Donald McCown · Diane Reibel
Marc S. Micozzi

Resources for Teaching Mindfulness

An International Handbook

Springer

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"A deep, supportive, and challenging dive into the art of teaching mindfulness, including the science of it, in the form of MBSR and other mindfulness-based interventions. Highly experienced contributors offer a cornucopia of inspiring, instrumental, and non-instrumental perspectives on the multi-dimensional topology of the classroom in vastly different contexts and cultures. Of particular note is the intimacy of one's own embodied sharing and exploring of the practice with others as the instructor — with the welcome mat for what arrives within us and between us firmly rolled out in not-knowing, coupled with deep listening, creativity, imagination, daring, and caring."

Jon Kabat-Zinn
Founder of MBSR
Author of *Full Catastrophe Living and Coming to Our Senses*

"This book is a wonderful and vital contribution to the field of mindfulness training. The editors have brought together a hugely impressive team of experienced trainers from across the world. Together the authors explore both the general demands that such training requires and the specific needs of particular groups and cultures. This book will find itself at the heart of required reading for students, teachers and trainers of mindfulness-based approaches.

MarkWilliams
Emeritus Professor of Clinical Psychology
University of Oxford

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Introduction: Meeting Mindfulness Teachers "Where They Are"

It is the time of the teacher, at last. After decades of growth of the mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs), the importance of the person and skills of the teacher has come to the fore. The demand for well-practiced and well-trained teachers has accelerated, as the MBIs have become more established through the elaboration of a scientific evidence base and are now recommended and even preferred for many clinical applications.[1]

This demand has brought the more senior teachers and trainers of teachers within the MBIs together in order to seek agreements on MBI integrity, standards for good practice, and assessment of training and teaching competency. This effort is worldwide, involving organizations in more than a dozen countries in Europe, as well as North America, the Australasia region, and Africa, so far. Such efforts and agreements are, of course, of great importance in establishing a community of scholars and practitioners with common concerns and aspirations. Finding common ground and making descriptions and definitions of the basic skill sets and core characteristics is essential to ensuring the competence of MBI teachers and maintaining the established pedagogy.

Yet, there are differences in the context of any MBI class that must also be recognized and allowed. Teachers must be encouraged to "grow into" the skills and characteristics within their very specific relationships to persons, places, and cultures. This requires an exacting balance. On the one hand, the teacher's own ongoing practice of mindfulness must be encouraged. Practice deepens the teacher's understanding of what we call the "key move" of the pedagogy, which is to help participants *turn toward and be with and in their experiences of the moment in a friendly way*. Every pedagogical move can be weighed, measured, and reflected on in its relation to this move. On the other hand, the teacher's deepening understanding needs to be enlivened by encounters and experiments with different pedagogical

[1] Note that our interest here is in the clinical applications of mindfulness, as the broader applications in organizations, businesses, education, and other social environments are too varied and too freighted with their own theoretical and practical issues to be effectively addressed. We believe it is best for MBI teachers to continually keep in mind that the clinical applications of mindfulness may differ significantly from other contexts, in background, theory, motivation, and intention.

theories, styles, and techniques. This is how teachers and the pedagogy itself will continue to mature and evolve.

With such growth and change inevitable in a global undertaking, another requirement is to capture the ongoing unfolding of pedagogical possibilities. As teachers co-create mindfulness with their class participants, meeting them where they are, the teachers are continually learning from class to class how to negotiate the key move in their emerging context. Such moments of discernment, of knowing something very particular, are transformative for the teachers; yet, only when they can share them with other teachers do they have the power to help the pedagogy of the MBIs evolve.

The intention of this book is to support the ongoing development of established MBI teachers and the evolution of the pedagogy through a simple strategy of sharing teachers’ insights and ideas from a rich variety of sources and contexts. Our work as teachers is to tend and extend relationships in the classroom. As editors, through our curious, careful, contemplative relationships with the chapters presented here, we have been touched, moved, and changed in our approaches to our classrooms, practices, and lives. We invite you to join in and experience your own relationships to this work that our colleagues have so generously shared. Explore what is here. Live with it. Allow it to influence you, as you influence others. With one hand on the key move of the pedagogy, the other forever reaching out, reaching toward, and ultimately grasping what is needed in the moment.

Vitality and Variety

This book is meant as a contribution to the ongoing co-creation of the pedagogy of the MBIs. The authors of these chapters represent a living, thriving range of geographical, cultural, philosophical, theoretical, and practical positions on the pedagogy. To read any chapter is to enter the community of teachers through a particular door and to see the pedagogy from a unique perspective. The variety of perspectives offers us vitality. You may be comforted to encounter perspectives aligned with your current ideas. You may be challenged when you meet other positions and postures that have evolved in different contexts. And you may be inspired and encouraged as you come upon the stories of teachers who find their own way, even when the way seems difficult or lost.

This book is not designed to deliver basic knowledge about teaching in the MBIs. Rather, it offers possibilities for growth in the practice of the pedagogy. Chapters are arranged to expand on four domains of teaching.

Part I: Honing the Skills of MBI Teachers

Here you’ll find what might be thought of as “master classes” in the skills of the teacher, as they are originally defined in the book *Teaching Mindfulness: A Practical Guide for Clinicians and Educators* (McCown et al., 2010). Don McCown starts

with stewardship, the most basic yet least definable skill, which is focused on the space and relationships in the classroom. He offers ways of conceptualizing the MBI class and the activities of the co-creation of the pedagogy of mindfulness, making connections to the ethics of the practice, as well as to the all important atmosphere of the gathering in the room.

Next, Aleeze Moss, Diane Reibel, and Don McCown present the skill of guiding practices as a way of catalyzing the co-creation of the pedagogy, through four dimensions of skill in guidance that culminate in the key move of being with and in the experience of the moment in a friendly way. With precision, they provide and analyze a script for seated yoga—which becomes a resource as a practice and as a training.

Saki Santorelli, a pivotal thinker at the UMASS Center for Mindfulness, particularly in the development of inquiry, delivers a truly masterful class on that skill. Inquiry may be described as a dialogue of teacher and participant, leading to what Santorelli calls "remembrance"—participants' inner realizations that they have the capacity to transcend their inherited and self-imposed limiting views, ideas, and opinions about who and what they are and to gain a vastly larger perspective on their own capabilities. The verbatim dialogues and the penetrating discussion of the types of questions that may open participants to such realizations must be returned to again and again.

Florence Meleo-Myer, also contributes from the UMASS CFM, adding a new, emerging skill of leading interpersonal practices. These practices turn participants toward one another to explore mindfulness in a closely focused spoken encounter.

Willoughby Britton covers the skill of homiletics—speaking to the group—with meticulous regard for how to keep up with, review, and bring into easily understood language the vast range of scientific evidence supporting the MBIs. Offering valuable insights and examples for presenting this material, the chapter can expand not only your skills in developing and delivering talks, but also can deepen your understanding of the effects and applications of the practice.

Rebecca Crane and Barbara Reid round up the skills section with a unique form of reflection for users of this book, from their position in the academic/clinical mindfulness community in the UK, where government health policies have driven increasing demand for MBI teachers, and qualifications are critical. Whether you wish to consider your own development, or that of teachers you are training, the comprehensive assessment they outline creates a useful opportunity for considering competence—and it is commensurate with the values and ethos of the MBIs.

Part II: Teaching MBI Curricula Everywhere—International Contexts

In this section, the contributors help to probe the big question: What is it like to be an MBI teacher? They offer perspectives from a range of geographical sites, giving us thick descriptions of how it is to bring mindfulness to groups of participants with very different national or cultural positions—who are often together in one

classroom. These chapters are not meant to exclude readers—"I'll never live there; I don't need to know about that"—but rather to include us all in thinking about the differences any teacher may overlook and avoid encountering in her own classroom. Each chapter illuminates another facet of how the key move of the pedagogy becomes possible for participants and how it touches and moves them.

Heyoung Ahn, teaching in Seoul, South Korea, has thought and experimented intensely to create ways of bringing a curriculum that was built in the extreme individualism and anti-authoritarianism of the USA to a culture that is more collectivistic and accepting of hierarchy. An MBSR class looks the same, but different as he leads it—one hand on the key move, one hand reaching outwards.

Among other powerful appraisals, Fabio Giommi and Antonella Commellato reflect on differences between participant and teacher attitudes and affect in Italy and the "normative" ones of more often described US and UK participants and teachers. Explanations of how and why American teachers, say, can seem inauthentic in a European MBI context may generate considerable soul-searching questions.

Dina Wyschograd's elegant personal essay on teaching MBSR in Israel opens with the question, "If missiles are fired at Jerusalem and the air-raid sirens go off during class today, is there enough space in the shelter for my MBSR group?" There is conflict, cultural contrasts, and challenges, and at the center, the key move of being with and in the present moment in a friendly way—she has learned so much and shares it transparently.

In an anglophone country close to the cultural and religious diversity of Southeast Asia, the MBIs can be positioned with less concern for the exoticism of their Buddhist references. Timothea Goddard and Maura Kenny describe a growth and reception of the MBIs and the differences from the US/UK norms that continue to affect teaching and to generate new approaches.

Simon Whitesman and Linda Kantor reflect from South Africa on the demands that an enormously heterogeneous population, dynamic economic situation, and dramatic social challenges place on the teaching of the MBIs. They offer vignettes of the developing practices of teachers in different niches in the culture—describing the kinds of reaching out to experiment with great richness.

The challenges of diversity insist on the two-hand approach to evolution of the pedagogy. The need to hold fast to the key move while reaching out with an open hand to build a friendly atmosphere in the classroom is sensitively addressed in Rhonda Magee's personal and potent essay, "Teaching Mindfulness with Mindfulness of Diversity." Written from the USA, the spirit nonetheless may pervade the pedagogy everywhere.

Part III: Teaching MBI Curricula to Everyone—Special Populations

In this section, contributors share their expertise, developed through long and deep commitments in working with particular audiences, from inner-city populations to clergy and religious and from frail elders to participants with trauma in their

personal histories. These chapters are not presented to encourage or support teachers to become specialists, but rather to help them become better generalists. Through the detailed sharing of these experts, teachers can develop their own abilities to understand and work in their diverse classes with participants who may benefit from the pedagogical ideas and approaches generated and refined within these focused categories. What's more, the ideas and approaches may generate further new ways of thinking about and practicing the pedagogy.

Beth Roth, through decades of teaching inner-city populations on the US East Coast, has discovered pedagogical turns that make the MBIs more accessible. This is a highly creative undertaking. As Roth remarks, "I consider myself an artist engaged in a vital art form: meeting others' full and imperfect humanity with my own, for the explicit purpose of growth and healing."

Lucia McBee's long engagement with elderly populations has resulted in more comprehensive recasting of the MBSR curriculum than required in many other instances. The challenges are large and the demands are layered. Teaching frail elders actually requires teaching frail elders and their caregivers, and each audience experiences the world differently and needs the teacher to meet them where they are and draw everyone together. The work has been done.

The potential of mindfulness pedagogy to bring about reduction in anxiety and accompanying shifts in behavior in folks diagnosed with developmental and intellectual disabilities is profound. Nirbhay Singh and Monica Jackman have been in the vanguard of this work that is so specific and yet so applicable in any class because it is simple, memorable, and effective. The "soles of the feet" practice belongs in every teacher's repertoire.

Some issues are highly prevalent in MBI participants in MBI groups, such as chronic pain, anxiety/depression, and trauma history. The more a teacher can learn and practice, the richer each class will be. Lone Overby Fjorback and Else-Marie Elmholdt Jegindø specialize in chronic pain. Their chapter offers a balance of thorough, scientific analysis of the biopsychosocial experience of such conditions with the "not knowing" inherent in the practice of the pedagogy. Susan Woods brings practiced discernment to working with anxious and depressed participants. Among many insights her chapter offers a grounding in the benefits of the teacher's own mindfulness practice for her participants and inquiry dialogues that capture nuances of the work. Trish Magyari describes how, for participants with trauma in their personal history, the teacher can make the key move of the pedagogy possible through subtle shifts in timing and language, as well as use of self. Examples of "anticipatory guidance" for participants to stay out of distress, and demonstrations of skillful ways of addressing such distress in class or home practice, will influence teachers' classroom practices.

Jean Kristeller and Andrea Lieberstein speak to a further issue of prominence in the makeup of MBI classes, participants' relationships to food and eating. In describing the curriculum of a specialized MBI for this issue, they show how practices involving food and eating are powerful explorations of the interaction of mindfulness and personal choices.

We learn much more at the extremes than through engagement with the center. Susan Bauer-Wu works with participants with life-limiting illness and at the end of

life. The adaptations and additions she has made are sensitive, beautiful, and—perhaps surprisingly—widely applicable for any MBI class.

This section ends with two chapters dealing with participants who have vocations: health-care professionals and clergy. These choices, perhaps, have interest to the MBI teacher, as this work is a calling, as well. Mick Krasner describes a specific curriculum that investigates resilience as a dynamic force and incorporates mindfulness practices, with a focus on the self-care of the health professional. There is much for teachers to use in the classroom and to explore on their own. Don Marks and Chris Moriconi consider the same ground, from a perspective that includes both the religious and the spiritual. Here, again, teachers may be doubly touched, exploring new possibilities for participants and themselves.

Part IV: Practices and Scripts for the Classroom and the Teacher

One way to get started in thinking through and exploring new directions in the pedagogy for your specific context as an MBI teacher is to start with someone else's idea. The editors invited any contributor who was so moved to offer a practice, and we were rewarded with variety and vitality. As a result, the final section of the book is a trove of practices written for adoption in the classroom to explore a new direction or adoption by the teacher for work on self-development. Yet each practice is more than that, more than simply a template to apply. Each is also offered to be analyzed, rewritten, reconfigured, tested, retested, and ultimately transformed to meet participants—and teachers—right where they are, wherever that is in the world or in life, and to lead them on.

Unshakable and Evolving

Resources for Teaching Mindfulness has been created to deliver just what it says for teachers with sufficient grounding in their own mindfulness practice to grow in the two-handed way that helps the pedagogy of the MBIs to continue to evolve. Whether the teacher connects with the master classes in the broad skill sets of teaching in the MBIs or the detailed personal reflections on how it is and what it means to be an MBI teacher across a wide range of geographic and cultural positions or the finer points of teaching specific populations, one hand must remain unshakably on the key move of the pedagogy—turning toward and being with and in the experience of the moment in a friendly way—while the other hand reaches out to try, to adapt, to touch, and to evolve.

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Part I
Honing the Skills of MBI Teachers

Chapter 1
Stewardship: Deeper Structures of the Co-created Group

Donald McCown

The Primary Skill of the Teacher

What is it like in the room right now? This question is the key, the core, and the constant one for teachers in the mindfulness-based interventions (MBI). It is a question of *atmosphere*, which in everyday speech refers to vague, indeterminate, intangible characters of persons, objects, and environments (Böhme, 1993, 2011). Yet somehow, despite this vagueness, we can still answer the question quickly and easily. We all walk into the room and know, through body sensation and affect, that the atmosphere is tense, or friendly, or calm, or maybe a little sad. And furthering the mystery, we find that we have a very rich vocabulary at hand to describe it. Atmosphere is not something objective, entirely "out there," although the experience comes to us in that way. Nor is it something entirely subjective, available to oneself alone. Rather, it is available to us from both without *and* within, through an undivided relationship between self and other (Böhme, 1993, 2011; Bollnow, 2011; Ingold, 2015). Thus, a group can agree on, and even engage in dialogue about, what it is like in the room at a particular moment. Atmosphere, then, is what we attend to as MBI teachers, while tracking the unfolding of a class session moment by moment. The character of atmosphere is evident not only to teachers but also to participants, making it a valuable and valid measure for the relational state of the group, which the teacher tends through stewardship activities.

This chapter uses the concept of atmosphere to explore the skill set that comprises stewardship, the first of the four skill sets of the teacher, together with homiletics, guidance, and inquiry, as defined in the book *Teaching Mindfulness* (McCown,

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Reibel, & Micozzi, 2017). The concept of atmosphere allows us to venture more deeply into the ways that the stewardship skills contribute to the co-creation of an MBI class, and provides us entrée into emerging areas of concern. We examine seven stewardship skills that interlock, overlap, and allow the shared and unspoken experiences of participants and teacher to be revealed in the atmosphere—how it is in the room in the moment. These skills and their actions range from massively concrete to subtly intuitive. They are less conceptual and less language dependent than the other three skill sets of teaching, making them the first in the list, yet perhaps the last to be fully mastered.

The seven stewardship skills or actions are:

1. *Caring for place*: The most concrete skill, involving rooms, tables and chairs, lighting and HVAC systems, and the greater environment as it impinges on class participants.
2. *Attending to bodies*: Curricula in the MBIs are directed in a variety of ways to helping participants become more aware of and engaged with their corporeal experiences; indeed, through corporeal experience they often come to understand the benefits of mindfulness.
3. *Maintaining relationships*: The practice of mindfulness is a relational undertaking; therefore, an important skill is helping participants to find ways to "be" along with others, to have a sense of co-created experience in silence and in speech.
4. *Learning from and in the atmosphere*: Participants develop the potentials of mindful presence through dwelling in the place that mindful presence happens and among the ones with whom it happens. Teachers are shaped by the atmosphere of mindful presence, as well; the actions of the other skills of homiletics, guidance, and inquiry are responses to the atmosphere. Atmosphere not only teaches participants, it teaches the teacher.
5. *Tending the ethical space*: The practice of teaching and learning mindfulness in clinical applications is inherently ethical. The space that participants and teachers co-create becomes a first-order morality. When that space is threatened or collapses, the teacher has the necessary resources to repair it or shift to a different but sufficient professional ethic.
6. *Sensing sublime moments*: The atmosphere of the class is, in a way, a gauge for its value to participants. When it supports mindfulness—the turning towards and being with the experience of the moment—it has a particular character. We might use an aesthetic term to name it: the sublime. The presence of sublime moments in a class, then, suggests that it is possible for participants to find the potential to be with and in their experiences, even when aversive, and to live differently.
7. *Positioning the self for teaching*: As much as possible, teachers in the MBIs need to live in the atmosphere and ethical space of the class, to "steep" in it in a corporeal and affective way. This process of steeping, a key to teacher training, engenders new potentials for being, or perhaps new versions of the self to be accessed in the classroom. How these potentials become available to the teacher in any particular moment is a question worth addressing under the heading of stewardship.

As we move through each of these skills and actions, the concepts of atmosphere, relationality, and the meaning of the word stewardship will become clearer. It may even become a synonym for teaching.

Box 1.1: The Word "Stewardship"
Derived from Old English words *stig* and *weard*, or more familiarly *sty* and *ward*, the word stewardship clearly points to one who is a servant with significant responsibilities. The ward of the sty, or hall, must guard it to keep it safe from what is outside, and to serve those who are inside. This implies watchfulness and care.

The steward is one who is in charge while the true ruler is away, and who is expected to keep all of it safe—and to make it prosper—until the ruler's return. The MBI teacher takes on the democratic version of this task, stewarding the co-created mindfulness of the group until the group can teach and maintain itself. Teachers do well to remember the admonition to the wise steward of the Gospels: *"Every one to whom much is given, of him will much be required…" (Luke 12:48, RSV).*

1. Caring for Place

No skill is more humble. The MBI teacher, in a tradition stretching back to Jon Kabat-Zinn's first MBSR classes in the basement of UMASS Medical Center, is often the one who repurposes some general use space, taking down tables and setting up chairs in a circle to create a possibility of togetherness and comfort. That circle is emblematic of the stewardship skill set. It defines the group. It has an outside, which defines the group, and an inside, which belongs to the group. The circle also suggests a meeting of equals, in the way of King Arthur's Round Table. Stewardship skills are applied on both sides of the circle.

In caring for place, we focus on "outside" skills that define the space and the circle itself. Such skills are concrete—finding a meeting space, recruiting and organizing participants, and tending the space before and after the session.

Worldliness, compromise, and even business acumen come into play in these outside skills. Depending on the teacher's situation, the possibility of running a class may hinge upon entrepreneurial skills, from gaining institutional support for a program, to securing time and space on the calendar. Certainly, resources for marketing, public relations, and advertising are required; lacking institutional support, teachers often take on much of this responsibility. (For a structure to consider, see sidebar, "Marketing Mindfulness.") And, of course, as participants join the program, all the administrative tasks of enrollment, payment, orientation, and continuing contact must be accomplished. Again, often by the teacher.

How can the teacher make all this happen—often as only a small part of ongoing professional commitments—while maintaining a mindful balance? This facet of stewardship may be more challenging than it appears. The idea that teachers must

live what they teach—mindfulness in the midst of life's tumult—is a constant truth. Not so much a choice as a necessity!

Screening Participants

After recruiting, screening participants is perhaps the most important stewardship skill outside the circle. Screening may be done in short conversations before or after a group orientation session, or through intake questionnaires, followed up by phone or face-to-face conversation, if needed. What must be decided is not so much who is appropriate for the group as who may be *inappropriate*. Success at screening out those very few potential participants who have a potential to be disruptive is unseen by the class, yet it is essential for their safety, comfort, and possibilities for transformation.

Well-honed clinical skills are an advantage in screening. A teacher's honest appraisal of her own skill in maintaining the central move of the pedagogy is paramount—helping participants to turn towards and be with and in the experience of the moment, no matter how difficult. Only the teacher can decide what she can handle. Hayes and Feldman (2004) suggest that what must be judged is the participant's ability to face his own negative material while suspending use of his current coping strategies to try on new possibilities. This requirement is a tall order for anyone. The teacher must feel confident that, with her help as required, the participant will be able to do this. As such, a teacher's exclusion parameters will no doubt change over time, and with more experience become more and more inclusive.

MARKETING MINDFULNESS

However large or small your local market, it may be valuable to do the analysis that will let you speak clearly about why people should choose your programs. Here are four points to consider, and some telling questions to get you started (McCown, 2005).

1. **Identity**: Defining who is offering what. Are you marketing yourself, as a teacher? Or your organization? Are you offering a defined, recognizable program (say, MBSR or MBCT)? Or do you have a new proposal?
2. **Audience**: Defining specific target groups. With whom would you like to work? Consider demographics, psychographics, psychometrics, and potential alliances with organizations.
3. **Position**: Differentiating your offering. What other programs and practitioners are in your area? Is what you do in a new category? Is it a fresh approach? Does it emphasize different features and benefits than what is in the market now?
4. **Communication**: Defining the language and imagery most appropriate for a specific target audience. How do they prefer to get information? (e.g., adolescents and social media; folks with chronic illness and referrals from organizations and online news groups.) What propositions are most persuasive? Scientific evidence? Participant testimonials? Professional endorsements?

For beginning teachers, some rules of thumb may be useful. The exclusion criteria used by the UMASS Center for Mindfulness (Santorelli, 2014) are clear, and offer confidence for teachers with differing levels of clinical training. They specifically exclude folks in active addiction or in recovery less than a year; patients with suicidality, psychosis (refractory to medication), post-traumatic stress disorder, major depression, other psychiatric disorders if they interfere with group participation, and social anxiety unworkable in a group environ-

ment. Exceptions are individualized and enrollment may be considered if the participant is highly motivated, engaged in supportive professional treatment, agrees to the teacher communicating with the professionals, and the professionals agree to act as primary caregivers and first contacts in emergencies. Meditation practice may be contraindicated in some cases, as adverse effects are possible and recorded in the literature (for an overview, see Britton, Chap. 5). More prosaic exclusion criteria include language comprehension, logistical barriers to attendance (not related to physical impairment), and scheduling issues that could result in missing three or more classes. Ultimately, the teacher's intuitive feel for the participant and confidence in her own skills are the most important factors.

Returning to the concrete skills, caring for place means working with the room and its furnishings. A teacher works to make the room as comfortable and attractive as possible. However, there are logical and pedagogical limits. Being overly "fussy" about room décor, or attempting to control all temperature fluctuations and outside noise may undermine the central teaching point—to be with and in the experience of the moment, whether pleasant or aversive. More pedagogically valuable than exercising excessive overcontrol would be to use the less-than-satisfactory characteristics of the meeting space as an opportunity to talk about mindfulness. A teacher can call participants' attention to the balky heating or air conditioning system, or to the traffic noise outside the room, not to make excuses, but to highlight how the practice helps us in real-life situations, which are seldom perfect or even the way we would prefer. The message that most supports the pedagogy is that "we do what we can, and accept what we must."

2. *Attending to Bodies*

Stewardship is about tending to living, breathing, moving people, whose bodies are responsive in profound ways to the others and "othernesses" in their inner and outer environments. It is about creating conditions under which participants may come to greater awareness of, and possibly control over, their responsiveness. Right from the start, MBI curricula are designed to sensitize participants to their corporeal experiences (McCown et al., 2010). The first formal practice is the body scan, in which participants are asked to bring attention to all the areas of the body in turn, without the editing and ignoring of regions as often determined by social, cultural, and personal history. Further, sitting meditation is introduced with emphasis on physical sensations of the breath, while mindful movement practices bring focus to the body in motion in space, developing interoception (feeling the body from inside) and proprioception (feeling the body in space) in tandem. In any curricular situation, the body is the gateway to the present moment.

As participants begin to better connect to corporeal experience, they often notice differences in their engagement with the world. One participant wrote,

> This class's focus on getting in touch with our bodies helped me start to bridge the gap and repair the damage of being disconnected from my body. I started to notice things that I never had before (feelings, emotions, reactions, etc.). Now, I am more in tune with my body and notice physical changes more quickly than I had before. Now, I can recognize feelings for what they are instead of reacting without knowing what the motivating force behind the reaction was. This class helped catapult my understanding of my head and heart connection to a higher degree (McCown, 2015).

Stewardship skills facilitate this in concrete ways, by making the place in which the class meets amenable to corporeal learning.

Beginning from the definition of mindfulness that participants hear in the first session—paying attention, on purpose, from moment to moment, and nonjudgmentally,—the teacher establishes ground rules for the classroom. Such rules are specifically shaped by institutional considerations and cultural expectations. Yet, they might be expressed (to borrow from *Star Trek*) as a prime directive: "Take care of yourself." This directive is very much applicable when it comes to bodily needs—drinking water, going to the lavatory, moving the body, shifting postures. It applies as well to participating, or not, in activities that may be physically or emotionally challenging. Such emphasis on discernment and self-care may contribute to an atmosphere in which self-compassion becomes a possibility for participants. Research has suggested self-compassion may be strongly transformative (Feldman & Kuyken, 2011; Kuyken et al., 2010; Van Dam, Sheppard, Forsyth, & Earleywine, 2011).

The Buddhist and Taoist literatures identify four postures to illustrate the whole range of possible postures of the human body—traditionally said to number 80,000. These iconic postures of *walking*, *standing*, *sitting*, and *lying down* are often referred to as the *four dignities*, and are used for meditation practice. Stewardship makes the classroom accessible for all four dignities and the thousands in between. In fact, it is an example of stewardship for the teacher to be open to participants using any of the postures for meditation at any time. Suggesting, for example, that sitting meditation, or the body scan requires a certain bodily form militates against the prime directive, not to mention the broader teaching point that mindfulness is bringing attention to however it is in the moment.

Walking and standing must be also accommodated. There must be open floor space for participants to travel to the circle where the class gathers in the event members are using canes, walkers, wheelchairs, and other supportive devices. Ideally, there will be space that can be cleared for walking meditation for all participants, or another space nearby with the proper characteristics that may be used. When outdoor spaces are available, a choice to remain inside should be offered and supported by teaching staff, mitigating issues with weather, terrain, and any added physical effort.

Sitting is perhaps the most varied, and contested, of the four graces in the MBIs. Certainly, how we sit, the furnishings we use, and our expectations of "sitting meditation" are culturally derived. In western cultures, we spend far more time sitting in chairs than on the floor. We emphasize particular postures, and know that certain postures are expected in certain kinds of chairs. We even offer children smaller versions of chairs, so they can learn to sit up "correctly." In Eastern cultures (from which, for the West, popular "orientalist" images of medi-

tation have been derived), it is common to sit on the floor, and there are furnishings and accepted postures for particular situations, including meditation.

Teachers should simply furnish their classes for the culturally preferred ways of sitting. This point is based on two strong ideas. First, ways of sitting are deeply ingrained and not easily, quickly, or comfortably changed. As the early twentieth century sociologist Mauss (1934/1973) noted, sitting is a technique of the body that is deeply learned and highly variable by culture. The contemporary anthropologist Tim Ingold expands upon Mauss's view and suggests that humans grow into such techniques as a body-mind-environment complex. That position makes the preferred technique(s) not something learned, but a noncognitive potential of being (e.g., Ingold, 2008; see section "Learning from and in the Atmosphere" of this chapter for detailed discussion). Second, we are teaching mindfulness practice for use in the everyday world. It is therefore sensible to teach sitting meditation in the participants' preferred posture(s), so that practice is as "close" to the everyday moment as possible. In this way, formal and informal practices have a powerful continuity. What is achieved in formal practice becomes available even when literally just "sitting around."

Lying down, the fourth grace, requires floor space and comfort, and can be encouraged by making yoga mats and/or blankets available. This posture is suggested (although not required!) for the body scan, the first formal practice of most MBI curricula, and also for the floor yoga that is practiced as part of the mindful movement in the curricula. Rarely do clinical or educational programs, biased towards the cognitive, include lying quietly on the floor as a regular activity. Such an unusual action can be seen to help catalyze the idea for participants that the MBI class holds the potential for discovering new possibilities of experience (McCown et al., 2010). The literal change of perspective that accompanies lying down is simple yet dramatic. It can transform the atmosphere in the room, bringing curiosity and anticipation into the foreground.

3. Maintaining Relationships

We can begin right at the top of the head with defining relationships—in the mirror neurons in our brains. These neurons allow us to feel the movements and even the intentions of those who are with us (Gallese, Fadiga, Fogassi, & Rizzolatti, 1996; Gallese & Goldman, 1998). A "resonance circuit" through the brain makes the connection (Siegel, 2007). We notice an action or expression in another person, and our mirror neuron system duplicates it. Then, our superior temporal cortex predicts how it will feel. That information is processed by the insula and limbic system, in turn, to define its emotional tone. This tone is returned through the insula to the prefrontal cortex, which interprets it—and voilà, we come to know the situation and to feel what others are feeling. In fact, we can read their intentions and attune to them. Through this circuit, infants bond to caregivers, family and lovers bond, and social connections are made (Carr, Iacoboni, Dubeau, Mazziotta, & Lenzi, 2003). From an

evolutionary perspective, this neural process is what allows us to cooperate and compete, to make love, and to fight (Cozolino, 2006).

This circuit is active in the pedagogical situation of the MBIs. When we add mindfulness practice into the mix, the space and place change further. Meditators attune to their own intentions and resonate with themselves. The resultant activity in the prefrontal cortex calms the limbic system, particularly the "fearful" right amygdala (Creswell, Way, Eisenberger, & Lieberman, 2007; Lieberman et al., 2007). A physiological shift may be potentiated that results in what participants report as peace or relaxation—with attendant changes in body posture, vocal tone, gesture, and expression.

Now consider that during a formal group practice, participants may come to experience this kind of physiological shift. When the practice ends, participants begin to look around the group. Even if they are not peaceful themselves, their mirror neurons react to the attitudes of all those who are. Everyone has a chance to "try on" each other's feelings—to experience the atmosphere.

We can explain this characteristic situation of the MBIs in some detail, through Stephen Porges's "polyvagal theory" (2011). His theory posits that we have not only the two subcortical reflex reactions to awareness of threats in the environment—"fight/flight," or "freeze"—but we also reflexively react to awareness of safety. This third reaction is mediated by the evolutionarily newer branch of the vagus nerve, which enervates the internal viscera, including the heart and the muscles of the head and neck. When our subcortical threat detection system perceives a safe environment, such as with a group of peaceful meditators, the "fight or flight" reflex is suppressed, the heart rate slows, and we become ready for social engagement. That is, our eyes open further to exchange glances, our hearing tunes to the frequency of human voices, our face and neck muscles are prepared to make finely distinctive facial expressions and gestures, and we are ready for articulate speech. Also important in this context is release of the "love hormone" oxytocin which encourages approaching and even embracing.

The characteristic atmosphere of the MBI class is "clearer" now in terms of physiology. Again and again, through formal and informal mindfulness practice, the group together creates an environment that feels safe. Changes in expressions, postures, voices, and gestures may help even those who are struggling move towards social engagement. That response may flow around and throughout the group, creating an atmosphere in which approach and embrace of the moment is possible. In such an atmosphere, participants become more free to explore their aversive, painful experiences of the moment, and to meet them with friendliness.

Stewardship Inside the Circle

Let's consider now the circle of participants, this time looking at the "inside" skills of stewardship. As the capacity develops for the group to stay with the central move of the pedagogy, it is often tested by the environment, dramatic distractions, emotions, or conflicts, within the gathering. The teacher's skills here provide ways of bringing the pedagogy of mindfulness to bear, by helping participants to turn towards difficult experiences as they arise, or to let go of attractive experiences as they pass.

A simple example of an aversive distraction that cannot be avoided is a series of fire engines passing with sirens blaring in the street. In a loud enough voice, the teacher can ask the group to "drop in" to meditation and notice to what they are aware from moment to moment. With the distraction over, the group can then speak together in small subgroups or the full group about the experience. An extraordinary experience can thereby be turned to an ordinary example of mindfulness practice.

If the group is tested in its dialogues by conflict, cross talk, or dominating participants, the teacher may invoke stewardship skills of a formal approach to conversation that may equalize the situation. One approach is to remind participants that listening is the mindfulness skill in dialogue, and then introducing a formal dialogue practice.

A simplified version of the subgrouping technique from Systems Centered Therapy (Agazarian, 1997) may be valuable. Three instructions can be given: First, come to awareness of the body, and maintain that awareness throughout the process of listening and speaking. This practice helps ensure that the group is present focused. Second, when one person speaks, all others listen in a specific way. Listeners attempt to make a connection between what is said and their own present-moment experience. Third, if they find a connection, they may choose to voice it to the group. However, if they do not find a connection, they may hold their own truth, in silence, listening while those who have connected explore their topic. As dialogue continues, it may be that they do find a connection and may speak. If not, the teacher may make time for those who have been silent to speak. Slowly and supportively, all sides of a topic may find a voice.

Council Circle (Zimmerman & Coyle, 1996) may also be used in such situations. It too makes listening a mindfulness practice—so participants may become more aware of their own reactions and "inner" dialogues (also known as thinking). The process involves a talking piece that progresses around the circle. Whoever holds the talking piece speaks or offers silence; the others listen. There are four instructions: (1) speak the truth from the present moment; (2) really listen—be wholly present to what the speaker offers; (3) be concise—omit stories or analyses; (4) be spontaneous—just listen, you'll know what to say when it is your turn.

Both these practices offer the option for the participant to choose to be silent—perhaps the most important option offered as part of stewardship. It is not easy to define or discern who is participating in the group, and when. One may be silent during spoken dialogues and yet be deeply engaged. Participants may be transformed by what looks like simply sitting in the circle.

A Hidden Dimension

The fact that we learn mindfulness *together*, that mindfulness is a relational achievement, has been obscured for decades in the scientific literature. We might trace this obscurity to the kind of scientific research that has grown over the past three decades, and is being further elaborated year after year. Research modeled on (or aspiring to) the so-called gold standard of the randomized controlled trial (RCT) is still widely perceived to endow scientific legitimacy. However, its approach to outcomes is positivist, reductionist, and individualist (Micozzi & Cassidy, 2015). It attempts to set up some property of mindfulness

in analogy to a pharmaceutical compound, making it an external object to be placed "inside" to change the individual patient.

While this kind of research approach has elaborated a powerfully persuasive evidence base that has encouraged adoption of mindfulness for a wide range of clinical applications, much potential understanding has been lost. As professionals attempting to describe the pedagogy have suggested (Crane et al., 2014; Crane, Kuyken, Hastings, Rothwell, & Williams, 2010; McCown, 2013; McCown et al., 2017; McCown & Wiley, 2008, 2009), the discourse of this kind of MBI research does not match the concerns of pedagogical study and teacher training. In fact, the research discourse all but ignores the relational dimensions of mindfulness. Even the little bit of data that might be considered from a relational perspective nevertheless focuses on individual outcomes: Imel, Baldwin, Bonus, and MacCoon (2008) looked at data from 60 groups. Through multi-level statistical modeling they calculated the effect on symptom change of the others in the group, factoring out teacher effects, and adjusting for pre-intervention symptom severity. The reported effect accounts for 7 % of variability in outcomes. To put that in perspective, consider that the most significant predictor of outcomes in psychotherapy, the client-therapist alliance, accounts for only about 5 % of variability in outcomes (Horvath & Bedi, 2002).

To better connect with the relational dimension, my colleagues and I have been working with a social constructionist view (e.g., Gergen, 2009, 2015), pioneered in *Teaching Mindfulness* (McCown et al., 2017), to describe the pedagogy of the MBIs. The power of being together has always been obvious to teachers, who hear first hand how participants find it so much easier to practice with others, and how "close" they feel to people with whom they've actually spent precious little time, and whose names they may not even know. Attending to the relational dimension of the pedagogy is one way to define stewardship.

4. *Learning from and in the Atmosphere*

The pedagogy of the MBIs is not so much about delivering information as it is about facilitating transformation. Much of the possibility of transformation is available in the classroom experience. Through the atmosphere that they co-create, participants and teachers help each other to maintain the practice of mindfulness, particularly in its key move of being with/in the experience of the moment, however dire or delightful. As the class develops this capacity together, participants find that it may also be available to them outside the class.

We might express the process as teachers and participants "steeping" in the co-created atmosphere of the MBI classroom, and being transformed. The relational constructionist theorist Gergen (2009) describes this process as the development of a *potential*, which is then a part of the participant's *multi-being*. In other words, the new capacity is a new mode of being that is shaped in specific relationships and can then be accessed in other situations.

A useful perspective on this process again comes from the anthropologist Ingold (2013). He explains that

> …it is wrong to think of learning as the *transmission* of a ready-made body of information, prior to its *application* in particular contexts of practice. On the contrary, we *learn by doing*, in the course of carrying out tasks of life. In this the contribution of our teachers is not literally to pass on their knowledge, in the form of a ready-made system of concepts and categories with which to give form to the supposedly inchoate material of sensory experience, but rather to establish the contexts or situations in which we can discover for ourselves much of what they already know, and also perhaps much that they do not. In a word, we grow *into* knowledge rather than having it handed down to us (p. 13, emphasis in original).

Returning to Gergen's (2009) ideas, a valuable way for the teacher to think about the situation and atmosphere is through the idea of *confluence*. In this view, group "participants" are mutually defined in the moment through the unfolding of the class activity. A session of formal meditation, for example, mutually defines meditators who are sitting still and quiet, and a teacher who is speaking words of "guidance." As the confluence of formal meditation ends, a new confluence may form as meditators become dyad partners and speak aloud to one another, likely in the curious and non-judging manner that, through the teacher's guidance, informs the atmosphere. In the confluence of the plenary dialogue that follows, the teacher may inquire of participants' in-the-moment experiences in the same way.

In the view of confluence, there is no causality, that is, nothing *forces* the teacher or participants to do what they do. Likewise, they have no agency, that is, no force from "inside" compels them. Rather, what happens from one moment to the next in the class issues from the confluence of relationships. This confluence provides a useful way to speak of the process of the "co-creation" of mindfulness in the group. What's more, after time steeping in this particular confluence, participants come away with potentials for formal and informal mindfulness practice, including potentials of curiosity and non-judging that can also be accessed in other situations.

In this view, stewardship is the tending of relationships to ensure that the atmosphere teaches; that the confluence is a context for growing into knowledge, for being endowed with new potentials; and that the practice of the pedagogy of the MBIs can be transformative.

Box 1.2: Greater Expressive Resources from a Collective Culture
It is exciting for MBSR pedagogical theory (in English) to have the opportunity become acquainted with the Korean vocabulary, with such terms as *Ahwoollim* and *Shinmyong*, and the different structure and syntax. They support the insights that humans are relational beings and help to counteract the atomistic, individualistic concepts enforced by the dominant academic and medical research paradigm (McCown & Ahn, 2015). *Ahwoolim* refers to a deep resonance among more than two different persons or things in which they may lose their ordinary self-boundaries. *Shinmyong* suggests a powerful emotional experience within a group—a sense of ecstatic aliveness and mutuality of becoming. Both terms are a contribution to MBI theory. With such expanded language resources, modes of expression may be built that can capture the most profound moments of pedagogical practice.

5. *Tending the Ethical Space*

Recently, the MBI community and its critics have expressed concern about the role of ethics in the content and pedagogy of the interventions (e.g., Lindahl, 2015; McCown, 2013; Monteiro, Musten, & Compton, 2015; Purser, 2015; Van Gordon, Shonin, Griffiths, & Singh, 2015; Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2013). A key position that has been espoused by the community throughout its history is that MBSR, and by extension the other MBIs, have an implicit ethics. While this position has been considered as controversial (Baer, 2015), such a claim is greatly strengthened within a relational constructionist view, in which the ethical situation is constructed in the moment in the group.

As my colleagues and I (McCown et al., 2017) analyzed the pedagogy of the MBIs, we identified the qualities of the atmosphere that is co-created in the classroom. These qualities are located in both the actions of teaching, and in the unspoken framing of the space, as the teacher and participants come together. This quality may be thought of as the *ethical space* of mindfulness (McCown, 2013), which can be defined by seven specific qualities, distributed across three dimensions.

Although the word *space* is often used in an abstract or metaphorical way in discourse around mindfulness and meditation, the ethical space is not an instance of this same concept. Rather, the ethical space is an actual architectural situation—a place, with furnishings, where people act together in site-specific ways. In the following descriptions of each dimension and its qualities, this will become clearer. Figure 1.1 may help in understanding the relationships and ultimate integration of the dimensions and qualities.

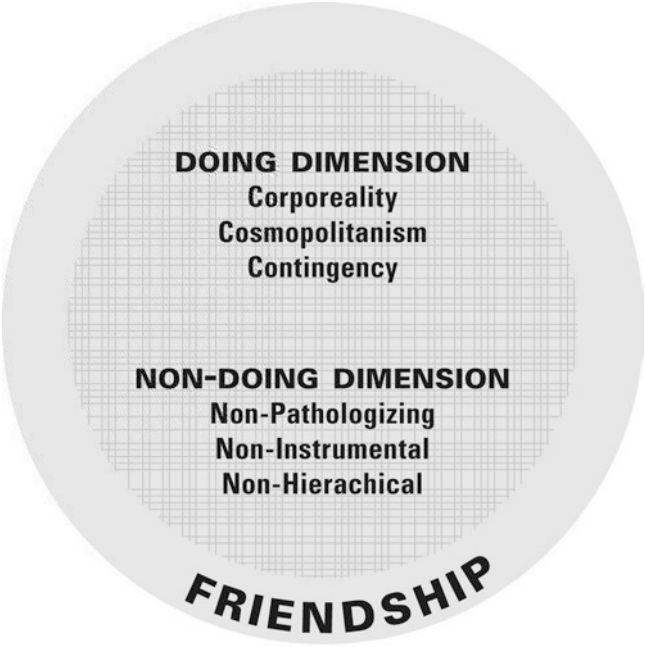

Fig. 1.1 The interweaving (represented by *crosshatched lines*) of the doing and non-doing dimensions is ultimately infused with the quality of friendship—perhaps the best single word description of the atmosphere of the MBI classroom