

HIDDEN PEARLS PODCAST/MVP/PAF - MINDFULNESS & MEDITATION COURSE II
4 STAGES OF THE SELF – STAGE 2: “HEAL THYSELF” (Part 1)
Reflections and Suggested Journal Prompts

OVERVIEW: This document contains the materials for Class 3 “Heal Thyself” Part 1. This class will cover: (A) Calm Mind and Compassionate Heart, (B) Trust and Believe in Yourself, and (C) Acknowledge, Embrace & Accept the “Wounded Self.” The remaining 3 parts of “Heal Thyself” will be addressed in Class 4.

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 these next 2 weeks around “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 slow, hold all in love, grace, and non-judgment. Life, and especially healing, is a process.*

I. HEAL THYSELF (Part 1) – Before you start these reflections and journal suggestions, we invite you to do some breath work with a short period of quiet or meditation (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.¹

“We are all damaged. We have all been hurt. We have all had to learn painful lessons. We are all recovering from some mistake, loss, betrayal, abuse, injustice, or misfortune. All of life is a process of recovery that never ends. We each must find ways to accept and move through the pain and to pick ourselves back up. For each pang of grief, depression, doubt, or despair there is an inverse toward renewal coming to you in time. Each tragedy is an announcement that some good will indeed come in time. Be patient with yourself.” – Bryant McGill

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 this it is YOU that will 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.

“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

“Don’t turn away. Keep your gaze on the bandaged place. That’s where the light enters you.” – Rumi

“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

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.

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A. “Calm Mind” & “Compassionate Heart”: These are the 3rd and 4th elements of the 8 C’s of Mindfulness. As we develop Conscious Awareness in our practice and get more comfortable accessing the power of our breath (Controlled Breath), we eventually find a calmness of the mind. That is what our breath can do for us as we hold all in awareness. Those strong thoughts or emotions that at one-time may have been triggered by certain people or events in our lives, we learn to see as simply thoughts and emotions and with our awareness we are able to create a pause to hold space for them and then let them pass. Thereafter we proceed with intention, choosing our response, attitude, and the demeanor we want to have in the moment. A calm mind, like a still pond, provides for an easier passage through the events of our lives.

“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”

As we learn to find our Calm Mind, we also begin to touch and experience our Compassionate Heart. Where once in difficult situations we may have seen an enemy or an attack or been self-critical, we learn to replace those thoughts and feelings with compassion. Compassion for ourselves and for others in our lives. It is a part of the re-shaping of the way we see the world, and the thoughts that at one time would drive our emotions and influence the actions we would take. We learn to hold all with compassion, appreciating them for what they are, these thoughts and emotions, and even other people in our lives. As we learn these skills and apply them in our lives, the triggers are reduced, we find more peace, and we create an opening for further healing.

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

Questions for reflection:

1. In your mindfulness/meditation practice, how have you experienced “Conscious Awareness” and “Controlled Breath”? How have they impacted you?
2. Have you experienced a “Calm Mind” in your practice? Have you been able to observe and de-escalate difficult thoughts, emotions, or sensations in your body? If yes, how and when?
3. In the “pauses” you are finding/creating in your life, how have you been able to apply the *Loving Kindness* meditation practice to certain situations, yourself, and other people?
4. How, if at all, have you experienced more compassion for yourself and others when you pause, breathe, and observe, and reflect before responding?
5. How might sharing and experiencing more compassion in your life open opportunities for healing, for yourself and others?
6. What are 1-2 small steps you could take this week to begin to apply the concepts of *Loving Kindness*, *Calm Mind*, and/or a *Compassionate Heart* in your life?
7. What resistance or obstacles might you face in doing this and how can you overcome that?

B. Trust and Believe (with wisdom) in Yourself, Others, and the World: In Stage 1 (*Know Thyself*) you have worked on learning more about yourself, your beliefs, your thoughts, your emotions, where all of those come from, why you have them, and what you can do with them. The wounds we all suffer in our lives can leave us with a loss of trust, faith, and belief, in ourselves, others and the world. We can lose trust and faith in the “world” thinking it is unfair. We can look with distrust at others because people in our lives have hurt, disappointed, or let us down. And maybe the deepest wound and loss of trust and

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belief we experience, is the loss of trust, faith, and belief in ourselves. In suffering and difficult times doubt and negative self-talk can arise. We can lose confidence and faith in our abilities to get things done, achieve our dreams, interact in productive ways, build relationships, and a host of other things.

“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

I AM WORTHY - As we begin the healing journey there comes a point where our progress is connected to accepting that *we are enough just as we are*, that *we already contain and have within us everything we need*, and that *we are worthy of happiness and joy in our lives*. Rebuilding the trust, faith, and belief we have in ourselves is the foundation for rebuilding that trust, faith, and belief in others and in the world. Not in a whimsical foolish way. No, wisdom and insight are still required. But we move our baseline toward trust and belief, even with both eyes open. The world is a challenge and as President Regan so famously stated, *“Trust but verify.”* Trust is not easy but to do otherwise can leave us stuck in our pain and injury.



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

ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY - In this process of healing, we must also examine our own responsibility. That is, the level to which we have accepted responsibility for our own lives and our own choices (and the resulting consequences). Recognizing that the ONLY thing we really have control over is ourselves, and trying to control others only increases frustration and pain.

“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.

OPPORTUNITY, NOT FAILURE - All of life is an opportunity, even the painful parts and parts the world may see as “failure.” But in truth there is no such thing as failure. We try, we may not achieve but we learn, we grow, evolve and then refocus and try again. Through this process, while not perfect, we are able to build our confidence in ourselves, to trust ourselves again, and to believe in our abilities, and in this is our own healing. Yes, we review the past for what happened, accept responsibility for our choices and actions, and try to learn the available lessons. But then we let it go and build on it, moving forward to try again, following our dreams and vision for the life we seek. It is all about getting up again and taking small consistent steps toward our vision, with intention and consistent with our values and who we want to be.

Questions for reflection:

1. How and in what ways have you lost trust, faith, or belief in yourself?
2. When and why did this happen and what beliefs, thoughts, or feelings underly this loss?

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3. How and in what ways have you lost trust, faith, or belief in others or the world?
4. When and why did this happen and what beliefs, thoughts, or feelings underly this loss?
5. Have you ever felt you were not enough, that you did not have within you what you needed, or were unworthy of happiness and joy in your life?
6. If yes, where do these feelings and thoughts come from and how true are they for you now? What new beliefs, thoughts, feelings could help you heal and rebuild the trust and faith?
7. In what ways might you have avoided accepting responsibility for your own life and choices? How has this impacted your own sense of autonomy and agency?
8. How have you tried to control things outside of your control (which is anything other than yourself) and how has this impacted you and/or what has it cost you?
9. What are 1-2 steps you can take this week toward rebuilding trust and faith you may have lost, in yourself, in others, or the world?
10. Can you use your mindfulness and meditation practice to release negative or limiting thoughts/feelings and replace them with more empowering thoughts and feelings that allow trust to grow and creates space for faith and belief in yourself and others?
11. What obstacles might you face in trying to do this and what can you do to overcome them?

C. Acknowledge, Embrace & Accept Your “wounded self”: In weeks 1 and 2 of this class we addressed “Know Thyself.” Part of Knowing Thyself includes learning how we have been wounded and injured in life, and how those wounds may still be lingering, unhealed, and as a result, still impacting us in our lives. This can manifest through the projection of unresolved emotions onto other people in our lives. It can create negative self-talk and doubt, limiting beliefs, fear, lack of confidence, and even loss of energy, symptoms in the body, and depression.

In constructing this course, we have intentionally added this stage of “*Heal Thyself*” because so many of us do not want to even acknowledge the fact that we have been hurt, let alone specifically name what the injury was/is and how it has impacted us. This is difficult stuff and hard to do. It takes a lot of work, patience, and courage to do this work and so we have set it out as a separate step in this process. We can never heal if we never identify and acknowledge that we have been hurt and are in fact wounded. One of the first steps in this healing process is to spend time listening to the self, finding the wounds you are carrying, acknowledging them, holding space for them, and beginning the acceptance process so that we can move toward healing. Welcoming and embracing your wounds and your “Wounded Self.” In doing so you take a powerful step in your own healing process.

“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.

In this we also want to avoid demonizing our wounds or getting stuck in what happened, who did what, and all the story that may surround you as you acknowledge your wounds. In Part 2 of *Heal Thyself* we will look at the possibilities and ways forgiveness can help us. But at this stage the focus is simply on finding, acknowledging, embracing, accepting, and finding peace in your current reality, which includes your wounds and injuries.

“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

As we move towards healing in all of this, we move beyond letting our woundedness define us, control us, or dictate who we are, who we will become and where we can go. We can choose to look at our wounds as lessons, opportunities, scars yes, but also marks of wisdom, experience, and insight. *Pain is a*

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pathway towards meaning. With your pain then, let us work to make something positive of it, to grow from it, to integrate it into our lives and use it to grow and take the next steps in our lives.

“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

Questions for reflection:

1. In your life how have you minimized or denied the wounds you have endured in life?
2. What are the beliefs, thoughts, and feelings that cause you to do this?
3. In listening to yourself in times of quiet, what injuries or wounds have you discovered?
4. Where did these originate and how have you been carrying them?
5. What steps can you take to identify, acknowledge, accept, and even embrace these wounds and your “Wounded Self”?
6. How could embracing your “Wounded Self” impact you and help move you toward healing?
7. How have these wounds impacted you over the years, possibly in ways that feel hurtful, but also in ways that have ultimately helped you become who you are today?
8. What would be helpful in working with these wounds and finding more peace and healing?
9. What obstacles might you face in doing this work and what can you do to overcome?

“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

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?

In Class 4 (June 13) – Heal Thyself (Part 2)

D. Forgiveness - of Self, Others, and the World:

E. Recognize & Remove “Inner” Masks and Deceptions:

F. Values - Joyful Gratitude: