



## November 2011

The Moment is Now

A Newsletter from *The Center for Courageous Living*

### *The Unfaithful Yes*

**“Saying “yes” to more things than we can actually manage to be present for with integrity and ease of being is in effect saying “no” to all those things and people and places we have already said “yes” to, including, perhaps, our own well-being.” Jon Kabat-Zinn from *Coming to Our Senses***

Having a manageable life is a key concern for most adult members of society. Unfortunately, it is becoming a big concern of our children as well. As Jon has often pointed out, we live in society afflicted by Attention-Deficit *Overactivity* Disorder. We simply have too much on our plate. We want to slow down, do less, have more time for ourselves, but it's not happening.

Moving through life at high speed can be addictive. Overcommitting is fashionable. Saying “yes” when we want to say no is often a cloaked desire for approval. In our longing to know that we are lovable human beings, we look outside ourselves for self-worth. If we take on too much, saying yes to the many requests of friends, co-workers, supervisors, and family, we will inevitably be unfaithful. We must relearn our loveliness and practice saying “no.”

Why do I think that relearning our loveliness comes first? When we fully love ourselves and know that our nature is open, wise, and caring, the need to establish our identity in the outer world diminishes. We know how to be content in our own being, comfortable in our own skin. Embracing our deeper nature, we know the path of personal integrity. If saying yes to busyness means losing the capacity to truly listen to our loved ones when they have something meaningful to say, why would we do so? If that extra trip to the store to satisfy an urge to acquire something means losing a few precious moments of alone time at home for meditation, reflection, or just simply non-doing, then why would we say yes to the impulse?

When leading day-long MBSR retreats I sense participants' struggle with surrendering to an entire weekend day of accomplishing nothing. Slowing down is like coming off a drug. There's a withdrawal period that is uncomfortable. Practicing mindfulness asks us to move into a place of *faithful yes* to our innermost nature. We faithfully say *yes* to each moment, not compromising it for a future fantasy or the play of reminiscences.

If we want to heal the societies *ADOD*, feeling, as we do, that its absence would only enrich our experience of living with others, then we should take a look at the times when we offer an unfaithful yes to the world. Only we know when that is. That's why it comes down to knowing within ourselves the feeling of contentment. Living with integrity is much more interesting and satisfying than managing hyperactive overactivity. Don't you agree?