Mindfulness and Menopause: Harness Its Power Transcript

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Introduction to mindfulness as medicine

I. It's so great to be here with you all day. Six and sometimes they say you saved the best for last. And this talk is the one that is most dear to my heart.

Mindfulness is the best medicine and so often overlooked. I am here to tell you that not all medicine comes in a pill bottle. And the more we can embrace that and the more we can start to harness our own healing potential, capacity, and trust in ourselves.

Oh, the greater our journeys are going to be. So I was introduced to mindfulness when I was a first year medical student. I there was a there was a research project taking place that one of my classmates was doing, and I decided to support him and join it.

And was I ever glad I did because it introduced me to Mbsr, which is mindfulness based stress reduction. This is the work of Jon Kabat-Zinn at of UMass.

And so feel free to Google and learn more about it. I really consider her consider him the father of modern day mindfulness and am honored to have studied with him and to be sharing his work out in the world, and of course, to have been adding to it with all of my own experience.

So when I did this research project, I just got blown away and I thought, oh my God, this is how healing really occurs. So I went to the guy who was teaching the class, and I said, I have to be your apprentice.

You're going to be my mentor. I'm going to study with you. And while I was going through medical school, I was working with him teaching mindfulness to cancer patients in hospitals who were dealing with the worst pain, bone pain from metastases.

Discovering MBSR and teaching patients

And I was watching through their mindful, their inquiry, through their mindful inquiry into their pain, and by learning to breathe and harness the power of the breath.

Their pain was changing. And so this has been something that I grew up with as a physician, and that I have always integrated into my work with patients and have seen the most powerful results.

And so I want to share it here with you. If the only thing you take away from the summit, and there's so many things to take away, but if you take away the power of breath, the power of being mindful, the power of being present in your life, I will feel like all the time and energy I've put into producing this summit for you was well worth it, because it is the greatest gift I can give to you.

So what does mindfulness really mean? Well, an easy definition is paying attention on purpose. Moment by moment, without judgment and being kind to yourself.

So I want you to just stop and take a minute and think about how often do you beat yourself up? How often do you say things to yourself that you wouldn't say to your worst enemy?

Are you kind to yourself or you nasty girl, or you mean girl to yourself? And so when one of the things I often hear is, oh, that stills I tried, I can't meditate, I can't be mindful.

And I have to remind you then that this is not something we do once and we master. I have been meditating and practicing mindfulness since I was about 24, and I'm 54 now, so that's 30 years and I still have to practice.

It's not like I sit down and I meditate and I'm just, do I have moments too? Or in my mind is racing. I can't be focused and it's a practice. It is a journey.

It is not something. It's a muscle, the mindfulness muscle and something we have to keep flexing. And someday you go to the gym and you can lift and pump that iron.

It's easy. Some days it's more of a struggle because you didn't sleep well, or you're a little under the weather, or you're stressed about something that's happening in in a relationship or with your work.

And so it's the same thing with mindfulness. We have to just commit to the practice. We have to commit to the to the journey of caring about what is going on internally with us and how are we interacting externally with the world.

And so let's just take for an example. And I said, not all medicine comes in a pill bottle and it doesn't. But you know, I love my supplements. So let's just take for example, taking a supplement.

What mindfulness means and why practice matters

The difference between rushing in, taking it, drinking your water and moving on, or mindfully taking your supplement and looking at the supplement, not giving thanks to the supplement.

Giving thanks to yourself for the wisdom in finding the supplement for the people who made it with quality and care for the doctor who prescribed it to you, and then thinking about what it does.

Oh, this supplement is going to help my lymph flow, or this supplement is going to take down inflammation in my brain, or this supplement is going to build my bone health and really thinking about it and then swallowing it with grace and gratitude.

And breathing. And what a different experience that is and how that is going to be. That supplement is going to be incorporate it into your cells in a totally different way than just onto the next thing.

I promise you, when we stop and breathe and appreciate and have gratitude, the smallest, most mundane things, they pop and they add so much beauty and joy to our lives.

And so let's see, we have a few minutes. So let's do a little practice. A lot of people have me on their summits or their podcasts or their retreats or whatever it is to to do mindfulness practices, and I always love doing it.

And so I want to do that here with all of you. So get comfortable if you're not already comfortable. And I always stop and think, if I'm not already comfortable, why wasn't I?

I want to create an environment where I always put my comfort first. Remember, self-care is not selfish around here. Self-care is mandatory. It is a beautiful gift you give to yourself.

So of course, if you are listening to this and driving or moving about in the world, you're not going to close your eyes. You might want to do this at another time, but if you're just sitting on your couch or in your bed or wherever you are in your yard, I invite you to close your eyes.

And I invite you to feel your feet grounded on the floor on the earth. And to connect to mother to mother Earth. And I invite you to feel a string from the crown of your head pulling up, extending you to the universe above.

Knowing that you are this portal, this energetic, beautiful, loving highway between the universe above and the Earth below. And then focusing in on your heart center.

If you want to put your hand there, you can. And just breathing in. Feeling the beauty. The warmth that resides in this heart center.

Mindful supplement ritual and gratitude

Remembering to lead with our hearts. To be heart led while connected above and below. Whom returning home to who we truly are. We'll take a moment to focus on our breath.

Breathing in through the nose. And when we breathe in through the nose. We let our bellies expand. And as we breathe out through the nose. It's as if a string is pulling the inside of our belly back to our spinal cord.

And just staying here for a moment, getting curious about your breath. No, being a mean girl, there's no right way or wrong way to do this. There's only the way you are doing it right here, right now.

Befriending the silence or befriending the chatter? If you're thinking this is silly, how will this heal me? Or if you're thinking about the laundry or that phone call you need to make, or that email you didn't answer kindly and gently collecting your thoughts and bringing them back to your breath.

Guided breathing and body awareness practice

Knowing you may have to go gather those thoughts every moment. As you learn the new practice. Of breathing. And if there's a part of your body that feels tight or painful.

Could be a muscle joint. Could be an upset stomach, a headache. Focusing your attention. There. And saying hello to this discomfort. Again, getting curious.

What does it feel like? Said throbbing. Is it sharp? Is it cold or is it hot? What's the temperature? Does it have a shape? Does it have a color? Does it have anything to say to you?

In breathing, knowing you are not your pain. Knowing this area has a message to reveal to you. It may come now. It may come later. All in divine time.

Breathing, breathing, breathing. And as we get ready. To leave this quiet state. Knowing we can return here. Knowing if it wasn't quiet and was full of chatter.

We can still return here and practice again and again and again. Thanking yourself for participating. For trying something new. If this was new to you and for being open to new ways of healing.

You can wiggle your fingers, wiggle your toes, move your body. When you're comfortable, you can open your eyes high. So maybe that was stressful because sometimes stress reduction can be stressful as we're learning how to do it.

Or maybe that was peaceful.

Breath, nervous system regulation, and daily mindfulness

And you can feel your parasympathetic nervous system kicking in and nervous system regulation from a place of peace that we can move forward to find the healing we need in.

And so I just wanted to give you a taste of what this could be like. There's a lot more where that came from. And when we can learn to breathe because remember our breath, it truly is the best medicine.

It's free. It's always with us. We just have to tap into it. And it's how we enter the world. Baby takes the breath and starts to cry. And as we are on our deathbeds, we take our final exhale and we move on to whatever awaits us in. So the breath is healing.

The breath connects us and it's waiting for you to harness its power. I think about infants when they're crying, and

then at the end they go, you ever see an infant do that?

And that's how they're regulating their nervous system. And so we too can learn to regulate our nervous systems. We can learn from the babies who breathe with their big Buddha bellies.

No more sucking in that gut. It's all about breathing and opening up the energy centers down there. And so I am all chilled out animals. And from the breathing exercise we just did.

But mindfulness has so many far reaching abilities, it's how we can greet the day. So another quick practice I'll share with you before we end is when you wake up mindfully feel your body in the bed.

Scan your body. Give thanks to your body. Give thanks to your bed and your blankie and your pillows and your PJs. If you're wearing some, greet the sun.

Put your feet on the ground. Start the day in a mindful way. Open to all the magic and miracles that are awaiting you. When we step into mindfulness, we step into a whole new way of being that I promise you, will serve you well.

So I hope you enjoyed this as much as I did, and I look forward to sharing more with you about how mindfulness truly is the best medicine, and how it can really guide you to the most amazing second sacred act.

As you transition through your hormonal journey.