersonal understanding of the dharma (Kramer, 2007). Its immediate roots include Gregory Kramer's early work with traditional Asian meditation teachers and study of Buddhist psychology (the *Abhidhamma*), and an experiment in combining Bohmian dialogue and *vipassana* practice. With Terri O'Fallon, Kramer developed the first version of ID as an online practice, and together they produced a research methodology to study it and a joint PhD dissertation (Kramer & O'Fallon, 1997).

The practice evolved over the next several years as Kramer began teaching retreats and weekly groups. Many of ID's distinctive elements emerged in 2000 and 2001: breaking the group into subgroups, changing group sizes throughout the retreat, introducing explicit topics to the dialogue groups, including yoga to bring bodily ease, meditation in nature to encourage a gentle opening of awareness, and the occasional use of walking meditation in combination with dialogue. The introduction of contemplations drawn directly from the Buddha's teachings opened the door between ID and the other wisdom traditions—essential truths from any tradition are suitable as contemplation topics. The combination of mindfulness and calm concentration with contemplations is now the foundation of ID. At present (2007), ID has been taught to several thousand people in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia; weekly groups engage the practice on three continents, and a group of senior teachers is being trained by Kramer.

The IMP dates from Kramer's invitation to Allie Rudolph and Yael Schweitzer to invite MBSR teachers to a special ID retreat sponsored by the Metta Foundation; the other participants were Katherine A. Bonus, Kaye H. Coker, Joan Fishman Hecht, and Florence Meleo-Meyer. After an intensive ID retreat taught by Kramer, this group began to consider curriculum development. Collaboration continued after the retreat, and the group fashioned a presentation of the basics of ID to fit the populations they expected to serve: mainstream, not explicitly Buddhist or especially committed to spiritual ideals, and motivated largely toward addressing daily problems and improving functioning. The Metta Foun-

dition provided teacher training materials and authorized the use of the ID practice and the group's pilot offering in 2003.

Based on an informal evaluation in 2004–2005, the course was reduced from 8 weeks to 6 weeks and some of the busier aspects of the course, such as movement sessions, poetry, and music, were streamlined. Concerns for simplicity and accessibility also led to trimming down the practice guidelines from six to four. At present, the IMP explicitly presents only Pause, Relax, Listen Deeply, and Speak the Truth. (The remaining two guidelines, Open and Trust Emergence, were deemed too subtle for a short course and are no longer taught explicitly in the IMP; rather, they continue as implicit influences in the language used by the instructor.) Later revisions led to the current form of the course: an introductory class to review mindfulness practice, six class sessions, and one daylong retreat. At the time of writing (2007), the IMP has been offered for 4 years in pilot projects at several university medical centers and in private therapy practice.

The Logic of Interpersonal Meditation

All of these forms—ID retreats, weekly groups, online meditation, the IMP, and other forms under development—share in the logic of interpersonal meditation: its ability to foster attitudes and responses that transfer readily into other relationships. This logic also includes the powerful dynamics of mutuality. When people meditate together and one becomes distracted or overly identified with his or her emotions, others can supply the reminder—through words or behavior—to return to mindfulness, to relax and accept present experience. A feedback loop is created, reinforcing energy and clarity and opening new understanding. Mutuality also supports the natural tendency of the open and accepting mind toward lovingkindness and compassion. Thus interpersonal meditation reveals the intersubjective nature of experience—the shared human experience in the moment it is lived.

THERAPEUTIC STANCES AND SKILLS SUPPORTED BY ID

Mindfulness can be integrated into therapeutic work in a variety of ways. Germer (2005) divides these into three groups, all of which are compatible with ID. The ID guidelines point to specific skills that can be immediately useful for persons receiving psychotherapy. Elements of the practice, such as the use of the guideline Pause, can be taught to the

client—in Germer’s terminology, this would be Mindfulness-Based Psychotherapy. For example, Kim and Kramer (2002) taught the ID guidelines to people with social anxiety disorders, with promising results. ID’s theoretical frames of reference can also inform therapy, with or without any explicit teaching: this would be Mindfulness-Informed Psychotherapy. We consider this option, albeit briefly and with reference to ID’s context in Buddhism, in the next section of this chapter.

The focus of this section, however, is on the therapist’s practice of interpersonal mindfulness as it enhances and supports the therapist–client relationship.¹ In Germer’s terminology, we will be exploring ID’s contribution to Mindfulness-Oriented Psychotherapy. ID in all its forms, including the IMP, can support therapists in their relationships with clients. A number of aspects of the therapeutic relationship are treated here, grouped under the headings of therapist self-awareness and acceptance, the capacity to be present to and accepting of the client, and the fruits of practice in exploring present moment experience in relationship. The ID guidelines have significant depths that unfold only with time and practice. In intensive practice, the guidelines and the meditative skills they point to are practiced repeatedly; in longer retreats, they often yield exceptional clarity and stillness. Mindfulness, tranquility, energy, and inquiry gradually become a natural mode of being in relationship.

Support for Therapist Self-Awareness and Acceptance

An important group of factors in the therapist–client relationship can be considered as dimensions of therapist self-awareness and self-acceptance. These include acceptance of dysphoric experiences during the therapy session, such as not knowing what is going on, not knowing what to do, countertransference phenomena, and needs and pressures that emerge into consciousness from the therapist’s life situation.

Pause at its most literal level—pausing before speaking—provides an interruption of any tendency the therapist may have to respond automatically. Not knowing what to do or say can be experienced as dysphoric, dangerous. The Pause enables the therapist to recognize his or her self-identification with being the knowing one, the competent helper who must have and provide answers. As the gesture of non-identification, Pause also allows the therapist to step back from identification with negative feelings and so prevent their escalation. Without identification with these roles, there is the possibility of meeting the client with what Shunryu Suzuki (1973) called “beginner’s mind.” Trust Emergence, in particular, can extend this: trusting what emerges frees

the therapist from having an agenda, from having to accomplish something. Speak the Truth, in combination with these qualities, fosters patience and discernment, freeing the therapist to accept silences and to wait for the emergence of what is relevant in this moment.

Countertransference reactions in particular may be seen by therapists as dangerous, confusing, embarrassing, or inadmissible. The guidelines Pause and Relax help the therapist recognize, accept, and respond effectively to his or her own reactivity and/or countertransference. Practicing Pause supports the therapist's mindful awareness of his or her reactions and emotions, and allows them to be examined rather than defended against. In the therapeutic moment, Pause introduces a buffer between reaction and action or expression. When Pause uncovers difficult matters, it needs the support of Relax. The initial, literal Relaxing matures into deep acceptance and compassion. Over time, meeting troublesome inner phenomena with stillness means that they are not fed; their energy begins to drain out of them.

Therapists are often challenged to be aware of how personal needs affect the therapeutic relationship. Home and work roles can easily intertwine, and one may impinge upon the other. Emotional reactions and personal stories may interfere with the therapist's ability to be attentive. ID offers the calm acceptance of the guideline Relax; with the guidelines Pause and Trust Emergence, the therapist can increase his or her awareness of the flow, intensity, and impermanence of inner emotional and thought formations, especially as they arise in dialogue with another. Mindful awareness of reactive judgments as they arise does not imply passivity, but allows flexibility and choice of actions. The therapist's personal practice of mindfulness and compassion becomes a valuable resource and model for clients struggling in their relationships. Clear, unattached awareness of these emotions and thoughts supports the therapist in showing up as a whole person—the foundation of being fully and effectively present to another.

Presence to the Client, Empathy

The stance of unconditional presence is, in turn, known to assist the healing process (Welwood, 1992). Such unconditional presence is manifested as the presence of the whole person, present moment empathy, and the therapist's genuine interest and close attention.

The guideline Open is the primary reminder to the practitioner to extend meditative awareness from the personal to the interpersonal. When applied to the therapeutic relationship, Open invites the therapist to notice the “between” of relationship. The sense of an isolated self and

separate other give way to an I–Thou relationship, as experienced in ID practice. The mindfulness and calm concentration of meditation are repurposed for relationship and open the way for the emergence of present moment empathy.

Empathy with the client in the present moment is especially supported by the guidelines Relax and Open. These two motions powerfully support the stances Buddhism knows as the *brahmaviharas* or “divine abidings”—lovingkindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. These may be considered as aspects of the awareness, understanding, and sensitivity referred to as empathy. They are the fruits of mental training, not simply emotional states (as Thomas Bien notes in Chapter 3), and can be cultivated by the therapist in an especially effective way in ID.

Buddhist psychology considers aversion as a kind of tension or stress. As the gesture of Relax—the letting go of tension—ripens, a state of nonaversion necessarily takes its place. Nonaversion is the basis of these four qualities; they arise naturally and spontaneously in the absence of aversion. Lovingkindness, compassion, and sympathetic joy become strong when Relax is opened outward to the other. Open fosters awareness of and responsiveness to the other’s condition and extends meditative awareness into the “between” of relationship. Equanimity is also strongly evoked by Trust Emergence and develops the balance needed to remain available and responsive in a changing or challenging situation.

Equanimity, especially as developed relationally through Relax and Trust Emergence, is an invaluable resource in the difficult moments of therapy. Without the balance provided by this combination of Relax, Open, and Trust Emergence, it is difficult to remain available and responsive to a client’s pain, anger, confusion, or blame without being pulled off balance. In the face of ambiguity, silence, and strong affect, Relax and Trust Emergence—and their fruits of compassion and equanimity—allow genuine openness for the client to coexist with the self-awareness required to self-regulate naturally. When Relax has been practiced in the relational context of interpersonal meditation, it becomes a strong support for recognizing tension and choosing ease. It engenders deep acceptance of self and other.

The Fruits of Practice in Interpersonal Meditation

Especially when the guidelines are practiced with precision and with the support of other meditators, ID presents an unparalleled opportu-

nity to experience and explore unbinding in relationship. As stress, fear, distraction, and longing are revealed, they can be dropped; they no longer block the channel; mutuality emerges naturally.

The therapist practicing ID also gains experience in how it is to be in relationship with another who is also cultivating these qualities, enjoying the unbinding of another and thereby gaining direct personal experience of therapeutic change and transformation. Deep listening takes on an entirely new dimension. Speaking the truth is understood as arising from the body, from the deeper recesses of the heart-mind, and from emptiness. Relational wisdom—the intersubjective presence that is essential for good therapy—is experienced in the body, and in the felt sense of the moment, with the precision of refined mindfulness.

In ID, these qualities are developed and explored while in relationship with others.

RESOURCES IN BUDDHISM FOR SUPPORTING THE THERAPEUTIC RELATIONSHIP

The theoretical frame of therapy can also be informed by ID—an instance of Germer's category, Mindfulness-Informed Psychotherapy (2005). Since ID is based in and indeed incorporates Buddhism's frame of reference, psychological insights, and goals, this is an especially rich possibility. The Buddhist orientations of the practice are clearly defined, and certain qualities of psychological growth are named. These orientations and qualities underlie the IMP also, but are not named or taught as explicitly there.

Buddhism as a Psychology

Western observers, perhaps beginning with William James (1902/1982), have identified Buddhism as primarily a school of psychology; James (prematurely) remarked, "This is the psychology everybody will be studying twenty-five years from now" (Scott, 2000). While without religious overtones, ID is firmly embedded in the psychological understandings and practices of Buddhism. ID teachers refer directly to the Buddha's teachings, making use of the richness and precision of Buddhist psychological concepts and terminology. ID is explicitly guided by Buddhism's long established ethical and pedagogical system and its rich epistemology.

Buddhism's Contexts for Human Transformation

The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism address human suffering at its root. They are supported by a body of observations and practices that have been tested for millennia. Buddhism's diagnosis is that suffering is self-elaborated by means of hunger in its various forms (which include the cravings for pleasure, for recognition, and for escape). Buddhism's prescription, the Eightfold Path, is a multimodal, synergistic approach. Mindfulness is only one part of this prescription—or rather, Right Mindfulness is: skillful mindfulness, mindfulness that tends toward the lessening of suffering. Mindfulness *can* take unskilled, unhelpful forms—awareness oriented toward fixing or enhancing the self, or a means of escape from life's realities. As one element of the Eightfold Path, the broad attentiveness to the present moment called Mindfulness takes its place as a quality of attention beside the strong natural focus of the calm mind, Right Concentration. The energetic application of both Mindfulness and Concentration, when directed toward the release of unwholesome mental states and behaviors and the cultivation of wholesome ones, is called Right Effort.

Even these attentional qualities—Right Effort, Mindfulness, and Concentration—are only part of the prescribed regimen. The full prescription also includes a moral triad: Right Speech, Right Action, and Right Lifestyle. These checkpoints do not exist to promote conformity to culturally or religiously sanctioned conventions, but because their neglect has been proven to increase suffering and to negate the benefits of the attentional qualities of Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Calm Concentration. Neglecting ethical behavior clouds the mind. It can lead to actions that hurt others, which further cloud the mind. Mind and behavior always affect each other; it is impossible to cultivate goodness in one without the other. “Right” in this context means “effective”—it refers to the speech, action, and lifestyle qualities that have been shown empirically to reduce self-caused and self-elaborated suffering. An approach to life options that appeals to empirically observable consequences, rather than to cultural or religious conventions which may not be shared, is eminently adapted as a frame of reference for therapeutic work.

These factors are prefaced, in the Eightfold Path, by the need for understanding of cause and effect in one's mental and emotional life—Right View—and by a commitment to using that understanding to reorient one's life and actions towards relinquishment and kindness—Right Intention. Right View also encompasses a clear understanding of

the cause of suffering and the remarkable human potential to end this suffering. Without an understanding of how suffering is caused and elaborated, and the will to take hold of the laws of psychological causality, the development of attention—or any of the other factors—becomes a trivial nicety. They work together, not in isolation, and ID is intended to be part of this process.

Mindfulness plays a role in another part of Buddhism's psychology. It is one element in a series of qualities that each lead to the next, and that together support the clear perception of reality. These qualities are Mindfulness, Inquiry, Energy, Joy, Tranquility, Concentration, and Equanimity. The abstraction of mindfulness from these contexts and its application in the West have sometimes been marked by a broadening of the word's meaning to encompass several of these qualities—for example, inquiry and tranquility; both clarity and precision are lost in the process. When the natural sequence of this list, in which each quality is the ground of the next, is understood, there is more for the practitioner—or the therapist—to work with. ID, while radical in its *direct* application of the dharma to interpersonal relationships, is traditional and explicit in its endeavor to cultivate this wider panoply of mental qualities.

The ancient and sophisticated psychology that is Buddhism also differs in its goal from the young and evolving Western psychologies. The Western psychologies typically aim at the diminishment of suffering by a mixed bouquet of approaches: gaining the social skills to get one's needs met more effectively, adjusting one's wants to the surrounding context of what is accepted and possible, resolving buried past conflicts of many kinds, integration of the self. Western psychologies have articulated their goals in diverse ways also, based on their different assessments of the nature of the human being. These young disciplines are in a stage of yeasty ferment, offering much that is useful and containing fresh insights and wisdom. They are also beginning to draw a great deal directly from Buddhist teachings. But as a group they are ambiguous in their analysis of human nature and the root cause(s) of suffering, and they change with the fashions of the passing decades.

The Buddha's psychology aims bluntly at the end of suffering: its cessation. It proposes to reach that end by the complete relinquishment of the cause of suffering, *hunger* or *craving* in the specific, technical sense assigned to these terms. The cessation of craving, in turn, is inextricably linked with the eradication of ignorance about the constructed, impersonal nature of the self, as Fulton discusses in Chapter 4 of this volume. Buddhism's prescription also results in the lessening of suffering along the way to this startling goal of suffering's abolition—but in

contrast to Western psychologies, it pursues this lessening from the perspective of a single coherent analysis of suffering's cause. The "methodology" underlying its millennia of evaluative efforts is simple: is a given practice or program effective in moving people along the path of relinquishment of the root cause of suffering, as evidenced in the actual lessening of suffering?

Buddhism's empirical approach has produced other refinements of understanding that support the lessening of suffering. The cultivation of specific qualities of mind such as lovingkindness and compassion, for example, has evolved both practical approaches of great refinement and valuable working definitions of those qualities. In a similar way, ID draws from and offers as part of its practice such penetrating insights of Buddhist psychology as dependent origination (*Paticca-samuppada Sutta* [SN 12.1]), the aggregates of clinging (*Nakulapi Sutta* [SN 22.1]), and the wholesome and unwholesome roots of thought (*Sammaditthi Sutta* [MN 9.4-7]). Taken together, this rich blend of theory and practice help ensure ID's continued development in scope and depth.

Because ID draws explicitly from the Buddha's teachings, certain orientations of the practice are clearly defined, and certain qualities of psychological growth are named. The hungers for pleasure, for narcissistic satisfaction, and for escape (escape often manifests interpersonally as a fear of intimacy) are understood as foundational, so one learns to recognize and release them rather than to satisfy them more efficiently. This focus on relinquishment is explicit and its practice is embedded in how ID is taught. The practice of relinquishment takes place within a moral context, and an important part of this process is represented by the system of *dana*, or generosity. This system, still young in the West, insists that the teaching be offered freely: teachers are not paid for their teachings, which are considered priceless. Rather, meditators are encouraged to engage in the practice of generosity: they offer support to the teachers as they are personally moved to do so, with the hope that this will help keep the teachings available, allowing others to benefit as they have done. Because ID is offered on this *dana* basis, it is effectively lifted from the challenges and distortions inherent in commercial enterprises and in the development of a professional practice.

When therapists not only gain some measure of personal transformation in ID but also understand the dynamics of transformation as laid out in Buddhist psychology, they have a schema for discerning and guiding transformation in their clients as well.

INTERPERSONAL MEDITATION TRAINING OPTIONS FOR THERAPISTS

Considered as an approach to developing therapeutic presence, ID is one that uses the same methods in training as in the actual work (see Gehart & McCollum, Chapter 11, this volume). Germer (2005) indicates that the extent to which mindfulness is to be implemented in psychotherapy may influence the degree of training and practice needed. The developers of Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) conclude that “after seeing for ourselves the difference between using MBCT with and without personal experience of using mindfulness practice, it is unwise for instructors to embark on teaching this material before they have extensive personal experience with its use” (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002, p. 84). We concur that it is imperative for the therapist wishing to benefit from ID to gain as much personal experience with the practice as possible.

Open Enrollment Options

The therapist or other helping professional can enter and benefit from ID practice through any of its manifestations. An initial “taste” of the practice could be had by participating as a student in an IMP class, participating in a weekly group, or attending one of the shorter ID retreats. These are avenues that a therapist might pursue for the enrichment of his or her practice but might also recommend to a client. Meditators enter into ID in the same way; it should be noted that the peer-to-peer nature of the dialogues can pose some initial challenge to therapists new to it.

The IMP provides a very solid, if basic, introduction to the practice. In comparison to the other ID formats, connections with Western psychology, while not presented explicitly in the IMP, may be more readily gleaned by a therapist-participant. On the other hand, there will be less of the conceptual framework of Buddhist psychology available for informing and guiding therapeutic practice.

Weekly ID groups, led by a facilitator, are also an option. Weekly groups progress through a programmed 8-week introduction to ID and then continue meeting and practicing together, revisiting the practice guidelines and exploring new contemplations. The material covered in the introductory sequence is roughly similar to that of the IMP, although the guidelines Open and Trust Emergence are fully included. ID facilitators are not required to be as thoroughly trained as IMP teachers.

The chief advantages to weekly groups are the integration of practice with everyday life (in contrast to retreat formats) and the opportunity to continue working on interpersonal meditation as a group over the following months or even years (in contrast to the IMP).

ID retreats come in a variety of durations, from one day to more than a week. Retreats of just a few days can provide a solid, if basic, introduction to the practice. ID retreats take a form similar to insight meditation retreats: there are periods of silent sitting meditation and of interpersonal ID meditation; there are periods for walking meditation or rest. Meals are taken in silence, and participants refrain from interactions apart from the ID sessions. The focus is on the practice.

Greater depth can be had by attending longer ID retreats. While ID can be beneficial in any of its forms, it reaches its fullest development in the setting of a longer retreat. In retreat, the qualities pointed to by the guidelines ripen over the longer course of intensive practice. Hence, retreatants are able to experience these qualities to an exceptional degree. Retreat practice opens up the possibility of deep insight in the midst of interpersonal contact. A qualitatively deeper experience of lovingkindness and compassion and a radical release of one's sense of self and other are not uncommon experiences in these longer retreats.

Options with Restricted Enrollment

Some other opportunities exist that are restricted in several different ways.

Some ID retreats are offered specifically for therapists. These typically include contemplation themes drawn from the practice of therapy and greater attention to the psychological framework supplied by Buddhism. Most of these are longer retreats.

For one specific subgroup of therapists only—those who have completed the full course of training offered for MBSR teachers by the Center for Mindfulness at the University of Massachusetts Medical School—there is the option to train to teach the IMP. In the course of the prerequisite MBSR training, they will have participated in silent *vipassana* retreats, developed and maintained a regular meditation practice, and received in-depth training in the theory and curriculum associated with MBSR. It is also expected that IMP teachers will have group process skills and some familiarity with psychotherapeutic approaches.

In the IMP training itself, prospective teachers participate in multiple ID retreats, some of them paired with detailed teacher training.

These retreats provide firsthand experience of the guidelines and contemplations. They also offer direct experience of in-depth practice and the personal transformation it enables, thus enhancing the prospective teachers' capacities for nonreactive, relational presence. The training sessions help IMP teachers to understand the many layers of instruction inherent in the six simple guidelines, to gain an overview of the theory behind ID and the IMP, and to grow through the unique interpersonal dynamics actuated in the practice. It is expected that IMP teachers will continue their traditional (silent) meditation practice, and that they will pursue further ID training.

Two other training opportunities exist, but they are linked with formats that can only be offered free of charge, in accordance with the tradition of *dana* (generosity). Because of this, they are not suitable for therapists wishing only or primarily to improve their professional practice—though therapists are by no means barred from them. The first is the facilitation of a weekly ID group. Facilitators are required to have an established meditation practice and a specified level of experience with ID; they receive ongoing support and training from the Metta Foundation as they facilitate the weekly group. The second option is training as an ID teacher. ID teacher trainees work as apprentices co-teaching with Gregory Kramer, at first teaching only short nonresidential retreats on their own. They attend teachers' meetings, participate in teleconferences, and work in pairs or triads. Although it uses new technologies, this training remains in many respects an apprenticeship training modeled after traditional Asian teacher training relationships.

Information on various trainings and retreats can be found at www.metta.org and (for the IMP) www.umassmed.edu/cfm.

CONCLUSION

Mindfulness is an innate human capacity, and ID is about being human in a wise and compassionate way. ID is revolutionary in cultivating mindfulness and associated qualities directly in relationship, thus easing their transfer into other relationships. It can be understood as a means of personal transformation or as a resource for therapist training. In addition, the deeper framework of Buddhist psychology undergirding ID (and the IMP) offers breathtaking psychological insights that can guide therapeutic practice for therapists so inclined. ID is the most direct approach we know to bringing mindfulness into relationship. From the perspective of therapist training or continuing education, ID's po-

tential stems from its fostering of mindfulness in the place where the greatest difference can be made: in relationship.

NOTE

1. We wish to thank Sharon Beckman-Brindley for generously sharing her insights on the role of the guidelines in supporting the therapeutic relationship.

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