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Book Report: Wherever You Go, There You Are

Jon Kabat talks about mindfulness being attention and awareness above all. Learning how to watch your thoughts, not to a point where you want to control them, but let them free to have a deeper understanding of why you had them in the first place. I have a few occasions at which I have experienced mindfulness, generosity being the biggest one. I have grown up always wanting to give to others and making sure people are happy. Sometimes it holds me back and I don’t realize it. Everyone has been mindful one way or another without realizing it, the hardest part is learning how to use it and to benefit your life.

Mindfulness means a lot to me now that I have understood what it means. I think that everyone should learn how to harness their own energy in a good way to improve their happiness. It means trusting others as well as trusting yourself. It means being generous at times you are not sure if you should be. If you have been through unwanted thoughts such as depression, anger, confusion you have to bring those up to get to the happy thoughts like trust, joy, and love. Reading this book and taking the class have definitely changed my thoughts on mindfulness. I didn’t know it was a practice in a sense that you can improve just like drawing or athletic talents. It is in a way; a life style that you should use everyday.

As I mentioned I have always grown up caring for others as much as I care for myself and I have always wanted to give, but I have had plenty of times I have been angry. Sometimes for no reason at others because people frustrate me. If I knew about mindfulness before those occurrences I think the outcome would've been much different. You have to take the time to ask yourself why am I angry? Why do I need that right here and now? Instead I could tell myself that it doesn't matter and I should move on and try to make myself happy.

The Mountain Meditation was interesting because as I was sitting there I started feeling exactly how I think you should, sturdy and unmovable. I tried focusing on becoming the solid rock the mountain meditation intended for. After a little bit of time I started to fall into that visualization, I started almost feeling like I could feel a slight breeze like being on top of a mountain. I could almost hear trees bustling near by and as I focused on my breath it started to feel like I needed to try harder as if I were on top of a mountain.

In turn the Lake Meditation was very interesting because I did the laying down method instead of sitting. I felt very relaxed, almost to relaxed. I think I enjoyed this one over the first because visualizing water is very easy for me because I love the thought of the ocean and lakes and rivers. They calm me and I like the thought of movement through nature, almost as if referring to Taoism and the meditation practices they partake in nature near rivers. They choose to meditate near rivers because they can hear the river flow and feel connected to nature.

The Lake Meditation had more impact on me because it was something different from the usual sitting, back straight meditation we’ve done in class. I got a chance to try a new type of mediation which was pretty fun. Also another reason it had a bigger impact on me is because like I mentioned before water relaxes me and calms my mind. I have always loved the look of lakes and starring off into the ocean on a beach somewhere is one my favorite things to do.

Because of the chance to get to try a new meditation I am looking forward to the walking meditation and how that affects me. I am used to being on my feet and being active so I think I will enjoy it. Back to the Mountain Meditation, I am not saying I didn’t like it, in fact I used both of those as a journal entry.

Fate, following as effect from cause, Karma is something that I never understand until my late teens. It’s kind of a powerful aspect of life if you think about it. Someone does something bad and in a way it’s put into the universe almost hanging there waiting for a moment to drop back onto that same persons head later down the road. Some are more subtle examples than others but either way it can be scary. But on the other hand there is such thing as good Karma. Now this is very different from bad Karma, you do something good to someone you might get something in return for example joy.

Personally I don’t believe good Karma comes to people who ask for it or expect it. I have heard some people say like “I did this for this person so I deserve this” and I don't agree with that. I’ve had a few experiences of Karma some good, very few bad because I have always been generous to others unless they make me absolutely hate them. I have had a form of Karma happen to me recently and it was almost suddenly after the good deed my wife and I did for someone. I went to Denny’s for a breakfast dinner night out and this waiter sat us down asked us what drinks we’d like and left us for 45 minutes and never came back. As we were about to get up and leave a younger kid came over probably about 17 or 18 years old and asked what happened and we explained about the waiter leaving us. He then took out his notepad and said “I am so sorry about that, I will take your order and have your food put first up on the waiting list”. So we decided we’d tip this kid 20 dollars because we know the wages of a waiter. Just before we gave him the tip he said the manager had paid for our meals, we handed him the money and he put on the biggest smile on his face it made me so happy as well and I will never forget that moment in my life.

Finally, does mindfulness change Karma? My answer is yes, because if you think back to what I typed about Karma potentially being scary it ties into mindfulness and wishes it will happen to someone. I think the more mindful you are about others it wont cause them pain or suffering. Sure you could say “that person deserved it” and go on with your day. But what you don’t realize is how big of an effect that could've had on their lives. It could be as simple as if you hated a coworker and they lost their job. Then in the short term you think, well they will get another job but they deserved to get fired. In the long term, what if someone else won’t hire them because they were fired and have to say that on a resume? What if they have kids? How would they support them and keep them healthy in a mental state and physical? Mindfulness can be positive in anyways if you let it be. This class has taught me a lot about patience and respect for myself and others already.