

Integrating Mindfulness Meditation with Yoga

Adapted from Dr. Ronald Alexander's new book, *Wise Mind, Open Mind: Finding Purpose and Meaning in Times of Crisis, Loss, and Change* (New Harbinger Publications, 2009).

(519 Words plus Bio)

The practice of yoga involves a natural understanding of the daily applications of mindfulness meditation. They are wonderful complementary practices that go hand-in-hand to assist our minds and bodies to become highly focused and merge into the peak state of oneness. By practicing both mindfulness meditation and yoga asanas we prepare ourselves to become conduits for receiving the many natural gifts of imagery, thought, sensation, sounds and colors that are the fabrics of our inner collective unconscious minds eagerly waiting to birth forth into many varied forms of creative expressions.

Yoga in Sanskrit means union or to yoke. It is the balance between the (Ra) sun energy and the (Ma) moon energy or in Chinese medicine the yin and yang. The application of mindfulness meditation with yoga allows one to bring these energies into a deeper state of balance. It also enables one to access what I call a state of "Open Mind," that gives us direct access into the core creativity of our inner subconscious. This state of Open Mind is the space that all innovative artists use to bring forth their new creative works. Mindfulness meditation also enables us to experience a deeper level of wisdom or "Wise Mind." Here our egoic self or small mind drops away and we open into a vast and infinite expansive state of luminosity. In this expansive state the small mind no longer ceases to exist and we evolve our practice into the Wise Mind and Big Heart.

How Mindfulness Meditation Can Improve Your Yoga Practice:

- A mindfulness meditation sitting before asana practice will assist you to become more focused in your physical movements as well as your breathing.
- You will learn to move in and out of each posture by applying a focus of breath, attention to movement and focus with your eyes.
- When we practice mindfulness meditation we learn to become more attentive and concentrated both during our yoga practice as well as when we are going about our day. With each and every action and movement there follows an increased quality of awareness.

- After a yoga practice mindfulness sitting will not only assist you to deepen your concentration skills but also enable you to penetrate deeper levels of concentrated absorption. The first level of enhanced absorption is called a Jhanna state. The first Jhanna is wisdom or samadhi a state of heightened peace, bliss or joy.

Mindfulness and yoga practice are excellent upaya's (meaning "methods" in Sanskrit) to help us to overcome in-balances in our moods whether they be anxiety, depression or painful afflictive mind states that work their way into the body to create symptoms of pain, stress and dis-ease. Together they enable us to navigate our way through the muddy and murky waters of the egoic mind's daily moods, fears and anxieties and deliver us to the other shore of balance, joy and bliss.

To learn how you can integrate Mindfulness Meditation into your yoga practice, read Dr. Ronald Alexander's new book, *Wise Mind, Open Mind: Finding Purpose and Meaning in Times of Crisis, Loss, and Change* (New Harbinger Publications, 2009).

www.openmindtraining.com

Ronald Alexander, Ph.D. is the author of the just released book, *Wise Mind, Open Mind: Finding Purpose and Meaning in Times of Crisis, Loss, and Change*. He is the director of the OpenMind Training® Institute, practices mindfulness-based mind-body psychotherapy and leadership coaching in Santa Monica, CA, for individuals and corporate clients. He has taught personal and clinical training groups for professionals in Integral Psychotherapy, Ericksonian mind-body healing therapies, mindfulness meditation, and Buddhist psychology nationally and internationally since 1970. (www.openmindtraining.com)