

**Mindfulness Meditation and Emotional Intelligence
In the
Teaching of Communication**

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Mindfulness + Communication Theory = Emotional Intelligence

1. Emotions play a role in how we communicate
2. Consider interactions with boss, colleagues, parents, etc.
3. Police officer example
4. Many people communicate in habitual patterns of behavior
5. Many people don't communicate very well
6. Many people never consider changing the way they communicate
7. Something's wrong with that picture
8. Communication concepts often influence us on an unconscious level (e.g., self-talk, nonverbals)
9. It's not the events of our lives but how we *appraise* them that trigger emotions
10. Refractory Period and Prefrontal Cortex "Buffer"

MBSR

Stress → React

Stress → Awareness → Respond

My Modification

Stimulus → Awareness → Respond

Communication concepts can be stimuli for our emotions:

- You're giving a speech
- Someone makes a face in back of the room (facial expression)
- You appraise that nonverbal as a criticism (self-talk, self-concept)
- That appraisal triggers nervousness
- All of that happens without you consciously realizing it, yet you feel nervous and you panic—rushing through the rest of your talk, avoiding eye contact, using many vocal interferences, and forgetting what you planned to say

**Beginner's Mind can help you observe those stimuli/communication concepts
as they are impacting your thoughts, emotions, and behavior.**

“‘Emotional intelligence’ refers to being intelligent about our emotional life: more self-aware, better able to handle disturbing emotions, more sensitive to the emotions of others—and able to put all that together to create effective, nourishing interactions.”

(Daniel Goleman in his Forward to *Emotional Awareness* by Paul Ekman, 2008, p. ix)

Sample “EQ To-Dos” from Roger Pearman’s book *Introduction to Type and Emotional Intelligence* that relate to combining mindfulness and communication theory:

Pearman’s book devotes two pages to each of the sixteen Myers-Briggs personality types, describing emotional intelligence traits of that Type.

- “Start demonstrating interest in the present moment” (INFJ)
- “Work to identify feelings and emotional reactions as useful information” (ESTJ)
- “Start communicating more patience” (INTJ)
- “Start demonstrating interest in new ways of seeing things” (ISTP)
- “Start sharing feelings and emotions, and being more empathetic” (ENTJ)

Basics of how I structure my classes:

- Introduce some communication concepts
- Do some meditation
- Assign an Application Journal that relates to mindful application of those concepts
- Discussion
- The rest of the class time is devoted to speeches, group work, etc.—“business as usual”

Note: I am in the process of writing a text book based on these teaching methods. Please send me an e-mail message if you would like to be notified when the book is published.