

Reply to commentaries on *A Preliminary Inquiry on Rosen Method and Mindfulness: What We Notice*

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I would like to thank Jan Walker and Julia Cousins for their thoughtful commentaries on the Rosen Method and mindfulness article. This reply is from me only and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of my co-authors.

Jan Walker's comments regarding the Eastern and Western approaches to mindfulness highlight the importance of kindness as an element of mindfulness. In her commentary, Jan describes the integral nature of mindfulness and kindness in Buddhist tradition and writes: "Mindfulness focuses the work, but compassion/loving-kindness is the real power." She notes that, with the introduction of mindfulness practices from the East into the West, many traditional underpinnings of Eastern mindfulness practices have been omitted. For example, in the world of western research, one definition of mindfulness recognizes that mindfulness includes an attitude of curiosity, openness, and acceptance (Bishop et al., 2004). While these qualities would seem to set the stage for the experience of kindness, they are not synonymous with kindness or compassion. Because some western mindfulness definitions do not explicitly include kindness, we might question the consequences of research findings that overlook this ingredient. Even though, as Jan quotes Dipa Ma, "There is no difference between mindfulness and loving kindness" within the Buddhist traditions, it seems to be important to explicitly include kindness in our discussion of mindfulness. Certainly, in our informal study on Rosen Method and mindfulness, the concepts of loving kindness and compassion were essential to participants.

Another thought stimulated by reading the commentaries is the apparent influence of culture on the experience of receiving Rosen Method. It makes sense that some of the perceived benefits from experiencing Rosen Method might be dependent upon one's cultural perspective. For example, in a Western culture that values individualism and where lifestyles are more isolative, perhaps one of the powerful aspects of both Rosen Method bodywork and movement is their capacity to remind us of our connectedness. This benefit might not be as significant for people from a culture in which one's "self" is already viewed as inherently interconnected with others, such as is more typical of traditional Eastern cultures. It would be interesting to explore what people from an interconnected culture experience as benefits from Rosen Method.

In her commentary, Julia Cousins writes that "the practitioner is an integral part of the client's experience." Her observation underscores the necessity of the Rosen Method practitioner to consciously set an intention for the Rosen session. Those we interviewed for the study reported that the loving kindness we bring to our work through *who* and *how* we are matters significantly. When we cultivate kindness deep within our being through our own practices and offer it to others with an open heart, something happens—

we make a difference. To quote Jan, this is the “real power.”

The commentaries by Jan and Julia, and our Rosen community dialogue about mindfulness will hopefully inspire us to trust the power of kindness and gently cultivate it in ourselves and in all our relationships, including with our clients, Rosen students, Rosen colleagues, and everyone we encounter.

References

Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J., et al. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical psychology: Science and Practice, 11*, 230-241.