

Reflections on Offering Guided Mindful Awareness Practices: A Guide for Skill-Building Course Instructors

Introduction

There is no magic in meditation scripts.

Quite the contrary. If there is magic, it is with you.

Seriously.

A number of years ago, a meditation script was read at a retreat. Afterwards, one of the teachers turned to the person who read the script and asked:

“Did you *read* the meditation script?”

“Yes,” the person replied.

“I thought so,” the teacher said.

Ouch.

What did the teacher mean?

The teacher meant that the script was read like someone reading the list of ingredients on the label of a can of creamed corn. Reading in this manner conveys qualities of stiffness, and dullness. These qualities that do not enhance the guided practice of mindful awareness.

How do you Improve Your Odds of Success?

Imagine driving a car after only having a few lessons.

If you do, there is a good chance it won't go so well. The same is true for guiding meditation.

So, prior to offering guided meditation, practice. Take the car out for a drive. In other words, read the script. Read it more than once. Make it yours. Feel it in your body. Feel it in your heart.

Also, it is important to have a personal and daily mindful awareness practice. Your class will know and feel the difference. They may very well have an easier time connecting with mindful

awareness practice from someone who has spent time practicing. And, if questions arise regarding practice, you are in a better position to answer them due to your daily practice.

Additional Suggestions

Don't forget to pause. Speed reading usually doesn't make a favorable mindful awareness practice! In fact.....pause.....often. For example, if you are reading a body scan script, pause between each part of the body. Take a breath or count to 6 or 7 before you move on. If you are sharing a breathing exercise, pause to take a breath yourself! Give participants time to savor the food they are eating during a mindful eating experience. You get the picture.

The.....pause.....opens up the possibility of healing, well-being and resilience. This is the magic. Take the advice of those signs on the roadside: "Slow down." "Yield."

Final thoughts

Have you ever given a gift to someone and just knew it was the right one? Can you remember how happy you were to give such a gift? And, can you recall the the face of the receiver of the gift? Offering guided meditation can be very similar. That is, when you offer guided practice, offer it as if it were just the right gift for each person. Can you offer the guided practice from your heart? Can you bring humor? Compassion? Kindness? Can you bring your life, your own mindful awareness practice and life experience to each guided practice?

More Final thoughts

If possible, consider meeting weekly or monthly with other mindfulness awareness practitioners and teachers. Each of you can share what has worked, or what hasn't worked. Practicing with other facilitators or teachers can support your skills and challenge you to improve. Practicing with others is a great learning tool and one we highly recommend.

Okay, This is it. Promise!

Meditation is often portrayed in a serious and somber manner, and this is okay—well, maybe it is. We invite you to make room for joy as you guide practices. We don't have to take ourselves too seriously. Just be yourself. Lead from your own experience as a mindful awareness practitioner. Remember, we don't have to do this perfectly. In fact, the less perfect, the better—if you get the drift!

Happy guiding!!! Keep it real!