

Wherever You Go There You Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life¹

By Jon Kabat-Zinn

Reviewed by Estelle Jacobson, CYT

Wherever I went there I was. I was actually at Mount Madonna, holistic center near Santa Cruz, CA, with Jon Kabat-Zinn whose latest book, *Wherever You Go There You Are*, has become a best seller and which teaches stress reduction through meditation and Yoga.

We were 120 health practitioners taking Jon's seminar on mindfulness in everyday life, and the participants came from every part of the world. They varied in occupation from doctors, nurses, yoga teachers and body workers of every type and description. Some were sent by hospital facilities to learn Jon's techniques with the goal of setting up his methods in their facilities. Before you can teach his work to others it is essential that you learn and practice the art of using awareness in your own life. That is the strongest lesson I learned in the week we spent doing sitting meditation, walking meditation, yoga and his unique form of scanning



the body while in a prone position. If you don't integrate the methods in your own body, how can you teach it to others? Among the participants were many people who had never done any yoga or mediation, which really duplicated the clients Jon gets at the Stress Reduction Clinic, an outpatient service of the Division of Preventive and Behavioral

Medicine in the Department of Medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. Many of you may have seen Jon featured in Bill Moyer's PBS series called "Healing the Mind." That is where I first came into contact with Jon's work and was so fascinated by the show that I called the clinic in Worcester, MA, and received a schedule of his seminars and when I found he would be in my area, I hurried to register. Jon is also affiliated with Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, in Rhinebeck, NY, and a full program of their events is also available. Jon's first book, *Full Catastrophe Living*, has also become a classic. Its focus is on using the wisdom of your body and mind to face stress, pain and illness.

Jon Kabat-Zinn photo ©Priscilla Harmel

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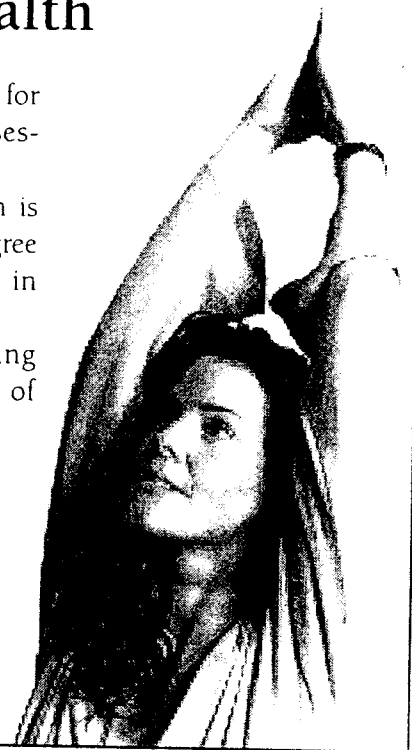
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What sets Jon's work apart from other stress-reduction methods is that it offers people who would never take themselves to a yoga class, people who are in chronic pain, people who have been rejected by traditional methods such as more drugs and further operations a way of working with their own stress, pain, and illnesses more effectively, to help them in mobilizing their own inner resources of mind and body for coping, for growing, for healing, for moving to greater levels of health and well-being, for taking charge in their lives in new ways.

Jon with his partner Saki Santorelli, teach an eight week course that can be taken as a complement to any medical treatments. Usually referred by doctors, the participant is evaluated in an individual hour long interview. Once a week for eight weeks participants are required to spend one day at the clinic and the rest of the week practicing

what is taught in class. For further information call the clinic at 508-856-2656.

It is interesting that the title of Jon's book, *Full Catastrophe Living*, came from the quote in *Zorba the Greek*. Zorba was asked if he was married. "Yes," he answered, "I am married. I have a house; I have children, the full catastrophe." We all have the "full catastrophe" in some form or another and we're grateful to have the opportunity to be alive and deal with it.

What Jon teaches, which I feel took me to a new level of understanding while in his aura, was that even though I knew how important the breath is, how important it is to stay in the moment, to constantly pay attention to my body and read its messages, I found myself making a new commitment. Jon requires at least 45 minutes of

meditation for six days a week. When you spend five days as I did in the mountains of Monterey Bay surrounded by the Redwoods I allowed myself to get back in touch with the moment and saw the healing effect of just being present. Now wherever I go, there I am.

¹ Jon Kabat-Zin, *Wherever You Go There You Are*, Hyperion, New York, 1994.

How Yoga Works: An Introduction To Somatic Yoga¹

By Eleanor Criswell, Ph.D.

Reviewed by Jim Dreaver, D.C.

When I came across Eleanor Criswell's book I had already been a yoga devotee for many years, and more recently a student of somatic education, as a result of having met Thomas Hanna, Ph.D., the author's late husband. Naturally, I was interested in Dr. Criswell's "somatic" perspective on yoga, and how it was different from traditional yoga.

The author, a professor of biofeedback and yoga psychology at Sonoma State University, tells us that the goal of somatic yoga is "ongoing mind-body integration" and emphasizes certain key principles for facilitating this process. Among those that are consistent with the somatic ideas presented by Thomas Hanna and his teacher, Moshe Feldenkrais, are self-sensing, awareness while moving, and internal visualization, all of which are essential in the understanding and self-regulation of the body.

Self-sensing is a way of more directly tuning in to one's own sensory-motor processes through taking note of the physiological feedback cues that arise out of movement, such as lengthening and contracting of muscles, the shifting tensions in joints, and so on. Awareness while moving has to do with moving slowly enough that the practitioner can be totally mindful-present to the asana-throughout the entire range of movement. It is in effect to constantly bring one's attention back to one's practice, and is a prerequisite for self-sensing.

Lastly, the author suggests that instead of launching directly into a posture, it is of more value to prepare oneself in advance by visualizing oneself doing the posture first. I think this is extremely beneficial and have always found it helpful in my own practice. Jean Klein, a master of Vedanta and yoga, suggests the same thing, "feeling" and "seeing" the movement before actually doing anything. It is to move the energy body first, and then the physical.

The book is organized into chapters on such yoga esoterica as *niyamas* and *yamas*, or things to do and not do (practicing cleanliness, austerity, and attention to God; refraining from injury, lying, greed); *pranayama*, or breathing; *pratyahara*, progressive relaxation; meditation; and *samadhi*, or union with the Absolute. The chapter on *asanas* is fairly comprehensive and illustrated with photographs of the author doing the poses, one picture per

pose. Fifteen asanas are described. Internal visualization, mindfulness and a controlled rhythm of breathing is recommended in each posture.

There are three chapters on the psychophysiology of yoga. The author has taken pains to describe exactly what happens, physiologically and neurologically, when one does yoga. It is this focus on scientific understanding that also makes her approach unique. Nothing is accepted on faith—as is often the case with traditional yoga—but is rather scientifically tested out. Such subjects as neural communication, transmitter substances, the structure of the nervous system, the somatosensory cortex and the physiology of muscle contraction are covered in considerable depth. The last chapters have to do with altered states of consciousness, *kundalini* awakening, and somatic yoga as a way of life.

Each chapter in the book is introduced with several quotes, with one usually from a yoga authority such as Patanjali or Haridas Chaudhuri, and then one from an ordinary student. The former are succinct and to-the-point, such as Patanjali's "The mind may also be calmed by expulsion and retention of the breath." The student quotes are honest and unaffected, and have an equally compelling ring of truth about them. "If I don't practice yoga for a while," says one student, "when I do it's like coming home again—coming back to myself, and it's so good to be there."

The author's style is both scientifically objective, drawing as it does on a lengthy list of authoritative references (including, as a prime source, Dr. R. S. Mishra's *Fundamentals of Yoga*) and at the same time warmly personal. She brings all of her scientific training and understanding to this book, and a great deal of herself as well.

She points, for example, to the danger of becoming too attached to the vertical or transcendent dimension of

human existence, which is always a temptation in yoga, especially as one learns to detach from the pain and suffering of ordinary worldly life.

"There is some measure of peace and calm," she writes, but, "You find yourself missing something—you miss the fellowship of other humans. You miss feeling at the usual level of intensity. You cannot work as effectively with others because you cannot fully empathize with them."

At the very end of the book Dr. Criswell offers this piece of wisdom: "I sometimes like to think of our being in a cosmic feedback system. When we make the right choices, things go well. When we are on the wrong track, things seem to go poorly. It is as if the universe was saying "hot" when we are on the right track and "cold" when we are off the track." Eleanor Criswell's somatic approach to yoga, it seems to me, is a way of tuning in even more precisely to the body's own internal feedback mechanisms, and thereby getting the maximum physiological value and personal joy and fulfillment out of one's yoga practice.

This book makes a valuable contribution to yoga literature. It is essential reading for all yoga teachers, and for every student of yoga who wants to understand, from a Western scientific perspective, more about how yoga really works.

¹ Freeperson Press, 455 Ridge Road, Novato, CA 94947

Vanda Scaravelli On Yoga

Video Produced by Esther Myers' Yoga Studio¹
Reviewed by Richard C. Miller, Ph.D.

I always take great pleasure in witnessing people who are at the top of their art form, be it music, painting, dance, therapy, meditation, yoga—whatever. The important factor is that they are living their art form in a truly magnificent manner—when they are not only performing what they have mastered, but they have become it. Then I find their presence a fire that fuels the lamp of my own spiritual creativity.

Whenever I partake in such ritual I find myself thrown deeper into my own art form, spurred on by the greatness I have just witnessed. It doesn't matter whom I observe, just that they have reached a pinnacle of their own form. Examples come to mind: Segovia on guitar, Ali Akbar Khan on sarod, Bernstein conducting, Pavarotti singing, Iyengar performing asana, Krishnamurti during a talk, or my own spiritual mentor, Jean Klein, during a dialogue. Their greatness electrifies.

And so I found myself reflecting along this vein as I watched the video of Vanda Scaravelli teaching the art form which she has mastered: yoga. I call you, if you are interested in greatness, to see this video. Few people have heard of Vanda Scaravelli, but those who have witnessed her presence and gifted teaching skills are touched to the core of their hearts and driven deeper into their own practice.

Vanda was born in Florence, Italy in 1908. Her father created orchestra and music societies in Florence and her mother was one of the first Italian women to attend university. Their house was a gathering place for musicians, artists and intellectuals. J. Krishnamurti visited there often and used their house as a retreat during his travels and lectures.

Through Krishnamurti, Vanda met B.K.S. Iyengar. She had private lessons with him in Gstaad for a number of years while Iyengar was on his annual teaching trips to Europe. She also worked with T.K.V. Desikachar, who showed her the importance of the breath in all aspects of yoga. When Iyengar and Desikachar stopped coming to Gstaad, Vanda carried on by herself. Working on her own, she discovered "a world without aim and without competition, where the body can start again to function naturally and happily, allowing expansion to take place."²

TRANSPERSONAL PSYCHOTHERAPY Second Edition

Seymour Boorstein, M.D., editor

Since its original publication in 1980, this book has become a classic in the field of transpersonal psychotherapy. This new edition contains articles by the major figures in the field, including new contributions by Stanislav Grof, John Nelson, Donald Evans, Charles Tart, Edward Hoffman, Seymour Boorstein, W. Michael Keane and Stephen Cope, Sylvia Boorstein, and Roger J. Woolger. The articles present a spectrum of widely diverse perspectives—from precise behavioristic work with attention training, through creative clinical pharmacology and theory development, to innovative use of chakra energies. The result is a rich and provocative summary of the state of the art in transpersonal psychotherapy.

The editor's focus is on the scientific healing/mysticism alliance, which dates back to the earliest shamans and in modern times has engaged William James, Carl Jung, Roberto Assagioli, and Abraham Maslow. In the book, some of the most respected pioneers in the field give their vision of the synergistic potential of these two powerful traditions. For the professional and non-professional alike, *Transpersonal Psychotherapy* describes a wide variety of uses of traditional and spiritual approaches for the alleviation of mental suffering and for spiritual development.

448 pages • Available February 1996 • \$19.95 pb • 0-7914-2836-2

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"This is a timely and useful introduction to the new and growing transpersonal orientation in psychotherapy. The diversity of theories, techniques, and issues presented by the contributors underscores the comprehensive nature of the emerging perspective. It will prove to be equally valuable for the professional and non-professional reader."
— Miles A. Vich, Editor, *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*

"Seymour Boorstein is a very experienced and widely respected psychiatrist and psychoanalyst. He has not left this base in clinical practice as he has begun to explore the possibilities for psychological theory in the transpersonal domain. The professional community owes him a debt of gratitude for bringing together representative works on transpersonal psychology in a single anthology." — Mardi J. Horowitz, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of California, San Francisco

By way of reviewing her video I present selected excerpts from Vanda's own voice during the teaching session she gives to Esther Myers' on this video.

"It is important to be relaxed while you are doing the poses. All the time you have to be relaxed—in an attitude of receiving. We are not against—we are with the body. This is the beauty of it. It is a feeling of well-being while you do the poses. You must never have it in mind what you want to do but what the body can accept."

"Our work in yoga is only one: to undo the tension. Undo, not do. Then the other comes. It is invited in if you are not afraid."

"Relaxation rather than effort is the foundation."

Be relaxed, but not sleepy. To be relaxed means to be intensely alert to

your insides—to what happens inside you. This is extremely important to be aware. To be awake. To be attentive—conscious.

"Yoga is not for the sake of exercise. We have something else in mind. You have to undo the tension. The nervous system enjoys it. Then the body is happy."

"It is important to be rested while you do the poses. We are with the body. This is the beauty. The feeling is inside."

"An attentive mind can make an intelligent body. But a lazy mind makes a dull body."

"The yoga is through and with the movement of the breath. This brings energy, movement and strength. You have the feeling of life."

"You see what happens. You follow your breath. Following is already an act of attention—of interest. Then you'll discover

there's no teacher and no pupil. You are your own teacher. You are your own pupil and in that moment there is creation."

"Teaching is the highest work one can do in life. You don't teach to help people. You have to have clarity."

"Live and give your energy... give your wisdom...give what you have. Give...not over-give. Be simple. That is so healthy."

"Do it for the sake of itself. For the fun of it. Then it's right. I practice because it's natural of me and I feel better. There is no other reason."

"With yoga I learned how to survive."

¹ Tapes may be ordered through Esther Myers' Yoga Studio, 390 Dupont Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5R 1V9, \$19.95 plus \$5.00 postage.
² Scaravelli, Vanda, *Awakening the Spine*, Harper Collins, San Francisco, 1991, p.24.

Grace Unfolding: Psychotherapy in the Spirit of the Tao-Te Ching

By Greg Johanson and Ron Kurtz
Reviewed by Donna Martin

This is a well-written and beautifully presented book about therapy which would be helpful to body therapists, psychotherapists, and particularly for anyone in therapy themselves.

Ron Kurtz, who developed the Hakomi Method of body-centered psychotherapy, and Greg Johanson, senior trainer of the Hakomi Institute, have written this book to illustrate the connection between the ancient principles of the *Tao-te ching*, Lao Tzu's Chinese classic, and modern psychotherapy. Written for both therapists and clients, it addresses issues of non-violence, the use of the body in therapy, the importance of mindfulness, and the interrelatedness of all things. The introduction suggests that the reader approach the book in a meditative way and "explore whatever enters your awareness." Each chapter quotes from various translations of the *Tao-te ching*. Case examples are given to show a way of practising therapy that is congruent with the principles of the *Tao-te ching*, and to emphasize how Lao Tzu's wisdom can provide a foundation and framework for inventing whatever technique is useful in a particular moment.

The following excerpts give a taste of what *Grace Unfolding* is about:

Simply Being

He who knows men is clever; he who knows himself has insight. He who conquers men has force; he who conquers himself is truly strong.

He who knows when he has got enough is rich...
And he who dies but perishes not enjoys real longevity.
(Wu Wei Wu)

The principles of nonviolent, nonddoing, mindful therapy are fundamental. If the therapist lives and breathes them, techniques evolve naturally as the process goes along. If the therapist is not grounded personally in the principles, the techniques simply will not work. The therapist is her own best instrument.

When a superior man hears of the Tao, he immediately begins to embody it. (Stephen Mitchell)

He doesn't think about his actions; they flow from the core of his being. (Stephen Mitchell)

Empowering

Withdraw as soon as your work is done. Such is Heaven's Way. (trans. Chan)

The work of therapists is not analogous to that of engineers or artists. Therapists do not create something that they can stand back from, look at, and claim as their own. Mindful, non-violent therapy simply helps us discover and affirm the wisdom of our inner experience. When insights emerge, attachments are released, new roads are discovered, and bodies reshape around more realistic, nourishing beliefs, it is not the therapists' doing. It is not their baby. Therapists' work is more like that of a midwife. They coach nature. When the baby is born, there is no question to whom it belongs.

[The Tao] accomplishes its task, but does not claim credit for it. (Chan)

In Chapter 17, Lao Tzu says that when the sage is at work, people will say "we did it ourselves." This is empowerment. Who is it who looks inside herself, explores the mystery, suspends old reactions, experiences the pain, and explores integrating new ways of being into her everyday world? Who else but the client? The therapist is blessed by being a witness, by carrying the water, by celebrating the new birth. It is enough. The task is done. It is time to withdraw. Anything else will sow confusion and induce a sticky, harmful dependence.

If you want to accord with the Tao, just do your job, then let go. (Stephen Mitchell)

Jumping

The Master views the parts with compassion, because he understands the whole. (Stephen Mitchell)

Therapists have to be able to go back and forth between being intimately

connected to the fine grain of what is happening, to being able to stand back and see the whole picture. When they gain a perspective, they may well see that they need to escape from a particular system.

Compassion flows naturally from realizing how one part fits into the whole. For instance, it can be boring and frustrating for therapist and client to follow an unending assortment of aches, symptoms, interesting happenings, evocative associations, and more, as one therapist did with Greta. When a jump to a higher level revealed that Greta was terrified of being ignored, unconsciously angry at not being interesting enough to be included without constantly performing, and desperately trying to get the therapist not to abandon her, the purpose of the stream of symptoms was understood. New options became possible for satisfying her deep need to be included and acknowledged.

In general, the jumps made in therapy that enable us to transcend our self-perpetuating systems are from context to form, statement to assumption, surface manifestation to experiential base, experience to meaning, what is being done to who is doing it and how, thought to thinker, piece to pattern, and expression of character to core. Again it is important that the therapist and client observe the world, but trust their inner vision. Either one can make the jump, or simply express that something does not seem to be working, that it is time to step back and get a wider perspective on what is happening. Therapy is a mutual collaboration, not a guru-disciple capitulation.

To be productive, any level of work requires the willingness to empty ourselves of what we think we want and know, and a corresponding willingness to open ourselves to what emerges as important and needful.

[The Sage] only helps all creatures to find their own nature, but does not venture to lead them by the nose. (Wu Wei Wu)

He simply reminds people of who they have always been. (Stephen Mitchell)

The Master's power is like this. He lets all things come and go, effortlessly, without desire. (Stephen Mitchell)

Can any of us, therapists, clients or both, hope to attain such wisdom, such a quality of being-in-the-world? No. To attain anything implies an effortful, usually self-centered attempt that separates us from what we seek before we start. While we may not be able to attain, the Tao-te ching does suggest a possibility that we might allow some healing experiences to happen. Lao Tzu affirms a creation in which we can be content, one that provides more than enough for our needs, one that we do not have to change, a creation in which reconciliation occurs as we find compassion for ourselves and others. Perhaps with some encouragement from a therapist, friend, group, or guide we can open ourselves to the possibility that the creation can nourish us. Instead of fighting it, we may discover a way to be at peace with it and creatively enter into its rhythms.

Mindfulness is a wonderful tool for exploring creation and letting it into our lives. As we watch carefully, we not only become witness to and let go of unnecessary attachments, we identify with that part of our mind which is awareness itself. When we are in such a state of "not-knowing" anything in particular, we may experience unity and interrelatedness. This place of unselfconscious compassion is a state that is beyond therapy.

Interview with Ron Kurtz

By Donna Martin

Ron Kurtz is the creator of the Hakomi Method¹ and author of *Body-Centered Psychotherapy: The Hakomi Method*, and *Grace Unfolding* (with Greg Johanson). Donna Martin originally recorded parts of this interview on her weekly yoga program on a British Columbia television station. Donna is a certified Hakomi therapist as well as a yoga therapist and teacher. She currently teaches a Hakomi training for therapists with Ron called *Loving Presence: Therapy as a Spiritual Practice*.

Donna: As a yoga teacher and therapist, one of the reasons I was attracted to your Hakomi Method of Body-Centered Psychotherapy was because the principles on which Hakomi is based are so close to some of the basic principles of yoga.

Ron: Eastern philosophy and practice has been an important influence on my life and work. I started doing yoga in 1959 and later became interested in Buddhism and Taoism. The first Hakomi principle is "unity," which, of course, is implied in the meaning of "yoga." For me, the unity principle is basic because it describes a level of reality where we're all interconnected. It assumes that level of reality as primary, in life and certainly in terms of doing therapy.

D. I know that Hakomi, like yoga, assumes that body, mind and spirit are part of the whole person, and that each of us, including therapist and client in a session, are inextricably linked together. What are some other aspects of unity that you see operating when you work?

R. I remember a woman in one workshop who had a migraine. As I worked with her, I sensed that she was so enmeshed with her mother's world that I asked her if I could work—right then and there—with her mother. At that point in the session, I began to work with her mother, who

was there only in her consciousness... there's another kind of unity.

D. The first introduction I had to Hakomi was in a workshop with you at Hollyhock, in British Columbia, and what really struck me at the time was that the whole style of therapy as you demonstrated it seemed to be very yogic in the sense of, not just connectedness, that is everything being part of the same whole, but the way you worked with mindfulness and the development of awareness...

R. The idea of mindfulness is very similar to meditation. It's a matter of getting some distance from the habitual mind. If we get some distance from our automatic and habitual way of doing things, and start to watch them, we cultivate another level of mind which is much more free, because we can decide *not* to do those things. As a tool for therapy, it's wonderful. If you ask people to be mindful and then do something that shows them their habits, the habits totally reveal the underlying model that they carry about themselves and the world. For example, if you ask somebody to be mindful and say: "When you're ready I'll give you a signal," and you say "You're a good person," you can even do this with a very large group... many people will notice that they don't accept that. If you asked the same question outside of mindfulness... in ordinary consciousness—how many people think they're a good person? —almost everyone would put up their hand. But in mindfulness, they notice that something else goes on, such as a voice in their head that says "I don't believe it"... or they get sad and start to cry a little bit... they get some distance on who they are and see that they're wired up differently than they thought.

I have asked myself what makes Hakomi different from other methods of psychotherapy. One of the main things I see is that Hakomi involves the evocation of experience in mindfulness. We use mindfulness in this precise way. This is a fundamental

difference in method. We evoke experiences while a client is in this particular state of consciousness. Those experiences tell us what kind of models people are operating from.

D. One of the things I like about how Hakomi works, how a Hakomi therapist would work, is that with mindfulness, the insights and solutions, the keys to the healing, arise from within the client.

R. Yes, it's very empowering. In Hakomi, as we've said, mindfulness is a foundation for the work. Non-violence is also a necessary part of this because, in order for someone to become mindful, and vulnerable, he or she has to feel safe. This becomes the first task of the therapist and it is an important part of gaining the cooperation of the unconscious. A Hakomi therapist doesn't look to solve problems. We don't try to change someone into some kind of ideal person. We just hold up a kind of empathic mirror, a mirror that doesn't just show you who you are but comes from a place inside the therapist which is accepting and compassionate, no matter who you are. And that empathic mirror is very important to have in front of you when you're trying to grow, to move out of your rut.

D. You talk about how we operate from a "model" and you talk about how Hakomi is about studying the way a person organizes—their world view, their perceptions of what's happening, so understanding—in mindfulness—how we're organized gives us some level of choice.

R. Yes, it's not just simple conditioning. It's these complex models of who you are and what kind of world you're in—just like a polar bear has a model about the kind of weather it lives in—its model is predicting something. We learn our models very, very early on. For example, if there's a continuously cold emotional atmosphere, the child organizes her body to deal with it. Even though she doesn't think about it later, she still

carries the model. She carries it in the way she organizes her body, her behavior, her thoughts. She organizes around a model of the world as "cold" and non-accepting, unfriendly. We all have models... we can't function without them.

D. One of the principles of Hakomi is the mind-body connection. So, regarding how a person organizes, besides just their mental model, there is how the body organizes around the belief system.

R. Bodies are a very clear expression of the model, which is almost always unconscious. You're not thinking about how you should hold your body. And, the way you organize yourself physically helps you manage your emotional response... You can stand on any street corner anywhere and watch people go by and you'll notice, first of all, they're not the same. They use their bodies differently. In therapy, you can access the person's model through the body. The way they're holding can be talked about as blocks... blocks to the flow of energy. I think of it as a kind of management... they're trying to manage their experience, to minimize the pain. In yoga, when you open up the body, you release some of those management procedures. Self-knowledge should come from that.

D. One thing I know as a yoga teacher is that someone can practice yoga from inside their model; in other words, a person could do their practice managing in the same way as they've managed all along, just reinforcing those patterns.

R. Yes, Ida Rolf said that if you exercise with a badly structured body you just exaggerate the imbalances.

D. Well, I know that in yoga, if you're focusing on the exercise as a task, instead of studying *how* you're doing it, then it doesn't take you beyond where you start.

R. Right, because the very part that exerts effort is the part you want to relax.

D. One of the things I know you're doing more of, Ron, is working with therapists in helping them study how they're organized, themselves, in doing therapy with a client.

R. If I go back to that idea of the empathic mirror, that's something that you can't fake... you really have to bring yourself to a certain state of mind that is healing for the client, regardless of any technique or therapy you use. Studies have shown that it's really the personality—the *personhood*—of the therapist that does most of the work. So, I like to teach people now how to get into the right state of mind, how the way they manage their experience keeps them from being in a healing state of mind. The Hakomi Method itself is well-suited for the state of mind that I call "loving presence." Loving Presence is the name of the new trainings that I offer.

D. Can you say a little about the new trainings?

R. The Loving Presence trainings consist of a three-week intensive session every summer for three years in a row. They're offered mostly in Oregon, at a Tibetan retreat center. The environment itself is incredibly nourishing. I like that... right away you're embraced by Nature. We work primarily in the beginning on personal growth. There's an enormous amount of processing and an enormous amount of practice. We practice loving presence all the time, which is a great setting for learning therapy. The group gets so bonded that they then learn the method and techniques at a whole different level. They develop skillful means to express compassion and create a healing relationship for the client.

D. The Hakomi Method is practised by both counselors and bodyworkers, and the Loving Presence trainings include all kinds of therapists.

R. The approach is appropriate for anybody and works in all kinds of settings, even personal relationships. The people who take the trainings often say that what they got had as much benefit for them in their personal lives as in their work. Presence is about totally showing up, meaning that you don't show up managing yourself, you show up in an open, empty way. This kind of presence allows the therapist also to be nourished in the session. It is a kind of spiritual, or "non-egocentric" nourishment. The quieter you are inside, the less busy you are, the deeper you get and the more nourishing the experience is for both client and therapist. Something about the client fills you up... whether it is courage, vulnerability... it's like a work of art and it sustains your capacity for compassion. Da Free John says there's no love without pleasure. So that's part of what we teach, this cycle of taking in and beaming back.

D. It's very common in health care professions that people burn out or get sick themselves. It suggests that for some reason, the therapists are not taking in enough nourishment from what they're doing.

R. Back at Esalen about twenty years ago, they used to say, "Don't just do something... stand there!" Therapists are usually trained to do something. The idea in their mind—their model—is "I have to do this... make something happen." They're organized around doing. They have to find what the problem is so they can solve it. All that busy-ness gets in the way. It gets in the way of therapy. As therapists, we have to learn a certain kind of faith. Things will be okay. They are okay. If we can learn to really be there, the client starts to unfold very spontaneously. It's like sunlight on a

flower. It's the right time to unfold. They know that on some level when the therapist is in the right state of mind.

D. For me, that state of mind that rests in faith is what makes this a very "spiritual" kind of therapy. In yoga, for example, that whole idea of having to do something... of having to get it right... get somewhere... it really gets in the way of the practice being a spiritual practice. It gets in the way of it being "yoga!" But that "doing" mode is a cultural model. We're in a culture that really encourages striving for goals, getting somewhere, fixing things.

R. It's called "materialism" and it does make us all into doers. This material basis has come to represent "the good life." You work all week and on Saturday you have to go buy something. So this culture is based on this whole model. But in physics this model doesn't hold up at all anymore. In quantum physics there is another reality. In quantum theory, what makes up even solid objects is awareness.

D. It brings to mind Deepak Chopra's book, *Quantum Healing*, which represents Ayurveda and a whole different approach to healing. I'm aware that even alternative healing methods, herbs or acupuncture or shamanism or whatever, stay within the limits of the cultural model if they're still looking for what's wrong and attempting to "fix" it. What I like about your "loving presence" approach is that you're inviting therapists to study their state of mind and the quality of presence that they bring to the relationship. It really gets away from this whole idea of something's wrong... let's figure it out and fix it.

R. Right. It's more about, let's find something to love in this person and let's beam it right back at them. That's the essence of it.

D. So, what is healing really about then, if it's not finding what's wrong and fixing it?

R. Well, if you have a cut on your finger, you don't have to do anything... clean it and it'll heal. Pay some attention to it and it'll heal even better. Healing is built in. Empathic mirroring for yourself, by yourself, is a great help to healing. It is learning to be compassionate towards yourself and towards the world. In psychotherapy, what a healing relationship involves is demonstrating that you're present, attentive, compassionate, and that you understand the person's experience. If you can demonstrate that, you gain the cooperation of the unconscious mind, which has been managing their experience—their pain—for a long time. If the therapist has the trust and cooperation of the client's unconscious, through compassionate understanding, therapy happens. So the therapy has a lot to do with the state of mind of the therapist—the therapist's *being*. In this sense, it's more about being than doing. In this sense, therapy also comes out of, and becomes, a spiritual practice.

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30 Scripts for Relaxation, Imagery and Inner Healing, Volumes 1 & 2

By Julie T. Lusk, Editor, Whole Person Associates, Inc., Duluth, MN
800-247-6789

Reviewed by Donna Martin

Julie Lusk, yoga teacher, counselor and wellness expert has pulled together in these two volumes a variety of scripts that are useful to anyone in a teaching or helping profession. Her experience and expertise come through strongly in the introductory comments when she talks about preparing people correctly to make the experience safe and comfortable, creating the right atmosphere, using the voice effectively, and using music properly. Therapists who are not experienced in guided relaxation or visualization would do well to read Julie's suggestions.


The books are well organized and easy to use. The scripts, which have been contributed by a number of different experts, are divided into five sections: Becoming Relaxed, Nature and the Environment, Inner Answers, Healing, and Personal Growth. Each script is presented with a summary statement, a time estimate, and suggestions about how to use it most effectively. For example Bernie Siegel's script—Love, Joy, and Optimism—is introduced this way: "In this guided meditation, participants journey down a private path; encounter their own personal guide and shadow; feel love, joy, hope and optimism; and learn to accept themselves no matter what is going on in their lives."

As Julie says in her forward, these scripts are offered to beginners for personal use and to professionals to expand their repertoire and inspire new ideas. There are scripts for working with pain, with grief, with needing answers, and even a stop smoking relaxation script. Liliias Folan has also contributed a wonderful version of the Inner Smile exercise. Julie's own Mountain Tops visualization is particularly effective as in all-sensory relaxation experience.

As a therapist, I am appreciative of the variety and the simplicity of the scripts. The time estimates are useful, and each volume contains both short (5 minute) and longer

(30 minute) examples. I have found the books to be a valuable resource, especially for working with groups and for training other therapists.

Julie invites contribution for future volumes. If you have a favorite relaxation script, it can be sent to Julie Lusk, at 2140 Laurel Woods, Salem, VA 24153. Please include a theme statement, a time estimate, and a 50 word biography.



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