

Cultivating Creativity Through Mindfulness

Interview With Rodney Owen

By Frank Frontis

As artists engaging in the business of creative work, we encounter high times and low spells; on-key moments, off-key ones; days we're hitting our strokes, weeks we're missing them.

There may be a near infinite number of reasons why we tend to fluctuate up and down, on and off in our creative activities. However, by doing an honest inventory of ourselves we'll often find that a major reason is because of the conflicts, tensions, stresses and distresses we encounter in life. These appear to be always ever present, robbing us of focus and ready to tumble us down from our creative heights.

At such times, what might we be able to do to *re-establish* ourselves back to creative altitude and composure? The answer may be simpler than expected... Being fully in the present and embracing the moment connect us to our "core selves," the *source of our inner order, unity, harmony--and creativity!* Such is the way of **Cultivating Creativity Through Mindfulness**.

In an interview with **mindfulness** and **meditation practitioner**, Rodney Owen, who is also a musician and poetry writer, we'll delve into the process of cultivating creativity through mindfulness. Additionally, as teacher of, both, mindfulness and meditation at the **Center For Holistic Healing** (High Point, N.C.) and the **Daishin Buddhist Temple** (Thomasville, N.C.), Owen's theoretical understanding of this process lends considerable expertise to the discussion.



Rodney Owen

Photo courtesy of Rodney Owen

blood pressure, higher immunity, and adapt to the ups and downs of life much easier. Additionally, and what may be of most importance in this context, mindfulness practice induces neurogenesis, or the production of new brain cells. You can actually say that practicing mindfulness will change your brain—for the better.

FF: New brain cells? That's impressive...! Artist and creative types talk often about how being relaxed and calm contributes to their creative processes. This being the case, what could you say about Mindfulness and its value to the creative process?

RO: Mindfulness practitioners speak of the "zone" or the "sweet spot", which is a state of superconsciousness, or above and beyond average consciousness. It's the same place a musician is in when he or she is absorbed in a performance or in writing a composition. It's the same place a visual artist or writer finds themselves in when they are so absorbed in their art that they lose all sense of time and space and the daily stressors and frustrations of life. This "zone" is endemic to all of us. It is within us. However, it gets lost and covered up by the stress and frustrations of daily life. Artists are obviously not any more immune to losing touch with this "zone" than non-artists. It happens to all of us. Mindfulness practice gives us an opportunity to rediscover that sweet spot, which makes it easier for creative types to tap into their higher creative selves.

FF: Hello Rodney-- can you briefly explain to readers of SimplyElevate Magazine what Mindfulness is?

RO: Mindfulness is the practice of being present to the moment as it happens, rather than being mentally caught-up in the past or future and/or daydreaming about anything other than the present.

FF: In general, what are some of the ways Mindfulness can help us?

RO: Scientific studies have proven that people who practice mindfulness experience less stress, have lower

FF: Wonderfully put. ... It appears that artist and creative types are particularly prone to ups and downs, on-and-off moments in their creative lives. Such roller-coastering sometimes may interfere with their productivity when needed most. How might Mindfulness help them get off such a “roller coaster” so that they may be more stably functional?



Artwork courtesy of Pixmac

RO: Mindfulness practice should be directed at learning to be present at all times, not just when meditating or playing the piano. Mindfulness training is designed to teach us to try to live in the here and now always, regardless of what is happening in our world. From my experience as a creative type, I think the ups and downs are a part of normal life—the same ups and downs that non-artists experience, that all people experience. However, it can be particularly frustrating for creative people. Mindfulness practice teaches us to acknowledge the thoughts, feelings, and emotions that rise and fall in our experience, but to not get attached to them. We learn to see them for what they are, which is empty of real substance; to look at them objectively with a sense of detachment; and to always be mindful of that naturally inherent “sweet spot”, which is quite stable and calming.

FF: As someone who practices Mindfulness regularly, what do you feel it does for you personally?

RO: As I noted above, Mindfulness practice has been scientifically proven to change the functioning of our brains. I will go further and say that when practiced regularly, it changes everything about a person. I have been meditating and practicing mindfulness for a long time. I am not even close to the same person I was before I started. Of course

there are infinite factors that contribute to how one changes, but mindfulness has been like the silent pilot for me.

FF: How have you seen it help those who you teach or give Mindfulness guidance to in terms of enduring, overall personal benefits or changes?

RO: Sustained Mindfulness practice will quite naturally lead one to being more concerned with his/her health, and the well-being of others. I have found that people who begin a mindfulness practice and weren't already very compassionate and concerned with their health, soon become that way. It leads one to consider the importance of nurture. We become more concerned with nurturing ourselves and with nurturing others.

FF: And that has to be a significant achievement for us all. ...What, if anything, would you like to add further to this discussion that might shed more light on how Mindfulness supports the lives and activities of artists and other creative types?

RO: As I noted above, most of us get caught up in the ups and downs, the drama of life. These things affect how we function, regardless of what we do in the world, creative or not. Mindfulness practice provides us with tools to keep it all in perspective, to learn to live with appropriate detachment, and a methodology for being present to this moment, the eternal now, which is all we really have anyway.

FF: Rodney, it's been a pleasure talking with you about Mindfulness and its value and function in cultivating the creative process. Thank you very much for the interview.

RO: Thank you for the opportunity. I hope I was able to help.

About the Author:



Frank Frontis has a background as a professional feature article writer, having worked for several publishing companies in Memphis, TN where he wrote pieces related to art, health and wellness. Currently he's focused on fiction, working to compile and complete an anthology.