Mindfulness in Law
LAW 513A

Readings for Class Eight
March 27, 2020

Portrait of the Lawyer as an Artist: Mindfulness, Creativity and Gratitude

“Creativity is intelligence having fun”
-Albert Einstein

“We’re just moments; we’re clever but we’re clueless”
-Jack Johnson

Professor Scott Rogers
University of Miami School of Law
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www.mindfulnessinlawclass.com
Mastering Both Focused and Open Attention

There are two complementary qualities of physical fitness: strength and stamina. To be a well-rounded athlete, it is good to have both. Similarly, there are two complementary qualities of attention: focused attention and open attention. To be an accomplished meditator, it is good to be strong in both.

Focused attention is an intense focus on a chosen object. It is stable, strong, and unwavering. It is like sunlight focused with a lens shining intensely on a single point. It is like a solid piece of rock, majestically un-
moved by the distraction of the wind. It is a mind like a closely guarded
royal palace where only the most honored guests are allowed to enter and
all others are courteously but firmly turned away.

Open attention is a quality of attention willing to meet any object that
arrives at the mind or the senses. It is open, flexible, and inviting. It is like
ambient sunlight, lending itself to anything and everything. It is like grass,
always swaying gently in the wind. It is like water, willing to take on any
shape at any time. It is a mind like an open house with a friendly host,
where anybody who walks in is welcomed as an honored guest.

The good news is when you are doing mindfulness meditation, you
are training both focused attention and open attention at the same time.
(Two for the price of one!) That is because mindfulness meditation
includes both components. There is the element of moment-to-moment
attention that you keep bringing back, which trains focused attention.
There is also the element of non-judging and letting go, which trains
open attention. Hence, if you only do mindfulness meditation, you will
be just fine.

Having said that, however, we found it very useful for our participants
to experience the difference between them and to acquire the tools to em-
phasize training of one or the other if they so choose. The exercise we
created is similar to circuit training that some athletes use. Circuit train-
ing is a combination of high-intensity cardio and resistance training in
the same session. One common way to do it is for trainees to run around
a track (cardio) and then stop to do push-ups (resistance), and then run
around the track again, and then stop to do sit-ups (resistance), and so on.
Trainees alternate between cardio and resistance training, hence develop-
ing both strength and stamina at the same time.

In the same way, our circuit training starts with a focused attention
exercise for three minutes, and then we go to an open attention exercise
for three minutes, and so on. We usually do this for twelve minutes, plus
two minutes each of resting the mind on the breath at the beginning and
at the end. Here are the instructions we use.

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MEDITATION CIRCUIT TRAINING

Let us begin by sitting comfortably in a position that enables you to be
both relaxed and alert at the same time, whatever that means to you.

Let us rest the mind. If you like, you can visualize the breath to be a
resting place, or a cushion, or a mattress, and let the mind rest on it.
(Short pause)

Let us shift into focused attention. Bring your attention to your breath,
or any other object of meditation you choose. Let this attention be stable
like a rock, undisturbed by any distraction. If the mind is distracted,
gently but firmly bring the mind back. Let’s continue this exercise for the
remainder of 3 minutes.

(Long pause)

Now we shift into open attention. Bring your attention to whatever
you experience and whatever comes to mind. Let this attention be flex-
ible like grass moving in the wind. In this mind, there is no such thing
as a distraction. Every object you experience is an object of meditation.
Everything is fair game. Let us continue this exercise for the remainder
of 3 minutes.

(Long pause)

(Shift to focused attention for 3 minutes. Then shift to open attention
for 3 minutes.)

Let us end this sitting by resting the mind. If you like, you can again
visualize the breath to be a resting place, or a cushion, or a mattress,
and let the mind rest on it.

(Long pause)

Thank you for your attention.

There are a few important features common to both focused and open
attention. These features are also common with the original mindfulness
meditation we practiced earlier.
The first feature is strong meta-attention (attention of attention). This is because in either meditation, you maintain clear awareness of the movement (or non-movement) of your attention. Hence with enough practice, meta-attention can be strong whether in moving mind (open attention) or still mind (focused attention). The second feature, closely related to the first one, is clarity and vividness of attention. In either meditation, attention can be maintained at high clarity. The analogy is a good torchlight, which can be equally bright whether you shine it at one spot or move it round the room.

The third feature is both meditations require a balance of effort and relaxation. In either case, too much effort makes it tiring and unsustainable, while too little effort causes you to lose your grip on your attention. The classical analogy of this balance is having just the right tension on the strings of a sitar. If the strings are too tight, they break easily, but if they're too loose, they cannot produce beautiful notes. So the strings need to be in the “Goldilocks zone” of being not too tight and not too loose.

I suggest one fun way of maintaining this balance is to play it like a video game. When playing a game on the Xbox, it is most fun when the difficulty setting makes the game just difficult enough to be challenging but not so difficult that you will lose every time. So I like to start a game at a beginner setting and increase the difficulty as I get better at it. We can lay the same way in meditation, especially because we get to control the difficulty setting. Initially, we can make the game easy. For example, we can tell ourselves, “If I can sit for just five minutes, and I can maintain solid attention on my breath for ten continuous breaths anytime during these five minutes, I win!” If you can beat the game at this difficulty setting, say, 90 percent of the time, you can increase the difficulty setting more fun. Once again, the key is to create just enough difficulty to be challenging, but not enough to discourage you. One funny thing I discovered about playing this game is after I became quite good at it, the lowest difficulty setting became really fun. That setting for me is, “Just rest my mind for ten minutes, in an alert sort of way.” That’s it, just rest. I like it so much that I still play at this setting a lot in between days when I play the more challenging games. It is a game in which the easiest setting never gets boring.

"I got you this book on mindfulness meditation instead of an Xbox. It's just as fun!"

The final feature, closely related to the third feature, is that in either meditation it is possible to get into a very good state of ease and flow. When you are engaged in an activity you are very good at, such as skiing, dancing, or writing code, and if you are in a state where your full attention is on the activity and it is fun, easy, and sufficiently challenging at the same time, then you may get into a state of flow in which you are performing at your best yet your mind is at ease. Similarly, with enough practice, it is possible to become skillful at playing with attention and getting into a state of flow when it feels fun and easy at the same time, just by sitting. Very cool.
Meditation makes you more creative, study suggests

Date: October 28, 2014
Source: Leiden University
Summary: Certain meditation techniques can promote creative thinking, even if you have never meditated before. The study is a clear indication that you don’t need to be an experienced meditator to profit more from meditation. The findings support the belief that meditation can have a long-lasting influence on human cognition, including how we conceive new ideas.

FULL STORY

Certain meditation techniques can promote creative thinking, even if you have never meditated before. This is the outcome of a study by cognitive psychologist Lorensa Colzato and Dominique Lippetto at Leiden University, published in Mindfulness.

Long-lasting influence

The study is a clear indication that you don’t need to be an experienced meditator to profit more from meditation. The findings support the belief that meditation can have a long-lasting influence on human cognition, including how we conceive new ideas. Besides experienced meditators, also novices may profit from meditation.

Different techniques, different effects

But the results demonstrate that not all forms of meditation have the same effect on creativity. Test persons performed better in divergent thinking (= thinking up as many possible solutions for a given problem) after Open Monitoring meditation (= being receptive to every thought and sensation). The researchers did not see this effect on divergent thinking after Focused Attention meditation (= focusing on a particular thought or object.)

Setup of the study

40 individuals participated in this study, who had to meditate for 25 minutes before doing their thinking tasks. There were both experienced meditators and people who never meditated before. The study investigated the influences of different types of meditative techniques on the two main ingredients of creativity:
• Divergent thinking allows for many new ideas to be generated. It is measured using the so-called Alternate Uses Task method where participants are required to think up as many uses as possible for a particular object, such as a pen.

• Convergent thinking, on the other hand, is a process whereby one possible solution for a particular problem is generated. This is measured using the Remote Associates Task method, where three unrelated words are presented to the participants, words such as ‘time’, ‘hair’ and ‘stretch’. The participants are then asked to identify the common link: in this case, ‘long’.

Story Source:
Materials provided by Leiden University. Note: Content may be edited for style and length.

Journal Reference:

Cite This Page: MLA APA Chicago

"Haiku" is a traditional form of Japanese poetry. Haiku poems consist of 3 lines. The first and last lines of a Haiku have 5 syllables and the middle line has 7 syllables. The lines rarely rhyme.

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The old pond; a frog jumps in - the sound of water.
- Basho

Sand scatters the beach
Waves crash on the sandy shore
Blue water shimmers

-Kaitlin
Definition of Haiku

A haiku poem has three lines, where the first and last lines have five moras, and the middle line has seven. The pattern in this Japanese genre is 5-7-5. The mora is another name for a sound unit, which is like a syllable, though there is a difference. As the moras cannot be translated into English, they are modified, and syllables are used instead. The lines of such poems rarely rhyme with each other.

Haiku became popular as tanka poems in Japan during the 9th and 12th centuries. Initially, it was called “hokku” and Basho, Buson, and Issa were the first three masters of the haiku genre. Haiku poetry is also full of metaphors and personifications. However, this has often been argued against, since haikus are supposed to be written on objective experiences, rather than subjective ones. In English, several experiments were made in this genre as given below.

“Autumn moonlight—
a worm digs silently
into the chestnut.”

(Autumn Moonlight, by Basho)

Features of Haiku

- It contains three lines.
- It has five moras (syllables) in the first line, seven in the second, and five in the last line.
- It contains 17 syllables in total.
- A Haiku poem does not rhyme.
- Haiku poems frequently have a kigo, or seasonal reference.
- Haiku poems are usually about nature or natural phenomena.
- The poem has two juxtaposed subjects that are divided into two contrasting parts.
- In English, this division between two parts can be shown by a colon or a dash.

Examples of Haiku in Literature

Example #1: Old Pond (By Basho)

Old pond
a frog jumps
the sound of water

In this example, we can clearly see two contrasting parts of the poem; one is about a frog that is jumping, and second is about the sound of water. The syllable pattern is also following a 5-7-5 format.
Example #2: *Book of Haikus* (By Jack Kerouac)

Snow in my shoe—
Abandoned
Sparrow’s nest

This haiku is presenting an image in the first part of “snow in my shoe.” In addition, there are two contrasting ideas that mingle with one another as the second part is about nature. The pattern of syllables is 5-7-5. The poet has tried to present a little story in this haiku.

Example #3: *Dust of Summers* (By Multiple Poets)

Calling home—
the color of mother’s voice
before her words

(By Hilary Tann)

Twilight…
his voice
depth purple

(By Ludmila Balabanova)

In these haikus, figurative device such as metaphors have been used to present an insight of the world. Through this technique, multiple senses are used to gather sensory information.

Example #4: *Thirds* (By Jeffrey Winke)

Song birds
at the train yard’s edge
two cars coupling

Personification is also a definite trait of haiku poetry. This is to assign a human quality or qualities to nonhuman things, though this is less prevalent in haiku as compared to metaphors. In this poem, personification is very well done, hence allowing the poem to speak for itself.

Example #5: *To a Leg of Heron* (By Basho)

To a leg of a heron
Adding a long shank
Of a pheasant.
The theme of this poem is to laugh at one’s self. This is a perfect example of haiku poetry, as it is perfectly following the pattern of syllable counts. It is also giving an amusing and ironic touch, since reality is the major aspect of this form of poetry.

Example #6: Selected Haiku (By Nick Virgilio)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lily:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>out of the water…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>out of itself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Picking bugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>off the moon</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Nick Virgilio is an American poet who is a great supporter of Japanese haiku. He has written 5-7-5 syllable-style poems when translated in Japanese. These examples of haiku poems are natural, mystical, and refined.

**Function of Haiku**

Haikus are short poems written on topics and things that the readers can identify with easily. For example, seasons and animals are readily recognizable topics to readers. Generally, haiku is written for realistic and objective reasons; however, haikus are also written for children. Sometimes it presents two juxtaposed ideas to express meanings through internal comparison.

Found at: https://literarydevices.net/haiku/