

HAKOMI AS A WAY OF BEING AND BEING WITH OTHERS: REFLECTION AS THE ROAD TO FREEDOM

by Donna Martin

Hakomi has been called applied Buddhism. This is partly due to the way Hakomi uses a state of mind called mindfulness as a way of cultivating more self awareness, more compassion, and the capacity to be present in a calm and loving way, for oneself as well as for others. Hakomi is an approach that uses mindfulness in a very unique way which is the basis of the self discovery aspect of the method.

The spirit of Hakomi has qualities of patience and acceptance, curiosity and spaciousness, kindness and a genuine concern for the well being of others, appreciation and respectfulness, and something we refer to as an “experimental attitude”. Hakomi actually uses experiments done in mindfulness for the purpose of self understanding and personal freedom.... that is, freedom from the automatic reactions that, without conscious awareness, keep us trapped in a continual replay of old patterns, unpleasant experiences and unnecessary suffering.

Since Hakomi, like Buddhism, is concerned with alleviating unnecessary suffering by understanding the nature of the mind, the latest research in neuroscience has been of great interest to Hakomi practitioners and teachers. Science is beginning to address the whole question of consciousness and of how the mind works. Research done on the benefits of mindfulness practice is especially validating for Hakomi practitioners as it demonstrates how mindful awareness can contribute to emotional and physical well-being. The findings are convincing and support the value of the way Hakomi uses mindfulness to assist people to have more emotional intelligence, better responses to stress, more successful relationships with others, and generally to find more sources of nourishment in life.

Recommended reading to support the understanding of how Hakomi works include:

The Mindful Brain, by Daniel Siegel,

Social Intelligence, by Daniel Goleman,

A General Theory of Love, by Thomas Lewis and others,

Happiness, by Matthieu Ricard,

Destructive Emotions, by Daniel Goleman,

The Mind and the Brain, by Schwartz,

The I of the Vortex, by Llinas,

The Neuroscience of Human Relationships, by Louis Cozolino,

Making up the Mind, by Chris Frith,

and, about the research done in the field of psychotherapy:

The Heart and Soul of Change: What Works in Therapy (published by the American Psychological Association)