

FLORIDA BAR NEWS

MINDFULNESS AND GRATITUDE: THEN AND NOW

By Scott Rogers > Special to the News

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In today's column you'll learn a gratitude practice called "Then and Now" that can be a meaningful way to bring moments of heartfelt appreciation into your day. As this practice may be new to you, slowly ease into it and practice at specially carved out times. Importantly, it offers you the opportunity to relate to gratitude from its emotional center. Always take good care of yourself with emotionally tender

practices, for while they can help reduce stress and even be healing, they can be emotionally powerful at times.

"Then and Now" as its name suggests traipses through time and invites you to bring to mind someone who is a meaningful part of your life. They may be alive or have passed on and they may also be a beloved pet. If you practice for 10 or 20 minutes, you may want to bring to mind a handful of people, e.g., family members, moving slowly from one to the other, as you follow the simple instructions that repeat themselves with each person. If you have but a few moments to practice, you may bring to mind just one person.

You can also practice with people in your personal or professional life with whom your feelings and connection may wax and wane. As "Then and Now" is a gratitude practice, you may find it helps bring a little more meaning into your connection with that person.

PRACTICE INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. After settling into your seat, taking a few slower deeper breaths.
- 2. Close your eyes and bring to mind someone important to you visualize, hear, or otherwise sense them — such that you are holding this person in your mind and heart.
- 3. With this person in mind, recall one of the first times they came into your life. Allow this memory to come to you rather than seek it out. As it does, rest for a few moments — or as long as you would like — with this mental recollection.

- 4. Then, with this person still held in mind, reflect on a more recent time you were with them.

 Again, allow this sensory impression to come to you and rest with it.
- As memories or tender feelings surface, allow them to become the object of attention for a
 few moments, noticing the arising and passing away of thoughts, feelings, and body
 sensations, as you breathe.

Gently release a sense of this person and, should you wish to continue the practice, bring to mind another person. Slowly and with deliberation, repeat the process of reflecting on one of the first times you met and then on a more recent time. If the person or pet has passed away or you have not seen the person in a while, it is fine if the more recent time is many years ago.

You'll find that this is a portable practice that you can do anytime. So that you might have a taste of its fruits, take a few moments now and practice by bringing one person to mind for a few minutes.

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Mornings and evenings tend to be good time to practice on a regular basis, with drop in moments of practice available to you throughout the day. The instructions are intuitive, easy to remember, and you'll find it easy to guide yourself. You can also listen to **this 10-minute guided practice**.

As you practice, take comfort in the gift of connection and the meaningfulness of sharing time together with another person — be it a person from childhood or school, a dear friend or family member, or someone with whom you work, open to the wisdom and compassion of knowing that everything changes with the passage of time.

If you have a question about mindfulness and integrating it into the practice of law that you would like answered in this column, send it to srogers@law.miami.edu.



Scott Rogers, M.S., J.D., is a nationally recognized leader in the area of mindfulness in law and founded and directs the University of Miami School of Law's Mindfulness in Law Program where he teaches mindful ethics, mindful leadership, mindfulness and negotiation, and mindfulness in law. He is the creator of Jurisight, one of the first CLE programs in the country to integrate mindfulness and neuroscience and conducts workshops and presentations on the role of mindfulness in legal education and across the legal profession. He is author of the recently released, "The Mindful Law Student: A Mindfulness in Law Practice Guide," written for all audiences.