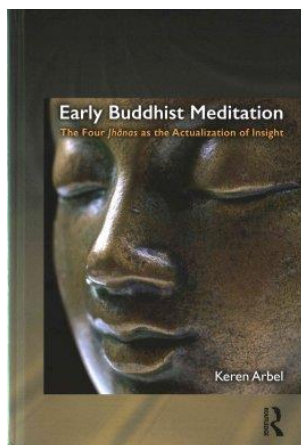


# Maps of Mindfulness and the Ethics they Entail

Nava Levit Binnun



# Keren Arbel



# Thank you

Keren Arbel



Asaf Ferderman



- Maty Libliech
- Thor Gonen
- Itamar Bashan
- Amos Avisar
- Many others who read and commented

<https://mindrxiv.org/fsz85>

# Outline of the talk

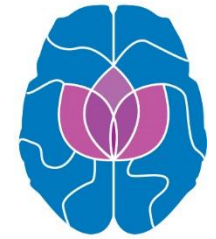
- Motivation for creating a Mindfulness Map
- Presenting the map
- Implications to the discussion of ethics

# Since 2009



Sagol Center  
for Brain and Mind

Muda Institute for Mindfulness,  
Science and Society







# Mindfulness in preschool





# Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)



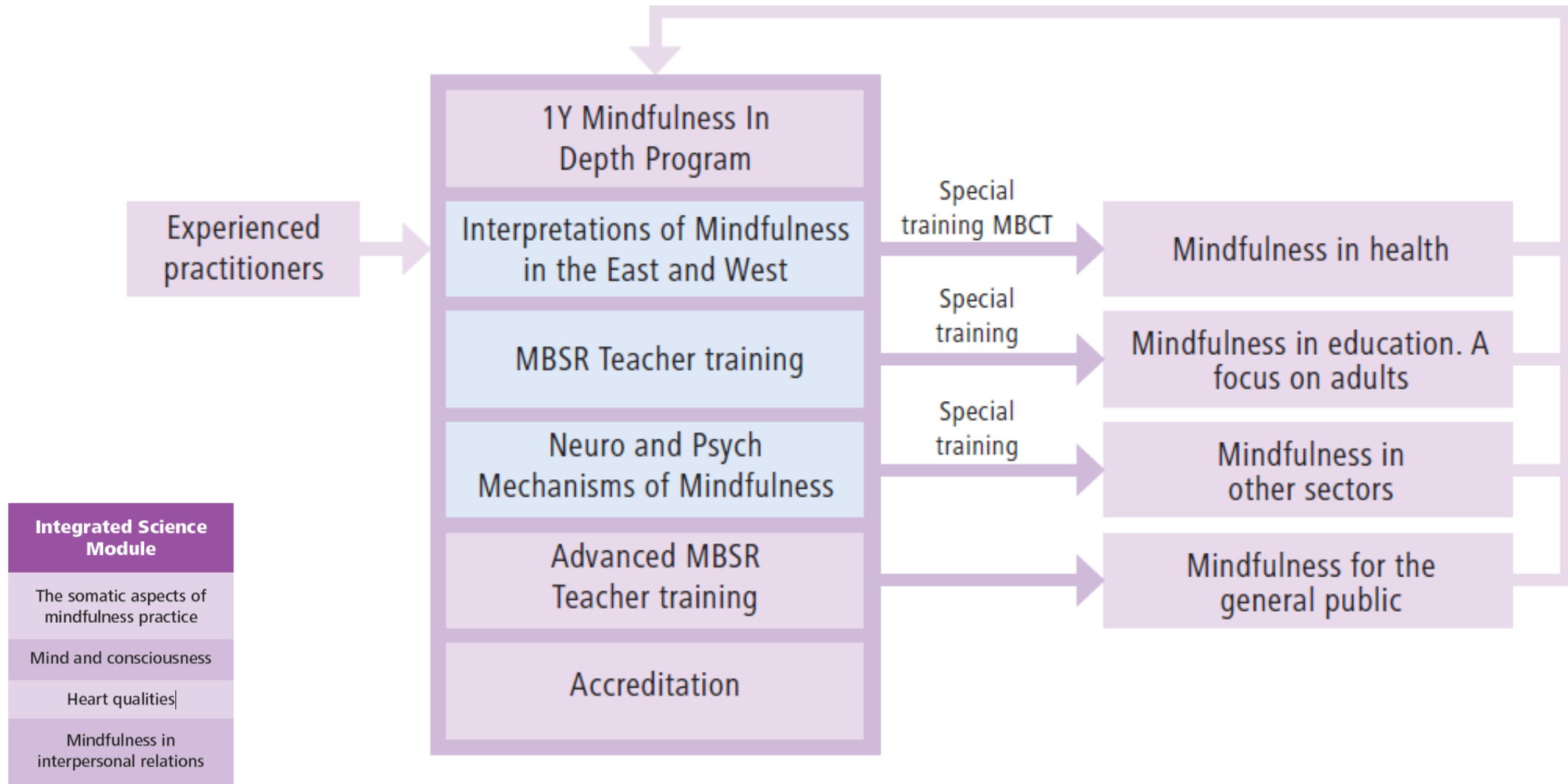
PRIFYSGOL  
**BANGOR**  
UNIVERSITY

# Hundreds of MBSR courses across Israel



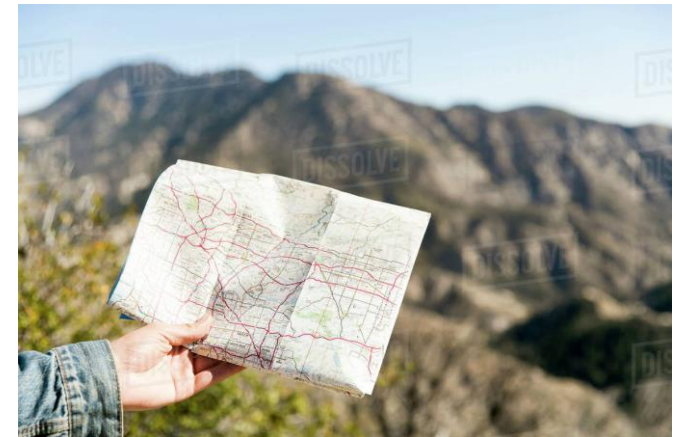
# A Mindfulness-based social change model

## Addressing diversity and multi-culturalism



# The need for a map

- Clarify what different “mindfulness teachers” are doing (and what they are not)
- Address the McMindfulness Criticism
- Clarify the mindfulness-teacher training path to teachers in-training.
- Clarify the mindfulness practice path to students





Greater  
Good  
Science  
Center

mindful  
taking time for what matters

*Practicing Mindfulness & Compassion*



## Four Aspects of M (Umbrella of Mindfulness)

- m1: Paying attention to experience in the present moment
- m2: Relating to experience without judgment or resistance (mindfulness = m1/m2)
- m3: Relating to the experiencer with the desire to alleviate suffering (compassion)
- m4: Understanding the nature of both experience and the experiencer (wisdom)

*Practicing Mindfulness & Compassion*



# The families of practice that we use under the umbrella term “Mindfulness”:

## **M1**

Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment

## **M2**

Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude

## **M3**

Cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits

## **M4**

Cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience

# The map itself is influenced by both Buddhist and scientific thinking

- focuses on the mental practices that are generally described as mindfulness in contemporary discourse
- It does not aim at describing the full traditional Buddhist landscape.
- It includes a wide range of practices under the term mindfulness that may not fully overlap with Buddhist definitions and practices.
- Practices that appear in the map are considered mindfulness-based and are associated with mindfulness in contemporary Western discourse – mainly in science and psychology.

<b>M1</b> Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment	<b>M2</b> Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude
<b>M3</b> Cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits	<b>M4</b> Cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience

# domains of transformation

- What about **the intentions** associated with different transformative processes that are connected with the various mindfulness practices



## Suggestion for transformative domains\*:

**T1**

Gaining insight into the causes of suffering in terms of one's relationship to experience

**T2**

Gaining insight into the sense of self in the context of suffering and wellbeing

**T3**

Gaining insight into the transient nature of body, mind and external phenomenon

**T4**

Gaining insight into the contribution of positive and prosocial mental states to wellbeing

\*The first three are based on the Three Characteristics

## Other transformative domains:

**T5** Avoidance of harming others – mental practice

**T6** Alleviation of depression

**T7** Enhancing cognitive abilities

**T8** Improving physical abilities

**T9** Improving parenting

**T10** Transcendence

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**T4**

Gaining insight into the contribution of positive and prosocial mental states to wellbeing

\*The first three are based on the Three Characteristics

# M1: Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment

<b>T1</b> Sources of suffering	Beginning to identify the relationship between wandering mind and restlessness and suffering
<b>T2</b> Sense of self	Beginning to recognize a lack of control of inner and somatic experiences
<b>T3</b> Transient nature	Beginning to observe the dynamic nature of the wandering mind and physical experience (sensations)
<b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes	Not realized in M1

# M2: Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude

**T1**

The sources  
of suffering

Suffering is understood to be dependent on wanting and rejecting certain experiences. A non-judgmental/accepting attitude allows to open a gap between experience and reaction and hence reduces suffering, develops psychological flexibility and mental strength

# M2: Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude

**T1**  
The sources  
of suffering

Suffering is understood to be dependent on wanting and rejecting certain experiences. A non-judgmental/accepting attitude allows to open a gap between experience and reaction and hence reduces suffering, develops psychological flexibility and mental strength

**T2**  
The sense  
of self

Yearning and avoidance/aversion patterns are beginning to be seen as the "glue" of the self – of what produces the firm sense of "self". In addition, it is also the beginning of understanding the relation between a “sticky” or light experience of self, and the reduction or increase of suffering

# M2: Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude

<p><b>T1</b> The sources of suffering</p>	<p>Suffering is understood to be dependent on wanting and rejecting certain experiences. A non-judgmental/accepting attitude allows to open a gap between experience and reaction and hence reduces suffering, develops psychological flexibility and mental strength</p>
<p><b>T2</b> The sense of self</p>	<p>Yearning and avoidance/aversion patterns are beginning to be seen as the "glue" of the self – of what produces the firm sense of "self". In addition, it is also the beginning of understanding the relation between a “sticky” or light experience of self, and the reduction or increase of suffering</p>
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<p><b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes</p>	<p>Reducing reactivity allows for the acceptance of the present experience, and the reduction of the inner struggle in a way that leads to more self-compassion</p>



# M3: cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits

**T1**

The sources  
of suffering

Discerning that suffering or wellbeing are conditioned by the mental attitudes present at each moment. Experiencing internal or external experiences with the presence of wholesome states reduces mental suffering, while the presence of unwholesome states increases it

# M3: cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits

**T1**  
The sources  
of suffering

Discerning that suffering or wellbeing are conditioned by the mental attitudes present at each moment. Experiencing internal or external experiences with the presence of wholesome states reduces mental suffering, while the presence of unwholesome states increases it

**T2**  
The sense  
of self

Identifying the relationship between self-modes (e.g., relaxed or rigid sense of self) and the presence of wholesome or unwholesome states (cognitions, attitudes and emotions). Beginning to see that the "self", "other" and the "world" are less rigidly separated than previously assumed

# M3: cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits

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<p><b>T3</b> The transient nature</p>	<p>This transformation domain is not always actualized in M3. For it to be actualized a discerning mindful awareness needs to be cultivated so one can start to see that wholesome states are also transient and dependent on various causes and conditions</p>

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<p><b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes</p>	<p>Actively cultivating wholesome states and pro-social habits, such as compassion to others, gratitude, benevolence, friendship, joy, sympathetic joy, forgiveness, and generosity (which are more than cultivating acceptance and self-compassion as in M2)</p>

# M4: cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience

## T1

The sources of suffering

A penetrating insight into how wanting and avoidance/aversion lead to dissatisfaction and mental suffering is established. Seeing clearly how reducing automatic wanting or aversive reactions towards experience lead to the reduction of mental suffering

# M4: cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience

<p><b>T1</b> The sources of suffering</p>	<p>A penetrating insight into how wanting and avoidance/aversion lead to dissatisfaction and mental suffering is established. Seeing clearly how reducing automatic wanting or aversive reactions towards experience lead to the reduction of mental suffering</p>
<p><b>T2</b> The sense of self</p>	<p>Seeing clearly that the "self" is a complex phenomenon constructed from changing and co-dependent processes. It is not autonomous and independent, but is dependent on an ever-changing context</p>

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<p><b>T3</b> The transient nature</p>	<p>Deepening and internalizing the insight that every physical or mental experience, as well as every external entity (e.g., property, people, etc.) is transient. When this insight is truly understood, it leads to the release of attachment and identification (there is no point to hold on to something that is about to vanish and change)</p>

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<p><b>T1</b> The sources of suffering</p>	<p>A penetrating insight into how wanting and avoidance/aversion lead to dissatisfaction and mental suffering is established. Seeing clearly how reducing automatic wanting or aversive reactions towards experience lead to the reduction of mental suffering</p>
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<p><b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes</p>	<p>The weakening of identification with different aspects of experience, leads to a more relaxed and open sense of self. Being less occupied with self-based wanting and aversion, it is much easier to allocate significant resources to others. The conditions are formed for the spontaneous appearance of wholesome and prosocial mental states, not only towards ourselves, but also towards others</p>



	<b>M1</b>	<b>M2</b>	<b>M3</b>	<b>M4</b>
<b>T1</b> Reducing suffering and increasing mental well-being and Joy	Identifying the relationship between wandering mind and restlessness	Understanding the role of attitude towards pleasant and unpleasant experience to wellbeing and suffering	Discerning that suffering or well-being are conditioned by the mental attitudes present at each moment	Understanding that wanting/avoidance leads to suffering while their calming leads to wellbeing.
<b>T2</b> Understanding the self	Beginning to recognize a lack of control of inner and somatic experiences	Rigid or light sense of self is conditioned by wanting or aversion or their absence	Self manifests differently in the presence of wholesome and unwholesome states of mind	Self is a constructed and fabricated mental phenomenon
<b>T3</b> understanding the transient nature of body and mind	Beginning to observe the dynamic nature of the wandering mind and physical experience	Beginning to understand that inner and outer phenomenon are transient.	N/A	internalizing the insight that every phenomenon is transient
<b>T4</b> increasing pro-social feelings and attitudes	N/A	Reducing reactivity and acceptance of painful experience as a basis for self-compassion	Active cultivating and developing of pro-social attitudes	Spontaneous re-allocation of resources from self to others

- The map is not only an abstraction of various existing practices
- Also a model that can help locate new practices within a web of relations between practices, intentions and sought-after transformations.

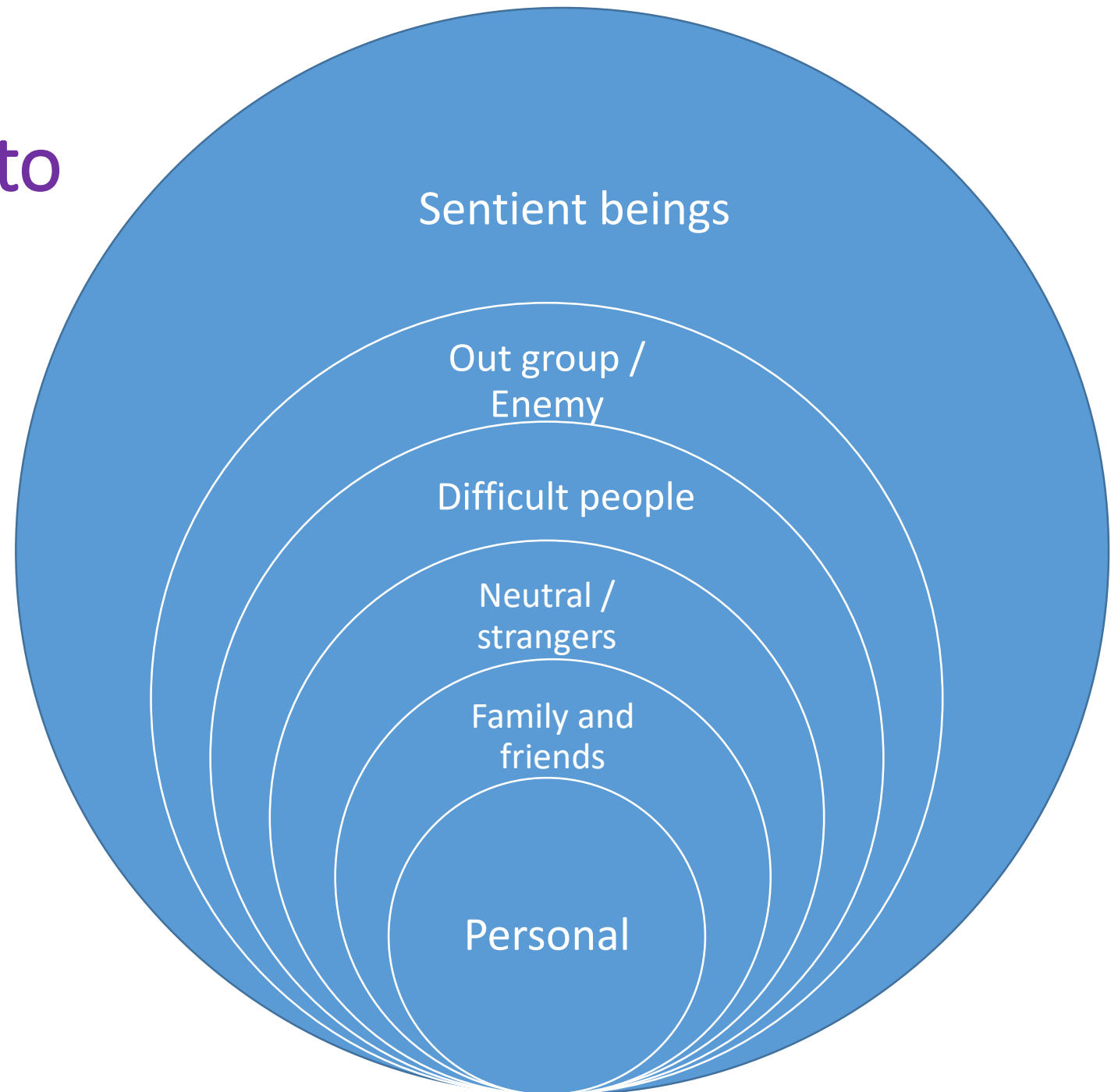
# Practical applications of the map

- Contribution to the ethical discussion
- Clarifying difference between different mindfulness-based intervention
- Support teachers in clarifying what they teach (and what not)
- Help practitioners situate themselves in the map – are they gradually spanning more terrain or limiting themselves?
- Support broad teacher training programs
- Research applications
- Research questions
- Next steps for contemporary mindfulness program development

# Mapping the mindfulness maps onto an ethics map

S1: Refraining from causing suffering and harm

S2: Freeing from suffering

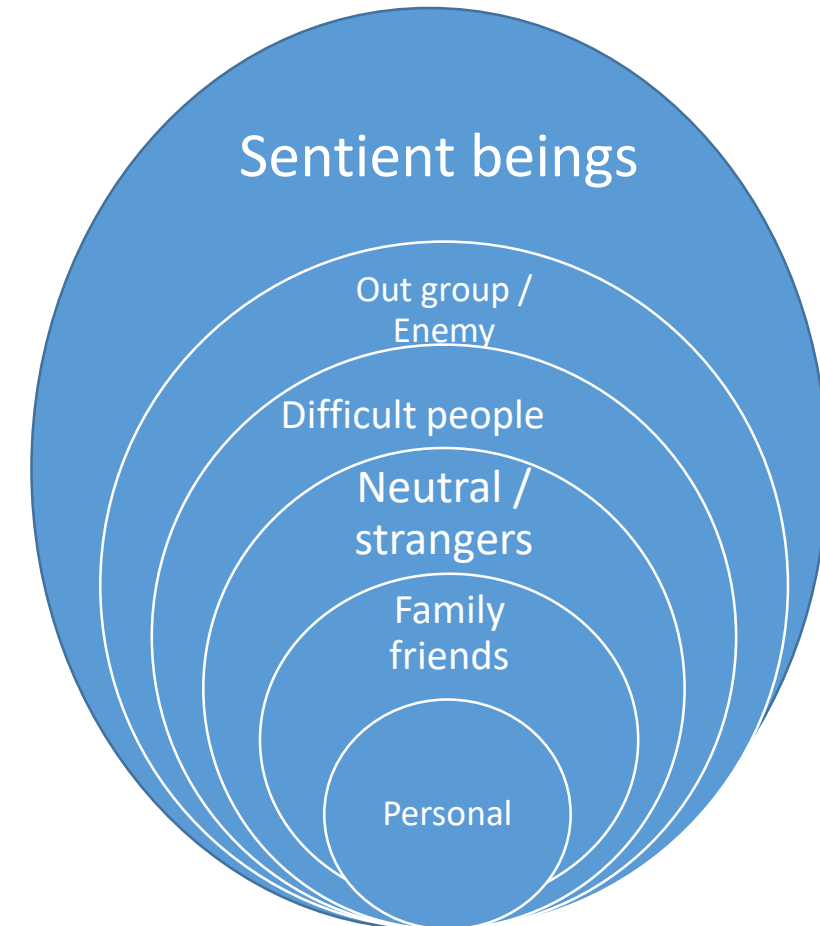


# Assumption: M practices are ethics-neutral

<p><b>M1</b> Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment</p>	<p><b>M2</b> Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude</p>
<p><b>M3</b> Cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits</p>	<p><b>M4</b> Cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience</p>

## M1: Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment

<b>T1</b> Sources of suffering	Beginning to identify the relationship between wandering mind and restlessness and suffering
<b>T2</b> Sense of self	Beginning to recognize a lack of control of inner and somatic experiences
<b>T3</b> Transient nature	Beginning to observe the dynamic nature of the wandering mind and physical experience (sensations)
<b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes	Not realized in M1



## M2: Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude

**T1**  
The sources  
of suffering

Suffering is understood to be dependent on wanting and rejecting certain experiences. A non-judgmental/accepting attitude allows to open a gap between experience and reaction and hence reduces suffering, develops psychological flexibility and mental strength

**T2**  
The sense  
of self

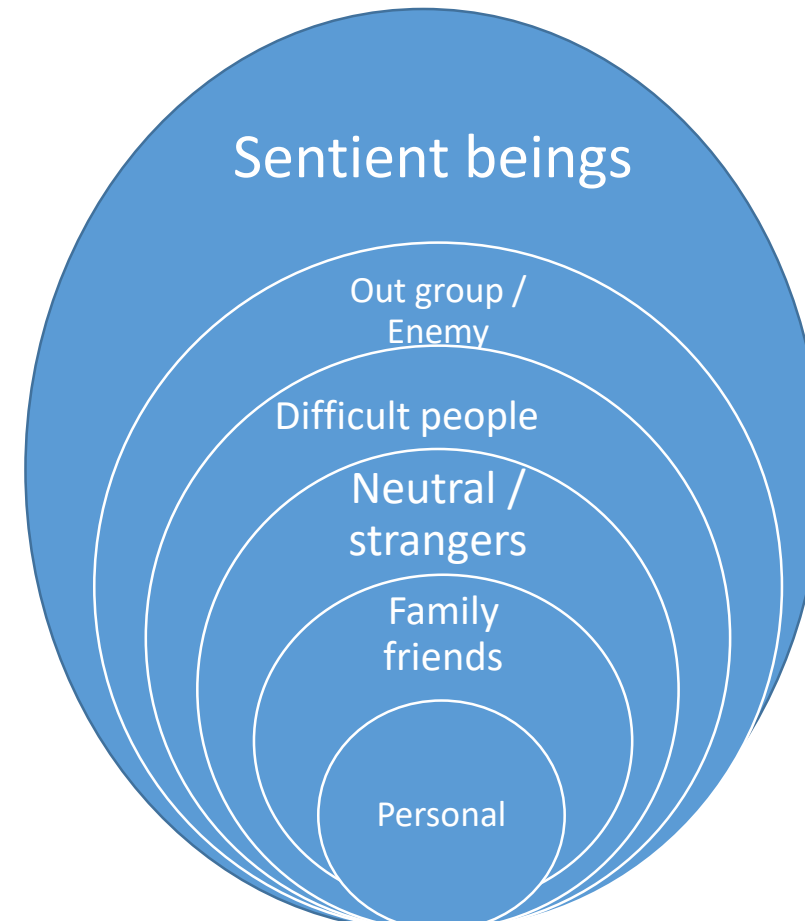
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**T3**  
The transient  
nature

Beginning to understand that all the inner mental states (thoughts, memories) and the external sensory stimuli are co-dependent, transient and temporary occurrences

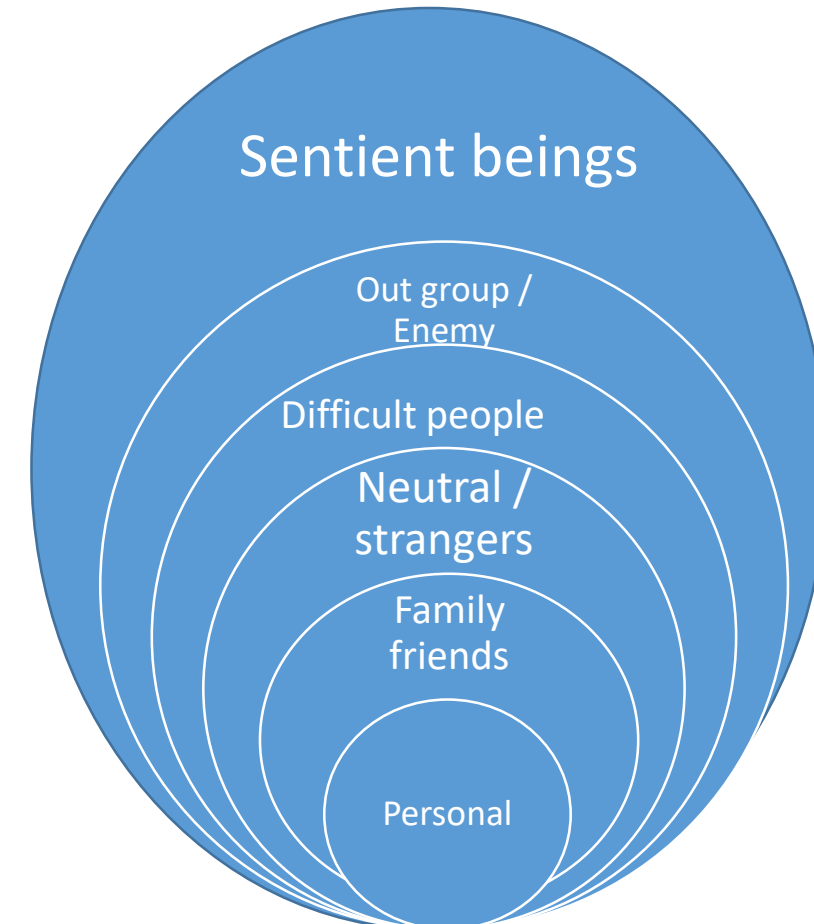
**T4**  
Wholesome  
and  
Pro-social  
attitudes

Reducing reactivity allows for the acceptance of the present experience, and the reduction of the inner struggle in a way that leads to more self-compassion



## M3: cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits

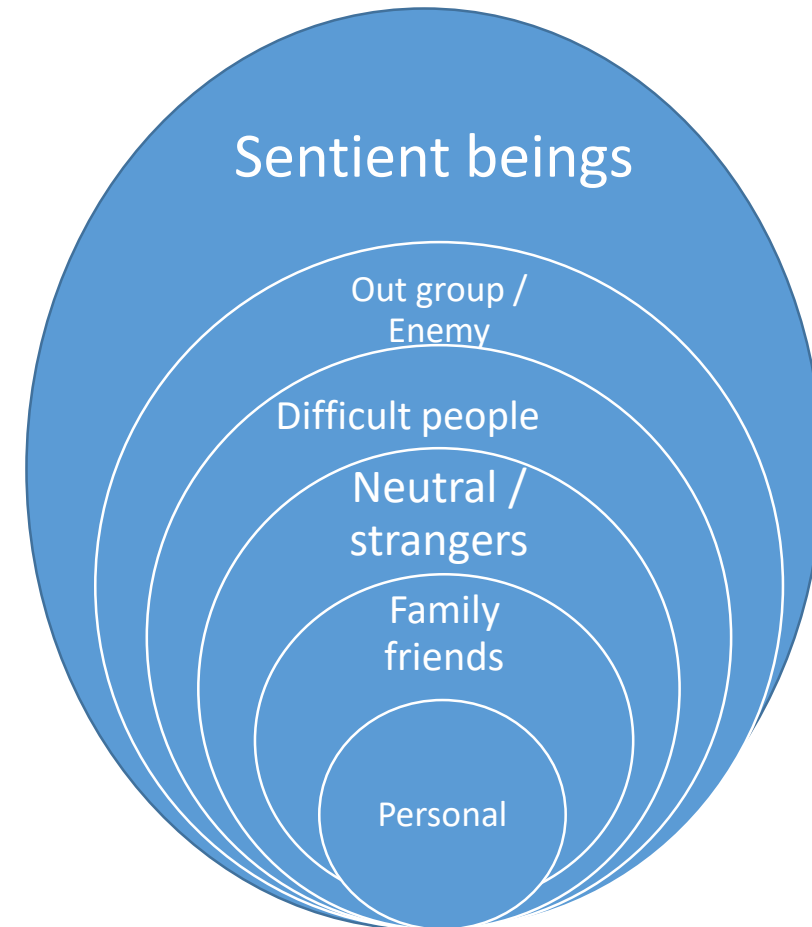
<b>T1</b> The sources of suffering	Discerning that suffering or wellbeing are conditioned by the mental attitudes present at each moment. Experiencing internal or external experiences with the presence of wholesome states reduces mental suffering, while the presence of unwholesome states increases it
<b>T2</b> The sense of self	Identifying the relationship between self-modes (e.g., relaxed or rigid sense of self) and the presence of wholesome or unwholesome states (cognitions, attitudes and emotions). Beginning to see that the "self", "other" and the "world" are less rigidly separated than previously assumed
<b>T3</b> The transient nature	This transformation domain is not always actualized in M3. For it to be actualized a discerning mindful awareness needs to be cultivated so one can start to see that wholesome states are also transient and dependent on various causes and conditions
<b>T4</b> Wholesome and Pro-social attitudes	Actively cultivating wholesome states and pro-social habits, such as compassion to others, gratitude, benevolence, friendship, joy, sympathetic joy, forgiveness, and generosity (which are more than cultivating acceptance and self-compassion as in M2)



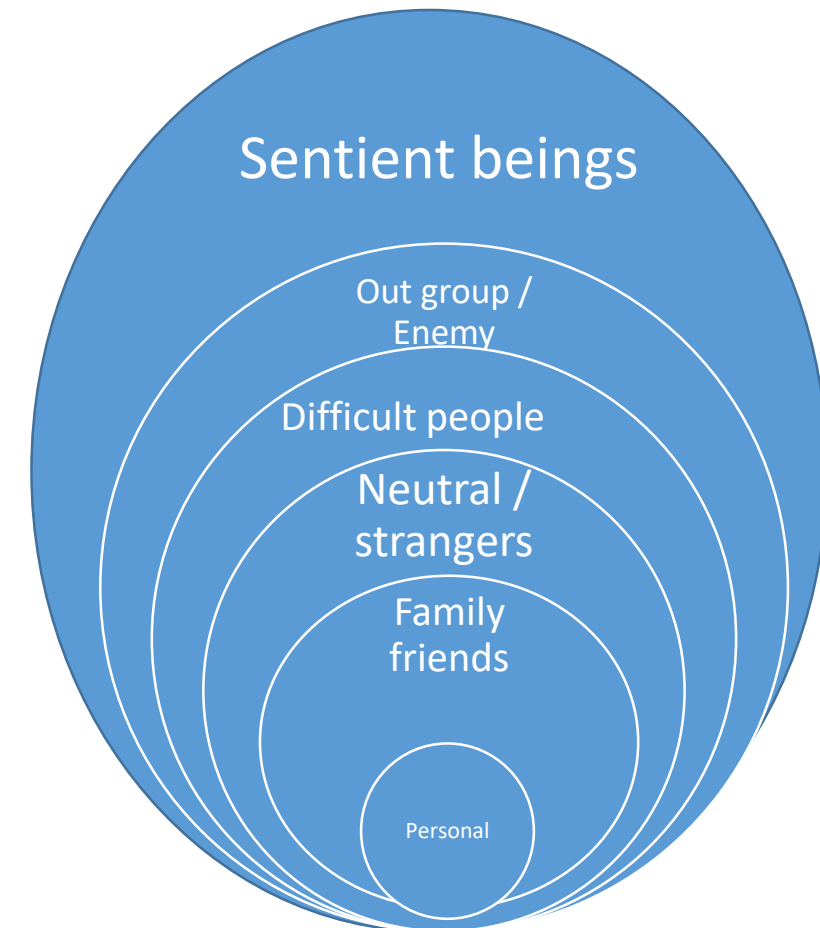


**M4: cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience**

<p><b>T1</b> The sources of suffering</p>	<p>A penetrating insight into how wanting and avoidance/aversion lead to dissatisfaction and mental suffering is established. Seeing clearly how reducing automatic wanting or aversive reactions towards experience lead to the reduction of mental suffering</p>
<p><b>T2</b> The sense of self</p>	<p>Seeing clearly that the "self" is a complex phenomenon constructed from changing and co-dependent processes. It is not autonomous and independent, but is dependent on an ever-changing context</p>
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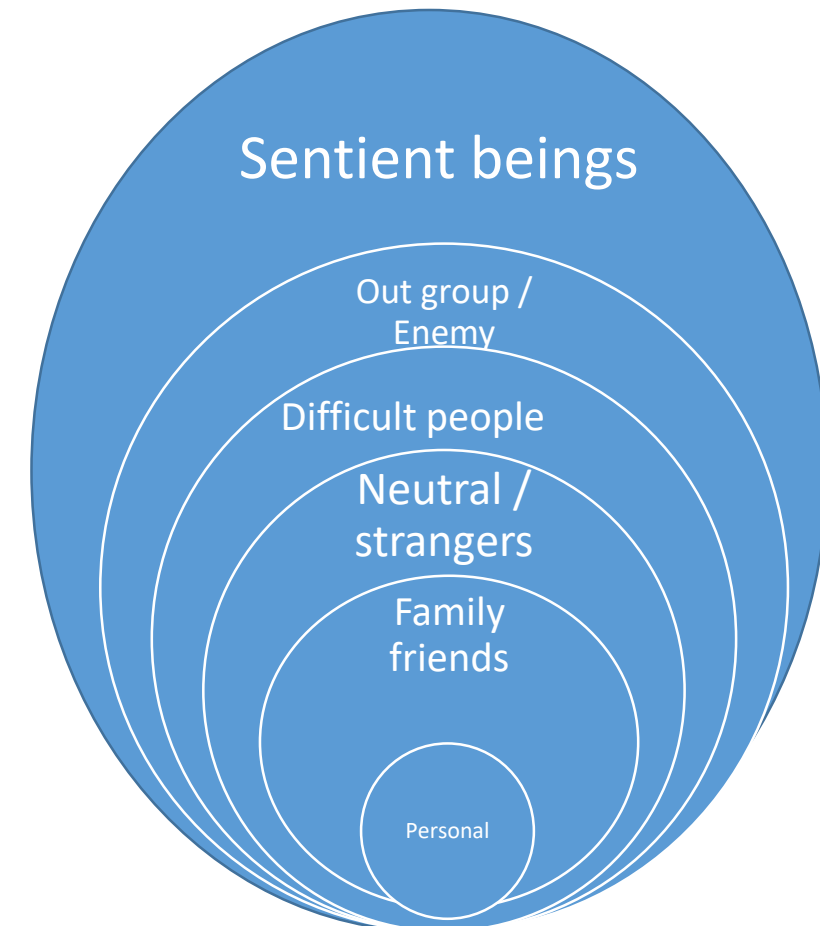


<b>T1</b>	Gaining insight into the causes of suffering in terms of one's relationship to experience
<b>T2</b>	Gaining insight into the sense of self in the context of suffering and wellbeing
<b>T3</b>	Gaining insight into the transient nature of body, mind and external phenomenon
<b>T4</b>	Gaining insight into the contribution of positive and prosocial mental states to wellbeing ( <b>of self? Of other?</b> )



## Other transformative domains:

<b>T5</b>	Avoidance of harming others
<b>T6</b>	Alleviation of depression
<b>T7</b>	Enhancing cognitive abilities
<b>T8</b>	Improving physical abilities
<b>T9</b>	Improving parenting
<b>T10</b>	Transcendence



# Open questions:

- M3 vs T4
- M3 as a standalone vs M3 after M1 and M2
- M4 with T4 / T1+T2 vs M3
- M3 with T4 vs M4 without T4
- Effect of adding a T: refraining from harm (from a mental perspective)
- Challenging the assumptions that explicit intentions and Ts are necessary

<p><b>M1</b> Cultivating intentional attention to the present moment</p>	<p><b>M2</b> Cultivating discerning awareness with a non-judgmental attitude</p>
<p><b>M3</b> Cultivating wholesome and pro-social mental habits</p>	<p><b>M4</b> Cultivating ways of looking that decondition distorted perceptions and deconstruct subjective experience</p>

<b>T1</b>	Gaining insight into the causes of suffering in terms of one's relationship to experience
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# Evidence that brief mindfulness has pro-social effects

- Alkoby, A., Halperin, E., Tarrasch, R., & Levit-Binnun, N. (2017). **Increased support for political compromise** in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict following an 8-week mindfulness workshop. *Mindfulness*, 8(5), 1345-1353.
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- Schindler, S., Pfattheicher, S., & Reinhard, M. A. (2019). Potential **negative consequences of mindfulness in the moral domain**. *European Journal of Social Psychology*.
- Cox, H. C. (2018). *The Effects of Mindfulness and Relaxation on Social Bias and Prejudicial Behavior* (Doctoral dissertation, Long Island University, The Brooklyn Center).

# In summary

- How ethics relates to contemporary mindfulness does not have a simple answer
- It may depend on what practices and transformational axes the program embodies and how much the teacher understands them
- Maps of mindfulness can support the discussion
- Maps of mindfulness can support empirical research to test various assumptions on which combinations of Ms and Ts (and length of interventions) support ethics.

# Thank you for listening

Keren Arbel



Asaf Ferderman



- Maty Libliech
- Thor Gonen
- Itamar Bashan
- Amos Avisar
- Many others who read and commented

<https://mindrxiv.org/fsz85>





- כשהעצמי נחלש , פחות אחיזה בצרכים של העצמי ויש פחות אחיזה בתודעה יש יותר פתיחות לאחר – החלשה של GREED HATRED ולכן החלשה של מניפולציות
- להוסיף טיפוח ייזום של פעולה . סילה גורמת לכך שאנחנו פועלים כך ללא קשר לטרנספורמציה של התודעה.
- מטה וסילה – כתרגול תשומת לב.
- 1T – כשאני מתחילה לראות שהפעולות שהן לא אתיות – הן נובעות מהיאחזות בעצמי – התגובות האוטמטיות הן תגובות של דחייה התשוקקות ותוקפנות, השהייה של התגובה הפוגענית- גורמת לפחות סבל בפעולות שלנו, ולכן גם פחות סבל פנימי (פחות חרטה).
- אתיקה – כמה שפחות לפגוע בזולת.
- דיבור נכון
- Interpersonal ethics
- Refraining from harm – from a mental perspective
- המפה שלנו היא לא התנהגותית.
- ככל שתחושת העצמי שלי יותר מרווחת ויותר סיכוי שאראה לא רק את עצמי, סיכוי שאפעל באופן אתי
- מבחינת בסיס לאורך חיים יותר אתי גם 1T 2T 4T (הרצון לטפח את המיטיב).