

The image shows a certificate for the William C. Bier Interdisciplinary Award. The title is "Meditation / Mindfulness and Spirituality / Religion: From Frenemies to Collaborators?". The presenter is Doug Oman, Ph.D., from the School of Public Health at the University of California, Berkeley. The award is given by the Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality (Division 36 of the American Psychological Association) at the 126th Annual Convention in San Francisco, California, on August 10, 2018. The certificate features a yellow header, a light blue background, and a red-bordered box for the presenter's information. A small globe icon is visible on the left side.

**Meditation / Mindfulness and
Spirituality / Religion:
From Frenemies to Collaborators?**

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Address on Receiving
William C. Bier Interdisciplinary Award
from the
Society for the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality
(Division 36 of the American Psychological Association)
126th Annual Convention
American Psychological Association
San Francisco, California
August 10, 2018

ABSTRACT

Spiritual traditions were historically the sole custodians and developers of meditative techniques, but tensions have arisen in the current era of scientific research on secularized modes of meditation. Meditation and spirituality research have both competed and collaborated, rendering them “frenemies”. But some of the same conceptual and methodological trends that have generated widespread interest in “mindfulness meditation” may ultimately lead to its reform or displacement by more diverse and spiritually grounded approaches. This talk, based on material prepared for the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Meditation*, traces many key trends and turning points in the past half-century of meditation research, highlighting necessary and emerging roles played by reconnection with spiritual traditions.

DESCRIPTION OF AWARD

Source: <http://www.apadivisions.org/division-36/awards/bier.aspx>

William C. Bier Award

[Award recognizing outstanding interdisciplinary work on issues of psychology of religion and related fields.]

This award honors an outstanding contribution through publication and professional activity to the dissemination of findings on religious and allied issues or who has made a notable contribution to the integration of these findings with those of other disciplines, notably philosophy, sociology and anthropology.

2017

Miguel Farias

2016

Richard Sosis

2015

Neal Krause

2014

Tanya Luhrman

2013

Susan McFadden

2012

Ev Worthington

2011

Annette Mahoney

2010

Justin Barrett

2009

Fraser Watts

2008

Ray Paloutzian

2007

None

2006

Leslie J. Francis

2005

Owe Wilkstrom

2004

Naomi R. Goldenberg

2003

Nils G. Holm

2002

Siang-Yang Tan

2001

William C. Meissner

2000

Carole A. Rayburn

1999

P. Scott Richards

1998

Peter C. Hill

1997

Edward P. Shafranske

1996

Ana Maria Rizzuto

1995

John McDargh

1994

Don Capps

1993

James W. Jones

1992

Barry Ekstadt

1991

David Wulff

1990

Hendrika Vande Kemp

1989

Reuven Bulka

1988

David Bakan

1987

H. Newton Malony

1986

Paul Pruyser

1985

Paul Clement

1984

James E. Royce

1983

Gary Collins

1982

Adrian Van Kaam

1981

No award presented

1980

William C. Bier (awarded posthumously)

OUTLINE

Meditation Research: 1970-present

- What is Meditation?
- Research 1970 to Present:
 - Shifting Tides
 - Meditation + Spirituality = both Friends,
Competitors: “Frenemies”
- Beginning to relink with Spirituality/Religion

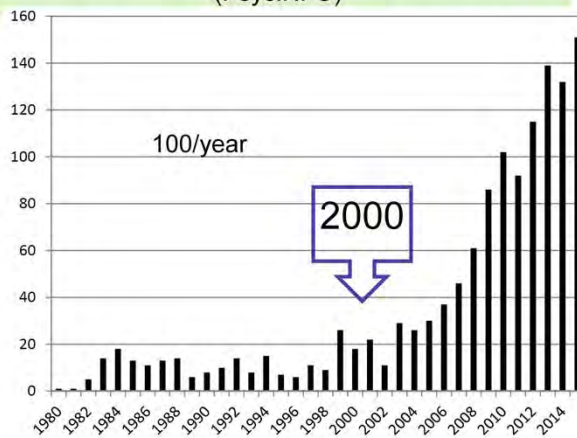
From forthcoming
Oxford Handbook of Meditation
Previously speaker led
2 RCTs of spiritual meditation

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Editors of the Oxford Handbook of Meditation are Miguel Farias, David Brazier, and Mansour Lalljee. The book is expected to be published in 2018 or 2019.

A) Overall Expansion

Publications/Year on "Meditation"
(PsycINFO)



Peer reviewed, Empirical Study,
Journal article (searches 12/27/2017)

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What is Meditation?

Cardinal Features:

1. Sitting
2. Dedicated time
period
3. Train attention



Zazen = "Sitting"
Buddha (seated)
Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras*
Bhagavad Gita
Hesychasm

TM: 20 mins/day
MBSR: 40 mins/day
Akin to exercise routine

Goals and Methods of Traditional Meditation / Contemplative Prayer

1. Goals: Transform consciousness to align
with eternal realities & sacred truths

a. Cultivate discrete, spiritually helpful
altered states of consciousness (ASCs)

b. Altered *trait*: **Awakened state**

Teresa of Avila:
"Unio mystica"



2. **Ancillary practices**
& ancillary beliefs
(framing resources)


- ✓ Noble Eightfold Path
- ✓ Eight-limbed Yoga
- ✓ Adherence to main tenets
(e.g., Hesychasm)

Goleman (1977):
Traditional meditation "paths all
propose the same basic formula...
the **diffusion of the effects of
meditation** into the meditator's
waking, dreaming, and sleep
states" 5

Goleman, D. (1977) *The Varieties of the Meditative Experience*, New York, NY,
Irvington Publishers. Most of the material in the 1977 first edition is also contained in
the 1988 revised edition: Goleman, D. (1988) *The meditative mind: The varieties of
meditative experience*, New York, Tarcher.

B) Early Ferment + TM Paradigm

a) Diverse methods Zen, Ananda Marga, Vipassana, etc.
Goleman (1977) *Varieties of Meditative Experience*

b) Transcendental Meditation (TM) 

i) Wallace (1970) in *Science*

Students (n=15): Changes in oxygen consumption, heart rate, skin resistance, brain wave frequencies – argued a **“distinct” state** of consciousness

TM could supply “a **large number** of subjects [who] were readily available [and] had received consistent and **uniform instruction** through an organization that specializes in teaching this technique.”


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c) Herbert Benson → Secularized TM

i) *Relaxation Response* (1975) – opposite of stress response

Frenemies
Ongoing tension



Wallace, R. K. (1970) Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation. *Science*, 167 (3926), 1751-1754.

Benson, H. (1975) *The Relaxation Response*, New York, William Morrow.

C) A Plethora of Outcomes

Already by early 1980s, sitting meditation linked to
physiological effects

- Brain activation (EEG)
- Depth, rate of breathing
- Oxygen consumption
- Heart rate
- Blood pressure
- Skin conductance

Methodological issues

- Lack of controls for sitting quietly expectancy effects
- Procedures not fully described

Meditation often linked to

- Lower arousal
- But occasionally to
- Higher arousal

Psychological effects

- Reduced anxiety, substance abuse, pathological behavior, hypertension
- Improved adjustment, self-regard, inner-directedness, spontaneity, capacity for intimate contact

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Flash Forward

Many Early Findings Sustained in Later Meta-Analyses

Meta-analyses (mostly in 2000s), selected:

- TM → lower systolic, diastolic BP
- MM → Enhanced telomerase ($d=.46$)
- M(all) → Enhanced psychological outcomes ($r=.27$)
- M(all) → Improved anxiety, depression, pain (vs controls)
- M[var] → Reduced depression, anxiety
- MM → Reduced chronic pain, insomnia
- M[var] → Reduced PTSD symptoms
- M[var] → Reduced substance abuse; smoking
- M[var] → Affects brain structure, activation

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D) Big News in 1990s:
Mindfulness Catches a Wave

<u>Mindfulness</u>	<i>versus</i>	<u>TM</u>
A. Framed non-theistically		A. Mysterious mantras
B. Ostensibly science-like “observe workings of one’s mind”		B. Unclear if TM is a “religion” (cult-like?)

First research on Mindfulness Meditation
Deatherage (1975)

Most Influential
Kabat-Zinn’s (1982, 1985)
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR), combining

- Buddhist-inspired mindfulness-meditation
- Hatha Yoga postures
- Other elements

Deatherage, G. (1975) The clinical use of "mindfulness" meditation techniques in short-term psychotherapy. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, 7 (2), 133-143.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1982) An outpatient program in behavioral medicine for chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: theoretical considerations and preliminary results. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, 4 (1), 33-47.


Kabat-Zinn, J., Lipworth, L. & Burney, R. (1985) The clinical use of mindfulness meditation for the self-regulation of chronic pain. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 8 (2), 163-190.

D) Mindfulness Catches a Wave

MBSR

How K-Z Defined “Mindfulness”

Mindfulness is “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally”
(Kabat-Zinn, 1994)



Ancient Greece
“the value of the present instant plays a fundamental role in all the philosophical schools”
¹⁰ (Pierre Hadot, 1995)

Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs)

Meditation a component:
MBSR for stress, etc,
MBCT for depression
MB-EAT for eating disorders

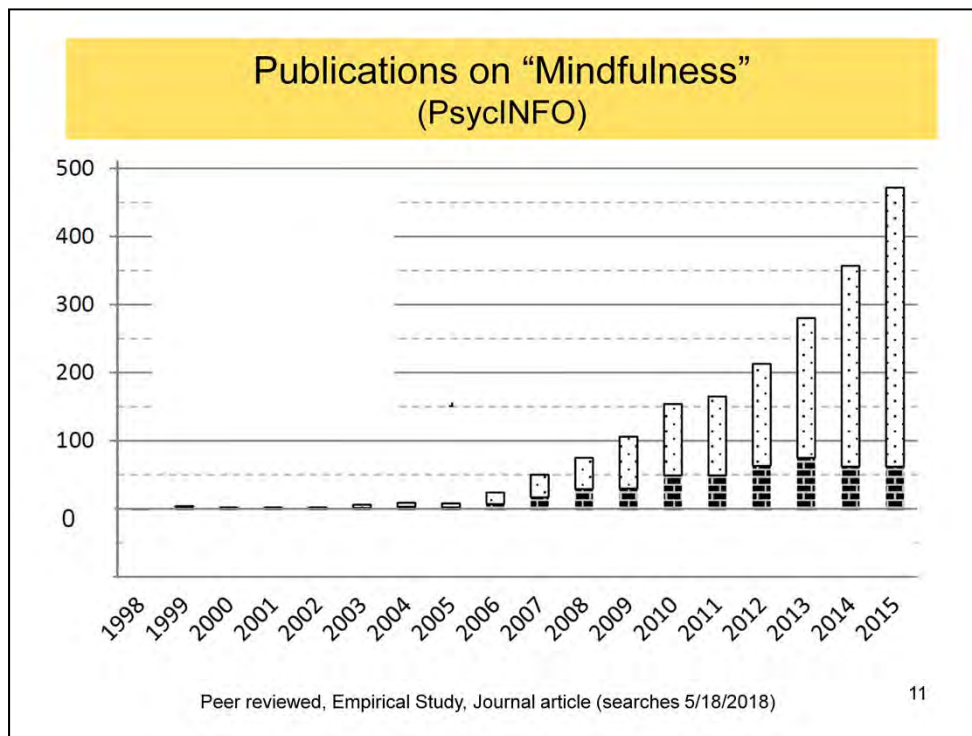
Mindfulness journal (2010-),
impact > 3

Expert poll predicts mindfulness most influential new therapy approach through 2022
(Norcross et al, 2013)

Hadot, P. & Davidson, A. I. (trans.) (1995) *Philosophy as a way of life: spiritual exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, Malden, MA, Blackwell.

Singh, N. N. (2010) Mindfulness: A Finger Pointing to the Moon. *Mindfulness*, 1 (1), 1-3.

Norcross, J. C., Pfund, R. A. & Prochaska, J. O. (2013) Psychotherapy in 2022: A Delphi poll on its future. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 44 (5), 363-370.



Why the Wave?

MBSR + MBIs

1. Reframing Purpose: Mid-Level Goal

<p><u>PREVIOUS EXTREMES</u></p> <p>↑↑ High-level spiritual goals: TM's "fourth state"</p> <p>↓↓ Mundane clinical goals: Benson's "relaxation"</p>	<p><u>Mindfulness (MBIs)</u></p> <p>Mid-level, perhaps measurable: Cultivate "mindfulness"</p>
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E) A Monsoon of Measures

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003)

- ✓ Trait measure of “mindfulness”,
15 items, unidimensional
- ✓ Usable for meditators, non-meditators
- ✓ Face-valid assessment of *attentional phenomena*
- ✓ In population, MAAS correlated with awareness, well-being, positive emotions, self-regulated behavior, longitudinal stress declines

Limitations:

- ↓ Not face-valid for Buddhist mindfulness

MAAS ITEM

“I find myself doing things
without paying attention”

Soon, a dozen other “mindfulness” measures

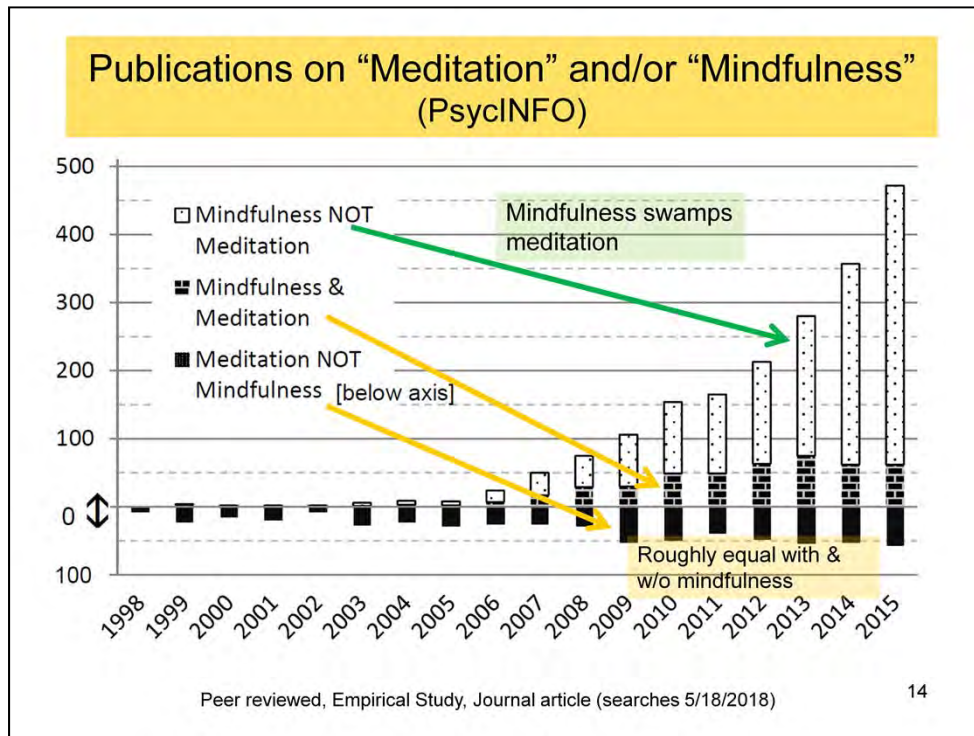
- Multi-dimensional (mostly)
- Measure as trait, rarely as state
- Largely lack face-validity for Buddhist mindfulness

“These scales might perhaps be best described as measures
of Practicality or Relative Sanity or Reasonableness”
(Rosch, 2007)

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Brown, K. W. & Ryan, R. M. (2003) The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84 (4), 822-848.

Rosch, E. (2007) More Than Mindfulness: When You Have a Tiger by the Tail, Let It Eat You. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18 (4), 258-264.



Why the Wave? MBSR + MBIs

1. Reframing Purpose: Mid-Level Goal

<p><u>PREVIOUS EXTREMES</u></p> <p>↑↑ High-level spiritual goals: TM's "fourth state"</p> <p>↓↓ Mundane clinical goals: Benson's "relaxation"</p>	<p><u>Mindfulness (MBIs)</u></p> <p>Mid-level, perhaps measurable: Cultivate "mindfulness"</p>
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2. Rediscovered Ancillary Practices

MBSR's Ancillary Practices

- ✓ "Informal practice" (during day):
attend to the breath
- ✓ Cultivate "mindfulness qualities"
(e.g., patience, non-judgment)

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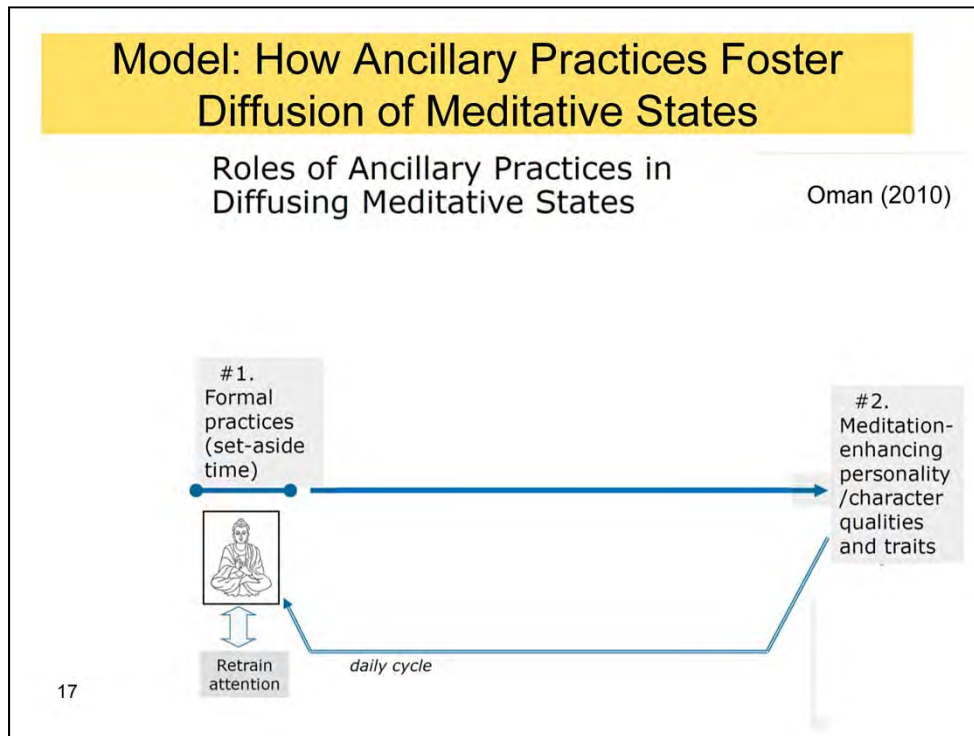
F) Rediscovering Ancillary Practices

Others also Rediscover Ancillary
(while still pursuing “relaxation”)

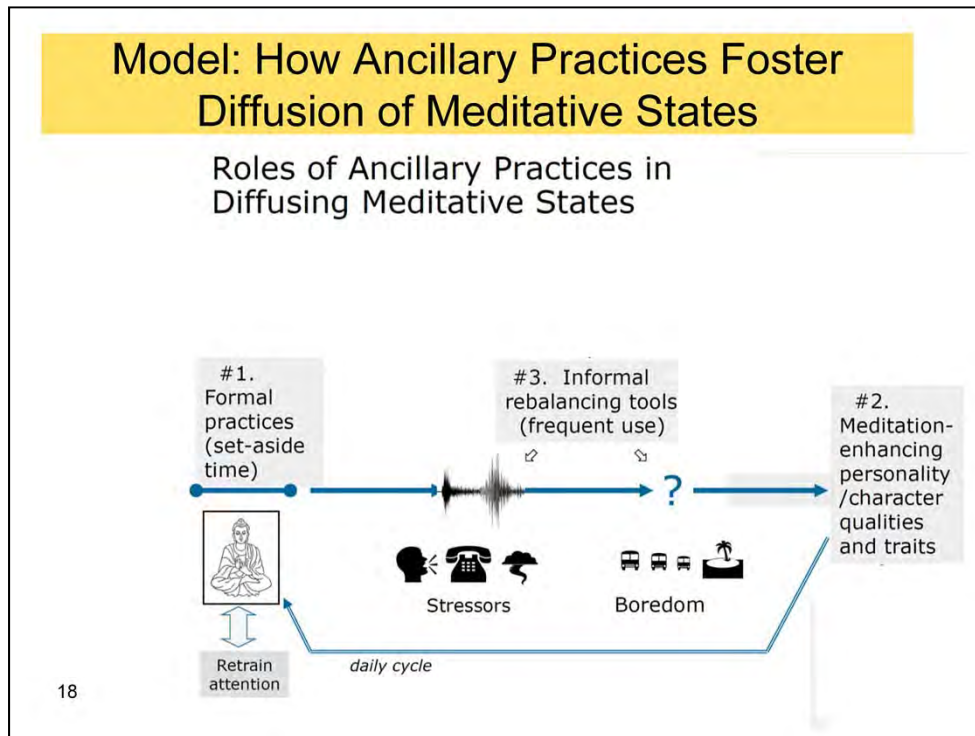
- ✓ Herbert Benson: + “belief systems” etc.
- ✓ Jonathan C. Smith: + “cognitive factors”

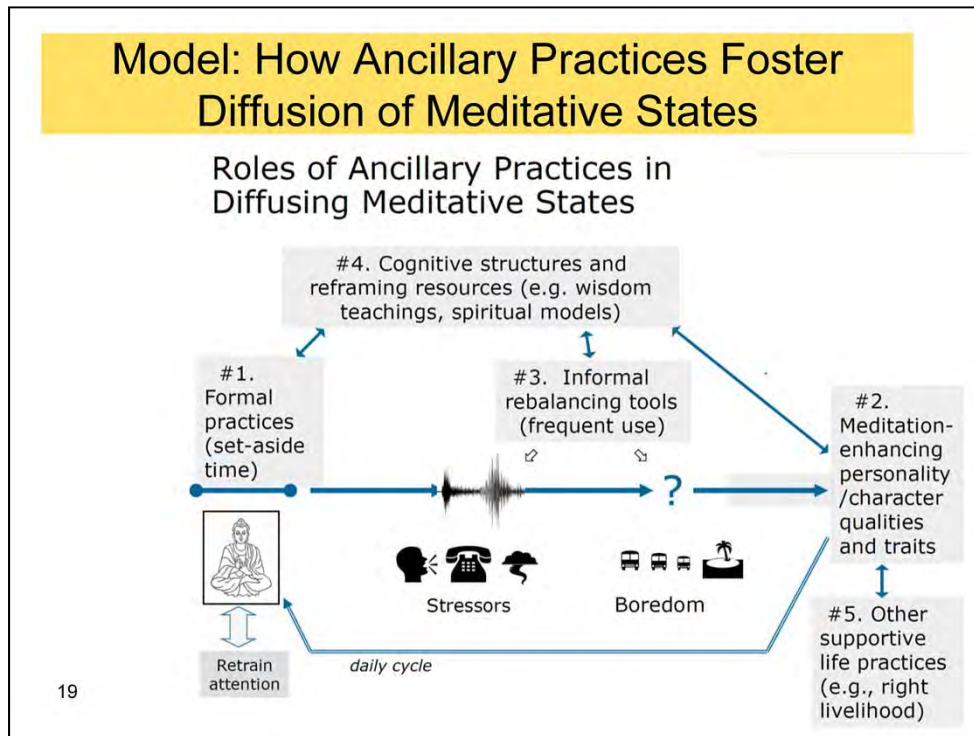
⇒ Canonical list?

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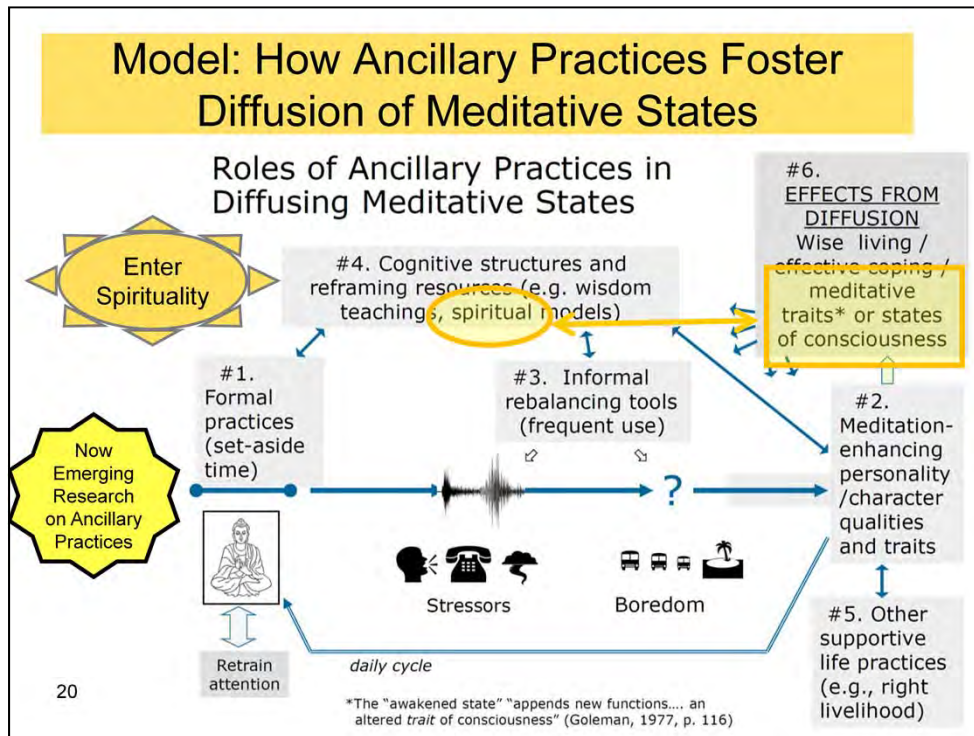


Oman, D. (2010) Similarity in Diversity? Four Shared Functions of Integrative Contemplative Practice Systems. In: Plante, T. G. (ed.) *Contemplative Practices in Action: Spirituality, Meditation, and Health [foreword]*. Santa Barbara, CA, Praeger, pp. 7-16.





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**G) Buddhists Wonder:
What is this so-called “Mindfulness”?**

Ignores Traditional Memory Facets

What, monks, is the faculty of mindfulness? Here, the noble disciple is mindful, possessing supreme mindfulness and alertness, one who **remembers and recollects** what was done and said long ago. This is called the faculty of mindfulness

– *Samyutta Nikāya* 48:9


Levman, B. (2017) Putting *smṛti* back into *sati* (Putting remembrance back into mindfulness). *Journal of the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies*, 13 121-14

Disconnected from Tradition

“a decade ago, a North American group interested in developing integrative therapies discovered mindfulness. . . But rather than turn to the Buddhist literature, they chose to **ask each other** what they meant and understood about mindfulness.”

(Mikulas, 2011)

“McMindfulness”



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Oman, D. (2015) Cultivating Compassion Through Holistic Mindfulness: Evidence for Effective Intervention. In: Plante, T. G. (ed.) *The Psychology of Compassion and Cruelty: Understanding the Emotional, Spiritual, and Religious Influences*. Santa Barbara, CA, Praeger, pp. 35-57.

Mikulas, W. (2011) Mindfulness: Significant Common Confusions. *Mindfulness*, 2 (1), 1-7.

Purser, R. & Loy, D. 2013, July 1. *Beyond McMindfulness* [Online]. Huffington Post. Available: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ron-purser/beyond-mcmindfulness_b_3519289.html [Accessed December 9 2014].

H) Major Ethical Critique: How Transcend McMindfulness?

Roger Walsh in the *American Psychologist* (2006):

[Meditation] research findings have been interpreted almost exclusively within [modern, secular] Western psychological frameworks, ignoring meditation's complementary psychological and philosophical perspectives. This has been widely described as a **necessary "decontextualization,"** but it is actually far more. It is also a major **recontextualization** and revisioning of the practices within an exclusively Western psychological and philosophical framework. In anthropological terms, this is the **trap** of adopting a **purely etic (outsider) perspective** rather than both etic and emic (insider or native) perspectives.

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(Walsh and Shapiro, 2006, pp. 227-228)

Walsh, R. & Shapiro, S. L. (2006) The Meeting of Meditative Disciplines and Western Psychology: A Mutually Enriching Dialogue. *American Psychologist*, 61 (3), 227-239.

H) Major Ethical Critique

Thus:

[What has emerged] is an assimilative integration that feeds the **global “colonization of the mind”** by Western psychology that “undermines the growth and credibility of other psychologies” (Marsella, 1998, p. 1286). As such, it overlooks much of the richness and uniqueness of the meditative disciplines and the **valuable complementary perspectives** they offer.

(Walsh and Shapiro, 2006, p. 228)

Advocate a more inclusive integration,
not just a Piagetian “assimilation”


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Marsella, A. J. (1998) Toward a "global-community psychology": Meeting the needs of a changing world. *American Psychologist*, 53 (12), 1282-1291.

I) Green Shoots: Inching Toward Inclusiveness

Beyond exclusively Western:

Buddhist critiques



Indian Psychology Movement launched in 2002 with
Manifesto on Indian Psychology signed by 160.
→ pubs (e.g., *Foundations of Yoga Psychology*, Rao, 2017)

Beyond exclusively secular:

A few studies of Abrahamic contemplative prayer
(e.g., Asbill ,2016; Fox et al 2016; Newberg et al 2003)

A few studies of religiously “adapted” [!?] mindfulness
(e.g., Ford & Garzon, 2017; Huennekens, 2018;
also systematic review by DeLuca et al, 2018)

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Rao, K. R. (2017) *Foundations of yoga psychology*, Singapore, Springer Nature.

Asbill, L. M. 2016. *Spiritually oriented interventions: Comparing mindfulness and centering prayer as interventions for anxiety reduction*. Ph.D., Biola University.

Fox, J., Gutierrez, D., Haas, J. & Durnford, S. (2016) Centering prayer’s effects on psycho-spiritual outcomes: a pilot outcome study. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 19 (4), 379-392.

Newberg, A., Pourdehnad, M., Alavi, A. & D'Aquili, E. G. (2003) Cerebral Blood Flow During Meditative Prayer: Preliminary Findings And Methodological Issues. *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 97 (2), 625-630.

Ford, K. & Garzon, F. (2017) Research note: A randomized investigation of evangelical Christian accommodative mindfulness. *Spirituality in Clinical Practice*, 4 (2), 92-99.

Huennekens, A. O. 2018. *Comparing the Effectiveness of Christian and Secular Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction: A randomized controlled trial*. PhD Ph.D., University of South Alabama.

DeLuca, S. M., Kelman, A. R. & Waelde, L. C. (2018) A Systematic Review of Ethnoracial Representation and Cultural Adaptation of Mindfulness- and Meditation-Based Interventions. *Psychological Studies*, 63 (2), 117-129.

I) Green Shoots: Inching Toward Inclusiveness

Accommodating + Studying Diverse Preferences/Needs:

Only a minority may
prefer mindfulness meditation



- US national survey:
7.0 million “spiritual” versus
3.6 million “mindfulness” meditators
(Burke et al, 2017)
- Experimental crossover study (Burke, 2012)

Choice of spiritual meditative focus can *matter*

- RCTs (Wachholtz et al, 2005, 2008, 2017)
- Deep basis in traditions (Oman & Bormann, 2018)

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Burke, A., Lam, C. N., Stussman, B. & Yang, H. (2017) Prevalence and patterns of use of mantra, mindfulness and spiritual meditation among adults in the United States. *BMC Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 17 (1), Article 316.

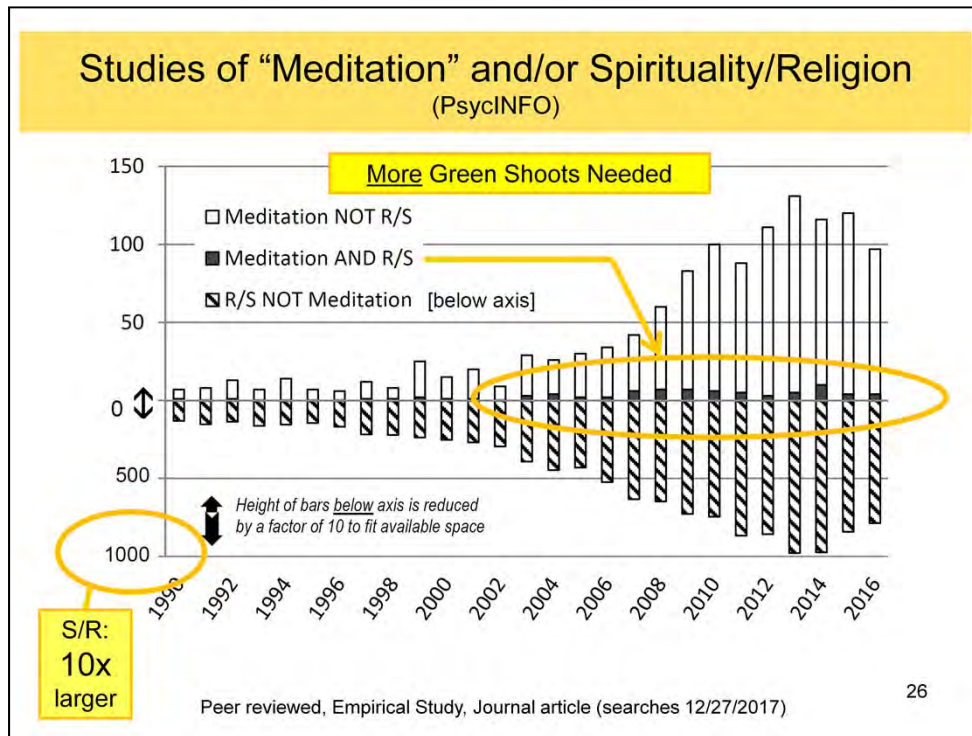
Burke, A. (2012) Comparing Individual Preferences for Four Meditation Techniques: Zen, Vipassana (Mindfulness), Qigong, and Mantra. *Explore: The Journal of Science and Healing*, 8 (4), 237-242.

Wachholtz, A. B. & Pargament, K. I. (2005) Is Spirituality a Critical Ingredient of Meditation? Comparing the Effects of Spiritual Meditation, Secular Meditation, and Relaxation on Spiritual, Psychological, Cardiac, and Pain Outcomes. *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 28 (4), 369-384.

Wachholtz, A. B. & Pargament, K. I. (2008) Migraines and meditation: does spirituality matter? *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 31 (4), 351-366.

Wachholtz, A. B., Malone, C. D. & Pargament, K. I. (2017) Effect of Different Meditation Types on Migraine Headache Medication Use. *Behavioral Medicine*, 43 (1), 1-8.

Oman, D. & Bormann, J. E. (2018) Eknath Easwaran's Mantram and Passage Meditation as Applied Indian Psychology: Psycho-Spiritual and Health Effects. *Psychological Studies*, 63 (2), 94-108.



From Frenemies to Collaborators

Examples of studies of BOTH meditation and
spirituality/religion

- a) Secular versus **spiritual focus** RCTs
(Wachholtz et al. 2005, 2008, 2017)
- b) Spiritual meditation → **spiritual modeling** processes
(Oman et al, 2007)
- c) Neuroimaging: **differential activation** of brain regions
(Barnby et al, 2015)
- d) Meditative practices **stabilize daily integration** of
entheogen (psilocybin) occasioned spiritual experiences
(Griffiths et al, 2018)
- e) Etc.

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Oman, D., Shapiro, S. L., Thoresen, C. E., Flinders, T., Driskill, J. D. & Plante, T. G. (2007) Learning from Spiritual Models and Meditation: A Randomized Evaluation of a College Course. *Pastoral Psychology*, 55 (4), 473-493.

Barnby, J. M., Bailey, N. W., Chambers, R. & Fitzgerald, P. B. (2015) How similar are the changes in neural activity resulting from mindfulness practice in contrast to spiritual practice? *Consciousness and Cognition*, 36 219-232.

Griffiths, R. R., Johnson, M. W., Richards, W. A., Richards, B. D., Jesse, R., MacLean, K. A., Barrett, F. S., Cosimano, M. P. & Klinedinst, M. A. (2018) Psilocybin-occasioned mystical-type experience in combination with meditation and other spiritual practices produces enduring positive changes in psychological functioning and in trait measures of prosocial attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Psychopharmacology*, 32 (1), 49-69.

Summary / Conclusion

- Meditation began in spiritual/religious traditions
- Research on meditation and spirituality/religion reflects both tension and collaboration (“frenemies”)
- Collaboration should expand for
 - Respecting diverse **individual preferences/needs**
 - Fostering **inclusive integration** with traditions
 - Studying **meditation-spirituality relationships**

What directions do you suggest?

Persistence → Success

THANK YOU

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