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Episode 149 – Mindfulness and Meditation: How to Be More Present in Life

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Jonathan Hunsaker: Welcome, everyone, to another episode of Empowering You Organically. I'm your host, Jonathan Hunsaker, joined by my co-host, TeriAnn Trevenen.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Hey, everyone!

Jonathan Hunsaker: Today, we are going to talk about something that I think is a very important subject, and we're going to talk about mindfulness. We're going to talk about meditation and just being more present in our lives. And I think that this is something that gets missed a lot. We often just float down the river of life, float down the stream of life. And we've talked before about being intentional and all of that, and this goes right in line with all of those conversations. So, tell me, I mean how do you practice mindfulness? What is mindfulness to you?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Well, before we get into mine, let's just talk about what mindfulness is overall. Mindfulness is really being present in the moment, not thinking about the past, not thinking about the future. When you think about this topic, you could really go down a very big rabbit hole, and this rabbit hole goes further and further and further as you really process being present. I love this topic. This is actually something I've really focused on in the last year of my life. I read a book by Eckhart Tolle called—

Jonathan Hunsaker: *The Power of Now.*

TeriAnn Trevenen: *The Power of Now.* I couldn't even think of the name. I've recommended it to a lot of friends, which is why Jonathan knows what it is. I read it, and it was just like—people ask me all the time, "What are you reading? What do you love to read?" Because I love to read, and that's one of the books that I've read this year.

And I'll go back to it multiple times and read just little excerpts of it that I've highlighted on the apps in my phone. There's a lot of quotes that come from that book that are really powerful. And it really focuses on being present. Now, that's one way you can really go down the rabbit hole, but he is an expert in talking about being present and really being present with yourself, with your mind, with your emotions and your life.

And so, again, this is something that you can really go far down the rabbit hole. But if this is something that you're just hearing about and learning about for the first time, we're going to talk about the basics, and then even for those of you who have practiced mindfulness in your life, we're going to give some tips and tricks to improve upon being mindful in your life.

Being mindful is super important for your emotional and mental wellbeing, but I would also say that it's really important for your physical wellbeing as well, because some of the things we're going to talk about today talk about reducing stress and really focusing on your body and what's going on in your body. So, mindfulness is something that can be a holistic approach to really benefiting you and your health. Go ahead.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, no, I was just going to talk more about mindfulness to kind of really bring some more clarity around it. I mean it's about really being present in the moment, right? And so, this day and age, we always have our phones out, right?

And we're looking at our phones while we're having conversations with others. We're looking at our phones while we're eating dinner. We're watching TV while we're eating dinner. All of these different things, as opposed to just being really present to the action at hand.

So, if you're eating your meal, rather than watching TV, rather than being on your phone, be very present to the people that are there with you, be very present to the flavors, to the textures of the food in your mouth, to all of that.

It's a different way of being in the sense that, especially nowadays, we're always looking for the next thing. "What's coming next? What are we doing next? Now that we're done..." "We're doing this right now, but what are we going to do after we're done doing this?" Right? As opposed to just let's focus on the "this" that we're doing and not think so much about what is coming next.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Some of the ways that you can practice mindfulness in your life, and Jonathan touched on one of these, just some tips for things that I've worked on in my life this year. This comes from books, from experts, from other people, and then some of my own things that I've implemented.

Like Jonathan said, when you're eating, be very present to your meal. I think going one step further, we live in a society where everything's instant, and that includes food. Take the time to make a meal. Feel your food, cut your food, understand what your food does for your body, make the meal. Sit down and eat the meal with family, with friends, maybe by yourself.

Maybe you just need a quiet moment. And chew your food, and think to yourself, "Am I full? Am I not full?" Being mindful is being present to every step in the process of where you're at in the present. And so, just thinking about eating a meal, there's a process to that, and we've lost that art of let's just make the meal, understand the food, understand how it works together, cooking, doing things in the kitchen with your food, sitting down, appreciating your food, chewing your food, taking a moment.

These are all parts of being mindful, and we're in such a fast-paced world and society now that even things like meals, we don't stop for. Other ways that you can be mindful. Being present with the person that you're with. Put your phone down. Look them in the eyes. Talk to them. "What are we talking about? What am I feeling while I'm talking to this person?"

Share feelings, process feelings, feel the feelings physically. Really connect with people. That's another huge part of mindfulness, connection. Connection with another person. Sometimes, it's connection with yourself, which we're going to talk about here in just a minute. And so, that's another way you can be really mindful is mindful of the people you're with, the conversations you're having.

We also live in a world where there's a lot of bright, shiny lights, and lots of things going on at one time. And I think that our capacity to get a lot of work done has gone down, and we're not as efficient in our lives, and we're all overworked and overstressed because we don't just focus on one task anymore, "I'm doing this while I'm doing this, this, this, and this."

This is something I talk to people a lot about, in Masterminds I've ran, people I've coached in the past, with people I work with. Get focused on one thing and really put all your time and effort into it and complete it, and then move on to the next thing. That takes being mindful and thinking about "Where am I? What am I doing?" Being really focused.

So, there's a lot of different ways in our lives, like I said, that we can be more mindful and really focused. And you can really make a list for yourself. "Where can I be more mindful of myself, my body, my emotions, what I'm doing in my life, in my life?"

One specific way that we want to touch on today is meditation, and meditation is an extremely powerful way to get mindful with yourself about your body, your emotions, and where you are in this current

moment, letting everything else go. So, Jonathan, is meditation something that you practice in your life?

Jonathan Hunsaker: It's something that I try to practice in my life. And I think that's why it's called a practice, right? Because you don't perfect meditation. I think that there's times that I'm better at meditating than others. And I think that—I think meditation has a lot of definitions for different people, right?

So, it's not always sitting cross-legged on the floor with my palms up on my knees, saying "Om," and doing that meditation as much as it is really just trying to be mindful and present in the moment, I think is a form of meditation, too.

You touched on a few things that I just want to put into perspective, right? We, we're with other people often, but then we look at our phones all the time. Yet, we tell kids not to come up and interrupt us. We tell them to say, "Excuse me." But as soon as our phone dings, or vibrates, we pick it up and we look at it while we're talking to somebody.

And to me, I think it's probably one of the most disrespectful things you can do, by trying to say, "No, whatever's on my phone is more important than what's going on right here in front of me." The other thing you talked about was multitasking, and we pride ourselves in multitasking, but the reality is, it takes 15-20 minutes to get that focus on the task at hand.

So, you talked about mediation. Do I practice meditation? I practice being mindful and being focused on the one thing that I'm focused on. I'm actually really good at multitasking, and there I am trying to take pride in that.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Me too. I get that. I totally get that.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And so, and my mind races a lot. And so, for me, the meditation is not living in the past so much, the meditation is not living in the future so much, but really—and it's a constant focus for me. It's something that I have to be really intentional, I have to think about what's going on right now in the moment.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Meditation is one of the things that many people in the world will tell you they struggle with. They can't get into it, they can't focus. And I think that does come a lot from our training as human beings, with all these bright, shiny lights and all of these things going on, we've lost the art of just being and just sitting and just feeling. Meditation looks different for every single person.

So, I just want to make that my very first statement when it comes to meditation, before we get into how you can start meditation. I've been practicing meditation pretty heavily for a year now, and I keep it simple most of the time. I really try, when I wake up in the mornings, to do two things – a gratitude practice, which I've talked about on the podcast many times, but then meditation.

And meditation doesn't always mean you have to spend an hour being silent. Sometimes, it is just being mindful and present with yourself, breathing in and out. Part of my gratitude spills into my meditation. It's feeling your body, it's feeling your breathing, it's feeling your heart, it's feeling what's happening right now in this present moment and letting go of everything else.

One of the things I like to compare it to when I talk to friends and people about meditation is, when we're having a conversation with a friend, do we listen, or do we stop and talk every five seconds? And do we interject things all the time? Our mind's over here, and it's over here, and "They said this, and I've got to add this, and this and this and this." Or do we sit and listen?

When you meditate, you stop, you find a quiet place, you're just with yourself, you're mindful, and you're not talking to yourself all the time. Let go of work, let go of friends, let go of family issues, let go of something bad that happened that day. In this moment, you are here. Breathe, breathe in, breathe out. Feel your heart. Quit talking and interrupting yourself all the time and just silence your mind. Think about having a conversation with a friend and truly listening to that person.

And that's how I compare just simple meditation, just the basics of meditation, to other people when they ask, "How do you meditate? How did you start meditating?" When it was a struggle for me to start meditating and I couldn't get quiet, it was like my mind's going a million miles an hour, my mind always goes a million miles an hour, and when I meditate, it doesn't stop.

And I finally realized, it's like having a conversation with yourself. Quit talking and just listen to your body, listen to your emotions, and just let things flow. Just like if you're a good listener in a conversation with a friend and you just let them talk, and you don't listen to interject, you just listen to feel and understand and hold space for that person.

That's how I compare simple meditation for people. Stop. Stop thinking. Stop trying to have a conversation. Breathe in, breathe out. That's just one simple way, for a few minutes, to start practicing meditation that's really simple and easy.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, and I think there's a couple key takeaways here. I mean I remember, I don't know, 20 years ago, when I was deep in sales, I bought a cassette program that was like "The Art of

Effective Listening.” And it really opened my eyes up to the fact that everybody’s just waiting to talk, right? When you’re talking to most people, they’re just waiting, like you said something that’s triggered a memory. Now, they’re thinking about the memory, now they want to tell you about it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: They not even really hearing what you’re saying.

Jonathan Hunsaker: They’re not. Everything is just constant triggering, and it’s really like being present to what the other person is saying, and not waiting to speak, right? And I think that that happens often. We’re often just waiting to speak. Sometimes, we can be doing the podcast, and I hear you say something, I’m like “I want to talk about that.” And then, I’ve got to shut my brain up and come back to it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, or [*crosstalk 0:13:10*]

Jonathan Hunsaker: Let’s get really present to the conversation. And if that comes back, then it comes back. Great. And I think that that’s—it’s such a good analogy for meditating, is trying to just be present. What are you feeling, right? What are you feeling in your body? Focusing on your breath. I mean I’ve found, for me, one of the best ways that I can shut up my brain is to take big, deep breaths and count my breaths, right?

So, if I do box breathing, which is four in, hold for four, breathe out for four, leave it for four, just doing something like that and focusing on my breath can help quiet my mind. Counting, right? Counting your breaths, just in one, out two, three, four. You get to 10 and you start over. And if you miscount, it doesn’t matter. Just start over.

I mean I remember when I was living down in Panama six years ago, there’s a Buddhist monk that I was friends with, and that was some of my first times of really learning meditation. He was teaching me to count and doing different things like that.

So, and then there’s also guided meditation. I mean I think, again, meditating, meditation can be tough if you’re constant in a go-go-go state, if you’re so used to your mind racing, if you’re constantly thinking about stuff. Sometimes, it’s good to just get it out and go through a guided meditation. Let’s actually just let somebody else lead us and let’s actually see what it’s like to shut our brains up for a minute.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah, absolutely. No, and I love that suggestion, and I think there’s a lot of myths out there about meditation. You know? Just to give you the basics of starting to meditate, just breathe in and out, like I said. Take five minutes away from the world. Go somewhere where you’re quiet and

alone, where you can be at peace, and be mindful of yourself in that moment. Breathe in, breathe out. Focus on your breathing for five minutes.

I can guarantee you, just do that. Don't focus on like "I'm not disconnected. I'm not thinking this. I'm not thinking that." I think a lot of people think that meditation means you have to be perfect right out of the gate, and they think that meditation means you have to be in this perfect state of not feeling, thinking, anything, like everything's gone from you.

That's not realistic and it takes a long time practicing meditation to get to a place where you can truly disconnect from everything going on. I'm still working on that. So, just take five minutes, get out of your head, get out of everything that's going on, take some deep breaths, and I can guarantee you, five minutes of focusing on your breathing, and walking away from that five minutes, you're going to go "I feel so much lighter. I feel so much less stress. Like I'm just present with myself now." That's such a simple way to start meditation.

Don't believe the myths that meditation has to look like this, or it has to look like this, or you have to be perfect at this, or that you can't have one thought slip into your head, or you have to stop your meditation and it's over. It's going to take time to get there but start by focusing on your breathing and just taking yourself away from all the stressors in the world and just being one with yourself. **[0:16:06]**

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, and that's just it. I mean I talked about that Buddhist monk, and he told me, he was like "It's a practice." And I asked him, I was like "How often do you meditate?" He was like "I practice meditation 100 times a day." He's like "I'm still practicing doing it." The reality is, when you start doing it, making it five seconds without your brain chiming in is a big win, right?

And as you continue to practice, you can get to seven seconds, and 10 seconds, right? Now, I don't want you sitting there thinking the whole time, "How long have I been quiet?" Because now you're thinking again. But understand that you're not going to—you're likely not going to hit five minutes, you know?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah.

Jonathan Hunsaker: That's a long time. But it's that practice of just quieting it down, letting things go blank, just being present to your breath and the feeling. And it will get better the more that you practice it. I love doing these podcasts because I think of all the things that I could be doing more of in my life, and I think about meditation.

There's times when I have been a lot more present to it, there's times when I'm not. And I love when it's really a key focus of mine to spend more time getting better at meditation, because it does really

calm your entire life down. It really—it just makes everything feel so much better, doesn't feel so chaotic.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. And I want to dive a little deeper into some of the meditation practices I've found beneficial for myself, but before I do that, I want to talk about some of the benefits of mindful meditation, so using mindfulness and meditation together. And just to kind of tie this together, mindfulness means being present to a certain thing in that moment.

If you're focusing, first time practicing meditation, on just breathing, you're mindful of the processes happening in your body while you're disconnecting from everything else. That is mindfulness in meditation. It's being mindful of one thing, letting go of everything else, and really focusing on yourself. And so, just try that. Just if you haven't meditated before, just try that simple practice.

And here's the thing. Tweak it to work how it works for you. You should walk away from meditation feeling refreshed, less stressed, calmer, and more connected with yourself. Whatever you need to do in that moment, maybe you're focusing on your breath, and then all of a sudden, you wonder, "I wonder what's going on in my heart right now?" Don't feel like "Oh, I'm not doing meditation right."

Okay, then be mindful to what's going on in your heart right now and feel that. It's okay for your mind to go different places in meditation, but stay focused, stay focused on you, stay focused on wherever that is in that moment, and take deep breaths. Don't shame yourself for not being perfect in meditation.

And kind of mold to what is going to feel best to you. You don't have to be in one place or be perfect or be like everybody else when it comes to meditation. Some of the amazing benefits of meditation. Reducing stress, which is huge. One of the top reasons people like mindfulness meditation is because it helps reduce their stress.

When you start meditating and living in the present with mindfulness, you learn how to think about things very differently. It isn't going to magically get rid of all of those things that are stressful in your life, but it helps you to deal with them better. You develop a healthy coping mechanism where you understand and appreciate things for what they are.

And I love this one, because meditation for me, in the morning, has become something that changes my emotions. And again, I mentioned this practice of gratitude and meditation coming together for me, which has been an evolution of meditation for me, helps me to start my day thinking about how grateful I am for my body, for my family, for the things that I have, and oftentimes, when I wake up in the

morning, I start with my mind going a million miles an hour, and I am stressed.

“I have this today, and this today, and this today,” and I’m thinking about yesterday, and I’m thinking about the future. And taking deep breaths, feeling gratitude, feeling what’s going on in my body starts my day off with lower stress, and that is why mindful meditation is so powerful when it comes to reducing stress.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, and I mean sometimes, just starting off, you might even be more stressed meditating, because you’ve turned off your phone, and you’re thinking “Oh no, what if somebody tries to call me or text me?” Or “What’s going on, on Facebook or Instagram?”

But what it’s doing is it’s really building up your muscle in removing yourself from all of the other chaos that’s going on out there, right? And it’s all chaos. Traffic is chaos, work is chaos, other people’s problems is chaos, the phone is chaos, work, all of these things. And you’ve got to learn how to, not that you’ve got to, it’s very helpful to learn how to really tune that out and be focused on you.

And so, when you first start meditating, some of those things can almost make you feel more tense, but it’s part of the process to be able to let go of all of those other things, is going through that little bit of tense moment.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Some of the other benefits are improved memory. If you struggle with memory issues, this might be more to do with how much you are trying to keep track of in your mind and letting go of all those things you’re trying to keep collected in your mind and keep track of, and all the multitasking.

Meditation can help you to let go of some of those things and realize how some of those things probably aren’t super important. Even though you feel like they are, the stress and the weight of those things, and letting them go makes you realize “It’s okay. I can let go of that.” Also, better focus and concentration.

Other cognitive functions can also be improved simply by meditating, including things like the way you think about things, developing positive attitudes, like acceptance, appreciation, gratitude, patience, and non-judgement. This in turn allows you to focus on one thing at a time, whatever’s happening in the present, like we talked about, instead of trying to do too many things at one time.

I spoke about this earlier. We live in a society and in an age where everything has to happen right now, and we’re doing a million things at one time. We’ve lost the art of really focusing on one thing and

doing it our very best and feeling gratitude for finishing one thing and then moving to the next. Meditation can really help with this.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I mean it really can. And it's—listen, the focus, the memory, I mean your brain is a muscle, and we have to train it, right? We have to make it stronger. And being able to learn how to shut all of it out will make you better at focusing on that one thing when it's time to just focus on one thing, because you can focus on it and your mind knows how to shut everything else out because it's learned how to shut everything else out, right?

And so, it's, again, I can't reiterate that this is a practice. It's an exercise. It's something that you get better at. You have to learn how to do it, and then do it over and over. It's just like training for a marathon and running, and you get stronger doing it. Going to the gym and lifting weights. It's the same thing.

So, when you start off, you don't run good, you can't run very far. When you start off in the gym, you can't lift very many weights. The same thing with meditation. But start somewhere, and then do it consistently. And you'll see that focus gets better, your memory gets better, all of it gets better as you get better at meditation.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. A few more benefits that are really awesome. It's not just from an emotional and mental perspective, but there are actually physical benefits to meditation. One of those is lowering your blood pressure. This comes from a lot of the mental and emotional benefits therefore lowering your blood pressure.

When you're calming down around the stressors in your life, when you're getting away from that stress and that anxiety and those things that you have going on, it can lower your blood pressure, which can help improve your health. Things like stress, anxiety, and lack of focus overwhelm your mind, overwhelm your nervous system, and we already know that some of these things can suppress your immune system, which can lead to sickness, illness, and things that we don't want going on in our lives that slow us down from living our best life.

Also, weight loss. So, benefits of meditation when it comes to weight loss, mindfulness can really help us to get present throughout the day, living more in the present. You can focus more on what's good for your body. We talked about mindful eating and really focusing on what's going in your body, preparing that food, how it's impacting your body, not overeating.

And you know, this is actually something that's a really good connection to meditation, your eating and weight loss. If stress leads you to eating, replacing it with something else is something they often

suggest, and meditation is one of those amazing things that you could replace eating with, when you're like "I'm going to go and eat something," but you just had a meal 20 minutes ago, but you're super stressed, go to a quiet place and breathe. Don't go for the food. It's a really great replacement for someone who may be a stress eater, and I think all of us can suffer from that from time to time.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, you remember as a kid, right, and you're—if you're somebody that had a short fuse, like me, so maybe this is just for me, but I remember always being told, "Count to 10 before you say anything," or "Count to 10 before you do something," right? Because you're ready—it's the same thing with the eating, right? You feel that craving to go eat some sugar, or go eat something, or sometimes you just eat out of habit, right, like I'm watching TV, so I eat.

Being mindful is being present. And if you feel that desire to go eat, and weight is something that you struggle with, take 10 deep breaths, and that will get you present to what are you really feeling? Are you maybe just thirsty? Are you really just bored? And it's just part of being mindful.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yep. Absolutely. It's like the adult version of counting to 10. Go and meditate and take a deep breath, and just really focus on yourself and being present. So, obviously, all of these benefits are going to lead to more future success for you emotionally, mentally, and physically as you get more connected, you're more mindful about yourself, your body, and what's going on in your life through meditation specifically.

So, let's talk about a few tips. We talked about a few ways you could do mindful meditation starting out, just some of the basics, but let's just cover really quickly where you can meditate.

So, for me specifically, and this could be different for everyone, but I need to be in a place where it's quiet, where I really try to like close blinds. I don't want it to be pitch black, but I also don't like a lot of light on me.

That could be totally different for you. You might find that you feel less stress when you have a lot of sunlight on you, so you might want to go lay out in your back yard and close your eyes and meditate. It's different for everyone.

For me, I like to lay on my bed, because I'm comfortable there. I like to close my eyes. I don't like too much light, and I don't like sound or people or noise. I like to just really disconnect. If I'm not at home and I need to really disconnect from stressful situations and moments, I like to sit in my car, make sure all the windows, doors, everything are closed, it's really quiet in there, shut everything off, and I can close my eyes and take a few deep breaths. So, finding a place where you can be quiet, you can be centered, you don't have a lot of distraction, and that's going to look different for everyone.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Yeah, when you're sitting in your car, don't be driving when you're doing the meditation. So, just making that clarity for the safety of our listeners.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yes. My car is stopped when I meditate. I don't close my eyes and drive.

Jonathan Hunsaker: You know? For me, it matters, it can make a difference the time of day. So, if I wake up and I meditate, and I'm waking up and that's okay, I do need to sit upright, because any time, if I'm laying down or closing my eyes to meditate, it's very easy to drift off into nap zone, which I feel like I could use more of.

TeriAnn Trevenen: I think a lot of people struggle with that, for sure. Yeah.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, I do think it's good to find a chair, sit in a chair, have your feet flat on the floor, focus on your posture, have your back upright, you know? You don't need to be super tense. You can have your hands, your fingers interlocked if you want to, or you're just hands on your legs. But it is good to have that posture to keep the blood flowing, and really just focus on your breath. Inside, outside, it really depends.

I mean I know when I was down in Panama, we would sit out on a back patio and just watch the waves come in, of the ocean, and something repetitive like that was really nice to just go and zone out to. So, find what works for you.

And again, there's no perfect way to do it. You have to figure it out. Is it sitting in your car? Is it doing it on your bed? Is it at the kitchen table? Do you need to—whatever it is, go find out and go play with it, and sometimes it just works better in different places. It's not going to be the same place all the time.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. Yeah, and I think it's important to know, like you should be in a place where your body is totally relaxed, and you feel comfortable. If you're in an uncomfortable position, meditation is not going to happen, at least in my experience. So, that would be a tip that I'd give you as well. What should you focus on?

So, this is different for everyone I mean. And again, I'm going to share a few things that I've done in this last year here in a few minutes. But if you're just starting out for the first time with meditation, first of all, you're not going to be perfect. Second, meditation is talked about in the sense of clearing your mind out completely, and I'm going to tell you right now, if you're just starting the practice of meditation, it takes a long time to get to a place where you can completely disconnect.

In fact, for me, it's only happened a handful of times, and I have to have a pretty lengthy amount of time to meditate to get to that place. So, mindful meditation really boils down to, again, being in a comfortable place, being in a quiet place, where you can really connect. And a lot of times, it just comes down to think about your breathing. Breathe in, breathe out.

It doesn't mean you're not thinking about anything. You have to be thinking about your breathing to feel yourself breathing in and out, but you're disconnecting from a lot of the things in your brain. You're disconnecting from a lot of the things in your mind. If you're just starting out with meditation, just start with that. Quiet place, 5-10 minutes, be comfortable, be relaxed, and just focus on your breathing. Let everything else go.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I think that's the easiest place to start is focusing on breath. Counting your breaths. Go to 10, start over. It's just a good place to start, in my opinion. Now, and we're talking about mindful meditation, and I think there's a couple distinctions there, right? One is sitting and just meditating and counting to 10.

The second is kind of the mindfulness in our day-to-day operations. So, we can kind of do a mindful meditation, like we talked about, when you sit down for your breakfast or lunch or dinner, or your eating, by putting the phone away, by being present in that moment, to me, is a form of mindful meditation. Focusing on my food and not thinking about all the other things in life. Focusing on that one thing that I'm doing, in my mind, is a form of mindful meditation.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Agreed, agreed. And again, see, that's another example of meditation looks different for everyone. It really is about getting connected with yourself and being present and letting go of all the other things – past, future, what's going to happen in five minutes. It's being present in the moment.

Another thing that you can do is focus on a really just one space, one item, one object. If you're having a hard time getting your mind to calm down, maybe look at a flower that's in a vase and just focus on that and just think about that. It's really training your mind to focus more and focus on one thing. So, that's another tip that you could try if you're having a hard time getting focused.

It's really about focus, being present, whatever that looks like for you. And then, one other tip is you could try essential oils. You could put some essential oils in a diffuser, lavender is really relaxing. I like lavender, peppermint, and a eucalyptus mix for relaxing. It kind of has a spa smell to me. I actually put that in my kids' diffuser overnight to help them go to sleep. And I think it's a really great smell, it's very relaxing. So, any of your favorite essential oils that are going to help you feel relaxed and reduce stress is also something you can use when you're meditating.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I love the idea of having things that help, right? So, whether that's a guided meditation app, if you need to, whether that's some nature sounds app, where you can hear the oceans crashing, or you can hear birds. Just things that just help us get out of the craziness that has become our lives.

And that's the reality, right? Is there's so much going on. That's why meditation is so much more important now than I think it's ever been in the past, right? 50 years ago, we didn't have all these distractions. Our mind wasn't going so crazy. I'm not saying meditation wasn't beneficial 50 years ago. I think it's 10 times more beneficial now than it's ever been in the past, because of everything that's going on, constantly going on, from the news, to our phones, to—yeah, we could go on and on.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Oh, and absolutely, I think you make a really good point. Whether you're 25, 35, 55, 65, and you haven't practiced meditation, or you've been in and out of meditation, we've been trained to go, go, go, think, think, think, multitask, multitask, multitask, be fast, instant gratification, overstress, overanalyze.

We've constantly got negativity being bombarded in the news, we have more information, magazines, books, social media. Our brains are trained to have a million things going on at one time. So, don't expect meditation to come in one day. You spend a lifetime of being trained on how to overthink and overanalyze and have so many things on your mind, and overstress, it's going to take time to learn to deconstruct that back to a place where you can just be present with yourself.

Jonathan Hunsaker: I need to meditate just after hearing your list, right? You went through all that, and I could feel everything coming up, like holy crap, that's life.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah. And it really is. So, to close this out today, I wanted to share a few things. I've really been practicing meditation for the last year. Some of the most brilliant minds of our time, and all the way back into the past, believed in meditation. It looked different for all of them. But again, some of the most brilliant and successful minds have practiced meditation.

I've read about some of their practices, I've read about what some of them did. One of the things that was most fascinating to me was people who have tried to meditate, where they get to that place where you're just barely falling asleep and you're still awake, because they believe that was where you were most present to your unconscious mind.

I can tell you that it's taken a long time of meditation just at the basics to feel like I can even start that. And it takes a long time to get to a place, just in one meditation session, to be in that state of mind. But

it's been extremely powerful for me. So, it's not just something we're talking about here on the podcast today, but successful and brilliant minds, for a long time, have been meditating and using it to come up with some of their best ideas, to disconnect, because their minds go a million miles an hour, and just focus on one thing, or try to come up with their next creation, their next invention, and shut off the world.

So, that's just food for thought. I mean this rabbit hole goes deep. Also, one of the things that's been really powerful for me has been visual meditation.

Recently, I've been practicing being really connected to nature through visual meditation. My meditation starts with feeling what my emotion is at that time that I'm meditating. Sometimes it's happy, sometimes it's sad, sometimes it's stress, sometimes it's overwhelmed, sometimes it's anger. It doesn't matter.

I identify my emotion by meditating, and then I connect it to something I think about in nature. I'll close my eyes and imagine myself in that place in nature, and I'll feel all of the things around me in nature – the sounds, the energy, the colors, and I'll connect my emotion to that. I think oftentimes, one of the things I struggle with, and something we struggle with in the world today, is feeling ashamed of our emotions instead of using them to benefit us and to learn from them.

So, meditating on my emotions and connecting to nature through that, because nature is such a beautiful thing, has helped me to identify the power in my emotions, and I can tell you this has not been something where I've meditated for five days, and then all of a sudden, I found this practice for myself. This has been refining meditation over and over and over again.

I have to be in a quiet place, I have to have a lot of time to meditate like this. But when I get those moments and that opportunity, meditation has allowed me to disconnect from the world and really connect with myself and my emotions. These are just a few of the practices that I've started trying, and again, this rabbit hole goes deep.

I just wanted to share a few places that you can go with meditation. And again, if you're just starting out for the first time, I love meditation, and I think it can be really powerful, especially if you're in a place where stress is high, anxiety is high, and where you just need to be connected with yourself and mindful again.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Well, and I don't think that we always recognize all the benefits that come from meditation, right? So, there's the mental health, and the clarity and strengthening your brain, and the

focus, and the memory. There's the physical health that can happen inside of your body, the blood pressure, the stress release, all of that.

There's the spiritual health that you can get by getting quiet and getting really present to your faith and different things that really matter to you spiritually. Meditation is wonderful when you have a big decision, where you're not sure what to do. Now, it doesn't mean sitting there and thinking about that decision.

That means sitting there and getting quiet to everything else, because when you do that, I think that the answer comes to you easier when you're not thinking about what should you do. Because a lot of times, when you're thinking about a decision to make, you're weighing in other people's feelings, and this, and that, and your pros and cons, where it's actually just shutting everything up can have you come to an a-ha moment to help make it.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Yeah.

Jonathan Hunsaker: And so, I think meditation just goes really deep in a lot of different ways, and there's no right way to do it. There's no wrong way to do it. Just do it and see what happens for you, and let that be your journey, and see where it leads you.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely. I love that you said that. And I will say this, as my last comment here. One of the biggest benefits I've received from meditation is loving myself more. When you become mindful to yourself, when you become connected to yourself, and you shut out all the noise of the outside world, you're allowed to really enter into a space of feeling your body, feeling your heart, feeling your emotions, and letting go of everything else, and that's been a powerful practice for me.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Absolutely, absolutely. Yeah. I think so many benefits come from it by just shutting everything else up, right?

TeriAnn Trevenen: Absolutely.

Jonathan Hunsaker: So, that to me is what meditation really, really is ultimately. So, listen, thank you for tuning in. I hope that you got something from this podcast, something you can walk away with, something that can help you meditate more, be more mindful with, just any kind of tip.

And if you learned something, share it with somebody that you know. Share it with a friend or relative, somebody that you think might be a little bit overstressed. Share this podcast or share a tip that you learned.

I was doing another podcast earlier, and we were just talking about the compound effect when you learn something, that you should teach what you learn, because it can help other people, and then they teach other people and it helps them. So, it's one of the reasons why we do this podcast is not just to help you live a healthier, more organic life, but hopefully, inspire you to teach others, and we have a big compounding effect there.

So, thank you very much for tuning in. If you liked this podcast, make sure you follow us on iTunes, subscribe to us on iTunes, I'm sorry, give us a big thumbs up, leave us a comment. Go to EmpoweringYouOrganically.com for all of the show notes, the transcripts of this podcast, links to Eckhart Tolle's books, and other resources that we have. And am I missing anything?

TeriAnn Trevenen: I think you covered it all.

Jonathan Hunsaker: Thank you, everybody, for tuning in. We'll see you on the next show.

TeriAnn Trevenen: Thanks, everyone!

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Episode 149 – Mindfulness and Meditation: How to Be More Present in Life