

## sponsor spotlight

# Kerrie Liles Lauck KLauckwork

Written by Karen Martin, staff writer

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing attention on the present moment with acceptance.

"It sounds easier than it is," Kerrie Lauck says, but with repeated practice, "you learn how to train your attention, become more aware of and change your actions and reactions, lower your stress level, reduce anxiety and depression, deal with chronic pain, and strengthen your immune system."

Kerrie started a company called KLauckwork to help individuals, workplaces, and other organizations re-assemble scattered awareness and move toward wellness through mindfulness training. "There's a way out of the myriad distractions," she says. "Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing."

And, at what may be the beginning of the end of a pandemic (along with other complex economic, social and political conflicts) that has induced free-floating stress and anxiety as well as a sense of foreboding and confusion, it might be more important than ever.

The concept is firmly based in neuroscience, and with practice can positively change the neural pathways in your brain, she says. "Working with individuals — in

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Kerrie also offers a virtual group on Tuesdays that incorporates teaching, storytelling, mindfulness practice, and feedback. "I opened in September, so the group started virtually right from the start because of the pandemic," she says. "There are benefits to the virtual approach. Folks can attend no matter where they are — their office, car, bed, airport, hotel, or kitchen table. Although some connection is lost by being virtual, the convenience of it is hard to beat. I'm grateful for the online option and feel that even when the pandemic has abated, I will still offer a virtual option because people like the convenience."

Individuals are billed on an hourly basis, with price breaks after four one-hour sessions and eight one-hour sessions. Workplace and group billing is structured around the type of event and time required. The weekly virtual group is a monthly cost.

Kerrie followed a meandering route to becoming a mindfulness trainer. A native of Searcy, she attended the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville; "apparently I didn't want to leave, staying for seven-plus years," she says. "Thankfully, I didn't leave with just one degree."

That second degree was a Juris Doctor.

After graduation, she moved to Little Rock and took a job in an established private practice "where I cut my teeth as a lawyer, though my dream was to someday pursue an occupation that made even more use of my undergraduate focus on psychology and social work."

After private practice, "I moved to public practice in the legislative branch of state government, where I stayed for almost 18 years. Along the way, I discovered mindfulness."

After nearly 21 years of law and considerable opportunities "to apply mindfulness practice to my personal life and the craziness of being a lawyer, I made the decision to turn all my energy to teaching mindfulness. I began guiding mindfulness groups in all sorts of places about a decade ago and took certification courses to learn as much as I could and to share it with adults, teens, and kids, and bring it into the workplace."

She's lived in Hillcrest since 2000. "My son (a freshman at Central High School) and I are in our second home on Linwood Court because we love it so much."

One of the best examples of the practice's power has aided Kerrie as a parent. "We cognitively know that reacting to our children is the last thing to do in the heat of a moment, yet it's difficult to stop ourselves before we do," she says. "My mindfulness practice has helped me to learn how to create space between my child's 'event' and my response, which in turn has created much better outcomes for us. It has helped me cultivate much more patience with my child, and we end up communicating in the ways he needs."

A simple mindfulness exercise to clear your head and improve your focus "is to incorporate five minutes of 'white space' into your day — turn off your phone and the TV, silence any notifications on your computer, and give yourself over to focusing on doing nothing; you are a human be-ing, not a human do-ing!"

Next, "close your eyes and imagine you are sitting beside a gentle stream with leaves floating by. When you realize you're caught in a thought, you've picked



up a leaf. Gently toss the leaf back into the stream and watch the water. You can take as many white spaces throughout your day as you'd like."

For Kerrie, the most challenging aspect of guiding mindfulness is remembering that the goal is the journey itself of sharing mindfulness with others.

"Related to that is not trying to break through to a resistant client since by sharing mindfulness with someone, I am doing the only thing I can do in the moment. And there are seeds being planted that will unfold when the time is right."



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