

One World Spiritual Center
Community Circles
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Put Down the Phone!
with Rev. Melanie Eyre



Perhaps the greatest wealth you possess, the most precious, valuable gift you can ever hope to offer any human being, is this one simple, true thing: You. Your presence. Showing up. Being in the company of another, undistracted, unhurried, with an open heart, gentle hands, and a patient soul. Willing and able to listen, do something or do nothing, willing to be surprised by whatever emerges in the soil of your present, loving company with another human being.

– Wayne Muller, *A Life of Being, Having, and Doing Enough*

This month we've been exploring the value of mindfulness practices, with a focus this week on relationship with others. What did author and theologian Paul Tillich tell us? *Listening is the first law of love.* Deep listening to another requires us to extend the gift of our full presence and attention. While we may pick up the phone to connect, we put it down, perhaps metaphorically, when it distances us from each other and from ourselves.

We are in the midst of a national and indeed global crisis as we come to grips with how, as individuals and as community, we face the challenge of Covid-19. The truth of our interconnectedness is no longer an abstract principle – it's today's top news. How do we move forward together into this new territory? On an individual level, how do we move forward into a future which, at least in the short term, is unknown?

Our mindfulness practices can help us manage anxiety about the present and the "unknown next," and can also help us grow in compassion as we interact with others. Now more than ever, we look for tools that help us manage our own racing minds.

Calming your mind: what tools do you use? When are they effective, and when do they fall short?

- ***Meditation, reflection***
- ***Reading, music, quiet time***
- ***Intentional awareness while, for example, reading the news – mindfully observing your own emotions.***
 - o ***What is the cost of emotions that run away with you?***

Connecting with others: what have you noticed? Do your mindfulness practices enable you to be present to the other person, and to yourself as you speak with her or him? What gets in the way? What promotes connection?

How can community help us navigate the days ahead?