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Mindfulness Meditation

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Relaxation techniques are notorious stress relief practices and wellbeing promoters that have been used cross-culturally for years. Although relaxation techniques are often cited as prominent treatment models in treating behavioral health ailments, they have, eventually, been used as treatments for many physical health conditions and, frequently, in spiritual practices. There are various relaxation techniques. Deep breathing, mindfulness meditation, progressive muscle relaxation, biofeedback, autogenic, yoga, taichi, and visualization are relaxation interventions that have been used worldwide to manage stress and several medical impairments. However, although there are many existing relaxation techniques, their effectiveness in treating or alleviating specific medical or psychiatric ailment is the most regarded. Hence, in this paper, I will discuss a newly applauded relaxation technique, mindfulness meditation, hailed by many, including mainstream celebrities, useful in treating a range of mental and medical conditions. Moreover, I will delineate its benefits, drawbacks and analyzed it conforming to the Christian faith.

Mindfulness interventions are not new. Although mindful practices have bloomed in popularity less than a decade ago, they are, nonetheless, rooted in Buddhist meditation traditions and have existed for years (Sanders, 2018). These days, its spiritual aspects are, in most parts, alienated. With its acquiescence in the secular culture, its practice is mainly inclined on neoliberal philosophies, focusing on self-discipline, self-surveillance, and the integration of body and mind (Sanders, 2018). There are, nowadays, more than 1300 mindfulness meditation apps. They are available across various formats and portable outlets (Sanders, 2018). In addition to that, mindfulness ideology is explicitly integrated and embraced in numerous social factors; this includes education, medicine, and many large corporations. In psychotherapy, mainly cognitive therapy treatment approach, mindfulness approaches are used to combat diverse psychiatric ailments. “Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) has been applied to clients with depression, resulting in decreased depression as well as anxiety” (Robin & Chapman, 2014).

Moreover, in mindfulness ideology, the focus is centered on the present, the here-and-now. “Mindfulness is the ability to be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and actions in the present moments” (Wood, 2010). Besides being mindful of all the activities, one is involved in; mindful exercise is set on two tenets. To begin, one should evade completing a task hastily in an attempt to have the chore completed. Second, thoughts about the future and other life occurrences should be refrain from. The focus must be solely on what is occurring in the present (Sanders, 2018). Understandably, one might react unmindful to a situation that produces undesirable or stressful results. When this ensues, if the person is mindful of his or her negative thought or destructive behavior, mindfulness meditation can be explored as a relaxation technique (Wood 2010).

In essence, mindful meditation is an easy-to-follow exercise. Mindful meditation is an uncomplicated yet, effective way to battle stress. It can be practiced everywhere. The practitioner solely needs to sit or lie down comfortably in a peaceful location and follow the exercise prompts. In brief, according to Wood (2010), a breathing exercise session is as follows: Place one hand on your chest while the other hand should be rested on your stomach. Take a deep breath through your nose, then slowly exhale through your mouth as if you were extinguishing a candle with your mouth. Attention should be placed on the stomach and your chest as they

moved. Pay attention to other parts of the body for tangible sensations. This process can be repeated as much as you desire as you exhale through your mouth. Besides this breathing technique, mindful exercises can be integrated into other day-to-day activities such as running, walking, and eating (Wood, 2010). The goal is to pay heed to what is occurring at the present moment or “right now.”

There are several benefits associated with mindfulness exercises. In a 10-years conducted meta-analysis study, relaxation training, such as mindfulness meditation, besides other relaxation interventions, was observed to be beneficial in reducing anxiety (Robin & Chapman, 2014). In addition to that, anecdotal and scientific research has demonstrated that meditation techniques, when practiced, can be hugely beneficial to the practitioner’s mental, physical, and over wellbeing (Sander, 2018). An array of conducted studies affirmed that mindfulness meditation is useful in treating posttraumatic stress disorder, fibrositis, concerns with bowel movements, and particular chronic skin disease (Powell, 2018). Other benefits of mindfulness meditation entail optimal concentration level, stress reduction, better wellbeing achievement, and higher mental state attainment (Eberth & Seidlmeier, 2012).

As with all renowned interventions, mindfulness meditations are not exempted from scholarly critiques. One reported drawback of mindfulness meditation relies on some of its controversial findings. A study conducted on meditation asserted that “Relaxation can extend beyond the meditator to the environment” (Sanders, 2018). Hence, the study refutes that mindfulness meditation can shift its focus on the practitioner to cues on the environment. Another critique of mindfulness meditation relies on experimental studies sample sizes. According to some researchers, extraneous factors, such as sample sizes or the experimental designs, may be attributed to the positive result of some conducted studies,

From a Christian perspective, albeit mindfulness meditation is based on the here-and-now, which can prevent one from worrying about the past or the future, its origin, however, does not correlate with the Cristian faith. Mindfulness meditation teaches one to be mindful of the activities they are engaged in. When one’s focus is on a particular task, the mind is warded off from adventuring on other tasks. Likewise, when one attention is rested on God, worries and other life concerns are eradicated in one’s mind. God tells us in Psalms 46:10, “ Be still and know that I am God.” Other Bible verses that require our reliance on God are Philippians 4:6-7, Matthew 6:34, and Colossians 3:2. However, albeit mindfulness meditation requires one to shift his or her focus in the present moment, its origin and core practice are derived from a non-Christ-centered religion, Buddhism. The bible teaches us, “But even if an angel from heaven or we should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.” Therefore, knowing mindfulness meditation’s origin, its practice may be discarded by many in the body of Christ.

To conclude, mindfulness meditation is one of the latest most used relaxation techniques. Since its global recognition, it has been used on many platforms and hailed, by many, useful in treating several mental and medical ailments. Though mindfulness interventions recently gain popularity, this practice is not new. Several meditation techniques can be used to reduce stress and to combat specific medical or psychiatric ailments. Several studies have been conducted on mindfulness practices. Besides its acclaimed benefits, many critiques or drawbacks can be found in this meditation technique. As a newly touted relaxation intervention, compared to its

acceptance in the secular arena, its use, nonetheless, by some who professed the Christian faith, may be rejected.

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