

HIDDEN PEARLS PODCAST/MVP/PAF - MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION COURSE II
4 STAGES OF THE SELF – STAGE 2: “HEAL THYSELF” (Part 2)
Reflections and Suggested Journal Prompts

OVERVIEW: This document contains the materials for Class 4 “Heal Thyself” Part 2. This class will cover: (D) Forgiveness - of Self, Others, and the World, (E) Recognize & Remove “Inner” Masks and Deceptions, and (F) Joyful Gratitude.

NOTE: *These reflections and journal prompts are offered to assist in asking questions, from a mindfulness perspective, to help move one toward a greater understanding of the self while building strengths in the areas of mindfulness. However, due to the probing nature of these questions and reflections, especially around these 2 classes on “Healing Thyself”, these materials could stir up challenging and difficult thoughts/feelings. 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, and/or call for assistance if in any way you feel the need. A list of resources and contacts is at the end of this document. Be gentle, go slowly, hold all in love, grace, and non-judgment. Life, and especially healing, is a process.*

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

“Healing may not be so much about getting better, as about letting go of everything that isn’t you – all of the expectations, all of the beliefs – and becoming who you are.” – Rachel Naomi Remen

“It’s been said that time heals all wounds. The truth is that time does not heal anything. It merely passes. It is what we do during the passing of time that helps or hinders the healing process.” – Jay Marshall

What is healing? Healing is personal to each of us, just as our wounds and injuries from life are. There is no pressure, no standard, no required result. This is your journey, your process, and all of it goes at your pace. In general, healing is helpful in areas that continue to cause us pain or disrupt or interfere with our day-to-day lives. But there are also wounds we all carry and have buried for so long and have told ourselves that we are OK, that we may not even recognize them as a wound and may not be aware of how they impact and influence us. These wounds take time, attention, courage, and patience to uncover and work through. But as with everything, if we can find the quiet, listen within, and follow the triggers, disruptions, voices, and signals your body sends you, we are on the path. But in all of YOU define your healing and you set the pace and the path. These reflections and journal prompts are merely a suggestion on ways to use mindfulness to begin to work on these issues.

“Choosing to forgive someone for past wrongdoings isn’t an act of weakness or an attempt to forget, but a courageous decision to channel our precious time into a more positive and rewarding direction.” – David Cunliffe

“When we embrace forgiveness, we instantaneously dissolve stagnant energies from our life, pain and anger that has no benefit or purpose, and in doing so, we open that space in our heart for greater peace, love and healing.” – David Cunliffe

D. Forgiveness - of Self, Others, and the World: Due to the complexities and struggles many people have around the issue of forgiveness, I have prepared a more detailed discussion of this topic, which is set forth in the Course Resources page in the document entitled “*Forgiveness – A Meditation Exercise.*” I encourage you to refer to that for more information and the *Forgiveness Meditation Exercise.*

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“Forgiveness and letting go are steps on our road back to happiness.” – Rina Dayton

What is forgiveness? It is an act of grace we do for ourselves, others, and even broader society to release burdens, find freedom, and take steps toward healing. It is setting down the weight of a painful event that we carry around with us, may prevent us from being our best selves.

What happens? Depends on who was harmed, what happened and who is doing the forgiving. But in cases involving 2 or more parties, it typically includes considering what happened, who was harmed and how, and what needs to happen to make amends and repair harm, Within that process (if available) forgiveness can be part of the discussion.

Forgiving yourself - for things done or not done? Often the person most in need of forgiveness is ourselves from ourselves. We often bury ourselves in guilt, remorse, and shame, over things done or not done. Learning to forgive ourselves in these situations is critical, so we can learn lessons without layering in shame and guilt, while still working to learn, improve, evolve, and grow.

“Letting ourselves be forgiven is one of the most difficult healings we will undertake. And one of the most fruitful.” – Stephen Levine

Forgiving others for injuries and disappointments and harm they have caused? This is hard for all of us and can be a difficult process. Yet it is one of the keys to unlocking our own happiness, to cleansing ourselves and our lives, and to take steps towards healing, learning, growing, and evolving. It takes patience and courage, as well as love of self and others to walk this path. For a *Forgiveness Meditation Exercise*, see the resources page.

Forgiving the world for not being fair? Let us put energy into controlling what we can control and not worry about the rest. In what ways in your life do you put energy into thoughts or feelings that the world is not fair or just? Or are you angry at some higher power over things that have happened or not happened? Accepting responsibility for our lives is the first step in healing, and the second is forgiving whoever and whatever we may have been blaming for issues in our lives.

“If we can bring spiritual energy, which is love, kindness, forgiveness and so on, to the problem, we can dissolve it. It’s really just a matter of changing our mind about how we’re going to process the events in our lives.” – Wayne Dyer

Questions for reflection:

1. Where in your life could you use forgiveness? Either of self, others, or the world?
2. In what ways have you been harmed and not been able to forgive?
3. What limits you from engaging in forgiveness? What beliefs, thoughts, emotions come up?
4. In what ways have you harmed others or harmed yourself?
5. What would it look like to accept responsibility for these events and take steps to repair harm and make things right?
6. What limits you from doing this? What beliefs, thoughts, emotions come up?
7. What are 1-2 small steps you could take this week to move toward forgiveness?
8. What resistance or obstacles might you face in doing this and how can you overcome that?

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E. Recognize & Remove “Inner” Masks and Deceptions: One of the blocks to our own healing is the degree to which we are not honest with ourselves about who we are and our lives. The ways we deceive ourselves by the stories we tell, excuses we make, blame we lay on others, all of it is a distraction and avoidance. What masks do you wear when dealing with yourself? How does this distort things and push you off track?

“You have the power to heal your life, and you need to know that. We think so often that we are helpless, but we’re not. We always have the power of our minds... claim and consciously use your power.” – Louise L. Hay

Review and assess patterns of beliefs, thoughts, and emotions In *Knowing Ourselves* we reviewed Beliefs, Thoughts, and Emotions. How have you been less than honest with yourself in parts of your life? What stories do you tell yourself about the things you do or do not do?

Are you open and willing to make changes? We can’t be who we want to be and do the things we want to do if you just keep being the person we have always been and doing the things you have always done. You have to (try) to be the person you want to become and then do the things you want to do in order to live the life you want. Are you willing to make those changes and take the daily and consistent steps needed to do this, to create change, to find freedom and healing?

Being open and willing to ask for help and to help others? You are not alone on this journey and none of us can make it alone. Being open and willing to ask for help from those around us is critical to our abilities to change and grow. Get feedback. Ask for help. Be curious. Stop thinking you know everything and approach life as “the stranger” and with approach life with a “beginners mind.” Acknowledging what you know and do not know, along with genuine curiosity will take you a long way. And where you can, help others, lift up, and support. Nothing is as rewarding as helping others and sharing the wisdom and resources you do have. You are a resource!! Share it!

Questions for reflection:

1. What masks do you wear? How do you deceive yourself? What stories do you tell?
2. What beliefs, thoughts, or feelings underly these masks and stories?
3. How willing are you to make changes to move towards your own healing?
4. What limits or bocks you from doing so?
5. Are you willing to ask for help from others? To help others? To be curious and learn?
6. If not, what limits or block you from this?
7. What are 1-2 steps you can take to move towards recognizing the masks you wear, the stories you tell, and ultimately taking those masks off and being honest with. yourself?
8. How can you use your mindfulness and meditation practice to do this?
9. What obstacles might you face in trying to do this and what can you do to overcome them?

F. Joyful Gratitude: These are 2 more values in the mindfulness practice we offer as a resource to center your meditations on. They are exactly what they sound like. We choose joy and gratitude as a way of life. There are always things to be joyful and grateful for and leaning into a life of choosing joy, and offering gratitude, opens pathways to healing ourselves, and our relationships with others and the world. Try focusing each day on something to be joyful about and/or grateful for. You might even create space in your journaling to write on these topics in more depth. Choosing joy and gratitude is choosing happiness.

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“Resentment blocks the flow of prosperity. Gratitude magnifies and accelerates it. Forgiveness bridges the gap.” – Rev. David Alexander

Questions for reflection:

1. Trying journaling on this or at least making a list of the things that bring you joy or that you do for others that bring joy to them, as well as the things you are grateful for.
2. What do you feel when you make these lists and why?
3. What are 1-2 steps you could take to focus more on things in your life to be joyful and/or grateful for?
4. What obstacles might you face in doing this work and what can you do to overcome?

8 C’s (Tools) of Mindfulness

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

NEXT COURSE COVERS “BE THYSELF” & “SHARE THYSELF”

“The human heart has a way of making itself large again even after it’s been broken into a million pieces.” – Robert James Waller

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QUOTES:

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“Meditation is not just a rest or retreat from the turmoil of the stream of the impurity of the world. It is a way of being the stream, so that one can be at home in both the white water and the eddies.” - Gary Snyder, “Just One Breath”

“Our sorrows and wounds are healed only when we touch them with compassion.” – Buddha

“Healing is embracing what is most feared; healing is opening what has been closed, softening what has hardened into obstruction, healing is learning to trust life.” – Jeanne Achterberg

“You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” – Buddha

“When you think everything is someone else’s fault, you will suffer a lot. When you realize that everything springs only from yourself, you will learn both peace and joy.” – Dalai Lama.

“The sun shall always rise upon a new day and there shall always be a rose garden within me. Yes, there is a part of me that is broken, but my broken soil gives way to my wild roses.” – C. JoyBell C.

“Meditation can help us embrace our worries, our fear, our anger; and that is very healing. We let our own natural capacity of healing do the work.” – Thich Nhat Hanh

“When I stand before thee at the day’s end, thou shalt see my scars and know that I had my wounds and also my healing.” – Rabindranath Tagore

“My scars remind me that I did indeed survive my deepest wounds. That in itself is an accomplishment. And they bring to mind something else, too. They remind me that the damage life has inflicted on me has, in many places, left me stronger and more resilient. What hurt me in the past has actually made me better equipped to face the present.” – Steve Goodier

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