

Feedback from past participants of the MSC intensive taught by Tina and Pete Gibson in September 2017 at Sophia

### **What worked for me?**

*I want to say how very grateful I feel to have been at this workshop. It continues to resonate for me a week later, and this, I'm sure, will continue. What I liked overall the most is that, for me, the way the workshop was run, starting with the first correspondence about it, was in keeping with the values it teaches. I felt welcomed and embraced by friendship, curiosity, respect and compassion. I brought along my struggles and vulnerability, and felt safe to allow these to be seen.*

*Given I'm a beginner to MSC, I found pretty much all of the meditations and informal practices beneficial in some way.*

*To learn to drop into the present moment and press the pause button. The program gave me a space to accept myself, in all its parts...to accept the struggle. It provided a space away from the daily grind with others who were easy to trust. Enjoyed the poetry*

### **Did the program meet my main reason for attending?**

*The program exceeded my expectations. The whole concept of self compassion was foreign to me prior to attending the program and now I feel I have access to some very valuable tools to help me continue to activate and maintain my calming system and so much more....*

*Yes - I have left the program with a greater understanding of MSC and myself, am more kind and gentle to myself, and feel more emotionally resilient. I feel motivated to continue the practices.*

### **What was most useful?**

- *Working through my barriers to self-compassion. And that we revisited this a few times.*
- *The activity where we envisaged what we would most desire from a person who was visiting us if we were bedridden – this really helped me connect to my compassionate voice.*
- *Understanding that unmet emotional needs are often at the heart of emotional pain, and the negativity bias. Understanding that I have the capacity and skills to be able to meet those needs myself.*
- *Understanding that there is often a positive motivation behind the inner critic, and criticizing the criticizer is unhelpful*
- *Understanding shame*
- *The amount of meditation – I really appreciated these practices, and felt energized and calm by the end of the day.*
- *The soothing touch, and the frequency with which we used this, as it took a while for this practice to resonate with me.*
- *Striving vs disillusionment*
- *Empathy vs compassion*
- *The wrist band – its been a very helpful reminder since the course*

*The blend of input, meditations, poems, reflections, journaling and discussions in both the small and large groups. By far, the sharing of stories by both the facilitators and participants in such a caring and honest way was very valuable. The dynamics of this group was so conducive to learning, sharing and connecting with each other.*

*The aspect that stands out was the 'being with' the other participants and teachers – very useful experiencing the perspective that we all suffer and find 'being human' hard in so many ways – the sense of solidarity in this was wonderful to experience and equally wonderful to continue to recall, even with the programme now over. .*

*Also, very useful to experience 'being with' the teachers, and the perspectives and orientations they live out in how the program is managed, in what is said in the teaching, in how participants are responded to... wonderful kindness to experience, being 'taken seriously' but held lightly. .*

*Refreshers re. the meditations and concepts plus a lot of new information, including evidence base. I also have greater motivation to use this for myself personally consistently! Before I was approaching it in a bit of a random way but the program has definitely given me greater understanding and focus.*

### **Feedback on facilitators:**

*Hearing the personal stories of presenters made it authentic and real.*

*Tina's examples and her ability as a storyteller made it easy to relate and understand concepts and exercises. Tina's use of humour was important given the heavy discussions and this was so natural and beautifully woven in to each session.*

*Pete was gentle, quietly spoken and offered a soothing and calming presence together with a wise and friendly ear. His honesty and integrity shone.*

*Tina was warm, authentic and funny, which set the stage for an open, trusting group. One of the main things was that she herself used self-compassion – this has helped me apply it too. I appreciated the use of personal anecdotes which normalized the struggles of MSC, and a way through such struggles. I appreciated Pete and Emma's contributions too.*

*Relaxed and informative*

*I continue to be blown away by your skills, humility and integrity, Tina. Your organization and generosity with the handouts, the emails with resources and the beautiful little keepsakes were incredible. I love my stone, and have been wearing my wristband all week. I loved the humour and the gentle presence and availability of both you and Pete, and the loving interactions between you.*

*The being taken seriously – no shaming, nothing too silly, everything accepted – whilst being held lightly – the sense that everything can be managed, held, laughed with ... so comforting and a wonderful orientation that I'm often referring now.*

*I appreciated the warmth and humour of Tina and gentle nature of Pete*

*Tina, you are quite possibly one of the most inspiringly beautiful souls I have ever met. I feel blessed to have shared the time you so graciously gave us.*

*Tina, your contribution was significant in creating a safe, warm, kind and comfortable learning environment. Your expertise and experience in MSC was evident throughout the program as well as your ability to provide lots of relevant examples to explain a point/concept. Tina you were also very willing and open to share personal stories as and when appropriate and have a good laugh too...lots of good laughs!! Your sense of humour really added some lovely shades of lightness and release throughout the 4 days. Perfect.*

*It was great to have Pete also; he often added value by his insights and presence.*

*Pete has a way of being kind, gentle, quiet, warm and thoughtful. It was great to be able to chat a few things out with him in the breaks.*

*Tina's teaching skills are wonderful – she expresses ideas very clearly and succinctly, with absolutely beautiful language and images. She also has terrific skills in leading and responding to the group. Keeping us moving (with kindness), keeping discussion focussed whilst letting conversations open up...very skilful – thank you.*

**The Sophia venue:**

*Sophia is a perfect venue for this type of program, especially the beautiful garden. I really feel this added to the value and benefits of this program.*

*Absolutely beautiful, the venue supports the program magnificently.*

*Fabulous*

*Venue was perfect for the exercise. The garden provided an outstanding backdrop to stare at each day and the opportunity to take oneself outside anytime was invaluable. It was great doing exercises outside. The indoors was roomy and flexible and you could easily be in the back to have some space or be upfront when you wanted to. Also good for small group work. The provision of blankets and mats was a great touch when a bit chilly.*

*A very beautiful, sacred space. Perfect.*

*Beautiful venue – special to have the library and garden close by*

**Other comments:**

*In the last few days I have shared some of my reflections and learnings from the MSC with a couple of friends. I found it interesting that one dear friend said she felt a 'shift' in me (in a positive way) as we chatted about the program and other things. Just in the way I spoke and in the way I looked...less tense, more relaxed, more accepting of what is.*

*To be honest, I have felt a 'shift' in me too...*

*Yesterday, the other friend said I was 'glowing'.... she is also trained in mindfulness and we had a really rich conversation about the benefits of the many calming practices accessible to us.*

*It was powerful to visit core values again and learning to view them through the lens of mindfulness. I was touched by the ease to be with others, the common humanity – and with this ease came acceptance and a longing to be kinder to myself.*

*All of the teachers contributed to a relaxed and open environment that supported us as a group but also really engaged me personally. 4 days of this could have been horrible – either boring or just too overwhelming, but this was definitely not the case. Thank you ☺*

*The intensive MSC course was an extremely valuable way to spend 4 days. The presenters and facilitators provided a safe environment for exploring and sharing a range of life's difficult issues. The exercises, meditations and discussions were practical and useful but most importantly I have been able to easily apply them in my everyday life. It was a well-constructed course that allowed*

*each individual to participate as much as they felt comfortable and to take from it what they needed for their own personal circumstances. The presenters were compassionate, kind and wise and helped me to challenge myself which is exactly what I needed.*

*I wanted to understand mindfulness and learn how to practice it and now I know. Yes my expectations were met and so much more. Being self-aware and checking in with myself regularly is an important tool to have.*

- Having four full days was useful as it helped me to immerse myself fully in the exercise. It was important however to have a day off afterwards to relax, regroup and reflect*
- I appreciated the invitation to go home each night and rest from the intense days*
- I appreciated the suggestion not to look at the handouts during the course. 3 days later, I took the booklet to bed with me and enjoyed a quiet reflection time with the resources*
- If an exercise did not work at first, there was time for it to evolve e.g. I found it hard to come up with the loving kindness phrases that I would believe but when I did the meditation where a friend visited and gave me a gift, the gift was a card with the words on it – very powerful.*
- To realise that crying and sadness are okay and most of all not to try to suppress and stop the emotion but to be with it and not beat oneself up for crying. It made me recall a situation when I was in my early 20s and my Nanna became very sick. I was very close to my grandmother as she was the one person who never judged me and adored me so I was very sad that she was going to die. I travelled along with other family from Adelaide to Mt Gambier to be with her and I cried a lot. I remember a family member saying to me 'Are you still crying? You are making it difficult for the rest of us'. Pete's comment to me about letting myself cry without judgement was important to me during the course.*