

Live Well Lifestyle Teleseminar

Recap & Recording

September 25, 2014 - [Click Here for the Recording](#) (requires [Windows Media Player](#)) or [download mp3](#)

Our regular host, Perry A~ Arledge, was out of town this week, so this session was hosted by:
David Wilson, PhD & Shantel Mackey, PsyD

Health Benefits of Mindfulness and Mindful Connection

Opening point: How we experience the world and relate to others is dependent on how we regulate our emotions. Two ways we can regulate our emotions involves Mindfulness and Mindful Connection.

Dr. Wilson's intention today: Take a mindful breath

What is Mindfulness?

While there are many different definitions of mindfulness, Jon Kabat-Zinn, the co-developer of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), concisely defines mindfulness as "moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness" (Gazella, 2005, p. 59). Recently, MBSR was reported by [ABC News](#) (Conley, 2012) to be one of the best "evidence-based prevention, intervention programs" available for managing mental health issues and promoting well-being.

Often times we get caught up in the stress of life by rehearsing and planning for the future or rehashing and trying to make sense of the past. When practicing mindfulness, we are connecting with the present moment, the moment where we are really living. Mindfulness is not just an abstract concept relating to our attention and awareness; rather, mindfulness can be cultivated through various exercises, which for the most part can be practiced anywhere at any time.

Benefits to mindfulness: Presently, mindfulness-based treatments provide some of the most effective and empirically supported psychotherapeutic treatments for addressing a wide range of psychological conditions while improving one's well-being.

- Increased Well-being and Positive States
- Increased Reports of Relaxation
- Improved Quality of Sleep
- Increased Self-awareness
- Improved Self-regulatory Skills
- Improved Work Motivation and Engagement
- Reductions in Headaches
- Lower Blood Pressure
- Symptom Reduction for Chronic Illnesses
- Reductions in Physical Pain and Discomfort
- Reductions in Depression
- Reductions in Stress and Anxiety
- Symptom Management for Personality Disorders

Dr. Mackey's intention today: To emphasize the importance of mindful connection to overall physical and mental health. I am specifically speaking about mindful connection in relationships.

**Troublesome emotions are often managed with the support of those close to us in our lives. Research is supporting the benefits of social connection more and more as the years pass. If we have trouble connecting, we're more prone to depression, anxiety, illness, and likely to have difficulty regulating our emotions.

The health of your couples' relationship will affect your overall physical and mental health. When two individuals make up a couple, their autonomic nervous systems become wired together. The autonomic nervous system is that part of our body that responds to threat with fight, flight, or freeze. So...if one person becomes anxious or overly stressed it affects us. When a fight or argument occurs, it can leave one party emotionally dysregulated in a way that affects his/her ability to function normally and taxes one's mental and emotional health. Knowing how to mindfully connect with your partner cannot only deescalate an argument, it can buffer someone against the stresses of the outside world.

Remember: People often do not know why they do what they do. They rationalize make false correlations, and often reach to come up with a reason to feel better about what they do and make sense of their feelings and behaviors. Our

primitive brain reacts to things much faster than our frontal lobe is able to keep up with. The more out of synch and disconnected from your partner that you become, the more likely you are to misinterpret their actions, feelings, intentions, and behaviors. This is because...we are not really naturally wired for love or to see the positive. We are primitively wired to notice threat. It's a survival mechanism. This is especially true if our autonomic nervous system is activated or stressed and the primitive part of our brain begins to take over.

Example: Let's say Jack and Mary have been married for 7 years and have started to feel really disconnected from one another. Their schedules are different, they have three kids, lead busy lives, and don't really share things with each other like they used to. Jack comes home from work and goes directly to his office and gets on the computer without saying hello. Mary didn't say hello either and thinks, "He must not be glad to see me." Jack thinks, "I have to get this bill paid before Mary finds out it's late again and feels relieved to be home after a long day." After walking out of the bedroom he walks into the kitchen and stands next to Mary with the intention to reach out and hug her. Feeling awkward and slightly hurt, she moves further away from him to clean off a side of the counter. Jack immediately feels angry, remembers that she didn't say hi to him when he came home and attributes it to her not saying hi to him when he came home. What really happened is that when Mary physically moved away from him, his body responded before his frontal lobe could catch up. Because she moved further away from him, he felt rejected, felt emotionally threatened, and became angered. This couple is what I call out of synch or disconnected from each other. In order to prevent such misinterpretations of nonverbal movements, they would need to feel more connected.

How do we mindfully connect: Exercise: Face to face eye contact for 5 minutes, touch, focused attention on each other, being in the moment with each other

Benefits of Mindful Connection:

- **Increased Well-being and Positive States**
- **Increased Reports of Relaxation**
- **Improved Quality of Sleep**
- **Increased Self-awareness**
- **Improved Self-regulatory Skills**
- **Improved Work Motivation and Engagement**
- **Improved physical health**
- **Buffers against physical illness**
- **Buffers against mental illness**
- **Lower Blood Pressure**
- **Reductions in Physical Pain and Discomfort**
- **Feelings of connectedness**
- **Reductions in Stress and Anxiety**



To contact Perry Arledge: perrya@austin.rr.com