



Parent & Faculty Education Conference
THRIVING IN A COMPETITIVE WORLD
Menlo School, February 7, 2015

Dr. Vickie Chang
Mindful Parenting: The Research and the Practice
Attendee Notes

This 45-minute workshop combined basic information on mindfulness with some active on the spot training and exercises.

Mindfulness:

Defined as: Paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment.

Throughout the day our body and mind constantly get disconnected – eg, we are in this room but thinking about something else. Mindfulness is about living our lives in a way that our bodies and minds are in the same place.

Dr. Chang reviewed some of the research which states that:

Adults who practice mindfulness are:

- Happier
- Less depressed, anxious and angry
- Are more compassionate to self and others
- Better regulate their emotions
- Have better physical health
- Feel more satisfied in relationships

For children, benefits of mindful breathing include:

- Improved focus
- Ability to get back on track faster
- Less anxious when taking tests
- Able to make better decisions when nervous or in conflict
- Increased ability to tolerate discomfort

With regards to parenting, mindfulness can help:

- Self-awareness
- The ability to pause between stimulus and reaction
- The ability to focus on whole picture, not just negative piece
- The time and space to decide how to cope/react

Mindfulness changes memory functioning, and reduces memory of negative stimulus, helps to override our natural instinct to focus on the negative.

Thinking keeps our emotions going. Emotions can be quick - what keeps us stuck is our *thinking*, focus on emotion and let it pass.

Formal and Informal Mindfulness:

- Breathe: take a breath through your nose then breathe out your mouth. Repeat five times- counting to 5 as you breath in, hold for 2 and count to 5 as you exhale. Stop throughout the day to take mindful breaths.

- Mindful eating
- Do one thing at a time
- Have a few minutes of silence at beginning or end of car ride
- Stop for 3 minutes and listen quietly to a piece of music

Mindful Parenting:

Beginners Mind: Imagine the world from your child's point of view, let go of your own, imagine how you appear and sound from your child's point of view.

Greatest gift you can give your child is yourself, grow in self-knowledge and take care of yourself.

Model what you want to see - slowing down, pausing, and doing one thing at a time.

Emotions and calmness are contagious.