



Mental Wealth

Newsletter

Issue - April, 2015

YOUR LIFE CAN BE DIFFERENT..

Now I know, where do I go?

By Karina Stell

One of the most important pieces of learning from both group work and individual work, is once we 'get it', what then?

This is one of the most crucial points of the awakening and change in our lives. When the penny drops and we recognise the unhelpful choices we have made, we unmask our hiding places, and we understand why we have created them. This is the place from which our sores have started to be tended to and held.

What now?

This is our most gifted place, because where we go now is down to our choices. How do we choose to make life different? As we notice change in the room in which we sit with our fellow group members,

how do we then take this out into the world and broaden the change to envelop our whole life? That this takes courage, there is no doubt. It can also be an extremely exciting moment when we understand that we can create a new life based on what now really matters to us. Proactive and no longer reactive to the hurts of the past where we try to build unsteady structure after unsteady structure to try and house the pain, we now begin to form a solid structure within which we live as our authentic selves.

Many of our clients comment that they feel understood in our environment but 'its different out there' and we strongly get that in the world we are not always met with the compassionate empathy we hope for. But this again is our choice. Are we going to be a mirror of what we are

offered, or are we going to choose what we are and recognise when it isn't met with what we hope for, that we continue to choose to be authentic and ourselves.

There can be no doubt that in time, changes will occur. They may bring us closer to others or help us recognise that we need to draw back from yet others but these decisions are now based on who we want to be in the world and not as a means of avoiding pain. Our greatest joy is watching our clients have that light bulb moment when it all starts to fit together - when they come to embrace themselves for who they are and know their worth and place in the world. We wish you all continued growth and discovery.

Please look out for our new **Life Coaching Groups** that address this very topic – Brochures with details will be available in the therapy room soon.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MINDFULNESS! By Michael Cohn

"Mindfulness changes the brain by allowing people to access this present-moment pathway," says Zindel Segal, PhD, a professor at the University of Toronto. "This is vitally important for working with sad mood states."

Current research has amply verified that one of the main implications of a mindfulness approach is that it allows people to learn how to shift their awareness in strikingly important ways. And, more importantly, to effect changes to neural response pathways, allowing for the gradual expunging of un-useful fight-flight responses and replacing such hijacked response pathways, with more sanguine, more measured, softer pathways that more accurately reflect actual reality. In short, it develops a response of equanimity in place of a reaction of alarm.

People generally are trapped in suffering-induced 'awfulness' and 'terribleness' and 'hopelessness' of their sad mood states. By this I mean that when people experience their sad mood states, they immediately want to try to understand their 'problem' and solve it and they generally do this by fleeing into a thought-based judgement about what it is they are experiencing. A typical response might be "Oh my God, I'm feeling terrible and sad and hopeless and lonely and very depressed and I'll never get better". What started merely as a sad mood state is immediately transmogrified into a depression and the person then 'knows' they are 'depressed'. And 'depression' is, of course, a dreadful affliction which requires intervention, treatment, perhaps medication - "Oh my God, this is awful and terrible ... "

There is another way.

Through the practice of Mindfulness, people can learn to become aware of the present moment, as it is, and not as the mind says it is.

What do I mean by this?

Taking the above scenario of someone waking up to a sad mood state, an early mindfulness-based response might be as follows:

"Oh my God, I'm feeling terrible and sad and hopeless and lonely and very depressed and I'll never get better".

Mindfully, the person may be able to note that they have judgemental thoughts about what it is they are feeling, and, having learned to recognise that thoughts are different from feelings, their newly-learned response might be: "Hang on. The 'I'm feeling terrible and sad and hopeless and lonely and very depressed and I'll never get better' is merely a thought, full of judgements". They then have the opportunity to 'thank their minds for the thought' and gently allow the thought to drop away as they mindfully tune in to a curious awareness of the

actual feelings themselves and may become aware of an overriding feeling of sadness itself.

Mindfully just sitting with the actual feeling of sadness, the person may become aware of the fact that they had had a dream of their deceased grandmother whom they very much loved. They may then become conscious that this feeling of sadness is an entirely appropriate response to a dream about a beloved deceased grandmother, and that the sadness is a normal, 'healthy' sadness as opposed to some terrible depression.

With continued mindfulness practice the response mechanism may shorten and the noting of the thoughts and the letting go of them may drop away completely as the person learns more and more to tap straight into their feelings directly, without the intrusion at all of the unhelpful, un-useful and unworkable thoughts.

The gradual replacement of the thought-based, judgment-based, problem-solving response by the mindfully curious awareness response is what has been termed, neuroplasticity.

And, to take the above scenario somewhat further, with practiced mindfulness, someone who wakes to a sad mood state not triggered by a sad grandmother dream - where the person experiences deep sadness and melancholy without a 'reason', they are able to experience the feelings directly, with curiosity, interest, appreciation perhaps. This ability to just be in the moment of the awareness, a moment termed a 'sacred space' by Tara Brach, allows the mindful observer the ability to not react in panic or fear, and in place of such panic or terror or dread reaction, to choose a response with greater equanimity, with softness, with compassion, with a measure of sanguinity.

This is what is meant by accessing the present-moment pathway.

NEWS

New Couples Therapy. Michael and Karina will now be running special couple's therapy sessions together. We believe this will bring a deeper and more profound experience to our clients and we hope you will take a flyer from the therapy room when next in, to read more about it.