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CPRD 104
03/01
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Reflection Paper 1

To begin I started with a lot of progress I needed to make with being mindful, and being aware of my surroundings and my thoughts. I tend to fly through life while forgetting and losing things while trying to plan out everything since I hate taking a risk. To give a great example of this the other day I ended up being late to my morning class since I couldn't find my car keys. I had intentionally put them in the side pocket of my backpack so everything would be together the night before.

This is not the first time I've lost my car keys like this, and it probably won't be the last. Pretty much everyday I spend it unable to focus on anything for very long as my attention span is no existence. The only reason I bring this up is to give context for how little mindfulness, or meditation normally would play in my life. So I have spent most of my life practicing near zero mindfulness and peacefulness.

Most of my meditation so far has not been very meaningful or beneficial. I don't think this is because meditation does not work, or is silly, but because of my lack of ability to focus or allow my mind to be peaceful. Since most of the time when I attempt to meditate each day I find myself easily distracted, fidgety, and honestly kinda uncomfortable.

I do think I have started to notice a change, a very slow and inconsistent change, but still a positive change. I find that when I meditate I am able to stay sitting for a little longer, and to stay calm and still more easily than before. This change is happening but very slowly which is kinda frustrating, since at least for the current moment it feels more

like I am spending my time each day sitting down and mostly being uncomfortable. Whats odd is this uncomfortableness often coexists with some calmness and relaxing part so I try to focus on that while meditating instead of my more negative feelings associated with meditation.

Despite my frustrations with meditation, I am genuinely excited to continue working on it. I believe that this has the potential to address some of the challenges I tend to face, especially with my issues with focus and the constant feeling of being distracted and overwhelmed. Although the progress is slow and the sessions often leave me feeling somewhat uncomfortable, there's a sense of calm that I experience each time I sit down to meditate. This calmness is a different experience for me.

I like the idea that I might eventually be able to extend these moments of calm into my daily routine is an exciting prospect to me. Even though it's rather tough, the potential benefits, and the desire to try something new keeps me motivated. I am hopeful that with continued effort meditation might be able to help me become more mindful and less forgetful.

I have honestly noticed a major shift in how I try to respond to negative stimuli over the span of this course. At the beginning of the semester I took a promotion at work that put me into a leadership position and lots more work. I also ended up taking a few more difficult classes this semester. The third major stressor was knowing this was my last semester and not feeling prepared for the workforce and uncertain about the future. All this led me to getting burnt out only a month into the semester. Which forced me to reevaluate the way I try to handle everything. I tend to try and solve all my

problems with more hard work and brute force. My solution tends to be that I just need to work harder, and I do not like admitting this is not always possible. So after 2 years of this mentality and not often having days off between school and work, I decided to use this class to try and reframe the way I handle stress and negative emotions.

The thing I've found most helpful with daily stresses is trying to be nice to myself. Instead of yelling at myself for taking a break after a 10+ hour shift I need to allow myself to take a break from work, and not be mad at myself for not working. Another big thing is not punishing myself over everything I tend to not like to try since whenever I screw things up I tend to heavily punish myself. For a while I figured not burning myself was good enough for this, but it's not. Even if I might not be causing myself physical harm, I am still causing myself mental harm by hating myself so deeply. This realization was in part due to this class and trying to accept my emotions and not trying to control them. That I see this emotion and feelings, but I won't let it control me.

I really hope as this class continues, I hope to be able to learn more methods that will be able to help me. I am especially curious about the section on mindful eating, as my go to comfort in life has always been food. While I have lost some weight I still have a lot of progress to go in fixing my relationship with food.