



Mindful Practice: Adaptive Action

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Mindfulness is a topic today that many people are talking about. I am not an expert in mindfulness. In fact, I am only recently beginning to build a practice of mindfulness.

I started with an online search. [Wikipedia](#) describes it as “a popular method to handle emotions by paying attention to them.” In 2009, Zgierska defined it as “the intentional accepting and non-judgmental focus of one’s attention on the emotions, thoughts, and sensations occurring in the present moment.” The term, itself, comes from Buddhist practice. Mindfulness is an attribute of consciousness that has long been believed to contribute to [well-being](#). Hundreds of books are available to help, and an internet search lists almost 30 million hits.

But the other day someone asked me if, based on the bits that I am learning about mindfulness, how I would describe it in HSD terms. So here is my attempt. See what you think.

I think mindfulness is Adaptive Action.

What? First I think mindfulness is about **intention**—deciding what you want. What can you imagine or consider that will create fitness with the world around you? What patterns will relieve the tensions you feel in your world? What patterns your life will move you toward greatest fitness? in your work? in your family? in your community? It doesn’t really matter the scale you consider, you first have to decide what you want.

What? If what I want is to create patterns of generative engagement, then I have to picture those patterns. I take time to consider what they will look like where ever I see them. I fix those patterns in my awareness so that I can recognize them when I find them.

So what? Second, I think mindfulness is about **attention**—seeing and understanding the patterns around you. So what is the distance between your current reality and the patterns you intend? Because you have named the patterns you intend and because you know, intimately, what those patterns look like, you can see the differences between the two. So what are the options for action, based on the difference between what you want and what you have? Using the principles of HSD, then, you can explore conditions that shape your current patterns. Consider how you might shift those patterns to relieve the tension created by the difference between what you have and what you can imagine is possible.

So what? So what do I see in my current patterns that do and/or don't match the patterns of generative engagement? So what are the conditions that shape the current patterns? So what can I do to shift my current reality to more closely match the patterns of generative engagement that I want? So what can I do to relieve the tension I feel? So what are my options for action?

Now what? Finally, understanding mindfulness through the lens of HSD is about **action**. Now what action will you take to shift the patterns in your world, as you understand them? Now what will the impact of your actions be? Now what differences are your actions really making?

Now what? Now what actions can I take? Now what actions will I take? Now what do I see in the patterns around me? Am I shaping the patterns of generative engagement?

Back to the What? And after you have taken action you go back to your reality to ask “What do I see now?” What do I see that compares with my intentions? What is my next intention?

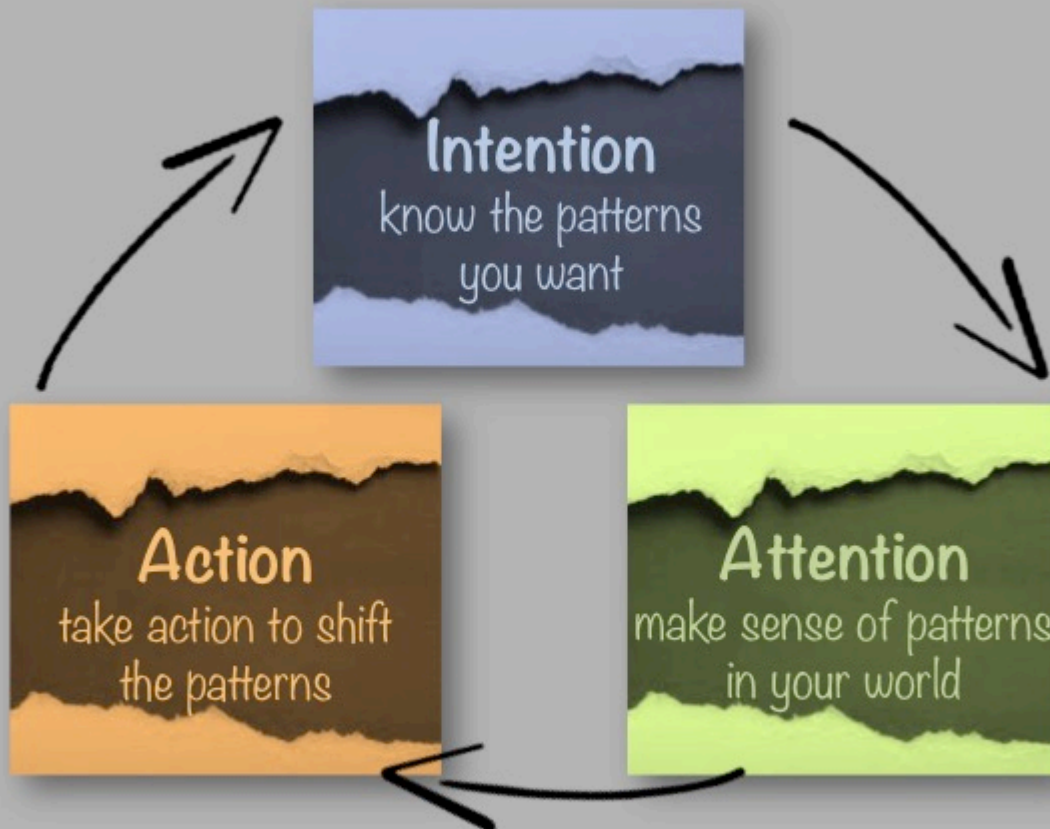
What? After I take action, I look to see how closely the patterns I see around me match the generative patterns I imagined. What does my world look like now?

Just as with any Adaptive Action, this iterative cycle of inquiry and action can occur in the blink of any eye. Or it is a cycle that may take months or years. However long your cycles of inquiry are, you engage in ongoing cycles of Adaptive Action that help you know your intentions, pay attention to the reality in your world, and take action to move your world closer to those intentions.

So that's how I see mindfulness through an HSD lens. I want to be clear that I do not intend to diminish the power of intention or the lifelong practice it can require to move into a life of mindful attention. I know that there are people who have spent their lives to develop their own mindful practice, and I have every respect for their work and their commitment. But this level of understanding of what it is to be mindful can help me in my own growing practice. I welcome your feedback about this perspective and about your own practice.

Royce

Mindful Praxis



Adaptive Action