Mindful Monday: Mindfulness, Meditation & Contemplative Prayer

Sorry to send so late in the day! I was busy being mindful (or maybe just busy!)..)

In this week’s Mindful Monday email, we consider the difference between Mindfulness, Meditation and Centering Prayer.

Here is a brief overview of three different but oft overlapping practices. Pause and consider which you feel most drawn to, and maybe try one out this week!

**Mindfulness:**
Mindfulness is the basic ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we’re doing, and not reactive or judgmental towards what’s going on around and within us.

Why it matters: Every day, we are bombarded with distractions that can keep us from concentrating on what we’re doing. Mindfulness is a remedy for these distractions. It promotes focusing on what’s happening right now. In addition to increasing awareness, mindfulness can minimize overwhelm or an overly reactive response to our moment-to-moment experience. While meditation can help to increase mindfulness, people can practice mindfulness while doing any daily activity.

*What is Mindfulness? with Jon Kabat-Zinn*

**Meditation:**
Meditation is the practice of concentrating on one’s breath, repeating a mantra or following a guided exercise. One can do this for the purpose of reaching a heightened level of spiritual awareness, to practice mindfulness, or manage stress.

Meditation isn’t about becoming a different person, a new person, or even a better person. It’s about getting a healthy sense of perspective. You’re not trying to turn off your thoughts or feelings. You’re learning to observe them without judgment. And eventually, you may start to better understand them as well.

Meditation Apps: *Insight Timer, Calm, Headspace*

**Contemplative Prayer:**
A wordless, trusting opening of self to the divine presence. -Cynthia Bourgeault

Most faith traditions have some form of meditation or contemplation. They share a goal of expanding or deepening the consciousness of the practitioner. Centering prayer is one method of contemplative prayer, which reaches back to the early days of Christianity.

In her book *Centering Prayer and Inner Awakening*, Cynthia Bourgeault writes that even when we can find ways to stop “outer noise” through something like a walk in the woods, a retreat day, or a quiet moment at a place of worship, it is much more difficult to still the “inner noise” - the inner monologue, worrying, arguing with ourselves, daydreaming. Centering Prayer invites us to do that, while giving loving attention to the divine dwelling within us.
A guide to the practice here.
Contemplative Prayer App: Centering Prayer
What is Contemplative Prayer? with Richard Rohr

These emails are inspired by both our work around purpose and meaning through NetVUE and by a campus-wide effort to encourage body, mind and spirit wellness as we navigate our more isolated world. They will be sent every-other Monday, with the Learning Commons sending Metacognition Monday emails on opposite weeks.

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