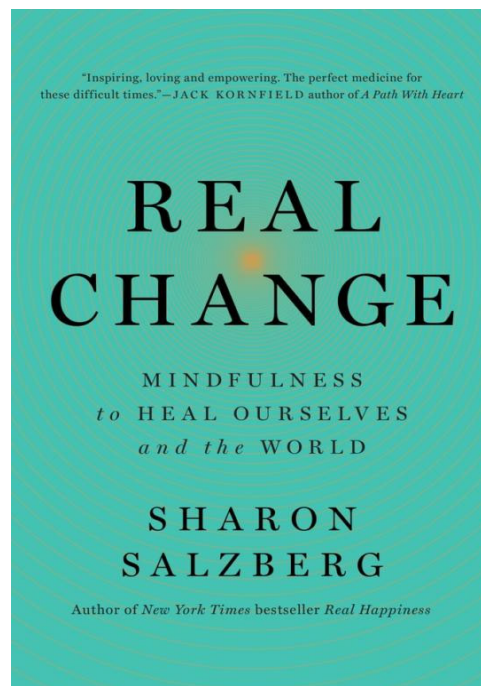


Contemplative Resilience Tools for Social Change Makers

Participant Course Journal Week 1

*Contemplative-Based Resilience:
Awareness, Balance & Connection*



Drawing from elements of the Garrison Institute's Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project and from Sharon Salzberg's book, *Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World*, this course invites you to strengthen your resilience and deepen awareness, balance and connection in your work and lives.

“Be Well, Serve Well”



GARRISON INSTITUTE



CBR
PROJECT

Garrison Institute

Founded in 2003, the [Garrison Institute](#) is a 501(c)3, not-for-profit, non-sectarian organization exploring the intersection of contemplation and engaged action in the world. The mission of the Garrison Institute is to apply the transformative power of contemplation to today's pressing social and environmental concerns, helping build a more compassionate, resilient future. The Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project is one of the Garrison Institute's signature initiatives, addressing the psychological and embodied dimensions of resilience for professional service providers.

Real Change

In her eleventh book, *Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves & the World*, [Sharon Salzberg](#) teaches us that meditation is not a replacement for taking action, but rather a way to practice generosity with ourselves and summon the courage to break through boundaries, reconnect to a movement that's bigger than ourselves, and have the energy to stay active.

Consulting with veteran activists and social change agents in a variety of fields, Sharon collects and shares their wisdom and offers the best practical advice to foster transformation in both ourselves and in society. *Real Change* guides us to embody the fundamental principles of mindfulness practice toward greater clarity and confidence, so that we can create a better world.

Use of the Participant Course Journal

This *Participant Course Journal* is designed as a companion to this course. You are encouraged to have this *Journal* accessible during each workshop and cohort coaching session. Included in the pages of this *Course Journal* are: Weekly Topic Descriptions, Presentation Slides, Social Learning and Personal Reflection Prompts, Practice Resources, and space for notes.

This *Journal* has been set up as a fillable PDF document, so that you may either type notes directly into the *Journal* through Adobe (remember to save your work) or you may print it and handwrite notes throughout.

Contact

Please direct any questions to the Contemplative-Based Resilience Project team at the Garrison Institute at CBRProject@garrisoninstitute.org.

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Participating Organizations

- Child Advocacy Center of Putnam County
- DC Gov't Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
- Fortune Society
- NYC Mayor's Office DV Taskforce
- Putnam County Child and Family Services
- Safe Horizon
- Sakhi for South Asian Women
- Sanctuary for Families
- Services for the UnderServed
- The Legal Aid Society
- Urban Justice Center
- Women Against Abuse
- Women & Justice Project
- Worker Justice Center

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Workshops

Week 1: Contemplative-Based Resilience: Awareness, Balance & Connection

Guest Speaker: Madeline Garcia Bigelow

The Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project of the Garrison Institute is grounded in scientific research on human resilience and was developed by experts in the field of psychology, trauma, and contemplative practices. Its integrated approach offers tools for resilience—including meditation, mindful movement and compassion practices—along with an understanding of the psychology and physiology of stress, burnout, and vicarious trauma. Anchored by Awareness, Balance and Connection—the CBR project empowers individuals to prioritize their own self-care and nurture their well-being, both personally and professionally so they may “be well to serve well.”

Week 2: Activating One’s Agency & Sense of Purpose

Guest Speaker: Shelly Tygielski

Many times we experience, even as we grow in compassion, the feeling that whatever we might contribute or offer to try to be of service could never be enough. Activating our sense of agency empowers us to do the good that is in front of us, however small or large it seems, and brings our sense of purpose to life.

Week 3: The Need for Resilience & Building Resilience

Guest Speakers: Ali Smith, Atman Smith & Andres Gonzales

Every effort to bring change to a system – whether within a family, a workplace, a community – involves navigating ups and down, triumphs and disappointments. This mirrors our experience of trying to change a habit, or make progress in learning something new. Cultivating resilience is the key to longer term efforts.

Week 4: Moving from Empathy to Compassion

Guest Speaker: Ellen Agler

Even though we use these two terms synonymously in ordinary conversational English, researchers and psychologists actually draw some distinctions between the two. Empathy is the resonance we feel in witnessing someone’s struggle or distress. Compassion – moving toward the suffering to see if we can be of help --is one possible response to the felt sense of empathy.

Week 5: Remembering the Joy

Guest Speaker: Justin Michael Williams

When we confront a lot of suffering -- our own, within a family, or professionally-- it often takes some intentionality to remember to also take in the joy. Savoring even simple pleasures of a day – a sunset; a child’s smile; a great cup of coffee --might appear selfish or self-centered. But if we look at what makes for resilience and renewal, remembering to take in the joy is an important part of it.

Week 6: Cultivating Equanimity & Balance

Guest Speaker: Samantha Novick

In the way we use the word, equanimity does not mean indifference or not caring. It means balance. It might, for example, be the balance between compassion for ourselves and compassion for someone else, or the balance between a compassionate urge to help and the recognition of realistic limits or boundaries. One manifestation of this balance is a sense of spaciousness within, an ability to be with both joy and sorrow, with our wish to help and the wisdom of knowing that we can’t just fix everything.

Cohort Coaching

CBR faculty will provide weekly 45 minute, live virtual cohort coaching sessions in between sessions. These additional sessions provide an opportunity to deepen your learning from the course, and engage in additional contemplative practices related to the CBR pillars of Awareness, Balance and Connection. The cohort coaching sessions will alternate between Meditation, led by Cathy Trentalancia and Mindful Movement, led by Gayla Marie Stiles.

Learning Objectives

1. Obtain an understanding of the psychology and physiology of stress (including secondary and vicarious stress and burnout) and resilience.
2. Learn how to detect, monitor, and respond to one's emotions.
3. Engage in contemplative practices such as meditation, mindful movement, and loving-kindness to regulate one's stress response.
4. Learn how contemplative practices have informed activists and social change agents to foster both personal and societal transformation.
5. Foster social learning and connection within a cohort of fellow change makers.
6. Build a foundation of practical skills for increased resilience through awareness, balance, and connection.



Faculty & Featured Guests Biographies



Sharon Salzberg

Sharon Salzberg is a central figure in the field of meditation, a world-renowned teacher and author. She has played a crucial role in bringing meditation and mindfulness practices to the West and into mainstream culture since 1974, when she first began teaching. She is the co-founder of the Insight Meditation Society in Barre, MA and the author of eleven books including New York Times bestseller, *Real Happiness*, her seminal work, *Lovingkindness* and her most recent book, *Real Change: Mindfulness to Heal Ourselves and the World*. Sharon is a co-founder and Senior Advisor to the Garrison Institute's

Contemplative-Based Resilience Project and serves as the Garrison Institute's Spiritual Director.

Garrison Institute CBR Faculty



Gayla Marie Stiles

Gayla Marie Stiles completed her BFA in dance performance and pedagogy from Ohio University. As a professional modern dancer she performed internationally and established outreach programs which used the transformative, healing, and educational aspects of movement in schools, community centers, assisted living, and hospital settings.

Gayla is a founding member of The Garrison Institutes' Transforming Trauma Initiative where she designed and implemented contemplative-based resilience programs for survivors of domestic violence, substance abuse, and the agencies who support them and is a Senior Advisor to the Contemplative-Based Resilience Project. She received her Master's degree from Tristate College of Acupuncture and is a licensed New York State acupuncturist working at New York Presbyterian Columbia University Medical Center in Pediatric and Adult Oncology, Hematology, and Stem Cell Transplant in both inpatient and outpatient settings.



Cathy Trentalancia

Cathy Trentalancia is a faculty member of the Garrison Institute's Contemplative- Based Resilience Project. She has been meditating for over 25 years and has taught in schools, corporations, in studios and privately. Her career spans the fields of media, wellness and education. She worked on both Cosmos series with Carl Sagan and Neil DeGrasse Tyson, among other programs, received a Master's Degree in South Asian Studies from Columbia University, and developed professional development, interdisciplinary and mindfulness curriculum for K-12. Cathy

teaches meditation to sex trafficking survivors at Sanctuary for Families and Back to Humanity and collaborates on workshops with Holistic Life Training. She is also a SEED: Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity facilitator.



Lina Pasquale

Lina Pasquale is the Director of the Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project, one of Garrison Institute's signature initiatives. Lina is a mission-driven senior and executive team leader with over two decades tenure in the social and human services sector, advancing traumatic stress theory into practice across multiple service industries. She has worked with non-profits and government agencies utilizing a strengths-based and resilience-centered approach with direct service clients and the professionals working within these organizations. In addition, Lina has served as a senior administrator of program

operations for non-profit organizations throughout her career.

Lina was awarded the opportunity to participate in the Morgan Stanley Strategy Challenge, resulting in the development of the Center for Trauma-Informed Practice – further expanding trauma awareness training and healing-centered engagement to networks of professional service providers and organizations. She has held positions as a researcher and training specialist for Columbia University, Fordham University, and with the Sanctuary Institute and has taught as an Adjunct Faculty at Iona College. Lina currently serves on the Advisory Board for the national Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice (CTIPP). She holds two graduate degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University and The New School for Social Research.

Guest Contributors



Madeline Garcia Bigelow

Madeline Garcia Bigelow is the Associate Director of the Urban Justice Center in New York City, as well as the Director of the UJC's Domestic Violence Project (DVP). She founded DVP in 2003, assembling a team of attorneys, social workers, and advocates who work cohesively to address the issues confronted by victims of intimate partner violence in both a legal and non-legal context. After law school Ms. Garcia Bigelow went on to work at the Bronx District Attorney's Office in the Domestic Violence/Sex Crimes bureau, first as an Assistant District Attorney, then as Acting Supervisor of the 2221 unit, which worked closely with law enforcement officials in sex crime and child abuse investigations. Prior to founding the Domestic Violence Project she served as Co-Director of Sanctuary for Families' Bronx office where she litigated family offense matters, provided education and outreach to the community and supervised staff. Ms. Garcia Bigelow believes the founding principle by which to successfully address and represent issues raised by survivors of intimate partner violence is to unequivocally validate the client and litigate with emotional intelligence. Ms. Garcia Bigelow is a past participant in the Garrison Institute's Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project, through the 2019 Women's Leadership Retreat.



Shelly Tygielski

Shelly Tygielski, whose work has been featured on CNN Heroes, is a self-care activist and community organizer. After spending almost 20 years immersed in Fortune 1000 organizations in corporate America, and the past decade as a high-ranking executive in publicly and privately held companies, Shelly turned to teaching modern-life mindfulness full time.

Committed to the democratization of meditation, her emphasis is on bringing mindfulness to corporations, public schools, nonprofits, and social justice and political organizations. She honed this focus over ten years of volunteering as a community organizer on campaigns, in social justice organizations, and on behalf of underserved school districts. A former leader with the Democratic Party in Florida, in 2016 Shelly co-founded South Florida Women Rise Up—a group of 3,000 women whose mission is to inform, organize, and activate local women around central issues affecting the community and this country. She also leads a community of 15,000 meditators in Broward County, Florida. Shelly is also the Founder of Pandemic of Love, a global, grass-roots volunteer-led mutual aid community that has directly matched over 1.2 million people since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, accounting for over \$52 million in direct transactions. She is a trauma-informed mindfulness teacher, a community organizer, self-care activist and an author, with a forthcoming book, "Sit Down to Rise Up: Find Yourself, Build Community, Change the World" due out in the Fall of 2021 from New World Publishing.

Holistic Life Foundation

The Holistic Life Foundation has been featured on Making a Difference on the NBC Nightly News, CNN, and CBS, as well as O the Oprah Magazine, The Washington Post, Upworthy, Mindful Magazine, Yoga Journal, Shambala Sun, and many other publications.



Ali Smith

One of three co-founders of the Holistic Life Foundation, Ali Smith is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. He is a graduate of the Friends School of Baltimore and the University of Maryland, College Park, receiving a BS in Environmental Science and Policy with a Biodiversity specialization. He has over 15 years of experience teaching yoga and mindfulness to diverse populations. Through his work at the Holistic Life Foundation he has helped develop and pilot yoga and mindfulness programs at public and private schools, drug treatment centers, juvenile detention centers, mental crisis facilities, and retreat centers, nationally and internationally. Ali has authored a series of children's books, and co-authored several yoga and mindfulness-based curriculums, and developed numerous workshops and trainings.



Atman Smith

Beginning in 2001, as a Co-Founder of the Holistic Life Foundation, Atman Smith has been teaching yoga and mindfulness to a diverse population including underserved and high-risk youth in Baltimore City Public Schools, drug treatment centers, wellness centers, and colleges. A native of Baltimore, Atman attended the University of Maryland, College Park where he was a letter award winner for the University's men's basketball team. He graduated with a B.A. in Criminology and Criminal Justice.



Andres Gonzales

Andres Gonzalez is one of the three Co-Founders of the Holistic Life Foundation. For eighteen years, Andres has taught yoga to diverse populations throughout the world, including Baltimore City Public School students, drug treatment centers, mental crisis facilities, homeless shelters, wellness centers, colleges, private schools and other various venues throughout the nation and throughout the world. He has partnered with John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health and the Penn State's Prevention Research Center on a Stress and Relaxation Study and is a published author in the Journal of Children's Services. He is a certified Health Coach through the Institute of Integrative Nutrition, maintains a B.S. in Marketing from University of Maryland, College Park and an MBA from the University of Maryland.



Ellen Agler

Ellen Agler serves as the CEO of the END Fund, working to see an end of the suffering caused by five neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) affecting 1.7 billion people. The END Fund has supported local partners across more than 30 countries to deliver over 700 million NTD treatments to hundreds of millions of people since its founding in 2012. Ellen has worked in global health and humanitarian response for over 20 years in more than 70 countries, for organizations including International Medical Corps and Operation Smile.

Ellen holds graduate degrees in International Health from the Harvard School of Public Health and in Development Studies from the London School of Economics. Ellen currently serves on the boards of Global Institute for Disease Elimination, Uniting to Combat NTDs, Legatum Institute, the World Economic Forum's Global Health Security Advisory Board, and Panorama Global. Ellen's book, *Under the Big Tree: Extraordinary Stories from the Movement to End Neglected Tropical Diseases* (with foreword by Bill Gates) was published in January 2019 by Johns Hopkins University Press. Ellen was also recently named as one of Fortune Magazine's "World's 50 Greatest Leaders" for 2019.



Justin Michael Williams

Justin Michael Williams is an author, transformational speaker, and top-20 recording artist who has become a pioneering voice for diversity and inclusion in wellness. From growing up with gunshot holes outside of his bedroom window, to sharing the stage with Marianne Williamson and Deepak Chopra, Justin knows well the pain of adversity and the power of healing to overcome. He has since been featured by The Wall Street Journal, Grammy.com, Billboard.com, The Root, The Advocate, Yoga Journal, and SXSW®. With his groundbreaking book *Stay Woke*, and over a decade of teaching experience, Justin's message of hope and

empowerment has spread to more than 40 countries around the globe, particularly through his national "Stay Woke, Give Back" tour bringing mindfulness to youth in underserved communities. Justin is dedicated to using his voice to serve; to being a beacon of hope for those who are lost, and to making sure all people, of all backgrounds, have access to the information they need to change their lives.

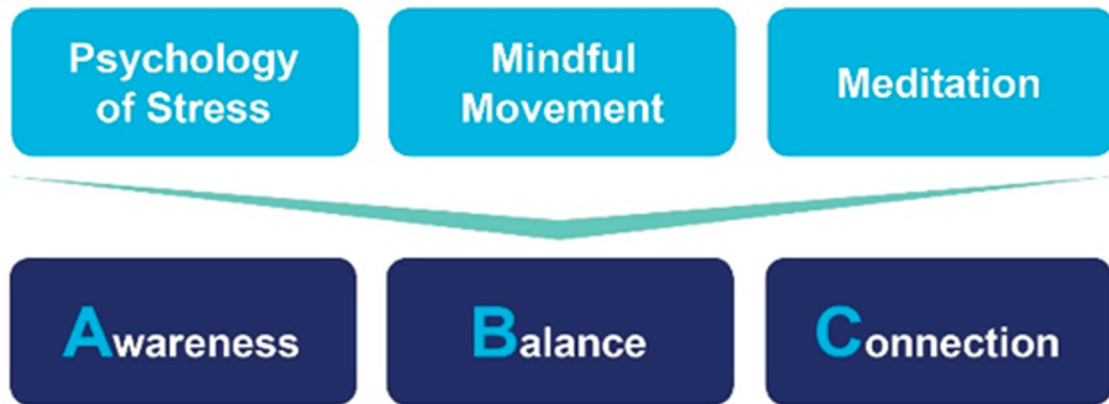


Samantha Novick

Samantha Novick is passionate about amplifying the voices of marginalized and underserved communities, creating equitable opportunities for people with disabilities and sharing kindness with others. She pursues these passions as a speech-language pathologist, owner of her private practice Bridge Therapy and President of The Friendship Journey, a charitable organization that cultivates friendships and enriching experiences for individuals of all abilities. Samantha grew up in Parkland, Florida. After a violent mass shooting devastated her community, her passion for activism, social justice and philanthropy grew. Samantha is committed to honoring those whose lives were taken due to hatred through acts of love and creating change in their memories. Last year, The Friendship Journey partnered with Dylan's Wings of Change of the Sandy Hook community to develop a free virtual summer camp for teens and adults with disabilities through the Covid-19 crisis called Camp Wings of Friendship. They continue to offer programming as a safe space for all to feel a sense of belonging. Samantha enjoys finding balance through traveling with her husband, exploring nature, meditation and reading.

Week 1: Contemplative-Based Resilience

Awareness, Balance & Connection



Awareness of:	Balance:	Connection:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ What is happening around us ❖ How we are feeling (through our bodies) ❖ How we are perceiving situations ❖ How others around us are feeling ❖ How our actions are impacting others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Arousal balance ❖ Emotional equilibrium ❖ Between work and relaxation ❖ Between short-term and long-term goals ❖ Between our needs and the needs of others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ With ourselves ❖ With others, including co-workers, our families, friends and communities ❖ With our values, aims

Contemplative practices, which are methods to train the mind and the body, contribute to **Awareness, Balance, and Connection.**

Meditation is a way to train the mind through familiarization with concepts that you want to become habitual, and to lessen the grip of mental habits and attitudes that aren't serving you well. Your thoughts wear grooves in the mind, the way that wheels wear ruts in the field.

Attention training builds concentration.

Compassion is the wish for others (and oneself) to be free from suffering. Love is the wish for others (and yourself) to be happy. Loving-kindness is compassionate awareness which opens your attention and enables you to become more inclusive.

In mindful movement, you focus gently on the experience of synchronizing movement and breath. You can think of it as moving meditation.

Over the past 25 years, there has been a growing body of research on the psychological and physiological effects of contemplative practices, giving birth to a new field known as contemplative science.

The evidence base accumulated so far indicates that:

Contemplative practices <u>enhance</u>:	Contemplative practices <u>decrease</u>:
Attention and concentration Learning and problem solving Flexible thinking Positive thinking Positive affect (better moods) Social support Pro-social behaviors Immune functions	Anxiety and stress Depressive episodes PTSD symptoms Rumination Inflammation Blood pressure Arthritis symptoms Pain

The positive effects are only observed when people actually engage in the practices.

Listening to a talk, reading about them in a book, or watching other people practice is not effective.

Notes

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Presentation Slides

Week 1 - Contemplative-Based Resilience: Awareness, Balance, Connection



- Building Community & Intention Setting
- Contemplative-Based Resilience (CBR) Project
- Live Teaching and Meditation from Sharon Salzberg
- Social Learning: Sharon Salzberg in conversation with Madeline Garcia Bigelow
- Silent Personal Reflection
- Mindful Movement Practice
- Closing



“Efforts toward change are an expression of our own innate dignity and testament to the belief that what we do matters in this world. We engage not only to try to foster change right now, we engage to enliven what we believe to someday yet be possible.”

~ Sharon Salzberg, *Real Change*

The CBR Approach



Contemplative practices are methods to train the mind and body for a state of wellbeing.

These may include mindfulness, breath, and compassion techniques, as well as body awareness and movement practices.

How often do you engage in
contemplative practices?



Resilience is the ability to maintain balance, endurance and agility - responding flexibly to challenging situations and the stress that they cause.

Resilience can be learned and strengthened through contemplative practices.



Contemplative tools for Resilience enable you to extend Compassion to yourself and others.



Mindful Movement

- Reflective processes
- Connection to the physical, emotional and mental aspects of ourselves
- Auto-regulation and cultivation of vital energy
- Practices which bring balance to our body and mind

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Teaching from Sharon Salzberg

Real Change & CBR

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Introduction to Mindful Movement

By: Gayla Marie Stiles

CBR emphasizes that changing both behaviors and environment can have a profound effect on the brain and nervous system. Changing behavior with regards to mindful movement is vital to the process of changing how we approach and process stress in our lives. Mindful movement is underscored by the awareness, balance, and connection (ABC) taught in the training. Equally, mindful movement strengthens the efforts towards awareness, balance, and connection.

Moving mindfully is a reflective process. It is a call to consciousness, offering the opportunity to bring awareness, balance, and connection to the physical, emotional, and mental aspects of ourselves. The movement practices in CBR ask two simple questions:

- Are you aware of your body and how you move?
- Is there a connection between your posture, how you move, or how you experience limitations in movement and how you feel?

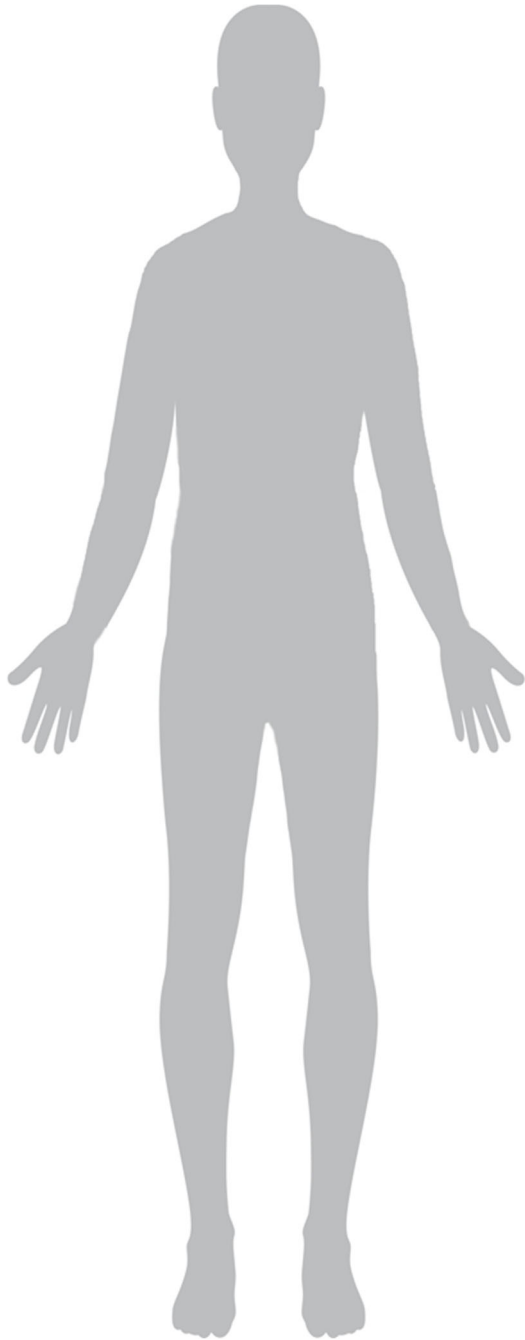
Identifying the manifestations of stress can help us to make healthy supportive changes that improve the quality of daily life.

Mindful movement is also empowering. When the ABC tools are implemented in a safe and supportive environment, we have the opportunity to experience and explore mindful movement practices as tools for auto-regulation and cultivation of vital energy. The sequences taught in CBR are designed to bring balance to our body and mind. They are designed to help lengthen what feels short and tight, brighten and energize what feels dull, strengthen what feels weak, find ways to rest when tired, and slow down what feels too fast. When aware and armed with practical tools, we are more able to adapt, to change and meet the demands in front of us. Mindful movement practices not only build resilience, but transform physical, emotional, and mental stress into vitality.

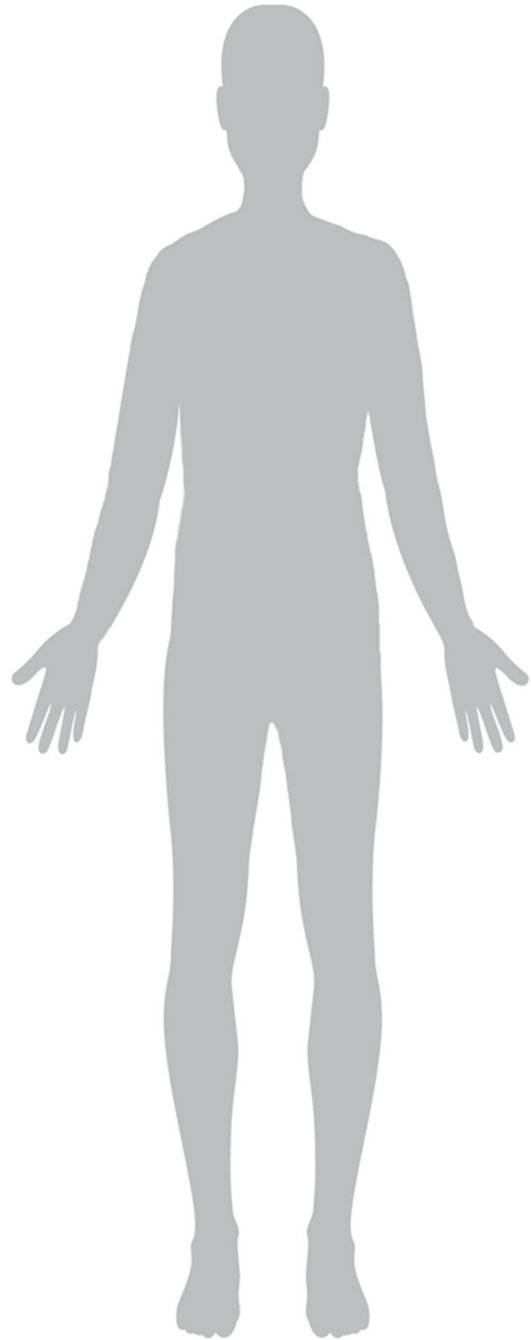
Our curriculum is rooted in anatomy and physiology and guided by eastern philosophies including chi gong and yoga. An important principle in our pedagogy is that though we are all different, there are common manifestations of distress for the spirit, body, and mind. During the retreat, modifications will be offered to meet participants' needs and instructors are available to address any concerns that may arise. There is no pressure to copy movements exactly rather an expectation to move in a healthful way with a sense of curiosity and discernment.

Silhouettes

Before



After



Introduction to Meditation

By: Sharon Salzberg

People have been transforming their minds through meditations for thousands of years, across cultures. Depending on the type, meditation may be done in silence and stillness, or by using voice and sound, or by engaging the body in movement. All forms emphasize the training of attention. Three basic skills of meditation practice are concentration, mindfulness and loving-kindness or compassion.

1. Concentration

We can be somewhat scattered or distracted, fragments, with our attention jumping to the past, and jumping to the future so that we lose energy, we lose stability. As we practice concentration, we gather all of that attention and energy back to this moment so that it becomes available to us and made powerful by that.

2. Mindfulness

Mindfulness means developing a quality of awareness of attention so that we can see more clearly what is actually happening in the moment, instead of being so swayed by different habits that may arise, projecting into the future, comparing, judging, holding onto certain assumptions, and not realizing that they are guiding us. With mindfulness, as we cultivate that quality of attention, we find that we can be more honestly, more cleanly, more directly with our experience as it is. Instead of being lost in a world of interpretation and judgment, we can actually connect to what is happening. This gives us the power of perspective, of understanding of seeing things differently.

3. Loving-kindness or compassion

The skill of loving-kindness or compassion is to realize that the best way forward for ourselves and then for others is to have a sense of compassion. Rather than being lost in such harsh judgments, unfair standards, perfectionism, we recognize that the rhythm of life itself is one where we are having to continually begin again. We move forward, we get stopped, we have to start over. We have a big plan, a big vision, we forget it. We have to be reminded. In this way, because of the compassionate element, because it helps us begin again and find renewal, meditation can be seen as a kind of resilience training.

These three skills – concentration, mindfulness and loving kindness or compassion – are considered trainable. These are not seen as gifts that some people have and others don't, but by training our attention to be more centered, more open, more flexible, more connected, we find that this is the result. What we are aiming for in meditation practice is a state of balance. We are deepening relaxation, letting go, finding tranquility and peace. We are also deepening interest, connection, investigation, energy. We want both. It's a state of relaxed alertness.

Presence and balance

It's very important to remember that in meditation practice, we are not so concerned with what comes up. We are more concerned with how we are with what comes up. So you actually cannot fail at this. The question isn't "what's arising" but how present are we with it? How balanced are we with it? How much compassion can we have with it? That's the place where we mark progress in meditation. It's in the way we relate to what comes up. So please don't feel discouraged if you find a lot of thinking or a different kind of experience than what you had imagined. The most important thing is in developing that balance so that no matter what happens, joyous or difficult, or anywhere in between, we can practice these skills of concentration, mindfulness and loving-kindness and compassion in relation to it.

Finding a Structure

The spirit of the meditation practice is one of really making it your own. Do it for the amount of time, the frequency that feels right for you. There's no impossible standard you are trying to meet. You can find your own pace. And more than anything consider this an experiment just like an exploration. Try it out and if you're going to assess if it's making any difference, if it's bringing you any benefit, I would urge you first of all not to evaluate it constantly, because then you won't really be doing it, you'll just be thinking about it. But set some structure. Some amount of time that seems reasonable to you. Something like: I will try this out for 5-10 minutes per day for a month, and then we'll see. Whatever seems right to you. And when you are going to look for the benefits, I would really urge you to look at your life. Don't look at that formal period of practice that you are experimenting with. Look at how you feel about yourself, how you talk to yourself, how you meet a stranger, how you deal with disappointment, how open you are to joy. Those are the things we look at to see if meditation practice has been of benefit to us.

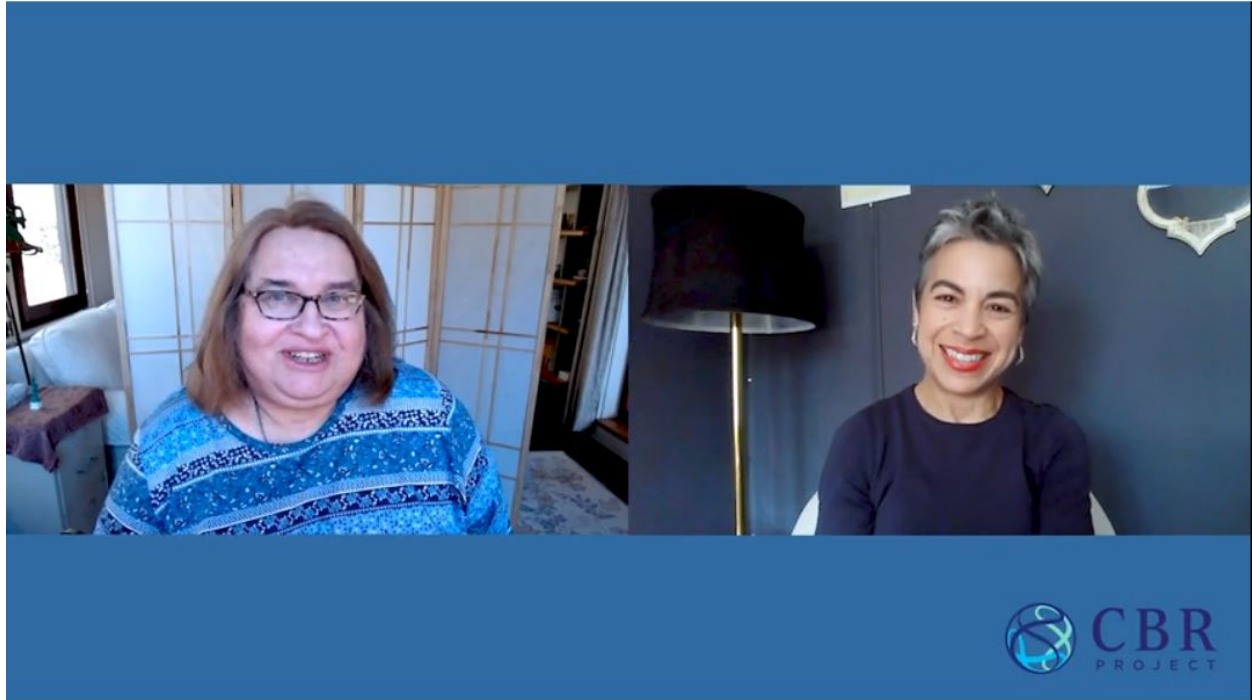


Notes

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Social Learning

Sharon Salzberg & Madeline Garcia Bigelow



“Building a culture of wellness at work.”

To learn more about Madeline Garcia Bigelow
and the Urban Justice Center, [click here](#).

Notes

Personal Reflection

Awareness, Balance & Connection

What brings awareness?

What fosters balance?

What creates connection?

What activities and practices sustain you?

What needs more attention?

Overall, what are you noticing?

Personal Reflection

Know Thyself Questionnaire

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER FOR SELF-MONITORING YOUR WELL-BEING

Being aware of ourselves, our needs, our feelings, our thoughts and our body are essential to maintaining balance and resilience. Regular self-monitoring is encouraged.

The following questions may help to guide this monitoring and observation.

Part 1. Know Thyself is the starting point.

As a social change maker working on the front lines, you may consider these questions as related to your life “outside” of your work, meaning when you are *not* on the job.

What do you notice when you are well and relaxed?

How many hours a day do you sleep? How is your sleep?

What type of food nourishes you?

What things might make you feel irritable or upset with others?

What things trigger anger or sadness in you?

Overall, how do you feel about yourself? Do you generally focus more on your positive traits or on the negative?

How do you feel about your work? Do you believe in what you do? Do you believe that what you contribute has value?

Why do you engage in advocacy/activism/social change work?

Do you typically feel open to social interaction and spending time with others?

How often do you laugh? What are the things you do for pleasure and how often?

Do you typically maintain healthy habits and self-care? For example: healthy eating and exercise habits.

Do you have a regular religious or spiritual practice? What is it? When do you practice?

Please add any other area of your life which you believe is important for you to monitor.

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Practice Resources

Mindful Movement: Finding Neutral

Click to view a video of Gayla Marie Stiles leading a mindful movement practice: [Finding Neutral](#)



Begin by finding neutral. Sit at the edge of your chair, with your knees bent. Make sure that your feet are facing forward, that the ankles are underneath the knees.

Move your buttock flesh out and away from your sitting bones. From your sitting bones, make sure you're pressing down clearly. Left side and right side receive the weight equally.

From there allow your spine to stretch up. Hands are resting on the thighs comfortably. You can practice with your eyes closed or open, with the gaze resting on the floor a few feet in front of you.

Pay attention to how you feel. Make note of any note of areas that are drawing your attention.

Is there an area where you feel pain? Does the pain feel sharp, dull, achy? Is it fixed or moving? Does it feel hot or cold?

How is your breath moving? Is it shallow or deep? Does it feel restricted or does it flow freely?

How is your energy level? Do you feel heavy or sinking? Or perhaps light and floating away?

And come back to your breath. Note those three aspects of **how your body feels**, **how the breath is moving** and your **overall energetic level**.

Practice Resources

Meditation: Gathering Your Energy

Click to hear audio of Sharon Salzberg leading a meditation:
[Gathering Your Energy](#)

To begin with, you can sit comfortably and relax. You don't have to feel self-conscious, as though you are about to do something special or weird. Just be at ease. It helps if your back can be straight, without being strained or overarched. You can close your eyes or not, however you feel comfortable. Notice where the feeling of the breath is most predominant—at the nostrils, at the chest, or at the abdomen. Rest your attention lightly, in just that area.

See if you can feel just one breath, from the beginning through the middle, to the end. If you're with the breath at the nostrils, you may notice tingling, vibration, warmth, coolness. If at the abdomen it may be movement, pressure, stretching, release. You don't have to name them, but feel them. It's just one breath.

Notice what arises. And if images or sounds, emotions, sensations arise, but they're not strong enough to actually take you away from the feeling of the breath, just let them flow on by. You don't have to follow after them, you don't have to attack them, you're breathing. It's like seeing a friend in a crowd, you don't have to shove everyone else aside or make them go away, but your enthusiasm, your interest, is going toward your friend, "Oh there's my friend. There's the breath."

Notice when you're distracted. When something arises—sensations, emotions, thoughts, whatever it might be—that's strong enough to take your attention away from the feeling of the breath, or if you've fallen asleep, or if you get lost in some incredible fantasy, see if you can let go of the distraction and begin again, bringing your attention back to the breath. If you have to let go and begin again thousands of times, it's fine, that's the practice.

You may notice the rhythm of your breath changing in the course of this meditation session. You can just allow it to be however it is. Whatever arises, you can shepherd your attention back to the feeling of the breath.

Remember that in letting go of distraction the important word is gentle. We can gently let go, we can forgive ourselves for having wandered and with great kindness to ourselves, we can begin again.

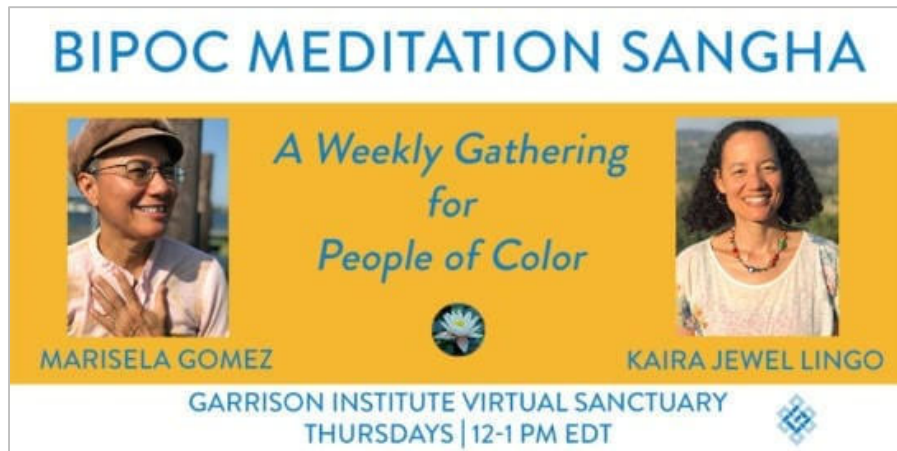
When you feel ready, you can open your eyes. See if you can bring this awareness of breath periodically into your day.

(Mindful.org)

Practice Resources

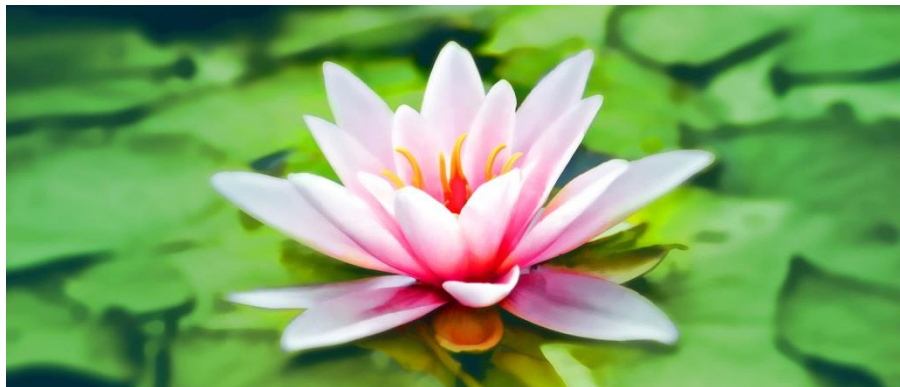
Garrison Institute Meditation Groups

BIPOC Meditation Sangha



The Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) Sangha is a weekly gathering of self-identified BIPOC practitioners that provides a safe place to meditate and explore contemplative practices. [Click here to register.](#)

Noontime Virtual Meditation Group



In the spirit of holding space for community and connection, the Garrison Institute offers Noontime Meditation groups, every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Meditators of all levels are welcome. [Click here to register.](#)

Practice Resources

Download Mobile App

Care for Caregivers: Skills for Resilience
through Meditation & Mindful Movement

Led by Sharon Salzberg and Gayla Marie Styles



The Care for Caregivers app provides eight guided meditations that you can access anytime, anywhere, and at your own pace, each between 5-6 minutes long.

“Nothing has to take a long time. You don’t have to explode your to-do list. Just short moments...will transform your day.”

–Sharon Salzberg

Be well, Serve well.

