Title: Meditation Part 3: Relational Mindfulness  
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[Peggy Mihelich] Hello and welcome. This is Peggy Mihelich associate director of member content at APA. Today's webinar is titled meditation part 3 relational mindfulness. If you have a question for our presenter, please type them in using the questions box located in your webinar control panel. Our speaker is Dr. Paula Christian-Kliger. She has over 30 years of experience specializing in working with people with historys of severe adversity crisis and Trauma she has been the Principal consultant to leaders family businesses nonprofit organizations and Fortune 500 companies temp to implement transformational change and growth processes. Welcome Dr. Kliger.

[Dr. Paula Christian-Kliger] I'm excited to be here again for our part 3 of meditation with a focus on relational mindfulness, and I just want to say that I am so grateful for the opportunity to bring this somewhat different approach to meditation and mindfulness to everyone and we're going to continue today with an actual.

This focus that on meditation mindfulness in other words, I'm going to present you with some examples of how to work with yourself and with your client and your patients in the practice that you're doing. But as before in order to get started, what I would like to do is to make sure that we're in the right frame of mind so Let's listen, very carefully just for a moment or two.

And the reason why I begin with this bell is because I'm hoping to feel what I feel and that is it somehow another brings us into a focus focus on being as present as fully present as we can be as we talked about meditation and mindfulness.

You know, I was thinking a lot about the series and all the things I wanted to share with you so that you can feel better prepared to do this work with others, but it's also important for you to know that this these techniques and these approaches the meditation and mindfulness offer you and that today in particular. I decided to choose to exercise.

Is around relational mindfulness knowing that relational mindfulness is very much connected to the work that we do we become relationally mindful with our patients and with our clients. And so in order to do that. Well, it's so important for us to be in the right frame of mind as well. So there's a couple things I just wanted to remind you before I get started with the main body of the presentation the things I've chosen for us to go through you can use in person and you can also use remotely virtually I have been able to sit with people when I am on a virtual experience on a platform and go through a mindfulness exercise or meditation exercise.

So I'm hoping That you will feel comfortable trying out, you know with on your own or with someone else. I'm doing these virtually. Finding that. I'm hoping also that during this experience today that you will also consider beginning some kind of routine around meditation and mindfulness.

And the reason why I'm saying that is because Anything that we really want to develop mental muscles for we need to do and I think I mentioned this the last time we met was that even if you do a meditation or mindfulness exercise 5 minutes a day five minutes in the morning to begin maybe in the middle of your day in between seeing clients.

Or in the evening and in the evening, that would be a way for you to begin to build a practice and what I have found happens over time with the routine of a practice and I want I can talk a little bit about that or if you have questions about I practice we can talk about that. What I have learned is that my mind and my body and my emotions. Come together around that time and they all say together. We have to do a meditation.

We need to do something mindful. It's the most amazing thing. I've observed all the years. My routine is typically first thing in the morning when I do meditation and I do yoga and I read something. It's it just kind of goes together for me when I am late doing it. I might get involved and maybe you know following up on something right away.

My body and my thoughts move into this space and it says do your meditation and yoga. So when you get into a practice your body and your mind will come together and it will help you continue. So with that said let's proceed.

So what we're going to talk about is What we're going to talk about today is deepening your inner awareness and understanding of mindfulness and meditation practices in order to enhance relational that relational self what I mean by that is relational awareness relational wisdom and in doing that focusing on relational awareness and relational wisdom, you will feel more relational and Readiness and preparedness to work not just with yourself from within but also to extend yourself outward to others it will allow you to see yourself grow and to recognize when you are getting bogged down in barriers psychological emotional ones and a So allow you to think about ways to sustain a sense of mindfulness and a kind of contemplative State of Mind in your relationships in general.

So very quickly here want to make a couple of points about the research along these lines again. I want to emphasize that the research there's a lot of scientific validation to show that meditation and mindfulness is very very powerful. Not just with cognitive functioning like are increased in increases in attention and arousal and curiosity and are flexible thinking, but I want to remind you that I brought up that it has been found.

To increase our social and relational functioning and that it leads to increased happiness a better overall attitude about ourselves and about life in general and an overall quality of life Improvement has been found when people engage in meditation and mindfulness on a regular basis, okay?

So relational mindfulness, we're going to use two people today to kind of help us be our guide in relational mindfulness. The first person I discovered her name is Debra, Eden Hull. She is a Zen Monk. And she trained for about over 7 years at a Zen monastery.

And she is I found she wrote a wonderful book, which is in your handouts and it's called relational mindfulness.

And I found her to be a profoundly open and deep and loving being who understands how to connect with the fact that we are not just said, Brit we are not separate but that we are connected and so I took a quick coat quote from her book and she says meditation and mindfulness offer a direct means but healing the myth of Separation. This is the key to both personal healing and Global sustainability. Our native state is non separation and the second person that I'm using for us.

As a guide today is Jack Kornfield now Jack Kornfield is a very long a well-known clinical psychologist. I'm sure many of you have heard of him in the context of meditation and mindfulness one of his absolutely wonderful books that I recommend highly again. It's listed in the back of your hand out and it's it's called wise heart. And in chapter 1 and in the at the top of chapter one. He has the title that I thought was very helpful for us to begin and it's nobility our original goodness. And on that note, let's keep going and let's look a little bit closer.

And what that cornfield actually says from the wise heart and this quote comes from the Buddha Siddhartha Gautama.

Since you're searching for understanding of self don't ask about caste or class riches or birth but instead ask about heart and conduct look at the Flames from a fire where it is the brightness arise from the nature of wood and it doesn't matter what kind of wood in the same way the bright heart of wisdom. Can Shine from wood of every sort.

It is through virtuous conduct through loving-kindness and compassion and through understanding of truth that one becomes Noble.

I love that quote very much because it gets us in touch with very very quickly. The fact that we are all here as human beings first and that no matter what we have that we have acquired. The only thing that matters is what goes on in our mind and our heart in what we do.

So to focus us in a little bit more concrete way. I want to take us back as I have in the in the last two meetings or meditation to the five core self study transformational practices that I have brought into Focus for myself for many years, but into Focus for others, and we today are working on two of those self-study practices when working on number 3. Value your awareness and acceptance of self and others. And I also believe that we're working much more on the fifth one that has to do with dedicating our attention to finding our purpose or calling it so to speak so that we can feel like we are making a difference in each other's lives in our own life and in others lives. So first we're going to focus on valuing ourselves with others as a course of study transformational practice.

This is often really it can be difficult because often we feel like if we concentrate on ourselves and accepting ourselves and working on our own agenda our own dreams that that means that we cannot adequately appear attention to others and and what they need us to accept them for kind of like the notion of A kind of reciprocity. How can we reciprocate in a way that feels balanced? We don't lose ourselves by focusing on others and we don't somehow or another concentrate so much on our own needs and self acceptance and recognition that we don't think of others and the fact that they are going through the same evolving process exactly the same as we are and of course as therapists and those of you who are still in the process of becoming a therapist, It's all about relationships and it's all about finding a balance in our own minds between what is us? And what are we connecting with with our patients or clients? And so this notion of relational mindfulness can be enormously helpful when it comes to our work with others. Okay.

So now what I'd like to do do is I'd like for us to do our first mindfulness exercise. And this particular mindfulness exercise meditative exercise you may find is going to focus on our relationship with our self. Now when I said relational self, you might have thought just relationships with people are others outside of us the relationship begins within and that's what we're going to focus on in this particular exercise. It's a visualization exercise and I call It finding Refuge within now we're going to go through the exercise. And then what I would like to do is to invite you to have reactions as I did in our last meditation opportunity and and so will take your responses and so forth and then we'll go on I'll have some additional questions that I will ask you and then Hopefully you'll have some reactions to those as well.

Okay, so now I'd like us to begin. I want you to take a moment to get as relaxed as you can in your seat. Once again as before, it's okay if you want to sit on the floor or if you would like to lie flat on the on the floor as well. If you sit on the floor. Legs crossed or whatever. It's a good idea. If you could lean against a couch or a chair. As you sit in a seat. Allow yourself to close your eyes. And as you do feel relaxation and calm take over your body. Now the clown to begin to take over your emotions and your thoughts all of your focus on your body and notice yourself sinking naturally into the back of your seat, or as you lie on the floor. Watch while shoulders relaxed at the same time you know back remains somewhat, erect and slightly tilt your head forward. As your face and your neck soften into your shoulders. As if everything part of you on the top of your head to your shoulders. Your back and then your waist all relaxing as if you can feel a gradual change in your whole being notice how your body feels And now draw your attention to your breath. From your heart area to the bottom of your diaphragm feel your breath naturally flowing greens breathe freely and naturally now as you find your breath, let it take over your attention poor to quiet moments listen, very carefully to your breath. Our breath is the most important evidence that we exist. You are alive. Now allow your breath to consume your attention. And feel the state of calm and quiet take over from your waist legs and down to the tips of your toes feel the calm feel yourself relaxing all the more adding to your breath. Letting your breath take the lead quiet and still breathe I am going to let you take a moment to tune into your breath. Letting yourself go deeper into a state of calm.

Now I'm going to change our focus a bit. I want you to imagine that you are standing at the top of a grand staircase overlooking the great room of enormous Beauty and stature you look out across the room and you're struck by the brilliant lights of a tall chandelier hanging low draping the room with it light.

You look down and you imagine stairs beautiful sprawling wood stairs. So captivating that you begin to walk down. Each step one step at a time taking in the light from the chandelier. Letting it be your guide. As you continue to walk down notice to your left a wall filled with art pieces in photographs representing places and worlds you cannot recognize but they're awesome.

You continue to walk down the stairs. And now now you're beginning to see that you're almost at the bottom of the stairs. Finally find yourself at the bottom of the stairs. And in front of you is a huge brass door. Immediately push through the door opening it wide. And when you do a brilliant sun over takes your eyes, you're blinded it first. But as your eyes adjust to the light. You begin to realize that you're outside now in the most Lush Garden filled with blossoms of unusual native lands you take in the smells, the colors the sounds life touching the leaves to the tree. You have been transported somewhere beyond the staircase beyond the steps Beyond The Mansion. You are in another world. And you suddenly feel the warmth of the sun on your face and shoulders and you find that you're now walking along the garden that leads down to a beach. It's getting warmer. But you can see blue the blue blue green water. The blue blue green water sprays your cheeks with its cool touch. And you find a place to sit. Leaning your body against a tall tree. It allows you to peer out into the sea. While holding on to the breathtaking beauty of the garden take it all in and breathe.

Tune in to your body, tune in to your senses tune in to your breath you begin to feel the warmth and the calm. Peace. You lean your head back further now against the tree. And in this moment just for a moment. Allow yourself to lean against the tree. And allow yourself to dream drift off drift off into your own special dream allow your eyes to close around the dream just for a moment. And when you do stay with it for just a few more moments. Let yourself drift let yourself feel the warmth of the sun against your shoulders. As you dream. It's all so new but also calming. Now imagine that as you sit on the beach you notice that there's a box lying next to the tree. Open the boxlook to see what is inside the Box. It can be anything anything at all.

It can be an object, a picture. a note, whatever it is it is there just for you.

I want you to reach into the box. Take what is inside. Hold it. Examine it. Examine it closely just for a moment and breathe allowing yourself to stay sitting there against the tree holding on to whatever it was that was in that box just for a few more moments stay now imagine that you're now ready to get up and to lead the special place knowing that you can bring yourself back whenever you would like to it's a place you have made in your own mind a peaceful and calming place. A place to make you feel a quiet inside but also feel alive and energized for outside. It is a place you can call a refuge.

In fact being there may remind you of other places that are Refuge where you can touch touch them for a moment now we're back at the huge grass store. You reached for the handle and walkthrough hold what you found in the Box? You start up the stairs readjusting your eyes to the light. Imagine you can hold on to the banister if you like the steps are heading up again now slowly, but surely you're getting to the top. You're making your way back to the top with the light the light from the chandelier as your guide. You're almost at the top.

And I'm going to count backwards from five to one. And soon you will be at the top and you will feel calm. And you will feel relaxed. And you will also feel warm and energized and strong.

Five four three two one may open your eyes. I realized that that was kind of a longer meditation mindfulness exercise with visualization. But what I wanted to do was to give you some exposure to away into yourself. Sometimes visualization is one of the easiest ways for us to achieve that. I know that when I first started doing this exercise and exercises like this like staying still for several minutes. I would find myself easily distracted. But it's okay to feel distracted as long as you find your way back and listen listen to what you're trying to tell yourself in the exercise or listen to my voice. Bringing you back into the experience. Notice even now as I speak that you may have found it difficult or you might have found it relatively easy, but they still this after glow or this after feeling of calm and stillness that continues This feeling that there is very important because it is an indication that your meditation and your mindfulness exercise is having a deep a deeper inner. Impact on your physiological functioning and well-being. It is lightening your load physically and emotionally and mentally. With that in mind I would like for us to take a little bit of time to process. Just what you experienced both in the breath and physical sense sensing and centering component and then the visualization component any comments and reactions would be wonderful people sharing what they were able to do how far they could go. And the other thing what you were able to bring back from the box. So let's open it up for people to speak.

[Peggy] Hello, Dr. Kliger, this is Peggy from APA. Yes. I just wanted to let you know that some of our attendees are having trouble hearing you. This is an issue with our software provider and we are working to troubleshoot that okay, we have assured them all that they will receive the recording in an hour and they'll be able to hear you at that time. However, we can share a few Thoughts with you.

In lightness is one of the one of the comments Serenity was another comment. Some people had trouble staying in the moment focusing. And some people didn't find anything in the Box.

[Dr. Kliger] Ah That's interesting in and of itself.

[Peggy] One person was able to bring back a sheet of paper. I think that's a very specific interesting thing other thoughts. Let's see here. She said the breathing was especially helpful and she was able to sink into herself and be calm she found herself having a hard time with the visualization though.

[Dr. Kliger] Okay, you know that's very important part of the reason why I'm introducing various kinds of meditation or meditative techniques is so you, you can begin to identify for yourself. What works well for you? Some people it is breath work and it's a focus on the body scanning. For example, some people that is they can go to the Brass work for a little bit, but then they get easily distracted and visualization is something that they find much more easy to get into. So we really want you to begin to tune into yourself and what works for you and when you're able to do that and recognize that you'll be able to see that as something to look for in your patient when your clients because they really are going to come with their own backgrounds their own histories and their own sensibilities around what works for them in terms of meditation mindfulness. Now, keep in mind. So people may lie on the floor some of you may have been on the floor and you have particular kinds of experiences from that as well because that works for you or sitting on the floor. So what I'm saying, basically is that want to find your niche in meditation any other, anything else come up Peggy before we move on?

[Peggy] Someone found a kitten in the Box.

[Dr. Kliger] Oh, this one is very interesting. Let me get this one here. I found memories popping up from precious mindful moments. I find it distracting from what I was experiencing at the moment. So again, I sounds like someone's struggling again to stay but you know what? Okay, so this is really important also when you are getting 2, Drafted again. I'm going to emphasize it's okay. If you were distracted to memories that that probably isn't that's good. You can touch those memories and and like say oh and and embrace them for a moment. Oh, I didn't know that was there and then come back so that you're curious not judging yourself. It's about being curious about everything that's there. And then at the same time bringing yourself back either to your breath or to the visualization in other words, it's all good. It's all good. I think I should move on because I'd like to do another exercise. Thank you Peggy. Thank you so much. Thank you everybody. Thank you. I like to do another exercise and this time I'd like us to work on the fifth course self-study transformative practice and it has to do with finding your purpose of finding your own calling now. I know with our members part of your calling you is to become psychologist or you wouldn't be in the audience listening. But sometimes you know calling has a special Direction. It's not just psychologist. It's a particular kind of concentration maybe or a specific way. We want to make a difference and it has to do with that part of us to feels connected to others. And so this is about finding purpose so that we can contribute to the whole of life. And so I want to move into that area.

We're going to do an exercise in the Moment by Jack Kornfield, but I wanted to read a really wonderful piece from Deborah Hull Again by Joanna Macy and it says Because the relationship between self and world is reciprocal. It is not a matter of first getting enlightened or saved and then acting as we work to heal the earth the earth heals us no need to wait as we care enough to take risks. We loosen the grip of ego and begin to some to come home to our true nature. Okay. So with that I'd like us to now do a an exercise in mindfulness and this is an as an exercise on meditation on gratitude. And I'm going to invite you. Once again again keeping in mind. These are examples of things to use in your own work, but also for yourself that you can choose many different ways of Going into the moment and coming up with a routine that works for you to settle yourself to become calm still and focused and even with that feeling more alive and enriched. So I chose Jack Kornfield a meditation on gratitude. And so I'm going to read a bit of it and the whole idea is for you again to get as comfortable as you can in your chair. To become still and quiet inside yourself again tune into your natural breathing, breathe naturally and we're going to begin the practice of gratitude. By feeling how year after year. You've cared for your own life. Now we're going to take some time to acknowledge all that has supported you in this care. With gratitude. I remember the people animals plants insects creatures of the sky and sea air and water fire and Earth all whose. Joyful exertion blesses my life every day. With gratitude. I remember the care and labor of a thousand generations of Elders and ancestors who came before me. I offer my gratitude for the safety and well-being that I have been given. I offer my gratitude for the blessings of this Earth I have been given. I offer my gratitude for the measure of health I have been given. I offer my gratitude for the family and friends I have been given. I offer my gratitude for the community I have been given. I offer my gratitude for the teachings and lessons of light I had been given. I offer my gratitude for the life I have been given. You can open your eyes and kind of feel. Jacqueline feels words resonating through you What comes to mind?

What self-reflections do you have from thinking about gratitude? We're so busy in our lives each day. We may not recognize how important it is to think. About what we're grateful for particularly now more than ever when light and what's going on in the world around us and our planet is so uncertain. So we are embracing a relationship with one another and with our planet and in embracing that relationship we are embracing our responsibility for the health of our planet okay, so questions about the process and about what you are experiencing. I'm open. I want to hear some thoughts.

[Peggy] Dr. Kliger it's Peggy again. And our audience is kind of on the quiet end right now. I think some of them are struggling with the audio issues, but we are getting a census of from the Gratitude exercise a sense of some people feel sort of overwhelmed or sort of unworthy of all that gratitude a sense of comfort from all that gratitude.

[Dr. Kliger] Well, I overwhelmed I would be interested to find out about the gratitude. It would be interesting to hear more about is it overwhelmed overwhelming because One is so not aware of it or so aware that feel guilty or uncomfortable with what they have. Or is it that there's so much anxiety and worry? That it is difficult to tune into moment-to-moment. What one is grateful for? All of it is so understandable at this point in time. So what I would say about some of these comments is that I can tell that my colleagues and I in the members the participants we all need our own self care and time don't we absolutely we all need to spend time working on being in the middle of this very difficult coronavirus atmosphere and at the same time we're expected to take care of ourselves and take care of others take care of our patients and clients and our families.

When we really need to have someone to go to or some place to go to Just why I speak of Refuge inside to go to to quiet and calm and soothe and soothe us.

Another comment, I felt relaxed and full of compassion. How can we? How can we? Find a way to carve out our own self-care and self-healing time each and every day. To bring ourselves into a focus a Mindful and meditative Focus. That allows us to look at what we need. I think there is some there's some guilt or some you know, I'm not supposed to do that. I'm not supposed to take the time or if I take the time I have so much that comes through I feel overwhelmed and bombarded by it. I don't quite know how to kind of bring the meditation into a place where it's helpful. Again, I want to encourage you to start small and I put together a number of resources for you to also Embrace that will help you move forward in your own practice. And that this is not the opportunity to just taste get an introduction to the different ways. You can go about beginning a meditation practice. So we talked about breathwork. Talk about Body Sensations scanning mental emotional body. We did some visualization work. And we did it in the context of developing self a relationship to self and our relationship to others. Other quick comments before I kind of go to the last piece.

This is a very wonderful comment. I found the now-familiar the now-familiar isolated feeling of quarantine melting away. I felt stronger and more responsible. I have wondered about how to personalize exercises for my clients. I love the idea of following their intuition and their life experiences. So absolutely then you really you're really following both this aspect of focusing on self-study for you and your client as well as how meditation can be so helpful the key in my last presentation was it's so important to learn more about this story first.

That's why I encourage you to write your own story first. Then you're going to be more interested in their story because in that story you'll find the intuitive pieces that will allow the two of you together to find a roadway to a good meditation and mindfulness practice. It could be walking. It could be running it could be music. The roadway will be determined by them through you empowering them. Just have a couple more things. I want to say before we're going to have to I know go in a couple of minutes. So the beginning word as I close with you. I always say the beginning rather than final word. I wanted to give you this final piece an illustration that I did several years ago about being born and how we're born each and every day.

And it's life is always waiting a breath awaiting to be born to be seen to be recognized to be known to belong to be United. Once more in Being Human in most precious reunions of all your life is love dancing in my heart. Now this is a piece that was inspired by my daughter. However, it is the way that I feel.

It is the way that I feel about life each day being a rebirth and that I'm joined to you. So your life is love dancing in my heart. On that I will step back and just note that there are a number of references for you to go to that. I hope I helpful in your journey

Back to you Peggy.

[Peggy] Thank you. Dr. Kliger. We are very short on time. Maybe just time for a one or two quick questions.

What kind of my mindfulness meditation techniques would you recommend and I would imagine there's a lot of anxious parents out there right now. What how about for them? This is a anxious time for them. So four teams in particular programs. I think that is really great.

[Dr. Kliger] I did give a reference or A book that has a number of mindful games mindful games for kids really very cool that you can buy Susan Greenland, but I think one of the really great program for particularly teens and preteens and young adults is the DBT program. Because it's it includes mindfulness includes learning to see oneself from this from the present moment and learning self compassion and emotion regulation and finding quiet space inside oneself. So I recommend dialectical behavior therapy for youngsters and the parent piece to that is wonderful. Whatever the youngster does the parents are doing. At the same time, so everyone's learning together. That would be one of my recommendations along with wisdom. Dr. Greene Lance book. Excellent. So not only do parents get to benefit but the teens the teens benefit and the parents can also benefit. They have the same language that they using and they're doing the same kinds of mindfulness exercises.

[Peggy] Wonderful. All right. Well, let me just see if we have any more questions have come in before we head out. I'll just wanted there's just a comment just says the Gratitude exercise was very important to them and very valuable to them at this present time, and it's really important to remember that right now. So thank you for that.

Well, Dr. Kliger, we are out of time. I do want to thank you so much for your presentation today.

Thank you for being here, yeah after all for being here all week. Yes experience. Yeah, and thank you to our audience for those of us who those of you who struggled to hear. We apologize for this inconvenience, but rest assured we will get you the recording and about an hour from now and you'll be able to hear Dr. Kliger and go through these exercises.

Her we are now going to wrap up the presentation and let you know that we have a short survey that will appear on your screen shortly after we've closed down the the session we asked hit you take a few minutes to complete the survey to pray give us the feedback so we know how we did and how we can improve as I said, this is the last Wellness webinar for the week, but we hope to bring you more in the weeks ahead. So please be on the lookout and until then. We thank you for your attention and we hope you have a great day.