

Finding Meaning and Connection in a Complex World

Mindfulness and Contemplative Science at the UC Davis Center for Mind and Brain

Imagine...

Joy, a recent retiree, worries about her family history of dementia.

When her doctor tells her about a study showing that older people who meditate experience lower levels of cognitive decline, she begins exploring online mindfulness resources and gradually develops a daily contemplative practice. A year later, her memory is sharper, she's more alert behind the wheel, and she's taken up birding—an interest she never had the patience to pursue before now.

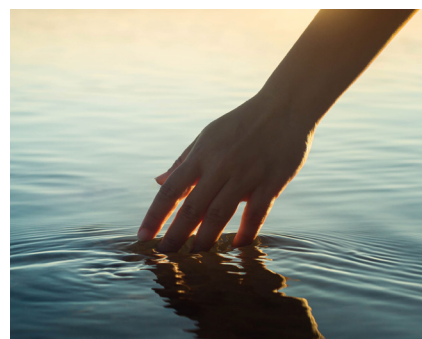
She shares her experience with a former coworker, Theo, a mid-career professional who is juggling the competing demands of work, parenthood and caring for an aging parent. The COVID-19 pandemic has only intensified these stressors for Theo and his family, so when Joy tells him about an upcoming meditation retreat, he decides to join her. The benefits are lasting and far-reaching—profoundly shifting how Theo thinks about the balance of his work, life and family commitments, and giving him tools to help his teens navigate adolescence with resilience.

Now more than ever, millions around the globe are searching for meaning and connection in an uncertain world.

For thousands of people, meditation and contemplative practice have transformative impacts on their mental, physical and holistic well-being, as well as on their empathy for others.

We are just beginning to unlock the mysteries of how mindfulness and compassion affect the mind, brain and body. UC Davis researchers from the **Center for Mind and Brain** are leading the way, shedding new light on how meditation and compassion-based practices can foster longer, healthier, more meaningful and more interconnected lives.

Your support and partnership will deepen this impact and broaden its reach—advancing mindfulness research with the potential to change how the world thinks about human well-being and the pathways of compassion that connect us all.



With training, ... we can strengthen our capacity to fully experience and enjoy the moments we are in, to embark on new adventures, and to navigate life's challenges more effectively.”

- Amishi Jha, Ph.D. '98, *Peak Mind*

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Meeting the Present Moment

From the COVID-19 pandemic to the climate crisis and racialized injustice, our world faces increasingly complex challenges. Meditation and contemplative training can transform how we respond to these stressors—helping us to reimagine what it means to live well and in harmony with others and our planet.

Led by Dr. Clifford Saron, a visionary team of researchers and students at the Center for Mind and Brain is pursuing some of the deepest inquiries ever conducted into how meditation and contemplative training enhance mental and physical health, while fostering greater compassion and interconnectedness. Over the past 15 years, their research has yielded powerful insights—revealing that meditation encourages empathetic responses, improves attention and cognition by changing the brain's signaling mechanisms, and strengthens DNA repair mechanisms at the cellular level.

Together with friends who share our vision, we will build even further on this work—sharing our insights to help more people find meaning, build resilience and connect more deeply with the world around us.

Support That Makes a Lasting Difference

Philanthropic support is key to expanding the reach of UC Davis' mindfulness research and realizing its transformative potential for individuals and communities everywhere. We invite you to partner with us in advancing this research by considering the following opportunities:

Endow the Shamatha Project to ensure long-term support for one of the world's most comprehensive longitudinal studies of the mental, physical and emotional effects of meditation

GIFTS STARTING AT \$10,000; GOAL: \$300,000

Fund postdoctoral fellowships that support exceptional scholars investigating how meditation impacts our responses to global challenges like pandemic-related stress, racialized injustice and economic insecurity

THREE TWO-YEAR FELLOWSHIPS, EACH STARTING AT \$80,000 PER YEAR

Provide programmatic, staff and student support for data collection, processing and archiving to ensure widespread access to mindfulness study insights, including those from current projects like the [Pathways Project](#) and the [Contemplative Coping with COVID](#) study

GIFTS STARTING AT \$20,000; GOAL: \$525,000

Create research funds that amplify the impact of current studies through conference presentations and publications while enabling scholars to pursue timely new projects

GIFTS OF ANY AMOUNT WELCOME; \$250,000 TO ENDOW A RESEARCH FUND

Fund research positions that allow us to recruit and retain scholars who will lead major initiatives that extend the reach of UC Davis research in contemplative science

GIFTS STARTING AT \$10,000
