



Welcome to the Gifted Mindfulness Community of Practice Pilot! I'm so happy to invite you to join this endeavor. . .

## WELCOME

Adapted from Jillian Pransky

*In whatever way you're showing up here . . .  
Wherever you may have been . . .  
Gather your whole self up  
And let yourself know you're welcome here.*

*Whether you're showing up with expectations . . . or with fears . . .  
Whether you're showing up in joy . . . or in sorrow . . .  
Take a moment to greet yourself  
Exactly as you are right now.*

*Gather yourself up and welcome all of you:  
Your mind, your body, your heart.  
Sit for a moment and welcome yourself...*

*Take a moment to be with yourself.*

*When we feel welcomed, we show up in our full authenticity.*

## **NOTE FROM KELLY**

As a gifted/multi-exceptional adult, one of the greatest lessons I have learned through mindfulness is that of community. Like many with (misunderstood) neurodiverse minds, I spent many years trying to figure things out on my own, not feeling at home in most group spaces. Through an open-hearted, like-minded mindfulness community, I have learned not only how to be with my own mind more skillfully, but also how to connect more deeply with others. It is my deep hope that this Community of Practice can provide you that same opportunity.

Welcome, and thank you for embarking on this adventure with us!

Sincerely,  
Kelly

## **OVERVIEW**

The Gifted Mindfulness Collective Community of Practice is emerging as a way for gifted and twice-/multi-exceptional people to come together in community around the practice of mindfulness, to meditate, learn, and support one another on the path of gifted development. It is a space that understands common gifted needs and challenges and connects in ways that are relevant to gifted culture. In these ways, we have the opportunity

not only to cultivate our personal growth and practice, but also to transform our collective experience into a higher level of awareness in the larger world around us.

*“Feeling at ease, in a community in which we experience the comfort of feeling safe and seen, we begin to reconnect with our gifted selves – and by extension, the world around us – in more authentic ways.”*

Our pilot project for the Community of Practice (CoP) will run for 4 months from **November 2019 through to the end of February 2020**. The pilot will allow us to work (and play!) collaboratively with you, the Founding Members, to experiment with the CoP structure, content, and logistics, build the foundation for a supportive, open-hearted mindfulness community, and shape the direction of the community for future members. Of course, we will also connect with and support one another as we deepen our personal and collective mindfulness practices on the path of gifted development.

## COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

The CoP is led by Gifted Mindfulness Collective founder, Kelly Pryde. Kelly is a trained neuropsychologist, coach for gifted people, as well as a meditation teacher and practitioner living in Toronto, Canada. Kelly studies and trains extensively in various mindfulness traditions—from Zen, Insight meditation, and Unified Mindfulness to Mindful Self-Compassion, somatics, and mindful movement for trauma. Her core practice continues to be rooted in the Zen tradition where she has taken Teacher and Bodhisattva Precepts, and has authority to teach meditation. As part



of her own self-development as a gifted person, it is essential to her to adapt these teachings and practices in ways that are relevant to the gifted person's unique experience, and that are secular in nature while grounded firmly in both eastern wisdom and modern science.

The CoP is co-led by Kim Bielman (Virginia, U.S.) and Zoe Valour (Capetown, South Africa). Both Kim and Zoe are graduates of the [GMC Foundations program](#) and committed practitioners engaged in gifted mindfulness-based work in their communities.

## **PRELIMINARY FRAMEWORK FOR THE PILOT**

### *Weekly Live Gatherings*

Our weekly gatherings will be the heart of the CoP. Each week, we will come together for 60-75 minutes on the [Zoom.us](#) video conferencing platform<sup>1</sup> to engage in formal meditation practice, themed talks, and shared reflections. Please note that members always have the option of participating via audio only for all or part of our sessions.

#### **Week 1**

- ❖ Themed talk, sitting meditation (some guided where appropriate), and shared reflection + discussion. Each month we will focus on a different theme that we can continue to cultivate throughout the month.

#### **Week 2**

- ❖ Guided movement meditation (occasionally), sitting meditation, shared reflection + discussion

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<sup>1</sup> The Zoom conferencing platform is free of charge for participants. You can sign up for a free account on their website at [zoom.us](#). Each month, I will send out a link for our weekly meetings. Once you are signed up on Zoom, you can simply click on the link and you will automatically join the virtual meeting room.

### **Week 3**

- ❖ Guided movement meditation (occasionally), sitting meditation, shared reflection + discussion

### **Week 4**

- ❖ Tea with Q+A. Tea meditation followed by questions, reflections, answers, and explorations. For tea meditation, members bring their own cup of tea (or beverage of their choosing) while Kelly hosts a tea ceremony—preparing + serving three cups of tea as in the Zen tradition.

**Noble Silence.** In the tradition of formal meditation spaces, we will observe noble silence in Weeks 1-3. Noble silence refers to the calming stillness each of us holds and manifests as we rest our awareness in the silence. It is much like creating still water that reflects things as they are, allowing our awareness of ourselves and others to be clearer and deeper. This means all microphones will be muted upon entering the practice space until it is time for the shared reflection and discussion portion of the gathering.

**Timing, Recordings, and Logistics.** With members across multiple time zones around the world, our best approach currently is to hold the weekly gatherings on

**Sundays at 10:00 AM Eastern Standard Time.**

**Our first gathering will be held Sunday, November 3, 2019**

To accommodate members who may not be able to attend live, it was suggested that the talk and (guided) meditation portions of the gatherings be recorded on Zoom and made available to all members. Shared reflections and discussions would NOT be recorded. We would like to explore this option as part of the pilot.

To ensure the recordings do not impact the felt-sense of safety in the community space which is of utmost importance, we will record the speaker-only screen for the talk and (guided) meditation portions of the gatherings. This means that any members in attendance would not be visible on the recording. The recording will stop at the end of the meditation practice before we engage in shared discussion. For those people unable to participate live, they will have the opportunity to engage in discussion and shared reflection in our private discussion group...

### *Secret Facebook Group*

The CoP secret FB group will be our space for connecting and exploring at the intersection of giftedness and mindfulness in between the weekly live gatherings. Here you can post questions, reflections, curiosities, and resources related to the weekly gatherings, your personal practice, or navigating life as a gifted person within the context of mindfulness. Themed talks + guided meditation recordings from the weekly gatherings will also be posted here so you can practice anytime.

This space will be an additional opportunity for us to connect with and support one another through open-hearted mirroring. The group will be moderated by Kelly, Kim, and Anri.

For the pilot, the FB group will also serve as a space where we can debrief and brainstorm ideas on the development of the community.

### *Gifted Sesshin Retreats*

Gifted Sesshins are a secular variation on the traditional [Zen sesshin](#) – a period of intensive meditation which literally means "touching the heart-mind". These retreats will be opportunities for gifted adults with meditation experience to come together for extended

periods of gifted-specific practice and community with seasoned facilitators and peers. These retreats will be virtual, also taking place on the Zoom platform.

Our goal is to hold 3 Gifted Sesshins each year with the aim of holding the first retreat in January 2020. Members of the CoP will have the opportunity for early registration for these events at a discounted rate. Founding Members of the CoP (see below for more details) will enjoy a deeper discount both during and following the pilot.

### *[GMC Podcast + Exclusive Content*

We have had a podcast-in-the-making for some time at the GMC that will focus on explorations at the intersection of giftedness and mindfulness. While the podcast episodes will be made available publicly, our intention is to create and provide behind-the-scenes exclusive content for CoP Members such as opportunities for private Q+As with podcast guests and guided practices. Unfortunately, it is unclear at this time whether or not we will have the podcast launched during the pilot period; however, this will be a long-term feature for members that we wanted to mention.]

### *Gifted Mindfulness Coaching + Mentoring*

Members will have rich opportunities for guidance and support during our Weekly Gatherings and through our FB Discussion Group; however, should anyone wish to receive more in-depth one-on-one support for their practice such as navigating stuck points or integrating their practice with gifted development, Kelly is happy to support you via [coaching/mentoring](#) at a discounted rate.

## **COMMUNITY GUIDELINES**

To ensure a safe, compassionate space that is aligned with the [GMC's mission and values](#) to be a catalyst for the adaptation and practice of mindfulness for gifted people, we will be

creating a working set of Community Guidelines. Preliminary guidelines will be shared at the outset of the pilot and will be shaped as appropriate with community members and leadership.

## FOUNDING MEMBERSHIP

We are looking to Founding Members to help us establish, shape, and sustain this space for the gifted community. The invitation is to embrace this pilot as a collaborative effort, sharing your insights, imaginings, needs, and feedback to foster the emergence of a meaningful community.

**Commitment.** Given the foundational, collaborative nature of the pilot, we are asking Founding Members to commit to the 4-month period and to attend, as best as possible, the weekly gatherings and FB discussion group. For members who are not, and do not wish to be, part of Facebook, we completely understand and respect your wishes and ask that you commit as much as possible to the weekly gatherings. For members who are unable to attend the weekly gatherings live due to time constraints, we ask that you engage in the practice recordings and shared FB group discussions as much as possible.

**Cost.** The cost for Founding Membership is **\$40 per month/ \$160 for the 4-month pilot.<sup>2</sup>** This is a special rate offered given the collaborative, experimental nature of the pilot; however, **Founding Members who choose to continue their membership in the CoP following the pilot** (which we hope you will!) **will maintain this special monthly rate.** Once the community is more fully established, the rate for new members (*i.e.*, non-founding members) will increase accordingly.

Finally, we hope that you will join us not only in the spirit of experimentation and collaboration, but also with a sense of joy and humor! Too often on our journeys do our

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the 4-month pilot commitment, Founding Members will be committing to the \$160 fee, yet may pay on a monthly basis.



COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE: PILOT

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intensities and seriousness take over and drive us toward understanding, “fixing” problems, and striving to make a difference. Let’s (re)discover what it feels like to be and connect with a sense of fun and humor.

We look forward to being and connecting with you soon! ❤️