



# Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Center of NJ™



The Living Moment

Fall 2018, No. 20

*"My life is not this steeply sloping hour in which you see me hurrying."  
- Rainer Maria Rilke*

*("It's Not What You Think!"  
article by Diane Handlin included below)*

## An Invitation to Learn Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction



Gilded Stream -- Photo by Sandy Renna

**Learn to live with greater vitality, health and well-being  
through Jon Kabat-Zinn's Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction  
program.**

**Presented by the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Center of New Jersey, the program offers powerful methods for reducing stress in your everyday life.**

*Diane Handlin, Ph.D., is one of the few instructors in New Jersey and in the world (not just trained) but actually **Certified** by Jon Kabat-Zinn's and Saki Santorelli's Center for Mindfulness at UMass Medical School. She, and her husband, Jim Handlin, Ed.D., who is also Certified by the CFM, often teach together.*

### I am not I

I am not I.  
I am this one  
Walking beside me  
whom I do not see,  
Whom at times I manage to visit,  
And whom at other times I forget;  
The one who remains silent  
when I talk,  
The one who forgives, sweet,  
when I hate,  
The one who takes a walk  
where I am not,  
The one who will remain standing  
when I die.

~ Juan Ramon Jimenez ~  
(Translated by Robert Bly)

### What to Remember When Waking (Excerpt #1)

In that first  
hardly noticed  
moment  
To which you wake...

there is a small  
opening  
Into the new day  
which closes  
the moment  
you begin  
your plans.

What you can plan  
is too small  
for you to live...

~ David Whyte ~

## Upcoming Events

### ~ Free Fall 2018 Talk ~ in Summit NJ

**Wednesday, November 14  
7:30-9:00pm**

Grand Summit Hotel  
570 Springfield Ave  
Summit, New Jersey

### ***All are Welcome***

Reservations are required

### ~ Winter 2019 Course ~ in Summit NJ

**begins Tuesday, January 15  
7:30-9:30pm**

Reservations are required

### ~ Summer 2019 Course ~ in Edison NJ

For more information or to reserve a place  
for the talk or course, please contact  
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For more information go  
to [www.mindfulnessnj.com](http://www.mindfulnessnj.com)

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## It's Not What You Think!

Dear Reader,

*God guard me from those thoughts  
men think in the mind alone.  
He that sings a lasting song,  
thinks it in the marrow bone.*

From *A Prayer for Old Age* by W.B. Yeats

Often when students find their way to their first MBSR class, what begins to become apparent is that they hope to be fixed. This "fix it" perspective often appears before we actually start the MBSR course, when we ask what prospective participants' expectations and goals might be. Often, participants' assumptions are that their stress (whatever it might be) has made them somehow defective and that they indeed need to be "fixed." It seems that in the face of serious challenges, whether health threats or any of life's disappointments, we humans often contract into a small part of ourselves, and tend to mistake a small part of ourselves for the whole. Perhaps seemingly paradoxically, the giving up of an approach of trying to fix oneself or another person is a skill which requires perspective shifting. You can't do it. It is not a mentally-driven activity. It is a transformational result of learning new skills.

From the very first class, we ask students to suspend their assumptions and beliefs, as much as is possible for the duration of the class, not to give up their critical or analytical thinking, but to suspend judgment long enough to give this body-centered program at least a chance. We ask them to become their own scientific investigators, and invite them on the first night to give up their habitual associations to a simple food, a raisin, and explore what the experience of approaching the eating of a raisin can be. From there we move on to the experience of guiding them through their entire body, as they lie down on a mat or sit in a chair. Perhaps seemingly paradoxically, one of their first common discoveries is how relaxing and reinvigorating it can be to simply let the level of their exhaustion actually sink in. Some students have even described the first class as re-introducing them to themselves. Conceptually, we are inviting students to entertain the potential we all have for making what Jon Kabat-Zinn calls an "orthogonal rotation" in their perspective and to begin to consider the possibility that, as he so often puts it, "Just as we are, we

are all fundamentally beings with miraculous potential, and that as long as we are alive there is more right with us than wrong with us."

As the course progresses, we give our students CDs or downloads so they can practice what they learn in class at home. They are usually surprised at how refreshing and revitalizing the first two weeks of practicing with our Guided CDs can be. Since many class members approach this program at a run as they begin to have an inkling of the potential for living a richer life that this practice offers, it is natural, even advisable, at this point, to feel exhilarated about this opening to a new approach toward living that most class members are beginning to experience.

At the same time, somewhere around Class 3, as students begin to acknowledge that this practice isn't meant to be a sprint, we often find that some class members are beginning to experience that their romance with the practice is beginning to change. At this point, it is not uncommon for students to feel not only exhilarated but also newly realistic about the kind of commitment this opening to a new approach to living is going to require.

In many ways, this is the most interesting choice point in the program. Here it is not uncommon for us to find ourselves responding to some of the students' questions with the reminders like, "the good news is that we can always start again, and the bad news is, that we always have to begin again." We also often like to add that more good news is that a renewal of commitment does get easier as the clear benefits of the practice in each of person's life accumulate. For example, one of our recent students, an anesthesiologist, commented that she had, in rushing off to work each morning, customarily run by the koi gold fish pool in her garden as she hurriedly tossed some fish food into it. She shared that since practicing the body scan regularly and experiencing the slowing down of her own habitual rhythms, she had begun to discover the power of pausing at the pool for even five minutes each morning and just simply sitting and watching the fish after she fed them. She was startled by the renewal she experienced from this daily, brief visit with her fish and herself.

At the same time, as these new experiences of themselves begin to accrue, a further shift in perspective begins to occur as students often see that their ideas about what is wrong with them can be worked with, and that what will be needed from them is far simpler than what they imagined. Many begin to attest to the experience of having more energy and creativity accessible through some simple tender cultivation of both the formal and the informal practices. We sometimes liken this to a gardener's need for tilling and weeding a garden in order for it to flourish, reframing this action as a turning toward or softening in the face of whatever may be happening in their lives. This often is accompanied by a new, lively curiosity about the nature of the stories they may have been

telling themselves about the meaning of the events in their lives. At these moments, a kind of spaciousness and more degrees of freedom begin to occur around their own habitual reactivity.

For many, it suddenly seems possible to see choices where none had seemed to exist before. Jon Kabat-Zinn writes about such a moment of choice in his chapter on emotions in *Full Catastrophe Living*, (Bantam Books, 2013) when he invites the reader to consider that, "Your Emotions are Not You" as he describes how he and his young son, Will, met and worked with the potentially self-defeating emotion of fear when they were trying to climb a mountain. He describes how, with a storm rising and the mountain peak tantalizingly near, instead of blindly pushing on to the top, they re-grouped, both internally and externally:

*"What I imagined Will took away from this experience, and what was certainly reinforced in me, was a sense that fear could be worked with-that he could attend to and honor feeling frightened, that fear could even be helpful and intelligent, that it was neither a sign of weakness on his part nor an inevitable result of going up the mountain that way. One day things could be frightening, the next day not. Same mountain, same people, but also different. By our willingness to see the problem as separate from our feelings and to honor both, we had been able to be patient and not let the fear mushroom and become dangerous in itself or to defeat our confidence. This strategy enabled us to break down the problem of getting to the top of the mountain into smaller problems that we then took on one at a time experimenting, seeing how things would go, not knowing whether we would make it but at least trying again and using our imagination taking things moment by moment." FCL,(pp. 422-424)*

Having experienced through formal and informal practice that everything is in movement and continually changing within us as well as outside of us, results in an enlivened capacity for sitting with feelings of sadness, fear or remorse with the awareness or conviction that "this too will pass." Cultivating skills for being, rather than jumping too quickly into doing mode, are what makes it possible for us to find the most creative practical solutions so that we can live more creatively.

A powerful example of this occurred during our most recent MBSR class. One of our students, a graceful woman who had had a recent serious health crisis and who from the very first class had worked sincerely at learning the skills we were teaching, shared the following with the class. Her eldest daughter had just left for college far away which was heart-breaking for her. Having practiced her new skills, she knew not to try to chase her feelings away. Instead, after her daughter left, she went up to her daughter's bedroom and began stripping the bed. She shared with the class what happened next:

*She took the sheets out, carefully folded, and mindfully unfolded them. She felt their softness and smelled them. She slowly and methodically made the bed, spreading out and smoothing each sheet with her hands, feeling it's softness and holding them near her nose so she could smell them. She put the pillowcase on and did the same thing. It took a very long time. She fluffed up the pillow. Each moment, each touch, all her senses responding, all meant so much to her...*

When she finished speaking, you could hear a pin drop in the room. And then, I found myself saying quietly, but aloud, "Can you imagine what your daughter will experience when she comes home from college and gets into that bed?"

We can befriend our pain, our anger, our lack of kindness and generosity toward ourselves, our sorrow, our perceived or imagined character failures, and our challenges, not by trying to eliminate them, but by bringing curiosity and present awareness to them, practicing letting go of any desired outcome in order to obtain it. Perhaps seemingly paradoxically, just seeing how we are constantly distracted and how we are self-absorbed most of the time (what Jon Kabat-Zinn calls "the movie of the story of me, starring me, directed by me, produced by me") can be an impetus to open the treasure of the present moment and present-moment-living. And here's the kicker, the present moment can't be experienced fully unless we can bring a kind of affectionate awareness to the whole of our experiencing, even the unpleasant, of which we have all too often been conditioned to be afraid.

Being skillful means inviting and allowing ourselves to be wherever we are, and to know it-- to be in a place where there is nowhere else to get to, where nothing needs to be fixed or improved upon. Just a waking up to "this" and "this" and "this" unfolding moment by moment whether pleasant or unpleasant. How psychologically sound that MBSR identifies "turning toward" whatever is happening inside and outside ourselves as a way of working creatively with the stressors of daily living. It requires cultivating both true affection for ourselves and the skillfulness of living like a warrior-- the readiness to live creatively in the face of whatever life may bring.



Diane Handlin, Ph.D.  
Licensed Psychologist



*Diane Handlin, Ph.D.  
Founder and  
Executive Director*



*Jim Handlin, Ed.D.  
Educational Consultant*

barn's burnt down  
now I can see  
the moon

~ Masahide ~

**Fresh**

To move  
Cleanly.  
Needing to be  
Nowhere else.  
Wanting nothing  
From any store.  
To lift something  
You already had  
And set it down in  
A new place.  
Awakened eye  
Seeing freshly.  
What does that do to  
The old blood moving through  
Its channels?

~ Naomi Shihab Nye ~  
(You & Yours)

How could we forget  
those ancient myths that  
stand at the beginning of

## Worthy of Note

**Omega Presents  
Jon Kabat-Zinn Event At Lincoln Center  
[www.eomega.org/JonKabat-Zinn](http://www.eomega.org/JonKabat-Zinn)  
One Night Event - Dec. 1st, 7 to 10pm  
"The Power of Mindfulness in Difficult  
Times": An Evening of Practice & Inquiry  
With Jon Kabat-Zinn**

**Omega Presents  
Saki Santorelli, Florence Meleo-Meyer and  
Bob Stahl Workshop at Omega Institute  
October 12 - October 19, 2018  
"Convergence: A Silent Retreat"**

**The Medicine of the Moment: How  
mindfulness is making inroads in health  
care through habit change, stress  
reduction, self-care, and decreasing  
physical burnout, Barry Boyce and Peter  
Jaret, 5th Anniversary Issue of Mindful  
magazine, April 2018**

**Too Early to Tell: The Potential Impact and  
Challenges-Ethical and Otherwise-Inherent  
in the Mainstreaming of Dharma in an**

all races - the myths about dragons that at the last moment are transformed into princesses.

Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are only princesses waiting for us to act, just once, with beauty and courage.

Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.

~ Rainer Maria Rilke ~  
(Letters to a Young Poet)

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### Seasons

For Autumn  
a full harvest moon

For Winter  
snow on every branch

For Spring  
fields and fields of flowers

For Summer  
a cool, cool breeze

But, if you can be present  
right now  
fully present

This is the best season of  
your life.

~ Wu-Men ~  
(trans. by Jim Handlin)

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Today the planet is the only proper "in group."  
Participate joyfully in the sorrows of the world.  
We cannot cure the world of sorrows,  
but we can choose to live in joy.

You must return with the bliss  
and integrate it.

**Increasingly Dystopian World, Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2017**

**[Some Reflections on the Origins of MBSR, Skillful Means, and the Trouble with Maps](#), Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2011**

**[Altered Traits](#): Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain, and Body, Daniel Goleman & Richard J. Davidson, 2017**

**[The Craving Mind](#): From Cigarettes to Smart-phones to Love - Why We Get Hooked and How We Can Break Bad Habits, a new book by Judson Brewer with a forward by Jon Kabat-Zinn**

**[Congressman Tim Ryan, A Mindful Nation](#): How a Simple Practice Can Help us Reduce Stress, Improve Performance and Recapture the American Spirit, with a forward by Jon Kabat-Zinn**

**[Mindfulness, Healing and Transformation](#): The Pain and the Promise of Befriending the Full Catastrophe with Jon Kabat-Zinn**

**[Jon Kabat-Zinn's Keynote Address](#) at the 2016 Psychotherapy Networker Conference: "The Radical Gesture of Mindfulness: Let the Beauty We Love Be What We Do"**

**[New Jersey Psychological Association](#) - December 2016 e-newsletter, "Why Mindfulness Matters," editor, Diane Handlin**

**[Jim Handlin speaking](#) on Mindfulness and Education at Newark Academy in the Fall of 2015 (for further information on Jim Handlin's college guidance work, visit [www.strategiccollegeplacement.com](http://www.strategiccollegeplacement.com))**

**[The Telomere Effect](#), by Nobel prize-winner Elizabeth Blackburn and researcher Elissa Epel**



The return is seeing the  
radiance is everywhere.

The world is a match for us.  
We are a match for the world.  
The spirit is the bouquet of  
nature.

(Compiled from various  
writings of Joseph Campbell)

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**What to Remember When  
Waking**  
(Excerpt #2)

Now, looking through  
the slanting light  
of the morning  
window toward  
the mountain  
presence  
of everything  
that can be,  
what urgency  
calls you to your  
one love? What shape  
waits in the seed  
of you to grow  
and spread  
its branches  
against a future sky?

Is it waiting  
in the fertile sea?  
In the trees  
beyond the house?  
In the life  
you can imagine  
for yourself?  
In the open  
and lovely  
white page  
on the waiting desk?

~ David Whyte ~  
(The House of Belonging)

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Come, come whoever you are

Wonderer, worshipper,  
lover of leaving.

It doesn't matter.  
Ours is not a caravan of  
despair.

**who have demonstrated how the telomeres  
at the end of chromosomes have the  
capacity to lengthen as a result of lifestyle  
changes and the development of stress  
reduction skills, resulting in enhanced  
health and increased longevity.**

**[60 Minutes interview of Jon Kabat-Zinn by  
Anderson Cooper](#)**, (13 min), CBS News,  
December 14, 2014

***Additional valuable interviews  
from 60 Minutes Overtime***

[The newly mindful Anderson Cooper](#), (5:30 min)

[Mindfulness and technology: Do they mix?](#) (2:30  
min)

[Why practice mindfulness?](#) (2:30 min)

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***Podcasts***

"A Necessary and Vital Moment,"  
Jon Kabat-Zinn's Science of Mindfulness,  
[Opening to Our Lives:  
an interview with Krista Tippett](#)

Jon Kabat-Zinn discusses Mindfulness in  
Education, January 26, 2006  
Mindfulness in Education ([Part 1](#))  
Mindfulness in Education ([Part 2](#))  
Mindfulness in Education ([Part 3](#))

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**More Videos with Jon Kabat-Zinn**

[Jon Kabat-Zinn discusses MBSR and the stress of  
modern life](#), YouTube.

[Jon Kabat-Zinn discusses the significance of  
MBSR for leading a healthy life](#),  
Google talk, YouTube, Oct 11, 2007.

Come, even if you have  
broken your vows  
a thousand times.

Come, yet again, come.  
Come

Inscribed at the Tomb of  
Jelaluddin Rumi  
(trans. Coleman Barks)

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### The Living Moment

There is a stillness at dawn  
asking for me

I hear the note not played

I see the line not written

I understand the word not  
spoken  
I am in stillness

I am the Living Moment  
uncommitted.

~ Cliff Woodward ~  
(with Stephen Damon)

[Jon Kabat-Zinn discusses the scientific research  
on MBSR and its relationship to health,](#)  
Google talk, YouTube, March 8, 2007.

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**Bill Moyers PBS video**  
on [Healing from Within](#)  
from the series *Healing and the Mind*

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### ***Selected past issues of The Living Moment***

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### Dedication

As always, as I complete the newsletter, I take time to pause and when I do, I cannot help but recognize that I am only a vehicle, a person fortunate enough to have been given so much by so many. *At this moment in time, what needs to be expressed is that the deepest gratitude is due to our teachers throughout the years, especially today to Pierce Wheeler, our revered Companion in Search for much of our lifetime, who, having given so much to so many, left this earth on September 24th. Pierce was a true beacon of light.*

And of course a deep bow to our incredibly talented, steadfast Technical Artistic Director, Dave Kapferer, who brings this quality newsletter to you without ever missing a beat, to Triston Handlin, our precious Technical Project Manager without whose sensitivity and unfailing conscientious commitment, our classes would never hum or continue to be, and, finally, without question, to all of our student throughout the years-  
- who have indeed been our best teachers.

*"As to the value of the course, I would note that the group workshop designed to work through Jon Kabat-Zinn's curriculum is very effective. The workshop / course added a great deal of depth and opened my mind to a different way of looking at things and fostered exploration. When mindfully present, time seems to expand for me. I relax, freed from thinking about the next place I have to be or the next thing I have to do ... I have discovered that if I hold off, I usually do not act along the lines of my first reaction. I've realized that I almost always have time not to act immediately. I've also rediscovered my happy me, what I remember from soooo long ago ..., and that is really wonderful." - Jane Dobson, Corporate attorney*

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Although Dr. Handlin is a licensed psychologist and has a separate psychology practice, please note that this is an **educational course** and not psychotherapy. In addition, information contained in this document is informational and not to be construed as medical advice. If you suspect you have medical issues, please pursue appropriate treatment. Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction is a separate **educational course** for those interested in developing mind-body connections. MBSR is a non-psychological service offered apart from Dr. Handlin's psychology practice and is not meant to substitute for personal or professional psychological advice which must be received from a licensed mental health professional.

NJ Lic. #3306

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