



Mindfulness & Grief: Reengaging With Life After Loss

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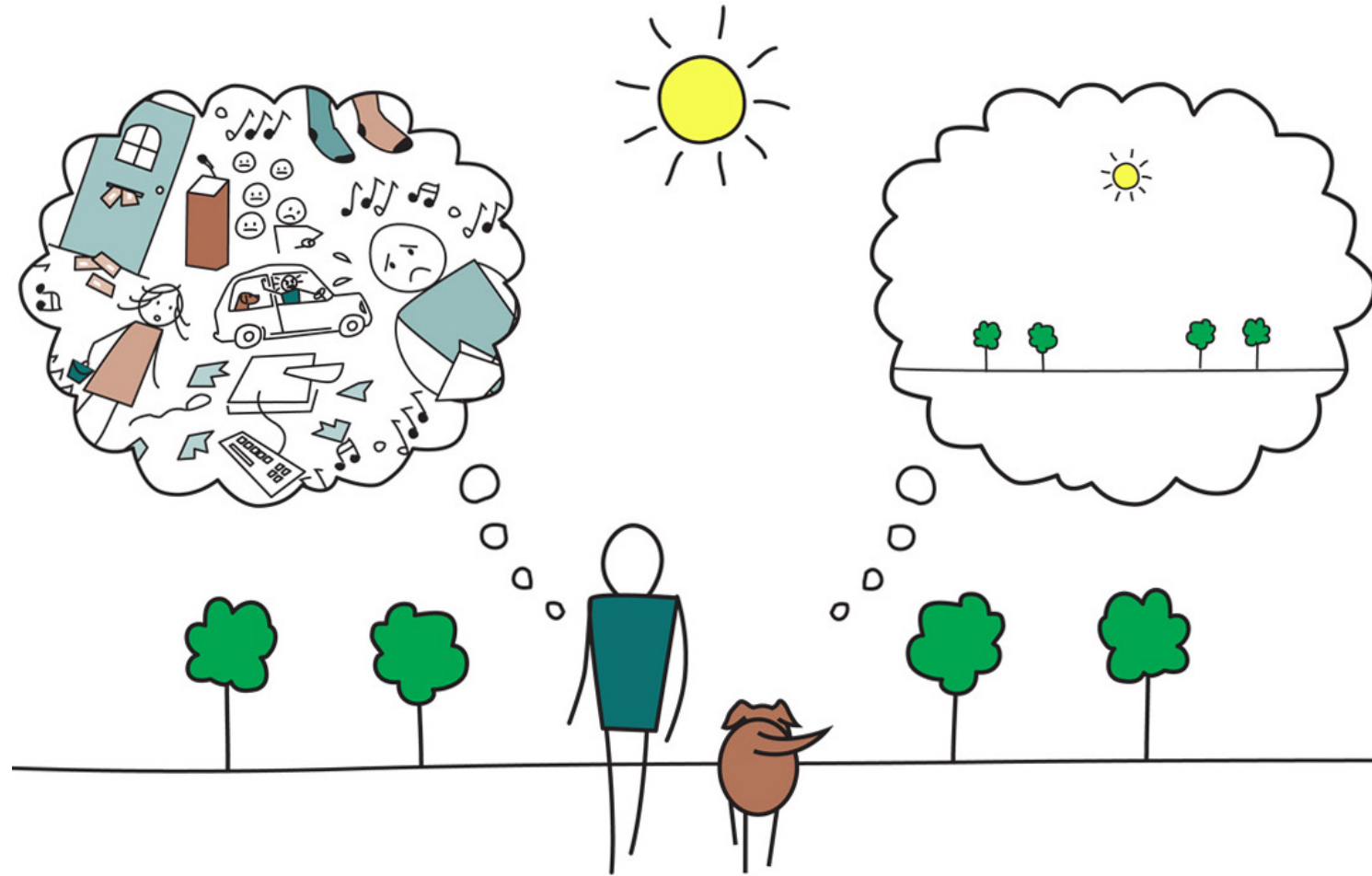
Association of Death Education & Counseling
40th Annual Conference

Pittsburgh, PA

GET HANDOUTS: <http://mindfulnessandgrief.com/adec-2018/>

Session Objectives

- Explain how mindfulness practices, including present moment awareness and compassion, can be used to relieve physical and emotional suffering.
- Outline specific meditation, yoga, and guided journaling techniques that enhance the ability to connect with the body's wisdom.
- Review case studies that illustrate how the practice of mindfulness meditation and yoga contributes to meaning making and posttraumatic growth.



Mind Full or Mindful?



MINDFULNESS IS....

...the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united. Mindfulness is the energy that helps us to know what is going on in the present moment.

Thich Nhat Hanh (2008)

<https://www.lionsroar.com/the-moment-is-perfect/>

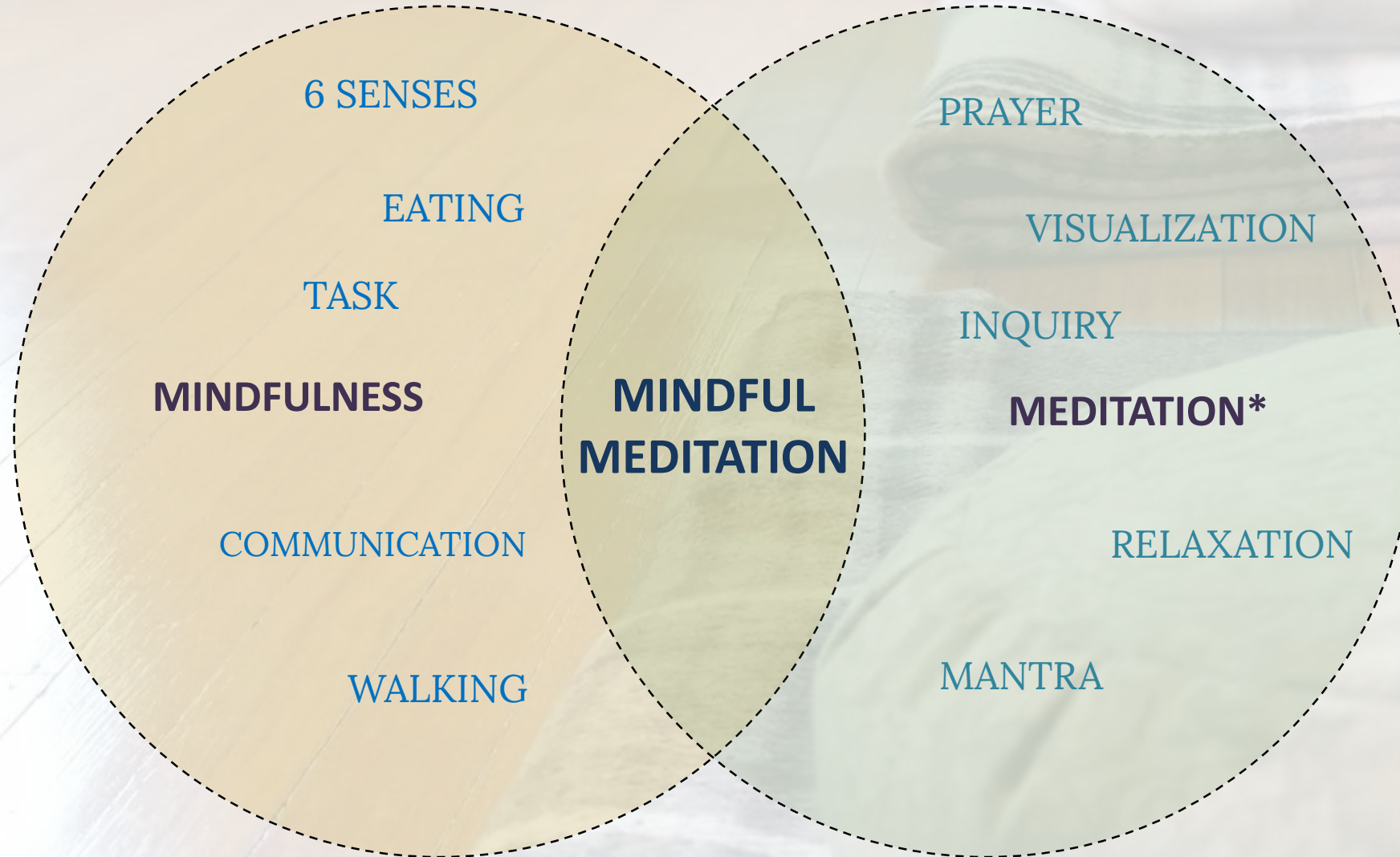
MINDFULNESS IS....

The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003)



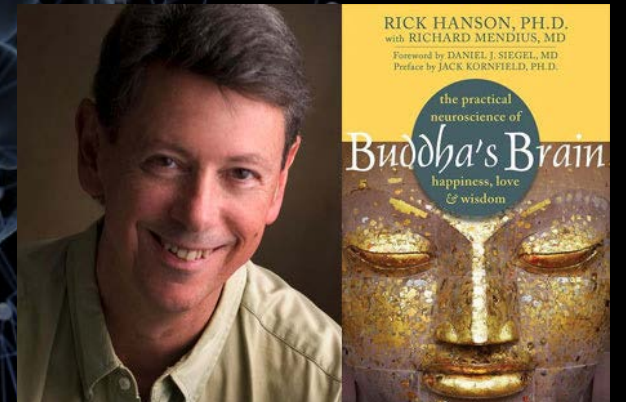
Mindfulness Is Not Just Seated Meditation...



*Mindfulness is still an option!

The Brain on Mindfulness

- Lateral Prefrontal Cortex: Assessment Center
- Medial Prefrontal Cortex: Me Center – Empathy
- Insula: Gut Feelings
- Amygdala: Fear Center Shrinks
- Neocortex: Creativity



Suffering = Pain x Resistance



Shinzen Young (1994)

5 Domains of Posttraumatic Growth

- Increased Appreciation of Personal Strength
- Sense of New Opportunities & Possibilities
- Deepened Sense of Connection & Compassion
- Appreciation of Life in General
- Spiritual or Religious Change

Calhoun & Tedeschi (2006)



Relevant Articles & Research

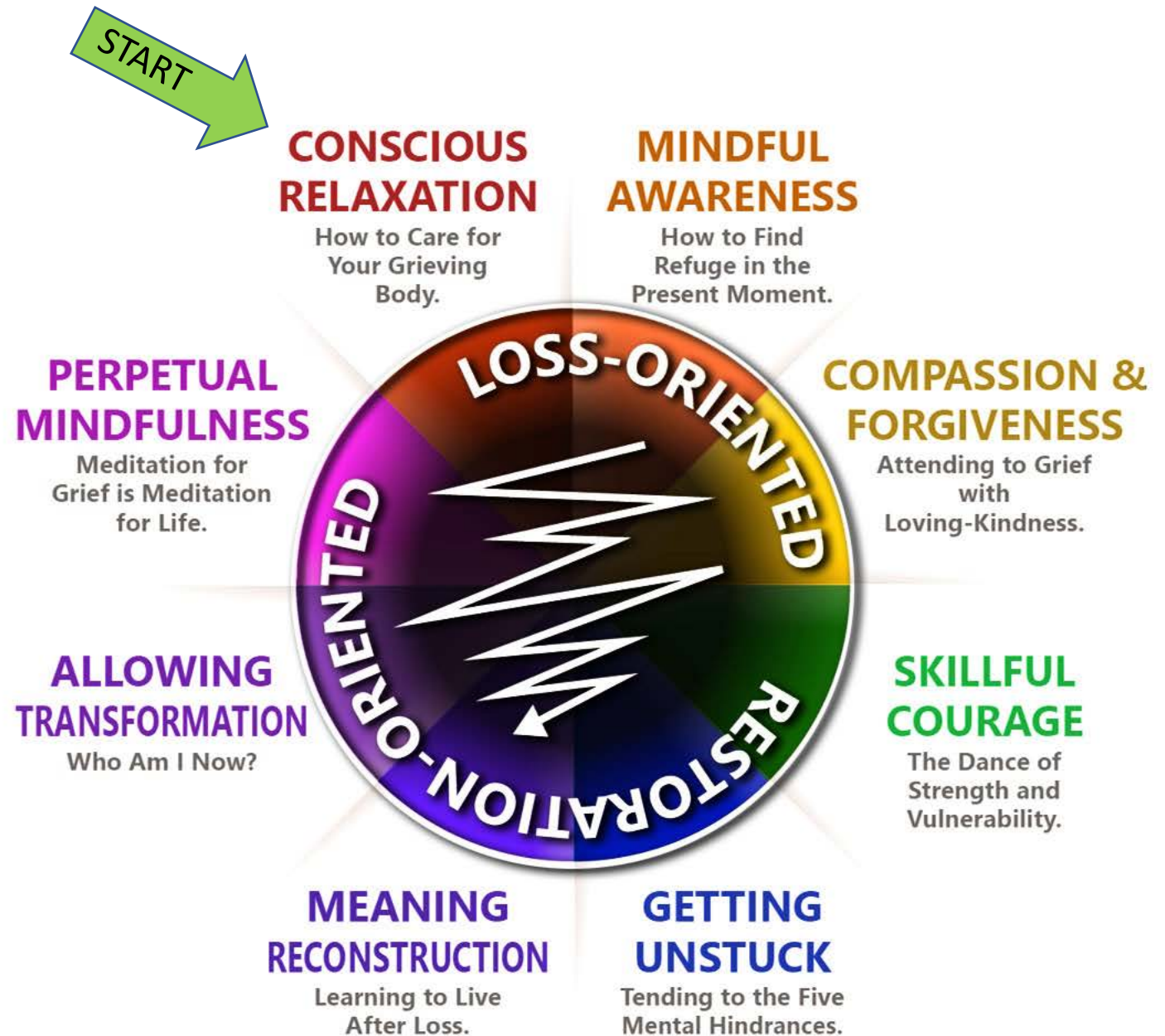
- Cacciatore, J., & Flint, M. (2012). **ATTEND: Toward a mindfulness-based bereavement care model.** *Death studies*, 36(1), 61-82.
(A)ttunement, (T)rust, (T)herapeutic touch, (E)galitarianism (N)uance, and (D)eath education
- Hofmann, S. G., Sawyer, A. T., Witt, A. A., & Oh, D. (2010). **The effect of mindfulness-based therapy on anxiety and depression: A meta-analytic review.** *Journal of consulting and clinical psychology*, 78(2), 169. 39 studies, 1,140 participants

Relevant Articles & Research

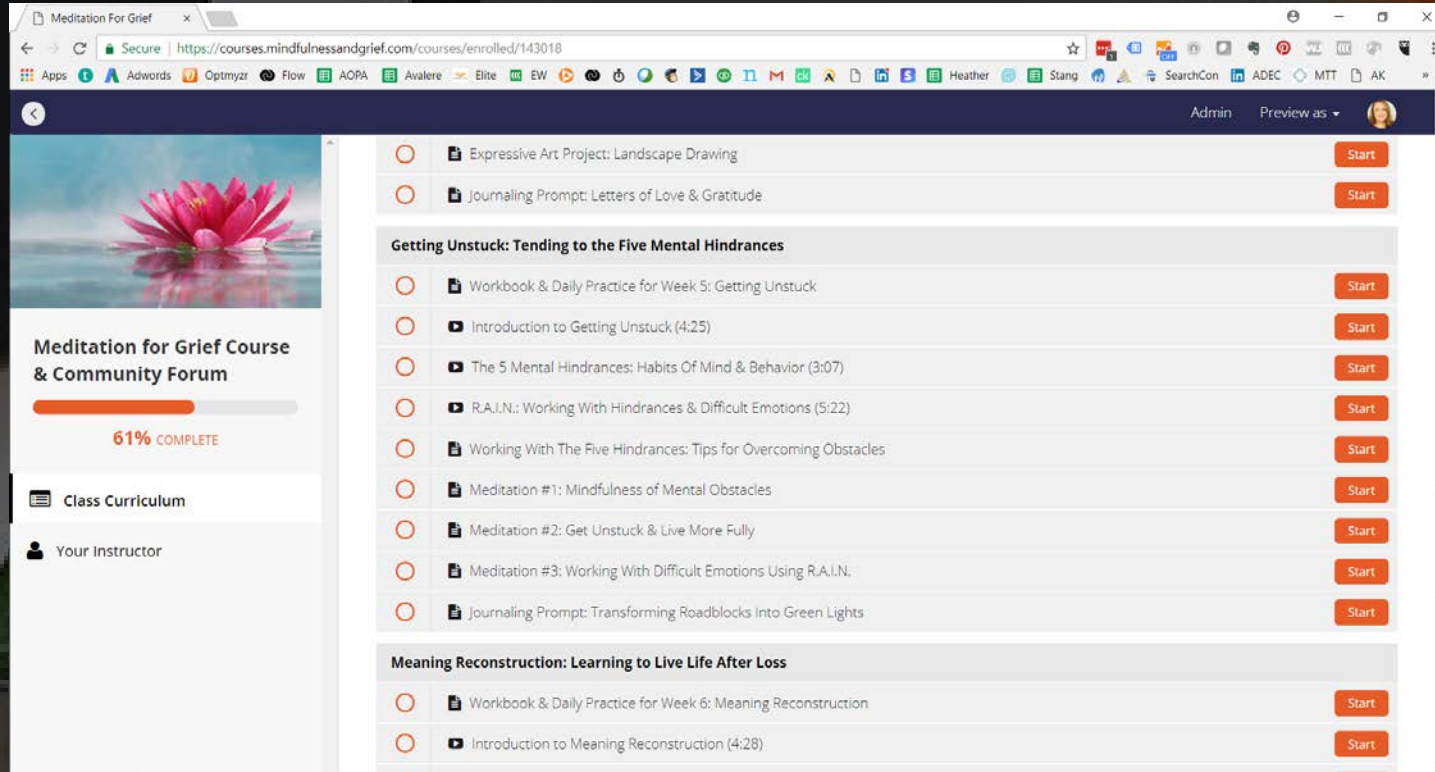
- Philbin, K. (2009). Transpersonal integrative yoga therapy: a protocol for grief and bereavement. *International Journal of Yoga Therapy, 19*(1), 129-141. Non-significant, however positive leaning, improvement in the Satisfaction with Life Scale
- Telles, S., Naveen, K. V., & Dash, M. (2007). Yoga reduces symptoms of distress in tsunami survivors in the Andaman Islands. *Evidence-based complementary and alternative medicine, 4*(4), 503-509. All reported a significant reduction in self-rated fear, anxiety, sadness, and disturbed sleep after the one week program.

The Mindfulness & Grief System

8 Module Mindfulness & Grief System Overlayed with the Dual Process Model of Bereavement (Strube & Schut).



8 Week Online Course & Alumni Group



Meditation for Grief Course & Community Forum

61% COMPLETE

Class Curriculum

Your Instructor

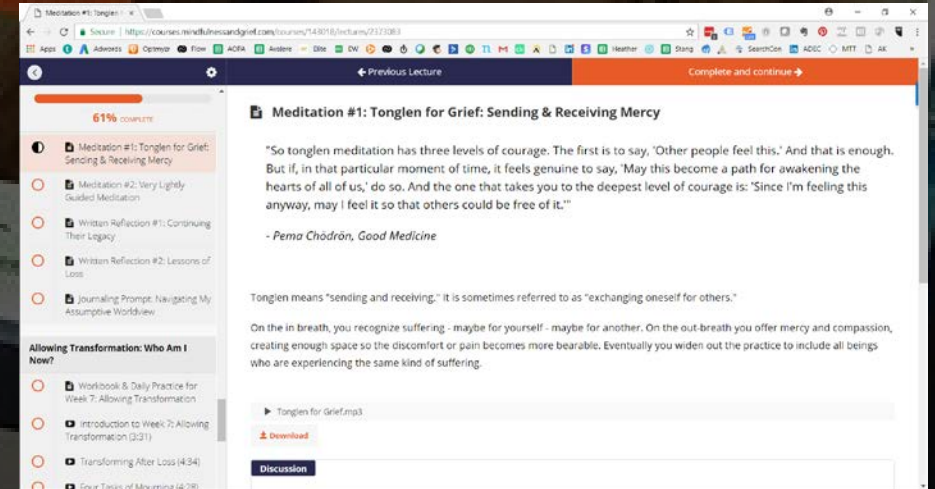
- Expressive Art Project: Landscape Drawing [Start](#)
- Journaling Prompt: Letters of Love & Gratitude [Start](#)

Getting Unstuck: Tending to the Five Mental Hindrances

- Workbook & Daily Practice for Week 5: Getting Unstuck [Start](#)
- Introduction to Getting Unstuck (4:25) [Start](#)
- The 5 Mental Hindrances: Habits Of Mind & Behavior (3:07) [Start](#)
- R.A.I.N.: Working With Hindrances & Difficult Emotions (5:22) [Start](#)
- Working With The Five Hindrances: Tips for Overcoming Obstacles [Start](#)
- Meditation #1: Mindfulness of Mental Obstacles [Start](#)
- Meditation #2: Get Unstuck & Live More Fully [Start](#)
- Meditation #3: Working With Difficult Emotions Using R.A.I.N. [Start](#)
- Journaling Prompt: Transforming Roadblocks Into Green Lights [Start](#)

Meaning Reconstruction: Learning to Live Life After Loss

- Workbook & Daily Practice for Week 6: Meaning Reconstruction [Start](#)
- Introduction to Meaning Reconstruction (4:28) [Start](#)



Meditation #1: Tonglen for Grief: Sending & Receiving Mercy

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- Meditation #1: Tonglen for Grief: Sending & Receiving Mercy
- Meditation #2: Very Lightly Guided Meditation
- Written Reflection #1: Continuing Their Legacy
- Written Reflection #2: Lessons of Loss
- Journaling Prompt: Navigating My Assumptive Worldview

Allowing Transformation: Who Am I Now?

- Workbook & Daily Practice for Week 7: Allowing Transformation
- Introduction to Week 7: Allowing Transformation (3:31)
- Transforming After Loss (4:34)
- Love Takes of Mourning (4:28)

Meditation #1: Tonglen for Grief: Sending & Receiving Mercy

"So tonglen meditation has three levels of courage. The first is to say, 'Other people feel this.' And that is enough. But if, in that particular moment of time, it feels genuine to say, 'May this become a path for awakening the hearts of all of us,' do so. And the one that takes you to the deepest level of courage is: 'Since I'm feeling this anyway, may I feel it so that others could be free of it.'"

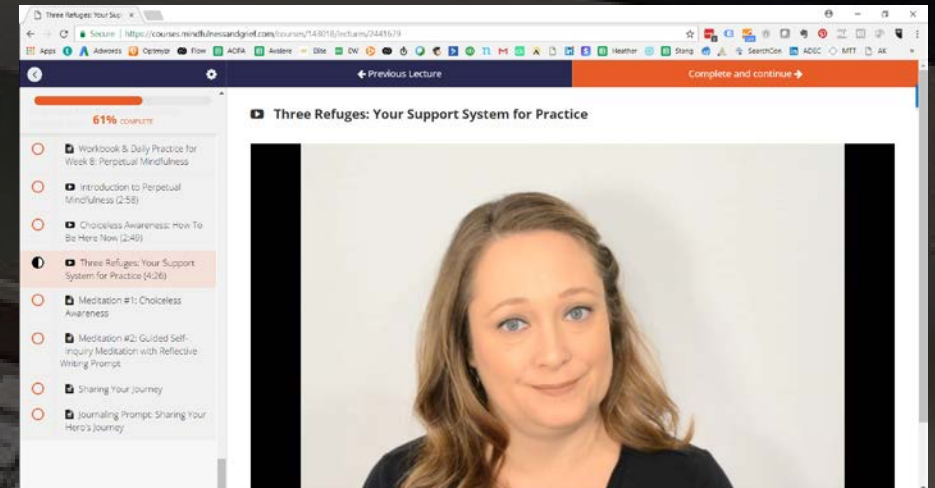
- Pema Chödrön, *Good Medicine*

Tonglen means "sending and receiving." It is sometimes referred to as "exchanging oneself for others."

On the in-breath, you recognize suffering - maybe for yourself - maybe for another. On the out-breath you offer mercy and compassion, creating enough space so the discomfort or pain becomes more bearable. Eventually you widen out the practice to include all beings who are experiencing the same kind of suffering.

[Download](#)

[Discussion](#)



Three Refuges: Your Support System for Practice

61% COMPLETE

- Workbook & Daily Practice for Week 8: Perpetual Mindfulness
- Introduction to Perpetual Mindfulness (2:58)
- Choiceless Awareness: How To Be Here Now (2:49)
- Three Refuges: Your Support System for Practice (4:26)
- Meditation #1: Choiceless Awareness
- Meditation #2: Guided Self-Inquiry Meditation with Reflective Writing Prompt
- Sharing Your Journey
- Journaling Prompt: Sharing Your Hero's Journey

Three Refuges: Your Support System for Practice

Video of the instructor.

Module 1: Focusing & Conscious Relaxation

- Counting The Breath
- My Mantra Meditation
- Breath Focus Meditation
- Three Part Breath
- Relaxation for Anxiety, Grief & Stress
- *Informal Practice: Good Sleep Hygiene*

Module 2: Mindful Awareness

- Body Scan
- Mindfulness of Breath
- Mindfulness of Breath, Body & Sounds
- Phoenix Rising Therapeutic Yoga
- *Mindfulness of Everyday Tasks*
- *Mindful Awareness Break*

Module 3: Compassion For Yourself & Others

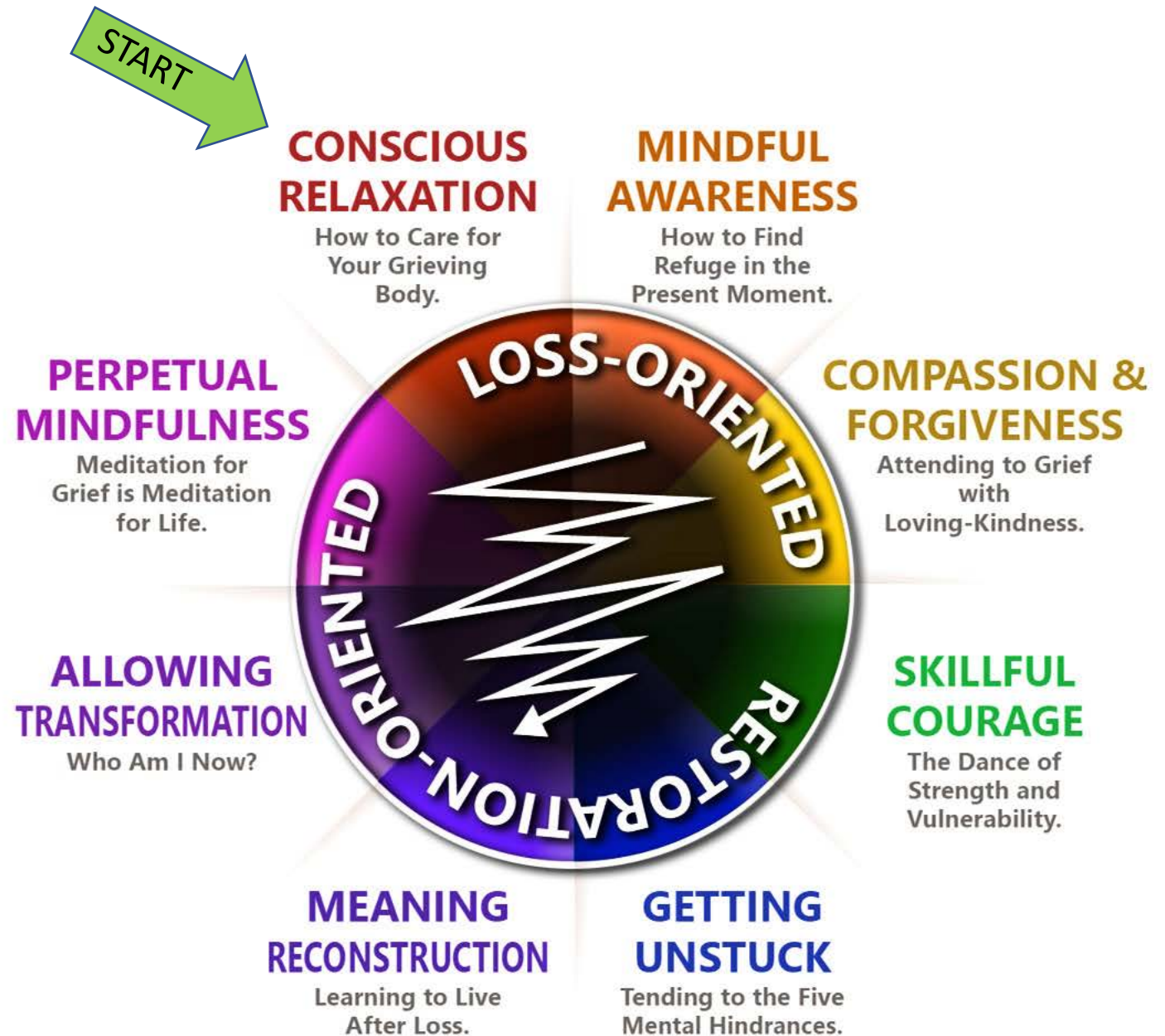
- Metta Meditation
- Affectionate Breathing
- Heart Center Meditation
- *Wake Up With Self-Compassion*
- *Well Wishes on the Spot*

Benefits of Self-Compassion

- Less Anxious & Depressed (Neff, 2009)
- Fewer Negative Emotions (Neff, Rude, Kirkpatrick, 2007)
- Higher Emotional Intelligence (Leary, Tate, et al., 2003)
- Emotional Coping Skills (Rockliff, Gilbert, et al. 2008)
- Reduces Avoidance In PTSD (Thompson, Waltz, 2008)
- Less Resistance to Suffering (Neff, 2003)

The Mindfulness & Grief System

8 Module Mindfulness & Grief System Overlayed with the Dual Process Model of Bereavement (Strube & Schut).



Meditation Can Help Bereaved People & Professionals:

- Start **Sleeping** Again
- Relieve **Physical Tension** & Increase Immune Functioning
- Self-Soothe to Calm **Anxiety**, Racing & Worried Thoughts
- Feel More **Caring** Towards Self & Others
- Establish a **Continuing Bond** With the Person who Died
- Develop life-long **Coping Skills**
- Cultivate **Posttraumatic Growth**



References & Resources

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