

Fixing versus Serving

Worksheet for Mindfulness Teachers

Date / Time:

What have you brought mindful awareness to today? Check all that apply.

Heart

Mind

Body

Breath

Environment

To begin this Meditation, please bring kind awareness to

- why you chose this topic
- how your belly, chest, and head each feel when you reflect on this topic
- the emotions that you can associate with these visceral feelings
- the positive or negative impact of any stories you believe in regarding this topic
- the fact that many others are feeling similarly about this topic as you
- how you might feel with increased awareness around this topic
- when you can apply increased mindfulness to this topic in your day-to-day life



If you're teaching mindfulness, it's likely your own mindfulness practice has changed your life. Thanks to mindfulness, you may have greater resilience and self-confidence, you feel healthier and happier, or your life has become more open, spacious and abundant.

When we become teachers we want nothing more than to share these benefits with others, but we have to be careful as to how, and what our role is.

When students come to us to help alleviate their suffering and pain, we have a choice to make. Will we approach the situation as 'fixers,' or do we recognize the opportunity to be of service?

It's true our knowledge and access to the practice puts us in a position of being the teacher to the student. But the most successful teachers understand this role is not a fixed one. When real human connection occurs, it's between equals. Both parties learn from each other.

Understanding the difference between fixing and serving helps us be more mindful of when we've become too attached to the former.

Being of service (versus fixing) makes us more effective teachers.

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The following chart highlights some of the main differences between fixing and serving:

Fixing	Serving
Ego-based work	Soul-based work
You are the expert	You are a fellow human
Involves two separate entities	Involves two connected entities
An outcome-dependent act	A process-oriented act
Requires you to play a role	Requires authenticity
You must demonstrate your strengths	You can share your vulnerabilities
Depleting and exhausting	Energizing and affirming
Takes power from others	Empowers others

SEPARATE VERSUS WHOLE

Approaching a teaching situation as fixers requires us to see our students as broken or weak, unintelligent or incapable. They are lacking and in need of what we have. What we have and know must be different from and better than.

On the contrary, when we approach our teaching as an act of service, we view those whom we are teaching as whole and divine. We approach them as if they are equals. Our teaching relationship is one in which we are just as likely to learn.

YOUR ENERGY AS A TEACHER

Because fixing is the work of the ego, it ultimately wears us down and becomes a hindrance to our success as teachers. It requires us to play a particular role in which there's an expected outcome. Inevitably, we don't get the outcome we want. This is painful to the ego, emotionally exhausting, and energetically depleting.

Because serving is an act between two equals, the energy exchange between teacher and student is balanced. There's simply no such thing as burnout or 'compassion fatigue.' Teachings are focused on process rather than outcome, which allows each moment along the path to feel satisfying and freeing.

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EMPOWERING TEACHER STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS

A teacher who is a 'fixer' is at risk of appearing condescending, degrading the self-esteem of their students, and encouraging attachment and dependency upon sources outside oneself for wellbeing. It's ultimately a dis-empowering relationship that's of little benefit.

A teacher who is present with students as an equal, with an open-hearted desire to be of service, empowers their students to recognize their own strengths, their inherent capability to self-heal, and their wholeness. It's an empowering and beneficial relationship.

SUCCEEDING AS A TEACHER

If your teaching has hit a plateau, or if you aren't getting the clients or results you have hoped for, question if your work has been centered on fixing or serving.

- Are you present for your students as an expert, or as a human being?
- Are you playing the role of 'mindfulness teacher?' Or allowing for authenticity?
- Are you teaching for fame or gain? Or teaching to be of true service for others?

The following meditation is followed by several mindfulness journal prompts to help you reconnect to your desire to be of service.

Return to this mindfulness exercise as many times as you need to throughout your teaching career. Your responses will change as you do.

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MINDFUL MEDITATION: FIXING VS SERVING

- Find a comfortable meditation seat in a quiet place
- Close your eyes, or gaze low at the ground
- Rest your attention on the breath for 1-5 minutes to calm and steady the mind
- When ready, reflect upon the teacher(s) in your life who have taught you the most
- Bring to mind the qualities you admire in your teacher
- In what ways (big or small) has your teacher treated you as an equal?
- In what ways did they recognize your wholeness, the limitlessness of your inborn potential?
- In what ways did they forgo attempts to fix you, and instead act in service?
- Spend a few minutes reflecting in gratitude upon your experience with such teachers.
- When you're ready to close the meditation, in your own words, dedicate the benefits you've received from the grace of such teachers to the benefit of your own students, and to all beings everywhere

WORKSHEET MINDFULNESS PROMPTS:

List some of the qualities that first drew you to your most beloved mindfulness teacher(s).

Are these mainly qualities of connection, or separation?

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In what ways have you grown, thanks to your teacher(s) and your own mindfulness practice?



What inspires you to share these outcomes with others?

Aside from the desire to be of service, is there anything else you hope to gain as a teacher?

In what ways have you fallen victim to prioritizing fame or gain as a mindfulness teacher?

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In your own words, what's the difference between presenting as an expert, and presenting as a fellow human?



Have you had an experience as a student in which you felt empowered to become your own teacher?

Have you had a teaching experience in which you learned as much as or more than your students?

Are there those you have learned from who may not consider themselves teachers?

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Do you think it's possible others have learned from you, even in a moment when you weren't 'teaching'?



For you, what's in the label of 'mindfulness teacher' you'd like to let go of? Is there a role you're caught up in that causes you anxiety or stress?

What support do you need to give up this role, and connect more authentically with your students?

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REVIEW

As a teacher, when you shift your efforts from fixing to being of service, both the students and you benefit. A teacher with the intention to be of service inspires others to join them on their journey.

Reflecting upon fixing versus serving will transform you from a teacher who walks ahead of others, rarely looking back, into a teacher who walks side by side with others, holding their hands.

Serving versus fixing requires letting go of ego. When this happens, you will recognize your students are whole, complete, and divine, and it's they who are doing the teaching.