A Personal Journey to Mindfulness: Implications for Social Work Practice

Steven F. Hick
Carleton University

Abstract

The author of this narrative (literally) had to be hit over the head to come across mindfulness. It changed the way he interacts with the world and highlighted significant implications for how he teaches and practices social work. Although he had several misconceptions about meditation based on his experience in the 1970s, his search for a way to heal from a head injury and post concussion syndrome led him to try mindfulness practice. Mindfulness is about paying attention with a kind of penetrative awareness of what is happening in the moment. With mindfulness he healed, and noticed other unexpected changes. After his recovery, he began to explore how he might develop these practices in his work as a social worker and social work educator.
REFERENCE:
NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING
Cleveland State University

PUBLICATION AGREEMENT

1. COPYRIGHT: In consideration for the publication of your work, if accepted and published by the journal noted above, the author(s) agree to transfer copyright of
the work to REFLECTIONS: NARRATIVES OF PROFESSIONAL HELPING, Cleveland State University, including full and exclusive rights to all media now known
or later developed, including but not limited to electronic databases and microfilm, and in anthologies of any kind (NOTE TO U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES:
SEE YOUR EXEMPTION, PARAGRAPH 4 BELOW.)

2. AUTHOR RE-USES OF WORK: As a professional courtesy, the author retains the right to reprint the author's article again after publication in the journal, in any
work the author is sole author, or in any edited work for which the author is senior editor. No further permission is necessary in writing from REFLECTIONS, nor will
the journal require fees of any kind for this reprinting. This statement is intended to provide full copyright release for the purposes listed above, and a photocopy of
this release may be used when another publisher requires a written release.

3. READER RE-USES OF WORK: The author(s) acknowledge that registered readers of REFLECTIONS and others with access to the article may use their work

4. AUTHOR WARRANTIES: The author(s) represent(s) and warrant(s):
   a.) that the manuscript submitted is the author's (authors') own work;
   b.) that the work has been submitted only to this journal and that it has not been previously published;
   c.) that this article contains no libelous or unlawful statements and does not infringe upon the civil rights of others;
   d.) that the author(s) are not infringing upon anyone else's copyright.
   e.) that the author(s) are responsible for any individual or organizational names that are mentioned, as Reflections disclaims responsibility for references to
      individuals, organizations, facts, and opinions presented by the published authors.
   f.) That the author(s) have taken care to ensure that the article does not contain any identifiable information about clients or patients except as pursuant to
      appropriate permissions and forms of informed consent as provided for in all relevant laws and codes of ethics.
   g.) That the author(s) content in no way violates any individual's privacy rights.
The author(s) agree that if there is a breach of any of the above representations and warranties that the author(s) will indemnify the publisher and editor and hold
them harmless.

5. AUTHOR RETENTION OF PATENTS: The author(s) may have, within the article, descriptions of the author's (authors') own proprietary patents. It is not the
intention of the editor or publisher to require copyright transfer of such materials. If any of these materials appear in the work, the author(s) may add personal
copyright notice to patents, with this understanding:
   a.) the author(s) retain copyright for said patents, with full and exclusive rights to the author's (authors') publication, not to include any other material from the
      article/publication;
   b.) the publisher retains full and exclusive rights to publication to the article/publication in any format, including patents when published as part of the entire article or
      production.

6. NOTE FOR U.S. GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES: If the article is single authored by an U.S. government employee as part of the employee's official duties, it is
understood that the article is not “Work of the U.S. Government.” However, if the article was not part of the employee’s official duties, it may be copyrighted. If the
article was jointly written, the authors understand that they are delegating the right of copyright to the non-government employee, who must sign this agreement.

7. “WORK FOR HIRE” AUTHORS: If the article was written by an author who was hired by another person or company to do so, the article is called a “Work for
Hire” manuscript. This agreement must be signed by the “employer” who hired the author, as well as the author.

8. NO AMENDMENTS: This form is not valid if the author(s) add(s) any additional constraints and amendments. Please submit the article elsewhere for publication
if the author(s) do not sign the form without alteration.
By using techniques to practice mindfulness, especially at work, you can reduce stress, boost your immune system, and improve your productivity. So, in order to help you reach your full unicorn potential, here are 10 mindfulness techniques to practice at work!

1. Set an intention at the beginning of every day. In order to set yourself up to have a successful day, you should write down an intention to keep you focused. Your intention could be a work goal or something more personal, such as "I will look at every obstacle today as a positive learning experience." You can either write this mindfulness — paying attention to the present moment in an accepting, nonjudgmental way — is a simple practice available to all. Research has shown it is also a reliable method for reducing stress, including at work. Put most simply, meditation is a way to train the mind. Most of the time, our minds are wandering — we're thinking about the future, dwelling on the past, worrying, fantasizing, fretting or daydreaming.

Mindfulness Models Social workers can assist their clients by maintaining a mindful witnessing perspective. Such is the belief of Charles May, MSS, LSW, a therapist and a case manager in an adult partial hospital program at the Horsham Clinic in Ambler, PA, who was trained as a clinical social worker at Bryn Mawr Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. Current social work practice includes the biopsychosocialspiritual assessment that evaluates the strengths and spiritual resources of clients. May's spiritual practice allows him to "work with the ideas that have personal impact," adding that "I meditate. I do martial arts, yoga—activities that integrate mind and body. When I'm on my game, I'm remembering to be mindful."