

Shrink Rap Radio #152, May 10, 2008, Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

David Van Nuys, Ph.D., aka “Dr. Dave” interviews Dr. Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D. Clinical Psychologist

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Excerpt: Some people become aware of their habitual styles of thinking, it's just a habit almost, almost that they develop over time... they can learn to become aware of that, not judging that is good or bad but just almost with a sense of curiosity... it's almost as if they are noticing for the very first time and say, "Oh catastrophizing is happening right now." As soon as they noticed that, they step outside of it. It's no longer controlling them.

Introduction: That was the voice of my guest Dr. Elisha Goldstein. Elisha Goldstein, Ph.D is a Clinical Psychologist in private practice in Los Angeles, California and a trained teacher of the increasingly popular Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction.

He stands at the progressive end of integrating mindfulness into the therapeutic setting. He is personally been integrating concepts and behaviors of mindfulness into his daily life, and has helped his clients apply these concepts in both clinical settings and their daily lives.

Dr. Goldstein has published the article *Sacred Moments: Implications on Well-Being and Stress* in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. His study found that integrating mindful principles into daily life for just 5 minutes a day over 3 weeks resulted in significant reductions in stress and significant increases in life satisfaction, positive relations with others, and environmental mastery - all key players in creating a life worth living.

He also has given workshops, radio interviews, and lectures in multiple settings on therapeutic benefits of mindfulness, including Kaiser Permanente, UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute, and the Mindfulness and Psychotherapy Conference at UCLA in 2007.

Now here is the interview.

Dr. Dave: Dr. Elisha Goldstein, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Goldstein: Thank you David.

Dr. Dave: And I think that you've been a listener to this show if I recall correctly.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah, that's right. There was a time where I was travelling internationally for a while and so was trying to collect a lot of psycho-educational material and just kind of really interesting material in area of psychology to listen to and continue brush up with and your podcasts were at the top of the list and so I was really happy to find it, get to listen to it. Lot of interesting people that come on the show that I was able to listen to, then and also during a number of commutes.

Dr. Dave: Well, that's great and I notice you put that in the past. So I hope you will be mindful to continue be a listener. But I know you wife is probably gotten a lot busier now that you're a professional.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah. It has. I've been seeing — I see people individually, I run groups, I am producing a couple different CDs that are particularly or I have already produce that are particularly focus on *Mindfulness for Stress, Anxiety, and Depression* and I also co-author with my wife, *A Mindfulness for Addiction and Relapse Prevention* as well as creating material, writing and co-authoring workbook based on *Mindfulness and Stress Reduction* and also multimedia guides that are set within a web world call: AliveWorld, right now. So I have been pretty busy. But I also want to come back, I do want to come back and listen to more Shrink Rap cause there is a lot of really interesting content on your show.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, great. And while we are giving me a plug here, don't forget that there might be selected episodes that you would want to suggest to your patients, clients as good psycho-educational material. Not the least of which will be this interview.

Dr. Goldstein: Good point, good point David (laugh)

Dr. Dave: (laugh) So before we get in to all of that, of course, our topic is going to be mindfulness and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction which you're been doing so much work in recently. I like to get into your background just a little bit. I have the impression that you have a rather interesting business career before becoming physiologists.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah. You know I was in the world of sales and sales management for a few different companies and was pretty successful and rising up on the ranks and becoming a manager of sales teams. And there just came a point where I was really working with people, and what I was doing more with them was finding out what they were doing in their daily lives to see if they were being effective there because the business also plays off of the personal world. And so with that in time I came to understand that I was starting to feel a little empty myself with what I was doing there. It seems like there could be more for me then that.

I took a retreat for about 30 days and went out and really reflected and — at a point in that retreat, I came in touch with — and my background is a Jewish background — I came in touch with cabbalistic thought, the kind of thought that has to do with really realising the inner connections of things. And in that connection with other people and discussion and some meditation with that, I

came to a point where there was about a weeks straight where I had this really rare experience of continued present moment awareness. And with that came feelings of calm and peace and a sense of connectiveness, a sense of compassion for others and myself and a real sense of focus.

During that — after that time I took more time out for myself to start to sit or lie or walk and that sort of stillness. And then I came back into the business world, after that and that was about the time of 1999 – 2000 where we — and I was living in San Francisco at the time, I was raiding the whole dot com wave and there was the crash.

Dr. Dave: Yeah.

Dr. Goldstein: That you all know. Are very familiar with.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Dr. Goldstein: I had built up a bunch of material while for myself and at that time I lost about 75 percent of it.

Dr. Dave: Ouch.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah. It was a big ouch. And it really cause me to reflect on: What is most important in my life. And it really came to — what was most important in my life really wasn't the next dollar that was coming in but really engaging in life in a more present moment way, really connecting with people. It really had me reflect on that experience I had at that retreat.

Combine with that, one thing that I like to — one thing that I just want to mention to the listeners and to yourself to know a little of my background. My dad's — I always had a little bit of a, I guess, a spiritual feeling for me in the way I view things.

My dad is a rabbi and my mom is really rooted in her fate as well. My dad used to go to people in their death beds and they used to talk to him while they were in the mist of almost passing and used to say to him, "If I just have to do it over again, I would do something different. I would be more present with people, I'll be more connected." And he used to relay that back to me as a kid.

And so that started coming up for me a little bit on the importance of that and even for myself to this day what I do sometimes is I look back, I just do this thing that I called: Present Nostalgia. Which is putting myself many years from now unto imagine myself on my own death bed and looking back and onto where I am today and asking myself from that place, "What do I wish I would do differently right now?" What would I like to have — look back from that time and saying, "Yeah, that's what I would have done." And so, it was that period where I realise there was something more for me, there was something other than I was doing. And I really wanted to get back in the field of or get into the field of psychology more to be able to deal with people and help them live the lives they want to live,

help them become more present, their thought, feeling and emotions, to become more whole and have those feeling that I've experienced.

Dr. Dave: Well that's a really fascinating background and I can see how your growing up in the family that you did and the things that your father related to you kind of laid the groundwork for the work that you are doing now. And I am curious about that 30 days retreat, was that actually a mindfulness meditation retreat?

Dr. Goldstein: No it wasn't a mindfulness, meaning rooted almost from mindfulness come from ... comes from as it's many thousand year old tradition rooted in Buddhism more and particularly the kind of mindfulness that's practised. When people talk about mindfulness and in this world is more of a possum of mine minus the ability to be open to whatever is arising in the present moment. Non-judgementally and this was more focus through the Jewish retreat but there were meditation experiences within that retreat that weren't directly rooted in, what people would call mindfulness right now but I would certainly say that the elements of mindfulness were woven throughout that entire retreat.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Now you ended doing your doctoral work at the Transpersonal Psychology Institute in Menlo Park I believe it is or it is Palo Alto, I was....

Dr. Goldstein: It's Palo Alto now. It used to be Menlo Park.

Dr. Dave: Okay. That's why I get confused. How did you end up getting your PhD there?

Dr. Goldstein: You know what? I am glad that you ask that question because I feel like I related the story a lot because always ... people always — often say; Institute Transpersonal, what's that? Type of things.

Dr. Dave: Right.

Dr. Goldstein: I really wanted to go back into the world of psychology because of this element in me that felt like there was something greater than myself out there were there are some people ... people really find — I think it's a huge majority of this country that feel like there is something greater than themselves out there or something more than just the material world that's just there even though that's really important. And I really wanted a field of psychology that honor that and realised that that's an important part in people's development or sense of well being for many people out there.

And I wanted something, I guess, not practically rooted in any tradition, so I have the freedom to integrate the feel of spirituality into the field of psychology and whatever way I felt that was okay for me. And Institute Transpersonal Psychology really allows that to happen. They are very rooted in all the tradition elements of psychology and at the — and they also bring in a spiritual element which is really often mindfulness in a way even though people try and — people don't want to necessary connect mindfulness with spirituality because there's a lot of connotation with that. But really the ability to be present to oneself, any particular

moment, brings us out of all the external things we find so important which are so important but also brings us internally to ourselves.

Dr. Dave: Well interesting little side story here is I was actually asked to consider applying for the opening for president of the Transpersonal Psychology Institute two or three years ago. I decided not to apply because it was clear to me they were looking for somebody who could walk on water, particularly in relation to fund raising and I didn't feel I was that person but I certainly was flattered to be invited as a candidate because I been aware of their work and known various people there over the years.

So let's talk about your work in mindfulness, you mentioned the — in mindfulness and maybe before we go any further we should — and you already hinted at this but you might have more to say about it. How do you define mindfulness?

Dr. Goldstein: So mindfulness is the — the best way to really explain it, well it's the ability to intentionally cultivate a present moment awareness, without our filters or lenses of judgement.

Often time we're very quick over the course of our lifetime to develop this habits of our mind to interpret adverts either internally within ourselves or externally to any advert that's happening as good or bad or right or wrong or fair or unfair. And that has a tremendous affect on how we fell physically, also with our emotions and how we choose to react or response to any particular situation. So mindfulness allows us to become more aware of those things, so we can choose to response to any situation in a way that's most effective for us.

You know, Marsha Linehan, she is up at the University of Washington, she's founded or she's created an approach in psychology called: Dialectical Behavior Therapy. And that's mostly use for people with — actually it's been — it's used all over the place now but initially with people who were or had a — I hate — I don't always love to use the term disorder but let me just use this because that's the language that's in our field. Borderline personality disorder which is really people who suffered from being able to have close relationships and are emotionally unstable at times and really suffer from that. And she defined mindfulness is really learning being in control of your own mind instead of letting your mind being in control of you.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, actually I don't know if you are aware of it but actually I interviewed her on my other podcasts series; Wise Consul, where I also interviewed your wife recently which had mention of that as well.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah, please do, that was great interview. Please go check that out.

Dr. Dave: Yeah, thank you. And you know, as I hear you talk — it's being amazing there is such an explosion of interest using this term mindfulness. I also interviewed Steven C. Haze, who I know you must be familiar with. And he's developed, I guess, would've be a more of a behavioral approach that incorporates mindfulness?

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Dr. Goldstein: Uh-huh. And mindfulness is being incorporate more in the behavioral and cognitive behavioral field simply because cognitive and mindfulness is a behavioral approach in a way. It's actually doing something, acting on something, creating a practice in your daily life to be able to intentionally focus on whatever is arising in the moment. Often times practice is made cleared, paying attention to sensation in your body or paying attention to your breathing or paying attention to thoughts or sounds or any particular thing, and really noticing the impermanence of these things.

And the importance of that is that often times in our lives we may get especially in the field of anxiety or depression or a variety of things like that. We may feel like — the feeling that we're feeling in any particular moment were the thought that we are having, it's distressing and uncomfortable and it's never going to go away, and it's always going to be like this. That's another thought, thought that's arise. And being able to practice mindfulness allows us to learn that things are actually impermanent. Things tend to come and go, and the more we realise that, which can only come with practice, the more we — the less distress we get when they do arrives. And the more we can approach them with a sense of curiosity or what's called, sometimes "Beginner's Mind." So that we can really get to know this feeling or this thought as if for the first time and watch it as it comes and as it goes. And the distress is less in that moment.

Dr. Dave: You know, in a lot of ways, you mentioned Beginner's Mind and in a lot of ways this sounds to me like, what I know for many years as zen, you know, as zen meditation. It's there a difference?

Dr. Goldstein: Well, I think if people go back and listen to the interview you did with Zinn and Young recently on Wise Consul too, which like I said before, there's so many interviews on both of this podcasts. There is a difference between zen and mindfulness and I would definitely refer people back to that cause he'll give a lot better explanation then I would anyway.

But the idea anyway with — they come from similar tradition and similar background, the are just one came kind of before the other and then they kind of built on each other but the reason mindfulness is so affective, I think, in the field of psychology right now or let's even say before psychology, the field of medicine. It's because people are really realising that they can practice this and they see in also immediate response from it.

People in the field of medicine, the reason — I mean the reason mindfulness hit the U.S. so stronger, the western world, is really through the field of medicine. It was — currently it's in over 250 hospitals around the country, many more worldwide. But medicine was dealing ... it deals less with theory the way psychology does and feels more of what works, without really care how necessary all the time but if it's work, great.

And so in the psychological world, in mine mind really respect that. They really respect the medical world in a lot of ways. And it was really Jon Cabot Zinn who initially came out in the field of chronic pain at the University of Massachusetts Shrink Rap Radio #152,

medical centre and said to the doctors there, "Give me your chronic pain patients who the medicine is not really working for. Let me put them through this eight week program of mindfulness and let's see what happens." And so he created this eight week program call Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and what that program taught people to do by giving them a series of instructions and practices in their daily lives was taught them how to relate to their pain differently then they are relating to it before.

So while there are two things besides death and taxes that we can be assured of in this world, which is pain and stress. Those are never going to go away but what we can learn to do is relate to them differently and then practicing mindfulness, what we learn to do is, instead of when a hammer hits our knee, going; "Oh my god, this is the worse thing that's ever happen to me. I can't believe I did this again. This pain is never going to go away and so throbbing, is the worse thing." But it's only tend to enhance the pain or our perception of the pain is that is growing and getting worse and probably actually is because we're pushing we're making our blood go faster and actually irritating the actual pain that's there but our perception of it is that it's really terrible and that we are suffering intensely.

Mindfulness teaches us to notice the pain, bring our attention to it instead of trying to avoid or distract ourselves from it and pay attention to the actual sensations of it as they rise and they fall and doing that we tend to suffer less from it. And in essence it actually comes and go quicker then it would have if were in the other way that we are relating to which is the more habitual way.

Dr. Dave: Yes. And you know, I would think another reason maybe why mindfulness is coming to such currency is because it — I can't think of a right word, I want to use the word; detox, and that's not the right word. But it kind of takes it out of the religious frame work and it removes that whole aura and turns it into a very secular thing that says, "Okay this is basically a secular psychological technique it doesn't matter what particular set of religious or spiritual beliefs you happen to have. This will help you get rid of pain or deal with stress and so on."

Dr. Goldstein: That's really great point. You are absolutely right and I think, we can really credit as well, again we can really credit Jon Cobot Zinn with that. He found the way to really convey the essence of mindfulness in a very palatable way to the western tongue. And that's why when I was saying earlier, how I felt like mindfulness for me in a way has some sort of spiritual elements to that. He's very clear and in his writing and the things that he does that he kind of separates it from spirituality or anything like that simply because I think he wants to retain that sense of secularization with the concept to make sure that it is continue to be accepted in the medical and psychological world that doesn't get a backlash because there is a — for some people the terms; religious or spiritual have a — you know, if you grew up in a home that was really dominating or something like that, that people can have a reaction to that and be turn off by something that could help them and could really work which mindfulness clearly does.

Dr. Dave: Yeah. And I know that you have steep yourself in some of the research particularly research by a Dr. Marlett and Richie Davidson. Maybe if you take us through some of that.

Dr. Goldstein: Sure, yeah. There is a lot of research that's being going on right now in the field of medical, psychology and mindfulness. And ...

Dr. Dave: Let me just echo that because in before we have this interview as we were sort of leading up to it. I had posed a question that lead me to go into the online psychological abstract database that I have access to through the university. I was amaze that the number of research studies that are currently being conducted on the topic of mindfulness. It was overwhelming. I hope that kind of narrow it down to focus in on a particular question and I realise, why it would take a lot of time to really review all this literature.

Dr. Goldstein: There is a tremendous amount and I think the reason people obviously in the medical and psychological field the reason people are doing a lot of research on it is because they are finding out that it works. And they are not just finding out that it works because of other research, they are actually doing it for themselves. And getting involve in the program or seeing a therapist or someone like that who has that background and they are noticing a change in themselves and so they get really excited about and want to do research on it as well.

You mention Dr. Richard Davidson, he created — he is at the University of Wisconsin and he created — he has a long, sorry before I — he has a long history with meditation and for him, he did a study that was more focus on brain research and meditation and what he found was that — initially he went into a biotech company and did EEG readings which basically a reading some electrical activity of the brain on employees there and what he found was; there was a natural set point for people in the company where there was more activity on the right side of the brain which is a brain very — to be very basic about the explanation — a brain that's more associated with uncomfortable emotions than the left side of the brain, the part that is associated with more comfortable and positive emotions. And with the end of doing eight weeks of mindfulness in MBS art class, they found that there is more activities started to shift to the left than the right side which meant to him that doing this meditation practices allowed for more comfortable emotion to arise for a person in essence being better for their health and well being. Did you wanted to say something?

Dr. Dave: Actually I'll direct you to talk a little bit about Dr. Marlett's research as well.

Dr. Goldstein: Okay. Dr. Marlett that's newer research of mindfulness and addiction which is really interesting. Alan Marlett is at also the University of Washington with Marsha Linehan and he has being doing — actually he is one of the leaders in the field of researching addictive behavior and he's been doing research in the area of mindfulness and — not mindfulness, sorry — meditation and addiction for the past 30 years but he's really known for his focus on in the area of; integrating cognitive behavioral therapy with addiction. And some more Shrink Rap Radio #152,

recently in the past couple years, he's been creating a program call: Mindfulness-Based Relapse Prevention. And what that is, is a — is really an adaptation from Jon Cobot Zinn Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction but focusing more and integrating cognitive therapy principles into Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. Focus specifically for helping people reduce their addictive behavior. And after a two year NIDA which is the drug administration research study, he's found really — he reports really promising results and for helping people reduce their addictive behavior and reduce the suffering they experience from those trigger, urges and craving.

And both my wife and I, she is an addictive behavior — she a addiction medicine specialist and I work with a number of people with addiction, create a CD that is out right now that focuses on giving people psycho-education around; what mindfulness is; how it works with triggers aid craving and urges and then give a few progressive guided meditation practices to follow. That help them work through what's called: "Urge surfing." Which is idea of, that an urges is an impulse that comes up mostly in the body or it's thought and the person becomes able to notice this, watch it on a non-judgemental way and watch it as it comes and goes; effectively feeling more self confidence and more self efficacious about being able to work with their urges and cravings with addictive behavior. And Alan Marlett endorse that CD and plans on using it in a five year study to follow.

Dr. Dave: Well that's really great. And I am been using one of your CDs: "Mindfulness Solutions." And find it to be very well done, very solid piece of work. Something you can feel good about that I am happy to recommend to my listeners and I'll be putting a link to your web site so you don't need to worry about that. That will be in the show note so people will find it there and I'll also mention it in my post commentary.

You know, this is so contemporary what you are saying just last night on NBC National News that had a segment about a — I think it was a hospital where they were experimenting with food addiction basically and trying to bring a mindfulness approach to people in relation to food. So that they would be really mindful about what they were choosing to eat and when they were eating and so on. It was very much in its early stages so they didn't have any conclusion yet but they said it was something that were investigating.

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah. It's Jean Kristala that's leading that research. She's also done a lot of work with Alan Marlett as well because a food addiction is also an addictive behavior. Eating disorder are also a form of addictive behavior as well, as well sometimes obviously related to anxiety. And she's being leading this research on mindful eating and what effect that has on weight loss as well as eating disorder and yeah I think there is promising results that are coming out from that as well. And I just want to mention that because there was that connection.

One other piece of research that I would mention that I think is really interesting besides the research that I conducted as well. Which was — Sera Lezar is a instructor at the Harvard Medical School and she did research with people who routinely had a mindfulness meditation practice and she found that those who did

practice meditation, it had a serious impact on their brain. And brain research is also important because people love it because it's something they can see. Now we can see what happens in the brain, so if we can see it we really believe it.

And she found that people who did a regular mindfulness meditation practice, she found they have a thicker cortex. Which is the area involved in reasoning and decision making. And she also found that they had a thicker insular, and what an insular is, is a part of the brain that's really responsible for — we might call a central switch board for the brain, it helps regulate our thought and emotions. And so the insular is suppose to deteriorate after the age of 20 a little bit every year and she found that it's thicker among those who have a regular meditation practice.

Dr. Dave: Wow, fascinating. And you just made passing reference to the fact you had done some research. I believe your doctoral dissertation research was in this area. Maybe you could give us a brief description of that.

Dr. Goldstein: Okay. So that was really interesting study for me to do. I did it — I study with 73 people across the country and I gave them a very brief practice to do. Even a very brief practice intervention where I had them do a mindful check in which was basically ... kind of tuning in to how their body was feeling, any physical sensations in their body, being able to notice then their attention to noticing their breath coming in and out of their body so had a present moment focus, a focus and noticing whether their mind was busy or calm so they are really becoming grounded in the stillness of the present moment.

And then after a few minutes of that, turning their attention slightly to an object they consider to be deeply meaning full or precious or what someone call sacred and then starting to pay attention to that object in a way that was slightly slower than they might normally do, and also noticing anything with that object that was associated with thoughts, feeling or anything physical sensations. And that object could be something actually physical or could have been a thought or could have been a cloud in the sky. It could have been anything that they felt was deeply meaningful or sacred in their lives.

And what I found was through assessments, that there was an significant reduction over a period of three weeks, more if they practice this for at least five minutes a day for five days a week, in stress reduction as well as increase in a variety of areas of well being.

And that was really although — as a mindfulness teacher and therapist to integrate that into my own practice, I suggest doing more than five minutes a day but sometimes in our culture right now, people will be resistant to doing work for more really five minutes or so. So this provide an introduction and the result are significant and it's was publish in the *Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Dr. Dave: Hey, congratulations. Now I know that you are using mindfulness in your own clinical work. So maybe you can tell us about how you are using it, what sorts of conditions you're finding that it's good for.

Dr. Goldstein: Okay. So I am finding that mindfulness is good for a lot of different conditions particularly in the area of psychology. I mean, that's why we see so much research in that area of mindfulness as stress reduction or mindfulness in depression or mindfulness in addictive behavior or food addiction or regulating emotions. It's really — not to say it's a panacea of any kind but what it is, is something that can be used to just create more awareness of whatever is happening.

So it can really be applied to any other approach, it doesn't need to stand by itself. And so some things that I find helpful in a practice working with clients is to help them — often time they come in and their mind is so busy or their emotions can be really erratic and so sometimes I help them learn how to become more present, I often do that through a couple different ways. One is through a breathing practice, helping them notice how to notice their breath coming in and out of their body for a certain period of time and noticing their mind is really taking their attention away in some way and just being able to rap it up in a term-like thinking or wondering or busy mind and gently bring it back to a point of focus. And the point of focus can also be a series of sensations that are rising in the body.

With things like depression or anxiety often times people have certain styles of thinking that had been worked out, I guess, in area of cognitive behavioral therapy but also in psychodynamical approaches, like catastrophizing for anxiety. And so catastrophizing is this idea that; we are always expecting disasters, something terrible is going to happen from some little events that happens, we really blow it up and magnified it and this tends to amplify our anxiety. So people become more aware of their habitual style of thinking. It's just a habit almost, almost that they develop over time they can learn to become aware of that. Not judge it is good or bad, but just almost with a sense of curiosity, it's almost, like I said before, as if they are noticing it for the very first time and say, "Oh, catastrophizing is happening right now." As soon as they notice that, they step outside of it. It's no longer controlling them, they can now choose in that moment what they want to do; did they want to continue to catastrophize or maybe they want to switch their attention on to something they were trying to do in that moment or maybe they become more aware of — they turn attention to their body and they notice their heart racing or they notice their respiration is really shallow and rapid and they can in essence learn to again control their mind instead of their mind controlling them so that they can make a choice what they want to do at that moment.

And there is a whole variety of different kind of thinking that goes along with, people exaggerate negative details, they tend to mind read, they think they know what the other people are thinking and take it personally even though what it might be is the person might be thinking this or they might be thinking something else. But we're not going to be able to do something like that to be able to treat it like a guess; "Oh, they might be thinking I am wearing — that I look terrible today," or they might be not looking at me while they are passing on the hall because they are really busy. They won't be able to do that unless they notice that they are doing this thing which could be a thought that's going on in their mind like mind reading, a certain habit of the mind. And there's a lot of these things

and I discuss these things on the CD that I sent to you which was particularly for stress anxiety and depression and also there's other ones that go along with addictive behavior.

So that's one way I deal with it and there's the other way more generally is just helping people become more aware of how their thoughts, their emotion, their physical sensations and their behavior really work together to put them in whatever state they end up being in.

Dr. Dave: Are there any psychological conditions where mindfulness is counter indicated? In other words it wouldn't be good for a person?

Dr. Goldstein: There is a lot of debate about that. And I am glad you brought that up, I mean, there is certain psychotic situations that someone whose has a deep sense of or is really, I guess, has a difficulty taking care of themselves because they have some sort of psychotic conditions like schizophrenia. I am not sure it works really well with someone who has an antisocial personality which is a personality that is really focus on the self and destructive towards other people however mindfulness is being used tremendously right now in the prisons systems with a lot of great results. And there might be a lot of people with antisocial behavior in the prison systems as well. So there's debate about it.

There are people I read about who do work and I actually did a workshop in a place I used work people who had a lot of psychotic conditions on mindfulness and integrating mindfulness into their daily live. However the way I approach it wasn't it this; "Let's do a 30 minutes meditation or 45 minutes meditation," it was more like, "Let's do a more informal practice." Which is something that is just a moment by moment type of practice. Just give a little example of that so that people get an idea on what's the difference between a formal and an informal practice.

A formal practice in mindfulness is really a time that is intentionally set aside to sit, stand or lie down and intentionally pay present moment awareness to any particular thing in that moment for a period of time; 15 minutes, 30 minutes something like that.

In informal practice is a practice that we can really weavern to our daily lives so for example; when we are in the shower in the morning are we thinking about what we need to be doing during that work day so we are not really in the shower experience the shower, we are already kind of at work even though we are at home.

An informal practice would be noticing when we are future thinking, we are thinking about the future about what we need to get done that day or worrying or whatever is happening in the mind in that moment, and generally bringing our attention back to noticing the feel of the water on our skin, where it is hitting our skin, it is hot or it is cold or warm, the smell of the soap, the sound of the water or whatever other sounds are there, what am I seeing around me, really becoming present to all the various sensations that are happening at that moment. And that

could be for 15 seconds, 30 seconds, a minutes, two minutes but it's more of a spontaneous practice and you can do that while washing the dishes, walking the dog, listening to music, you know, all that could be woven into our daily life.

And so with — people with psychotic behaviors that's the way I approach them was really doing something informal with them. And it seems to have some effect. I didn't do any kind of study with it or anything like that so who's to say really but what I would say is that, it's up for debate right now. I know that Mindfulness-Bases Stress Reduction in a group, they say if someone has a psychotic — someone is psychotic in anyway suffers from that, this is not a group for them.

Dr. Dave: Okay. Now you're a busy young professional, whose career is expending, exploding. Do you have a formal mindfulness meditation practice yourself?

Dr. Goldstein: Yeah. I do have a formal practice. And I tell you is difficult to integrate formal practice into your daily life especially in a busy life.

Dr. Dave: Right. So to what time of day do you find works best for you?

Dr. Goldstein: I do different times of day; I don't have a particular time. Sometimes I'll have a client that cancels on me or I'll have an hour there and I'll spend 30 minutes or sometimes just 15 minutes or sometimes longer, actually sitting and doing a practice. But what I will say for people who are busy professional especially people who have lots of kids or something like that, think there was a story recently of a women who used to have a meditation practice and since than has had a few kids and look on the cover of magazine and there were some women on the cover with her legs cross with her hands and the position that people would think of meditating even you don't have to have them that way, with the two fingers touching on the side of your knees. And there she was in peace on her wooden floor in her clean room and that was the picture and this woman said, "There's no way if I was in the middle of my room right now, with my hands like that, it would be more like, I'll be lying in the middle of the living room with my eyes close, catching a nap with clothes all over me and my kids running all around."

So for her a formal practice wasn't really that realistic, and so what she found really helpful to her was to really integrate a lot more informal practices into her daily life. When her kids came down for breakfast, she noticed when she was thinking about the work that she had to do that day and she gently brought her attention back and look into her kids eyes, really listening to what they were saying in that moment and intentionally asking them questions that she wanted to find out about them that day and being able to notice her emotions as they rose and fall and different things like that and so she really integrated a much more informal practice so if a person is listening like; "Why I don't know how I can ever have time to have a 30 to 45 minutes practice or whatever on a daily basis." I would say a few different things to that.

One is that is very difficult to integrated a mindfulness practice into your daily life without some soft of guidance. I know for me, it would be very difficult to have Shrink Rap Radio #152,

even gotten in to this at all without having being guided by somebody or at least a CD or something to really get me into the idea that I can — what to do really.

The second thing is, is difficult to do something like this without a community. A colleague of my, Bob Stall, who's a long time meditator. He actually used to live in a Buddhist monastery and he's being doing mindfulness-based stress reduction, he's a teacher of that, he was I think Jon Cobot Zinn's one of his first students. So he's being doing it for really long time. He and I have co-author a multimedia guide that brings someone through creating a mindfulness or meditation practice. Probably has about 4 CDs worth of guided meditation and there's instruction in there and it then guides people to connect to a community of other people who are doing the same exact program so they can connect around what's difficult for them or what's helpful for them and then they can also interact with Bob or I during the time that they are doing that program so they find themselves busy and they can't — they don't have time to actually go to a group of people who are doing this themselves. They can kind of do this on their own time their own watch while still being part of a community.

A community it's really what keeps this going, without a community, I think people are found this in the area of addiction without that community it's really difficult to make changes and community it's really incredibly important for that. And so that's why we built that guide in community.

Dr. Dave: Well that's a great point. Well as we wind down is there any last point you'd like to leave our listener with?

Dr. Goldstein: You know that's a good question. I think if I was to leave this with anything with our listener with anything it's really that this is simply an approach that's been really helpful for a lot of people not just in dealing with any — I know today we talk a lot about how it can be really helpful for people struggling. And one thing that I would have mention is, is not just for people struggling, it's for anybody who can ... who really wants to become more present to themselves and their lives and wants to ... enact in this world with more intention so that many years from now looking back to where you are today from you own deathbed you might say, "You know what, I was really there. I didn't miss out, I was there I knew what I was doing or I was intentional about what I was doing." And this is just something that can be an adjunct to live to help someone sit more into the present, a state of where they are in their lives and become more aware of all the comfortable things there are happen their lives as well as the uncomfortable things. And help them with sustain a more sensitive peace, calm, compassion in their daily lives. And so I just like to leave you with that.

Dr. Dave: Wonderful. Well Dr. Elisha Goldstein. Thanks so much for both being a listener and for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

Dr. Goldstein: Thank you David, thank you so much.

Dr. Dave: I hope you found this conversation with Dr. Elisha Goldstein both informative and interesting. You might also want to listen to my interview with his wife Dr. Stephanie Goldstein whose focuses on mindfulness in the treatment of addiction. That interview should be available on my other Wise Consul podcasts sometime after May 15th of this 2008.

Now there are two web sites that you should know about, the first is at www.drsgoldstein.com and that's spelled d-r-s-g-o-l-d-s-t-e-i-n.com and it contains information about both Elisha and Stephanie and their work, their background and so on along with links to their CD and other resources relevant to mindfulness based work. It's really a quite rich web site.

At the end of the interview, you heard Elisha mentioned a program he is developed with I believed it was Dr. Bob Stall in the helpful folks create mindfulness communities to support one another in the practice and you will find information about that program at www.aliveworld.com and in particular look under the alive guides manual to a link to one of the CDs he mentioned and under the communities manual to a link to his mindfulness support community that he mentioned.

On the Dr. Goldstein side, Elisha and Stephanie have a nice collection of inspirational poetry all of which is relevant to caring for the inner live. I'll close the section by reading one of them by Marry Oliver, whose one of my favourite poets, is call *The Summer Day*:-

Who made the world, who made the swan and the black bear, who made the grasshopper. This grasshopper, I mean the one who the one who has flung herself out of the grass, the one who is eating sugar out of my hand, who is moving her jaws back and forth instead of up and down, who is gazing around with enormous and complicated eyes. Now she lifts her pale forearms and thoroughly washes her face. Now she snaps her wings open and floats away.

I don't know exactly what a prayer is, I do know how to pay attention, how to fall down into the grass, how to kneel down in the grass, how to be idle and blessed, how to stroll through the fields which is what I've been doing all day. Tell me what else should I have done? Doesn't everything die at last and too soon? Tell me what is it you plan to do with you one wild and precious life?