

OVERVIEW: This document contains the materials needed for Class 2 of Course II in our series on an *Introduction to Mindfulness & Meditation*. Our goal in this class is to expand on the concepts presented in Course I through our review of “*The 4 Stages of the Self*.” In this course we will cover the first 2 stages of the self, including *Know Thyself* and *Heal Thyself*. We will spend two classes on each of these topics. Each week we will email you a link to our website that will include: (1) A downloadable PDF with overview of core concepts with journal prompts, (2) Video reviewing weekly concepts and journal prompts, (3) Weekly guided meditation & breath work, and (4) Yoga flow for the week with related breath work and flow.

In Class 2 we will cover Part 2 of *Know Thyself*. This includes the topics: (A) Know Your Beliefs, Thoughts, Emotions, (B) Know Your Body – Know Your Stress, and (C) Know Your Values – Loving Kindness Toward Self and Others. The overview and journal prompts for these three concepts are included in this handout.

NOTE: *These reflections and suggested journal prompts are offered to assist in asking questions, from a mindfulness perspective, to help move one toward greater understanding of the self while building strengths in the areas of mindfulness. However, due to the probing nature of these questions and reflections, they could stir up challenging and difficult topics or thoughts. PLEASE do not push into areas that are too uncomfortable. Self-care is critical and do only what you feel comfortable with. Take breaks, share with a friend or loved one, or call for assistance if in any way you feel the need. A list of resources and contacts is at the bottom of the page. Be gentle, go slowly, hold all in love, grace, and non-judgment. It is a process. We are never a finished product! If any questions let us know.*¹

“To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom.” — Socrates

I. KNOW THYSELF (Part 2) – Before you start with these reflections and journal suggestions, we invite you to do some breath work with a short period of quiet or meditation. Give yourself time and space to be present with these questions and to really listen to your heart and spirit, and to the responses that arise. Find a safe and private location with enough time to breathe, center, journal, and go within.²

C. Know Your Beliefs, Thoughts, Emotions - As you learn to sit and listen to yourself, and increase awareness, you begin to recognize the thoughts and emotions that arise for you. Rather than being pulled into them and reacting, awareness allows us to hold space for them, get to know them, and try to understand them. Remembering that our thoughts are just thoughts, and our feelings are just feelings, *they are not us, they do not define us, and we can work to change them and/or let them pass. “Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”* — Thích Nhất Hạnh.

Thoughts and emotions can also be thought of like a horse, we want to be the ones riding the horse (rather than the horse riding us!), and we want to be telling the horse which way to go and how fast, rather than the horse (our thoughts/emotions) going where it wants to go and just taking us along for the ride.³

¹ A warm thank you and acknowledgement to George Mumford for allowing us to adapt and use certain concepts from his work in “*The Mindful Athlete*.” We recommend if you have not done so, to read the book as it is a wonderful introduction (and guidebook) to mindfulness and its applications and benefits in day-to-day life.

² For a review of the “S.T.O.P.” method, see Course 1 materials and/or go to: <https://www.mindful.org/the-s-t-o-p-practice-creating-space-around-automatic-reactions/>

³ We want to acknowledge and affirm that there are certain circumstances, including mental health conditions, where controlling your thoughts is beyond the ability of the individual. We in no way mean to minimize those conditions or the difficulty of learning and applying this skill. We believe though, that with awareness, breathing, pausing to observing, then proceeding with intention, many of us can make changes to our “*reactions*” and begin to choose our “*responses*.” See “S.T.O.P. method from Course I referenced” above.

4 STAGES OF THE SELF – STAGE 1: “KNOW THYSELF” (Part 2)

Reflections and Suggested Journal Prompts

As we increase awareness of our thoughts and emotions, we eventually become curious as to where they come from and why. This leads us to reviewing the beliefs that are behind our thoughts and emotions. The more we are aware of our thoughts and emotions, and the beliefs that form them, the more we are empowered and able to make conscious choices about what we think and how we will respond in given situations. With awareness of our thoughts and feelings, we can catch ourselves (like watching ourselves in a movie), avoid just reacting, and then make *choices* on how we want to show up in the moments of our lives. This is how we train ourselves to use the “*space between stimulus and response.*”

“Your beliefs become your thoughts,
Your thoughts become your words,
Your words become your actions,
Your actions become your habits,
Your habits become your values,
Your values become your destiny.” - Mahatma Gandhi

“As you think, so shall you become.” — Bruce Lee

“We become what we think about. Energy flows where attention goes.” – Rhonda Byrne

Questions for reflection:

1. What beliefs, thoughts, and emotions are typically the “drivers’ in your day-to-day life?
 - a. What/how do you believe/think/feel about yourself and your life?
 - b. What/how do you believe/think/feel about other people?
 - c. What/how do you believe/think/feel about the world/universe?
2. Where do these beliefs/thoughts/emotions come from?
3. Is all of this currently serving you? What does it cost you to carry these beliefs/thoughts/emotions?
4. If they are not serving you and/or come at a high cost, what would it take for you to get rid of or create new beliefs/thoughts/feelings that would serve you more fully?
5. What might be some more empowering beliefs/thoughts/feelings, for you in your life?
6. What is one step you can take to let go of or change any of the beliefs/thoughts/emotions that no longer serve you or that might be limiting you?
7. What resistance or obstacles might you face and how can you overcome that?

D. Know Your Body – Know Your Stress: Our bodies tell us a lot and “keep the score” of our lives, our stress, pain, disappointments, anxiety, and injuries; as well as the joys, success, happy times, and transformations. “*Remove stress from the body and the body regenerates itself. You can heal yourself.*” – Rhonda Byrne. The body is always trying to talk to us, but we often are just not listening.

“Don’t let your mind bully your body into believing it must carry the burden of its worries.” – Astrid Alauda

Questions for reflection:

1. What is your relationship to your body, how well do you know it/listen to it?
2. Where in your body does stress or anxiety (or other strong emotions) present themselves?
3. What is/has your body been trying to tell you; how does it do so, and why?
4. How could you use breathwork, mindfulness, and meditation, to help you get in touch with and listen to your body, and then to alleviate some of the stress or anxiety you are holding?
5. What is one step you could take this week to get more in touch with your body, to listen to it (feel where it is hurting and try to understand why), and then release whatever is going on?
6. What obstacles or resistance might you face in doing this and how can you overcome that?

E. Know Your Values – “Loving Kindness” Toward Self and Others: Our lives are based not only on beliefs, but also on values. For Course II we have identified 4 sets of core values to work with and will offer one new set each week. This week we offer you the concept of “Loving Kindness”, and invite you to entertain it in thought, and possibly practice this week. The *Loving Kindness* meditation is a core meditation in the mindfulness practice, focusing on being well, being happy, and having peace, for self and others.

Questions for reflection:

1. How and in what ways can you offer yourself Loving Kindness?
2. Try a Loving Kindness meditation at:
 - a. <https://calmcom.app.link/8v76PoCr1pb> or
 - b. <https://insig.ht/oJBPN6Vr1pb>
3. If this is difficult for you, what resistance (thoughts & emotions) do you feel and why?
4. How and in what ways can you offer others Loving Kindness?
5. If this is difficult for you, what resistance (thoughts & emotions) do you feel and why?
6. What are 3-5 of *your own core values* that you aspire to live your life by?
7. To what degree do you feel you are living in alignment with those values?
8. To the extent you are not living in alignment with those values, why not, what gets in the way?
9. How would it impact you to live in full alignment with your values?
10. What is the cost/impact on you if not living more in alignment with your values?
11. What is one step you can take to live life more centered on Loving Kindness for self and others?
12. What is one step you can take to move toward living more fully in alignment with your values?
13. What resistance or obstacles might you face and how can you overcome that?

8 C’s (Tools) of Mindfulness

Conscious Awareness	Compassionate Heart
Controlled Breath	Connected Body
Calm Mind	Courageous Action
Clear Vision	Collective Reflection

SUPPORT CONTACT INFO:

Suzi Landolphi – MVP Clinical Director 818-470-2013; Suzi@vetsandplayers.org	NFLPA resource for Current Players https://nflpa.com/active-players/wellness-resources
Bruce Kittle – HPP Course Instructor 405-623-9460; CoachKittle61@gmail.com	NFLPA resource for Former Players https://nflpa.com/former-players/health-wellness?

Concepts Covered in Class 1 on Know Thyself (Part 1):

A. Conscious Awareness and Controlled Breath

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.” — Viktor E. Frankl “Man’s Search for Meaning.”

B. Acceptance

“For after all, the best thing one can do when it is raining is let it rain.”-Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

“Serenity comes when you trade expectations for acceptance.” - Buddha

“You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.” - Joseph Goldstein.

“Accept – then act. Whatever the present moment, accept it as if you had chosen it.....this will miraculously transform your whole life.” – Eckert Tolle.

In Class 3 (June 6) – Heal Thyself (Part 1)