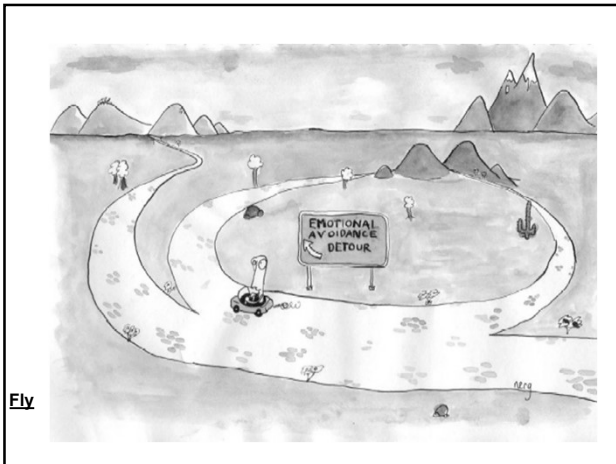


Mindfulness for Anxiety & Depression

Ronald D. Siegel

Center for Mindfulness & Compassion
Harvard Medical School

Common Factors in Psychological Disorders

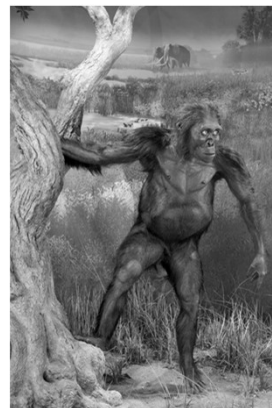


Overwhelmed?



Intensity of experience

Capacity to bear experience



The Thinking Disease

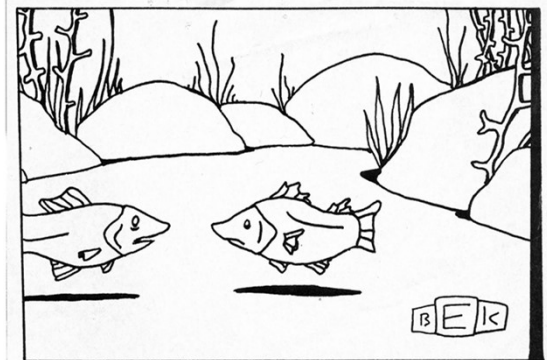
- Review past pleasure and pain
- Try to maximize future pleasure and avoid future pain



Befriending Fear: Treating Anxiety Disorders

Components of Anxiety

- Physiological
 - Psychophysiological arousal
- Cognitive/Affective
 - Future oriented thinking, fear
 - Accurate and inaccurate risk appraisal
- Behavioral
 - Avoidance and rituals



"To tell you the truth, even when I'm in water I don't feel that comfortable."

Toppling Forward

- Most of time we're lost in thoughts about the future
- Next, next, next
 - Looking forward to pleasure
 - Dreading pain



Anticipation

- All anxiety is anticipatory
- Even people in terrible present situations worry about the future



Worry

- Keeps me safe
- Helps me cope
- Prepares me for what may come



Trying to Be Happy by Avoiding Pain

- The “Diver Dan” approach to life
 - Phobic avoidance & constriction
- Medicating discomfort
- Hooked on distraction
 - TV, Internet, Shopping
- Stimulation tolerance



Escape-Avoidance Learning

- Enter situation
- Anxiety arises
- Leave situation
- Anxiety abates
- Reduction in anxiety is negatively reinforcing



Exposure and Response Prevention



Compassionate Bait and Switch

- Patients want us to remove anxious feeling
- Instead, we help them to increase their capacity to bear it
- Changing their *relationship* to the experience

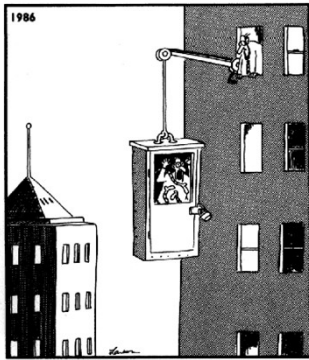
2500 Year Old Treatment

Why do I dwell always expecting fear and dread? What if I subdue that fear and dread keeping the same posture that I am in when it comes upon me? While I walked, the fear and dread came upon me; I neither stood nor sat nor lay down until I had subdued that fear and dread.



Facing Fears

- Necessary component of all anxiety treatment
- Mindfulness provides support



Professor Gallagher and his controversial technique of simultaneously confronting the fear of heights, snakes, and the dark.

Relief from Narcissistic Threats

- Anxiety often involves threats to who we think we are
 - Self image
 - Health
 - Wealth
 - Anticipated loss of pleasure
 - Anticipated pain



"Donald is such a fatalist—he's convinced he's going to grow old and die."

Mindfulness in Action



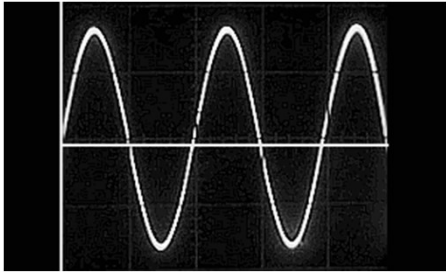
Mindfulness of Unwanted Affect

- Much anxiety is signal anxiety
- Fear of
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Sexual urges
 - Repressed/suppressed memories
 - Unacceptable thoughts



Stepping into Life: Treating Depression

All or Nothing



Turning Away from Experience

- Depression involves turning away from pain
- Mindfulness turns *toward* the experience at hand, challenging the depressive stance

Learned Helplessness

- Mindfulness redirects attention to present
- Practice seeing moment to moment experiences as workable



Prisoners of Habit



Murder in the 180th Degree



Aliveness



You become sensitive to the actual experience of living, to how things actually feel. You do not sit around developing sublime thoughts about living. You live. - Bhante Guanarantana

Attention to Present Affect

- Focus on *what*, not *why*
 - What is happening right now?
 - Can you be with or breath into what is happening right now?
- Similar to Eugene Gendlin's focusing and Gestalt Therapy techniques.

Moving Toward Pain

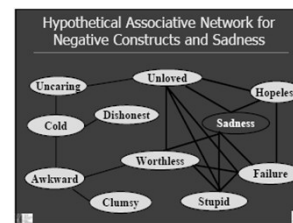
- What do you experience in your body?
- What is your relationship to your pain?
- Do you feel compassionate toward yourself?



Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT)

- One of "Third Wave" of Behavior Therapies
 - Acceptance is a precondition of change
- Carl Rogers
- Formulated by Teasdale, Segal, & Williams
- Hypothesized that mindfulness might prevent relapse of Major Depression episodes
- Based on information processing theory

MBCT Model of Depression



Mild dysphoria triggers depressive cognitive patterns from previous major depressive episode

MBCT Components

- Formal Practice
 - Body Scan
 - Mindful Stretching/Yoga
 - Mindfulness of breath/body/sounds/thoughts
- Informal Practice
 - 3 minute breathing space, regular or coping
 - Mindfulness of everyday activities

MBCT Structure

- Activities based on MBSR model
- Done in groups of up to 12 recovered depressed patients
- 8 weekly 2 hour sessions
- 4 follow up meetings
- Daily homework

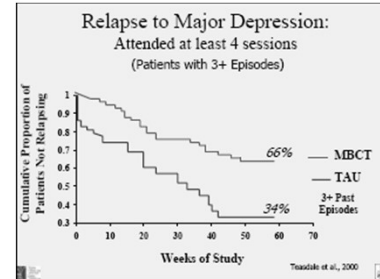
Perspective on Thought

- Refuting thought often falls flat
- Changing relationship to *all* thinking is more powerful

Thoughts are not facts...
I am not my thoughts...



MBCT Depression Treatment Outcomes



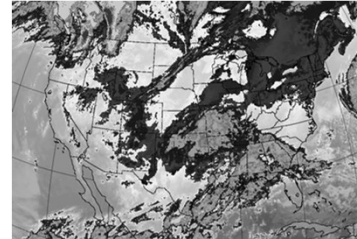
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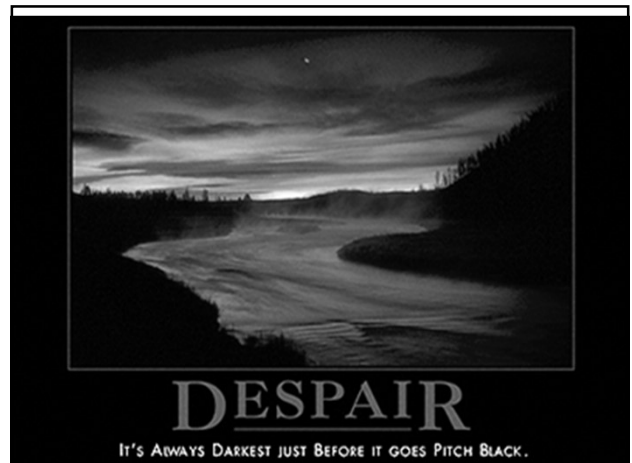
Affective Meteorology



- When in the past did you not feel depressed?
- How were your thought patterns different?

Entering Dark Places

- Following our patient into
 - Despair
 - Loneliness
 - Un-lovability
 - Self hate



Surviving & Connecting

- Patients need to know that they will not kill us off with their anger or despair
- “You cannot draw a depressed person out of his misery with love. . .you can, sometimes, manage to join someone in the place where he resides”

– Andrew Solomon

Hope

- Premature offers of hope are empathic failures
- Empathic connection itself offers hope



Medication

- Is patient caught in downward spiral?
- Does depressed affect lead to behavior which results in more depression?
- Is therapeutic relationship sufficient to reverse this?

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

~ Rumi ~

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www.DrRonSiegel.com

email:

rsiegel@hms.harvard.edu