

# Feedback from Students Interviewed in the Film *Shanti*

## What happens in the courses?

### A. S. Social Work

I would call the loving kindness exercise an exercise in compassion. So, you think of a person that you like very much and then you consciously send energy to this person, while imagining the connection you feel to them. And through this imagining, through this opening of the heart, something simply happens.

A more difficult exercise is: you imagine someone you have no connection to – for example, a bus driver you just saw. And you send energy to him as well, that same warm, loving energy you feel for someone you really like.

And then, in the most difficult exercise, you imagine someone you simply do not like, or who really annoys you, and you send out that energy to them and something happens – so a lot is going on there. Even if, in the beginning you have to overcome yourself, maybe because the ego is a bit in the way, in the end it also benefits you.

### J. H. Social Work

The mindfulness day that we did was really exciting, simply for the reason that we got to spend longer than just 1.5 hours of a semester class to indulge in some specific meditation theme. [...]

We did walking meditation. We walked around the garden for about a quarter of an hour just focusing on our feet and on walking. [...]

We did mindful cooking, where we tried to cook a meal together without speaking to the other 15 characters participating. That was an impressive experience because, in the end I did not think it would work as well as it did. The special thing was that although no one was speaking, we somehow arranged and agreed without conversation to create a meal and then at the end of the day share dinner together, and it was surprisingly good.

## Projects – the Munich Model in practice

### J. H. Social Work

Basically, the idea came to me that meditation offers another tool that enables me to come into contact with and work with young people. In my case, I see that the daily lives of young people engaged with competitive sports are influenced by a rigid structure, with a lot of stress, and expectations on all sides. Then I realized that I can apply what I myself have experienced in this course, to my work with young people. And here with these adolescents in a meditation lesson – which was then also effectively maybe only 10 minutes – we can still create a framework together that enables them to leave behind the constant pressure of this world of tennis.

### H. B. Social Work

My project was to implement a group for volunteer hospice attendants at a inpatient hospice facility, for the regular practice of mindfulness and meditation together, as well as the application of these practices in their work. I've learned so much by observing Andreas de Bruin through his meditation courses, how one can be guided through the topic, at the same time sharing background knowledge. The end result for me was really positive. My project was very well-received and the people were really excited, so I would say it was a success. I did this project in 2014 as a bachelor's thesis and up to now – 2017 – the group still exists.

### A. S. Social Work

We went to an elementary school together and developed a project on the theme of mindfulness in primary school. We thought about which exercises would be best [...]. The kids really enjoyed participating and it was fun. Just to be in class, to see how the kids participate and how they engage in the exercises. We just did classic exercises: the raisin exercise, the lemon exercise, the relaxation visu-

alization exercise, abdominal breathing . . . , it was so well received, that the school now also intends to continue the program in cooperation with the university, and is pleased to hear from students who have further ideas to contribute.

## How does one grade meditation? The potential for our educational system

### I. B. Evaluated the Munich Model for her Bachelor Thesis

This also reflects my own thoughts a bit – that this space for self-reflection and going inward is simply not considered in our education system. And I just believe that all this knowledge we get there on a daily basis is overwhelming sometimes, and that we also need time to be and grow together, through an inner maturation process. And I believe it's just about this, as well as that. You combine things and promote intuition and personality and self-development, self-reflection – as well as the transfer of knowledge.

## What does Science know about Meditation?

### P. K Communication Design

The stress was really something. I'd say I experienced at times very high levels of tension. And the meditation has made it possible for me to slow down – somehow to see things as not so important.

Then we also have the amygdala. This is the area which becomes active when anxiety is triggered. And we see that this area is smaller for meditators, so it would appear that we are dealing with certain things differently again, so anxiety doesn't develop. We know that in the insular cortex, body perception and the connection to one's emotions is strengthened, so that you register faster if you're excited and that also you can better register and make use of the impulses of the body. In regulating the emotional response, one has to consider how we deal with emotions, and for example, when anger comes up you might stop and think for a moment, or consider other options than being furious or upset, and this helped me a lot in reducing my own stress.

### L. O. Chemical Engineering

For example, in contentious situations, I am more relaxed. I think differently, react differently and not so hastily. Mainly I think about it before I respond and I try to put myself in the others' shoes.

### I. B. Evaluated the Munich Model for her Bachelor Thesis

It is worth noting that the students who rate themselves as more attentive also act with more self-efficacy or experience themselves as self-effective, meaning that their subjective beliefs independently give them strength to change certain situations or it strengthens their own efforts.