

The Mindful Self:

Teaching & Reaching Resilience During Challenging Times!

A special collaboration between
Sucheta Kamath, MA & Christopher Willard, Psy.D.

June 24, 2020



“The practice of maintaining a nonjudgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis.”

- Merriam-Webster Dictionary



- Maintaining a nonjudgmental state when goal is not being met
- With complete awareness of one's thoughts and emotions
- And keeping the larger context in mind and staying prosocial



WEBINAR COLLABORATION



Dr. Christopher Willard (PsyD),
Author of "Growing up With Mindfulness."

Chris@DrChristopherWillard.com
www.DrChristopherWillard.com



Sucheta Kamath, CEO & Founder of ExQ

Sucheta@ExQInfiniteKnowHow.com
www.ExQInfiniteKnowHow.com



Question 1 for Chris:

You talk a lot about the biopsychosocial model of thriving. What do you really mean by that, and how does that apply during the pandemic or in terms of mindfulness?

We can mindfully
care for our
bodies through
mindful eating,
exercise,
breathing, and
sleep hygiene.





Question 1 for Sucheta:

What role does Emotional Balance and Executive Function play in making sense of the experience of an ongoing pandemic?

3 Core Elements of Executive Function



1 Inhibition

2 Working Memory

3 Mental Flexibility



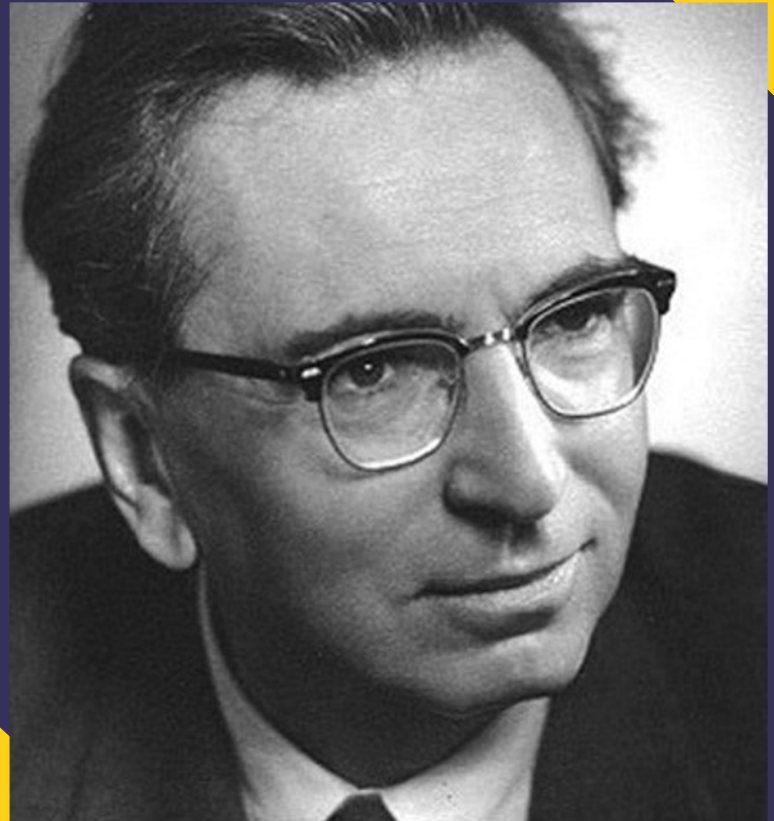
1 Inhibition

2 Working Memory

3 Mental Flexibility

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

-Viktor Frankl





1 Inhibition

2 Working Memory

3 Mental Flexibility

When dealing with uncertainty and unknowns, one must cultivate a mindset that our solutions for life's problems are, at best, provisional.





1 Inhibition

2 Working Memory

3 Mental Flexibility

“If one way of solving a problem isn’t working, how else might we succeed?”

- Adele Diamond



“Respond to the
mysterious
question: ‘What
is seeking me?’”

- James Hollis, Ph.D.

(Author of Living an Examined
Life and Living Between Worlds)



- Determine your inner mental and emotional state on an ongoing basis
- Successfully maintain a nonjudgmental state of heightened/complete awareness
- Instead of reacting, respond deliberately with a carefully thought out response





Question 2 for Chris:

When we feel so overwhelmed, often powerless, helpless or out of control, what are some things we can do?

When we feel
helpless, we can
find ways to help.
When we feel out
of control, we can
control what we
can.





Question 2 for Sucheta:

Tell us why you think in order to address methods to expand emotional bandwidth of the mindful-self, we must first talk about the phenomenon of boredom and exhaustion?

Not Wired For Efficiency



"People are naturally curious, but curiosity is fragile."

- Daniel Willingham, Ph.D.
(Cognitive psychologist)



**"The cure for
boredom is
curiosity. There
is no cure for
curiosity."**

-- Dorothy Parker



Too easy

Too hard

No control

Meaningless

“My bedroom bookshelves. Currently separated by fiction and non-fiction but thinking of rearranging out of boredom.”

- Reddit Post 1



"Mini board I just set up purely out of boredom."

- Reddit Post 2



“Decided to decorate my wall out of boredom (apologies to anyone who has done this before me)”

- Reddit Post 3

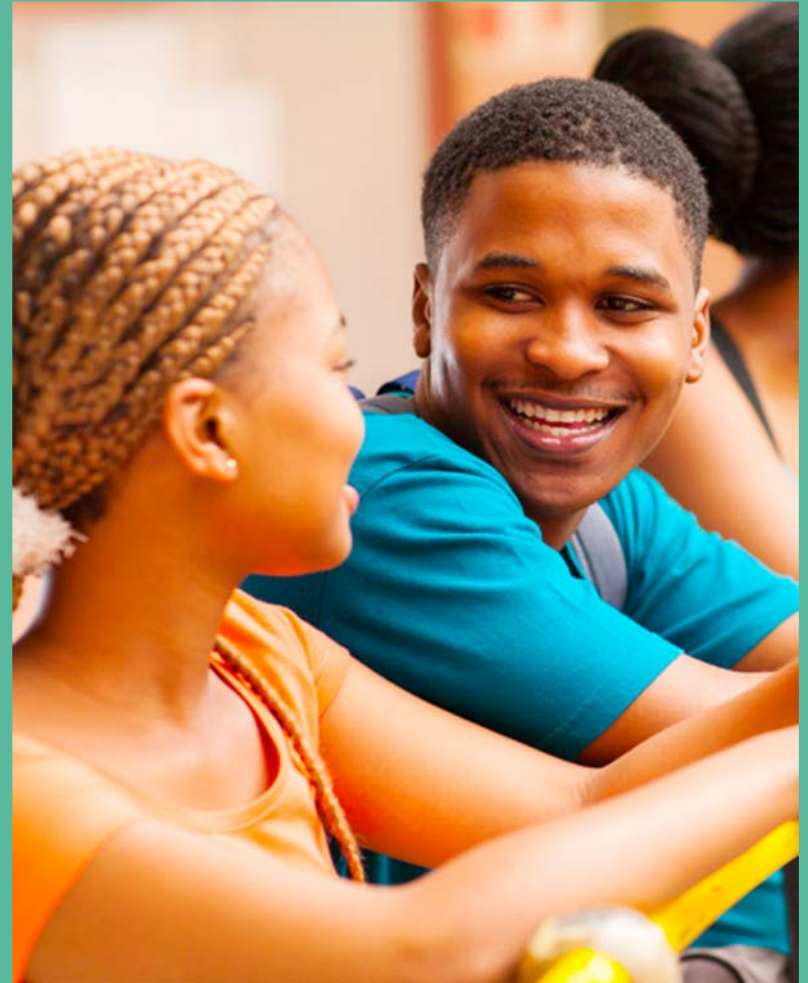


Boredom – A Signal To Be Mindful

Boredom rings the alarm to act. If ignored, it leads to disastrous outcomes (excessive eating, binge watching, general lethargy, and in worse cases, even depression)



- Is content too boring (easy)?
- Is teaching too monotonous?
- Are expectations and delivery too “non-transparent”?
- Are there no hooks to rope the learner’s intrinsic motivation?
- Is the WHY explained?





Question 3 for Chris:

What are the best things
we can offer our kids in
this challenging time?

Ultimately our presence, and our own self-regulation, is modeling for kids not just what to “do” in this time, but a better way to “be” through this time.





Question 3 for Sucheta:

How do you think we can develop into a mindful-self?
What personal practices do you bring into your work?

5 Part Cultivation of the Mindful-Self

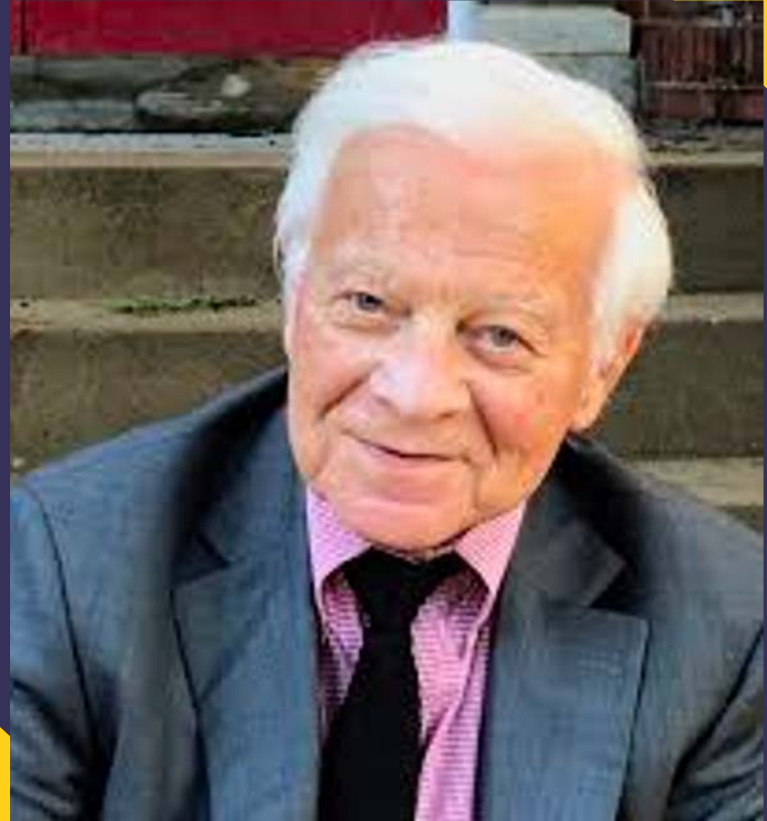
1. Slow down, be patient
2. Listen more and interrupt less
3. Understand the others' story
4. Develop a "witness" stance
5. Look for the hidden curriculum



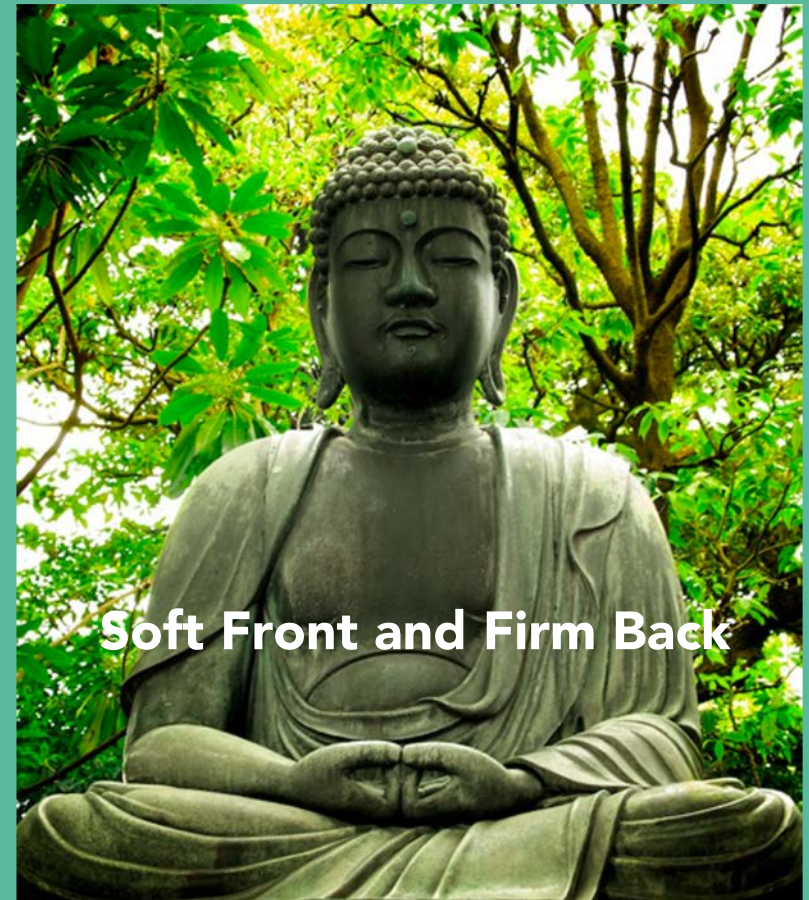
Take three deep breaths when you find yourself getting preoccupied with something or find yourself becoming irritable.



Explore and inculcate
the concept of
“Mature Spirituality”
proposed by James
Hollis, Ph.D.



Instead of protecting ourselves from feeling the pain, we can widen our embrace and expand the capacity to “be with” (and recognize we are in this together”)



The traditional Māori greeting *Hongi*



“Do not try to save
the whole world
or do anything grandiose.
Instead, create
a clearing
in the dense forest
of your life
and wait there
patiently,
until the song
that is your life
falls into your own cupped hands
and you recognize and greet it.
Only then will you know
how to give yourself
to this world
so worth of rescue.” ~ Martha Postlewaite



"Do you make regular visits to yourself?"

- Start now."

- Poet Rumi



Working With The Inner Critic



1. When have you told yourself that you're "not enough"?

2. How might you view these situations in a more empowering light?

3. How might you bring more compassion to yourself when self-doubt and self-criticism arise?

- By Tara Brach

“When a messenger of boredom arrives, it is wise to take a deep breath, kick out any external forces that might control your attention, accept your limits, and pursue actions that fulfill your agency.”

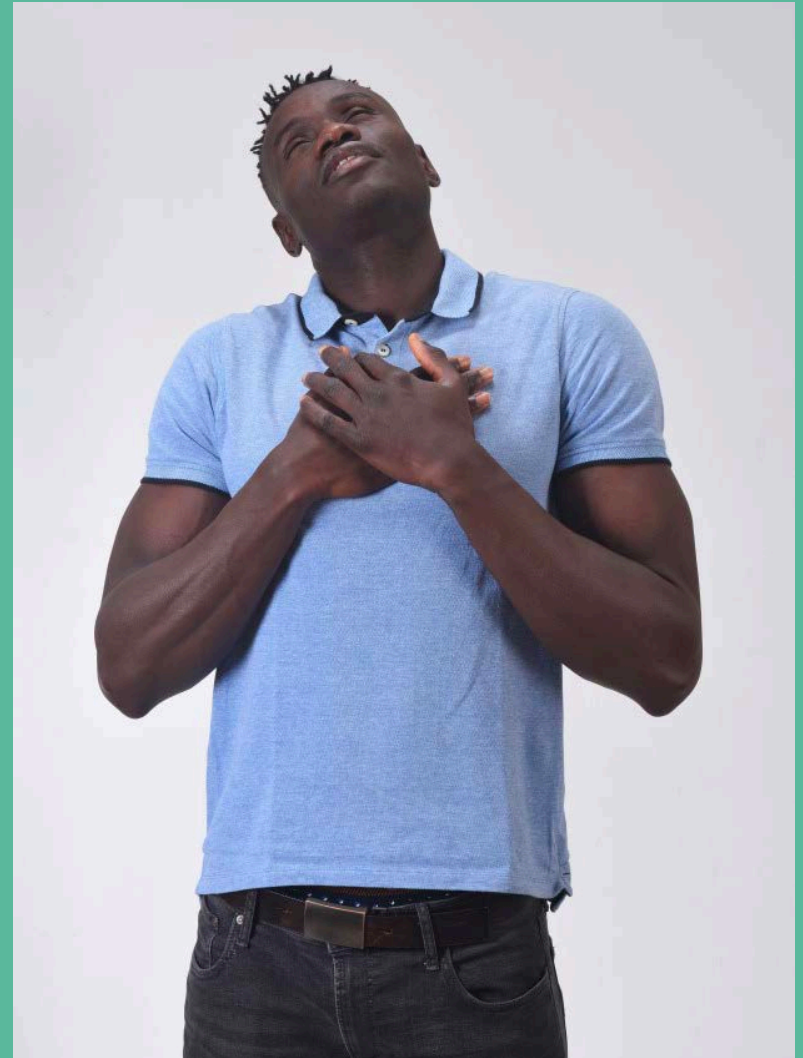
- James Danckert & John D. Eastwood authors of Out of My Skull



An Invitation to ACT

Empathize with your experience... and care about yourself as the experiencer of something distressing.

- Linda Graham (Blog: Self compassion break)



Conclusion: Making of the Mindful Self



“Try not to judge your progress. What you can trust is that your mind can change. Your heart can open. What you practice gets stronger.”

- Tara Brach

Conclusion: Making of the Mindful Self



"When we have a sense of meaning and purpose in life, options for engagement with the world are evident and compelling."

- James Danckert & John D. Eastwood
(authors of Out of My Skull)

IN SUMMARY...



*Infinite know how
for school*



Being mindful is
harder than it looks




Engage in a non-judgmental
“presensing”



Your strength is in
connecting with others



Infinite know how
for school

A black and white photograph of a group of children running outdoors. The child in the foreground is a young girl with dark hair, wearing a light-colored sleeveless top and shorts, running towards the camera with a joyful expression. Other children are visible in the background, also running, though they are out of focus. The background shows trees and foliage, suggesting a park or schoolyard setting.

“Let the beauty of what
you love be what you do!”
- Poet Rumi

Thank You!



Dr. Christopher Willard (PsyD),
Author of "Growing up With Mindfulness."

Chris@DrChristopherWillard.com
www.DrChristopherWillard.com



Sucheta Kamath, CEO & Founder of ExQ

Sucheta@ExQInfiniteKnowHow.com
www.ExQInfiniteKnowHow.com



Infinite know how
for school