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Zen and the Art of Multitasking: Mindfulness for Law Librarians

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Zen and the Art of Multitasking: Mindfulness for Law Librarians*

Filippa Marullo Anzalone**

Professor Anzalone explains what mindfulness is and how it can help law librarians thrive in their professional and personal lives. The demands on law librarians are tremendous, and the constant juggling of job responsibilities often leads to depression and burnout. A mindfulness practice can offer relief and perhaps even bring joy to harried law librarians.

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Introduction: A “Day in the Life” Case Study

¶1 Renata considers herself a reasonably intelligent, service-oriented, and adaptable person. She went to a fine undergraduate liberal arts school, a solid law school, and a distinguished library and information graduate school for her master’s degree in library science. Renata thinks of herself as a committed professional who finds joy in the legal research process itself. She feels passionately about teaching law students the ins and outs of legal research, and she gets a kick out of helping others navigate the mysteries of information retrieval at the reference desk.

¶2 Lately, though, Renata is in a slump. She is procrastinating doing even tasks that she found fulfilling in the past. For example, Renata is a faculty liaison and lately some of her usually sociable faculty members have seemed flustered, hurried,

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and rather discourteous. Their sharp retorts during reference interviews have led Renata to question her own efficacy. Renata is feeling an increasingly unbalanced sense of equanimity; in fact, she is starting to notice that everyone around her seems overly busy and rushed. Even the anxiety levels of the law students in her advanced legal research course are making her feel inadequate to the job. Her mind is always racing with issues from the sublime to the ridiculous. Manifestations of Renata's stress are becoming more frequent: when on the reference desk, she cannot focus on callers' questions because she is thinking about whether she has updated her PowerPoint presentation for her lecture on administrative law. Driving to work, she misses her exit because she is wondering whether she has responded to the chair about attending the curriculum committee meeting next Wednesday, or was it Thursday? When a new IT staff member approaches her for advice on how to handle a rude faculty member, Renata gives him only five minutes in the hallway when in the past she would have spent an hour with him in her office. And to top it all off, a 1L who overstayed the law library's closing bell two nights ago is troubled by the security guard's response, and both parties are turning to Renata to complain and seek validation for their side in the situation since she was the reference librarian on duty that evening.

¶3 Even though Renata should be thinking about an article that she and her manager are planning to write about flipped classrooms, all she can think of is the angry reaction of the usually sweet 1L and the hurt of the security guard whom the student described as "the most ignorant bigot she'd ever had the misfortune to meet." Renata, who is usually creative in handling such situations, is getting nowhere with a solution that will satisfy both parties to this unfortunate set of circumstances. She is sure that the guard was merely trying to be funny and that the student is taking the guard's banter personally because she is on edge from the pressure of impending finals and the writing competition looming in the next couple of weeks. Renata cannot focus on her own deadlines, and her mind keeps going back to each complainant's recitation of events.

¶4 Renata's mind is going in circles. No wonder she could not concentrate on her last two reference requests. She cannot even remember whether she was supposed to call one of the users back with an answer. It seems to Renata that everyone in the law school—students, faculty, and colleagues—is angry, selfish, or just plain lazy.

¶5 She is starting to hate her job. She wonders why she gave up the practice of law for all of this. Wearily, she remembers how much she used to love being a law librarian. It used to be fun to learn new things about online research; the faculty members were great, and students were always asking her about her career choice because she obviously loved her job. Wait! She just missed a three o'clock technology webinar on using the new class management system. Damn it. She has to get a grip. What is the matter with the law school, the law library, and the entire planet? Why is everything going wrong, and why can't she summon up whatever it takes to have a clear, functioning mind? She thinks about her law library colleagues at local law firms and the court library. At a recent lunch meeting, they were discussing how their work lives had lately taken on a more frantic tempo with downsized staffs. "Things just seem busier and more crazy in the office," one law firm librarian

had commented. So maybe all law librarians are experiencing whatever this is. Renata was never this flummoxed with her work. She thinks: what is wrong with me, and what is the matter with everyone and everything?

¶6 Does Renata's conundrum and state of mind sound vaguely familiar to you? I would wager that it does. Why? It might be because many of us today are living in a state of mindlessness. Librarians especially are prone to the side effects of professional multitasking. We may not have started out as jugglers, but our jobs now demand that we become adept at keeping many balls in the air at once. We are usually thinking about what we just did or what we are supposed to do next. We mull over the past and ruminate about the future. Like Renata, we go from task to task without any real quality time to pause, systematically reflect, or renew ourselves. We cannot be alone with our thoughts because our thoughts are rarely in the moment. If we do corral our thoughts and attempt to focus, we often make judgments and have inner dialogues with ourselves that actually keep us disconnected from the real activity at hand. We cannot quell the incessant chatter of our minds. We have become human automatons who are more comfortable doing than being. We are thankful that others cannot read our minds because they would uncover how messy and undisciplined our minds really are. Like Renata, we develop inferiority complexes because we think we are losing our grip in the fast-paced tempo of the world we have created. We use every available minute to check in with each other via e-mail, texting, and social media. Yet we find it difficult to concentrate on a colleague's or a friend's simple story. We are impatient to get to the new assignment, the next thing that we can check off the to-do list. With shortened attention spans and hearts racing, we are off, our thoughts and our lives whirring like hamsters on a wheel.

¶7 Let's leave Renata for a while and look at some of the reasons for her state of mind. Let's also explore the concept of mindfulness as a possible solution to Renata's dissatisfaction and the problems caused by her mindlessness.

What Is Mindlessness?

¶8 For many of us, mindlessness is our default state of mind. We experience mindlessness when we arrive somewhere and forget how we got there. We experience mindlessness when we put a stapler in the refrigerator and a stick of butter on our desks. In mindlessness we are distracted, unaware, and tuned out of what is happening while it is happening. Mindlessness is going through the motions without truly engaging in life. It is a symptom of an unruly or untamed mind.

¶9 The Buddha warned that a "man's mind may make him a Buddha or make him a beast. Misled by error, one becomes a demon; enlightened, one becomes a Buddha."¹ According to the Buddha, it is desirable to be on "the path of living each hour of the day in awareness, mind and body always dwelling in the present

1. BUKKYŌ DENDŌ KYŌKAI, *THE TEACHING OF BUDDHA* 22 (Society for the Promotion of Buddhism trans., 251st ed. 2001).

moment. The opposite is to live in forgetfulness. If we live in forgetfulness, we do not know that we are alive.”²

¶10 An unruly mind can lead to ennui and restlessness. We become distracted and have a hard time facing our own thoughts. Some of us deal with these uncomfortable feelings by escaping reality through frenzied activities or other distractions such as obsessive shopping, abuse of drugs or alcohol, or web surfing. We might criticize others to make ourselves feel better, or we might make hasty judgments about others. An undisciplined mind can make us defensive and cause us to take comments personally. Another telltale symptom of an untamed mind is to notice at a seminar that a presenter’s scarf clashes with her sweater or that her voice is annoyingly nasal, instead of focusing on what the speaker is actually saying. These ways of distracting ourselves from our racing minds also build walls between us. We feel isolated and paranoid. We need help to find our way back to well-being and health. The Buddha is said to have stated, “Whatever an enemy might do to an enemy, or a foe to a foe, the ill-directed mind can do to you even worse.”³

¶11 A flabby mind, like an out-of-shape body, requires conditioning. Just as we go to the gym to work out and get healthier, we need to train the undisciplined mind to move from a state of mindlessness to that of awareness or mindfulness. Meditation is a form of exercise or mental conditioning that can help to cultivate the feral mind and free us from the toxicity of harmful thoughts. People frequent health clubs for a variety of reasons, and the same is true of those who meditate. Some people meditate for relaxation and tranquility.⁴ Others meditate for religious reasons,⁵ and still others meditate to seek answers for questions they have about their lives.⁶ With time, a mindfulness practitioner’s motives to meditate may

2. THICH NHAT HANH, *OLD PATH, WHITE CLOUDS: WALKING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE BUDDHA* 129 (1991).

3. MARK W. MUESSE, *PRACTICING MINDFULNESS: AN INTRODUCTION TO MEDITATION* 14 (2011).

4. Dealing with anxiety and stress in the fast-paced lives we lead is often cited as a reason to meditate. See Matthew Moore, *Anxiety Relief: How to Combat Stress and Anxiety Through Mindfulness Meditation*, J. KAN. B. ASS’N, Jan. 2014, at 14. But an important point to remember is that meditation is a “serene encounter” with reality, not an escape from it. See THICH NHAT HANH, *THE MIRACLE OF MINDFULNESS: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE PRACTICE OF MINDFULNESS* 60 (1987).

5. Although many of the world’s religions have a contemplative or mystical practice, meditation is most often associated with Buddhism. Buddhism originated in the sixth century in what is now modern-day Nepal and India, with Siddhartha Gautama, otherwise known as the Buddha, or the awakened one. For the first half-century after the Buddha’s death, the path to enlightenment was largely an oral tradition; the earliest written information about Buddhism is thought to be contained in the Pali Canons, foundational texts from the first century B.C. Buddhism spread throughout Asia in its early years, and geography largely defines the three main types of Buddhism: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Within each type of Buddhism, other types of Buddhism have developed. For example, Zen and Tibetan Buddhism originated from the Mahayana form of Buddhism. The evolution of Buddhism is a very complicated subject that is beyond the scope of this paper. For an excellent online source of information about Buddhism, see THE BUDDHIST SOCIETY, <http://www.thebuddhistsociety.org> (last visited Aug. 23, 2015). For a very interesting book about the life of the Buddha, see NHAT HANH, *supra* note 2. Nhat Hanh recounts the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha over the course of eighty years from various original sources, including the Pali Canons.

6. Insight, which in the Buddhist tradition is known as vipassana or “clear gazing,” comes from a mind that has been primed by “attention, acceptance, and relinquishment.” See MUESSE, *supra* note 3, at 207–08. Insight cannot be coerced or forced. The mind must be ready for enlightenment. There is a Zen story that aptly illustrates what readying the mind for insight means: A venerable professor

evolve. No matter what the motivation, the important thing is to begin a meditation practice to break out of the rut of mindlessness.

Mindfulness—The Alternative to an Untrained Mind

¶12 Mindfulness does not just happen—it is developed in the same way that most habits are formed. It is a state of mind that is built from training and practice.⁷ Mindfulness has been defined in various ways, but the term generally connotes “a deliberate, present-moment, non-judgmental awareness of whatever passes through the five conventional senses and the mind—to simplify: emotions, thoughts, and body sensations.”⁸ Being mindful enables us to be both awake and aware; it is having a trained, instead of an untamed or “monkey mind.”⁹

¶13 When we are living mindfully, we live our lives fully and do not fritter away precious time like somnambulists. Ideally, because of the awareness that mindfulness brings, we are less apt to waste time in frenetic and meaningless activity. According to Jon Kabat-Zinn, “our ordinary waking state of consciousness is . . . severely limited and limiting, resembling in many respects an extended dream rather than wakefulness.”¹⁰ According to Kabat-Zinn, mindfulness “has to do with examining who we are, with questioning our view of the world and our place in it, and with cultivating some appreciation for the fullness of each moment we are alive. Most of all, it has to do with being in touch.”¹¹ The practice of mindfulness can help bring clarity of mind, relieve stress, and encourage feelings of compassion and empathy toward others.

¶14 Although mindfulness is very often associated with Buddhism, many of the world’s great religious, philosophical, and psychological traditions have a mystical

visited a Zen monk to ask him about his teachings. The monk poured the professor some tea and kept pouring even as the cup overflowed with the hot liquid and the professor expressed dismay. Finally, the professor begged the monk to stop pouring, telling the monk that the cup was too full. The monk explained, “A mind that is already full cannot take in anything new. Like this cup, you are full of opinions and preconceptions.” To be enlightened, the professor had to first empty his cup. See MARK EPSTEIN, *GOING TO PIECES WITHOUT FALLING APART: A BUDDHIST PERSPECTIVE ON WHOLENESS*, at xv (1998) (quoting PAUL REPS, *ZEN FLESH, ZEN BONES* 5 (1961)).

7. Many years ago, I was introduced to mindfulness and meditation practice at what was then Bingham, Dana & Gould, a large Boston law firm where I was the law library director. Justin Morreale, a productive and busy business partner, gave me a copy of a book that introduced me to meditation: DAVID HARP & NINA S. FELDMAN, *THE THREE MINUTE MEDITATOR: 30 SIMPLE WAYS TO UNWIND YOUR MIND ANYWHERE, ANYTIME!* (1990).

8. Leonard L. Riskin, *Awareness and the Legal Profession: An Introduction to the Mindful Lawyer*, 61 J. LEGAL EDUC. 634, 635 (2012).

9. The term “monkey mind” is often used in mindfulness literature to describe the wandering, feral, or unruly mind. See, e.g., Leonard L. Riskin, *Further Beyond Reason: Emotions, the Core Concerns, and Mindfulness in Negotiation*, 10 NEV. L.J. 289, 324 (2010) (Annual Saltman Lecture).

10. In this section, Kabat-Zinn explains the Buddhist perspective regarding the conventional state of the human mind. He also reminds the reader that yogis and Zen practitioners have “systematically” been exploring mindfulness for thousands of years. Kabat-Zinn writes that mindfulness practice is “beneficial in the West to counterbalance our cultural orientation toward controlling and subduing nature rather than honoring that we are an intimate part of it.” JON KABAT-ZINN, *WHEREVER YOU GO, THERE YOU ARE: MINDFULNESS MEDITATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE* 3 (1994).

11. *Id.*

or contemplative set of practices. Embarking on a mindfulness practice does not require adopting a set of beliefs from any particular religious or philosophical tradition. It does not matter what one's denominational affiliations or spiritual observances are, as "mindfulness is a non-sectarian practice and has little to do with belief, although it has much more to do with how we relate to our beliefs."¹² In fact, mindfulness training has entered the mainstream. Many businesses have instituted mindfulness training programs.¹³ Mindfulness was featured as a *Time* magazine cover story¹⁴ and featured in a 2014 Anderson Cooper segment on *60 Minutes*.¹⁵

¶15 Another useful way to think about mindfulness is as "embracing the process,"¹⁶ which means choosing to focus on the here and now, "this very minute," rather than on long-term goals or future events. How many of us plan to do something *only after* we do something else: for instance, after we lose twenty-five pounds, finish a degree, or complete a semester of teaching responsibilities? If we were to instead embrace the process of whatever we are doing, we would be truly living in the moment and fashioning a life that is lived and livable in the here and now. We would not ruminate about past failures or constantly project thoughts into the future. After all, the present moment is really all we have. We might be less apt to take on more than we can handle and less prone to procrastination because mindfulness can help us focus on what we are doing now. In short, a mindful state allows us to trust that the future will take care of itself if we live consciously in the present.¹⁷

Some of the Benefits of Mindfulness: Facing the Rigors of the Daily Grind

¶16 For most of us, a typical workday and commute has about 600 minutes in it. If we add food shopping and meal preparation, household chores such as laundry and general cleanup, and some type of physical exercise, a normal nonweekend day has about 720 minutes in it. Using just a tiny portion of those daily minutes to

12. MUESSE, *supra* note 3, at 30.

13. A good example of a business that has embraced mindfulness training for stress reduction, higher performance, and emotional intelligence enhancement is Google. The popular course that was developed by Chade-Meng Tan is entitled *Search Inside Yourself*. Tan's book describing the Google experience with mindfulness and emotional intelligence training is very readable and engaging, with forewords by Jon Kabat-Zinn and Daniel Goleman. See generally CHADE-MENG TAN, *SEARCH INSIDE YOURSELF: THE UNEXPECTED PATH TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS, HAPPINESS (AND WORLD PEACE)* (2012).

14. Kate Pickert, *The Mindful Revolution: The Science of Finding Focus in a Stressed-out, Multitasking Culture*, TIME, Feb. 3, 2014, at 40.

15. Anderson Cooper, *60 Minutes: Mindfulness* (CBS television broadcast Dec. 14, 2014).

16. This notion about embracing the process is from a conversation that I had with Nancy Maddox, R.D. She was explaining the content of a short article that examines why people such as Warren Buffet and first-class athletes are successful in their pursuits. See Colin Robertson, *Why Wildly Successful People Choose to Embrace Boredom*, WILLPOWERED (Feb. 12, 2015), <http://www.willpowered.com/learn/embrace-boredom>.

17. In a webinar, Dr. Kristin Rousch points out that the present *is* the current moment; it is not thought *about* the current moment. The present is comprised of the sensory information received via the five senses and the central nervous system. She also quips, "the present is the space between stimulus and response." KRISTIN L. ROUSCH, EVERYBODY PRESENT: MINDFULNESS IN THE CLASSROOM (Magna Publications Online Seminar CD-ROM, Apr. 2015).

develop a mindfulness habit could yield amazing benefits for practitioners. That's right: meditating for just a few minutes a day will potentially lessen anxiety, promote cardiovascular health, boost concentration, sharpen mental acuity, and stimulate creativity.¹⁸

¶17 And who among us believes we wouldn't benefit from reduced anxiety, improved concentration, and higher levels of creativity, especially in facing our many daily professional challenges? The pace of our days is often dizzying at best and overwhelming at worst. Requests for our expertise can be substantial and incessant. In addition to providing reference and research advice, explaining the fine points of various technologies, and delivering a host of bibliographic services, many of us teach, give presentations, write, and have our own work to contend with—work that has deadlines and deliverables, just like that of our users. We law librarians wear many hats¹⁹ and function as managers, teachers, consultants, researchers, advisers, and information providers (sometimes all in the space of one day).

¶18 Because we dedicate our professional lives to supporting the research needs of our library users—most of whom face their own pressures—responding to requests with focus and calm is paramount. All users—be they faculty, judges, law professionals, or law students—are better served when we maintain our composure no matter what the circumstances. Serenity not only inspires confidence, it also allows us to listen more effectively. We think more clearly and our cognitive skills work better when we control an unthinking response to a stimulus.²⁰ Moreover, mindfulness seems to cultivate emotional intelligence and “balance, kindness, and compassion.”²¹ As professionals who are called on to perform a dizzying array of services in the course of a day's work, we must avoid the inclination to respond reflexively, without adequate reflection.²² It is important that we find ways—both the time and space—in daily routines for professional praxis²³ to cope with demanding jobs while staying mentally and physically healthy.

¶19 One of the ways that mindfulness helps us to break out of the cycle of spirit-deadening routine that can lead to mindlessness is by learning to use the impetus of intentionality. To successfully develop the characteristics gleaned from living mind-

18. *Id.*

19. There are some excellent articles on using mindfulness in the delivery of library services. See, e.g., Kristen Mastel & Genevieve Innes, *Insights and Practical Tips on Practicing Mindful Librarianship to Manage Stress*, 23 *LIBRES* 1 (2013) (using mindfulness to handle work-related stress and enhance the quality of library services); see also Louisa Toot, *Zen and the Art of Dealing with the Difficult Patron*, 75-76 *REFERENCE LIBR.* 217 (2002) (showing how mindfulness can aid reference librarians, specifically dealing with challenging users). Bringing intentionality to reference-desk work is also addressed. See Dale Vidmar, *Intentional Reference: A Mindful Approach to Fielding Questions Beyond the Desk*, 16 *OLA Q.* 30 (2010).

20. For a thoughtful explanation of this phenomenon, known as premature cognitive commitment, see ELLEN J. LANGER, *MINDFULNESS* 22 (1989).

21. ROUSCH, *supra* note 17.

22. Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator and philosopher, described a symbiosis of action and reflection that he called praxis. See PAULO FREIRE, *PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED* 68-69 (rev. ed. 1993).

23. Praxis can also be thought of as a type of critical reflection. Stephen Brookfield, another author generally associated with the theoretical benefits of critical reflection in teaching, especially in adult education, has opined that action and reflection are in a state of constant and productive tension known as praxis. See STEPHEN D. BROOKFIELD, *BECOMING A CRITICALLY REFLECTIVE TEACHER* 209 (1995).

fully, we must seek to harness the transformative power of mindfulness by cultivating the motivation or energy necessary to do so.²⁴ Such a commitment requires a certain amount of self-discipline, self-love, and a willingness to be silent.²⁵

¶20 Regular meditation helps us to develop mindfulness and to break out of our customary forms of action and reaction. It teaches us to leave space between our experiences and responses so that we can choose how to respond instead of responding without thought. With time, the repetition and the familiarity of calmly concentrating the mind during a meditation session will help to train the mind to focus in all situations, not only while meditating. Meditation is truly like regular exercise to build muscle and strength—it conditions and disciplines the mind. To be serious about developing a mindfulness practice, law librarians need to make room for reflection and to persevere in daily meditation, even when results are not readily apparent. The motivation to keep going, even when the benefits are not instantaneous, is known as intentionality.²⁶ Kabat-Zinn warns that some people will resist the idea of setting aside time for themselves, but he advises that taking “time to ‘tune’ your own instrument and restore your energy reserves can hardly be considered selfish. Intelligent would be a more apt description.”²⁷

Your meditation practice will only be as powerful as your motivation to dispel the fog of your own lack of awareness. When you are in this fog, it is hard to remember the importance of practicing mindfulness, and it is hard to locate your attitudinal bearings. Confusion, fatigue, depression, and anxiety are powerful mental states that can undermine your best intentions to practice regularly. . . . That is when your commitment to practice is of greatest value. It keeps you engaged in the process. The momentum of regular practice helps to maintain a certain mental stability and resilience even as you feel under tremendous pressure to get things done, or find yourself going through states of turmoil, confusion, lack of clarity, and procrastination. These are actually some of the most fruitful times to practice—not to get rid of your confusion or your feeling but just to be conscious and accepting of them.²⁸

¶21 The excitement, the intellectual challenges, and the service component of our jobs are the elements that drew many of us to this profession. These characteristics also produce the job’s shadow side—its stresses and burnouts. It is crucial that we have a ready means of confronting the rigors of our chosen career and be able to sustain the joy that drew us to law librarianship. Endeavoring to become more mindful and adopting a more insightful way of proceeding in our professional milieus will help us to be more reflective practitioners and thus better accomplish our specialized obligations as law librarians in whatever parent organi-

24. Qualities often attributed to mindfulness include having a beginner’s mind, awareness, a spirit of nonjudgment, compassion, and patience. To have more acceptance, to be nongrasping, to have trust, and to be able to let go are all attitudes that mindfulness engenders.

25. In describing the “essence of stillness” needed for mindfulness, Thich Nhat Hanh poetically writes, “Our true mind is silent of all words and all notions, and is so much vaster than limited mental constructs. Only when the ocean is calm can we see the moon reflected in it.” See THICH NHAT HANH, SILENCE: THE POWER OF QUIET IN A WORLD FULL OF NOISE 76–77 (2015).

26. See JON KABAT-ZINN, FULL CATASTROPHE LIVING: USING THE WISDOM OF YOUR BODY AND MIND TO FACE STRESS, PAIN, AND ILLNESS 31–38 (rev. ed. 2013).

27. *Id.* at 35.

28. *Id.* at 37.

zation we work. Although it can be exhilarating to be a whirling dervish of activity, with multiple assignments, interesting requests coming in, and our users clamoring for more, we need time to reflect and renew in order to flourish as law librarians. We cannot sustain our performance day after day without trained and focused minds. A mindfulness practice is one avenue toward achieving that clarity.

More on the Benefits of Mindfulness: The Physiological Benefits

¶22 In addition to the professionally transformative benefits of mindfulness, it is also medically and psychologically beneficial, according to a number of encouraging studies.²⁹

¶23 As a species, we have an inbred tendency to leap to judgment. Our cave-dwelling ancestors needed this reactive perception of reality, what we have commonly called the fight or flight response, just to stay alive under the threat of dangerous predators.³⁰ Today, when we perceive a hazard or a disagreeable experience, such as gridlocked traffic, a nasty encounter in our professional or personal lives, or an unremitting deadline, the hormones that triggered the fight or flight response in our ancestors are released to warn the amygdala that danger is perceived. Since we, as thinking humans, can replay these unpleasant incidents in our heads, it is almost impossible to prevent this automatic hormonal response cycle without an intentional ameliorating intervention, such as meditation, for stress relief.

¶24 What our ancestors most likely experienced as an episodic stress response has become a normal state of affairs in a law librarian's modern, high-tech life. Thus, depression, anxiety, chronic headaches, backaches, arrhythmias, sleep and eating disorders, substance abuse, and digestive disorders have become the new normal. In other words, a reaction that was designed to be episodic in the days of our primitive ancestors is now omnipresent. As a result, many of us live with a constant state of cortisol overload in our bodies.

¶25 Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is a type of meditation that Jon Kabat-Zinn and others developed at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.³¹ Research studies have shown that MBSR can lower levels of stress

29. See, e.g., Carl Fulwiler et al., *Mindfulness-Based Interventions for Weight Loss and CVD Risk Management*, CURRENT CARDIOVASCULAR RISK REP., Oct. 2015, at 1 (discussing the use of mindfulness as an intervention with patients suffering from obesity and cardiovascular disease); Chidi N. Obasi et al., *Advantage of Meditation Over Exercise in Reducing Cold and Flu Illness Is Related to Improved Function and Quality of Life*, 7 INFLUENZA & OTHER RESPIRATORY VIRUSES 938 (2013) (discussing efficacy of training in meditation in reducing severity of respiratory illness).

30. Liz Mailliet, the owner of Still Sense, a company that offers workplace mindfulness training for legal and business professionals, described this phenomenon in her keynote presentation at the Law Librarians of New England (LLNE) Spring Conference. Liz Mailliet, *Mindfulness and Librarians: Bridge Over Troubled Water*, Keynote Address at the Law Librarians of New England Spring Conference (Apr. 24, 2015), description available at *Mindfulness and Librarians: Bridge Over Troubled Waters*, LAW LIBRARIANS OF NEW ENG., <http://llne.org/mindfulness-and-librarians-bridge-over-troubled-waters-law-librarians-of-new-england-llne-spring-2015-conference-2/> (last visited Nov. 12, 2015).

31. Kabat-Zinn and others offer an eight-week course entitled the "Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Program." The MBSR website states, "Since its inception, more than 20,000 people have completed our eight-week Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Program and learned how to use their innate resources and abilities to respond more effectively to stress, pain, and illness." *History of MBSR*, UMASS MED. SCH. CTR. FOR MINDFULNESS IN MED., HEALTH CARE & SOC'Y, <http://www.umassmed.edu/cfm/stress-reduction/history-of-mbsr/> (last visited Aug. 23, 2015).

hormones.³² Meditation can alleviate chronic conditions such as hypertension and help to boost the immune system. Meditation has been known to relieve depression, anxiety, ADHD, and the cognitive decline associated with aging. Meditation has also been shown to bring relief to sufferers of ailments such as asthma, psoriasis, and irritable bowel syndrome.³³ MBSR is used to alleviate pain and to help those suffering from the symptoms of debilitating or chronic illnesses.³⁴

¶26 Besides the efficacious effects of MBSR in alleviating various ailments and diminishing pain, it has also been shown to have favorable effects on the physiological construction of the brain itself. For example, one of the most well-known studies³⁵ was completed by a team of Harvard researchers at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston. According to the researchers, the study's results suggest that after only eight weeks, participants in MBSR had structural changes in the gray matter concentrations of the parts of their brain regions associated with learning, memory, self-regulation and perception, and the regulation of emotions. The changes observed via magnetic resonance imaging included a thickening of the cortical gray matter that governs processing and perception. This thickening of the gray matter of the cortex indicates improved functioning in the capacities controlled by this region of the brain.³⁶ Thus, meditation can literally strengthen the brain's architecture!³⁷

¶27 We have looked at some of the benefits of mindfulness for law librarians and for the brain's physiology. At this point, let's look at some simple methods of meditation, which are foundational to a mindfulness practice.

Getting Started with Meditation

¶28 One of the most uncomplicated forms of meditation is to simply pay attention to the breath. This is known as breath awareness, and it is a basic way to begin a meditation practice:

32. See, e.g., Paul Grossman, et al., *Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Health Benefits: A Meta-Analysis*, 57 J PSYCHOSOMATIC RES. 35 (2004) (identifying a number of empirical studies on the use of MBSR and its effectiveness in alleviating symptoms of clinical and non-clinical stress based health problems).

33. Meditation has been shown to mitigate many of the health issues listed as well as to improve focus and concentration, diminish loneliness, and increase feelings of empathy toward others. See DAN HARRIS, 10% HAPPIER: HOW I TAMED THE VOICE IN MY HEAD, REDUCED STRESS WITHOUT LOSING MY EDGE, AND FOUND SELF-HELP THAT ACTUALLY WORKS—A TRUE STORY 168 (2014).

34. Dan Harris calls MBSR a “secularized meditation” course. *Id.* For an article describing some of the research on the benefits of incorporating mindfulness into medical and psychological interventions, see Jon Kabat-Zinn, *Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Context: Past, Present, and Future*, 10 CLINICAL PSYCHOL.: SCI. & PRAC. 144 (2003).

35. There are a number of articles written about this magnetic resonance imaging study. See, e.g., B.K. Holzel et al., *Mindfulness Practice Leads to Increases in Regional Brain Gray Matter Density*, 191 PSYCHIATRY RES.: NEUROIMAGING 36 (2011).

36. “Demonstrating morphological increases in regions associated with mental health, the data presented here suggest a plausible underlying neural mechanism, namely, that such increases represent enduring changes in brain structure that could support improved mental functioning.” *Id.* at 42.

37. For a Ted-X talk by the neuroscientist Dr. Sara Lazar, one of the researchers and authors of the MRI brain study above, see *How Meditation Can Reshape Our Brains: Sara Lazar at TEDx Cambridge 2011*, YOUTUBE (Jan. 23, 2012), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8rRzTtP7Tc>.

1. Sit cross-legged on the floor with a pillow or in a chair with your hands on your lap. Make sure that you are comfortable—neither too rigid nor too relaxed.
2. Close your eyes and focus on your breath.
3. Follow the in and out movement of your breath. If you like, count to ten and repeat to create rhythmic cycles of breathing.
4. If you find that your thoughts begin to wander, gently pull your attention back to focus on the breath—without judgment. Continue your count for whatever predetermined length of time you plan to meditate.
5. When you are ready, open your eyes.³⁸

¶29 Besides breath awareness, there are more advanced meditation practices. One of these is known as a body scan meditation. A body scan is usually a guided meditation, and it can be done in a group setting. The person meditating focuses on his or her breath while the leader guides the group through a systematic “scan” of the body’s parts, usually starting with the feet and moving upward. Breath awareness, body scans,³⁹ meditating on a passage from an inspirational book or poem, using a mantra,⁴⁰ and meditating on a piece of art are all ways to meditate while sitting still. Some people prefer meditating while in motion; one very popular form is known as walking meditation.⁴¹ Walking meditation is ideal for those who spend a good part of their day at a desk. Thus, it might be just the form of meditation that would be very well suited to law librarians. Walking meditation can be done anywhere—outside or inside. A meditator can practice walking meditation while barefoot or wearing shoes. Some walking meditators prefer to walk in nature, but others use hallways, city streets, or a labyrinth.⁴² Whatever locus one chooses, it is important to select a place where it is safe to walk and meditate at the same time.

38. There are a number of meditation timers, complete with Tibetan bells, gongs, or soft music to help a meditator commence and end a meditation session. See, for example, the online meditation timer at Insight Meditation’s website, YOUR MEDITATION TIMER, <http://www.yourmeditationtimer.com/timer> (last visited Aug. 23, 2015).

39. Breath awareness meditations, body scans, and walking meditation are described in the various mindfulness titles. Depending on your bibliographic tastes, there really is something for everyone in the canon of mindfulness literature. There are specialized titles, mass market titles, and the titles that have become the veritable classics in the field. See, e.g., SCOTT L. ROGERS, *MINDFULNESS FOR LAW STUDENTS: USING THE POWER OF MINDFUL AWARENESS TO ACHIEVE BALANCE AND SUCCESS IN LAW SCHOOL* (2009); see also HARRIS, *supra* note 33; NHAT HANH, *supra* note 4. For a bibliography on mindfulness literature, the LibGuide created by lawyer/librarian Jon Cavicchi is an excellent place to start. See Jon Cavicchi, *Mindfulness: Legal Education and Practice*, UNHLAW: LIBGUIDES (Apr. 23, 2015), <http://law.unh.libguides.com/content.php?pid=632009>.

40. If you are interested in using a mantra or meditating on a sacred or inspirational passage, I recommend the work of Eknath Easwaran (1910–1999). See EKNATH EASWARAN, *PASSAGE MEDITATION: BRINGING THE DEEP WISDOM OF THE HEART INTO DAILY LIFE* (3d ed. 2008); EKNATH EASWARAN, *STRENGTH IN THE STORM: TRANSFORM STRESS, LIVE IN BALANCE & FIND PEACE OF MIND* (2013); EKNATH EASWARAN, *TAKE YOUR TIME: THE WISDOM OF SLOWING DOWN* (2d ed. 2006).

41. For a title that focuses on walking meditation, see THICH NHAT HANH, *GUIDE TO WALKING MEDITATION* (2005).

42. For an interesting article on the use of a labyrinth in an academic library, see Ian Chant, *Library Labyrinths Pave the Path to Relaxation*, *LIBR. J.*, June 2014, at 16.

¶30 The following is a walking meditation that uses a small piece of territory (about ten to twelve feet):

1. With eyes open and focused on a distant neutral point, slowly begin walking.
2. Put each foot down with deliberation (heel, ball of the foot, toes, lift up). Pay attention to the rhythm of how you place your feet down and then lift them up.
3. If your mind wanders, gently bring your thoughts back to the rhythm of your feet, slowly walking and focusing on the distant point.
4. When you are ready, stop and take a deep, cleansing breath.

¶31 Experiment with some of the various methods of meditating; everyone has different preferences and comfort levels. A meditation practice that works for one person might not work as well for another. The important takeaway for beginning meditators is to aim for consistency in a mindfulness practice. In other words, try to meditate, even for a few minutes,⁴³ on a daily basis.

Letting Go, Listening, and Wishing Others Well

¶32 Law librarianship is a service profession that entails dealing with people—judges, practicing attorneys, scholars, faculty, students, and the public—on a daily basis. Being mindful helps us to listen to our colleagues and users and to be attentive to them. Having a job that includes lots of personal interactions can be both exhilarating and spirit-depleting. Although most of us truly enjoy the synergy of working with others, we sometimes lose control of our schedules because of a client’s emergency, or we might have a less than positive exchange with a library user. Mindfulness offers an antidote to some of the aftershocks and ruminations that result from such negative experiences or encounters. The mindfulness tenet of letting go is an especially useful go-to principle when facing interpersonal challenges.

¶33 Mindfulness enables us to see that we need to relinquish the fiction that we are “in control” of what happens in life. “Mindfulness teaches this fact not as an abstract idea to which we give assent, but as a concrete and clearly demonstrated

43. Although there is no magic number for the ideal time to spend meditating, most of the literature advises to start with sessions of anywhere from five to twenty minutes. The time variable depends on the amount of time one has and the type of meditation being practiced. For example, Dan Harris recommends starting with five-minute basic breathing awareness sessions and increasing “organically,” or not. See HARRIS, *supra* note 33, at 228. Professor Scott Rogers gives instructions for a ten-minute body scan meditation. See ROGERS, *supra* note 39, at 102. Of course, some experienced meditators practice for thirty minutes or more at each session. Again, a regular practice, not length of time, is key to initiating a satisfying and beneficial mindfulness practice. Jon Kabat-Zinn offers some critical advice to nascent meditators:

To sustain your commitment and keep your meditation practice fresh over a period of months, years, and decades, it is important to develop your own personal vision that can guide you in your efforts and remind you at critical times of the value of charting such an unusual course in your life. . . . In part, that vision will be molded by your unique life circumstances, by your personal beliefs and values. Another part will develop from your experience of the meditation practice itself, from letting everything become your teacher: your body, your attitudes, your mind, your pain, your joy, other people, your mistakes, your failures, your successes, nature—in short, all your moments.

KABAT-ZINN, *supra* note 26, at 169–70.

reality.”⁴⁴ The concept of being awake to what is real, and not allowing the ego to interfere and color our misguided perceptions of reality, is well described in the phrase, “Thought and intellect are good servants—great tools, but poor masters.”⁴⁵ With mindfulness, we can learn to view unpleasant experiences as teachable moments. Reflections on difficult interactions with users and colleagues are opportunities to depersonalize a situation, remove any ego-driven reactions, and to develop greater compassion for others.

¶34 Mindfulness, then, is the foundation of developing a deeper understanding of others as well as ourselves. This capacity to be aware and to have empathy for others is an innate characteristic of sentient beings and should be a job requirement for anyone who deals with clients or users, as law librarians do, on a daily basis. Also, because our jobs do involve a fair amount of task juggling, we might find that in our busyness, we are habitually not listening carefully enough, both to each other when we are in meetings and when we are interacting with a user. Meditation is a direct means of becoming awakened and seeing with clarity, that is, “seeing things as they are.”⁴⁶ Through the discipline of meditation, we can tame the overactive “monkey mind” and develop greater acceptance of things as they are—not as we wish them to be. By slowing down and becoming more focused on what is going on in the present moment, we allow ourselves to tune in to what we are doing when we are actually doing it. This sounds so simple and effortless to accomplish. However, I would ask the reader to take note of the attendees at the next conference or workshop you attend. Without judging the audience’s behavior, please notice the number of participants that are checking cell phones, surfing the web, and generally tuning out a colleague’s presentation. When we concentrate fully in the moment, and turn away from distractions, we are better able to listen and really hear our clients and coworkers. With awareness in the present, we can focus on others and not on the ego’s wants and needs.

¶35 Meditation is the path toward developing mindfulness, and it is a remedy for overcoming the clouded, narcissistic self-absorption that the ego promotes. It is the “intentional cultivation of mindful awareness and pure attention—an alert, wakeful presence of mind.”⁴⁷

¶36 Thus, in addition to being a stress reliever and a path toward greater personal equanimity, mindfulness helps us to relinquish our preconceived notions and empowers us to be less judgmental and more empathic human beings.

¶37 A vital part of maintaining composure is the ability to let go of the illusion of control. When we see with a clearer mind, we are able to regulate our passions more skillfully. A dedicated mindfulness practice can help temper anger effectively and support the desire to simplify our needs and to want less.⁴⁸ In other words, mindfulness helps us to let go of ego, resentment, and judgment—all emotions that we, as professionals who deal with people on a daily basis, are wont to experience

44. MUESSE, *supra* note 3, at 32.

45. LAMA SURYA DAS, *AWAKENING THE BUDDHA WITHIN* 261 (1997).

46. Lama Surya Das writes that we meditate to become enlightened. “Cultivating present, moment-by-moment awareness helps you come home to who you are and always have been.” *Id.* at 260.

47. *Id.*

48. MUESSE, *supra* note 3, at 33.

regularly. Letting go is not synonymous with suppressing emotions, however. Rather, when we are mindful, we learn to recognize thoughts and emotions, acknowledge them, and then let them go. An honest mindfulness practitioner does not hide or deny the fact that he or she experienced an emotion. Thich Nhat Hanh explains, “mindfulness is touching, recognizing, greeting, and embracing. It does not fight or suppress.”⁴⁹

¶38 Wishing others good fortune is another hallmark of mindfulness. Just as we learn to be more patient and kind with ourselves as a result of a mindfulness practice, we learn to extend that generosity of spirit to others as we evolve in our practice. One of the most eloquent and simple explanations of this concept begins by explaining the impermanent nature of our existence and the importance of cultivating feelings of loving-kindness toward others.

¶39 Unfortunately, everything we are hoping to have and keep is impermanent. It is not possible to hang on to things. At the same time, it is not possible to avoid unfortunate circumstances. Fortunes are won and lost. Possessions come and go. People get sick and die. All of this is unavoidable. But we think if we do everything correctly, we will acquire and hang on to happiness. This is a myth, and as a result we are disappointed. We live in constant fear—fear of not getting what we want, fear of losing what we have, fear of getting what we do not want, and fear of not being able to escape from what we do not want.

¶40 With loving-kindness, the joy and happiness we aspire for others to have is the joy of freedom from hopes and fears, the joy of freedom from attachments and aversions.⁵⁰

¶41 Many law librarians are perfectionists. We crave order and answers. As dedicated professionals, we try very hard to organize our collections, our staffs, and our lives. We want to serve our users, and we try to keep everyone happy. But these goals are not always possible to achieve. The responsibility for order, for answers, for keeping everyone happy does not rest solely on our singular efforts. Extending open-heartedness to others is part of what is known as liberating the self from narrow views. As we develop in our practice of mindfulness, we naturally come to appreciate that the lives and realities of others are just as precious as our own.⁵¹ Mindfulness encourages us to see beyond ourselves. It helps us to break down barriers between the notion of self and others, and it promotes interconnectedness.

¶42 In addition to meditating for peace, serenity, and insight, there is another meditation practice to wish others to be well. This is known as metta, or the practice of loving-kindness. Metta is a limitless practice; it sets no boundaries around whom we should include in our wishes for well-being and happiness. Metta is a sitting meditation that uses visualization to send loving-kindness out to others. A metta of loving-kindness begins with wishing happiness for oneself; it then wishes happiness for those one loves or holds dear.⁵² It next moves on to wish friends

49. THICH NHAT HANH, *ANGER: WISDOM FOR COOLING THE FLAMES* 119 (2001).

50. DEBORAH CALLOWAY, *BECOMING A JOYFUL LAWYER: CONTEMPLATIVE TRAINING IN NON-DISTRACTION, EMPATHY, AND EMOTIONAL WISDOM* 204 (2012). Professor Calloway writes, “We can express loving-kindness by being gentle, kind, and open. We can engage in gentle looks, gentle words, and gentle actions. We can avoid harsh criticism.” *Id.* at 205.

51. NHAT HANH, *supra* note 4, at 51.

52. Sometimes this group of persons is described as benefactors, such as relatives, mentors, or friends. See HARRIS, *supra* note 33, at 235.

loving-kindness and then neutral persons (such as salespeople or clerks with whom we have fleeting relationships). The meditator then wishes happiness for those with whom he or she has difficult relationships; and finally, the metta closes with compassion for all sentient beings.⁵³

¶43 While the words of a metta will reflect an individual's specific wishes, it should include the intention for happiness, health, safety, and peace for others. Mettas are not feelings; they are aspirations. Practicing loving-kindness does not change one's feelings instantaneously. The practice may take some time to move a meditator's feelings—both about self and others. However, by spending time and energy cultivating loving-kindness, by visualizing a real person during the metta, the expression of goodwill might eventually change a practitioner's feelings toward a particular person. The following is an example for a metta of loving-kindness:

Metta of Loving-kindness

May I be happy and healthy. May I live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (parents) be happy and healthy. May they live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (spouse or life companion) be happy and healthy. May s/he live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (children) be happy and healthy. May they live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, cousins) be happy and healthy. May they live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (mentor, professor, or teacher) be happy and healthy. May s/he live without fear, in calm and peace.

May (my friends) be happy and healthy. May they live without fear, in calm and peace.

May my (Starbucks barista, supermarket cashier, or hairdresser) be happy and healthy. May s/he live without fear, in calm and peace.

May (an enemy or a difficult person) be happy and healthy. May s/he live without fear, in calm and peace.

May all sentient beings be happy and healthy. May they live without fear, in calm and peace.⁵⁴

53. As with all of the meditations mentioned in this piece, the reader will be able to find slight variations on a theme depending on the source consulted. For example, BuddhaNet, a website administered by an Australian Buddhist monk and volunteers, offers information about many Buddhist traditions. BuddhaNet describes the groups that a meditator sends a metta to as (1) oneself; (2) a respected, beloved person, such as a spiritual teacher; (3) a dearly beloved, which could be a close family member or friend; (4) a neutral person, somebody you know, but have no special feelings toward; and (5) a hostile person, someone you are currently having difficulty with. See Ven Pannyavaro, *Loving Kindness Meditation*, BUDDHANET, http://www.buddhanet.net/metta_in.htm (last visited Aug. 23, 2015).

54. This metta is modeled on one from Professor Mark Muesse's lectures on mindfulness. See MUESSE, *supra* note 3, at 273–75. For some thoughtful lessons on the loving-kindness practice and many other mindfulness practices, see the Insight Meditation Center's website, INSIGHT MEDITATION CENTER, <http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/> (last visited Aug. 23, 2015).

¶44 One of the most essential things to remember while practicing a loving-kindness meditation is to visualize a specific person or group of persons while repeating the metta. Do not forget the harried student, the less-than-polite lawyer, and the abrupt faculty member or colleague in your meditation of loving-kindness.

Conclusion: Back to the Case Study

¶45 Now, armed with an understanding about mindfulness, let's revisit Renata to see where mindfulness could help her. Without a doubt, Renata is in dire need of some inner calm and renewed energy to do her job. Although Renata enthusiastically chose law librarianship as a career, the relentless demands of the job have worn her down. She is in a very deep rut of perceiving only the negative aspects of her career.⁵⁵ Renata would be a prime candidate to initiate a mindfulness practice to help her recapture some of the zest and pleasure that she used to feel about her chosen profession.

¶46 First, Renata needs to practice a little self-love. She is bombarded with demands and needs a way to fortify herself to meet the quotidian stresses that she deals with on the job. From the facts of the case study, we see that Renata, like many law librarians, handles reference, she teaches, and she even arbitrates disagreements—this time between a student and the law library security guard. A daily dose of mindfulness would help her to maintain her equilibrium in juggling the multiplicity of tasks that she handles. A regular practice of morning meditation would most likely help Renata regain a healthy sense of self and immunize her to some of the hectic pace of her necessary multitasking. Renata would also benefit from letting go of her sense of control. Although she means well and sincerely wants to aid the 1L and the security guard in their disagreement, Renata is merely a bystander to the situation. She could listen to both parties if she has time and if she could do so without getting emotionally involved in the situation, but we see that by becoming embroiled in the disagreement, Renata cannot help herself from trying to make everyone happy and bring about a peaceful accord. Stepping back a little, Renata might see that this is a situation she cannot and should not handle. In addition to the time that Renata needs to recapture and devote to her teaching, and the clarity of mind that she needs on the reference desk, the dean of students might be the more appropriate arbiter in the first place. And once Renata lets go of the problem, the clarity of thinking that mindfulness brings might also help her realize that she cannot ruminate about her inability to have made everything perfect for the student and the guard. Disagreements happen; people do not behave the way we would like them to. We cannot control outcomes due to the actions of others, but mindfulness can help us control our reactions to conflicts and uncomfortable situations such as this.

55. For an interesting article on how bad events tend to overshadow the good events in our lives, see Roy F. Baumeister et al., *Bad Is Stronger Than Good*, 5 REV. GEN. PSYCHOL. 323 (2001).

¶47 Renata is an academic law librarian, but the day-to-day trials that she faces are very similar to the challenges that law librarians face in firms or in court and county libraries. For example, instead of being an arbiter between a student and a security guard in conflict, firm and court librarians are often called on to defuse confrontations between associates or library staff and legal staff. I am not encouraging an attitude of careless disregard, but we have to know what our boundaries should be. Mindlessness can lead to dysfunctional rescuing and the enabling of bad behavior. Mindfulness brings lucidity into the mix.

¶48 A walking meditation at noon or a break in the late afternoon would also be a salubrious way for Renata to take a breath as well as a short break from multi-tasking and other obligations. In addition to the positive effects of just having a brief respite from her work, Renata might also learn to slow down, reflect more, and not set herself up for taking on the frantic pace that so many of us adopt in law libraries without asking ourselves why we are rushing around. Mindfulness always brings us back to the essential rhythm of the breath; breathe in and breathe out, in and out.

¶49 Before Renata goes on reference or before she teaches a class, even a few moments spent setting an intention for the hours ahead will ameliorate her experiences—or her perception of the experiences—while she is on reference or teaching. Finally, Renata might consider an intention of goodwill for the users who have been less than polite or considerate of her by occasionally incorporating a metta of loving-kindness into her mindfulness practice. The loving-kindness meditation strengthens our compassion response for others by sending aspirations of goodwill their way. Even if it feels artificial in the beginning, practicing loving-kindness meditations will eventually affect our attitudes toward the more difficult people we interact with.

¶50 The people we encounter daily in our jobs may be mindlessly going about their lives and, in the process, not being as kind as they could be. By practicing mindfulness, we can stop passing judgment on them and instead develop and eventually model a calm, professional demeanor—instead of the reactive and harried state of mind that currently afflicts Renata.

¶51 Mindfulness is not magic. It will not cure the ills that exist in Renata's professional (or personal) life, but by slowing down, taking time to develop a mindfulness practice, and being more intentional, Renata will, with patience and in time, get her groove back because "[m]indfulness is the miracle by which we master and restore ourselves."⁵⁶

¶52 Eventually, once a few law librarians decide that a mindfulness practice is something that they would like to try, we can have mindfulness sessions and meditation breaks at regional and national law library meetings. I look forward to the day when we will be sharing stories about how we are using mindfulness in our workplaces to help each other, our colleagues, and our various library users to cope with their hurried lives and overwhelming responsibilities more gracefully. This is a call to let the conversation begin.

56. NHAT HANH, *supra* note 4, at 14.