

**Work in Progress**

Published monthly by Michele Crawford  
Work in Progress is an electronic newsletter intended to assist individuals seeking optimum well-being.

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Feature Article: Two models of transcending adversity: Mindfulness and Assertiveness Part Three  
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1) Note from Michele  
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Dear Reader

Not so long ago, talk of meditation in a therapist's office would have, in many circles, been considered setting in motion a flake meter. Concepts of mindfulness and being grounded were too alternative, too new-age and nebulous, just too non-scientific.

However, in the past fifteen years, the publication of research and brain-related studies has revealed another dimension of mindfulness: science. The fields of neuroscience, education, medicine, and

psychology have all produced concrete verification of the healing powers of mindfulness.

In fact, there is now ample evidence mindfulness training can soothe and repair ALL physical, spiritual, and psychological suffering!!

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2) Feature Article: Two models of transcending adversity:  
Mindfulness and Assertiveness Part Three  
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In childhood, more often than not, you are activated into a state of fight or flight (hyper-arousal) or freeze (hypo-arousal). The cause may be as innocuous as giving your first oral speech in Grade six. Or a more dramatic origin would be abuse. Because of the way your brain responds, you remain locked into the fight or flight or freeze state to a lesser or greater degree.

The immediate repercussions of arousal in your nervous system, brain and body creates disturbing sensations in your muscles, organs, skin, and head. Over time, the chemicals of fight or flight cause damage and can eventually lead to death: heart disease, cancer, suicide, etc.

So you need to find tactics for medicating, controlling, numbing, or distracting from your hyper-arousal and or hypo-arousal conditions. These will work with lesser or greater success but they are not a cure.

Over this brain and body damage we build layers and layers... too much caffeine, alcohol, drugs (prescription and illegal), acquisition, speed, damaged relationships and affairs, crime, self-defeating thoughts and emotions and behaviours, and on and on and on.

We live in an extremely externalized society which makes your fight or flight vigilance even more complicated. It becomes easier to be constantly pulled outside yourself by other people, the media and advertisements, demands of daily life, etc. You are not taught to go inward and steady your mind, to calm your body.

Science now shows us how to truly heal and release your stored trauma fight or flight responses. The list includes an energy psychology like EMDR (which in fact incorporates mindfulness) and most recently, the practice of mindfulness. Neuro-genesis (Newsletter May 2006 Volume I Issue III) is the re-growth of your brain, producing

new brain cells and repairing neuro pathways. It is a product of these approaches.

Generally, you are not trained to direct your attention in gentle, non-judgmental ways, with patience and acceptance, onto inner conflict, old childhood wounds, distressing body affect, problematic reactions and behaviour. It seems counter-intuitive.

Mindfulness engages your mind's natural tendency to fly all over the place. It is not a desire to suppress inner restlessness, but a non-judgmental curiosity about it. What follows then is letting go and relaxation.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, a well known teacher of meditation, describes mindfulness as "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally, to the unfolding of the moment-to-moment experience."

Meditation and mindfulness can help open and develop neuro-circuits that reconnect trauma-related damage between body and mind; between self and others; between damage and resiliency. For example, through the practice of mindfulness, you cultivate a more loving relationship with yourself which expands your attachments with others.

Simply in stillness, mindfulness means you breath more deeply, see more fully, hear more keenly. You notice more, and in the process, return to what is sacred and your mind is finally restored to its natural health. You will find that allusive quality called inner peace.

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3) About Michele  
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Michele Crawford is a therapist who assists individuals who are struggling with trauma, anxiety or depression. Her passion for her work remains embedded in being able to connect with you in your suffering, helping you find real solutions no matter how complex the issue may be.

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4) Counselling Services  
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Are you prepared to live with more happiness, optimism, confidence, self-worth and hope? If your answer is "yes," then your next step is to contact me for a free 20-minute phone consultation. We can then discuss how I might best help you resolve your problems of Trauma, Depression and Anxiety.

The benefits of counselling with Michele include: significantly reduced stress levels, an optimistic outlook in life, increased confidence and hope.

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