



# SHANE LYNCH PSYCHOLOGY

## Got a question?

Please let me know if there are subjects you're interested in hearing about!

## Things to Try...

Most people have heard of mindfulness and of meditation. Most people don't do either because they experience it as "impossible" and this is because they're doing it wrong. Not their fault, most people do it wrong. Mindful meditation is not about "clearing the mind of thoughts" it's about choosing a point of focus (e.g., your breath) and acknowledging when you were distracted and returning to your point of focus. It's NOT about never being distracted, it's about coming back from distraction.

## About Shane

My roles include, husband, father, son, brother, and psychologist. Being a man comes with challenging roles; roles that save for the last one, didn't come with any training. An important reminder!



## Anxiety Part 2: I get worried and it's not reasonable...

In Part 1 from last issue, I discussed how we naturally possess the ability to be in a state of calm. That it is actually not something that needs to be taught, but instead we need to know and acknowledge when a part of us is *not* calm—or preventing calm—and separate from this part to allow calm to return. Perhaps this sounds easier said than done. And you'd be correct in thinking that because another part of you has a different plan...

Think about a time when a part of you became anxious, or nervous, or worried. Now change the language to "a part of me was anxious/nervous/worried." Now recall what you did, thought, or felt next. For the vast majority of people, the response we have to anxiety is characterized in three ways: a) ignore it; b) avoid it/ use distractions; and, c) reason with it. Now change the language to a part of me ignores, avoids, or reasons with the anxious part. Let's use the part of you that reasons with the worried part for our example.



## Tips for Dads & Moms

Last issue I asked you to consider what part of you is about to enter into the interaction with your child as well as what part of your child you observe. If a part of you is frustrated and a part of your child is, too, this won't go well.

Based on what you just read about not taking sides, let's apply this to the interaction with the frustrated child. Your child's frustrated part triggers the reasonable part in you. You begin to reason, or give reasons, why frustration is unnecessary, not needed, or problematic. This part of you has a good intention and may even be correct(!); however, doing so increases the frustration of your child.

First, acknowledge a part of you believes your child's behaviour is unreasonable. Second, instead of letting that part of you interact with the frustrated part of your child, allow for calm to return, where you can ask some curious questions, with compassion, and with a desire to connect with your child, not correct them. This, in concert with mirror neurons that embody calm, will slowly help your child return to you.

Now we have a picture of *part-to-part* communication or *intrapersonal* communication. Whatever we call it, it tends, unfortunately, to be adversarial. If the reasonable part of you was okay with the worried part, it wouldn't give a multitude of reasons why worry shouldn't be there like: "It's not a big deal" or "it is what it is" or "it's not that bad" and on and on. While it may be easy to see the good intention that motivates the reasonable part, you may also experience the paradoxical effect. That is, the more reasons the worried part hears, the more worried it becomes, not less. So, while the reasonable part has good intentions (i.e., stop worry), its delivery of those intentions may actually increase worry.

We need to interrupt this back-and-forth, by doing what we've never done before: NOT TAKE SIDES! At best, the reasonable part of us may provide a temporary reprieve, at worst the worry turns into panic. The best thing we can do is to acknowledge both parts as separate from us. After all, you're not one or the other, you're calm, remember? And just in case you thought reason was calm, sorry, but you're wrong. Reason is devoid of emotion and human beings are not devoid of emotion. So take notice of these two parts of you that are in conflict and make the distinction between them (parts) and you. Notice how different this feels.



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