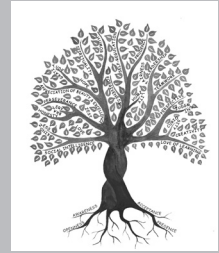


MBSB Handout 7.4

Session 7:

Review and Reflections



Take a moment to review the distance you have come since starting this Mindfulness-Based Strengths Practice program. Consider the core themes and main ideas we've been working with so far:

- Mindfulness and autopilot
- Your signature strengths
- Obstacles are opportunities
- Strong mindfulness AND mindful strengths use
- Valuing your relationships with others and yourself
- The golden mean AND facing difficulties with strength

In the first two sessions we focused on what is best in you and what might be a pathway for getting there and expressing those good qualities. We then focused on how when we bring forth our best qualities, not only will natural obstacles and challenges arise but we more closely notice the details in life. We then focused on widening and deepening our mindfulness and strengths practice, in part by considering how we might make our mindfulness practice stronger and find ways to bring mindfulness to our strengths practice. After the midway point, we considered a relationship we often don't pay attention to – the one with ourselves, and we practiced valuing ourselves (and others) and using a loving-kindness approach. In the most recent session, we brought the focus to difficulties or stressors in our lives and considered taking a strength-based approach to face these.

How are you doing with this process so far? What has stood out most to you? What has been most useful? Most surprising?

Session 7: Authenticity and goodness

- In terms of self-improvement and growth, will you be devoting your energy toward becoming better and stronger as a human being (e.g., trying to pay attention and build all 24 strengths)? The best possible self exercise may give you some good momentum toward this focus on becoming a “better person.”
- Will you be devoting more focus toward becoming a better you – in other words, diving deeper into those strengths that are most core to who you are and finding ways to express them authentically in your life, work, and relationships? The defining moments exercise may give you some good momentum toward this focus on becoming a “better you.”
- It is likely that a strong and dedicated approach toward one of these will lead to the other, but to focus explicitly on one for now might help you articulate your life vision and goals.

Tracking Sheets

The tracking sheets are a way to continue your self-monitoring – keeping track of your meditation behaviors, challenges, insights, and your progress. Self-monitoring is a technique that is one of the most scientifically proven ways to make changes in our lives. If your self-monitoring has

drifted off, start where you are ... in the here and now! What patterns have you noticed in your tracking sheets? What is the status of your mindfulness practice at present?

Journaling

Keeping your ongoing journal is a way to continue the exploration of your experiences, feelings, and ideas in a deep way. There are no limits to where the journaling can take you. Research has found journaling to be an effective exercise for self-growth and for dealing with problems. While it is not necessary to re-read what you have written, it is sometimes interesting to do so. In general, what have you been saying to yourself in your journal? Have you been giving yourself any important advice? What is the most important thing you have learned about yourself through journaling?

Mindfulness Practice

How has your mindfulness practice been going? Bring yourself back to Session 1 and your mindfulness practice at that point – what has emerged or changed since then? Consider your formal practice with the body scan, sitting meditation, character strengths breathing space, standing/walking meditation, loving-kindness meditation, and facing problems with mindfulness and strengths. What practice do you like the most? Which is most beneficial to you? Which would you like to maintain as a regular practice in your life?

How about your mindful living? Have you been bringing more awareness to routines in your life? Have you brought mindfulness to places where mindlessness was causing you trouble? Consider all the many ways mindfulness can be applied in your life – mindful eating, listening, speaking, shopping, working, driving, bathing, dressing, computing, and consuming. Do you bring some level of awareness to these areas?

Character Strengths

There have been a number of strengths-based exercises you have participated in – both in the group and outside of the group. You have practiced a lot of strengths-spotting, both of strengths in yourself and in others. We've emphasized the importance of appreciating and valuing all of our strengths, particularly our signature strengths. You practiced using your signature strengths in new ways. You practiced finding ways to use your strengths to deal with obstacles to your mindfulness practice. Connecting with others outside of the group has been another important component – you conducted a strengths interview of someone about their own top strengths, as well as you asked various people to offer you perspective on your own strengths. Then, there have been other strengths-related activities such as creating a strengths/mindfulness gatha, considering the strengths of movie/television/book characters, the strengths of your role models (people who have most influenced you), and fleshing out your strengths on a brainstorm worksheet. So, where do you go from here with this strengths work? What will you continue?

As you reflect on the points above, just take notice of what strikes you most. You don't have to have an answer to every question. What stands out as an idea, intention, hope, or desired goal?