



## The Restless Mind

- Evolved as a function of language
  - Instills order and predictability
  - Allows us to create cause and effect relationships
  - Allows us to compare and categorize things
  - Allows us regulate behavior via symbolic means
  - Allows us to evaluate impacts and protect us from damage
  - Did not evolve for purposes of self-reflection!

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## Where we live

Restless Mind	Quiet Mind
	

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## The Impact of Restless Mind

- It gobbles up processing space like a memory intensive software program
- It displays “output” at a constant rate
- It is the first message on the screen
- It is incredibly useful much of the time
- IT DOESN'T DO THE PRESENT MOMENT!
  - It regards the present moment as dangerous to survival

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## Quiet Mind and The Present Moment

- Quiet mind contains all non-verbal forms of knowing (inspiration, intuition, enlightenment, mysticism)
- Direct contact with self-experience and experiential integration
- A sense of well being and interconnectedness
- Perspective taking
- Compassion for self and others
- Direct contact with behavioral contingencies
- The doorway to radical acceptance and change

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## Five Steps to Transcending Stress Using Mindfulness and Neuroscience

- |                  |                     |
|------------------|---------------------|
| 1. OBSERVE       | • SKILL DEVELOPMENT |
| 2. DESCRIBE      | • INTEGRATE         |
| 3. DETACH        | • SELF CARE ROUTINE |
| 4. LOVE YOURSELF | • FAMILY LIFE       |
| 5. ACT MINDFULLY | • WORK LIFE         |

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## Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire

**Complete**

**Discuss with partner**

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## Five Phases of Present Moment Processing

### NOTICE

- Enlist top down attention rather than bottom up attention
- Activates brain circuitry related to somatosensory self-awareness and perceptual organization (this allows you to be aware of what is going on in your body and immediately around you)
- Three basic actions
  - Orient
  - Focus
  - Shift

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## Five Phases of Present Moment Processing

### NAME

- Engage non-verbal components of present moment using semantic processing regions of the brain
- Reduces impact of pre-conscious approach-avoidance urges based upon feeling tone of stimulus
- Defuse negative cognitive appraisals by using descriptive language

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## Five Phases of Present Moment Processing

### SOFTEN

- Soft awareness activates unique brain circuitry seen in various types of meditation practices
- Conscious expansion of awareness from self to all others like self
- Self-compassionate stance overrides dominance of semantic processing and cognitive appraisal.

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## Five Phases of Present Moment Processing

### LET GO

- Detachment is a specific form of attention routed in unique brain circuitry (separate from cognitive restructuring!)
- Deactivates “mind wandering”, ruminating, worrying circuitry and establishes a task positive network
- Involves conscious act of denying personal relevance of whatever is in awareness (It’s here but it doesn’t apply to me)

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## Five Phases of Present Moment Processing

### CARRY FORWARD

- Help client form generalized awareness that “things like this” pose no threat to self compared to the personal relevance of “things that matter”
- Activates components of executive control network and brain default network responsible for “visioning” (constructing mental representations of various future events, rehearsing responses)

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## The Moment to Moment Dialectic of the Moment

- There is an ongoing war for “bandwidth” between restless mind and Quiet mind with you as the watcher and listener
- On a daily basis, your attention shifts between these two modes of mind repeatedly and habitually
- One mode of mind “draws” the other mode, therefore, it is not possible to simply “stay” present
- It is best to think of the present moment as the dynamic, flexible allocation of attention between restless mind and Quiet mind based upon the goals and best interests of the human at that exact moment

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## Clinical Impact of Present Moment Failures

- Symbolic activity becomes the dominant experience of being (living in your head)
- Symbolically constructed rules govern behavior to an excessive extent (experiential avoidance and rule governed behavior)
- Behavior becomes disconnected from it’s real world consequences (inflexibility)
- Behavior becomes excessively regulated by culturally instilled morals, conventions (loss of values connection)
- Hence, being aware (centered) is regarded as the central “pillar” of ACT

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## The Escape Moves

<i>Busy bee</i>	
<i>Butterfly</i>	<i>Busybody</i>
<i>Ostrich</i>	<i>Worrier</i>
<i>Twiddler</i>	<i>Stoic</i>
<i>Rationalizer</i>	<i>Numster</i>

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## Intervention Strategies

Notice signs of “escape”

- **Non-verbal:** Looking down/away, sighing, sudden change of facial expression, lip curling or biting, watery eyes, nervous movements
- **Verbal:** Changing the subject, changes in rate of speech, forgetting questions, not answering questions, direct statements about avoidance (“I don’t let myself think about it”; “I just want this to go away”)

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## Intervention Strategies

Gently and compassionately step into the escape route

- **Non-verbal:** Lean forward in your chair and make commanding eye contact, stay relaxed and look curious and interested
- **Verbal:** Mention the signs you've noticed and ask the client to describe what is going on right now, in this moment ("I just noticed that you looked away, your face seemed to be stressed, that you kind of changed the topic"; When I asked about X, there are tears in your eyes.")

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## Intervention Strategies

Experientially deconstruct what has happened

- **Non-verbal:** Maintain commanding eye contact, forward leaning orientation, sometimes you can move your chair and sit beside the client
- **Non-verbal:** Use questions to elicits various aspects of present moment experience ("What was going on for you?"; "How did it feel?"; "What kind of thoughts were you having? Any memories? What was going on in your body?")

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## Intervention Strategies

- Ask the client to "hold still" and stay present with what is present without a lot of verbal processing
- **Non-verbal:** Often, staying silent and maintaining soft eye contact will slow things down and allow the client to stay with you
- **Verbal:** Don't use a lot of words as this activates restless mind. Mostly, utter words of encouragement ("That's OK"; "Just notice what's there; I'm here for you") or alter the pace or function of what the client is doing ("Say this very slowly"; "Let's try having you stand up and create a physical posture that represents what is happening")

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## Using Present Moment Processes in Session

- Try to encourage contingency shaped learning
  - **Non-verbal:** Soften eye contact a bit; maybe lean back in your chair, assume a relaxed posture
  - **Verbal:** Again, ask questions that require client to generate perspective (How do you feel about what just happened? Did you see anything new or different? Did staying present make this feel worse? Better?)

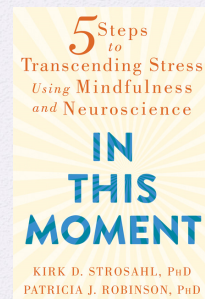
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## Intervention Strategies

- Try to get the client to carry some piece of learning forward for further practice
  - **Non-verbal:** Again, assume a relaxed but focused conversational posture, maintaining soft eye contact
  - **Verbal:** Questions about what the client might be willing to try to extend what has been learned (Would you be willing to practice just holding still and inviting this stuff in for 5 minutes at some pre-set time each day? Willing to do another present moment generating activity like this one?)

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## Summer – Fall 2014



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## It's Role Play Time!

### Instructions:

- Strengths and weakness: Observe, Describe, Detach, Love Yourself, ACT Mindfully
- Escape “macros”?
- What *verbal* signs of escape from the present moment?
- What *non-verbal* clinical signs of escape from the present moment?
- Which strategies did the therapist use? How did they work?
- Discuss in small groups of 4-6

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## 2015

a book for  
professionals

*Inside This Moment:  
Using the Present  
Moment to Create  
Radical Change*

New Harbinger  
Publications

### highlights

- Complements self help book
- Neuroscience foundations
- Five phase model described in detail
- Case examples galore!
- Applications to common clinical problems

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## In search of the present. . .



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