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Vidyamala Burch

Mindfulness for Fibromyalgia
What You Will Learn

- How to use your mind to manage your illness with grace, dignity and ease
- The Power of the Breath - how learning whole-body breathing can ease your pain
- Pain without Suffering - learning to accept any painful sensations you may have without adding anything extra through mental, emotional or physical reactions and tension.
Vidyamala’s Bio

Living with a chronic back condition due to spinal injuries and partial paraplegia, Vidyamala Burch knows the agony of trying to live with persistent pain. She knows the despondency of not coping and feeling helpless and hopeless. She also knows the joy and pleasure of finding a way to not only manage her pain but to live a full, happy and meaningful life.
Vidyamala’s Bio (cont’d)

- When Vidyamala was 16 she had a spinal injury leaving her with chronic pain.
- She learned meditation in the hospital at that time and learned that her mind could be a tool to heal her body. She has meditated daily for the last 40 years.
- She is an ordained Buddhist and thought she may have something to offer others in terms of meditation and healing.
- She began to run meditation courses since that time.
- For many years, Vidyamala pushed to try and make her pain go away. When that didn’t work, she found strategies to live with pain.
Suffering

- Vidyamala divides pain into Primary and Secondary.
- Primary suffering is the current experience.
- Secondary suffering is the reaction based on resistance and resentment to pain.
- When we have physical pain its as if we are pierced by an arrow. The untrained mind knows only to resist and they are pierced by two arrows. The trained mind does not resist the pain and is therefore not pierced by a second arrow.
- We can learn to be with unpleasant experiences to reduce suffering.
- Mindfulness can work for all types of pain.
How can mindfulness help with pain?

- Through mindfulness we learn that pain is not permanent and in a constant state of change.
- When you begin to think your pain is not curable, just try the body scan and see what happens.
- What ways have pain opened doors in your life?
- Has pain helped you to let go of anything or find different vocations?
- We can practice enjoying bodily sensations rather than resisting.
- Pain can often force us to soften resistance to life.
Our inner stories shape our pain experience

- Are you experiencing guilt due to chronic pain?
- Do you feel that you are making it up or feeling useless?
- These are inner stories we might want to take a look at and try to re-write.
What is mindfulness?

- It is a state where one is awake. In this moment you know what you are thinking, feeling and how your body is doing.
- In this state you are undistracted.
- The outcome of mindfulness means we are able to live with choice. We can also choose how we respond to our experience.
- Mindfulness combats a life of just reacting and having cravings.
- It increases balance and a feeling of wholeness.
Vidyamala’s Programs

- Breath works is based in the UK
- Two key programs Mindfulness for Stress and Mindfulness for Health
- In the US, Vidyamala’s book is called *You Are Not Your Pain*
Breathworks Meditations

- There are 7 practices in the program that are all about ten minutes
  1. Body scan
  2. Breathing anchor
  3. Mindful movement
  4. Compassion and acceptance
  5. Treasure of pleasure
  6. Open heart practice
  7. Connection practice
  8. 3 minute breathing space
Pacing and Mindfulness

- The Breathworks program helps move people out of “boom and bust”
- This begins with journaling your day and looking for patterns.
- When you look at the activities that made your health worse, you can begin to modify your schedule.
- You begin to look for triggers to pain and try to prevent these triggers.
- Vidyamala is a master at pacing. She has written 3 books!
- REMEMBER: Take a break before you need it!
Vidyamala’s tips:

- When in doubt, breathe out.
- If we have discomfort we are probably chronically holding our breath.
- Breath awareness is really important.
Thank You Vidyamala!

www.vidyamala-burch.com