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**Sniffing Out Mindfulness: Your Nose Knows**

**By Maya Talisman Frost**

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A nose is a funny thing.

We tend to think about our nose only when it is too big, stuffed up, ready to explode in a sneeze, or focusing our attention on a particularly heavenly or nauseating smell. Yet, day in and day out, our nose is working hard for us, creating countless opportunities for mindfulness while preventing us from being mouth-breathers.

It's impossible to see much of your own nose unless you look in the mirror, but there it is, taking up prime real estate in the middle of your face. It's the center attraction, but despite its bulls-eye position, it doesn't get much respect.

Women outline their eyes and lips for emphasis, but use tricky make-up techniques to minimize the nose. Some people pierce their nose for a bit of exotic adornment, but for the most part, the nose is sort of neglected. It harbors little nasties. It runs. It's, well, a bit offensive.

That's why I was excited to read Gabrielle Glaser's book, *The Nose: A Profile of Sex, Beauty & Survival*. It's a fascinating and snort-worthy look at this funny-looking facet of our faces. Her nasal passage through history offers some surprising hints of hilarity and dastardly doings.

Imagine my delight to discover that Gabrielle, Queen of The Nose, lives right here in Portland! She was happy to answer my questions in order to help us become more mindful of this amazing appendage.

Question: How did you get your first whiff of an idea for this book?

"My nose has always been a focal point of my life. Whether it was its size (big), its hyperfunction (an acute sense of smell), or its dysfunction (five sinus surgeries and a two-year-loss of my sense of smell), it always made me think in ways I doubt other people's noses did. When I was small and

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growing up in rural Oregon, I'd stretch my skin on one side so it wouldn't be so big in profile. Good or bad smells had the ability to really, really affect my mood. I couldn't understand how people could smell, say, bad fried food and even consider eating in such a restaurant, when such odors made me want to cry.

Finally, once I had 'grown into' my physical nose, I got very ill as an adult. For many years I couldn't breathe well, and I felt sick all the time. There's nothing like an illness to make you learn about a sick body part. So, to answer your question, one day I was having lunch with my agent and we started talking about smells, and how they affected us. He suggested turning my experiences into a quirky book."

Question: What are the most surprising, um, nuggets that you revealed about the nose?

"Probably the most striking things I learned involved the pseudoscience of the nose, and the terrible

experiments that were carried out in the 1940s by Ivy League doctors—especially on immigrants and women.

I was also amused to learn how much the physical nose played a role in history. In the 18th century, nasal shape was used to determine psychological characteristics of people, and such 'methodology' was even applied when picking national and military leaders."

If you're like most people, many of your most vivid memories are inextricably linked to a specific smell. Lilacs in bloom, freshly-cut grass, burning leaves, pine boughs—these conjure very distinct memories of seasons past. Our sense of smell helps us create memories while serving as a trigger years later as we recall them.

The nose is being studied for its role in Alzheimer's disease. According to Gabrielle, "Though we start losing some of our ability to detect odors as early as age 30, and it is common to suffer smell loss after age 60, a rapid deterioration among senior citizens can sometimes be associated with cognitive impairment."

Doctors in Portugal are using nasal tissue in adult stem-cell research. Although embryonic stem-cell research remains highly controversial, nobody seems too upset at the idea of a little nose-picking in the name of science.

Imagine the possibility of finding cures for Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, paralysis and cancer thanks to our noses. It's enough to make you appreciate your own olfactory factory—no matter what the size or shape.

Be mindful of your nose. Breathe in and smell the world. Notice your fragrant memories as they waft by throughout the day.

The nose plays a huge role in connecting us to all that matters most. It may lead to some surprising cures for what ails us.

And that's nothing to sneeze at.

Maya Talisman Frost is a mind masseuse offering specialized mindfulness training in Portland, Oregon. Her work has inspired thinkers in over 100 countries. To subscribe to her free weekly ezine, the Friday Mind Massage, visit

<http://www.messageyourmind.com>

[maya@mindmasseuse.com](mailto:maya@mindmasseuse.com)

## **The Art of Conscious Living**

**By Yvonne Chiarelli, PdD**

### **The Art of Conscious Living by Yvonne Chiarelli, PdD**

Mindfulness is an ancient Buddhist practice that has profound relevance for today. It is relevant because mindfulness is a practice of being consciously awake, experiencing the fullness of the present moment, and living in harmony with yourself and the world. The practice of mindfulness allows you to cultivate an appreciation for experiencing your life as you are living it. One of its effects is an increased ability to see the extraordinary in the mundane. Mindfulness has to do with being in touch and seeing what is so.

Practicing mindfulness is simple but not easy. Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally. It requires a mental discipline to wake up in each moment, and to keep waking up for each oncoming moment. This kind of extraordinary quality of attention requires effort. It requires such effort because you are almost programmed to forget, or you succumb to unawareness, or wish to become deliberately unaware. The use of medicants of all kinds is prevalent in our culture ranging from drugs, over busi-ness, TV watching, and other activities that tend to narrow our attention.

The power of mindfulness is in its practice and everyday applications. Applying mindfulness as a strategy can have significant positive outcomes on the job. How many times have you wasted time because you forgot to take something with you? How many times did you respond just a bit inappropriately

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because you weren't fully listening? Did you actually experience your lunch? How many times did that tiny forgotten detail cause more effort than necessary?

Mindfulness is empowering because it cultivates greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of the present moment reality. Mindfulness as a work or life strategy:

- > Saves time
- > Increases memory retention
- > Preserves integrity
- > Improves performance
- > Improves perception.

Who wouldn't like that? Successful people are highly skilled in using their focused attention on their activity, even if they spend little time on that activity. They can efficiently absorb, process, and discern and at very high rate when focusing their deep and mindful attention.

I challenge you to be fully awake, aware, focused in the present, and see the extraordinary in the mundane for the next two hours. Be ever vigilant that you are paying attention.

There are many resources on mindfulness at your local or virtual bookseller. Here are two that I can recommend:

1. *Wherever You Go, There You Are : Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life* by Jon Kabat–Zinn
2. *The Miracle of Mindfulness : A Manual on Meditation* -- by Thich Nhat Hanh, Mobi Ho (Translator)

Having a personal support team is a great way to keep you on track. You can also use a coach to help you reach your goals on personal growth and your desire to handcraft a life of choice.

By Yvonne Chiarelli. Yvonne is a professional coach providing personal support, clarity, and strategy through collaborative relationship. For more information, visit her website at: <http://www.goalminderplus.com> Free subscriptions to e–Letters are available. ©2002 Yvonne Chiarelli

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