Mindfulness and PSYCHOTHERAPY II
Attention: The Heart of Mindfulness and Psychotherapy

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*The typical psychotherapist enters private practice feeling ethically committed to giving attention to each client, to establishing and maintaining rapport, and to sustaining sensitive contact regardless of subject matter, emotional tone, or context. Without further training, such requirements are about as easy as the exoteric "Love thy neighbor as thyself." (*Speeth, 1982, p 141).

In the prior issue of the *New Jersey Psychologist*, our Special Section on Mindfulness and Psychotherapy explored mindfulness as a way of "paying attention in the present moment and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). In this issue, we explore several practitioners' creative approaches to integrating the art and science of paying attention into their thinking and their work. For this, we begin from the shared assumption that attention, the action of the observer observing the observed, lies at the center of our 21st century scientific paradigm. Despite this, we still tend to be habituated to an older 19th century science where an identification with a mind-centered self (i.e., an identification with the rational mind rather than an identification with a more inclusive attention) still holds sway. As psychologists, we find ourselves straddling two worlds in this fascinating historical period where we are in transition from the older science to an emerging science emphasizing the role of attention. Interestingly, physics, philosophy, and psychology are leading the way in this shift of scientific paradigm.

For the past one hundred years, we have been living in the transition between the worldview of the science of Galileo, Copernicus, and Newton and the worldview emerging from the science of Einstein, Bohr, and Heisenberg. The scientist's attention, how he uses it. and where he decides to focus it, seems to be an essential factor. The observer directly affects what is observed. For example, in quantum physics, no one experiment can show light to be both wave (i.e., energy) and particle (i.e., matter). How the physicist chooses to set up the experiment and apply his attention directly affects what he observes. The history of psychology, the science of the unconscious, also reflects the transition front one scientific worldview to another. Freud began by attempting to be a pure observer, i.e., as a Newtonian, and ended up analyzing the observer's and the observed's conscious and unconscious participation in the therapeutic process. The trap of the belief in an exclusive rationality was exposed by Freud. Right from the beginning, Western psychology brought into question the credibility of the so-called conscious mind and has included the researcher or observer, as a whole, in its field of study. For Freud. a free floating attention was an essential prerequisite for entering into the process of observing self and other.

A focus on the quality and nature of attention, as stated above, is central to the endeavors of both psychotherapy and mindfulness. The heart of mindfulness practice is completely about paying attention moment by moment, nonjudgmentally. It is about working with attention, cultivating attention. Recently, the centrality of attention has been much explored in psychological theories of self-regulation (Cohen & Blum. 2002: Ryan & Deci. 2001; Shapiro & Schwartz, 2000) and in the importance of sustained attention (Csikzentmihalyi, 1990). Wallace & Shapiro (2006) postulate that "attentional balance," which includes the development of sustained attention, is essential for both mental health and optimal performance. Nanamoli & Bodhi (1995), from the perspective of mindfulness, posit a "meta-attention" which they call the ability to monitor the actual states of mind that come and go and to recognize whether the attention has wavered into boredom/lack of attention or excitability. From this perspective. with the continual skillful practice of mindfulness, a state of well-being can be achieved that is not dependent upon pleasurable sensory, aesthetic, or intellectual stimuli. Thus, central to mindfulness is the recognition that attention can and should be trained. Finally, from the perspective of the emerging science and from the point of view of mindfulness, the real power of the mind lies not in an exclusive rationality, but in its power to demonstrate a flexible, more free and inclusive attention. Attention is primary. Rationality is how we respond. It follows attention. The underlying quest is to understand.

Another facet of the shifting paradigm is that during the past two decades, psychoanalysis, as a result of the intellectual impact of feminism, the women's movement, and postmodernist thought, has shifted more toward relational theory "anchored in the idea that it is relationships (internal and external, real and imagined) that are central" (Aron. 1996, p.18) and away from the "all knowing" therapist who "objectively" offers interpretation. "... not one subject and one object, not one irrational patient and one rational authority, not one judging what is real, but two observing-participants each of whom have a plausible perspective" (Aron. 1996, p.29). Furthermore, significant research on the psychotherapeutic process has long indicated that it is not the theoretical orientation of the therapist per se, but the quality of the attentional relationship that is the single most essential curative factor.

Jon Kabat-Zinn is fond of pointing out that, "the words for mind and heart are the same in Asian languages; *mindfulness* carries with it elements of openhearted friendly presence, an affectionate. compassionate quality within the attending..." (Kabat-Zinn. 2003, p. 150). Thus, in English, the word, "mind" in the term, "mindfulness," is a bit of a misnomer, what is meant is mind, body, and heart, one's complete being. Because mindfulness can only be understood as an attentional relationship to something else such as breath, bodily sensations, feelings, thought, etc., mindfulness is not a technique, but a wholehearted, whole way of being, a nonjudgmental relationship to whatever happens to be arising no matter what the content. Thus, mindfulness has historically been called the *heart* of Buddhist meditation (Thera, 1962). In addition, a synonym sometimes used in English for mindful-

ness is *insight*, in the sense of a maintaining an attitude of inquiry toward whatever arises: "What is this?" "Who is attending?" are some of the questions around which this type of inquiry revolves.

Dr. Michel de Salzmann, a French psychiatrist, helps shed light on this distinction:

> **QUESTION:** I was touched by something you said about the attention of the feeling....
>
> **Dr. de Salzmann**: It is what is often referred to as the opening of the feeling, of the heart. But, you see, we are always speaking of these things in a conceptual way. It makes the approach nearly impossible since this kind of experience should be dealt with in terms of energy. The opening of the feeling can only take place when one begins to understand through experience, the necessity of a balanced state in the distribution and circulation of our inner energy. It involves a new center of gravity of attention, its withdrawal from the mind, and the revelation, here and now, through my entire body of my existential participation in life. In that state, for instance, the act of breathing can be in itself an entirely new experience. It engenders a specific shock and mobilization of energy when I discover that it breathes through me (de Salzmann, 1976, p.76).

As new breakthroughs occur in psychotherapy, classical myrhs are often unearthed and found useful in elucidating them. For example, with the ascendancy of relational theory in psychoanalysis there is a shift away from the Oedipal complex (for Freud, Oedipus was the central myth) to pre-oedipal phenomena. With respect to the focus on attention that both mindfulness and psychotherapy offer, Epstein (1995) (by way of Jessica Benjamin, 1988) suggests the myth of Eros and Psyche. For Epstein, formal mindfulness practice along with psychotherapy can produce a freshness and vitality in the client and therapist, conceived of as Psyche enlivened by Eros. Winnicott (1960) when talking about maintaining the true self despite the compromises the environment requires is emphasizing the need to stay in touch with or to recover one's vitality. Mindfulness gives us a way to nurture this true self and the myth of Eros and Psyche is useful in helping to enhance our understanding of this.

Saki Santorelli (1999) with respect to attention and mindfulness and the doctor/patient relationship, suggests the myth of Chiron, the wounded healer. In that myth, as a result of a drunken brawl, Hercules accidentally wounds the centaur and healer, Chiron, with an arrow tipped in the blood of the Hydra. As a result, the wound will never heal. For Santorelli, as doctor/patient, therapist/client, we are the wounded trying to heal the wounding both in the patient and in ourselves. The myth helps bring us closer to that reality.

Perhaps one of the most powerful classical myths which can be related to non-judgmental attention or awareness (as well as relational theory) is the myth of Baucus and Philemon (Handlin & Handlin, 2006). Baucus and Philemon are an elderly couple (i.e., a dyad) with a wonderful interpersonal relationship. In fact, it could be argued that they have the best relationship in all of Greek mythology. In the myth the three most powerful gods, Zeus, Apollo, and Hermes, decide to visit mankind disguised as beggars to see who will willingly offer them hospitality. The three gods in beggar disguise are representatives of powerful forces inside each of us that present as worthless beggars-forces that if recognized and worked with can bring untold richness. The beggars can be seen to represent the dark forces that we tend to push away such as failure, emotional abuse, shame, loss, insults, and woundings of all kinds. In the myth, all of the humans who encounter the beggar gods summarily reject them except Baucus and Philemon. Poor and very close to being beggars themselves, Baucus and Philemon open their home, the little they have, and their hearts to the beggars only to find them gods in disguise.

The action of paying attention from the perspective of both psychotherapy and mindfulness offers a *Baucus and Philemon* approach to any unexpected guests who might arrive at any time in any moment, or might keep arriving moment by moment. In fact, each moment, if attended to mindfully, is a moment in which the unexpected, the unknown, is welcomed non-judgmentally. As a result of their open-heartedness, and their attention to their beggar guests, Baucus and Philemon are rewarded by the gods with immortality. The myth seems to suggest that with attention and acceptance of the moment for what it is bringing, one can move from a mortal framework, i.e., a limited, narrow perspective, to an immortal framework, i.e., an expanded, openhearted, fully accepting perspective.

In the rich papers that follow, Dr. Ken Verni, supervising psychologist at the UMDNI/University Behavioral Health Care Adolescent Therapeutic Day School, explores some of the core elements of mindfulness practice as they relate to the developmental needs and challenges of adolescence. Dr. Gordon Boals differentiates the meditation technique taught in Transcendental Meditation (TM) from Mindfulness Meditation (which Kabat-Zinn has described as not a technique, but as a way of being). As with Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), the TM technique has significant scientific research validating its effectiveness. In the final paper, the late Dr.Georgette Kelley, former Jungian analyst and board and faculty member of both the C.G. Jung Institute of New York and the Jung Institute of Philadelphia, founder and Director of the Office of Psychological Services, Douglass College. Rutgers University, from 1976 to 1992, and a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, explores the interface between Jungian psychotherapy and formal mindfulness meditation within the Dzogchen Buddhist tradition. In this transcription of one of her talks made available through the generosity of her life partner, the Rev. Daphne Hawkes and Dr. Ann Reese, Dr. Kelley draws attention to the shadow side of the psyche and the wounding which when hospitably engaged provides a doorway to what she describes as an experience of the numinous.

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