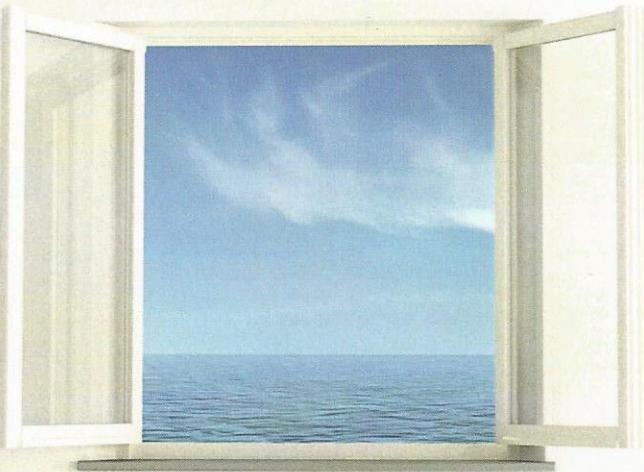


Transforming Wisdom

Pastoral Psychotherapy in Theological Perspective



edited by

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6

Personality, Individuation, Mindfulness

Felicity Kelcourse and Christopher Ross

Individuation does not shut one out from the world, but gathers the world to oneself.

—Jung, 1946/1969, p.226

HOW DO PERSONALITY, INDIVIDUATION, and mindfulness inform theological perspectives on pastoral psychotherapy? All three address the capacity to be self-aware, self-observing, in ways that attest to the realities of our being, essential skills for both therapist and patient if each desires to grow in wisdom. This chapter introduces concepts derived from analytical (Jungian) psychology and Buddhist mindfulness practices that serve as aids to intrapsychic (introspective) and interpersonal awareness. Compassionate self-assessment allows therapists to receptively attend to self and other, just as these capacities help careseekers more fully comprehend their own lived experience.

Essential to our present-moment awareness is an observing ego capable of noticing our existing thoughts and feelings. The ability to attend to wordless images and mute embodied sensation as components of the intersubjective, phenomenological field between analyst and analysand informs the transformative work of pastoral psychotherapy.¹ From a theo-

1. The psychoanalytic approach of intersubjectivity as elaborated by Stolorow, Atwood, Brandschaft, and Orange, as well as the philosophical stance of phenomenology have much in common with contemporary practices of Analytical psychology. Briefly,

logical standpoint, the therapist's goal is never to mold another into some preconceived image of health but rather to provide a space in which the therapist's respectful attention to all that careseekers bring encourages them to attend to their own deep wisdom, a "soul-knowing" of what is needed for abundant life.

Personality has to do with our innate sense of self, the ways that we naturally perceive and relate to those around us. Individuation, in the context of this chapter, has to do with our lifelong calling to express our true selves, with the belief that doing so not only responds to our individual need for meaning and purpose in life, but also best serves the greater good, broadly conceived. Mindfulness, as it has been appropriated for use in psychotherapy, allows us to be fully present in the now, the only moment in which change and choice are possible. In theological terms, we honor the Creator and creation by living into the full capacity of our created being. Buddhism can be viewed as a non-theistic philosophy, yet the Buddhist emphasis on compassion for all beings is fully compatible with the Great Commandment of Christianity (Matthew 22:35–40) and the aspirations of other world religions.

What is Personality?

In her youth, Charlotte felt she was "the odd person out" in her family.² Her brothers and parents loved to spend time together while she frequently felt the need for time alone. The rest of the family did not share Charlotte's love of fantasy and imagination, accusing her of having her head in the clouds while they attended to facts. As an adult, Charlotte trained to be a pastoral psychotherapist and learned to use the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) as an assessment tool. Of the sixteen possible combinations of eight paired personality factors, her personality preferences (INFP) were diametrically opposed to those of her family members (ESTJ). This discovery both confirmed her sense of being different and offered tools for understanding the perceptual and communication differences within the family.

Personality has been defined as "consistent behavior patterns and intrapersonal processes originating with the individual," where the term

intersubjectivity attends to the created field between two persons in dialogue. Phenomenology attends to "the thing itself" – noticing whatever arises in consciousness as receptively as possible. For further reading in intersubjectivity see Atwood & Stolorow (1984, 1993) and Orange et al. (2001). On Jung and phenomenology see Brooke (2009).

2. Case examples are extrapolated from actual cases with identifying information altered to preserve confidentiality.

intrapersonal includes “all the emotional, motivational, and cognitive processes that go on inside of us that affect how we act and feel” (Burger, 2011, p. 4).³ The MBTI was developed by Isabel Briggs Myers (1897–1980), drawing on the work of her mother Katherine Cook Briggs (1875–1968). Katherine Briggs found her categorization of personality types congruent with the work of Carl Jung (1921/1971). Jung’s work on typology began with his attempts to understand conflicts between Freud, Adler, and himself, particularly with regard to understandings of the unconscious which divided the early psychoanalytic movement (Jung, 1921/1971; Beebe, 2004). The MBTI was first published in 1962 and remains the most widely used personality inventory to this day (Saunders, 1991).

Jung (1875–1961) was a Swiss pastor’s son who trained to be a psychiatrist and adopted Freud’s psychoanalytic method as a young professional. Following nine years of service as an in-patient doctor at the Burghölzli mental hospital he experienced a “creative illness” that caused him to focus intently on his inner life (Ellenberger, 1970).⁴ Towards the end of his life, he dictated an introvert’s autobiography, *Memories, dreams, reflections* (1961/1989). This unusual life review assigns subjective experiences, such as dreams, fantasies and visions, greater or equal weight to external events.

Jung is known as a developmental theorist of adulthood (Crain, 2000). Following his own life pattern, he saw the first half of life as focused on building up ego strength, based on one’s roles in the outer world, and the second half of life as devoted to discovering one’s unique vocation or calling as an individual.

Personality and Individuation

The lifelong task of becoming the person we were created to be can be described as a journey from division to wholeness. Jung captures this aspect of human development through his concept of *individuation*, the term he chose to describe the processes of psychological and spiritual growth, which for him always went hand in hand. For Jung being an *individual* was a process of becoming “undivided,” aware of and open to all aspects of one’s being.

3. Personality psychologist J. M. Burger identifies six different approaches to personality, designated as psychoanalytic, trait, biological, humanistic, behavioral/learning, and cognitive (2011). Only the trait approach, as identified using the MBTI, is presented here.

4. Jung’s method of psychological inquiry invites each individual to explore his or her own sense of calling, with an eye toward community responsibilities, mindful of ancestral wisdom (Stein, 2005).

Jung's psychology is based on the assumption that a dynamic and useful tension exists between opposites that form part of the human *psyche*—our psychological life. The most basic polarity in his depth psychology is that between conscious and unconscious. While he may have agreed in principle with Freud's summation of the psychotherapeutic process, "Where *Id* [the unconscious] was *Ego* [consciousness] shall be" (1962/1923), Jung added the dimension of the Self as a patterning force or *archetype* of psychological totality, more inclusive than ego-consciousness, and the closest analogy in analytical psychology to the theological concept of God. The self transforms and transcends many polarities, including those between the ego's drive to adapt to prevailing social demands, and the requirements of a wider, more embracing, sense of wholeness that many consider the purview of religion (Jung, 1951/1968; Ulanov & Dueck, 2008; Stein, 2014).

Jung found the most accessible aspect of our unconscious to be the sets of opposites foundational to his personality typology as articulated in *Psychological Types* (1921/1971). Understanding his personality typology is a starting place for the journey toward individuation, our own and that of our clients. Jung describes eight different ways of being conscious in order to correct our personal bias of thinking of other people as different versions of ourselves. Because we are used to ourselves, we may assume that other people are psychologically like us. We may also use our own beliefs about religion and spirituality as a largely unconscious diving board for exploring others' worlds. *An understanding of personality differences facilitates our provision of appropriate counseling by showing us specific ways in which using our own personality as a map for understanding and responding to others may prove misleading.*

An Introduction to Personality Types

Individuals are revitalized in different ways: some of us are energized from the inside through introversion (I), by spending time alone with opportunity for reflection; others are refreshed through extraversion (E), by interacting with others and acting on the external environment. Understanding these ways of being energized is helpful in pastoral counseling: an introverted person may take more time to open up, and it is nothing to do with you, the counselor. An extravert may be very vocal in group counseling simply because any group is stimulating, not out of a narcissistic drive to dominate!

Jung considered that there were also four key cognitive processes that he called functions, each of which may be directed in an introverted (I) or extroverted (E) direction: two contrasting perceiving functions—sensing

(S) and intuition (N)—ways of following and processing stimuli, and two contrasting ordering or assessing functions—feeling (F) and thinking (T). The sensing function focuses on specific details, whereas the intuitive function orients to patterns and meaning, cognizing wholes. When sensing is “in play” in pastoral counseling the questions asked by the counselor are specific and focused. Intuition, however, is helpful for rapid exploration when ‘open ended questions’ speed the therapist across many areas of life toward the situation that is most pressing. While there is no ideal type combination for counselor and client the match between client and counselor makes a difference. A counselor literate in personality differences will know when she has to adapt to clients who perceive the world differently.

Thinking (T) and feeling (F) are contrasting—yet complimentary—ways of ordering the information we gather through our perceiving processes. Thinking assesses information through detached, logical analysis with attention to consistency. Feeling orders on the basis of values, with special attention to human need. The prevalence of thinking or feeling flavors the counseling process. When both client and counselor favor feeling judgment, rapport may develop quickly, whereas when both parties have thinking preferences more time may be required. A feeling (F) client may experience the (T) therapist as less “available,” but might come to trust their steadiness and perspective. Alternatively the thinking client may feel flooded by the immediate warmth of the feeling counselor, and this should not be pathologized as the client necessarily having “trust issues.”

Myers considered that the core of our personality is constituted by the pairing of our preferred way of perceiving—Sensing (S) or iNtuition (N)—with our preferred way of organizing—Thinking (T) or Feeling (F). In the construction of the MBTI, Myers added a set of questions that related to a further set of opposites, which she found helpful in determining which one of the pair of preferred processes was turned outward toward the external world, and which was introverted. If a judging process was used to face the outside world, the individual was designated as having a Judging preference set (a J), and if her preferred way of Perceiving was turned outward, she was identified as having a perceiving preference and was designated a P. “Judging” (J) does not imply that a person is judgmental but does denote a preference for order, structure, and planning in daily life. A “perceiving” (P) person is able to “go with the flow,” responding spontaneously in the here and now.

Type Frequency

All personality types are represented among those providing pastoral counseling and among those seeking it. However, the frequency of each dominant type often differentiates counselors from the general population. Among providers of counseling intuition and feeling (NF) predominate. NF's, representing only 10 percent of the general population (Kiersey, 2006) are also disproportionately drawn to seminaries and pastoral counseling training programs (Ross, 2011). Myers and McCaulley (1985) conclude, "Given that the majority of the population prefers sensing, the fact that most counselors prefer intuition creates a responsibility for counselors to learn methods for communicating and treating sensing clients" (p. 73).

A common misunderstanding of personality typology is the idea that one's preferred type, the preference for extraversion over introversion for instance, evident in childhood, must remain one's preferred approach throughout life. On the contrary, the concept of individuation as becoming *undivided* suggests that it may be important, particularly in the second half of life, to explore one's "inferior function." So, for example, a person generally preferring solitude to large groups, grand visions to immediate details, human values to universal principles, planning to spontaneity, in other words, an INFJ, might need to develop, in later life, the capacity to spontaneously relate to groups of people with attention to immediate facts (ESTP functions). Some persons may test as an *x* where preference is unclear. This lack of clarity is often caused by one's natural preferences' being muted by environmental pressures from home or work.

A positive characteristic of the MBTI is that no one set of personality preferences is more useful or better than any other. Each type has its own characteristic strengths and weaknesses, and for this reason the MBTI is often used to help working groups (and families) understand each other better, given their personality differences; such a new understanding of differences enables them to rely on one another's strengths in complementary ways.⁵ Therapists mindful of perceptual differences between themselves and their clients are equipped to adjust to clients' needs in treatment. For example, an INFP therapist working with a couple noted in supervision that her preferred use of metaphor to assist couples in identifying relational impasses was falling flat. The husband was a mechanic and the wife was a nurse. Based on clients' career choices, the supervisor suggested that this couple might prefer a more factually oriented, structured approach to the

5. *Gifts differing: Understanding personality type* (Myers & Myers, 1995) provides an introduction to types. Keirsey (2006) offers a pencil-and-paper, short version of the MBTI and complete versions of the assessment test can be found online.

work. The therapist was then able to identify specific behaviors to support mutuality, and the couple agreed that this shift of focus to address communication style was useful.

As significant as personality may be for improving communication, there is more to individuation (the life journey of becoming the person we were created to be) than understanding personality preferences. Growing in self-awareness allows therapists, who may carry their own wounds, to become wounded healers, not wounded wounders. Pastoral psychotherapy training programs generally require individual therapy as a component of clinical training. Pastoral psychotherapists are trained to approach those who come to them holistically, balancing attention to three modes of knowing: conscious *ego* awareness, the *psyche* (which includes unconscious ways of knowing as through dreams or embodied memories), and *soul*, or Self, as represented in Jung's concept of a "religious instinct" (Jung, 1926/1954).⁶ It is difficult if not impossible to approach others from this holistic perspective if one has not first learned to discern the component aspects of consciousness within oneself.

Stages on the Individuation Journey

The journey of individuation generally begins in midlife. Psychoanalytic theory frequently focuses on the conflicts experienced from birth to puberty as foundations for future functioning. A therapist informed by this theory will encourage a strong conscious sense of self, able "to work and to love" as Freud would say.⁷ While Jung acknowledges the importance of developing a strong ego, his theory of individuation is future-oriented, hopeful that early deficits do not circumscribe our potential, envisioning the second half of life as our opportunity to "get a heart of wisdom" (Ps 90:12b).⁸ The following is a brief review of anticipated stages on the individuation journey as one engages awareness of one's persona(s), shadow, contrasexual other, or "syzygy," and the Self.

6. "Consider religious experience . . . Can science be so sure that there is no such thing as a 'religious instinct'?" (Jung, 1926/1954, p. 83).

7. For a psychoanalytically oriented introduction to the basic tasks of ego development across the lifespan see Kelcourse (Ed.), (2015b), *Human development and faith* (2nd ed.).

8. For introductions to individuation theory in Analytical psychology see Murray Stein (1998); and Hollis (2000).

Persona

During the first half of life we may assume many roles. One can be a daughter, sister, wife, mother, pastor, chaplain, psychotherapist, teacher, spiritual director—inhabiting each of these roles in effective and reliable ways, while recognizing that one's core self transcends any given role. The need to be able to dis-identify from roles frequently presents itself for women when the "empty nest" stage of life challenges them to see themselves as something more than a mother, or for men, when fired or retiring from a job that has come to define their career. At these junctures, people may come to therapy asking, who am I, now that my services as a mother or engineer are no longer needed?

Shadow

In arriving at an undivided, holistic self-awareness, it is useful to explore one's "shadow" or "not-I" sense of self. A simple exercise brings aspects of the shadow into view: (1) Think of *one person* you would rather not encounter walking down the hall, someone you prefer to avoid. (2) Now identify *one aspect* of that person that particularly distresses you. (3) Once you have held that person and the troublesome aspect of their presence clearly in mind, ask yourself this: is there any hint, however small, of that person's troubling characteristic within you?

If your answer is, no, definitely not, then get a second opinion from your spouse or best friend. If your answer is yes or maybe, then consider the fact that it is often what we secretly dislike in ourselves that we find most disagreeable in other people (Kelcourse, 2015b). Clients who rage at a co-worker may discover that distressing aspects of that coworker's personality relate not only to family-of-origin experiences but also to traits that they are prone to deny in themselves.

Anima/Animus—The Syzygy

Beyond ego, persona, and shadow Jung identified the "syzygy" as the bridge to the self (Ulanov, A. B. & Ulanov, B, 1994). This is the awareness of a contrasexual "other" within each woman or man, designated by Jung as the "anima" within men and the "animus" within women. Jung's theory is not as heteronormative as it might sound, given the fact that every human society posits expected characteristics for masculinity and femininity. Even gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons must come to terms with the

social constructions of gender that their culture assumes. A woman may say, “I’m not a leader” if she thinks of leadership as a function of maleness. A man may have difficulty identifying his emotions if he has been taught that “real men” don’t show their feelings. The journey into wholeness may require the female follower to become a leader and the male stoic to gain affective attunement.

A man or woman in midlife may discover a contrasexual “other” within by becoming strongly attracted to a person who represents unclaimed potential aspects of themselves. The stoic professional is attracted to the patient whose emotions are passionately displayed. The patient is attracted to the doctor who embodies all the accomplishments and wisdom that she would like to attain.⁹ The difference between shadow and anima/animus contents is that while ‘not-I’ shadow contents repel us when we recognize them in others or ourselves, syzygy contents are powerfully alluring, calling us to discover unlived parts of ourselves. In Jung’s theory, expressed in heterosexual terms, men are drawn to unexpressed anima/soul qualities (the good they see in women), and women are attracted to animus/soul qualities (the good they find in men). This is a hunger for wholeness that all persons feel if they will heed it, what Jung called our “religious instinct” (1926/1954).

The Self

As a pastor’s son, Jung would have been well aware of mystical religious traditions that attest to an inner connection to the divine within all persons and all creation. Jung stated that “psychic processes seem to be balances of energy flowing between spirit and instinct” (Jung, 1946/1969, p. 207). An infant is born as a bundle of instincts with innate personality traits around which an ego, or largely conscious sense of self, forms. But the spirit nature of each person is also present from birth as the soul, “that of God” in us, that connects us to all of life and to one another. The lifelong journey of individuation moves along the axis between ego and Self, with Self corresponding to soul, the *imago Dei*.

It takes a strong ego to engage the archetypal energies of the Self (Ulanov, 2000). Becoming increasingly more aware of one’s whole ego-self, as it connects us to others and a greater Self in God, is the opposite of self-absorbed selfishness. As we grow in spiritual awareness, we are increasingly able to discern God’s call for our lives, the vocation in which our gladness

9. Jung’s treatment of Sabina Spielrein, a brilliant young woman diagnosed with “hysteria,” may well have inspired his “anima” theory (Kelcourse, 2015a).

and the world's hunger meet (Buechner, 1993). The Self is the archetype of wholeness, and like God, it is both center and circumference for our lives. — Without the centering energies of the Self, we find ourselves chronically out of balance.

Psychotherapeutic work with persons in the second half of life, or with young adults and children whose lives are foreshortened by terminal illness, must respond to the spiritual demands of the need for meaning. What purpose does my life serve? Have I lived the life God intended for me? These questions energize a fearless quest for discernment, what John Wesley understood as sanctification, a perfection in love (2007). Through a discerning sense of self and others, we find ourselves more able to live out the great commandment to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27).

The journey of individuation requires ego strength, spiritual hunger and clarity of purpose. But what if one finds oneself hopelessly confused, mired in depression, anxiety, endless recriminations directed towards oneself or others? Painful emotions, nagging fears and doubts afflict many persons for whom the meaning, purpose, and value of their lives is chronically clouded. How are such persons to find the inner peace and clarity that discernment and individuation require?

Faith communities are positive sources of social and spiritual support for many. But among counselors and clients alike there are those who need to heal from the effects of toxic religion, as, for example, gay, lesbian, and transgender persons who are not welcomed by their faith communities. And there is a growing trend for persons under 40 to identify themselves as "spiritual, but not religious" (Fuller, 2001). For those raised without a faith tradition, or for religious "refugees," it is helpful to know that there are spiritually based resources for healing that do not require assent to specific creeds, as in the mindfulness practices that follow. These practices offer a "how to" approach for gaining present-moment awareness that can be considered a spiritual discipline as it supports compassionate attention to self and others.

The Spiritual and Therapeutic Value of Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a resource for pastoral counselors that derives from the Theravada branch of Buddhism.¹⁰ Jon Kabat-Zinn, author of *Full Catastro-*

10. The Theravada branch of Buddhism is prevalent in Sri Lanka, Thailand, and

phe Living, and developer of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) defines mindfulness as “moment to moment awareness” (2009, p. 2). The deliberate practice of mindfulness for both practitioners and clients that has proliferated in the last decade (Davis & Hayes, 2012) is based on both solid scientific validation of its benefits (Segal et al., 2002), and central tenets of Buddhism, many of which can also be found within the Christian tradition (Thich Nhat Hahn, 1999; Wallace, 2009).

The first of what are called the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism—the starting point for the Buddhist path to healing, to Enlightenment— involves acknowledging the universality of suffering:

It is impossible to live without experiencing some kind of suffering. We have to endure physical suffering like sickness, injury, tiredness, old age and eventually death and we have to endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustrations, fear, embarrassment, disappointment, anger. (Dhammadika, 2014)

The counterbalance to this seemingly austere belief is the Buddhist conviction that deep within *any* conscious being lies the capacity to awaken to our true nature, our inner *Buddha*, meaning someone who is truly awake.¹¹ This capacity for fully awakened consciousness and its fundamental healing quality is the foundation for the practice of mindfulness. Buddhist mindfulness shares common ground with the founders of depth psychology, as well as important themes of redemption and resurrection in Christianity.¹² Freud’s summary of psychoanalysis as noted above, “Where *id* (the unconscious) was, *ego* (consciousness) shall be!” has the expansion of conscious awareness as its goal (1923). Jung too sought to help suffering midlife seekers along the path to individuation by making them more conscious of the archetypal patterns that were influencing their poor decisions and unmanageable relationships. In a similar spirit Kabat-Zinn (2009) affirms: “[Mindfulness] is a systematic approach to developing new kinds of control and wisdom in our lives, based on our inner capacities for relaxation, paying attention, and insight” (p. 2). The benefits of mindfulness practice extend from the original work with chronic pain sufferers (Kabat-Zinn 2009; Young 2004) to preventing relapse in the treatment of

Burma, the Southeast Asian country where some of the most prominent teachers of mindfulness in the West—Jack Kornfield (2008) and S. R. Goenka—received their original instruction.

11. Though Buddhism does not refer to a deity, the potential analogies between “Buddhahood” and “soul-knowing” are evident. Both refer to our innate capacity to access inner wisdom, what Ann Ulanov refers to in this volume as “the well” (Ch. 16).

12. Wallace (2009) cites 1 Corinthians 15:54: “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

depression (Segal et al., 2002) to treating anxiety (Orsillo & Roemer, 2008), to treating obsessive-compulsive symptoms (Hershfield & Corboy, 2013), to addressing relational difficulties (Ross & Doering, 2014), to cultivating self-compassion (Germer, 2009) and fostering the therapeutic relationship (Hick & Bien, 2008). The healing power of mindfulness encourages pastoral counselors to develop this capacity in themselves and those they counsel.

Practicing Mindfulness

What are the active components of mindfulness, and how are they developed? In *Five Ways to Know Yourself* Shinzen Young (2011), a sensory phenomenologist and the developer of Basic Mindfulness, describes three attentional skills that inform the practice of mindfulness: *concentrative power, sensory clarity, and equanimity*.

- *Concentrative Power* is your ability to focus on what you want when you want. Gently holding an intention lies at the core of the attentional skill of concentration. It is the ability to focus, and remain focused, on what is held to be relevant.
- *Sensory Clarity* is your ability to untangle the elements of sensory events as they occur in your awareness, an attentional skill that traces, tracks, and monitors just *what* is being experienced in the moment.
- *Equanimity* is your ability to let experience come and go without pushing away (aversion) or pulling toward (clinging): aversion and clinging are the two “poisons” that Buddhism regards along with confusion or ignorance to be the root cause of all suffering. The core ingredient of equanimity, and of remaining in that state, is the ability to stay present to the flow of experience even as that experience changes. In Buddhism impermanence is one of the hallmarks of existence and its simple acceptance a gateway to nirvana. Nirvana, in Buddhist practice, is a state of awakening between existence and nonexistence, made possible by such freedom from clinging, aversion, and confusion that no fuel for rebirth remains.

Concentrative power and sensory clarity enable one to receive the full sensory richness of the experience—*whatever it is*. Development of equanimity provides freedom from the internal struggle to control, facilitating rest and relaxation. With concentrative power, attention becomes sustained, both *within* and *between* experiences. The three skills together produce *presence*, to one’s own experience, and to another’s: the starting point of sensitivity

and emotional attunement that are the foundation for effective counseling: “Presence is where we meet others and mindfulness is a powerful means for constructing that house of presence” (Ross & Doering, 2014, p. 93).

Buddhist mindfulness meditation is often associated with sustained, nonevaluative attention to the breath as it moves in and out of the body. This very specific method, however, may be attractive to some individuals (kinesthetic learners) but not to others. The value of the Basic Mindfulness approach of Shinzen Young is the variety of ways through which mindfulness may be developed for Western care providers and careseekers.

Three basic strategies are used to train attention: *noting*, “*do nothing*,” and “*nurture positive*.”

- *Noting* involves tracking sensory events over time, either with or without the help of mental labels for the kind of experience that is in awareness.
- *Do nothing* involves dropping any intention at all, releasing the individual from the need to control what is experienced in any way at all, also known as “open presence” (Nyoshul Khenpo & Surya Das, 1995).¹³
- *Nurture positive* involves intentionally holding mental images, mental talk, or pleasant emotional body sensations. *Metta*—sending love and compassion to others—is the most common form of this strategy and corresponds closely to forms of Western Christian intercessory prayer.

Young distinguishes three sensory arenas—hearing, seeing, and body sense (see Fig. 6.1)—in which each of the three attentional skills may be developed, and each sensory mode has an internal and external focus:

- *Visual experiences* includes (1) ordinary vision (regular external sights), and (2) internal vision (images—i.e., nonverbal thinking).
- *Auditory experiences* include (1) external hearing, and (2) internal self-talk (verbal thinking)
- *Somatic experiences* include (1) ordinary physical body sensations, and (2) emotionally tinged body sensations.

Each of these six modalities of experience are experienced in four different forms, and are each the focus for training concentrative power, sensory clarity, and equanimity:

¹³. The Quaker practice of centering prayer is similar, with the exception that one is to remain open to the leadings of the Holy Spirit that may rise into consciousness as the directed attention of the ego falls away.

- *Focus In:* Internally arising experiences are chosen as the focus of attention, including thoughts (mental images in the visual mode and mental talk in the auditory one) and emotionally tinged body sensations.
- *Focus Out:* Ordinary physical aspects of the external world are the focus of attention (sights, sounds, and physical body sensations).
- *Focus on Rest:* The restful aspects of the three sensory modes constitute the focus of attention: relaxation in the body, quietness in the hearing mode (internal as well as external), and in the visual mode internally as the “blank screen” encountered when the eyes are closed, or in the “soft focus” of the external sight when there is no fixed object of attention.
- *Focus on Flow:* With increased sensory clarity, subtle fluctuations within sensory experiences may be noted so the field of awareness is experienced as forever changing and dynamic.

Figure 6.1. Grid for Noting Sensory Experiences¹⁴

	In (Subjective Experience)	Out (Objective Experience)	Rest (Restful Experience)	Flow (Sensory Fluctuation)
Visual experience	Mental images	Physical sights	Visual rest (blank screen or soft focus)	Fluctuating visual experiences
Label: SEE	Label: “See in”	Label: “See out”	Label: “See rest”	Label: “See flow”
Auditory experience	Mental talk “hearing yourself think”	Physical sounds	Auditory rest (mental quiet or no audible sounds)	Fluctuating auditory experiences
Label: HEAR	Label: “Hear in”	Label: “Hear out”	Label: “Hear rest”	Label: “Hear flow”
Somatic experience	Emtional body sensations	Physical body sensations.	Somatic rest (relaxation or tranquility)	Fluctuating somatic experiences
Label: FEEL	Label: “Feel in”	Label: “Feel out”	Label: “Feel rest”	Label: “Feel flow”

¹⁴. © Shinzen Young. Taken from Young (2011), ch. 9. In this grid, each cell describes a category of sensory experience (e.g., “mental image”). The two-word phrases in quotes are the labels spoken silently as an optional aid to the more basic of “noting” experiences that are relevant to the chosen focus category (e.g., “See in”).

To develop mindfulness, one needs simply to select one or more of these foci for a limited amount of time (a minimum of five minutes, and a maximum of twenty minutes at the beginning), deliberately noting what arises moment by moment in the chosen area of focus. When an experience arises that is not in your chosen focus area, for example a pain in the leg when your focus is on mental images, simply treat the pain with equanimity (let the sensation come and go) and return attention to the internal visual mode, staying vigilant for either images or rest from those internal images.

When beginning a mindfulness practice in this way it is useful for the development of sensory clarity to employ one of the two-word verbal labels found in each row of Fig. 6.1, depending on what comes into consciousness during the sensory event that one is focusing upon. This label can be a silent repetition or spoken out loud for even clearer feedback in the early stages of training, or when you are sleepy or fatigued. For instance if internal vision is the focus, when aware of an image, vocalize or subvocalize "See-in." When the image fades, "See-rest." Or "See-flow" when change is registered in the image, or when subtle change is noted within the visual rest state. When meditating using body awareness as the focus, note "Feel-out" for purely physical bodily sensations (including awareness of the breath) and the absence of such sensations as "Feel-rest"; emotion related bodily sensations are noted as "Feel-in."

The chosen area for focus may vary from session to session, depending on personal preference at the time and circumstances. For example if you live on a busy street, then choosing "hear out" as your focus might be adaptive, since car sounds would no longer be distractions but opportunities for mindful attention! At other times or in other settings you may choose to focus on internal sounds: one's self-talk (and note "Hear in") or their absence (as "Hear rest"). After a while, when the practice is established, you can try a "Focus-out" practice when walking to work or for recreation, and note the sights and sounds, subvocalizing the labels "See-out" and "Hear-out," respectively.¹⁵

The natural tendency is for experience to change, including what humans evaluate as "good" and "bad" or as "not-so-good" experiences. Often it is the fear of negative experiences that leads to suffering and to individuals seeking help from a professional care provider. A mindfulness practice, while straightforward in its instructions, requires patience and support, especially at first. Pastoral counselors who would like to use this resource with others are advised to try it. A natural confidence flows from the instruction

15. "Focus out" serves as a walking meditation, deliberately remaining present in the present moment. Persons who find it difficult to pray or "center down" sitting still may find this practice particularly useful.

when counselors have experienced the benefits themselves, including the fading of “negative experience” as the attentional skill of equanimity is strengthened.

The methods of the Basic Mindfulness approach, comparable in some respects to the structured approach of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), are particularly useful for persons struggling with negative emotions.¹⁶ Each method has a role in the development of emotional regulation. Mindfulness practice can be started within the counseling session and fairly quickly assigned as homework between sessions once the benefit has been experienced.

Here is an account of a counselor whose client struggles with depression and anger. Note the therapist tracking self-awareness as he attends to his experience of the client in the intersubjective field.

Mindfulness in Action¹⁷

In his first session David’s downturned face and rumpled clothes suggested someone unhappy, neglecting himself. Not looking at me, he said that he had called in sick to work. He had “had it” with his colleagues and clients.

I felt myself tighten inside. Moments later I remembered to breathe, and recalled the “Feel-in” of Shinzen Young’s instructions from a mindfulness retreat I had attended: “Notice body sensations that have an emotional tinge.” Perhaps David heard my relaxed exhalation; as I fixed my eyes on the same part of the carpet that seemed to absorb his gaze, he abruptly raised his head. His face slackened and tears sobbed out. At forty-two he said he had just “run out of juice.” I felt heaviness in my body, and a knot in my stomach. Then I realized that I was tracking my inner speech: “What had I to work with?”(noting verbal thoughts with the “Hear-in” label). With this awareness and with my eye on the clock behind his chair, I asked “Are there any *resources* you have?” He muttered: “My wife loves me but I don’t know why. I’ve been miserable to live with ever since my father died last summer.” “I don’t know why” he repeated, “It’s not as if we ever got on after he remarried, to that girl, while I was still in my teens!”

16. DBT was developed by Marsha Linehan, a psychologist originally diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder who developed this approach to support those needing skills to manage affect regulation and impulsivity (Linehan, 1993; Linehan & Dimeff, 2001).

17. This case vignette is based on an account from Robert Doering, a psychologist in private practice (see mindfulwaterloo.org/).

I felt some relief. Once I had reviewed the highs and lows of his adult life and his answers to some family-of-origin questions, I thought I could rule out a major depressive disorder.

At the end of the hour he added, “Oh! A friend told me about meditation last summer just before Dad died and I tried it and liked what it did for me. But then I just got bored with it—always focusing on the breath.”

“Let’s talk more about that next Wednesday then,” I suggested.

By session 4, having discussed early losses and some parallels in this, his midlife passage, he confessed with a sheepish smile: “I’m feeling better!” So I thought he might now be able to consolidate some of his gains with an orientation to Basic Mindfulness. I downloaded a copy of *Five Ways to Know Yourself* (Young, 2011), and we went over some pages I had highlighted.

He showed surprising enthusiasm: “Oh great! There’s some choice over what I have to meditate on. And it’s really effective according to some of the studies I looked up on the web.”

In David’s fifth session we practiced “Focus on Rest” in the body (e.g. relaxation in the limbs), in image-space (the blank screen when eyes are closed), and in talk-space (the quietening of self-talk by noting “Hear-in”). We also covered “Focus out” in the office with both of us noting sights and sounds using spoken labels as they occurred to us, and then David alone, and then silently. At our next meeting David said he really enjoyed going out to the park each morning and practicing Focus-out. In June a local colleague offered an eight-week Basic Mindfulness training. David and his wife completed the course. I met with him monthly over the summer. A one-year follow-up visit from them both revealed that David had returned to work at his company, and that both felt better about their relationship.

Conclusion: Common Ground

Self-awareness on the part of the counselor is a necessary component of effective therapy. Understanding aspects of one’s own perception, with an acquired awareness that others experience the world differently, makes it possible to remain open and responsive to the varying attunement needs of clients. Just as a teacher must read ahead of her students to effectively communicate new material, so a therapist will ideally have traveled further along on the path of individuation than the persons who come for care. Through the quality of self-awareness and the capacity for personal growth that individuation entails, both analyst and analysand will find themselves better equipped to discover meaning and purpose in life.

The redemptive work of pastoral psychotherapy includes healing from past hurts and finding rest in the present moment. At the heart of both Jungian analytical psychology and Buddhist mindfulness practices lies a deep optimism concerning the capacity of human beings to heal, given time and attention to what matters, to what has meaning. Both approaches to healing focus significantly upon suffering; their relevance for the twenty-first century relates to the transforming power of focusing courageously on what ails us. Pastoral counselors may draw on these resources both for themselves and for those for whom they care.

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