

There Is Another Way¹

By: Fong Tze King Blanche, Consultant, Cheng & Wong

I was scared when I was approached by the Law Society to contribute an article on mindfulness in Hong Kong Lawyer. I have been reading the magazine for years but have never thought of writing anything there - "I am not good at that" or more accurately "I am not good enough" is the recurring voice in my head since my childhood. Yet, after years of mindfulness practice, I had managed to catch myself reacting in the same old way so I took a few breaths, calmed myself down and considered if I could respond differently. I did - so you are now reading this.

Mindfulness seems to be a fancy word now with a pretty high hit-rate on internet. Nonetheless, not many people really try it or understand what it is about.

To many, mindfulness is closely associated with meditation (eg sitting still with eyes closed). Other forms of mindfulness practice one may have heard of include mindful walking, mindful eating, attention to breathing, attention to body movement, etc. It may also be associated with the sound of a bell because mindfulness teachers like to ring the bell as they start or end the practice. Plum Village is especially famous for ringing the bell every 15 minutes and one has to stop till the bell sound is over no matter what they are doing at that moment.

Right now, you may already have formed some mental images of the above "practice" and secretly concluded that it is rather boring, and even silly. What is the use of this practice? It sounds meaningless and a waste of time. Although google search says it is good for health or stress reduction, does it really

work? Or more importantly, does it work for me?

I would say that it works for everyone, irrespective of your age, gender, medical history, physical condition, etc. Why? Because all human beings are addicted to thinking, especially compulsive negative thinking. Addiction here means we can't control the thinking happening to us - most of the time it is involuntary, incessant and goes on without us noticing it.

Here are some examples of the practice.

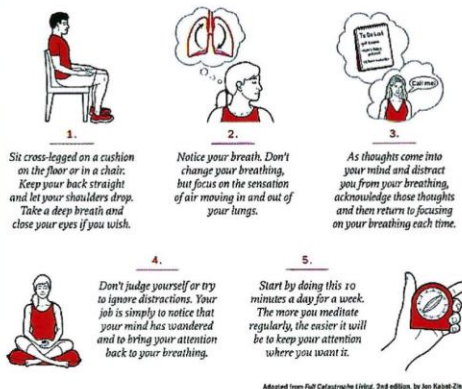
1. I was sitting in the toilet after a day of work and suddenly found that I was thinking of the DMC waiver application I planned to submit to the Law Society the next day. The letter and application form had been signed and put on my assistant's desk with the cheque for despatch the next morning (so basically all the work had been done and no further work was required from me) but the thought just came and I found my mind replaying the DMC work I did in the afternoon! I breathed and brought myself back to what I was doing in the toilet and finished the "business" there.

2. The next morning I was running late after morning shower. When blowing my hair dry, I blamed myself for being slow and thought of the negative impression/ remarks my lateness may bring. I was aware that I was doing my best to speed up and these thoughts did not help to make me faster but only made me feel bad. I directed my attention to feel the heat of the air of the hair dryer and to sense my fingers combing through my hair. The thoughts then subsided.

3. Walking from MTR station to office, I focused my attention on my body movement (eg the steps I took while I walked along and my body weight on the feet when I stood still in front of traffic light). This way, I practiced to just walk without making inner narratives about everything I saw or slipping into thoughts which were totally unrelated to what I was doing

FIVE STEPS TO MINDFULNESS MEDITATION

Basic meditation, the practice of doing nothing and being tuned in to your own mind at the same time, can be frustrating at first. But research shows it reduces stress and increases focus.



Most people attribute their high stress level to external factors such as work, money, health and relationship. Looking closely at ourselves however, we will discover that we spend most of our time thinking, in particular repetitive, meaningless thinking which keeps our internal "engine" running day and night without moments of rest and inner peace. Mindfulness points to another way of living - a more balanced way that alternates thinking (doing/ Yang) and non-thinking (being/ Yin).

¹ The title of this article was taken from Eckhart Tolle's teaching video of the same title released recently in the challenging time of pandemic.

(eg walking) at the moment.

4. Another day I was annoyed by something my mom posted at the whatsapp group which I thought was inappropriate and seriously biased. Immediately I made negative comments in my mind and wanted to reply to her, spelling out my view and feeling. I took a "golden pause"² immediately by feeling the unpleasant body sensation and tightness in my chest, the increased heart rate and the heat in my chest, ears and head. There was an impulse in me to immediately "do" something to correct her. Instead of falling into my usual mind cycle of attacking her mentally and feeling guilty for being disrespectful to her, I managed to turn my attention in and allowed the discomfort to sink in totally. The unpleasant and indescribable feeling swept through my body like a tidal wave; there was no thought but mere presence with my breathing and whatever feeling going

through me at that moment, and then it left, again like water flowing through me without a trace. I began to realise that I could have negative emotion towards someone I loved without making wrong of myself or my loved ones. The inner space that came from mindfulness was precious that it allowed me to embrace myself and others without a bitter feeling afterwards.

The "thinking" side of us becomes overpowering when we begin worshipping or blindly believe that "thinking" or reasoning can solve all problems at all levels and in many cases, we mistakenly believe that we are the voice in our head (which of course is only a thought) and feel the need to defend our thoughts at all cost. While thinking is a very useful tool that we can't live without, there is more to us as human "beings". In some sense, thinking can be said to be an opposite to non-thinking/ state of being, so the mindfulness practice may at first sound

very meaningless and even stupid to the thinking mind. It's like a fish coming out of the sea and starts crawling on solid land. They are two different systems serving different functions of its own.

We have been running the "thinking" system predominately in all aspects of our lives with the result of increased stress that brings unsolvable and even severe mental and physical problems to many. Is it time to try another way to practice non-thinking to regain some balance in our lives? Mindfulness is not as difficult as a fish crawling onto land but just some simple practice to pay a little attention to the most ignored or tiny things in our daily life to create moments of quietness through non-thinking. That precious moment also provides inner space and freedom that cannot be taken away by externals and forms the solid premises for everything we do.

There is another way – a less travelled and subtle way. ■

² "Golden pause" is a term used in mindfulness practice, meaning to stop ourselves at the moment we fall into the usual reactive pattern to try not to be taken away by our usual thoughts/ reactive pattern.

還有另一條路¹

作者：方梓瓊，鄭黃律師行顧問

當律師會找我給《香港律師》寫一篇關於靜觀²的文章時，我感到害怕。我一直有看這本雜誌，看了很多年，但從來沒有想過寫些甚麼去投稿——「我不擅長這個」，或者更準確的說，「我不夠好」是一把自童年起便在我腦裡縈迴不散的聲音。然而，練習過數年靜觀之後，我已做得到覺察自己又作出舊有的回應；於是，我呼吸幾下，冷靜下來，然後想一想是否可以有不一樣的回應。我做到了——所以現在你看到我這篇文章。

靜觀現在似乎是高檔的玩意，網上點擊率頗高。可是，沒有太多人真的嘗試過靜觀或瞭解過它究竟是甚麼。

很多人覺得靜觀常常和冥想（例如，閉目靜坐，一動也不動）拉上關係。你也許聽過其他練習靜觀的方式，包括靜觀步行、靜觀進食、覺察呼吸、覺察身體動作，等等。而靜觀似乎也與敲鐘聲有關，因為靜觀老師愛在練習開始或結束時敲鐘。梅村（Plum Village）尤以每15分鐘敲鐘聲一次而聞名；鐘聲一響，不論大家正在做

甚麼，一律要停下來，直到鐘聲響完為止。

此刻，你可能已在腦海描繪出上述「練習」的景象，暗自定論那是一件相當沉悶，甚至愚蠢的事。這樣練習有甚麼用呢？聽起來毫無意義，浪費時間。可是，谷歌搜尋顯示靜觀練習有益身心、減壓；它真的有效用嗎？或者更要緊的是，它對我奏效嗎？

我會說，它對每個人都奏效，不論年齡、性別、病歷或身體狀況。為甚

¹ 本文標題取自 Eckhart Tolle 以同一標題命名的教學錄影節目，該節目近月發布，發布之時正值疫情流行。

² Mindfulness 有很多中文譯名，其中以「靜觀」和「正念」最為普遍，本文採用了「靜觀」一詞。

麼？因為我們所有人都對思考上癮，特別是對消極或負面的想法上癮。這裡的上癮是指我們不能控制思考的發生——思考的過程很多時是身不由己、持續不斷，而且不知不覺的。

幾乎人人都把自己高企的壓力水平歸咎於外在因素，例如工作、錢、健康、人際關係。然而，自我端詳一番之後會發現，我們其實把大部份時間花在思考之上，特別是重複及無謂的思考，這些念頭令我們內在的「引擎」日夜開動，得不到片刻的休息和安寧。靜觀指向另一種生活方式——一個更加平衡的方式，思考（做／陽）和無念（本然／陰）互相交替。

這裡有一些練習例子。

1. 一天的工作結束後，我坐在馬桶上，突然驚覺自己正想著那份已經打算在第二天遞交律師會的公契豁免書申請。信件和申請表已簽妥，連同支票一併放在助手枱面，準備明早發送（換言之，基本上所有工作已經完成，我不需再做些甚麼），可是念頭就是冒出來，我的腦海竟然在重演著下午做公契的情景！我吸一口氣，把自己帶回在馬桶上正在做的事，並完成「要辦的事」。

2. 翌日早上，我淋完早浴後快要遲到了。一邊手拿風筒吹頭髮，一邊怪自己手腳慢，並想像遲到可能給人壞印象或招來批評。我知道當時我已盡力加快動作，這些想法幫不到我做快一點，只會令我感覺差。於是，我把注意力轉移到感受風筒吹出的熱力及手指在髮間梳理的感覺。之後，想法便慢慢安靜下來。

3. 走出港鐵站返回辦公室的路上，我專心留意自己身體的動作（例如，走路的步伐，站立在交通燈

前時雙腳感受到自己的身體重心）。這樣，我練習走路時走路，而不同時在心裡解說或評論眼前所見的一切事物，又或者不落入與當時所做的事（例如步行）完全無關的思緒裡。

4. 有一天，我媽在 whatsapp 群組發布一些東西，惹惱了我；我覺得那些東西內容不當，而且嚴重偏頗。幾句責備的話立時湧上心頭，想回覆她，說清楚我

白，只是和呼吸以及當刻貫穿身體那些說不清的感受同在。那感覺之後退卻，如水漫過全身，不留痕跡。我開始意識到，對著所愛的人產生負面情緒時，不一定要認為一定是我錯了或是他／她錯了。靜觀帶來的內在空間是珍貴的，讓我可以擁抱自己，擁抱別人，不用事後感覺痛苦。

當我們開始崇拜或盲目相信「思考」或推理能夠解決一切大小問題的時候，「思考」那一邊就已經變得強勢而主導了我們。很多時候，我們錯誤地以為自己就是腦袋中的聲音（那聲音當然只是一種想法），覺得有需要不惜代價，捍衛自己的想法。雖然思考是非常有用的工具，生活少不了思考，但作為人類我們有更多珍貴的內涵。從某種意義上可以說，思考是無念／本然狀態的相反，於是，最初聽起來，練習靜觀對於思考的腦袋來說是非常無聊的事，甚至是愚蠢的事。這有點像叫一條魚離開大海，開始在硬地上爬行。思考和無念分屬兩種不同的系統，各有本身的功能。

一直以來，我們在生活中各個層面都一味運用「思考」這系統，習以為常，許多人因此而壓力增加，造成無法解決的，甚至是嚴重的精神和身體問題。現在我們是否可試走另一

條路，練習「無念」讓我們恢復一點生活的平衡？靜觀不像魚在地上爬行那麼困難，只是做一些簡單的練習，花少許時間把注意力放在日常生活中最經常被忽略或細微的東西上，透過無念為自己創造寧靜的時刻。這段珍貴的時刻亦提供內在的空間和自由，是外物所不能帶走的，同時為我們所做的一切建立堅實的前提。

我們還有另一條路可走——少人走過但旅程妙不可言。■

THOUGHTS are NOT FACTS PRACTICE

When you put some space between you and your reaction, it changes your relationship to your thoughts—you can watch them come and go instead of treating them as facts. If you're stuck on a negative thought, ask yourself:

Excerpt from *Uncovering Happiness* by Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D., adapted from *Loving What Is* by Byron Katie.

的想法和感覺。我立即運用了「黃金停頓」³，停下來感受渾身不自在和胸膛繃緊的感覺，還有急速的心跳，胸口、耳朵和頭都熱起來。我裡面有一種衝動，想馬上「做」一些事糾正她。以往我總是在頭腦上責難她，責難完了，又會因為自己不尊重她而感到內疚，可現在我懂得把自己的注意力轉到內在，容許難受的感覺在當下完全呈現。一陣渾身不自在和無法名狀的難受感覺如浪潮般席捲全身；我腦海一片空

³「黃金停頓」是靜觀練習中的述語，意思是在我們掉進舊有反應模式的當刻停頓下來，嘗試不被舊有的思想／反應模式帶走。



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Blanche is a graduate of HKU and a solicitor with over 20 years' experience. Apart from private practice, she had worked as a Director (Legal & Compliance) and senior management in a listed company and a local bank respectively. Blanche advises on a wide range of commercial, corporate, real estate and other non-contentious matters. She has been regularly practicing mindfulness, meditation and qigong in the past decade, and has founded two charities promoting mindfulness and qigong practice. Blanche is a consultant of Cheng & Wong since 2014.

方梓瓊

鄭黃律師行顧問

方梓瓊律師畢業於香港大學，是一名擁有超過 20 年工作經驗的事務律師。除了私人執業外，曾於一家主板上市公司及一所本地銀行分別擔任法律及合規總監和高級管理層。方律師就廣泛的商業和企業事務、房地產及非訴訟事務提供法律意見。過去十年，方律師一直恆常修習正念、打坐和氣功，並成立兩個慈善團體推廣正念和氣功。方律師自 2014 年起成為鄭黃律師行的顧問。

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**Wellness Programme –
Mindfulness Practice Workshop**

To help members alleviate stress and optimise mental effectiveness amidst the outbreak of COVID-19, the Member Benefits Committee organised an online workshop entitled "The Foundation of Mindfulness Practice: Attitudes & Commitment" ("the Workshop") for members to join in the comfort of their homes or offices on 16 July.

Mr. Edward Lau, speaker of the Workshop, shared his expertise on mental health and well-being, as well as advice and tips on coping with stress and anxiety in daily lives. At the Workshop, members were also guided through sessions of meditation.

The Workshop was well received by 25 members.

身心健康系列——正念靜觀實踐工作坊

為了協助會員在疫情期間減輕壓力，提升心理效率，會員權益委員會於 7 月 16 日舉辦了「正念靜觀實踐的基礎：態度與承諾」線上工作坊，讓會員從家中或辦公室參與。

講者劉銘志先生分享了他在心理健康方面的專業知識，以及在應對壓力和焦慮的建議和技巧，還指導了會員練習冥想。工作坊吸引了 25 位會員參加，備受好評。



Mr. Edward Lau was the speaker of the Workshop
工作坊講者劉銘志先生。

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