Global PAD Core Concepts

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Mindfulness

for Intercultural Interaction (v.2)

A Compilation of Quotations

Compiled by

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The concept of mindfulness has been developed and expounded primarily by the psychologist, Ellen Langer, although it also has roots in Eastern philosophy. The concept has been adopted by many scholars working in the intercultural field, including William Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey.

This compilation of quotations covers the following aspects:

Section 1: Understanding mindfulness and mindlessness

Section 2: Psychological perspectives on mindfulness

Section 3: Mindfulness and intercultural interaction

Section 4: Developing mindfulness

Section 5: Shared mindfulness

1. Understanding Mindfulness & Mindlessness

Defining Mindfulness and Mindlessness

Mindfulness is not an easy concept to define but can be best understood as the process of drawing novel distinctions. It does not matter whether what is noticed is important or trivial, as long as it is new to the viewer. Actively drawing these distinctions keeps us situated in the present. It also makes us more aware of the context and perspective of our actions than if we rely upon distinctions and categories drawn in the past. Under this latter situation, rules and routines are more likely to govern our behavior, irrespective of the current circumstances, and this can be construed as mindless behavior.

Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a: 1-2

Mindfulness is a state of conscious awareness in which the individual is implicitly aware of the context and content of information. It is a state of openness to novelty in which the individual actively constructs categories and distinctions. In contrast, mindlessness is a state of mind characterized by an overreliance on categories and distinctions drawn in the past and in which the individual is context-dependent and, as such, is oblivious to novel (or simply alternative) aspects of the situation.

Langer, 1992: 289

It is precisely the sensitivity to the novel and, therefore, unexpected (i.e., nonalgorithmic) that is one of the key components of mindfulness.

Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a: 4

I define mindfulness in this article via Langer's (1997) definition, as containing components of (a) openness to novelty; (b) alertness to distinction; (c) sensitivity to different contexts; (d) implicit, if

not explicit, awareness of multiple perspectives; and (e) orientation in the present. Mindfulness thus is a many-sided, or heterogeneous, construct. "Mindlessness" is the lack of these attributes.

Sternberg, 2000: 12

Ellen Langer has done a lot of wonderful work on the social psychology discipline of mindfulness, but she uses the term in the context of projecting more outwards: seeing things from a broader perspective, open-mindedness, seeing things from the other person's viewpoint. But my perspective is actually taken from a very strong concept in Buddhism – it's one of the three precepts of Buddhism: compassion, mindfulness and wisdom. So it has a very strong Eastern philosophical root. It's quite interesting – rather than projecting outwards, you're tuning in into yourself, to listen to the internal noises and clutter within yourself, and considering how to declutter the arising reaction emotions, and that is a very layered and dialectical process.

Cañado, 2008: 213

Characteristics of Mindlessness

Trapped by categories
The creation of new categories … is a mindful activity. Mindlessness sets in when we rely too rigidly on categories and distinctions created in the past (masculine/feminine, old/young, success/failure). Once distinctions are created, they take on a life of their own.

Langer, 1989: 11

Automatic Behaviour
Habit, or the tendency to keep on with behavior that has been repeated over time, naturally implies mindlessness. However, … mindless behavior can arise without a long history of repetition, almost instantaneously, in fact.

Langer, 1989: 16

Acting from a single perspective
So often in our lives, we act as though there were only one set of rules.

Langer, 1989: 16

Characteristics of Mindfulness

The key qualities of a mindful state of being [are]: (1) creation of new categories; (2) openness to new information; and (3) awareness of more than one perspective.

Langer, 1989: 62

Creation of new categories
Just as mindlessness is the rigid reliance on old categories, mindfulness means the continual creation of new ones. Categorizing and recategorizing, labelling and relabeling as one masters the world are

processes natural to children. As adults, however, we become reluctant to create new categories. …
When we make new categories in a mindful way, we pay attention to the situation and the context.

Langer, 1989: 63–4

Welcoming new information
A mindful state also implies openness to new information. … Lack of new information can be
harmful. … Our minds, however, have a tendency to block out small, inconsistent signals.

Langer, 1989: 66–7

More than one view
Openness, not only to new information, but to different points of view is also an important feature
of mindfulness. … Once we become mindfully aware of views other than our own, we start to realize
that there are as many different views as there are different observers. Such awareness is potentially
liberating.

Langer, 1989: 68

The Roots of Mindlessness

The Mindless Expert
As we repeat a task over and over again and become better at it, the individual parts of the task
move out of our consciousness. Eventually, we come to assume that we *can* do the task although we
no longer know *how* we do it.

Langer, 1989: 20

Premature cognitive commitments
Another way that we become mindless is by forming a mindset when we first encounter something
and then clinging to it when we reencounter that same thing. Because such mindsets form before
we do much reflection, we call them *premature cognitive commitments*.

Langer, 1989: 22

The Benefits of Mindfulness

The process of drawing novel distinctions can lead to a number of diverse consequences, including
(1) a greater sensitivity to one's environment, (2) more openness to new information, (3) the
creation of new categories for structuring perception, and (4) enhanced awareness of multiple
perspectives in problem solving. The subjective "feel" of mindfulness is that of a heightened state of
involvement and wakefulness or being in the present. This subjective state is the inherent common
thread that ties together the extremely diverse observable consequences for the viewer.
Mindfulness is not a cold cognitive process. When one is actively drawing novel distinctions, the
whole individual is involved.

Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a: 2

Many, if not all, of the qualities that make up a mindful attitude are characteristic of creative people.
Those who can free themselves of old mindsets …, who can open themselves to new information

and surprise, play with perspective and context, and focus on process rather than outcome are likely to be creative, whether they are scientists, artists, or cooks.

Langer, 1989: 115

2. Psychological Perspectives on Mindfulness

A few psychologists, including Langer herself, have discussed the ways in which mindfulness relates to other psychological constructs.

Mindfulness and Psychological Constructs

… mindfulness has stood in relative isolation from much of the psychological literature. We would understand mindfulness better if we understood the relation between this construct and other constructs in the literature.

Sternberg, 2000: 12

Is mindfulness a cognitive ability?

… mindfulness seems to bear considerable overlap with cognitive abilities and intelligence, broadly defined (Carroll, 1993; Sternberg, 1985). Nevertheless, I think that the mindfulness construct—whatever its overlap with constructs of cognitive abilities or intelligence—makes at least two valuable additions. First, the particular conjunction of attributes specified for mindfulness is not specified by any theory of intelligence. Whether these attributes in fact will be found to cohere psychometrically remains an empirical question, but at a theoretical level, the construct seems at least somewhat distinct from existing ability constructs. Second, the mindfulness construct may be more useful when conceived of in state rather than in trait terms. People may differ in their average levels of mindfulness, but perhaps the standard deviation in a person's mindfulness is a more interesting construct than is the mean. To the extent that this state can be measured successfully, such measurement will be a valuable contribution to our understanding of people's interactions with the contexts in which they live.

Sternberg, 2000: 20

Is mindfulness a personality trait?

Mindfulness might be a personality trait rather than a cognitive ability. It might be useful to consider a well-regarded trait theory of personality and to inquire as to whether mindfulness resembles any of the traits proposed. … The most popular trait theory today is probably the big-five theory …. Although there are certainly other theories, big-five theory has gained such overwhelming comparative acceptance that I will limit my discussion to this theory alone.

Although different investigators sometimes have given the big five different names, they generally have agreed on five key characteristics as a useful way to organize and describe individual differences in personality. The following descriptions represent the five traits:

1. *Neuroticism*—characterized by nervousness, emotional instability, moodiness, tension, irritability, and frequent tendency to worry.
2. *Extraversion*—characterized by sociability, expansiveness, liveliness, an orientation toward having fun, and an interest in other people.
3. *Openness to experience*—characterized by imagination, intelligence, and aesthetic sensitivity, as well as openness to new kinds of experiences.
4. *Agreeableness*—characterized by a pleasant disposition, a charitable nature, empathy toward others, and friendliness.
5. *Conscientiousness*—characterized by reliability, hard work, punctuality, and a concern about doing things right.

Mindfulness seems potentially related to openness to experience. There is almost certainly some overlap. Moreover, research suggests that openness to experience itself is correlated with cognitive abilities (McCrae, 1996). So it would seem potentially fruitful to pursue the relation between the two constructs. Mindfulness also may bear some relation to conscientiousness. Studies are needed that correlate mindfulness with these traits to see if indeed there is a relation.

Sternberg, 2000: 21

Is mindfulness a cognitive style?

Styles are preferred ways of using one's cognitive abilities. … Mindfulness/mindlessness possesses many of the same characteristics as do cognitive styles but appears to be identical to none of the styles that have been proposed in the past. Mindfulness, like cognitive styles, is at the interface between cognition and personality. It also has yet to be integrated into larger theories of cognition and personality. It can lend itself to typical- or maximum-performance measurement. It has characteristics both of a state and of a trait. And one pole is likely to be superior to the other pole under most, but not all, circumstances. Strong psychological measurements still need to be developed for mindfulness/mindlessness, as is the case even today for cognitive styles proposed long ago.

Sternberg, 2000: 24

Mindfulness and Psychological Routines

Automatic vs controlled processing, while seemingly most similar to mindlessness/mindfulness, are orthogonal to them. One can process information in a controlled but mindless manner, or automatic but mindful. Related concepts like scripts, set, expectancy, labels, and roles direct behavior, but these too may be enacted mindlessly or mindfully.

Langer, 1992: 289

The mindfulness/mindlessness distinction is concerned with how we initially view information. Both mindfulness and controlled processing involve the conscious interpretation of information. Unlike the controlled/automatic processing distinction in which practice and familiarity determine which processing mode is invoked, the mindfulness/mindlessness distinction focuses on the categorization

of information even before further processing occurs. Controlled processing is the conscious processing of information within a given context. Mindfulness is a conscious awareness of the larger context through which information is understood.

For instance, the controlled processing required as one is learning to type the letter "I" dissipates with practice and eventually typing "I" occurs automatically without conscious attention. Yet even after one has learned to type automatically, one may be mindful in so far as one is aware that the symbol "I" (in the type font) may be understood as either a letter or a number. The awareness that the same environmental stimulus may be processed in several ways depending on its context is the essence of mindful awareness. Another example is an ambiguous figure resembling both a rabbit and a duck (Wittgenstein, 1953). The figure is automatically perceived as either a duck or a rabbit. Although at any particular moment automatic processing determines which form we see, we may be mindful of the ambiguity of the figure. As we bring conscious awareness to the context that informs our automatic perceptions, we are mindful that familiar forms in new contexts are just as novel as new forms in familiar contexts.

Automatic processing involves the repeated pairing of stimulus and response. Although the contents of such processing do not always reach conscious awareness, consciousness is not precluded. Unlike automatic processing, mindless processing does not require repetition and cannot reach conscious awareness. Mindlessness may result from a single premature cognitive commitment that is entirely inaccessible to conscious awareness. For instance, the letter "I" becomes accessible to conscious awareness quite readily even though it has been processed automatically, but the contextual assumption that the symbols one is typing are letters and not numbers (or, for that matter, some other system of representation) is not accessible to consciousness in a mindless state. This inattention to context resulting in an inability to view information from several alternative perspectives is characteristic of a mindless state of mind.

<div align="right">Langer, 1992: 301–2</div>

Although persistent routinization of responses may eventuate in uncritical, rigidified thought and behavior, communication routines running off at low consciousness levels need not be mindless and in fact may enable greater mindfulness to other matters.

<div align="right">Burgoon, Berger & Waldron, 2000: 109</div>

3. Mindfulness and Intercultural Interaction

Langer argues that mindfulness theory is helpful for addressing social problems in a wide range of contexts, including the workplace, classrooms and elderly care homes. This section reports applications that are particularly relevant to intercultural interaction. Langer herself comments specifically on mindfulness and ethnic diversity, and mindfulness and prejudice. Her concept of mindfulness has been taken up by several intercultural theorists, including William Gudykunst and Stella Ting-Toomey.

Mindfulness and Ethnic Diversity

Our institutions are seeking ways to deal with the increased ethnic diversity of our populace. Upper-middle-class members of many cultures currently fill our classrooms and business establishments. Regardless of color or ethnic background, if people are essentially trained the same way, they are likely to think and solve problems the same way. The more interaction these individuals with similar viewpoints have as we become increasingly a global economy, the more homogenized they are likely to become, and the more intolerant to differences and diversity. Can mindfulness research help us avoid the "forced homogenization" that has come to be the dominant view of the "cultural melting pot"?

A mindful alternative would be to consider "functional diversity" as a way of relating to differences among people. If we assumed that people behaving differently from us are not inferior, but rather are viewing the same stimulus differently, we could take advantage of the different perspective they offer. When we use a single metric for excellence, it becomes hard to seek or take the advice of someone implicitly, if not explicitly, deemed deficient. It is ironic that we can have a notion of someone or some group being inadequate to solve a problem for which we don't know the solution ourselves ("I don't know, but I'm sure you can't know.") Perhaps the future will see a truer diversity in those brought together to try to solve social problems. What would gang members who were willing to address the issue, for example, suggest we do about eliminating gang wars? What would drug addicts advise us to do about keeping our children off drugs? What would gun dealers suggest we do about making downtown neighborhoods safer?

Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000b: 131–2

Mindfulness, Stereotyping and Prejudice

Most attempts to combat prejudice have been aimed at reducing our tendency to categorize other people. These efforts are based on the view that, in an ideal world, everyone should be considered equal, falling under the single category of 'human being'. Yet categorizing is a fundamental and natural human activity. It is the way we come to know the world. Any attempt to eliminate bias by attempting to eliminate the perception of differences may be doomed to fail. We will not surrender our categories easily. … An understanding of the nature of mindfulness suggests a different approach to combating prejudice – one in which we learn to make more, rather than fewer, distinctions among people. If we keep in mind the importance of context and the existence of multiple perspectives, we see that the perception of skills and handicaps changes constantly, depending on the situation and the vantage point of the observer.

Langer, 1989: 154

A mindful outlook recognizes that we are all deviant from the majority with respect to some of our attributes, and also that each attribute or skill lies on a continuum. Such an awareness leads to *more* categorization and consequently fewer global stereotypes, or, as we said earlier, increasing discrimination can reduce prejudice.

Langer, 1989: 167

Since it is inevitable that all individuals stereotype their own identity groups and other groups, the key to dealing with the issue is to learn to distinguish between mindless stereotyping and mindful stereotyping. The characteristics of *mindless stereotyping* are as follows: (1) holding our pre-conceived, negative stereotypes rigidly and operating on automatic pilot in exercising such negative stereotypes; (2) presuming that the out-group stereotypes are valid and ignoring all new incoming information and evidence; (3) using emotionally laden evaluative categories to guide our "typecasting" process; (4) employing a polarized, cognitive mode to engage in in-group favouritism and out-group bias; (5) engaging in mental distortions to "force" members' behaviors into preconceived categories; (6) presuming that one member's behavior is reflective of all members' behaviors and norms; and (7) maximizing intergroup distance with exaggerated, contrastive categories with no productive outcome (see Table 1).

Mindless stereotyping	Mindful stereotyping
Rigid categories	Open-ended categories
Premature closure	First best guesses
Polarized evaluations	Loose interpretations
Delimiting contexts	Creating contexts
Information distortion	Information openness
Unwilling to change categories	Willingness to change categories
Maximizing intergroup distance	Minimizing intergroup distance

Table 1: Mindless and Mindful Stereotyping

In comparison to mindless stereotyping, the characteristics of *mindful stereotyping* are as follows: (1) holding the stereotypes consciously or mindfully – that is, being meta-cognitively aware that we are stereotyping members of an entire group; (2) assuming that the stereotypes we use are merely first best guesses rather than definitive answer (Adler, 1997); (3) using loose, interpretive categories rather than evaluative categories; (4) employing qualifying, contextual statements to frame our perceptions and interpretations; (5) being open to new information and evidence and redefining the preconceived social categories accordingly; (6) getting to know, in depth, the group membership and personal identities of the individuals within the group and sampling a variety of sources within the group; and (7) recognizing valid and meaningful differences and similarities between the self and others, and between one's own group and the other group.

While mindful stereotyping evokes an open-minded attitude in dealing with others, mindless stereotyping reflects a closed-ended mindset. Mindless stereotyping refers to our tightly held beliefs concerning a group of individuals. Mindful stereotyping, on the other hand, refers to our consciously held beliefs about a group of individuals, with a willingness to change our loosely held images based on diversified, firsthand contact experiences. Mindful stereotyping relies heavily on a receptive

communication process in observing, listening, and attending to the new cues and signals sent by strangers from other groups.

<div align="right">Ting-Toomey, 1999: 163–4</div>

Mindfulness and Cultural Intelligence

As a facet of CQ [cultural intelligence], mindfulness (at a highly developed level) means simultaneously:

- Being aware of our own assumptions, ideas, and emotions; and of the selective perception, attribution, and categorization that we and others adopt;
- Noticing what is apparent about the other person and tuning in to their assumptions, words, and behaviour;
- Using all of the senses in perceiving situations, rather than just relying on, for example, hearing the words that the other person speaks;
- Viewing the situation from several perspectives, that is, with an open mind;
- Attending to the context to help to interpret what is happening;
- Creating new mental maps of other peoples' personality and cultural background to assist us to respond appropriately to them;
- Creating new categories, and recategorizing others into a more sophisticated category system;
- Seeking out fresh information to confirm or disconfirm the mental maps;
- Using empathy – the ability to mentally put ourselves in the other person's shoes as a means of understanding the situation and their feelings toward it, from the perspective of their cultural background rather than ours (Gardner, 1995; Langer, 1989).

<div align="right">Thomas, 2006: 85</div>

Mindfulness and Intercultural Communication

We must be cognitively aware of our communication if we are to overcome our tendency to interpret strangers' behavior based on our own frames of reference. When we interact with strangers, we become mindful of our communication. Our focus, however, is usually on the outcome (…) rather than the process of communication. For effective communication to occur, we must focus on the process of our communication with strangers. (…) When we are mindful, we can make conscious choices as to what we need to do in the particular situation in order to communicate effectively.

<div align="right">Gudykunst, 2004: 253–5</div>

Mindfulness (Thich, 1991) means attending to one's internal assumptions, cognitions, and emotions, and simultaneously attuning to the other's assumptions, cognitions, and emotions. Mindful reflexivity requires us to tune in to our own cultural and personal habitual assumptions in viewing an interaction scene.

Ting-Toomey, 1999: 267

Mindful intercultural communication emphasizes the importance of integrating the necessary intercultural knowledge, motivations, and skills to manage process-based issues satisfactorily and achieve desired interactive goals appropriately and effectively. … A mindful intercultural communication model is presented in [Figure 1] below.
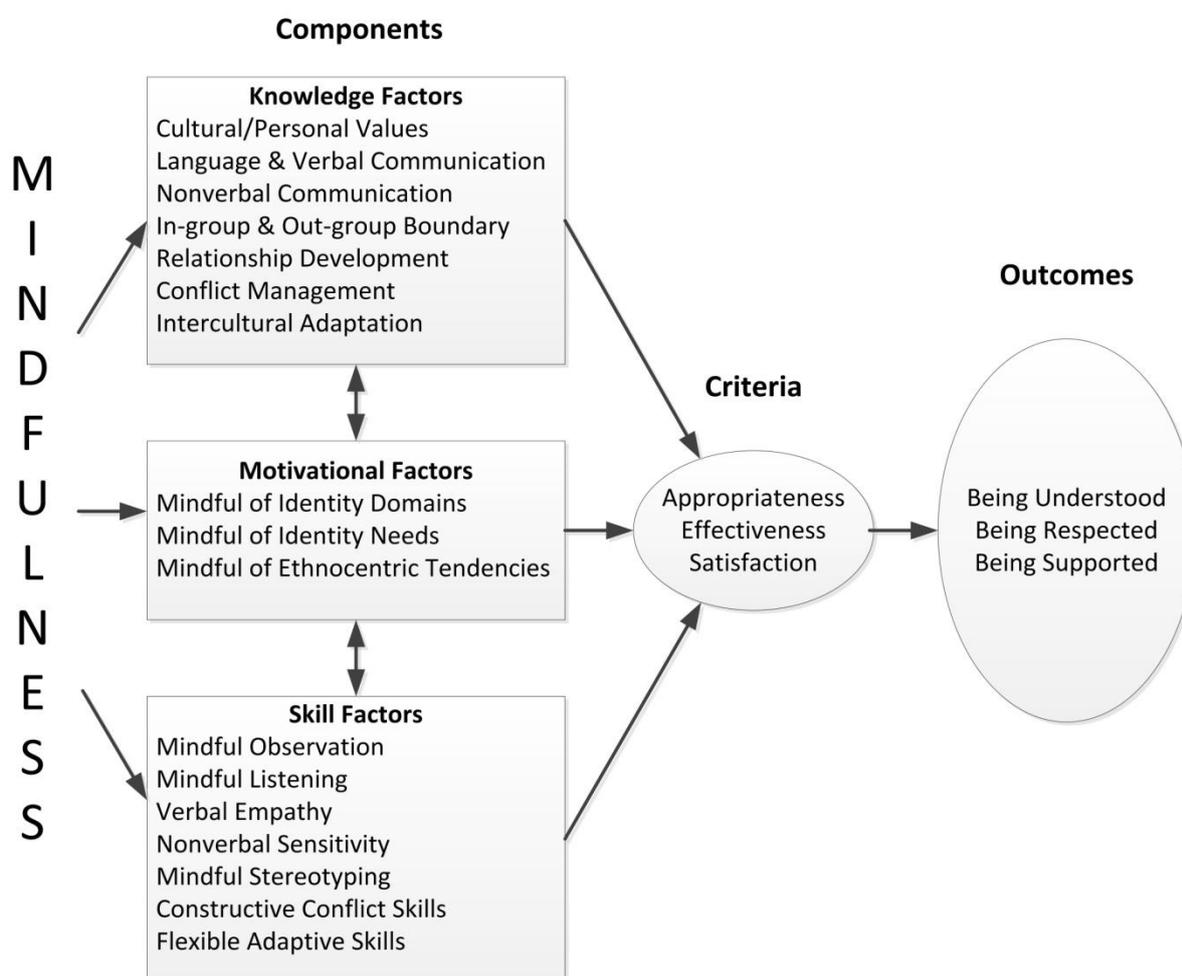

Fig. 1: A mindful intercultural communication model: Components, criteria, and outcomes

Ting-Toomey, 1999: 48–9

Mindful Verbal and Nonverbal Communication

Mindful verbal and nonverbal communication requires the application of flexible, adaptive interaction skills. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal adaptation creates positive interaction synchrony. Positive interaction synchrony, in the long-run, facilitates quality intercultural relationship development. Communicative adaptability requires cognitive, affect, and behavioral flexibility. It signals our willingness and commitment to learn from culturally dissimilar others. It reflects our ability to change mindsets, behaviors, and goals to meet the specifi needs of the people and the situation. It signals our desire to understand, respect, and support the other's cultural identity and way of communicating – and to do so with sensitivity and mindfulness.

Ting-Toomey, 1999: 141

Mindful Observation

Mindful observation involves an O–D–I–S (observe–describe–interpret–suspend evaluation) *analysis*. Rather than engaging in snapshot, evaluative attributions, we should first learn to *observe* attentively the verbal and non-verbal signals that are being exchanged in the communication process. We should then try to *describe* mentally and in behaviorally specific terms what is going on in the interaction (e.g., "She is not maintaining eye contact with me when speaking to me"). Next, we should generate multiple *interpretations* (e.g., "Maybe from her cultural framework, eye contact avoidance is a respectful behavior; from my cultural perspective, this is considered a disrespectful sign) to "make sense" of the behavior we are observing and describing. We may decide to respect the differences and suspend out ethnocentric evaluation. We may also decide to engage in open-ended evaluation by acknowledging our discomfort with unfamiliar behaviors (e.g., "I understand that eye contact avoidance may be a cultural habit of this person, but I still don't like it because I feel uncomfortable in such interaction). By engaging in a reflexive dialogue with ourselves, we can monitor our ethnocentric emotions introspectively. We may want to cross-sample a wide variety of people (and in a wide range of contexts) from this cultural group to check if the "eye contact avoidance" response is a cultural or individual trait. We may even decide to approach the person (with the low-/high-context styles in mind) directly or indirectly to meta-communicate about such differences.

Ting-Toomey, 1999: 269

Mindful Listening

Practice mindful listening skills when communicating with non-native speakers. Mindful listening demands that we pay thoughtful attention to both the verbal and nonverbal messages of the speaker before responding or evaluating. It means listening attentively with all our senses and checking responsively for the accuracy of our meaning decoding process on multiple levels (i.e., on content, identity, and relational meaning). Mindful listening is an important intercultural communication skill for a variety of reasons. First, mindful listening helps us to manage emotional vulnerability between ourselves and dissimilar others. Second, it helps us to minimize misunderstanding and maximize mutual understanding of cocreated meanings. Third, mindful listening helps us to uncover our own perceptual biases in the listening process. By listening mindfully, we are sending the following identity-support message to the other person: "I am

committed to understanding your verbal message and the person behind the message." Mindful listening consists of culture-sensitive paraphrasing skills(…) and perception checking skills (…) .

<div align="right">Ting-Toomey, 1999: 112</div>

In an intercultural exchange episode, communicators have to work hard to *listen mindfully* to the cultural and personal viewpoints that are being expressed in the problematic interaction. To understand identity-salient issues, they have to learn to listen responsively to the tones, rhythms, gestures, movements, nonverbal nuances, pauses, and silence in the interaction episode. They have to learn to listen to the symphony and the individual melodies that are being played out in the interaction scene.

   In order to listen mindfully, transcultural communicators have to learn to use paraphrase and perception checking skills in a culture-sensitive manner. Paraphrase is using verbal restatement to summarize the speaker's message. Perception checking skill is to use eyewitness accounts on a descriptive level to check whether the hearer genuinely understands the message or whether she or he has certain unmet needs or wants.

<div align="right">Ting-Toomey, 1999: 270</div>

4. Developing Mindfulness

If people are instructed to vary the stimulus, that is, to mindfully notice new things about it, then attention improves. Moreover, such mindful attention also results in a greater liking for the task and improved memory.

<div align="right">Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000a: 3</div>

What does it take to inculcate mindfulness for the long haul, to nurture what might be called a personal disposition toward mindfulness, if this is possible at all? … Three high-leverage practices … can be useful in developing students' sensitivity, inclination, and ability with regard to mindfulness:

- looking closely,

- exploring possibilities and perspectives,

- introducing ambiguity.

[The authors present a case study of mindful instruction, describing an algebra class taught by John Threlkeld. They then comment on the teaching approach.] As an instructor, John serves as a model of mindful sensitivity and inclination for his students. He is constantly pointing out good places to head to explore mathematics in a mindful manner as well as highlighting the pitfalls of mindless

thinking along the way. Likewise, he demonstrates an inclination toward mindfulness. He closes this particular class, and most of the others we have observed, by stating how he is going to have to rethink some issue or question. Thus, he is modeling his own openness to new information and the mindful creation of new categories.

In addition to modeling mindfulness, John also actively encourages it in his students. It doesn't take long for an observer to John's class to recognize that his most commonly spoken refrain to students is "Good question!" He is enthusiastic about ideas and delights in questions that push, probe, challenge, and extend the meaning of ideas. Throughout his instruction and interaction with students, John welcomes, scaffolds, and rewards the detection of interesting features and ideas that might be explored, thus supporting students' own sensitivity. Through his enthusiasm for students' ideas and the subsequent follow-through in exploring them, John nurtures students' inclination toward mindfulness. In this classroom, John has succeeded in creating what we have called a "hot cognitive economy" in which the cost of high-level thinking, risk taking, and mindfulness are low and the rewards are high (Perkins, 1992). Over time, a disposition toward mindfulness begins to develop as students continuously find their sensitivity, inclination, and ability with regard to mindfulness supported and encouraged.

Ritchhart & Perkins, 2000: 28, 31, 44–45

5. Shared Mindfulness

… past work in mindfulness research does not acknowledge the joint construction of a mindful state through the process of human interaction. To view mindfulness as it occurs within an interpersonal interaction, the elements of mindfulness as they relate to an involved state must be articulated. If mindfulness represents the active information processing at the individual intrapersonal level, shared mindfulness represents this activity at the interpersonal interaction level. Therefore, I propose the following definition: Shared mindfulness is a state of mindfulness achieved conjointly, whereby, in the communicative interaction, the individuals involved are in an active state of attending, responding, and perceiving information correctly. As a result, they are continually updating, attuned, and open to incoming data that are unexpected, disconfirming, improbable, implicit, and/or contested.

…

The goal in the current study was to examine the construct of mindfulness as it is enacted [in the aviation sector] through captain and first officer communication behaviors in crisis situations. The objective was to identify shared mindfulness in these dyadic situations and describe how it is communicatively constructed. To explore this objective, the following research question was posed for examination: What distinct communication behaviors might emerge in an aviation crisis situation to reveal shared mindfulness?

Krieger, 2005: 138

Typology of Shared Mindfulness Communication Behaviors

Process Category	Definition	Communication Behaviors
Seeks information	Interactants seek information in the interaction via seeking their partner's input or opinion, clarifying or confirming their partner's communication including correcting erroneous information. Interactants notice new and/or missing information as well as identify information that contests or casts doubt on the available data.	Seeks input or opinion of partner Seeks clarification or confirmation of information from partner Verbalizes correct information when partner gives erroneous information or misspeaks Identifies/verbalizes new or missing (discrepant) information (i.e., it doesn't give our directional flight anywhere) Identifies/verbalizes information that contests or casts doubt (disconfirming) on the preferred decision option
Reasons from a positive perspective	Demonstrates reasoning that focuses on what is available and feasible while noticing and incorporating discrepant and/or disconfirming information and comparing those data against the proposed option(s).	Presents thoughts, ideas, input, and opinion from a perspective of what is available and possible Notices and accepts discrepant and disconfirming information Compares and contrasts data
Perceives multiple perspectives	Interactants demonstrate the ability to perceive multiple information inputs, conditions, alternatives, and people perspectives. In so doing, they remain open to novelty actively processing the current state yet can sustain attentional focus to the task.	Able to view the situation, condition, data from another orientation (e.g., crew member, customer) Awareness of environmental stimuli Seeks and incorporates multiple data inputs Perceives options/alternative courses of action
Projects thoughts and feelings	Interactants verbally and nonverbally project their thoughts and feelings in an interaction to engender accurate, real-time, mutual understanding.	Interactants speak their thoughts out loud, using precise, concrete terms, allowing the other person to see and/or experience their thought processes in real time as opposed to only verbalizing the result of their thought process (i.e., verbally walk through the individual steps of a procedure or reconstructing a task; identifies missing data, discrepancies, and disconfirming information) Uses diagrams, figures, or body movements to accurately translate verbal message by a pictorial representation of the information presented in a crisis scenario (i.e.,

		demonstrating with hand gesture angle of plane landing on airfield) Uses nonverbal projection, including puzzling looks, furrowed brow, scratching head, etc.
Mindfully acknowledges partner communication	Interactants acknowledge each other's communication and demonstrate via a substantive response that the message has been received and critically processed.	Simple acknowledgment— demonstrates active listening by acknowledging partner statements via metacommunication (e.g., yes, uh-huh, right) Substantive acknowledgment—a verbal response that indicates the information was received and critically processed
Uses participative language	Interactants use language that emphasizes the tentative, conditional nature of information and the environment and demonstrate, through the use of inclusive terminology, joint ownership in the decision making process.	Verbalizes thoughts, reasons, suggestions, and information using conditional terminology, thus engendering a discussion environment that allows for differing views and opinions along with the awareness of the contingent and ever-changing nature of environmental conditions (i.e., if we go for the major airport, we might not be able to make it) Uses "We" language over "I or You" language (e.g., we decided)
Demonstrates fluid turn taking	A ping-pong pattern of communication that facilitates achieving maximum participation by both interactants.	Demonstrates a ping-pong pattern of participation in which both partners add, clarify, confirm, or seek information in the discussion and build on and/or extrapolate beyond the information of the other Finish each other's sentences or complete a partner's thought so that their pattern of thinking demonstrates congruence

Glossary of Mindfulness Inhibitors

Precognitive commitment—Deciding on a sole course of action very early in the deliberative process with little or no discussion with the partner. This behavior involves viewing the situation through a familiar category and finding one salient element, then centering all reasoning on that element.

Quick-decision over right-decision mentality—Giving highest decision-making priority to the *time* factor such that themain focus is on a quick solution. This mentality fosters a tendency to precognitive commitment in which one salient element is chosen as the sole focus in the deliberative process, whereas other important data either go unnoticed or are discarded without being critically processed.

Overt dominance—Engaging in behaviors such as talk-overs; interrupting; not allowing for turn taking; lack of openness to the viewpoints, suggestions, and input of the other interactant, including nonverbal behaviors such as invading the other person's personal space.

Nonpositive reasoning strategies—Reasoning and supporting a position from a perspective that does *not* focus on what is available and feasible, nor aptly notice and incorporate discrepant and/or disconfirming information. Thus, one does not make comparisons of proposed options or compares alternatives without incorporating all the available information.

Negative reasoning—Reasoning and supporting one's position by focusing on what is lacking and potentially not possible or feasible in the less preferred option while contrasting and weighing alternatives against only the positive aspects of the preferred option. In reasoning from a negative perspective, one is less apt to notice discrepancy, disconfirming information, or alternative possibilities for action.

Nonfact based—Reasoning centered on focusing and evaluating data from an emotional perspective such that the individual is inflexible when presented with logical facts that support an opposing viewor position and will not accept or process discrepant and/or disconfirming information.

Question based—Primarily reasoning by posing questions as input or seeking input via broad nonspecific questions such as "Do you see anything wrong with that?" In employing question-based reasoning, interactants acted as passive rather than active problem solvers.

Krieger, 2005: 160–163

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