



Mindfulness without Ethics: the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

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What is it?

- ▶ Originally translated to English as the best approximation of the Pali word *sati* in the 19th century (Heffernan, 2015)
- ▶ “Paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn, 1994).
- ▶ “I define mindfulness as the practice of being fully present and alive, body and mind united. Mindfulness is the energy that helps us to know what is going on in the present moment” (Thich Nhat Hanh, n.d.).
- ▶ “Mindfulness is a mental faculty, like intuition or musical ability. It reminds you of what you didn't know you had forgotten, and wakes you when you didn't realize you were sleeping (or daydreaming).” (*The Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education*, 2008).

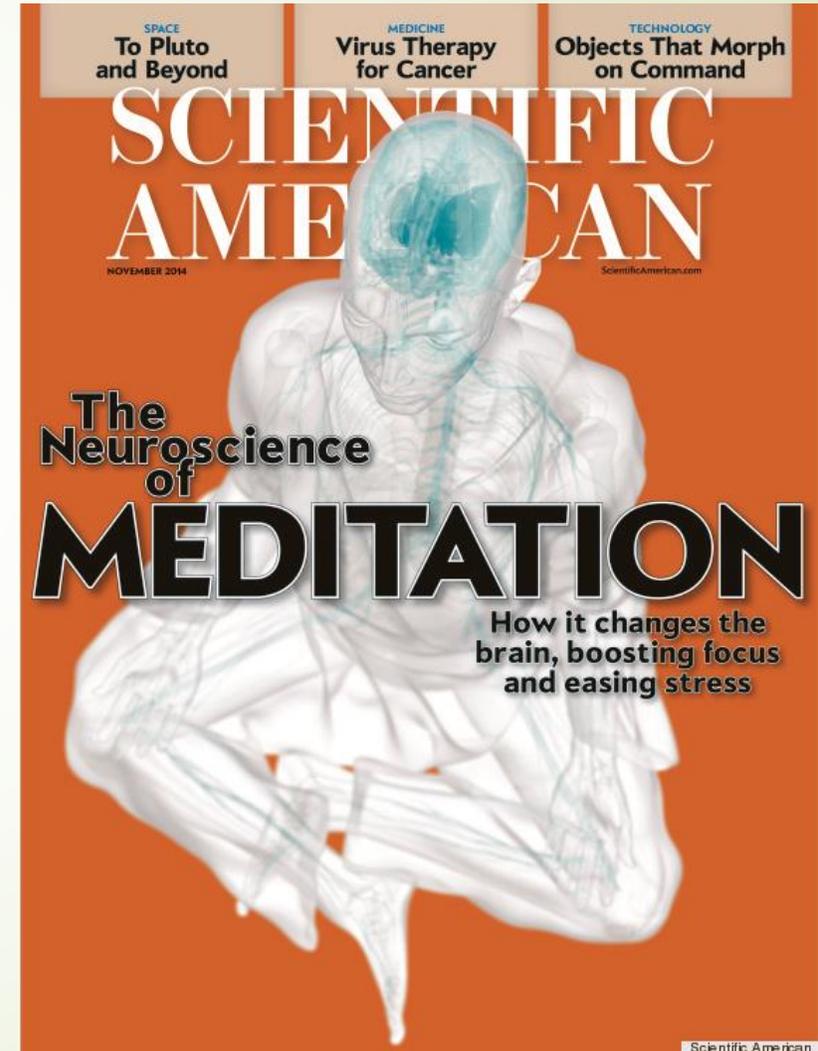


Ubiquity of presence

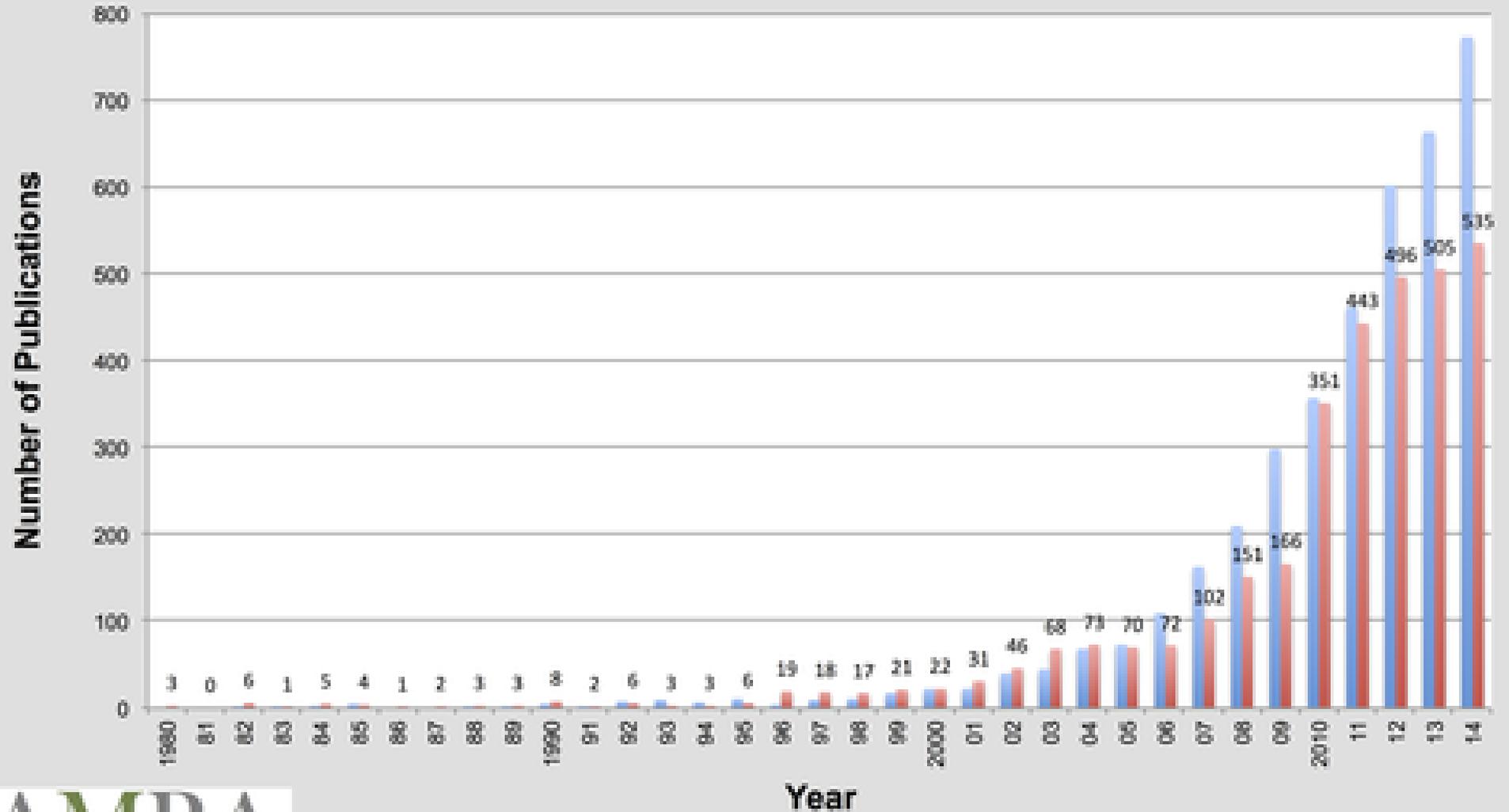


- ▶ Education- K-12
 - ▶ Call to Care
 - ▶ Calmer Choice
 - ▶ Mindful Schools
- ▶ Higher education
 - ▶ UMass- Center for Mindfulness
 - ▶ Brown University Contemplative Studies Initiative
 - ▶ UCSD Center for Mindfulness
 - ▶ UCLA Mindful Awareness Center
 - ▶ Harvard Business School
- ▶ Business
 - ▶ Aetna
 - ▶ General Mills
 - ▶ Goldman Sachs
 - ▶ Google
 - ▶ Target
- ▶ Technology
 - ▶ Headspace
 - ▶ iMindfulness
 - ▶ Smiling Mind
 - ▶ Mindfulness Daily

Some noteworthy examples



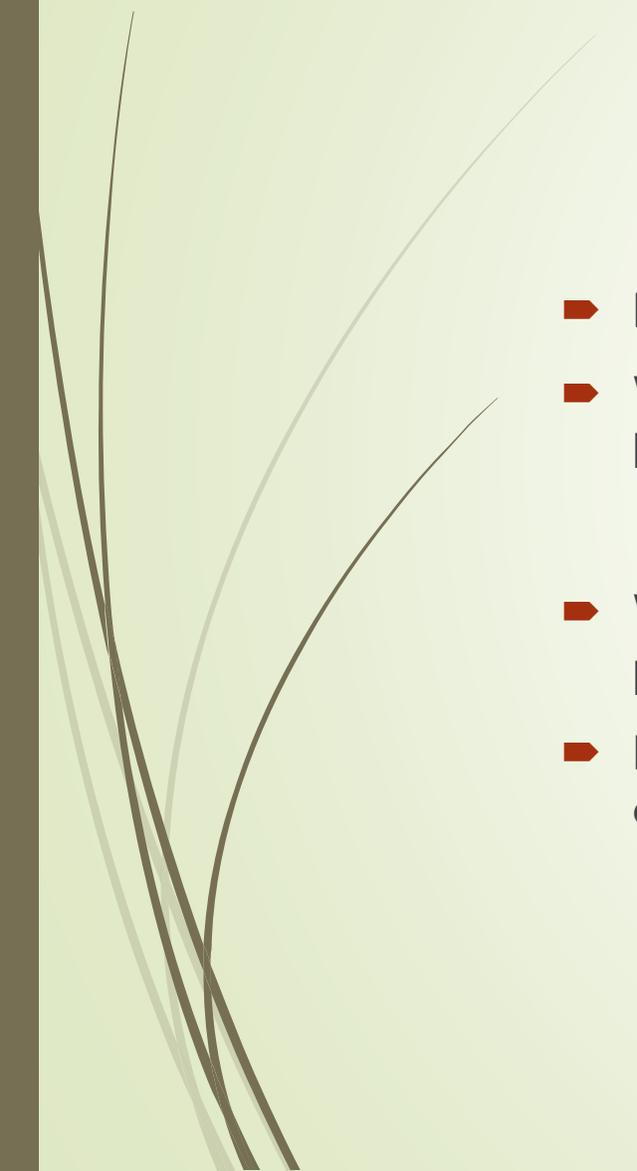
Mindfulness Journal Publications by Year, 1980-2014



goAMRA.org



Framing questions



- ▶ How do you view the reality of this increasingly popular presence?
- ▶ What challenges emerge from mindfulness being a more and more well known idea in our culture?
 - ▶ Which strategies are useful in meeting those challenges?
- ▶ What are the advantages of teaching mindfulness as a secularized program of mental training?
- ▶ How can the ideas of mindfulness work with behaviors of consumerism and capitalism, if at all?



Let's do some writing!



Some data points to consider

- ▶ Cost of 8-week MBSR program at UMass- \$545 for households with income under \$39,000
- ▶ Cost of 2-day Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute Program= \$1,250
 - ▶ “We help professionals at all levels adapt, management teams evolve and leaders optimize their impact and influence.”
- ▶ Google earnings in 2016 (projected)=\$20.76 billion
- ▶ Goldman Sachs earnings in 2106 (projected)=\$7.93 billion
- ▶ According to a Forbes magazine article from April 27, 2015, an important question to consider before implementing a mindfulness program at a place of business is what business benefits can be derived from the practice (Meister)



An example of challenging connections?

➤ Bill George

- Instrumental in bringing meditation and mindfulness to the corporate world
- Author of *Authentic Leadership: Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value* and *True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership*
- Professor of management at Harvard Business School
- <https://vimeo.com/3865167>

➤ Other information

- Board member at Goldman Sachs since 2002
- Board member at ExxonMobil since 2005
- Board member at Novartis since 1999
- Led Medtronic to “record-breaking profits”
- What kinds of questions might be considered based on this information?



The idea of “McMindfulness”

While a stripped-down, secularized technique — what some critics are now calling “McMindfulness” — may make it more palatable to the corporate world, decontextualizing mindfulness from its original liberative and transformative purpose, as well as its foundation in social ethics, amounts to a Faustian bargain. Rather than applying mindfulness as a means to awaken individuals and organizations from the unwholesome roots of greed, ill will and delusion, it is usually being refashioned into a banal, therapeutic, self-help technique that can actually reinforce those roots

-(Pursur and Loy, 2013).



Let's walk and talk!

- Find a partner
 - Pick up a list of prompting ideas
 - Take a walk!
 - Come back to our space in <10 minutes
- 



The “Three Poisons” or “Unwholesome Roots” of Buddhism

- Moha (opposite of wisdom)
 - Delusion
 - Confusion/ignorance
 - Raga/lobha (opposite of generosity)
 - Attachment
 - Greed/desire
 - Dvesa/dosa (opposite of loving-kindness/metta)
 - Aversion
 - Hatred
 - What kinds of connections are in evidence between these conceptualizations and what we have already discussed?
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From Thich Nhat Hanh's 14 Precepts of Socially Engaged Buddhism

- 2) Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth.
- 4) Do not avoid suffering or close your eyes before suffering.
- 5) Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry.
- 11) Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature.
- 13) Possess nothing that should belong to others.



Menmitsu/menmitsu no kafu

- ▶ A concept often considered in Soto Zen lineages
 - ▶ Often translated as careful attention to detail or exact consideration
 - ▶ “a very careful and considerate style” (Suzuki Roshi)
 - ▶ Carries a connotation of caring for things outside of self
 - ▶ Transferring the focus from “what can I get” to “what can I give” (Rutschman-Byler)
- 



Mindfulness and “Heartfulness”

- ▶ Mindful Schools Movement
 - ▶ “Our courses and curricula are designed for under-resourced public schools facing high turnover rates and toxic stress” (*Mindful Schools, 2016*).
 - ▶ Teaches both mindfulness and “heartfulness” with equal emphasis
 - ▶ “Heartfulness” defined as “The intentional nurturing of positive mind states such as kindness and compassion” (*Mindful Schools, 2016*).
 - ▶ Programs have impacted “more than 750,000 children and adolescents” since 2007 (*Mindful Schools, 2016*).
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What do we do
with this
information?