Mindfulness and the Mind-Body Connection

Presented by Rachel Thompson
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Intentions for our talk today:

1. Introduce mindfulness & mind body connection
2. Get familiar with the science behind it
3. Walk away with some tools to start using it in your life!

My ask of you:

Keep a curious, open mind!
And most importantly… have fun!
POLL

On a scale of 1-5, how familiar are you with mindfulness & the mind body connection?

1 - Unfamiliar
5 - Very familiar
Why are mindfulness & the mind body connection important?

They can help you…

* Reframe your relationship to stress and pain
* Make better decisions, more often!
Core Pieces

1. The body is INNATELY intelligent

2. The body is CONSTANTLY communicating with us

“Healing” applies to stress and physical / emotional pain
“Conditions” meaning whatever the body needs to restore balance
What is the Mindbody Connection?

Relationship to life and self

Promise of the Mindbody Connection

By being aware of what’s going on in our bodies (and our lives), we can directly influence our physical health & wellbeing
What is mindfulness?

Awareness
Best way to increase awareness:

EDUCATION!

Successful people ask better questions, and as a result they get better answers.

- Tony Robbins
POLL

Do you believe the mind (thoughts, feelings, etc) creates physical sensations in the body?

Options: Yes / No / Not sure
Why do we need mindfulness & the mind body connection?

Disconnection
POLL:
On a scale of 1-5, how connected do you feel right now?
1 - Disconnected
5 - Very connected
Why does connection / disconnection matter?

The body needs an efficient communication system!

Connection = good communication
Disconnection = poor communication
How to know you’re disconnected

Two major symptoms: **Stress and Pain**

Disconnection is **expensive**…

- **Chronic stress costs** $300B every year
  *American Institute of Stress*

- **Chronic pain costs** $635B every year
  *American Pain Society*
Why are we so disconnected?

* How society evolved
  Learning = compartmentalization = separation = disconnection

* Western medicine is just now embracing validity of mindfulness / mind body practices
Symptoms of Disconnection: Shifting our relationship to stress & pain

Stress and pain are MESSAGES from the body

This allows us to...

Better understand the body

Exercise autonomy (not let stress / pain get the best of us) and make better decisions
When the body and mind ARE connected…

* good health
* high energy
* clarity of mind
* higher productivity

...we feel really good!
The Mindbody Connection in action!

We need our mind & body to experience life

“Mind” = conscious, non-corporeal aspect of experience

“Body” = subconscious, corporeal aspect of experience

(Dr. Candace Pert)
Who was Dr. Candance Pert?

* Georgetown University grad
* NIH neurobiology researcher
* Studied the physiology of emotions
* Proposed joining “mind” and “body”
* Joined disciplines of psychology, neurology, endocrinology and immunology for the first time (PNI)

…aka the “mindbody connection”
The body and mind are really connected.

“Dr. Pert’s research provides scientific evidence that a biochemical basis for awareness and consciousness exists, that the mind and body are indeed one and that our emotions and feelings are the bridge that links the two.”

Excerpt from “Research of Dr. Candace Pert”
"In the beginning of my work, I matter-of-factly presented that emotions were in the head, or brain. Now I would say they are really in the body as well. They are expressed in the body and are part of the body. I can no longer make a distinction between the body and the mind."

- Dr. Candace Pert
Physiology: How the body speaks

Central Nervous System (CNS) = brain + spinal cord

The brain is the "command center"
The body is designed to feel
TWO brains are better than one

Enteric Nervous System (ENS) = brain in the gut
TWO brains are better than one

Brain in head:
* 50% dopamine
* 5% serotonin

Brain in gut:
* 50% dopamine
* 95% serotonin

80-90% of information travels FROM the body TO the brain via ENS

Why I’m a “bodymind” coach
How can we “reprogram” the brain?

Build new neural pathways

1. Activity fires synapses in brain
2. Synapses fire together to form a pattern (efficiency)
3. Repetition strengthens the neural pathway

New neural pathway = new habit / behavior / way of being
The Brain

* Wired for safety, not success
* Stress response

**Safety** = what’s known / experienced
**Success** = doing something you’ve never done before
The Language of Feelings

Feelings are the language of the body
Feelings = messages
The Physiology of Feelings

**Physiology** = how the body communicates with itself (and us)

**Feelings** = what the body uses to communicate

Common messages include…

* Thirst
* Hunger
* Sleep
The Physiology of Feelings

Messages also include emotions

“Chemicals called neuropeptides have a connection with specific receptors, like a key and lock. For example, morphine reduces pain because it connects with and activates receptors in the body that reduce pain. Receptors exist for feelings of rage, joy, hunger, pain, pleasure, grief, and for all emotions, as well as for body reactions like appetite, sexual behavior and water balance.”

- Dr. John Sarno, “The MindBody Prescription”
Let's try it out!

1. Think of something happy, or something you love.
2. Notice how you feel!
Emotional Intelligence (EQ): Dr. Daniel Goleman

* Emotions take 6 seconds to flood the body (physiology)
* Emotions take 90 seconds to be felt, processed and released by the body

What stops it? A choice
Physical pain & emotional pain have the same neural signatures, meaning the same areas of the brain fire when we experience physical OR emotional pain.

“Mind-body symptoms exist to serve a purpose. If you thought of that purpose by taking away the symptom without dealing with its cause, the brain will simply find a substitute symptom or disorder.”

- Dr. John Sarno on TMS (mind-body disorders)
The chemicals that are running our body and our brain are the same chemicals that are involved in emotion. And that says to me that we’d better pay more attention to emotions with respect to health."

- Dr. Candace Pert
POLL

On a scale of 1-5, how EASY is it for you to make decisions? (1 is difficult, 5 is very easy)
Resistance to change / indecision

Stress response! Fight or flight

We have to be willing to move THROUGH resistance to achieve success, make a change, try something new…
Decisions

We make dozens and dozens of decisions…

The conscious mind only contributes 5% to our decision-making process

Where does the other 95% come from?

The subconscious (the body)
What goes into our decisions

Thoughts → Words
Beliefs
Feelings
Experiences → Actions
Behavior
How do we make better decisions more often?

Get (bodymind) connected

Let’s try! BODY SCAN
POLL

On a scale of 1-5, how connected do you feel NOW? (1 is disconnected, 5 is very connected)
Recap

Life is a felt experience. We need our body & mind to experience it fully!

1. Listen to your body - it’s always communicating with you and it wants you to feel GOOD!

2. You have everything you need to experience anything you want

3. Awareness is your most powerful ally. Stay curious and let the body guide you
I help ambitious optimists use their bodymind connection to get clear on what you want for your life and create a plan to make it happen, so that you can get out of limbo and move towards your dreams with confidence!

If that’s you, let’s connect!
Schedule a Free Connection Call!
Visit: www.kinesthesiachicago.com

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Q&A

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