

Bodyfulness: Mindfulness Unleashed &

A Path for Inner Healing

Bodyfulness is a lifestyle philosophy and a set of practices which reverse centuries of toxic conditioning cutting us off from our body's wisdom and our right to feel healthy pleasures.

I've woven together existing and emerging healing practices to create bodyfulness.

It's a combination of (a) embodied mindfulness,

(b) the latest research on interoception (deep body intelligence including ways to release trauma stuck in the body and regulate incoming emotional stress), and

(c) tantra – the ancient philosophy that celebrates the body, honors natural pleasures in life, and views intimacy with ourselves and others as sacred not sinful.

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Bodyfulness is developed by alternating between your felt-sense, visceral experiences and the mental associations you have of those experiences (called embodiment), creating new mental, emotional, and physical patterns (such as healthy ways to respect, celebrate, and resource from your body).

3 Stages

Diving In // Discharging // Delighting

Stage 1: Embodied Mindfulness- *Diving In*

Cultivating embodied mindfulness starts with consistent listening to and interpreting your body's language. Given how much people overthink and mentally analyze their way through life, it can feel pretty foreign to start listening to your body's language and know what it means when you do listen.

Here are examples of *what* to pay attention to before you move on to *how* you handle the messages you do notice in the second step (this is by no means an exhaustive list):

Muscles when activated

Muscles when resting

How you're breathing

Posture

Fidgeting or being still

Body temperature

Heaviness in any area

Stiffness or tension in any area

Thirst

Hunger

Fullness

Emptiness

Twitching

Patterns in fatigue

Patterns in energy

Congestion

Which foods digest well

Which food don't digest well

The differences between one side of the body and the other

Smells/sounds/tastes/sights you like and don't like

Times of day you're most present

How laughter feels in your body

How crying feels in your body

Where in your body you feel each of your emotions

Stage 2: Discharge (Release) and Containment

This part of bodyfulness is more than paying attention on purpose, more than noticing cause and effect. It's knowing what to *do* with what you've paid attention to.

Cultivating tools to regulate yourself with dynamic movement is where bodyfulness begins to diverge from mindfulness.

Think of the saying "the only way out is through." Emotions and unresolved trauma live in the body, and they want recognition and then release; to be dislodged from the body.

In this second stage, your aim is to ground & center yourself (containment) and/or release (discharge) stress from the body to bring yourself into balance. It's about developing an interplay with the mind and body where you know how to pay attention, what to pay attention to, and then what to do about it. This type of self-agency is reassuring and empowering!

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Explore different movements to see what agrees with your body.

Examples of this step include things typically viewed as "exercise" such as:

Stretching /Yoga

Repetitive motion activities like running/biking/swimming/hiking/nordic skiing

Strength activities like weights, squats, lunges, core activities

Different types of dancing

And includes physical release not considered exercise like:

Rocking

Sweating

Crying

Auditory release like grunting, sighing, singing, chanting, humming

Yawning

Shaking

Bouncing

Therapeutic bodywork like:

Massage

Foam Roller

Acupuncture

Breathing Activities

Chiropractor

Moving in an aerial silk

Energy work like Chakra balancing and Reiki

- Sometimes this is about re-wilding and channeling our inner child (letting out rage) or inner animal (shaking, sighing) and can look pretty primal. We are human animals after all!

- Note: When it comes to yoga, I tell people to note the difference between the sensation of pain and the sensation of muscles releasing. We're aiming for the latter; think of this release as dis-ease states leaving your body.

This stage also includes the opposite of discharge/release, called containment, which is about anything grounding, centering, self-soothing, or creating a boundary between you and what feels overwhelming emotionally.

It can include:

Hugging yourself, someone else hugging you

Curling into a ball

Lying on the ground

Child's Pose

Going into an enclosed space

Rubbing your arms up and down your arms or legs

Putting your hands in your armpits

Going under a weighted blanket

**Stage 3: Mind-Body Intelligence, Emotional Regulation
& Increased Capacity
for Pleasure/Joy/Intimacy/Delight**

This third stage is about giving yourself permission to feel good, to thrive not just survive.

With developed self-agency, inner confidence, and deeper integration of all your intelligent inner systems, you can reclaim your birthright to feel, desire, and express yourself. From there, a magnetism emerges.

Believe it or not, feeling joy and pleasure can be pretty vulnerable. Especially in a world where we can be always on guard. Combine that with the fact that our Puritanical forefathers reduced anything pleasurable to sex and considered it lavish, gluttonous, or indulgent.

But research now confirms that pleasure practices actually aid in our resilience and compassion for self and others.

At this third stage, your bodyfulness practice has taught you how to:

- Ride the wave of discomfort from within and get to the other side. This means you're turning to pleasure not to escape discomfort and numb but to enhance and expand your life.
- Led you to feel a better sense of emotional and physical safety, which we know is necessary in order to feel ease around others and in the world. This can also increase your capacity for connection with others.
- Have a deeper appreciation and respect of your body, re-connecting you with the beauty within (which is healing in world so focused on the external appearance)

Examples of this layer of bodyfulness include:

Being less reactive

Trusting your body's messages

Confidence in your ability to self-soothe

Having boundaries with yourself and others (including body boundaries)

Being playful/silly

Seeing humor around you, including being able to make fun of yourself

Trusting your intuition

Tolerating discomfort through breathing and moving

Feeling presence

Celebrating

Taking risks

Going with the flow

Being sensual and erotic

Owning your desires rather than questioning it

Being creative

Accepting or loving your body

Ability to be more vulnerable