

Meditation, Mindfulness and Visualization: Finding Peace while Living with Cancer

Peter Vajda, Ph.D., C.P.C.

I'm a cancer survivor, going on five years. In the early stages of my treatment, I spent most of my time in some state of panic, fear, worry, anxiety and catastrophizing. After each radiation session, I would leave the clinic, get into my car, just sit and sob deeply. There were times every twinge, every physiological sensation I felt was "not normal" would throw me into the depths of despair, creating "stories" that I was getting worse, not better.

Having been a student and practitioner of mindfulness, meditation and visualization for twenty-plus years, I was better able to cope, to be with my cancer, my emotions, my physical sensations and my knee-jerk reactivity. I felt more centered, peaceful, grounded, hopeful and resilient and was better able to move through my recovery process with greater ease, grace and peace of mind.



Mindfulness meditation, mindfulness practices and visualization are known to have a positive emotional and psychological impact on cancer survivors. Additional research has found that mindfulness meditation practices and visualization can positively affect the physical bodies of cancer survivors, with positive impacts extending down to the cellular level.

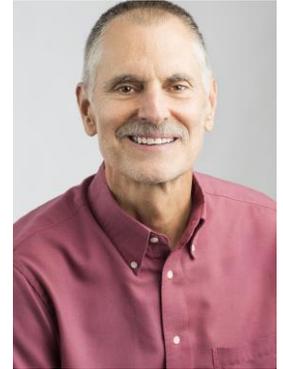
Practicing mindfulness meditative practices and visualization have caused positive cellular changes in breast cancer survivors, according to researchers (Alberta Health Services and the University of Calgary).

We know that psychosocial interventions like mindfulness meditation cannot only help one feel better mentally and emotionally, but now there is evidence that they can also influence key aspects of our biology (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23918953>)

This 90-minute presentation:

- Presents some of the research supporting the use of meditation, mindfulness and visualization practices as tools to be included in coping with, healing and surviving cancer.
- Defines, clarifies and provides examples of meditation, mindfulness and visualization.
- Explores (a) the brain science that explains how and why an individual gets and remains stuck in negative emotions (pain, anger, fear and worry...), negative thoughts and negative physiological states commonly associated with cancer and (b) the brain-based ways one can use to access positive states of happiness, joy, contentment, peace, love, hope, closeness and excitement that can make the cancer journey less frightening, and more tolerable and manageable – physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically.
- Describes the proven benefits of meditation, mindfulness and visualization.
- Engages participants in three different experiential and guided exercises: a mindfulness meditation, a mindfulness body-scanning practice, and a visualization practice intended to support one to heal whatever they feel needs healing in their life.





Peter Vajda, Ph.D., C.P.C. is an astute observer of the human condition and is a passionate pioneer in the field of mind-body-spirit integrative functioning and development. Dr. Vajda is dedicated to supporting individuals and groups to enhance their understanding of how to live consciously in, and from, the state of well-being that arises from the inside out which deeply supports an individual's ability to change, grow and evolve.

Peter brings a diversified base of professional expertise - as an entrepreneur, an educator, a facilitator, and a manager. He is sensitive to the diverse perspectives, demands and dynamics of relationships. Since 1981, he has facilitated individuals, couples, groups and organizations.

His life and the orientation he brings to coaching, consulting and facilitating are deeply influenced by his understanding of, and his experience in personal growth and spiritual realization that integrate the insights of contemporary psychology and psychodynamics.

For over twenty-five years, Peter's has been committed to his own personal and spiritual development. His experience in working with the "whole body" is based on his studies of psychodynamics, ego development, bioenergetics as well as energy healing. He has been a student and practitioner of meditation, mindfulness and visualization for over twenty years and incorporates these practices in his work with his clients.

Peter earned his Ph.D. in Education and Cognitive Psychology from Fordham University. His post-graduate work is in organizational behavior at NYU's Stern School of Business.

For the past 12 years he has written a weekly column – “*Food-For-Thought*” - focusing on moving through the obstacles and barriers that stand in the way of meaningful change. He writes a weekly column – *Know Thyself* - for the widely acclaimed international website – *Management Issues*.

Peter is a sought-after speaker, facilitator and coach.

His book– *Becoming a Better You, Who You Are vs. Who You Think You Are* – was published in October, 2013.