



# Foundations of Teaching Mindfulness

Thursday, February 6, 2025



# Group Agreements

- Attend + be present by minimizing other distractions
- Videos on for community building
- Please mute unless speaking to limit background noise
- Mindful listening + speaking
- Step up/Step Back
- Presume positive intent + acknowledge impact
- Take care of your needs
- Participation encouraged + OK to pass
- Practice kindness + curiosity
- Take a breath between speakers
- Confidentiality



*A brief*

# History of Mindfulness

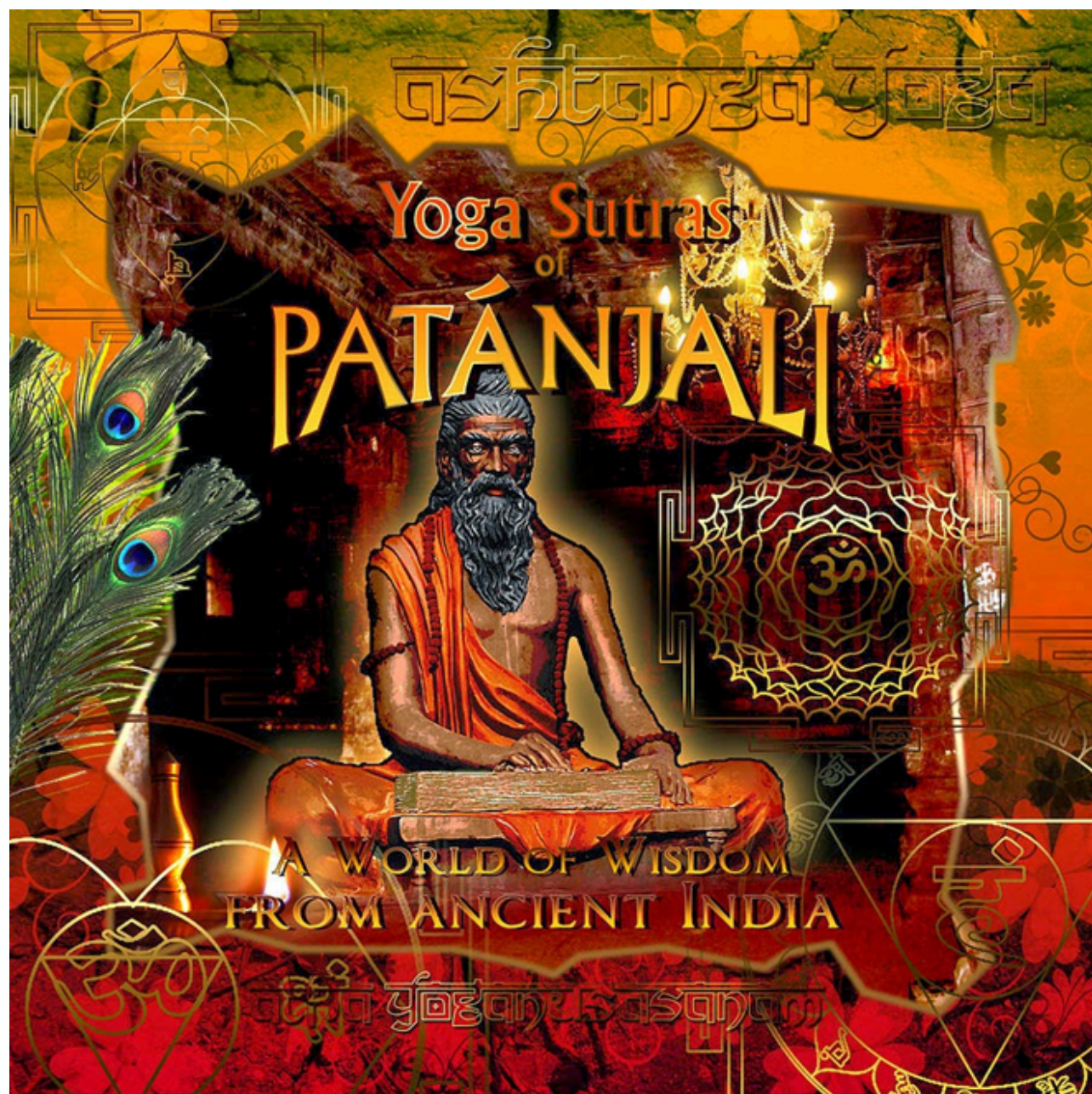




**Enter in the chat: Where does mindfulness show up throughout history? (ie what contexts will be cover?)**



# Yoga



Over 5000 Years

- May be as old as 10,000 years
- Sacred texts began about 5,000 years ago with the Rig Veda
- Yoga Sutras (2600 years ago) – sanskrit principles on the theory and practice of yoga
- Compiled by Patanjali (a sage) in India



# Hinduism

4000 years ago

- In modern day Pakistan
- Mindfulness in ancient Hindu texts
  - Yogic practices
  - Vedic meditation





# Judaism



**4000 years ago**

- Shabbat- centerpiece of Jewish life
- Kavanah- means direction, intention, purpose
- Tefillah- means prayer
- Mystical tradition of Kabbalah (about 800 years ago)
- Gnosticism (1st century AD)
  - emphasis on personal spiritual knowledge

# Daoism/Taoism

2600 years ago

- Ancient China
- Characterized by:
  - Harmonious relationship between humans and the world
  - Meditative contemplation
  - Qigong
  - Tai Chi





# Buddhism



2500 years ago

- Modern day India
- Mindfulness focused on:
  - Meditation to cultivate awareness
  - Higher purpose in life (vipassana)
- Mindfulness first became associated with Buddhism in 1881 when “Sati” was translated as mindfulness.



# Christianity

**1500 years ago**

- Focused on:
  - Attention to God
  - Caring for others
  - Prayer (the Jesus Prayer)
- Contemplative tradition practiced by:
  - Monks and nuns
  - Parishioners
- Gnosticism (1st century AD)
  - Emphasis on personal spiritual knowledge



# Islam



**1100 years ago**

- Used by the Prophet Muhammad
- Mystical tradition of Sufism
- Disagreement among Muslim Scholars as to if meditation is allowed or not





# Psychology

## 200 years ago

- Wilhelm Wundt (Germany) – first lab for experimental psychology
- William James (USA) – focused on fields of consciousness and attention
- Early Scientific research on meditation started in 1930's, EEGs in 1950's
- Therapies including mindfulness:
  - DBT (1970's)
  - ACT (1986)
  - MBSR (1990)
  - MBCT (2002)



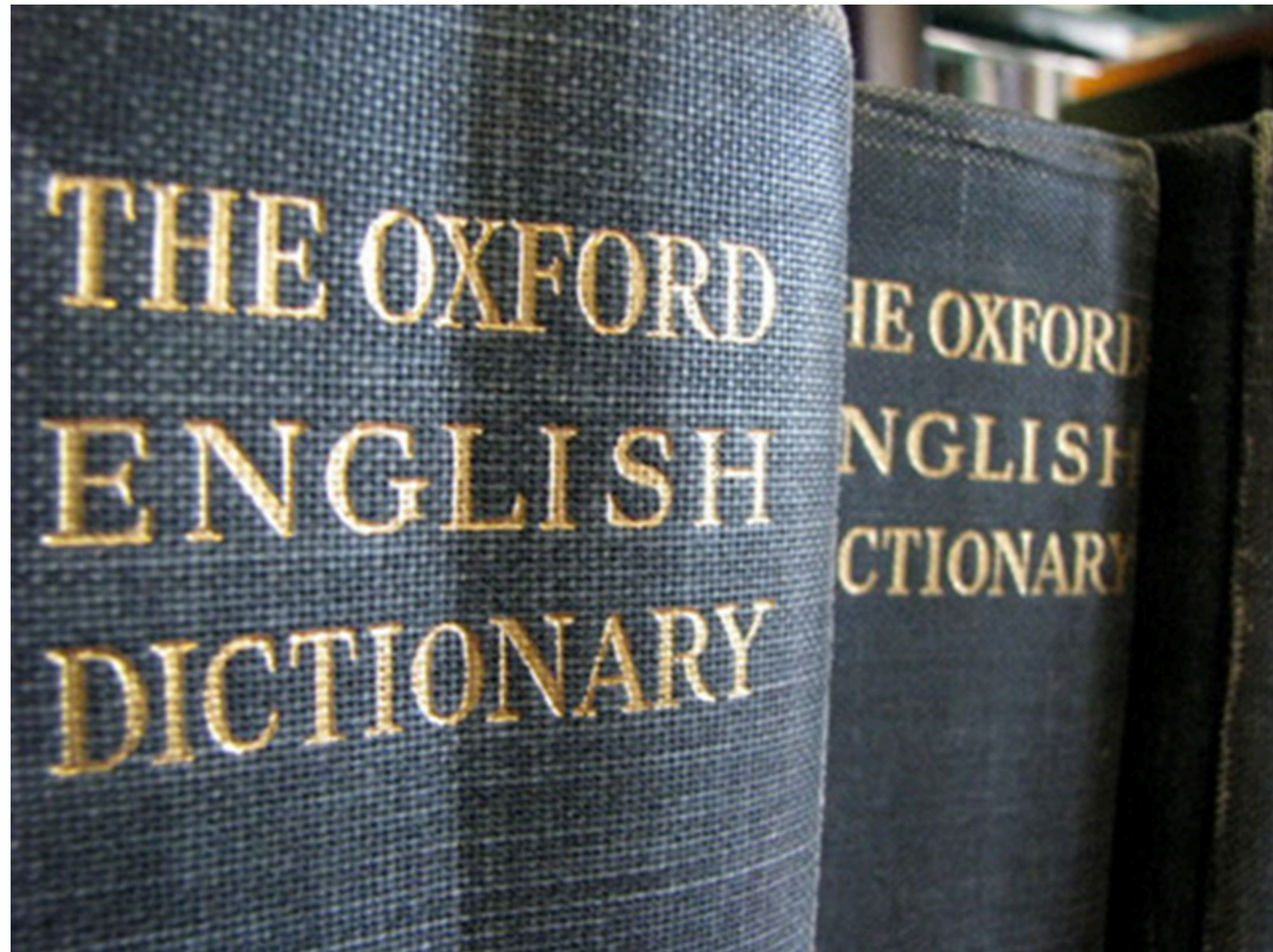


**When did the word MINDFUL show up in the Oxford English Dictionary?**

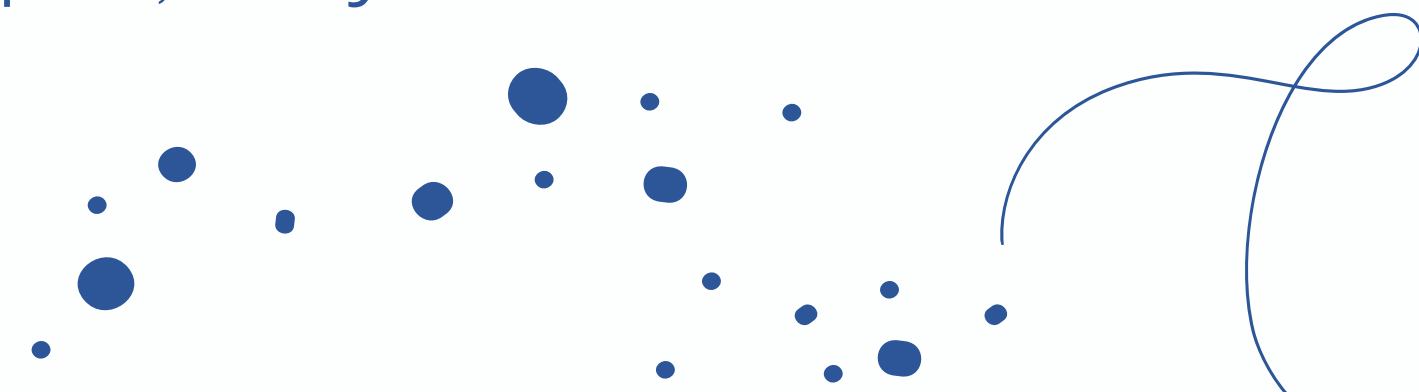




# Mindfulness in The English Language



- Mind (12th Century)
  - Memory, thought, intention, perceiving, care
- Mindful (14th Century)
  - Full of care, being conscious or aware, intending to do
- Mindfulness (1530)
  - State or quality of being mindful, memory, attention, alertness, watchfulness, intention, purpose, thoughtfulness





# Western Movement



• Jon Kabat-Zinn  
MBSR, Center for Mindfulness at UMASS



Dan Siegel  
Mindsight Institute



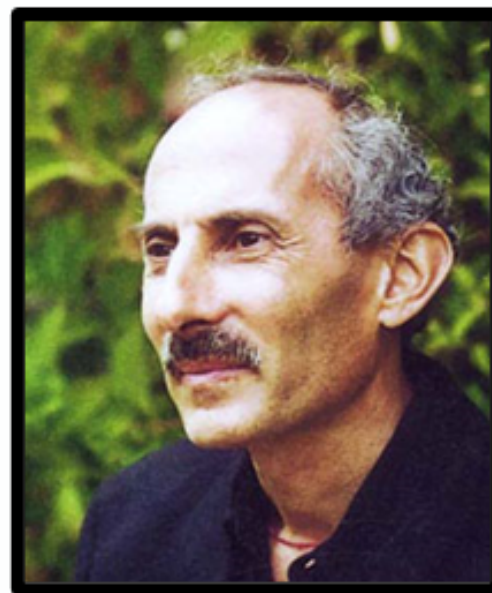
Thich Nhat Hanh  
Plum Village



Sharon Salzberg



Joseph Goldstein  
IMS Founders



Jack Kornfield

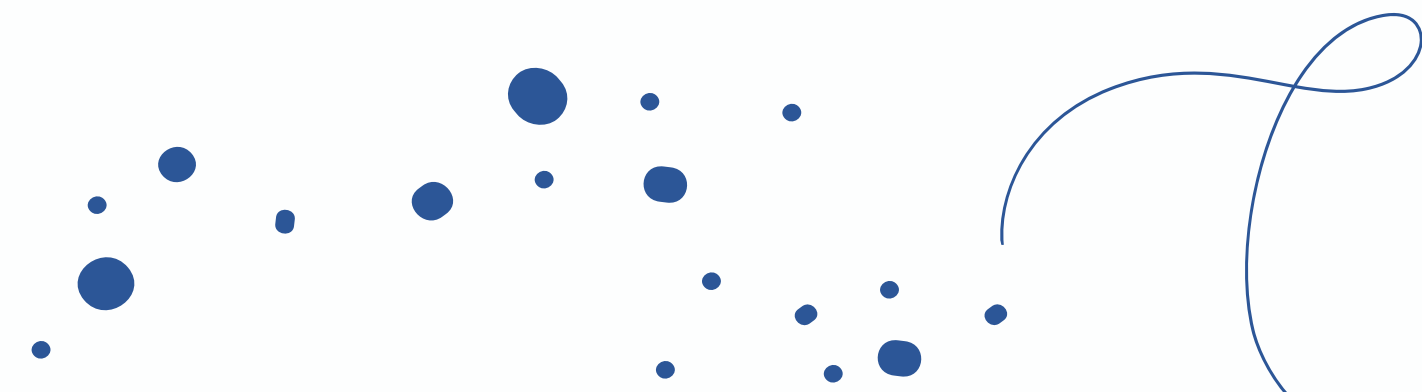
Less than 100 years ago

- Integration of ancient teachings, modern psychology and neuroscience
- Removes the religious or cultural aspects (secular)
- Focuses on attention training and heartfulness practices
- Thich Nhat Hanh's teaching in Plum Village tradition coincided with the US popularization of Buddhism in the 1960s and 70s
- Controversy over issues of cultural appropriation and "masking" the Dharma



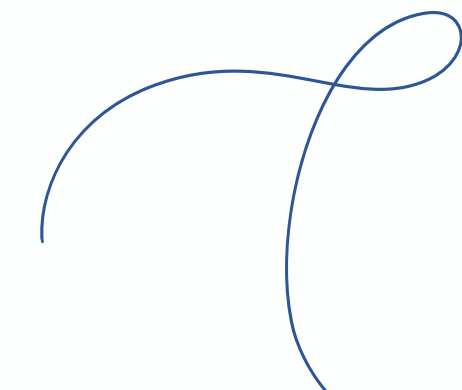
# Current Influencers

- Tara Brach
- Daniel Goleman
- David Treleaven- Trauma Sensitive Mindfulness
- Kristen Neff- Compassion
- Resmaa Menakem- Racialized trauma healing
- Dan Harris- 10% Happier
- Rhonda Magee- racial justice
- Rick Hanson- neuropsychologist
- Ellen Langer- Harvard professor of Psychology
- Patricia Jennings- Mindfulness in classrooms
- Ruth King





# A lesson in Secularity

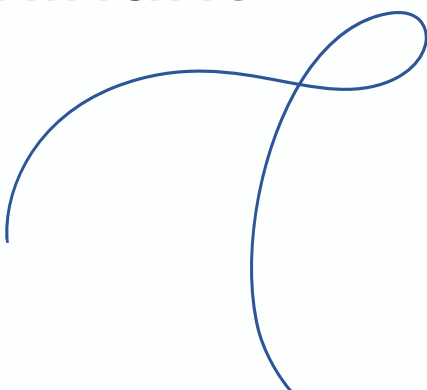




# Cultural Appropriation

When aspects of one culture are adopted by people from another, typically conducted in a disrespectful manner, without permission and be used outside of their intended cultural context (Britannica).

The unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc. of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society. (Oxford)







# Secularity, Neuroscience and Cultural Appropriation

Modern research has demonstrated that mindfulness practices can create lasting changes in the brain, leading to improved emotional regulation, greater self-awareness, and numerous other positive health outcomes. These findings stem from a Westernized interpretation of Eastern mindfulness traditions. While no specific tradition or religion can claim ownership of mindfulness, it is important to acknowledge that its contemporary practice in the West is most closely connected to Buddhist and Hindu traditions.

Calmer Choice draws from this rich history, grounding our approach in research-informed, evidence-based practices that began with MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn.

Mindfulness is a trait that we can cultivate through consistent practice, and it does not require affiliation with any particular religion. While we honor the historical roots of mindfulness, we remain focused on adapting and offering these practices in a way that is accessible and appropriate for public sectors in the U.S., such as schools, ensuring inclusivity and relevance for all.