

### SÁNATE TU MISMO

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HEAL THY SELF: Lessons on Mindfulness in Medicine.  
(original version in English, 1999)

"Sánate tu mismo" ["Heal thy self"] has as central axis the eight weeks in which the program of Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction "MBSR" is carried out, the novelty being—together with the personal stories of the program participants—the involvement of Dr. Santorelli himself as a teacher, guide and health professional and head of family.

The author describes the parallel process that occurs both within himself—as a person and as mindfulness instructor—and in the people, patients, professionals or people of any condition that follow the program, and gives rise to stories that arise from the continent of the shared connection. And, at the same time, it awakens in the reader confidence in his or her own resources and inner strength, as well as in the unique potential implicit in the therapeutic relationship. All of this makes the book a fundamental contribution to the discussion and understanding of what integrative medicine, behavioral medicine and mind/body medicine means. It should be specified that the term medicine in this context includes psychiatry and psychology.

The book deals with meditation introduced into life and life introduced into meditation, addressing the therapeutic relationship between people that have been united for this purpose, and dealing with the possibilities of this relationship, both within ourselves and in our family, at any age, and regardless of the condition or situation to be faced. The dynamics of this relationship is developed through a set of themes that make up a compact totality from which a clear and convincing picture of dignity, suffering and human elevation emerges.

The author gives an account of the methods and techniques developed in the Stress Reduction Clinic of the Medical Center of the University of Massachusetts and in the practice of more than twenty thousand patients and/or participants to this day. These methods have been experienced, in the first person, by thousands of health professionals, often prompting profound changes in their understanding of themselves, the people they care for and the possibilities inherent in the therapeutic relationship.

In this text, Dr. Santorelli, with more than forty years of clinical work under his belt, explores mindfulness as an internal discipline that allows us to approach and face with awareness the inherent challenges of taking care of ourselves and the service of others. At the same time, it is an invitation to investigate the application of mindfulness in the broad field of health sciences, offering us methods for bringing mindfulness into our lives, whether we are in good health or facing additional stresses derived from any illness or we are simply interested as professionals in relating this discipline to our life.

After the acknowledgments, the prologue by Jon Kabat-Zinn, and the introduction, the text is divided into four parts: Part 1. Convergence (the myth of Chiron, the living myth, the inner healer and the soft living body); Part 2. Do not turn your head (together with the first two sessions of the MBSR program it includes another eight chapters); Part 3. Keep looking at the bandaged place (sessions 3 to 5 of the MBSR program and 17 other chapters) and Part 4. That's where the light enters you

(sessions 6 to 8 and the intensive day of the program and another 13 chapters more). All of the chapters include different types of mindfulness practices related to the contents of the sessions of the MBSR program. The book ends with an epilogue and information about the Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, of which Saki Santorelli was director until last summer.

In the prologue, Jon Kabat-Zinn, says that the book tells, with exquisite simplicity, of the work of mindfulness in its vast complexity and its infinite ramifications of texture, tone and potential, and of the commitment, both internal and external, that it demands for the maintenance and development of the best that there is in us in the individual and social field.

Dr. Saki Santorelli, throughout the book's chapters, delves into the experience of not having felt seen or heard by the doctor when we have exposed a problem, but highlighting that the turn of the century and millennium is bringing a presence in the doctor-patient relationship, which is beneficial for both, in order to learn, grow and heal.

Taken as a whole, the life stories contained in "*Sánate tu mismo*" [*Heal thy self*] have profound implications for the world of medicine, healthcare, the mutual relationship between caregivers and patients and their potential to promote bi-directional learning, growth, healing and transformation in each one of us. Dr. Santorelli exemplifies all of this through poems by different poets, mainly by Rumi, a Sufi poet of the twelfth century, as, for example,

*Don't turn away. Keep your gaze  
on the bandaged place.*

*That's where the light enters you.*

The author asks again and again, in different ways, what is broken, what is shattered? The book, in its first English edition, was entitled *Shattered But Still Whole*. And what he is telling us, in different ways, is that *what is broken is as much an impoverished view of ourselves as isolated, separated and inadequate beings*, as that which so often leads us to be afraid or, in his own words, away from the fullness of life while we negotiate our safe, narrow, and anodyne burrow.

In short, the reading of the book is an invitation to free ourselves from the habitual and restrictive prisons of our own creation, to begin the internal call and the longing of our heart and to place ourselves in the embers of the fires of direct experience so we can mature, savor and complete what we really are. Mindfulness, as a liberating practice, calls us to face and honor the root causes of our individual and collective anguish and to carefully observe how they act in us. Moreover, what it really asks us to do is to be willing to observe what moves us—the root meaning of the term emotion—and learn to remain in our feelings in ways that allow us to harness their power to teach, heal and channel growth, not simply reacting and seeing ourselves as always overwhelmed and imprisoned by them. Daniel Goleman describes the cornerstone of emotional intelligence as consciousness of the present moment or, in fact, mindfulness.

The convergent activity of meditative practice and the invitation to take care of ourselves, and help the world, demand that each of us assume full responsibility for the well-being and evolutionary journey of all human beings and place that responsibility at the forefront of life, no matter what our role or profession is (p.340). What makes it possible for us to accept this responsibility is the strength of our universal longing for freedom and happiness and our desire to accompany each other on this journey. Living in this way is the basis of a radical change in our vision of the self, of healing, and of the therapeutic relationship.