

Mindfulness & Spirituality

- Some things on the brain: Sympathetic Nervous Response (SNR) is a primitive part of the brain where the built in survival instinct is. It is where physiological reactions to danger are initiated (fight, flight or freeze response). Because of its physical position closer to the brain stem, input comes to it before it makes it to the frontal lobe, the seat of reason. The SNR kicks into action before reason.
- Danger is more than physical threat. It can be a difficult job, relationships, worry about finances, etc. When brain perceives some kind of danger, it wants to move us from where we are (danger) to safety. SNR triggers response at this point. The **Doing Mode** is the mindset of getting out of perceived danger. The opposite state of the mind is the **Being Mode**. In the being mode, there is no perceived danger. We are safe, no problems to solve or danger to be avoided. In the being mode, curiosity arises, a sense of wonder. It is curiosity we are seeking to cultivate in mindfulness.
- Another concept: the brain on **Autopilot**. Autopilot is the way the brain remembers tasks and performs them without having to think on them per se, it is the way we form habits. Working memory is the one a person is conscious of. When learning a new task, playing piano for instance, a person must concentrate on fingering, etc. After some practice, the task of playing a piano no longer needs the conscious awareness of each movement, autopilot kicks in.
- Concepts to be unfolded. Analyzing vs. sensing, striving vs. accepting, thoughts are real vs. mental events, avoidance vs. approaching, mental time travel vs. present moment, depleting vs. nourishing activities.
- Spirituality: applying mindfulness techniques to help enter a state of being with God.