

TRULINCS 23038076 - LUMMUS, ALLAN CRAIG - Unit: BAS-H-A

FROM: 23038076

TO: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Mindful prisoner #5

DATE: 07/15/2011 05:03:59 PM

This is quoted from The Mindful Way through Depression by Williams, Teasdale, Segal and Kabat-Zinn. A great description of the psychology of mindfulness from a western point of view (2007:53).

"A Well-known travel writer was invited to dine at the home of a well-to-do Japanese family. His host had invited a number of guests, letting it be known that he had something of great importance to share. Part of the meal would consist of blowfish, considered a superb delicacy in Japan, in part because these fish are fatally poisonous unless the poison has been removed by a highly skilled chef. To be served such a fish was a great honor."

"As guest of honor, the writer received the fish with great anticipation and savored every mouthful. The taste was, indeed, like nothing he had ever eaten. What, asked his host, did he think of the experience? The guest was ecstatic about the exquisite flavor of the fish he has sampled. He did not have to exaggerate, for it was indeed sublime, among the best food he had ever tasted. Only then did his host reveal that the fish he had eaten was a common variety. The "important thing" the writer learned was not how good a rare and expensive delicacy tasted but how amazing ordinary food could be if he paid close attention to each mouthful."

FROM: 23038076

TO: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Mindful Prisoner #6: What is mindfulness?

DATE: 07/17/2011 07:55:51 PM

What is Mindfulness?

Two good statements on mindfulness comes from The Mindful Way Through Depression.

1. Mindfulness is the awareness that arises from paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmental, to things as they are.
2. Mindfulness is not paying more attention but paying attention differently and more wisely - with the whole mind & heart, using the full resources of the body and senses.

The first statement reflects the story I quoted in MP #5. The travel writer was primed to focus his attention on the new potentially dangerous delicacy. His was purposeful, in the present moment to the taste in his mouth - the fish as it was. In that the tastes were incomparable to his prior experiences with fish. Why? Because his normal eating experiences were only vaguely focused on the food in his mouth. They were highly influenced by his preconceived notions of fish. He entered the experience filled with a judgmental mind.

The story relates to the second statement in that he engaged the dish with his full faculties. His sense of taste and smell fully engaged. It produced pleasure on rivaled to previous eating experiences.

What can we learn from our travel writer and mindfulness? Life lived fully with all our senses (whole body) engaged can open up a range of human experience that is waiting right there for us to live. We move through life on autopilot so often. I know I did. Totally lost in my head with my body operating without any interaction from my consciousness. A child's response to undependable world is understandable, but long past serving a useful purpose. Now it is time to engage fully and completely in living what life is there before me. Seize the moment. Carpe Dium.