

# MyQuest

BY Daniel Labbe

Today's Meditation - Mindfulness, we hear a lot about it, but what's the big deal? For me mindfulness is the key for implementing ~~the~~ other useful skills or principles with any degree of effectiveness. Not only that, but mindfulness brings vibrancy back into our lives. It banishes apathy and boredom while breathing life back into the most ordinary of tasks. Finally, Mindfulness is a fantastic tool for subverting the conditioned Programming that runs so many of our lives. All those habitual patterns, reactions, and world views that seem to be of our own making, but are in truth the product of conditioning. This conditioning passes itself off as our real selves which is why so many of us are unaware of it. In fact, some of us are offended by the very suggestion that we are living out a life of conditioned habits, that in truth we haven't been "living" our lives for a long time now, but our lives have been "living" us.

By bringing attention to the habitual thoughts that fill our minds and to the predictable reactions we have to everyday events, we start to see how pervasive and convincing this conditioning is. At first this revelation can be overwhelming, but it is also exhilarating. Once we recognize this conditioning for what it is - a deception that has been passing itself off as our authentic selves - we can then begin to truly live our lives. It is like realizing that we have been held in bondage all our ~~lives~~ lives and have just been shown the gateway to freedom.

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Mindfulness brings our attention into the Present Moment, the only time and place where we have ~~the~~ power to live with purpose. Mindfulness helps us recognize habits that have been hiding ~~from~~ from our awareness, habits that have been growing away at the ~~time~~ ~~of~~ ~~our~~ ~~lives~~ quality of our lives for years; and by recognizing these habits we can choose to stop engaging them. ~~We~~ We can choose to live freely.

What does Mindfulness mean to you?

Current Events - Last night, April 28<sup>th</sup> was the first meeting of the Mindful Living group here at Old Colony. I thought it went great, even if there were just four of us. I'm sure the participation will grow once I have the flyers posted up in all the units. Mindful Living is a group I designed to bring inmates together as we explore how to use Mindfulness, Buddhist principles, spiritual philosophy, and life-skills to improve our lives and the atmosphere of the prison environment. We'll meet once a week. The first ten minutes are used for meditation or quiet reflection, then we read something useful and have an open discussion on how we can use what we just read to lead better lives or improve the prison environment. The discussion ~~will~~ is guided by a few questions such as:

- What message did this reading have for you?
- How can you use this message to improve the atmosphere of your environment?
- How can you apply this to ~~the~~ difficulties you are facing

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now?

among other questions. My hope is that guys will be able to learn new, practical ways to apply spiritual and psychological principles to their lives as well as ~~create~~ a supportive environment for guys to get together to help each other out. We'll see how it goes.

I'm giving a presentation on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Speaking Without Fear group. It's going to be on the principles of speech organization. The following Friday I am scheduled to give a speech at Toastmasters as well. ~~This~~ This week has been busy and I haven't had much time to ~~finish~~ finish the prospectus for LifeQuest. It's basically finished now, I just need to go over it then type it up. Once it's typed I'll put it up on the blog.

Anyone who knew me just a few years ago wouldn't believe that I'm doing all this stuff. I'm so excited about life these days. Now that I have faced many of the issues that were causing me so much trouble I feel like I could do anything. Life is vibrant and full of promise these days. The only problem I have now is the sense that I'm alone in my efforts. I don't have many people ~~in~~ in my life that share my vision, enthusiasm, or principles. I'm grateful to my brother Ron for his encouraging support. I couldn't do it without you, bro! And my mom. She comes to visit and we talk on the phone a lot. Her continued love has meant a lot. My dad and Carol have also stuck by me. These people have been there for me all my life.

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The only thing is I'm not sure anyone understands what I'm about or what I'm doing. No one in my life shares the excitement I have. No one is very much interested in what I'm doing. It can get lonely when you're the only one celebrating life, ~~but you do~~ and no one you know shares similar values or spiritual principles. I must admit, that is one of the reasons I had signed up for this blog. But I've been writing two entries a week now with no response. I'm not sure if anyone has left comments, but no one has written me. One person wrote a comment ~~at~~ during the first week of April, but I've heard nothing since. Is there anyone out there? Or am I merely enjoying a cathartic exercise?

Sorry, was getting gloomy for a moment. Anyway, 'till next time - Happy travels!

Quote of the Day "We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make our ~~buddha~~ world." The Buddha

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