MMTCP Disability Affinity Group

Meeting Minutes

July 8, 2025

**MISSION STATEMENT**

MMTCP Disability Affinity Group Mission Statement:

*As a community of certified mindfulness meditation teachers, we embrace our diverse visible and invisible disabilities as part of our identity, choosing to use challenges to gain insight and to grow self-trust and compassion, enabling heartfelt connections with ourselves, each other, and the communities we serve.*

Thank you to the 7 MMTCP alumni who joined the conversation today! Folks joined us from many places including Louisiana, Colorado, Germany, Canada and Nebraska. The different disabilities included limb difference, spinal cord injury, memory impairment, and chronic illnesses/conditions, such as MS, Lupus and chronic fatigue syndrome.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

We are now communicating exclusively on the MMTCP platform. If you haven’t joined the AA yet, please email Paru Desai (the MMTCP Alumni Co-Director) at [parudesai@mmtcpalumni.org](mailto:parudesai@mmtcpalumni.org) if you need assistance or a reduction in the annual dues.

**OPENING MEDITATION**

Thank you Diana for the guided meditation to start our time together. You asked us to drop into the body. If there is resistance can we greet that with friendly attention? If there is judgment can we recognize that as a form of suffering, then with kindness can we use the phrase *“May I be kind to myself in this moment.”* The meditation grounded us, asked us to try something different and then if/when judgment or some other difficult feelings arose we could repeat the same phrase “May I be kind to myself in this moment.”

As always, thank you Diana!

**INTRODUCTIONS**

The prompt for today was to share how living with our difference/disability impacts our practice.

* Some had an immediate reaction to the prompt and chuckled at the background of ableism that tends to immediately come to defend our “right” to be in this group. There is no need to qualify or defend. We are among friends and we belong.
* Many expressed the idea that our disability affects and impacts everything in our lives including our practice. Having a difference invites changes in perception and lived experiences. Perhaps we don’t practice regularly because we are consumed by all the things we need to attend to. Or we practice differently, perhaps lying down instead of sitting again because of fatigue due to disability. Certain situations may require us to adapt, ask for accommodations etc.
* My practice wakes me up to my vulnerabilities from my disability and this allows me to see what is needed. Sometimes it means taking a break because of the aches and pains produced by over stressing and over committing.
* There seemed to be agreement that regardless of the disability there were other associated conditions that have become part of our orbits. We don’t just have MS or a spinal cord injury or lupus. There are all kinds of symptoms and conditions that go along with these challenges and we continue to learn about them every day. This becomes part of the practice. This is everyday mindfulness.
* There is a balance between pushing pain away and asking the question “Can I be with this and is there some way to alleviate some of this pain?”
* Sometimes our conditions limit the kinds of things we would love to participate in and this invites disappointment of course.
* With so much happening in our lives, it is comforting to be with the phrase “trusting the mystery” and “held by the mystery.”
* Someone shared a lovely quote that goes something like “turn your glimmers into glows” which of course is a reference to shining light on the situation to help bring balance.
* Our disability and our pain actually brought us to this practice and led us to the MMTCP program.
* Sometimes life gets complicated, the mind gets confused and the simple practice of returning to the breath becomes the most helpful practice.
* Someone taking the Primal Trust Program referenced the vagal toning and somatic practices. This led to the idea that trust is a very big deal.
* Many agreed that nature is a big resource for them and that we have *friends* everywhere that can allow the nervous system to calm down, to trust, and to return to a para sympathetic state.
* When we ponder our existence, and the fear of dying without living a life, we can trust that the universe and our practice can sustain us through the fear.

**DISCUSSION AND THEME**

Trust became the theme for the day:

* There are so many levels to trust:
  + Trust in the world and universe
  + Trust in self
  + Trust in our partner or friend
  + Trusting our body and mind
* What is the relationship between trust with fear?
* The importance of wise discernment about what is needed, paying close attention to the joints in our bodies and our neuro cognition, listening carefully so that when we reach capacity, we can alter our involvement in an activity and know when to step back.
* When trust is difficult try this strategy: remembering a time when there was a lot of trust. What did that feel like? Bring that into consciousness and allow it to enter the body.
* Noticing that when there is increased trust there is less fear and anxiety.
* Recognizing the importance of being with the fear and uncertainty, trusting that there is a part of us or a part of the universe that will hold us up.

**RESOURCES**

None to share this time.

**WRAP UP**

We shared some good wishes and quick goodbyes as we needed to end the group a little early.

**NEXT MEETING**

Whether you join us in person or not, we include you in our good wishes. We hope to see you for our next meeting on **August 12 at 2:30 PM Eastern time**!

Respectfully submitted by,

Valerie Saiz, Notetaker and Co-facilitator

Diana Klein, Co-facilitator and

Gayle Wright, Co-facilitator