

Mind Full or Mindful? An Overview of Mindfulness

Puru Thapa, M.D., Director, UAMS Mindfulness Program
Director, UAMS Student, Resident, and Faculty Wellness Programs
Professor, Department of Psychiatry
thapapurushottamb@uams.edu

Objectives

- Describe the origin, definitions and elements of Mindfulness
- Evaluate the scientific evidence base for the potential benefits of Mindfulness
- Describe various informal and formal practices of Mindfulness and apply in personal life and professional practice
- Undergo a brief Mindfulness practice

**Dr. Thapa has no financial
disclosures**

If you can sit quietly after difficult news;

If in financial downturns you remain perfectly calm;

If you can see your neighbors travel to fantastic places without a twinge of jealousy;

If you can happily eat whatever is put on your plate;

If you can fall asleep after a day of running around without a drink or a pill;

If you can always find contentment just where you are:

You are probably a dog.



Jack Kornfield

JACK BLACK



DREAMWORKS
KUNG FU PANDA

PANDAMONIUM BEGINS JUNE 6

Kung Fu Panda: Master Oogway



**“Yesterday is history,
tomorrow is a mystery,
and today is a gift...
That's why they
call it
the PRESENT”**

Mindfulness

The Power of “NOW”

- Tao parable (Derek Lin. *The Tao of Everyday Living*.)
- “Remember the strawberry”



What Is Mindfulness?

Mindfulness is awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally. *Jon Kabat-Zinn*

Mindfulness - Formal

- Foundational practice
- Time set aside for mindfulness practice
- Types:
 - Breath-focused meditation
 - Body scan – focusing on body sensations
 - Mindful yoga
 - Walking meditation
 - And others

Mindfulness - Informal

- “Truly experiencing your life moment to moment as it unfolds with curiosity and acceptance”
- Being fully present while
 - Eating
 - Cooking
 - Doing dishes
 - Walking
 - Showering
- Brief moments of Mindfulness multiple times throughout the day

Acceptance

- Recognizing and acknowledging our reality (often unpleasant or negative) without resistance. **Not the same as giving up.**
- Life is stressful; can never be stressor free
- Suffering/distress depends on how we respond to stressors

Distress = Stress X Resistance

Mindfulness is a skill

Mindfulness is not a destination or goal; it is simply living and accepting your life in the moment with kindness and non-judgment

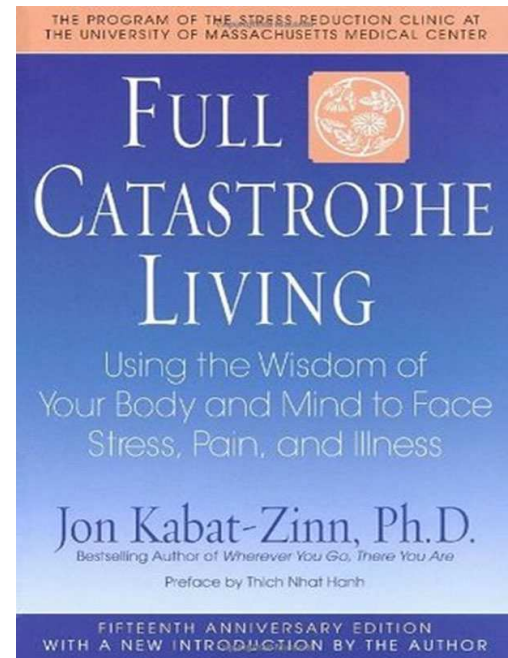
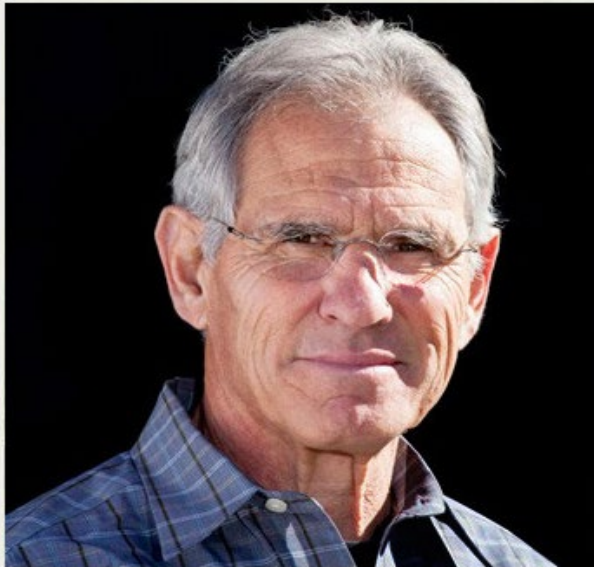
Origin and Scientific Basis of Mindfulness



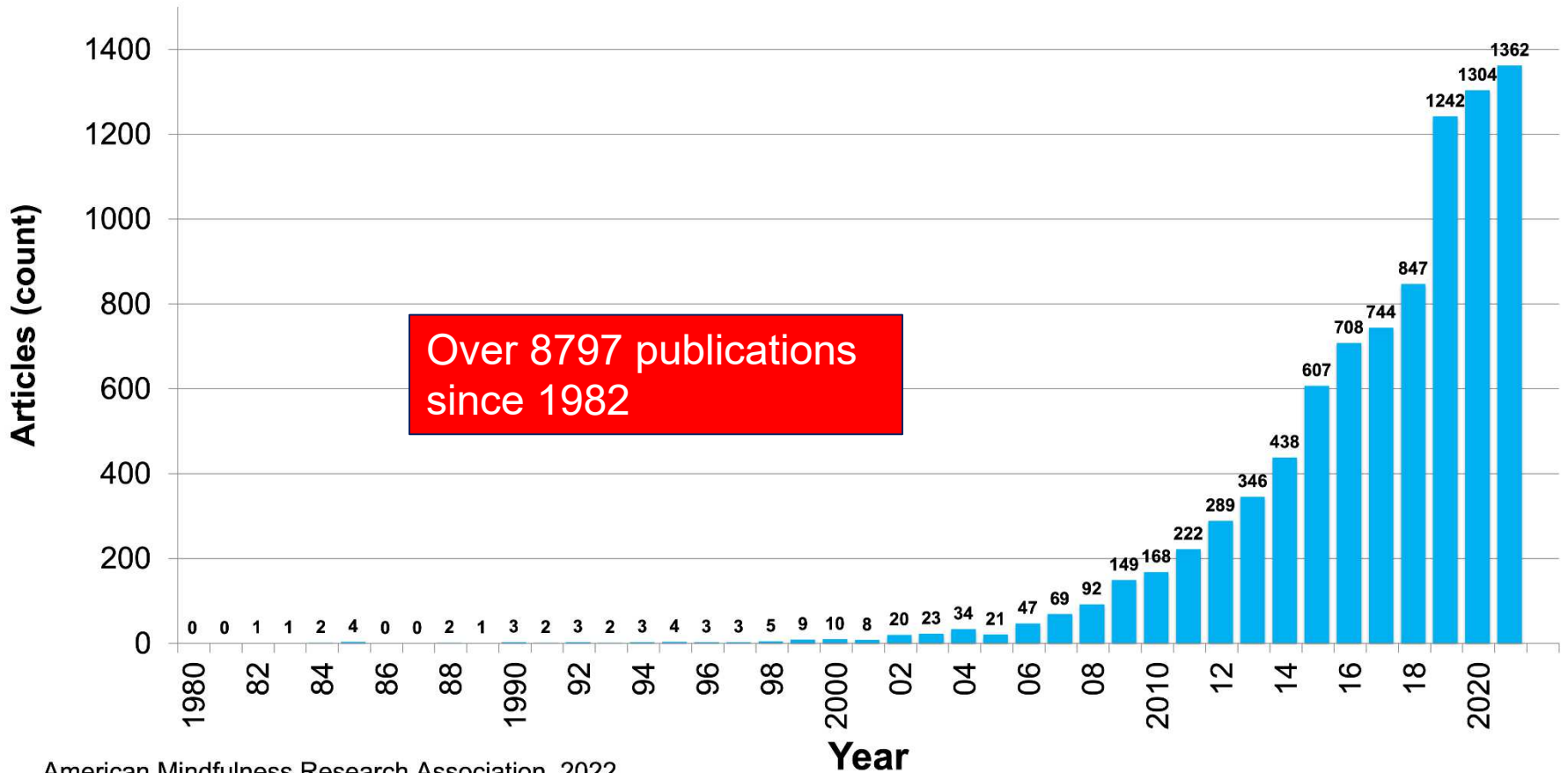
Mindfulness in Buddhist tradition was meant to alleviate suffering and cultivate compassion

First Published Study of MBSR in a Medical Journal

- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR)
- 50% of 51 chronic pain patients reported 50% improvement in pain. Also improvement in mood symptoms (*Gen Hosp Psychiatry* 4;33-47, 1982)



"Mindfulness" journal article titles published by year: 1980-2021



American Mindfulness Research Association, 2022
Source: goAMRA.org

Mindfulness

- Strong scientific evidence supporting beneficial effects:
 - As an adjunct to traditional medical therapies: cancer, MS
 - In weight management, smoking cessation, chronic pain
 - In mental health disorders: depression, anxiety
 - To reduce stress and burnout in otherwise healthy populations
- Wide spread **secular** practice
- Found in most academic centers, universities, corporations, and in almost all walks of life, including Congress

Why Mindfulness Works

- **Biological:** **Neuroplasticity** – postulated changes in the structure and function of brain regions involved in regulation of attention, emotion, and self-awareness
- **Psychological:** Being in the “present” in a non-judgmental way helps calming attitude with better coping skills

UAMS Mindfulness Program

<https://mindfulness.uams.edu>



KORU Mindfulness

Now open to the public! Our four-week introduction course, KORU Mindfulness, is a great place to start your Mindfulness journey. Enroll in one of the Spring courses now!

[Course Information](#)



KORU Mindfulness

The best introduction course for those new to

Resources

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program

Do
Mindfulness Program

COVID-19 questions? Talk with our Virtual Assistant.

Live Online Mindfulness Sessions

- Free, daily live Mindfulness session online via Zoom.
- **Open to all**
- Monday – Friday at 12:00 Noon
- To get the Zoom link, email UAMSMindfulnessProgram@uams.edu
- Recorded Sessions are available: [Mindfulness Session Library](#)

Mindfulness Courses Offered

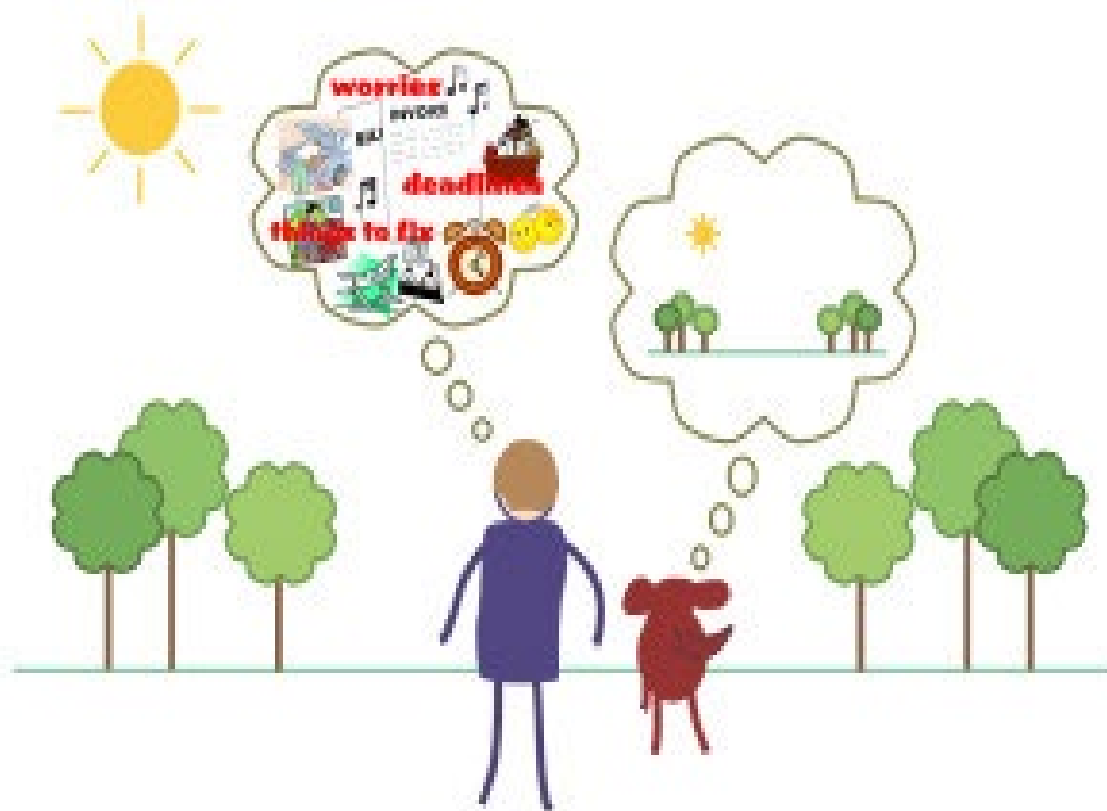
- Koru Mindfulness - free, donation based
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Program (MBSR) – modest fee
- Visit our website <https://mindfulness.uams.edu>

Closing Thoughts

- Growing body of scientific evidence supporting beneficial effects of Mindfulness meditation
- Evidence supports role for Mindfulness meditation in many medical and psychiatric condition and stress
- Mindfulness is a widespread, secular practice
- A skill that can be learned and always available to us



Plant the seed of Mindfulness; Cultivate Mindfulness



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Thank You!

Puru Thapa, M.D.,
thapapurushottamb@uams.edu