

History of Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness-based_stress_reduction

In 1979 Jon Kabat-Zinn (a man with Eastern European heritage) founded the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Clinic at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center, and nearly twenty years later the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care and Society at the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Both these institutions supported the successful growth and implementation of MBSR into hospitals worldwide. In 2015, MBSR is practiced as a complementary medicine, commonly in the field of oncology; in the same year, 2015, close to 80% of medical schools are reported to offer some element of mindfulness training and research and education centers dedicated to mindfulness have proliferated.

Extent of practice

According to a 2014 article in *Time* magazine, mindfulness meditation is becoming popular among people who would not normally consider meditation. The curriculum started by Kabat-Zinn at University of Massachusetts Medical Center has produced nearly 1,000 certified MBSR instructors who are in nearly every state in the US and more than 30 countries. Corporations such as General Mills have made it available to their employees or set aside rooms for meditation. Democratic Congressman Tim Ryan published a book in 2012 titled *A Mindful Nation* and he has helped organize regular group meditation periods on Capitol Hill.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jon_Kabat-Zinn

Jon Kabat-Zinn (born **Jon Kabat**, June 5, 1944) was a student of Buddhist teachers such as Thich Nhat Hanh and Zen Master Seung Sahn and a founding member of Cambridge Zen Center. His practice of yoga and studies with Buddhist teachers led him to integrate their teachings with scientific findings.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindfulness>

Mindfulness is the psychological process of bringing one's attention to experiences occurring in the present moment, which can be developed through the practice of meditation and other training. The term "mindfulness" is a translation of the Pali term *sati*, which is a significant element of Buddhist traditions. In Buddhist teachings, mindfulness is utilized to develop self-knowledge and wisdom that gradually lead to what is described as enlightenment or the complete freedom from suffering. The recent popularity of mindfulness in the West is generally considered to have been initiated by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Historical development – Buddhism

Mindfulness as a modern, Western practice is founded on modern vipassana, and the training of sati, which means "moment to moment awareness of present events", but

also "remembering to be aware of something". It leads to insight into the true nature of reality, namely the three marks of existence, the impermanence of and the unsatisfactoriness of every conditioned thing that exists, and non-self. With this insight, the practitioner becomes a so-called *Sotāpanna*, a "stream-enterer", the first stage on the path to liberation. Vipassana is practiced in tandem with samatha, and also plays a central role in other Buddhist traditions.

According to Paul Williams, referring to Erich Frauwallner, mindfulness provided the way in early Buddhism to liberation, "constantly watching sensory experience in order to prevent the arising of cravings which would power future experience into rebirths." According to Vetter, *dhyana* may have been the original core practice of the Buddha, which aided the maintenance of mindfulness.

According to Rhys Davids, the doctrine of mindfulness is "perhaps the most important" after the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. T.W. Rhys Davids viewed the teachings of Gotama as a rational technique for self-actualization and rejected a few parts of it, mainly the doctrine of rebirth, as residual superstitions.

Criticism

Various scholars have criticized how mindfulness has been defined or represented in recent western psychology publications. These modern understandings depart significantly from the accounts of mindfulness in early Buddhist texts and authoritative commentaries in the Theravada and Indian Mahayana traditions.

The popularization of mindfulness as a "commodity" has been criticized, being termed "McMindfulness" by some critics.

According to Purser and Loy, mindfulness is not being used as a means to awaken to insight in the "unwholesome roots of greed, ill will and delusion," but reshaped into a "banal, therapeutic, self-help technique" that has the opposite effect of reinforcing those passions. While mindfulness is marketed as a means to reduce stress, in a Buddhist context it is part of an all-embracing ethical program to foster "wise action, social harmony, and compassion." The privatization of mindfulness neglects the societal and organizational causes of stress and discomfort, instead propagating adaptation to these circumstances. According to Bhikkhu Bodhi, "[A]bsent a sharp social critique, Buddhist practices could easily be used to justify and stabilize the status quo, becoming a reinforcement of consumer capitalism." The popularity of this new brand of mindfulness has resulted in the commercialization of meditation through self-help books, guided meditation classes, and mindfulness retreats.

Buddhist commentators have criticized the movement as being presented as equivalent to Buddhist practice, while in reality it is very possibly denatured with undesirable consequences, such as being ungrounded in the traditional reflective morality and therefore, astray from traditional Buddhist ethics. Criticisms suggest it to be either demoralized or re-moralized into clinically based ethics.