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Introduction to the Functional Relationship between Buddhist Psychology and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

The past should not be followed after,
And the future not desired.
What is past is dead and gone,
And the future is yet to come.

But whoever gains insight into things
Presently arisen in the here and now,
Knowing them, unmoved, unshaken—
Let him cultivate that insight.
—THE BUDDHA, *Majjhima Nikaya* 3.187

All the things that you love are going to change; you're going to lose them one way or another. It makes them all the more precious.
—JEFF BRIDGES and ROSHI BERNIE GLASSMAN, *The Dude and the Zen Master*

Throughout history, human beings have consistently worked to develop effective ways to alleviate their suffering. In different eras, the paradigms of the day have led to a diversity of spiritual and secular techniques designed to quiet the turbulence of the mind, and to heal our emotional

and physical pain. From shamanistic rituals designed to evoke helpful spirits, to Catholic rites of confession; from Freudian psychoanalysis to functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain, the question of human suffering consistently has inspired technological innovation and philosophical questions (Gilbert, 1989; Moyers, 1993; Woolfolk, 1998). Despite how difficult life is, we human beings keep striving to make things more workable, to be happier, and make life ever more livable, with a heartfelt tenacity in the face of its difficulties or tragedies. Some prescientific methods, such as Zen meditation, have endured for centuries, with millions of people reporting that these practices have enhanced their lives, and lessened their burden. Other techniques based in scientific research, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), may only be decades old, but nevertheless present us with a particular advantage. The scientific method allows us to refine and specify our psychological technologies. As a result, we can test and replicate the degree to which particular processes and procedures are able to predict and influence human behavior (Barnes-Holmes, Hayes, Barnes-Holmes, & Roche, 2002; Hawton, Salkovskis, Kirk, & Clark, 1989; Skinner, 1953). In this way, we can hone interventions that provide us with a reliable and practical approach to the question of human suffering. Our cognitive and behaviorial therapy techniques have been thoroughly empirically supported and widely disseminated, helping people throughout the world to liberate themselves from psychological distress. As this research proceeds, methods become refined, with new techniques emerging and less useful methods being discarded. In this way, science has accelerated our understanding of suffering and how to respond to it.

Furthermore, as our understanding of evidence-based psychotherapies and ancient contemplative practices has deepened, certain commonalities have emerged that suggest possibilities for integration of cognitive and behavioral methods and meditative practices. Such integration of ancient wisdom traditions and research-based psychotherapies is generating new directions for applied psychological science.

This book aims to provide a comprehensive introduction to applied Buddhist psychology for CBT practitioners. We wish to help clarify available points of consideration in the integration of Buddhist psychology and CBT, perhaps creating a few new possibilities for the clinician. Further applications and adaptation of the evidence-based principles in Buddhist psychology and CBT are waiting to be undertaken. By clarifying

these foundations and practices, we hope to share in this evolutionary process with our readers and our communities.

CBT AND BUDDHIST PSYCHOLOGY IN CONCEPT AND PRACTICE

This book focuses on two effective, widely disseminated and increasingly well-researched methods: CBT and Buddhist psychology. Rather than consisting of a single, unified model of mental functioning, the term "CBT" represents a community of empirically supported treatments, which currently are recognized as the "gold-standard" approach to psychotherapy, in terms of efficacy research. This recognition appears to be due to the emphasis within CBT on scientific methods and evidence-based practices (Baker, McFall, & Shoham, 2009). Taken as a whole, CBT approaches have several hundred randomized controlled trials supporting their effectiveness for a wide range of psychological problems. The evidence is particularly strong for cognitive therapy (Butler, Chapman, Forman, & Beck, 2006) and CBT for anxiety disorders (Barlow, 2004), which have an outstanding track record for outcome research. Additionally, the processes involved in cognitive and behavioral therapies are often linked to basic experimental research (Ruiz, 2010; Alford & Beck, 1998), and research that indicates that treatment processes actively mediate significant change in therapy outcomes. This emphasis on empirically supported processes and mediation research has been particularly prevalent within the acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) literature (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 2011). CBT is host to a significant number of treatment models and scientific theories that have both significant similarities and evolving differences in language, technique, or philosophy. These changes emerge through the ongoing work of a global scientific community, consisting of active research programs and thousands of clinicians employing evidence-based techniques. At this point, the vast range of CBT theories and models "have been applied to the full range of human experiences" (Herbert & Forman, 2011, p. 1), with the aim of reducing mental illness and increasing well-being.

"Buddhist psychology," as we use the term here, refers to both a tradition of psychological techniques and an applied philosophy of mind, that have been used within Buddhism for at least 2,600 years to help

people liberate themselves from suffering. Buddhism, in its essence, is not a religion in the same way that any of the other global, theistic, and spiritual traditions are. Although culturally situated lineages of Buddhist teaching have espoused beliefs in reincarnation or other spiritual phenomena, there are no claims made in Buddhist psychology or in the teachings of the historical Buddha concerning the existence of a God, life after death, or the presence of a soul. Thus, Buddhism is an ongoing incomplete endeavor with many branches and schools of thought just as is Western science and experimentation.

At times, voices in the cultural discussion may question whether researchers and clinicians ought to be applying elements of religion to a scientific process. This argument would be important and valid if we were discussing the adoption of mystical assumptions in the absence of scientific analysis, experimentation, and replication. Furthermore, if we were adopting the assumptions of theistic religions, or asserting the existence of a God, gods, or supernatural entities whose existence is not falsifiable, we would be on very shaky intellectual and ontological ground. However, the integration of Buddhist psychology into the process of the development of a global psychology best suited to the needs of the human condition does none of the above. In the integration of CBT and Buddhist psychology, we are describing an evidence-based appreciation of applied psychological systems for the alleviation of suffering that have emerged cross-culturally and transdiagnostically.

Essentially, applied Buddhist psychology can be viewed as processes of discovery, and individual empiricism. Buddhism emphasizes such empiricism, and Buddhist teachings are only as good as their current validity and reliability (Dalai Lama, 1991). Even the most central teachings are to be examined and not just taken as truth; and if proven wrong through vigorous empirical testing, then they ought to be subject to change and progress (Dalai Lama, 1991). Buddhist psychology teaches not through revelation or blind faith, but through investigation and analysis. Through the observation of experiences, as well as an understanding of cause and effect and the relationship between reality and consciousness, Buddhism offers an alternative way of navigating the human experience.

According to tradition, at some point in the sixth century B.C.E., The Shakyamuni Buddha, once a member of the tribal aristocracy in the western Himalayas, became a serious student of the meditation and philosophical traditions that were practiced on the Indian subcontinent.

At that point in history, numerous techniques of yoga, attention training, and behavioral change methods had been developed throughout the region, within a centuries-old, prescientific tradition that related to spiritual scriptures. The Buddha mastered these methods, and then proceeded to develop an innovative technology for training the mind for liberation from suffering. The Buddha's approach eschewed spiritual and supernatural assumptions, and depended upon individual practices, and pragmatic results. This method became widespread in the region during the time of the Buddha's life, and spread widely after his death. For the next 26 centuries, the method went through a consistent process of rigorous research and development through the practice of millions of Buddhist monks, scholars, and lay practitioners throughout the world. While this process did not follow the sequence prescribed by Western science, Buddhism has contained a form of subjective, pragmatic empiricism, logical analysis, and neurophenomenology (Varela, 1996) throughout its evolution. In the 20th and 21st centuries, the subjective empiricism of earlier Buddhism has begun to merge with the Western scientific tradition, to suggest the possibility of a more refined, scientifically grounded Buddhist psychology.

BEGINNING WHERE YOU ARE

Please take a moment to bring your attention directly to your physical experience, here and now. If it is safe to do so, please close your eyes for a few seconds and take three deep, slow, and full breaths while paying attention to the physical sensations involved in breathing, as much as you can. Then open your eyes and return to the next paragraph.

As you hold the tablet, smartphone, or book that contains these words, you can feel its weight in your hands. You examine patterns of black and white symbols, which confer meaning. This all happens simultaneously, and seemingly effortlessly. You're not likely to be noticing any of that, and you may simply just be aware of the act of reading.

You might just be "hearing" the words you read "in your head." Your attention may have already wandered away from the book to some daydream of tomorrow, or some reminiscence of the past. All of this is a part of your unique human experience of being alive right now. As far as we are aware, no other animal can process all of this at once or have this sort of experience.

This realization leads us to adapt and paraphrase a portion of an ancient series of observations from the original teachings of the historical Buddha, known as the *Dhammapada* (Cleary, 1994; Friedlander, 2009):

- Given how rare it is that the conditions to potentially sustain life might emerge on a planet, isn't it amazing that you are even here in the first place, right now?
- And given how unlikely it is that life would evolve to the level of human consciousness, isn't it quite strange that you would have the ability to think at all, let alone read?
- And when we consider how difficult life on earth has been for so many human beings, and how rare it is to live in a time of relative peace and prosperity, how fortunate are we to be able to communicate through this book, together, here and now?
- If someone were watching over your shoulder just now, he or she would likely witness a human being who is relatively safe and healthy, who is well fed and educated, and who is seeking to learn more about how to help his or her fellow human beings to alleviate their suffering.
- Isn't it worth pausing and appreciating this event, even if just for its remarkable rarity in the known universe?

We know the human brain has more discrete possible connections across its nerve cells than there are stars in the sky, or grains of sand on a beach (Davidson, Jackson, & Kalin, 2000; LeDoux, 2002). The capacity we human beings have for language, thought, pattern recognition, and making comparisons between stimuli is unlike anything demonstrated by other animals. The human capacity to interact with the environment, to adapt, and to create tools for problem solving is awe-inspiring in its efficiency and evolutionary elegance. Beyond this, our potential for wisdom, compassion, and kindness is exceptional. Unlike other species, we have evolved to possess a potential for unconditional love and generosity.

Nonetheless, as you are human, then we also know something rather less heartening about you. We know you are struggling, and we know you are suffering.

We know this because it is the nature of the human mind to suffer and to struggle. Given our typical "day-to-day" human perspective, life

can seem consistently out of balance, like the feeling of a wheel that is slightly out of alignment.

Though we live in an era of relative global prosperity, 50% of the general population will suffer from a major psychological disorder over the course of their lives (Kessler et al., 1994; Kessler, Chiu, Demler, & Walters, 2005). Beyond that, millions who don't "earn" such a diagnosis experience problems with addiction or other self-destructive behaviors. Approximately half of us seriously contemplate suicide at some point in our lives (Chiles & Strosahl, 2005). Many experience tragic losses, abuse, neglect, or deprivation. All of us will die. Extreme poverty can be found in the shadow of staggering wealth. Nations fight wars with one another on horrific scales, spreading death, injury, disaster, poverty, and hatred.

Despite the miracle of human consciousness, most of us will experience a chronic "dis-ease" through which our experience will be tainted with some measure of chronic unhappiness and anxious apprehension. This "dis-ease" may be described as "the stress and intrinsic unsatisfactoriness of a life that is always seeking some other state or condition in which to feel fulfilled, complete and happy" (Kabat-Zinn, 2009, p. xxvii). In a sense, the central truth of the human experience is a truth of suffering.

In the midst of all of this struggle and pain, musician and composer Robert Fripp said, "A reasonable person might despair, but hope is unreasonable, and love is stronger than even that." As we observed, over the past several thousand years, wisdom traditions, mind sciences, and meditative disciplines have evolved to point a way out of the cycle of human suffering. As we will discuss together, this path forward involves compassion, wisdom, flexible response patterns, and the capacity to experience distress with courage and clear awareness. While the human condition cannot be avoided, we have no choice but to be human; we do, however, have a choice as to what to do with it. We can search for new answers, new ways of using what is both our gift and our affliction: our human mind. That which is the source of our suffering can also be our salvation.

As we take a closer look at CBT and Buddhist psychology, we find traditions that have evolved in different cultural contexts. However, these traditions share common aims, common techniques, and even elements of a common history. More importantly, CBT and Buddhist psychology are beginning to affect one another's development and perspectives.

Both Buddhist psychology and CBT aim to observe, question, and alleviate the experience of suffering by providing a clearer understanding of reality and creating an effective context to cultivate new approaches to one's struggles and personal development. Both Buddhist psychology and CBT have accessible and powerful contributions to offer one another in the pursuit of shared aims and functions.

From this point forward, at least in the Western world, it may be that CBT and Buddhism are evolving into one another. This turn of events was predicted over a century ago by one of CBT's forerunners, the great American psychologist William James. According to James (1902/2009), Buddhism was the "psychology everybody will be studying 25 years from now." James's prediction was accurate, though he placed the current Buddhist-informed revolution in Western psychology 100 or so years too early.

THE CURRENT AND FUTURE INTEGRATION

Over the course of the last two decades, methods and concepts that have been associated with Buddhism for centuries have become the central focus of much CBT research and development. CBT has been described as undergoing a third wave of innovation (Herbert & Forman, 2011) that has everything to do with a proliferation of methods based in such Buddhist-informed concepts as mindfulness, acceptance, and compassion. To varying degrees, both CBT and Buddhist psychology train people to cultivate a present-moment-focused awareness of our experience, in order to cut through the influence of delusional beliefs and destructive emotions (Dalai Lama, 1991; Kwee, Gergen, & Koshikawa, 2006). Furthermore, both schools of thought employ forms of analytic reasoning to question the merit and believability of distressing thinking, as well as contemplative, experiential techniques to reduce psychological suffering (Baker et al., 2009; Guenther & Kawamura, 1975). This blend of positive psychological change, based both on knowledge and in direct experience, is a primary characteristic of the integration of Buddhist psychology and CBT. Accordingly, throughout this book, we will be providing you with a blend of information and practical exercises. Each of the meditative practices we present to you can be used with patients in therapy. However, you can also use these exercises to deepen your understanding of the concepts we are discussing.

An amazing combination and flow of elements have occurred in the last three decades allowing us to understand more fully what drives our suffering, and how we can develop ever more efficient ways to foster its alleviation. Technological advances in fast and efficient travel, and an exponential acceleration of information technology, have led to a global exchange of ideas, across cultures and philosophical systems. Even just 50 years ago, most of the information on Buddhism and psychology that we have at our fingertips would be literally inaccessible to most people, including most psychologists. Beginning with the 1960s counterculture and expanding with Internet technologies, practices such as yoga, Buddhist meditation, and other philosophies from Eastern religions have pervaded Western medicine and popular culture.

During this same era, several areas of psychological science have experienced major advances that have involved a greater study of Buddhist psychology as a method of addressing psychological problems. For example, computer technology has resulted in much more precise imaging of our brains and neurophysiology. As a result, neuroscientists have more precisely described the ways that emotions, attention, and meditative training are expressed in the brain (Austin, 1999; LeDoux 1996, 1998, 2002; Treadway & Lazar, 2009). In terms of behavioral research, experimental and theoretical advancements in the behavioral analysis of human language have resulted in a new understanding of just how human beings are able to think and communicate. These developments have led to effective new methods for conducting psychotherapy (Hayes, 2004b; Hayes, Villatte, Levin, & Hildebrant, 2011). Advances in evolutionary psychology have illuminated the function and origins of much of what drives our psychological struggle and pain (Gilbert, 1998a, 2001; Kurzban & Leary, 2001; Wilson, 2004). Despite the roots of these movements being deep in the Western scientific tradition, all of these developments have lead researchers and practitioners to place mindfulness, acceptance, and compassion, fundamental elements of a Buddhist approach, at the center of new directions for applied clinical psychology (Goleman, 1991; Kang & Whittingham, 2010).

Following on these trends in science and culture, a wide range of new psychotherapies has emerged in CBT. These new therapies draw upon the most effective and research-proven methods of previous psychotherapies, and expand the CBT tradition through the elaboration of a new understanding of the nature of thinking, feeling, and doing. Beyond even this, these cutting-edge approaches emphasize ways that human

beings may establish a new relationship to their experience, through the cultivation of acceptance, mindful awareness of the present moment, and compassion. These therapies, including ACT (Hayes et al., 2011), functional analytic psychotherapy (FAP; Kohlenberg & Tsai, 1991), compassion-focused therapy (CFT; Gilbert, 2009a, 2010a), mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR; Kabat-Zinn, 1990), mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT; Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002), mindfulness-based relapse prevention (MBRP; Marlatt & Donovan, 2005), and dialectical behavior therapy (DBT; Linehan,1993a), have come to define the direction of CBT. Directly and indirectly, Buddhism informs these modalities on the levels of theory and practice (Hayes, 2004b; Kang & Whittenham, 2010). Beyond these cutting-edge innovations, elements of Buddhism may have informed the development of CBT from its inception. For example, according to Albert Ellis, "While Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy (REBT) highlights the norm of people's dogmatic, fanatical and rigid beliefs, it has *always* favored several aspects of Zen Buddhism as a Modus Vivendi" (Kwee & Ellis, 1998, p. 5; original emphasis). Buddhist models of human psychology have evolved over centuries of devoted contemplation, scholarship, and meditation. They have been recorded in thousands of volumes, which are centuries-old. Some of these texts have yet to be translated into modern or Western languages. This pool of knowledge and analysis of experience is currently being decoded by some of the best and brightest minds in Western intellectual traditions, and interpreted in the light of a global neuroscience initiative. We are beginning to understand the nature of mind from an integral, multicultural perspective, and we are beginning to test and implement methods for freeing the mind from its struggles.

All of this is available to us, for the good of our patients and ourselves. Right now, the sum of Buddhist and Western scientific thought can begin to point us in the direction of personal liberation, the alleviation of suffering, the cultivation of wisdom, and a growing compassionate mode of being. In our everyday life as clinicians, it will be a rare day that a person comes to us with a presenting problem that reads: "Seeking personal liberation." Nevertheless, when we seek to help our clients get out from under the dominance of excessive worries and rumination we are helping them to become free to live bigger, more meaningful lives. When we meet someone with agoraphobia or major depression, who has surrendered the outside world to become a functional prisoner of the four walls of their room, we are helping to alleviate and prevent their

ongoing suffering, and to develop the liberating self-compassion that they might need to face their fears and regrets.

Despite the wide proliferation of Buddhist publications, and the exponential growth in meditation and psychotherapy research, what has emerged so far can seem like myriad streams that flow in different directions. It is a quirk of our educational systems that scholars in various areas don't always reach one another with their discoveries. Rather than an ivory tower, the world of academic science may be better compared to an ivory archipelago, as David Sloan Wilson (2007) suggests. Each school of thought, on its own island, may be making great progress in researching an area of inquiry, with a given methodology. Nevertheless, these islands might not communicate in a way that allows for adaptive, prosocial cooperation. Neuroscientists may not be speaking with the behavioral researchers. Psychiatrists may be cut off from individuals who study the social impact of economic forces. Something is lost in this absence of communication. Even within the discipline of psychology, for example, there are isolated pockets of scholarship, so that the right hand of a science might not know what its left hand is doing. How many of us have learned a great deal about a given theoretical approach, for example, psychoanalytic theory, and have remained ignorant of what is happening in an allied modality, such as applied behavioral analysis. We know that for science to advance, it is necessary that scholars and researchers pursue ever more specialized lines of inquiry. Yet this specialization often isolates them from the broader discussion. In a sense, the intellectual, disciplinary archipelago is a side effect of our current educational systems. However, it doesn't have to be like this.

In the midst of the current revolution in psychology and related fields, there are significant efforts to address this side effect, and to bring together many disciplines that examine consciousness and suffering from a cross-cultural point of view. One great example is the work of the Mind and Life Institute (*www.mindandlife.org*), which has brought authorities on Buddhist philosophy, such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, into discussions with Western physicists, psychologists, and other scientists (1991). Organizations like the Association for Contextual Behavioral Science, the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, and the Compassionate Mind Foundation all provide a context where concepts from CBT and Buddhist psychology can be integrated. Nonetheless, we have yet to develop a user-friendly guide to the

basics of Buddhist psychology that provides a road map designed for the CBT clinician. Of course, there are huge numbers of publications about the alphabet soup of different cognitive and behavioral therapies (CBT, MBCT, DBT, etc.), but there is more available in Buddhist psychology than has been presented to cognitive behavioral therapists so far.

The adaptation of Buddhist psychology methods to CBT has centered on the concept of mindfulness (DiDonna, 2009). Depending on where and how mindfulness is referenced in the psychotherapy literature, this concept may stand for a process, a procedure, an outcome, a form of training, or even the entirety of Buddhist philosophy. Needless to say, this ambiguity can lead to some measure of confusion. In exploring and clarifying Buddhist psychology for the CBT clinician, we will explore these aspects of mindfulness in some detail. However, we can begin with the elegantly simple definition of mindfulness put forward by Germer, Siegel, and Fulton (2005): *awareness of present experience with acceptance*. "With acceptance" means this kind of awareness includes allowing public or private processes without trying to change or challenge their existence. As we touch on mindfulness in our initial discussion, we can return to this direct, clear, conceptual understanding.

Clinical psychologists target secular aims, and, in many respects, are limited to techniques that are based on empirical evidence. In this way, psychologists are assured that their work is based on scientific grounds, even when inspired by sources from spiritual philosophies. However, something would be lost if we were to turn our back upon the whole of Buddhist philosophy and psychology until such time that each element has been researched, packaged, commodifed, and branded in a Western idiom. As Dimidjian and Linehan (2003, p. 167) have suggested, "It is possible that relinking mindfulness with its spiritual roots may enhance clinical practice." Similarly, Hayes (2002a, p. 105) asserted, "Combining these two great traditions, spirituality and science, promises a leap forward in our understanding of human suffering, but only if psychological scientists keep their eye on the development of a coherent and progressive discipline, not merely the acquisition of a few new clinical maneuvers."

As we encounter Buddhist psychology as behaviorists, cognitive therapists, or researchers in applied psychology, we bring the perspective of the scientific method to Buddhism. In this book, as we explore Buddhist source materials for tools to use in combination with CBT, the alleviation of suffering and the promotion of lives of purpose, meaning,

and vitality are our aims, rather than the promotion of a state of "spiritual enlightenment." We will provide examples of CBT and Buddhist techniques that are compatible with evidence-based clinical practice. For example, in Chapter 10 we provide a case conceptualization method and worksheet that is derived from Buddhist concepts and intentions, yet which facilitates the targeted delivery of specific CBT interventions. Ultimately, though, our clinical aims are in complete accord with the teachings of Buddhism, wherein reified supernatural assumptions are to be avoided, and the pursuit of the alleviation of suffering is ever-present. Whatever "enlightenment" may be, it is helpful for this discussion to see it as a description of a frame of mind. This description has been left for us by individuals who have reportedly completed a process of realizing their human potential, through rigorous and stimulating mental training, in the face of great adversity. Whatever enlightenment comes to mean to you is your decision. The mission of the alleviation of human suffering and the promotion of growth is something clinical psychologists and other clinicians share. From this common ground, we can step forward.

CLARIFYING THE PROCESS

In Tibetan Vajrayana Buddhist temples, "butter lamps" (candles) are used that are made of clarified yak butter. This practice probably emerged because yak butter is more readily available than wax in the Himalayas. Yet there is also a symbolic significance to the clarified golden butter that glows in these brass candles. It is taught that, through the process of gradual Buddhist mental training, repeatedly coming into direct contact with the true nature of mind, our struggle with mental illusions dissipates and is clarified. Buddhist teachings describe an illuminated "clear seeing" that emerges through contemplative training that is akin to the clarification of butter. Gradually seeing through cognitive distortions, delusions, and emotionally cloudy perceptions is said to result in an experience of the "clear light" of pure conscious awareness, symbolized by the light glowing through the clear surface of the butter lamp (Baer, 2003).

At this point in the integration of Buddhist psychology and CBT, there is just so much information available, and so many seemingly disparate perspectives on Westernized mindfulness techniques, that it can

be hard to clarify the central concepts of Buddhism, and how they might relate to cognitive-behavioral practice. Even for those of us who "do mindfulness" as psychotherapists, the concepts, the body of research, and the intention behind the practices derived from Buddhist psychology can seem confusing and clouded in obscure terminology and cultural baggage.

Importantly, everything in this book is drawn from earlier Buddhist psychology and CBT resources, and our aim is to provide this to you in a new form for your better access and understanding. As there are many concepts that we will be surveying, we have included a very brief Appendix (at the end of the book) that outlines some key concepts. You can think of it as your dharma "cheat sheet" as you come to engage more fully with the concepts in Buddhism that can be readily applied to our clinical work. However, you already possess everything you need to work with the material in this book in meaningful ways. Buddhist psychology holds that all of us are already fully liberated and endlessly wise, but that this wisdom may not be available to us in our current state of affairs. From this point of view, you are already in possession of everything you need to break the cycle of suffering that holds you (and your clients) in place. This may sound a little weird at first, but, from a Buddhist perspective, right now, literally speaking, you are already "perfectly enlightened." You just aren't aware of it yet. The methods presented in the following pages will aim to make you more aware of this natural inner wisdom, in the service of the alleviation of suffering for you and your patients.

Throughout this book, you will encounter a number of experiential exercises and meditations. Derived from Buddhist practice and third-wave cognitive and behaviorial therapies, these practices are meant to both illustrate the concepts we are encountering, and to provide a form of practice that is relevant to clinical practice. These practices may be used with patients, and may be integrated into existing CBT modalities, to enhance training in mindfulness and self-compassion, and to further the aims of the treatment. You will find the practices provided set apart from our text in boxes that highlight each as an experiential exercise. Throughout its history, Buddhism has adapted and grown to better fit with the cultures and human conditions it encountered. Rather than providing a system of orthodox Buddhist practice, which can be found in a variety of sources, this book presents concepts, meditations, and exercises that are particularly relevant to the integrated practice of

Buddhist psychology and CBT. As mentioned, we also encourage you to experiment with these practices as you read through the text. To further this aim, we have provided audio recordings of all of these practices for you at *www.guilford.com/tirch-materials*. You can use these recordings to guide your practice, or work from the descriptions that are here in this book. Most importantly, we invite you to engage with this material experientially, and to use your own clinical wisdom and understanding to bridge into the experiences we discuss.

A First Experiential Step

For just a few minutes, let's step out of the structure of a conventional text, so that we might engage in a small experiential exercise. During this exercise, you will ask yourself a series of mildly provocative questions. There will be many exercises involved in this work you are beginning, so let's think of this as just "one taste" of a new level of engagement with this material. Many readers will recognize this practice as involving a concept from Buddhist psychology known as "mindfulness." If you have some experience with mindfulness, perhaps you might hold your knowledge of mindfulness as lightly as possible, as you approach this practice and all of that which follows. If you have no experience of mindfulness, or are unfamiliar with the term, you can rest assured that the rest of your reading here (as well as a casual stroll through the poster presentations at a CBT conference) will bring you into consistent contact with definitions and descriptions of mindfulness. For now, let's just view this exercise as a quiet, restful, and curious experiment. You might even think of it as a game, if that is helpful. A series of instructions and questions will follow. Later, after you read the questions, as best you can, try not to worry about whether the answers that present themselves to you are "right" or "wrong" or "true" or "false." They are just questions to be encountered, and your reactions are simply to be noticed, with acceptance, moment by moment.

As best you can, try simply to observe and be present with these reactions without judging them. Perhaps you might bring a little curiosity and kindness to the experience.

Guided Instructions

If you are willing, take a moment now, and breathe deeply and naturally in and out of the abdomen. For about 60 seconds after I ask you to begin [a few lines down] allow your eyes to close and just let that breath breathe itself in and out of your body.

Feel your feet on the ground.

Feel your back straight and supported, and feel yourself rooted to the earth like a strong and stable tree, or even a mountain. Take some time to rest in the breath, in a spirit of acceptance and kindness. With each in-breath, you breathe

attention and life into your body. With each out-breath, you let go, literally releasing the tension and the air that no longer sustains you, letting go more and more with each exhalation.

After about a minute or two of just being with that breath, simply watching what happens, open your eyes and read the series of questions that follows. Please read each question slowly, and give yourself time to make space for whatever arises in response to the question. Pause and let yourself notice and appreciate the thoughts, feelings, and sensations that unfold before your observation, moment by moment, after each question. Let some time pass, perhaps 10 to 30 seconds between each question. Exhaling, and letting go, move on to the next question. There are no answers. Just watching what happens.

When you are ready, please begin.

If you have taken the time to breathe in silence and approach the words below, please continue.

"What if everything you've learned wasn't exactly wrong, but was founded on an illusion?"

"What if the nature of who you really are is completely different from what you've been taught?"

"What if you found out that you were infinitely and inextricably connected to everything else that exists, and that all perceived separateness was something of a dream?"

"What if a part of you already knows this, and that part connects with the 'rightness' of these words, in the present moment, as you read this book, right now?"

"What if all things as we know them revealed themselves to be impermanent?"

"What would that mean for you? What would that say about your freedom?"

"What if you could naturally, precisely, and relaxedly draw your attention to the flow of your conscious experience, on purpose, with clear seeing . . .

and . . . in this way, you could come to see thoughts as thoughts, emotions as emotions, sensations as sensations,

and . . . find an experience of self that is beyond identification with anything in particular?"

"What if, from that perspective, you could wake up to the reality of what is happening right now, fully and deeply, without defense, experiencing the present moment, as best you can, and choose to take actions that are meaningful and purposeful to you, moment by moment?"

"What would that mean for your grocery shopping? For your parenting? For your home repair budget?"

"How can you be fully awake and alive, abiding in absolute reality, while you attend to the relative reality that you are co-creating right here and right now?"

"How is it that this makes sense to you?"

"How is it that it doesn't make sense?"

Now that our first exercise is complete, we can let it go, with a deep, cleansing exhalation. When you have completed this book, all of the above questions might seem pretty simple and straightforward. Then again, they may remain a complete mystery. Maybe both situations will be equally true. If you have experience with ACT, DBT, Zen, mindfulness, or yoga philosophy, some of this may be quite familiar already. Whatever your background, the aim of this book is to link the abstract with the precise, and spiritual concepts with the scientific method. You will learn how an integration of Buddhist psychology and CBT allows us to shift our perspective in adaptive ways, and to become unstuck from our habitual patterns of perception and action.

For now, take a moment to give yourself some credit for engaging with this first exercise, and, as you consciously exhale, try to let any of the questions or their potential answers go. This little introductory exercise is the first of many that we will outline and explain in far greater detail. You will find these exercises interspersed throughout the text. We would encourage you to actually engage in these practices, availing yourself of the downloadable guided practices when you can. Your understanding of the concepts here, and your use of the practical techniques that follow, will allow you to bring many potentially powerful elements of Buddhist psychology to your practice of cognitive and behavioral psychotherapy, in ways that are consistent with the state of the art of the CBT process and outcome research.

If you are a student, a researcher, or a clinician who is involved in practice-based research, we would encourage you to pay close attention to the questions that arise for you as you read this book. This is a time of exploration and expansion for the integration of CBT and Buddhist psychology. As such, the more we can identify further questions and lines of study, the better off we are. As scientist practitioners, our shared mission is to frame these questions in testable, scientific ways. In doing so, and by sharing these questions with our community, we can spur further research and reflection, driving the science and practice of the alleviation of human suffering ever forward.

In a rough approximation of one of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's suggestions, if the techniques here are of use to you, please use them with yourself and with your patients. If they do not seem useful, let them go; no need to worry about them further. We wish well-being, wisdom, loving-kindness, and freedom from suffering for you and your patients.

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