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Radical not knowing: mindfulness as a relational resource in generative dialogue

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As a practice, mindfulness has been seen as an individual activity that aims to alleviate personal suffering by cultivating insight into the workings of the mind and the nature of experience (Siegel, Germer, Olendzki, 2009). In this workshop, we will shift this view of mindfulness into the relational domain and explore its use as a core resource of generative dialogue. We will examine how mindfulness can serve as an embodied relational presence, a way of being and engaging with self and other, that can help create a safe, accepting and open conversational space that engenders new life affirming possibilities.

As a relational presence, mindfulness brings a refined awareness and a heightened sensitivity and attunement to the changing manifestations of the relational field. It's a means through which one can pause and bring to bear a moment to moment awareness of the multiple dimensions and expressions of human experience as it unfolds in the dialogic space.

In generative practice, mindfulness can also be viewed as a radical manifestation of not knowing. That is, it is a form of relational presence that acknowledges the uncertainty inherent in life and seeks to face any situation with openness and without attachment to preconceived ideas, interpretations, or judgements. Through its use, a practitioner may not only expand his or her capacity to relate to the concerns of the other with acceptance and compassion, but also practice a form of relational performance characterized by playfulness, curiosity, an ongoing

awareness of the circular nature of relationship and of the potential for connection and transformation that lies at the heart of the interactive moment (Morales, 2010).

Through the use of examples of generative practice and brief exercises we will explore how this embodied relational stance can help practitioners, therapists or consultants become more conscious of dialogue as a joint dance, where words and movements resonate with each other. We will also examine how this relational sensitivity can be used to promote a sensual democracy, a constant invitation for all experiences and viewpoints, to participate. Finally, we will explore how mindfulness can help practitioners be more in tune with their own relational resources, as well as notice and expand those subtle and unique moments in dialogue that generate increase intimacy and trust, disrupt dominant stories, reaffirm capabilities and create new possibilities of transformation.

References

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