Title: Meditation Part 2: A Self-Care Affirmation to Live By: I am Mind, Body & Soul Medicine  
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[Shannon Dody] Hello and welcome. I am Shannon Dody manager member content at APA. Today's webinar is titled meditation part to a self-care affirmation to live by I am mind body and soul medicine. If you have a question for our presenter, please type them in using the questions box located in your webinar control panel.

Our guest speaker is Dr. Paula Christian-Kliger. She has over 30 years experience specializing in working with people with histories of severe adversity crisis and Trauma. She has been the Principal consultant to leaders family businesses nonprofit organizations and Fortune 500 companies to implement transformational change and growth processes. Welcome, Dr. Kliger. Welcome.

[Dr. Paula Christian-Kilger] And here I am so happy to be here today. I'm here. I hope and to do this second part of the meditation series very excited to share my own thoughts about how to include a meditation and mindfulness.

Itís in my own life and in the work that I do with others, but as I did in the very first meditation well webinar, I'd like to begin by setting a tone for us all and I often use this wonderful Bell and you will hear a chime three times and then we'll begin.

What I have found is that when I begin with something like a chime or a Gong it sets the tone and it sets the entire moment for me to be more fully present and I hope it does the same for you. Today we're going to focus much more on the actual practice of meditation and mindfulness. And I hope to set to set a mindset and an emotional tone as spiritual tone.

In fact to prepare you to move into this space much more easily and readily so I have a thought and that is I'm imagining from some of the questions that came up before about how people might want to develop a mindfulness practice of their own in a meditation practice of their own but also want to use these practices with others not just in person, but also remotely so I just want to say the very beginning that the particular practices that That I have chosen for us today. You can use either in person with clients as well as in a virtual remote situation. So with that in mind, let's move forward.

So today I'm hoping to help you learn a little bit more than maybe number of you have already gotten into meditation and mindfulness, but to deepen your inner awareness and understanding of a meditation and mindfulness practice and how it enhances several things that are important in our lives.

First of all our overall capacity our overall capacity to work with each day that we have managing normal stressors and stressors that come from out of the blue to manage adversity and to manage the effects on our bodies and on our minds and on our emotions.

And the second important factor that I believe meditation and mindfulness helps with is self care overall self care, and I want to talk just briefly about some of the findings around the use of a meditation and mindfulness practice that are that have to do with scientifically validated benefits of a letter. Tatian mindfulness practice and so let's look at some of those for a moment that have to do with self care and even self-healing. In terms of cognitive functioning.

Thus the work of Sarah Lazar and the Herbert Benson Institute, which they're doing very up-to-date state-of-the-art research on meditation and mindfulness in general as well as by the way not they also include other kinds of Wellness techniques including yoga Tai Chi and so But with regard to meditation and mindfulness cognitive functioning there has been found increased attention and curiosity and allows 'l increased memory increased flexible thinking increased creativity increased fluid intelligence. That's that intelligence that we supposedly come here with it is our natural abilities.

It seems that doing meditation and mindfulness even enhances that an increase in neural plasticity, plasticity in the sense that there's a change up that it appears in the connections between the neurons and a number of researchers, particularly at the Herbert Benson Institute have been looking at the concept of epigenesis with regard to Resolving jeans finding in fact that we don't just come here with a set of genes and they don't change. It seems that we're always evolving even our genes and therefore our neurons.

Also, the findings show that there's increased social and relational functioning increased happiness and increased overall quality of life satisfaction with work family health and so forth and so on and the third important area where they've been very positive findings with regard to meditation and mindfulness is decreased stress levels that people report the report.

Yes, and instruments, but also in cortisol levels and other physiological measures and finally those who engage in some ongoing kind of meditation and mindfulness. They see reduced symptoms associated with depression, anxiety disorders, pain, and insomnia.

I thought it was really important to me to summarize some of that at the very beginning so that when we are thinking about beginning a mindfulness practice or even you know, convincing others because it can be hard at first to convince a client to consider doing meditation and mindfulness are to find time to engage in some kind of mindful Tech activity that that will actually help them change their overall outlook on their lives and also help them with whatever problem they're presenting because I may not always be able to size up bring together this notion that a mindful technique or meditation can actually enhance their overall life.

So self-healing often is a very it's very much of an outcome including recovery the stages of recovery and transformational change and which leads to a tendency to be more emotionally ready and prepared to deal with the various issues and life experiences that come up day-to-day and then there's overall mental resilience and wisdom that comes out of doing this practice.

One of the things that has been very helpful to me in my work in psychology is the development of my model which is a self-study model of the evolving self. And in that model there are 10 principles. But today what I wanted to talk with you remind you about a five core self-study.

Those transformational practices begin first and foremost with how important it is to develop an observing I and what that actually means is to learn to become more mindful and that means being in the present Mind Body emotions and spirit and the other for important core practices include deepening our own self-reflection, which comes out of meditation mindfulness practice.

Valuing your awareness, your own awareness, and your own acceptance of yourself and others gaining that sense of curiosity that I talked about a few moments ago and making meaning out of each and every experience that you have on a regular basis, taking the time to pause and think about what leaning can I take away from what just occurred even when we're doing our everyday? Routines in the morning or when we're winding down at night thinking about taking a moment to think about. What can I take away from this experience being curious?

And then finally the fifth one which we will talk more about not just today but in our third part is to dedicate one's time in finding and realizing your purpose and how you can make a difference in other's lives.

So I hope to set this tone for us where we can explore in much more depth this idea of the first important the first important self-study transformational practice which has to do with developing and observing I and will move into that in just a moment. But before that I want to talk just briefly about where my thinking is coming from.

I, over the course of 30 years; actually 45 years. I've been meditating for 45 years. Okay, tells you something about my age, but that's good. That's fine. But what I wanted to say is that I have studied many different teachings around the issue of meditation.

And I always come back to sit author got to Mama. Who was the original who's the Buddha and the reason why is because his teaching is simple and clear and helps it has always helped me refocus myself on what is essential about being a human being and being in this life and the Buddha came to these realizations. By leaving his home was very wealthy in from Indian background and India. He left very wealthy home and family and he went left and he wanted to understand more about human suffering.

He saw so much of it when he left the his home that was kind of surrounded with just kind of kept very safe and in the kind of secure space and he realized that many other people did not live the way he lived and it took him several years and he was just about ready to give up in terms of his trying to understand what is suffering all about. Why did he suffer?

Why was he experiencing daily these limitations with himself and for more in his life without being satisfied and finally one day he had what we know as the Enlightenment and in that Enlightenment, he finally came to understand that: Suffering is a part of life all life. And that in that suffering, we created we ourselves without realizing it tend to create our own circumstances of suffering.

And third, and this gets misunderstood. He also came to realize that we don't have to suffer that are suffering in large part is created by us. But when we are able to explore the origins and the roots of that suffering and to identify ways to work through whatever we have suffered. Then the suffering dissipates it is to sated and that that is what gives us hope.

And the fourth important truth and these are this what I'm describing here are his four noble truths the fourth important truth that he came to was that there are certain practices.

And Eightfold right practices that when we engage in them, we are more likely to stay on that right path or middle path that allows us to have a life that is filled with the positives the that's more satisfying and uplifting and that doesn't eliminate completely. But lessens the likelihood of us having pain and suffering some pain some suffering is inevitable no matter what and no one is immune.

And so these four basic principles which are basic truths help to guide me and have helped guide my sinking in developing the self-study model because within those four truths he really is saying, you know, it makes a lot of sense to spend some time in self-reflection and makes its it's important to spend some time becoming more mindful of what we're putting in our minds.

He calls them nutrients what kinds of nutrients we are putting inside our minds inside our bodies and therefore that lead to certain emotional experiences and even spiritual awareness has.

So I go to this original thinking to help me understand what my own Road forward might be to have more pleasure and more fulfillment in my life. And in the lives of those my patience my clients and in the lives of my family and my loved ones. The Vietnamese monk was very much influenced by the Buddha as well. And his teachings are very presented in a much more simple way as well. His book that I have suggested that you read it. I'm going to go to that just and moment here because I want to tell you what it is. It's going to take just a moment.

Because he's written a whole host of books on mindfulness and meditation. But this particular one is called the heart of the Buddha's teaching the heart of the Buddha's teaching and the reason why I wanted to mention that one right away is because it is you don't have to buy it. It is a pdf online because it's a classic and you can get it and you can use it for yourself and for your clients.

In fact, I have to say I started doing a mindfulness and meditation group about two years ago. And I have used that particular book as an introduction to meditation and mindfulness and it is been really helpful for people to start it that much more basic level. So from that book, I wanted to focus our attention today before we do. A real a real exercise in meditation mindfulness that he and one of his chapters. He gets us to focus on the importance of stopping calming resting and healing .What do you notice here in this chapter?

Is that we don't as human beings we are always seem to always be moving either in our heads or in our heads along with our bodies and so forth and we don't take the time to stop. Pause is another word. We often use in here in the literature. When we are able to stop and take a moment to breathe. We get in touch with this basic part of who we are and when we are able to get in touch with stopping instilling ourselves. We are able to feel a sense of calm and then as we learn to experience a sense of calm We begin to give ourselves or allow ourselves the opportunity to rest huge to rest we often as you know in our what in the west and across the world we often do not feel that we're allowed. For self-care to take the time to stop to call ourselves and to rest. That in the moment there is nothing more important than to do that and in that resting state and in that calm State he then talked about how healing can actually take place. You know, I often tell my clients that they're so busy often time to make things happen rather than letting something happen. And that also has to do with healing whether the healing involves something psychological. We're dealing with or something really physical that we're dealing with. There is a part of the mind that can help in that healing process.

Always when we give it its due and I'll talk a little bit about that. When we do the exercise giving whatever the pain and suffering is giving it its due its attention and in then allowing ourselves to allow it to let it go and to rest inside a calm around it. And the push up the Pasha. Is the word for healing in Sanskrit? And it is it means to look deeply or to gain Insight is another.

Definition of the Pasadena. So now with that in mind I want to take us to our next step. So now we're going to practice. The various exercises in mindfulness and I want you to go with me here and we'll take one step at a time. I have a number of these exercises that I want to us to do and I put them in an order so that they make they make some sense first.

We're going to take some time to just find that calm place inside yourself where you can listen more deeply to yourself but in a gentle nurturing way as well without judgment non judgment, which is a very much of a part of meditation and mindfulness. So this first exercise we're going to do is called softening. And I will share with you a little bit later where I get some of the exercises that I have and how I have developed them myself. I'd like you to find a comfortable position in your seat. Close your eyes. Or lower them too soft gaze downward gently. Take several deep breaths raising in through your nose and out through your nose. Or you can breathe in through your nose out through your mouth and as you breathe. Find your way to a natural rhythm of your own. As you listen to the sound of my voice and it may disappear from your hearing and that would be okay. Today we're going to try to explore pain and suffering. Through this very brief meditation. As you breathe allow yourself to sit more and more in the present. You may want to sit in a chair. You may want to get up from the chair and maybe lie on the floor. That's okay, too. You may want to sit on the floor and have your back against a couch or chair.

Just find the most comfortable place you can just for you and sit and breathe a way to deal with pain is to learn to soften. And then simply allow yourself to experience physically and mentally whatever it is. That hurts be your own good nurse. Hold your own hand. Tell yourself. It's all right, and then sit with yourself with compassion as you experience the sensations of discomfort. When you soften around and irritation, you consciously make clench your muscles around the spot that hurts. Or you may tighten your muscles as you think about something that is disturbing or irritating you. You focus on the hurting itself. But now you can focus on it letting go of the tightness. Softening means that you notice what you disregard?

The negative thoughts about how awful the discomfort is you find a way to be with the discomfort, whatever it might be and stay I will give you a moment to locate whatever that might be in your mind or in your body. Now stay with it. Let yourself notice get acquainted with it. Be your own good nurse here and now.

Allow yourself to breathe more deeply as you practice staying now soften yourself around whatever it is. That's uncomfortable being your mind in thoughts in emotions in your body breathe in and breathe out as you continue to soften your mind and your heart around it.

Whenever you're ready can you come back? And you can open your eyes. And I'd like to take just a moment to get some feedback from you about an input as to how you experience this moment. Any thoughts any reactions you have a welcomed you want to share with others through a question or comment that the outstanding?

The name of the book from tip not Han. I'll say it again the heart of the Buddha's teaching the heart of the Buddha's teaching Comments are welcomed. Okay. Now let's go on to the next exercise. This one has to do with letting go of thoughts. Find your posture and center yourself again taking several deep breaths close your eyes. And imagine yourself sitting on the bank of a river watching a leaf drift slowly Downstream observe one thought feeling Oak reception As You observe the leaf And that let each one. Drift out of sight. Return to gazing at the river. Waiting for the next lead to each Leaf to float by with a new thought. Sometimes the same Leaf will float back and forth several times just as some thoughts will float back into your awareness several times. Do not be concerned with the coming and the going of your thoughts.

Watch them notice them as they pass in front of your mind's eye. Now stay with the experiences you're having at the bank of the river. Allow yourself to sit there and breathe in and out watch the leaf pass. Your thoughts pass What's your shoulders and your arms?

Fall limp, your feet a dangling on the bank and your eyes begin to feel like they are even softening. Softening around whatever you were thinking and feeling allow yourself to drift.

Just drift sitting on the bank with your eyes opening and closing. Opening to see the leaves and the water and breathe knowing that you have all the time in the world in this moment this is your refuge. This is a safe space. One perhaps of many you can find and go to Will you couldn't breathe?

Whenever you're ready. Can come back listening to the sound of my voice? Back to the room. I could open your eyes. As you do feel the lingering feelings and Sensations. From This Moment Taking this moment to be still and drift along a river. Okay. Alright. Comments questions Very quiet out there. We have a little we have a few reactions coming in. Okay, sounds great. There is so much that happens internally without my own awareness. I had no idea how much tension I was holding an areas of my body. It can be difficult to soften around the pain. But if I don't allow myself to distract from it and just feel I notice a difference. Great. Oh good.

One more. Yeah, then this one just came in this exercise help me calm my thoughts but also realize how distracted I can be with the Body Sensations. Okay. So now I'm going to do one more. This is a little bit different but I wanted to do to give you three examples of a mindfulness kind of meditation that has components of meditation, which is your breath work.

Being in tune yourself and noticing how your breath works and having certain physical Sensations you paying attention to and staying with And now I'm going to read something to you and invite you to think about it and reflect on it. And see what comes to mind.

This is from another book that I recommended that sin your sin your hand out. It's from Elizabeth lesser, and it's called broken open. How difficult times can help us grow. You'll see it in your hand out. And I'm going to read her chapter a piece of her chapter a few paragraphs that's called the truth. And I have found that for some it might be reading from the Bible or the Quran or it might be reading from Torah.

Or it might be some other meditation saved from uni the poet but sometimes when we need something it inspires us to go deeper to understand more about ourselves and in life and to understand more about how we as humans operate here is here are some of her words.

It is often easier to remain stuck in all behaviors in mindsets. Even when they no longer serve us even when they make us miserable. We get attached to the way things are no matter how ridiculous or destructive they become.

We're trapped by our own version of reality. We're afraid of confronting the truth. We want to keep the Illusions in place. We must long for the tooth.

We must pay attention to the voice that calls us out of a safety zone. We must be willing to lose what stands in the way of our true self.

What I mean is that you can use anything everything as a wake-up call. You can find a treasure Trove of information about yourself and the world in the big trials and the little annoyances daily life. If you turn around and face yourself in times of loss and pain you will be given the key to a more truthful and therefore a more joyful life. The second core transformational practice is self-reflection. This is what I have been inviting to do after each brief meditation and the reading take another moment just with yourself. You have a pen in your hand and write down what comes to mind?

What comes to mind from doing the exercises? What do you see or hear differently inside your heart and mind that was not there before? And I want to add to your question a question to yourself reflection. Showing ourselves the rooms in our hearts. Meditation can be difficult nurturing our suffering can be even harder.

During meditation if you see a symptom of suffering. What is it? What did you see this time? Does giving your suffering words and recognition help decrease how you feel? And the second piece that goes with this that goes with the Four Noble Truths. What nourishes the joy in you? What is your Refuge?

Okay. Now you have some thoughts and so forth you written down. I hope and now we're going to do something together. I'm going to do it out loud, and I'm hoping you will do it with me as well. I believe that each and every day. We have to come we get Reborn. And the way that we can rebirth ourselves so to speak. Is to affirm who we are is human. In a firm that we are creators of our lives. To a very large extent this can be hard to come too.

But it's at the heart of what the Buddha certainly learned and I know having been raised even Catholic and know what I learned from the Seine some of the stories of the Saints and other great spiritual Minds thought leaders. The strength is in side is within so I decided to start this affirmation for myself that I want to share with you.

It seemed to be so helpful not right now more than ever when we have this, you know this coronavirus and we have a future of having to work with that and find a space for all kinds of unexpected potential illnesses. We have to take care of ourselves even better even brighter. However, I can come back to this simple statement and talk to myself with it and work with it every day. And this is it. I am mind, body, and soul medicine I am mind Body and Soul medicine and what I mean by that is that we have the power within.

To seek out more who we are understand ourselves better and feed ourselves those nutrients that are healthier make us happier. And that make us more fulfilling.

And fulfilled and at the same time when we are believe that we can create our own sense of well-being and wellness then we transfer that to others. So I'm going to stop there. In hopes that you have some comments and questions. And I hope that you enjoyed this brief introduction to meditation mindfulness.

[Shannon] Well, thank you so much. Dr. Kliger for your wonderful presentation. We've received several great questions from the audience. And the first one is what is the best way to introduce meditation into my practice?

[Dr. Kilger] What is the first the first important thing is that that you yourself and the many resources I will put together some resources, but it would be very important to you to feel comfortable doing your own meditation and mindfulness practice. The more comfortable you are with it the more it's going to be easy for you to introduce it.

I find that my clients are much more open because they know and they do it. And so that's one thing you can do and will I will provide some resources around that for you on their ha the next question we got is how can we work to ease some of our fears and anxiety during these times and what meditation and mindfulness practices do you?

I meant I chose the softening one or any meditation or mindfulness exercise that allows you to sit for them to breathe do breathwork begin with breathing always and then move yourself to look at inside yourself in your mind your thoughts and your emotions and your body where the tension is.

Where the concerns are and as you do practice softening around them practice letting yourself not judge because that's one of the things that we tend to do. We have feelings. We have you nobody reactions and we then judge.

If you can begin to let go of the judge and just be with whatever you're feeling and Breeze through it and take it one day at a time. Another very important Point related to that question is do begin a practice. That is everyday even even if it's five minutes of practice of five minutes every single day.

Preferably at the same time of day is better in the long run for you developing for your mind and body and emotions to get an alignment.

You will begin to see the results and you'll begin to build even more of a meditation and mindfulness practice as you do something more consistently.

Okay. Another question is how can we use meditation for kids and are we allowed to use it? Absolutely. Oh my goodness, of course, you know the best new meditation simple basic traditional meditation to start with is breathwork to breathe together.

See if you have youngsters or you're working with a youngster that is you know, one of the safest ways to begin and for many parents. It doesn't get in the way of a religious belief that someone might have because I really am very respectful of religious beliefs and so forth. But if you start with kids with them learning how to breathe and not hold their breath, by the way, it's something I really would like to emphasize.

I didn't talk enough about learning to breathe through and not hold our breath is just an enormous step toward calm and if we can work with kids to do that. Wow, they do Best by the way by sitting on the floor or lying down on the floor and holding their hands across their tummies or their diaphragm and watching their breath go up. And down that can be a way to begin with kids. The next question is do you have a lot of different meditations that you use with different clients? Yes, I do and I would say that each meditation or mindfulness exercise begins with some Basics as I pointed out before breathwork nearly always begin with breathwork because that is our core and that is the place where we do the real work of calm and relaxed and finding Stillness, but Each person is very different. Some people cannot bear hearing me talk too long.

So we need to find some other way in until I teach them how to talk to themselves or they might prefer music and I together we choose calming relaxing music to use as their way in to a deeper state of awareness, but also, Oh of calm and Stillness and refuge in peace. Some people prefer visualization. After we began with the breath work, I take them on a journey and for them that is what really allows them to calm and relax themselves and to also learn more about themselves on that Journey. So yes each person. I try to assess what what's going to be most effective for them. Some people just like to be inside their minds.

And go to the third eye. Experience the light or the sound inside themselves. It's so yes, each person requires some time spent figuring out what works for them. And then they take it the next step. They take it the next step and they'll invite me to help them with that.

But that's exactly what I'm here for not to prescribe one size fits all because it doesn't Okay, great. We looks like we have time for just one more question. And that one is how do you recommend doing visualization exercises? Is it best unguided? You know, I think that's another one of those questions that depends. I think I often hear from my clients and from my patients that they prefer to hear in a visualization.

They prefer to hear someone walk them through it and rather than doing it themselves, although when someone becomes an experienced meditator and they enjoy going to a particular Refuge. Let's just say a cottage that they go to in their minds or you know, they enjoy listening to particular music, but the music is in there and they need to make it in their minds themselves. They can do it themselves and they prefer that and some people just prefer to be still and to practice breath work by themselves without anyone guiding them.

In fact, I have a very close colleague who wanted me to teach her more about it, but she does not like any anyone talking or walking her through it. She prefers to have the experience from within.

[Shannon] Okay. Well, unfortunately we have run out of time. Thank you so much for joining us. Dr. Kliger and thank you to all of our listeners for your participation a recording of this presentation will be emailed to everyone in two weeks. Please join us tomorrow for part two of being the creative and professional practice with dr. Kliger. We are sending you the registration link via the chat box. As soon as the webinar has ended a short survey will appear on your screen.

We hope you'll take a few minutes to complete the survey and give us feedback on how we did and how we can improve we thank you for your attention and have a great day.