

RECOVERING THE **LOST ART** OF LISTENING

RICHARD REOCH



A more mindful
world - it's within
us all

Mindfulness as a
global force for
change

ALSO FEATURED...

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SAM BEARD

FOUNDER AND
PRESIDENT, GIFT



GIFT is a registered non-profit,
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Happily GIFT is growing and making important strides in creating the More Mindful World we envision. I am thankful every day for the team that works tirelessly to turn the vision into reality.

- GIFT has generated \$1.3 million of donated services combined from local and global volunteers and our professional staff.
- In Delaware the demand for mindfulness training is abounding in our compassionate schools and in health care, and the doors are opening for increased veterans and military training - on our way to train more than 5,000 Delawareans in mindfulness in the next three years.
- Our Superpower Summit has now interviewed more than 50 global headliners who have recorded their stories on the benefits of mindfulness and how it is changing lives. The headliners include Jack Canfield, Dr. Daniel Amen, ChadeMeng Tan, Lisa Nichols, Dr. Judson Brewer, Mike Dooley, Dean Radin and Dr. Bob Rotella.
- Our Universal Classroom Project is blossoming and generating a tremendous grassroots enthusiasm among all types of education and community-based leaders.
- Two days in London working with Jamie Bristow and the Hon. Chris Ruane helped clarify the most effective way that The Mindfulness Initiative and GIFT could best reach out to enlist governments into mindfulness.
- With the Veterans Initiative, GIFT enlisted a pro bono law firm, VanNess Feldman, to guide us and work with us to educate and enlist the support from U.S. Senators and appropriate US House of Representatives members.

The days at GIFT are long and exciting - all with deep appreciation to everyone who shares the vision.

Sam Beard

A MORE MINDFUL WORLD

IT'S WITHIN US ALL.

We've got a passion inside us to bring the benefits of mindfulness to everyone. There are so many known and scientifically proven benefits--and ones that simply makes us feel really, really good. **We exist because we imagine a different world. A more mindful world.** A world where access to all the inner technologies is made available to every child, parent, teacher and school across the globe so our future generations can lead the way.

A world where we honour our inwards journey as much as the outer experience of

life. A world where our mental health is loved, nurtured, respected, supported and honoured as the precious gift it is. **A world where a CEO and a first grader speak the same language of mindfulness, empathy, gratitude, and resilience as a good way forward.**

Right now across the globe, there's a growing group of leading influencers, activators, initiators, connectors, communicators, change makers, experts and artists, collaborating without competition, to find the simplest solutions to build a more mindful world.

MINDFULNESS AS A GLOBAL FORCE FOR CHANGE

giftglobal.org is a gathering place for collaboration and action to advance mindfulness as a global solution.

giftglobal.org brings together diverse mindfulness approaches to inspire, educate and connect individuals with their gift - the ability to elevate consciousness through harnessing the untapped power of our minds.

giftglobal.org also works from leadership to grassroots to help fully integrate mindfulness technologies into the fabric of our social, educational, economic and governmental institutions. Learn how you can join with us to create a **More**

Imagine the change if one billion more people practiced mindfulness in their daily lives.

Mindful World. GIFT was founded by **Sam Beard** as a nonprofit to serve as a crucial bridge between innovators, policymakers, educators and the general public with the goal of improving the lives of one billion people over the next decade.





RICHARD REOCH

Recovering The Lost Art of Listening

Richard Reoch has put into practice the tools of mindfulness to deal with some of the most horrific and gut-wrenching situations humanity has faced in recent decades.

He has devoted his life to defending human rights, working for peace and protecting the environment. Born in Toronto, Canada and raised in a Buddhist family, Richard moved to London in 1971 to begin a 23- year long career with Amnesty International, becoming its global media chief. He also served as President of Shambhala, one of the world's largest Buddhist organizations. He was a Trustee of The Rainforest Foundation and has been engaged in conflict resolution in Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, among others. He was recently invited to chair the Trustees of the Mindfulness Initiative, which provides training and support for the application of mindfulness in public policy development.



Richard Reoch with senior monks and police during the war in Sri Lanka

Today, there is a heightened level of aggression and hostility in public discourse in countries around the world. The spaces for mutual understanding, compromise and working together despite our differences have been largely shut down. The world is crying out for people who are capable of listening to the other side and opening their hearts to those with whom they may deeply disagree. If we remain in a state of perpetual combat, we are not going to be able to address some of the deep issues that are plaguing contemporary society. Nor will we be able to work cooperatively as a species to protect our biosphere.

Being a good listener definitely requires some inner work. Thankfully, one of the great fruits

of mindfulness practice is the recovery of the lost art of listening. In order to be open to another person and to be able to listen fully to what they are communicating - more than simply what they say - we have to be able to understand what our own minds are doing. We need to be able to set aside our thoughts and prejudices, as well as our egocentricity and our attachment to our opinions in order to give space to others. That makes it genuinely possible to listen more profoundly to what is being communicated behind the words.

Once I met an army commander who was in charge of units that were accused of torture. It was my job to open a discussion with him. In my experience, what is absolutely essential is to enter into any such dialogue with a spirit of

inquiry. Doing so is the most valuable use of that time together. The chance of convincing a person to change their beliefs and behaviors in one conversation is quite minimal. Rather, the great gift to come out of the conversation is to find out why the other person sees the world in such a radically different way. Sometimes, the result of that spirit of inquiry produces surprising results.

I opened the conversation with the commander from a place of honesty and inquiry. What I soon discovered was that rather than being defensive or hostile to me, he revealed something entirely different. He explained in great depth the efforts he was making to prevent torture under his command, most notably by cooperating with the International Red Cross to identify very specific incidents so he could deal with the officers who were carrying out torture. He also indicated to me that if he faced a lack of cooperation from them, he would close those interrogation centers down.

I knew that he was not fooling me, and I was able to verify everything that he said. I also knew that he faced political pressure and required considerable courage to act the way he did. In fact, in the course of this conversation, the person, who from outward appearances seemed to be the very emblem of the crime of torture, turned out to be, in my long years of experience, one of the most determined fighters against torture I have met.

I have learned things that I could never have imagined. I have met Buddhist monks who have publicly been in favor of war. In order to understand them, I have spent long periods of time in their temples, not endeavoring to argue with them but simply to become familiar with them. Through this patient relationship-building, I found that their public posture was sometimes very different to their private agonies. So, I think this principle about actively being willing to inquire and listen to others – especially those who are different from us or with whom we disagree - has for me been

extremely productive in terms of opening up dialogue and contemplating profound questions.

The seeds of my life's work were sown in my unusual upbringing. When I was 6 years old, my parents dragged me off to become a Buddhist. When I say dragged, they were not coercive— at that age you do what your parents do! The extraordinary thing about this was that I had direct experience of being a member of a minority in two ways: first, we were the only non-Japanese people in that community for at least 6 years; and simultaneously with that I was the only Buddhist in my school, taunted and jeered at by classmates who had no idea what they were talking about. It also gave me a very early understanding of the meaning of war and injustice. For the Japanese people in Canada who had survived the war, words like **“Hiroshima”** and **“Nagasaki”** had a very special meaning. They had also experienced internment without charge or trial during the war. So, looking back, that really shaped my life without my realizing it. It determined what I would do for the rest of my life and introduced me to incredibly helpful inner tools for doing that work—such as mindfulness and compassion practices.

Still, there are experiences in my work for which I don't think anything can prepare you. Recently, I was in the living hell of refugee camps on the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh to see the Rohingya people who are the victims of Buddhist terror. They were certainly surprised to see an old white man who looked them in the eye and said, **“I am a Buddhist, and I have come here to express my horror and my sorrow at what has been done in the name of Buddhism, and which is utterly the opposite of the Buddhist teachings.”**

People have questioned what the good people of Germany were doing during the Holocaust, or what the good people of Spain were doing during the Spanish Inquisition,

or what moderate Muslims have been doing in the face of the rise of Isis. In these refugee camps, I found myself facing that same question. I felt the weight of responsibility as a Buddhist, looking into the eyes of people who have experienced unspeakable horror at the hands of people who claim to be defending Buddhism.

Encouragingly, I have found that mindfulness can build bridges across differences that seem to separate us from our common humanity. Over the last four years, I have been spending part of my time teaching at a university in Morocco. It began as a project to teach mindfulness to young imams who had completed their primary Islamic education and were due to become the equivalent of priests in their communities. I wondered if it would be possible to really bridge the cultural and conceptual barriers that have come up over so many centuries of misunderstanding and conflict.

But what I found was that the presentation of contemporary neuroscience combined with the direct experience of pure mindfulness practice crossed all barriers. The first comment that these young imams made to me after their first practice session was **“this will help our prayer.”** I realized in that moment that mindfulness practice is in a way the most pure expression of our common humanity. It is something that transcends cultures and history. It is in a sense an expression of our essential nakedness in the cosmos. That deeply personal experience is the basis of profound listening.

There is understandable skepticism about whether the ancient traditions of mindfulness practice can be made publicly available on a mass scale and still have the same potency. But if there was ever a point in history where as many people as possible could benefit from that personal experience of mindfulness (and the resulting interpersonal experience), it is now.

That is why I believe that, while there is no guarantee of success, we cannot afford not to make this experiment.

Richard Reoch is Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Mindfulness Initiative, lead partner in the GIFT Mindful Nations Initiative as well as a member of the GIFT Global Advisory Board.

For more information on Richard's work, visit www.richardreoch.info

Richard's latest article, [Lion's Roar: Meditating on the Buddha in the midst of Buddhist Terror](https://www.lionsroar.com/221362-2/) Can be viewed at <https://www.lionsroar.com/221362-2/>



LESLYE MOORE

Something Must Be Keeping Me Here for a Reason

If a cat has 9 lives, Leslye Moore surely has 18 or more. For over 20 years, Leslye was an international aid worker serving in some of the most dangerous outposts imaginable - Rwanda in the uptick to the genocide, strife-torn Bosnia and Croatia and remote Zaire during a civil war, to name just a few.

Her stories rival the most hair-raising action-adventure film or novel but for the fact that they are all true and she somehow survived to share it all with us. More importantly, she has put her experiences (and her own personal recovery from PTSD) all to good use helping people recover from the trauma of war and rebuild their lives.



Rwanda (1993) in my clinic with social worker Alice who perished in the genocide

I have been on the verge of death so many times that I can only conclude that something must keep me here for a reason. The list of close encounters includes but is not limited to malaria, bombings, poisoning, motorcycle mishaps in the jungle, marauding militia, artillery barrages, sectarian violence, death threats, lightning jolts and skin of the teeth evacuations.

What compelled me to put myself in such harm's way? It started with how my mom instilled this idea of service in me at a very early age - of being useful and helpful to others. Added to that was my adventurous side of being attracted to different languages and cultures. The other element was definitely an addiction to adrenalin, my drug of choice during that time of my life. You see this addiction in a lot of aid workers and military people. It's that very intense visceral experience when you're close to death that you feel the most alive. **There was something of a thrill in seeking those extremes that I (and almost everyone I know who shares this experience) wasn't fully conscious of feeling at the time. It was only when I discovered meditation years later that I suddenly had zero desire to go into situations like that any more. Maybe age and wisdom also had something to do with it.**

My time in Rwanda perhaps gives the best

example of the crazy life I lived as an aid worker. Returning to the US after serving in the Peace Corps in Zaire (which is another harrowing story by itself), **I got a graduate degree in international development and was working for the University of San Francisco's center for AIDS Prevention Studies. There I was interviewed for a job that had two major requirements: to speak French and be willing to go to a war zone. Pick me!**

It was 1993, and Rwanda was so dangerous that the US government was evacuating people. The civil war between the Hutu and Tutsi populations was heating up that first year I was there. The director of the project was pregnant and back in California, so she pretty much put me in charge. **It was at the time when people were still trying to learn what HIV/AIDS was, how it was transmitted and the natural progression of the virus. At that time there were no medications available, and in the capital Kigali where I was, about one third of the population was HIV positive.** So there were some crazy scenarios going on related to that.

They would come with bags, and we had security guards checking them for bombs. Bombing and poisoning were the big things in Rwanda at that time. You could buy hand grenades in the market. Easy access. At any time I was waiting to get blown up or poisoned. Our head cook where we were living was known to come from a family of well-

known poisoners. When we found out he was stealing and had to let him go, we had to scrub down every pot and pan and throw out all the food to make sure we weren't going to get poisoned by him. If we went to a bar, the waiter would always open the bottles at our table, and then you'd have to keep your hand over the bottle to make sure no one could slip poison in. **I would go out with friends, and we'd always go to the place they had recently blown up because we figured if they just bombed this place yesterday, it should be safe to go to for a couple of weeks.** It was a sick and twisted way of going about things, but the situation was deteriorating quickly as the war got closer to Kigali.

The closest I got to getting blown up was during one of my daily stops at the post office. I was driving away from picking up the mail for about 30 seconds when I heard a big explosion. It was the mailbox next to mine that had a bomb in it that blew up. Added to this was my accidental exposure to contaminated blood. And the time when my boss (who had returned from California) had thought I was an intruder and almost shot me. Then I was with a friend eating chocolate mousse in a little French café when machine gun fire went off a block away. I didn't bat an eyelash and kept eating my mousse. **Then it dawned on me—this is probably not OK for me to be OK with it.**

There were IEDs on the roads hidden under palm fronds. I was getting used to seeing dead bodies in the street. People were being beaten to death before my eyes. I knew the genocide was going to happen, just waiting for something to trigger it, perhaps just a month or two away. I decided for a whole number of reasons that it was time for me to get out of there. I knew if I bore witness to the genocide, it would crush me as a human. I just wouldn't be able to recover and be effective in the world any more. Most of my 50 staff members were killed in the genocide. **My young 26 year old mind did not know how to begin to even process this. It wasn't until 11 years later in a silent meditation retreat that it all came out, and I cried for 3 days. It was intense grief and a release of the survivor's guilt I had endured.**

Returning to the States after another dangerous stint in Bosnia and Croatia, I was in Miami as



the director of a resettlement agency working with refugees and victims of human trafficking. Here I was, dealing with a crazy dysfunctional office, trying to help trafficked people when their traffickers were still at large, many in the Russian and Chinese mafias. **It was a hairy situation—and both I and my husband (who I had married in Bosnia) had PTSD. We were a mess. I wasn't sleeping. I had digestive problems. I had an out of control temper. Hypervigilance. My staff walked on egg shells around me.**

A colleague of mine working at another agency was using some modalities to help bring relief to people who had been exposed to trauma. She told me about the Art of Living Course by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. **I took the course and it was life altering for me.** The first time I did the SKY Breathing Meditation, I felt this boiling rage coming out of me. Oh my god, what is this? The release of all the pent up anger and rage was appropriate but unexpected. The next day, I was completely blissed out. So that started the journey. As I was healing and began feeling fulfilled inside, that fullness wants to express itself out into the world in terms of service and helping others. **How I was presenting myself to others changed dramatically, from being this hot-headed stressed-out person to being compassionate, a good listener and present for people in a way I could never be before.**

I also slowly became more dissatisfied with my work. My clients were people at the depths of despair, suicidality, depression and anxiety. They were struggling so much, these ghosts of

people, just existing and living for their kids, hoping their children will have it better than they did. I was helping them get jobs and apartments. So what, I thought, what's the point of life if I can't help them in some way to move past that? **I saw how the larger institutions were not focused on the inner well being of these individuals, just the practical, the most basic needs. That's what shifted me out of relief work completely.** I took a leave of absence for a while, went to India and came back committed to work full time with trauma affected populations get their lives back—to thrive as individuals with hope in their eyes and hope for the future.



Peace Corps Service, Bandundu Province, Zaire, 1990

If you would have told me several years back that I'd be working with veterans and loving it, I would have told you that you were nuts. I was always working on the other side of the conflict. War made me crazy because I saw children without parents, and all the suffering and displacement.

I was on a silent meditation retreat that was being taught by a friend, John Osborne, the director at the time of an organization called Project Welcome Home Troops. He showed a video of some veterans who had gone through the program. One was a Vietnam vet describing experiences that were exactly the same that I had—stepping over dead bodies and feeling total numbness. I immediately identified with them, and a month later I was working with the veterans program. At the same time, I was also managing a program in Iraq that taught the same techniques to Iraqi war survivors. **It struck me that these are all suffering human hearts, no matter what side of the conflict they're on, no matter what they saw, did or endured. I made the full shift to really seeing the need. I felt**

very much at home with the veterans. They're incredible people with such heart.

At first, when I speak in front of a new group, I will introduce myself and tell them a little bit of my background but not too much. But as it goes on, I let myself become more vulnerable with them. I'll tell them that I'm sitting here in this seat alive because of men and women like you because I had my butt pulled out of so many hairy situations by military people of many different uniforms. I talk about my experience with PTSD and how I was not dealing with life when I came back. They soon see me as a little beacon of hope, this centered, happy person. ***"Wow, if she could move through that, then maybe that happiness is available for me too."*** They understand that I've never walked in the boots of a military member but had close enough exposure to death and devastation to speak with clarity. They've joked with me, ***"You're a veteran of a different kind—but you were crazy. You were there without a weapon."***

With this work, everything I went through overseas all makes sense. I feel like my whole life has prepared me for the work I'm doing now. What practicing and later teaching meditation has done for me and what I hope it is doing for others is to give a new perspective on life. **Today, it is remarkable how I can have the most horrendous day and go home and sleep like a baby because the stuff doesn't stick to me anymore.**

Leslye Moore serves as national director of Project Welcome Home Troops, which is a GIFT National Partner. Leslye also serves on the GIFT Veterans Initiative's Executive Committee as a Mastermind.

To reach out to Leslye and find out more, visit www.pwht.org



Leslye and her spiritual teacher, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar in Kerala, India



DR. BOB ROTELLA

The Psychology of Greatness

Bob Rotella's job is to help some of the world's greatest athletes improve their performance. He considers himself a coach, but you won't find him talking much about technique and form.

As one of the most renowned sports psychologists, Bob spends most of his time getting people to change the way they view themselves, focusing on improving the attitudes and beliefs that stand in their way from achieving their best. While we may never sink a buzzer beater or catch a pass to win a championship, we can all use the kind of attitude adjustments that Bob Rotella recommends.



It's hard to change anybody at anything unless they really want to change badly. In sports, if you can't get into the starting lineup, you're going to work at getting better.

If you're having trouble with your shooting in basketball or your team is not winning, you get very interested in what you need to do beyond the physical training to change the outcome. Winning is very highly valued, so disciplined athletes are also willing to work on their confidence, their concentration and their composure.

My whole approach is **"let's make this stuff as simple as possible."** It doesn't need to be complicated. I want it to be really understandable so nobody has excuses like **"I don't know what you're talking about."**

It is clear that what makes elite athletes and any person truly successful requires more than talent and good intelligence. Your belief in yourself, your passion, your day-to-day commitment to being in a great state of mind are equally if not more important. Staying positive and optimistic is key. I ask, **"Have you ever had a day when you're in that state of mind?"** Good. So, now we know you are capable of being in that state of mind.

Now you have to get really good at anticipating what are all the things that happen that tend to take you out of that attitude. You have to be prepared to not let those things own you. A lot of people would rather see themselves as a victim. So, you either decide that you're in control of your life because you have a free will or you become the victim and decide that it's everybody else's fault. Success requires taking a lot of personal responsibility.

I spend very little time dealing in the past. If somebody has had a rough upbringing, I'll usually let them tell me about it before I stop them. **"OK, good. Here's the problem. Half of the most successful people in the world came from messed up families. They developed great attitudes and made it big in life. They did wonderful things and did not let how their parents brought them up ruin their lives. The question is, do you want an excuse for being miserable, negative and a pessimist? Or do you want to be one who says, 'I had a really rough time but I'm going to make sure I don't think the way my parents used to treat me'."** I tell them, **"I don't really care why you used to have a bad attitude. Starting today, you're going to have a great attitude because you are capable of doing it, and it's a choice you're going to make."**

At some point you have to take away the excuses. That's the difference between the psychology of greatness and other forms of psychology that dwell in abnormal behaviors. In college, most of the classes are in abnormal psychology. Why aren't we studying the happiest, most successful people in the world, instead of explaining why people are messed up?

The starting point is always this: are you going to go after your dreams or are you going to throw them away? As you grow up, are you going to get bigger ideas and dreams or are you going to lower the bar? At some point, you have to believe in your talent and your ideas and dreams more than anybody else does. You may run into naysayers who tell you "people from this town can't do what you say you want

to do.”**You have to be able to tell them, “Well, I’m going to be the first.”** It’s your life and you get one shot at it. So are you going to believe and go after some big ideas, or are you going to focus on all the things that people say about you that maybe are not fantastic?

What I tell everyone is basically you’re trying to separate yourself from everyone else in the world who does what you do. You might be just lucky enough to have way more talent—but not many people have just way more talent. Somebody might tell me that **“so and so is just lucky.”** I say, **“Sure, luck plays some role but successful people believe that you have to make your own breaks and luck.”** The better your attitude, the more you work, the more you persevere, you start having some lucky things happen to you. And when you get your lucky breaks, you’ve done all the work and learned all the skills and are ready to take advantage of them. But if you haven’t prepared, the opportunities show up and pass you by.

What I do is very honest, and I’ve got to get the people I work with to be very honest as well. If you thought you were performing right up to your ability level coming in second place, then you could live with it. It’s an easy solution for most of us that we’re really not that good. **“I’m good, but I’m just pretty good—I’m never going to be great.”** But when you know you’re not giving it your best, are you ready to look inside and be really honest with yourself?

When you do start living your dreams and begin to experience success, you will face other challenges. The fear of failure is always there. The lack of consistency is another. You may have won golf tournaments, but never a major. You’re talking about people who have spent more time and energy devoted to this one thing more than anything else they’ll ever do in life. And they really care about it. And all of a sudden they have to go and trust what they’ve done. A lot of what that trust is about is getting your conscious mind out of it when the stakes are high—when you have to make that **4-foot** putt in the last hole or that last free throw when the game is on the line.

Most people in sports have to learn how to compartmentalize. Nobody in the stands cares if you had a fight that afternoon with your wife or girlfriend. Michael Jordan said a long time ago that he decided that every night some kid is at the game, and it’s the only chance in their life they are going to see him play—so he better have a great game.

When great athletes are in a big game, they’re going to feel some nervousness. I think there’s a big difference between being nervous and being anxious. Being anxious is a mental state where you’re worrying about missing the shot or having a bad swim. Nervousness is the natural butterflies we feel when we’re excited being in a good competition. You get into your lane and you know the other swimmers are really good, too. You know you have to swim well today if you will have a chance of winning. You learn to get your mind in an optimistic place and turn it loose. You go out there and swim with freedom rather than spending the whole race worrying about having a bad swim.

The big question is always: are you going to be in that positive state of mind everyday or are you going to be a once-in-a-while player, as Vince Lombardi once called it? The people who are the most successful are the everyday players. They’re energized and feeling good everyday. It’s a big part of their purpose to have a great attitude. How do they do it? They have to work very hard at it.

Bob Rotella is a member of the GIFT Global Advisory Board.





DR. JUDSON BREWER

MD, PHD

Making Good Habits A Habit

The expression “no pain, no gain” applies not solely to getting good results at the gym.

Pain is also commonly the big motivator for most of us to start exercising our minds to rid ourselves of problem behaviors and begin to lead happier and healthier lives. Becoming open to trying mindfulness sadly often requires us to hit painful bottom. Denial is over, and continuing the status quo has become unacceptable. No one knows this pattern of behavior better than psychiatrist Judson Brewer MD PhD, one of the world’s foremost experts in mindfulness and the developer of highly effective hand-held technology to help people overcome addictions and anxiety disorders.

He wrote the book on craving (*“The Craving Mind: From Cigarettes to Smartphones to Love – Why We Get Hooked and How We Can Break Bad Habits”*). His presentation of “a simple way how to break a bad habit” was the fourth most watched TED Talk video of 2016, viewed by 10 million people. Dr. Brewer is the Director of Research at the Center for Mindfulness and associate professor in Medicine and Psychiatry at UMass Medical School. He is also adjunct faculty at Yale University, and a research affiliate at MIT.



I remember clearly the first time I meditated. It was my first day of medical school. I had been engaged to be married my senior year at college. At Princeton, they kind of brainwash you to marry your classmates, probably so they can get more annual giving! But it didn't seem like we should be together the rest of our lives. We broke up just before we both started medical school, and she wasn't super excited about that. This was a person I had been dating for 3 years and was my best friend, and suddenly she wouldn't talk to me. Needless to say, this was causing a lot of stress in my life.

Looking for answers, I somehow found Jon Kabat Zinn's book *Full Catastrophe Living*, and more importantly, started listening to guided-meditation cassette tapes. It was immediately helpful in helping me sleep better. I would also meditate during boring medical school lectures. I really got into it.

I am one of those **"go big or go home"** types of people. By the time I finished my MD/Ph.D program 8 years later, I had been meditating and using mindfulness practices daily. I had a teacher and was going on long silent retreats. I was also going for it professionally as well. I shifted my entire career focus from molecular biology to studying mindfulness. People

were telling me I was going to kill my career. I told them, **"I'd rather fail at science doing something I love than succeed at doing stuff that I wasn't as interested in."**

Nobody was really studying mindfulness at the time, nor was it a career path that anybody would recommend. I could see how useful it was to me and how it directly lined up with my patients' struggles. I could see how it was filling a gap that modern medicine was not. The pharmacology was not working in particular for people with addictions. And even the behavioral trainings and treatments were largely missing the mark because they were relying on cognitive control-based approaches. It's well known when we get stressed out, our prefrontal cortex goes offline, and we lose most of our cognitive control. So relying on that part of the brain to help change addictive behavior is not a great strategy.

For example, a lot of people with anxiety have tried all the medications. The ones that are non-addictive do not work very well for the general populations. SSRI's like Prozac and Zoloft are often one of the first lines of treatment. Developed for depression, these drugs have only a moderate effect for anxiety. Given the disappointing outcomes, many are willing to look for alternatives, and learning how our minds work is pretty rewarding in itself.

That is our starting point, helping people learn to map their minds. They learn to better understand how their mind works and how they can better work with it. Going through a simple systematic training, they often experience an immediate relief, even if it's only to a small degree that can be built upon over time. For us, it has been a winning formula. It's been working.

What is behind much of the habitual actions we do is a reward-based learning system, more specifically the **trigger-behavior-reward** mechanism. What we're doing is using mindfulness to specifically target and hack this reward-based learning system. With

mindfulness practices, you see clearly how truly unrewarding the old behaviors are—and how much more rewarding and healthier the new ones become.

Technology is making our work easier. The iPhone has been around for over 10 years, and people are pretty comfortable with app-based training at this point. We have doctors and therapists using the products we've developed for themselves and when they see that it works for them, are then turning around and recommending them to their patients. It's a really fun challenge to figure out how we can deliver app-based mindfulness training in a way that it's sticky enough on the first day that they say, **"Wow, I want to keep doing this."** For example, on average, in one study we found that people used our mindful eating app for stress emotional and binge eating (Eat Right Now) twice a day for an average of 12 minutes daily, which is remarkable for something that's not Facebook or gamified like Angry Birds. It's aimed to help people understand how painful their life has been—and they're still coming back because they're seeing relief from it.

One noteworthy success story using these digital therapeutic tools was a man in his mid 60s who was referred to me for alcohol use disorder. He had been consuming 6-8 drinks a night over a long time. It was causing him problems. He was getting hangovers. He was not getting his work done, and drinking itself was costing him a lot of money. He had mentioned something about how he was anxious as well.

At our first visit, I taught him about the trigger-behavior-reward piece and gave him our app-based anxiety program (*Unwinding Anxiety*). I asked him to just start going through the program and notice if there was anything that he was learning. When he came back the next week, he told me, **"Oh my gosh, I realized that I'm drinking as a way to work with my anxiety."** So, his trigger was anxiety, the behavior was the 6-8 drinks and the reward was temporary relief from the anxiety.

When he came back a few weeks later, he told me that he had quit drinking. **"It's not worth it," he told me, "this drinking is not doing it for me."** It was exactly what the Unwinding Anxiety program trained him to do—to notice the "non-reward" of the old behavior by simply bringing awareness to it. During the third visit he told me, **"I can actually use this to work on my anxiety."** He was now sober and his anxiety had dropped by 80 percent. **"I'm noticing my habit, and I'm able to use mindfulness to ride it out."**

He came back the fourth time and told me, **"My wife was traveling, and when she came back, I noticed how my anxiety was due to my interactions with her. And I realized I was contributing to it."** She would speak excitedly and would cause him to feel anxious. The trigger was she would speak excitedly—the behavior was to tell her to quiet down—and the reward was she would basically do as he asked. He realized this was also causing friction in their relationship.

"I hadn't realized this. Instead of me reacting to tell her to quiet down, I would just notice and get curious about the anxiety in my body, and then it quieted down, and my wife didn't have to." His anxiety had gone from an 80 or 90 to a 20 and back up to a 40 with his wife, and then back down to a 20 after he realized he was a contributor to the anxiety. Not that he's perfect. He's had his slips ups now and then. But he's got the fundamental tools to deal with it.

Another patient with a binge-eating disorder, a 30-year-old morbidly obese woman, had a similarly remarkable result from using mindfulness to overcome her problem. Her mother started emotionally abusing her when she was about 8 years old. What she learned was she could eat to numb herself from those really intense, unpleasant emotions. By the time she came to see me, she was eating an entire large pizza at one sitting, sometimes more than once a day, at least 20 out of 30 days a month. You can think of the trigger as an

unpleasant emotion, the behavior being binge eating and the reward was this numbing out. She went through our Eat Right Now program and learned how to work with all of this. Long story short, she went through the program for 6 months. Four months later, I saw her and she had lost 40 pounds. Most impressively, she told me, **“I want to thank you because I feel like I have my life back. I can eat a single piece of pizza and actually enjoy it.”** She was basically saying that food is not the enemy. She broke a whole bunch of habit loops, like how when she binged, she felt bad and would beat herself up, which would lead to more binges. Her mindfulness practice led to self-kindness, which felt a lot better than self-judgment.

Compared to when I started, mindfulness has become very popular right now. A lot of people have jumped on the bandwagon to get in on the market, pitching their approaches to improve our sex lives and workplace relationships and other nice sounding fixes. **“Follow your breath for 10 minutes, and magic will happen”** is often how mindfulness is pitched or hyped. Do it for 20 minutes, maybe rainbows and unicorns will fly out your rear end! So, one of the big challenges is to help consumers wade through all the mindfulness products that are out there now and find good evidence-based training that's really going to help them versus just lightening their wallet.

The excitement for me comes in the form of marrying these ancient practices with modern day technology where we start to deliver these tools through your phone. From our experience to date, these programs actually work, amazingly. With smartphone-based platforms, we now can reach underserved populations who might not otherwise have good access to healthcare. We can also make it affordable, at the same time as maintaining the high fidelity that is really critical for evidence-based treatments and the emerging field of medicine, called digital therapeutics, that these apps are part of. Who knew that we'd be using mindfulness to hack reward-based learning pathways and ironically

delivering this through a technology that in itself can be addictive. I guess our next digital therapeutic will need to be for smartphone addiction.

Dr. Judson Brewer is a member of the GIFT Global Advisory Board.

**For more information on Jud Brewer and his work, visit www.judsonbrewer.com
www.unwindinganxiety.com
www.goeatrightnow.com**

Ted Talk - A Simple Way To Break A Bad Habit- 10 million views on Ted.com





ALISON FOWLER

“Your Services are No Longer Needed” Was My Liberation—Twice!

There are questions we don't ask ourselves that can doom our dreams, sabotage our best intentions and leave us drifting in failure and purposelessness. Alison Fowler has asked herself some tough questions. In the process, she has come up with a way to inspire and help individuals and organizations cut through some of their self-limiting attitudes and make remarkable things happen.

Three times a day, an alarm goes off on my smart phone. Along with the buzzer, a three-word reminder appears on the screen: **“Work Worth Doing.”** It is based on a Franklin Delano Roosevelt quote—**“Far and away, the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”**

This alarm is a very small and pragmatic but ultimately powerful mindfulness practice for me. It is a moment I can check in and ask if what I'm doing right now is in that minute truly **“work worth doing.”** And to be honest, I often catch myself going, **“Well, maybe not.”** **“Maybe I should stop doing this particular thing,”** I question. Or perhaps I had become distracted worrying about something that may never happen. I realize I'm not being present, and this comforting message brings me back to that space of being present. It is also a simple but instrumental doorway to cultivating a sense of fulfillment and happiness—making sure our head and our heart are aligned in the same place and with a heightened sense of focus and purpose.

Why I use this technique is a product of my life experience as well as a sobering reality so many of us face. The truth is that statistically so many of us in the developed world are pretty miserable in our jobs. We have bought into a formula for success, for doing the right thing and playing according to society's rules and expectations, often to later be holding an empty bag of unhappiness, disappointment, missing connection and even depression. **“I am more than my job title says I am”**

First off, I'm an achiever. I like to make things happen. I'm somebody who has from a very early age needed a challenge. My grandmother told my mother back then that as long as I've got a challenge in front of me, I'll be fine. **“Make sure she keeps finding that,”** she would say as she feverishly knitted our family mohair jumpers for our birthdays. So I have spent most of my time enjoying doing really diverse things, following many different paths in my life and career. It has been a good thing, even when the pill of human experience

tasted bitter when first swallowed.

From the beginning, I set out with high intentions. I was first a teacher, and for the first couple of years, I really enjoyed it. But at that time in Australia, we had a lot of displaced families arriving by boats from Vietnam with very little English. As young inexperienced teachers, we were all very unprepared for supporting these new Australians. It was an incredibly challenging time, more crowd control and soccer games than advancing any meaningful education. Funny enough, I have gone full circle decades later, finding myself back in education working on a global project to incorporate mindfulness technologies into classrooms for more focused students and teachers and more productive learning environments.

Next up was a stint as a career advisor for the Australian Institute of Sport, helping athletes who didn't get selected for the Olympic team chart out what they would be doing afterwards. I don't know if you can plan life, but it kind of opened my eyes to the reality, “here's somebody who has reached the peak of what they wanted to achieve and now what?” It is a real issue that almost all of us have to face some time or another: what to do when something you love doing is taken away from you. Little did I know that it would soon be a big issue for me as well.

Headhunted for my next challenge, I became an executive producer for live events for the Walt Disney Company Asia-Pacific overseeing events in many countries. I learned so much about the power of storytelling and all the creative genius that Disney is renowned for. I got to the top of my field and was thoroughly enjoying my time, when I came back from a three city show tour in India only to be told that my job no longer existed, along with some of my amazing team. It was a shock to say the least. I remember feeling humiliated and embarrassed. **“What are people saying? What will people think of me? Now, I'm an epic failure. No one will employ me!”** All these feelings came up because my identity

was all wrapped up in this job title. I soon came to the realization that my reaction boiled down to a coin toss—**“heads” it’s liberating or “tails” it’s devastating.**

In that moment I had to choose that it was going to be liberating to move on. I realized I needed another challenge. I regrouped myself and came into the world of business, working myself up to a senior management level at a multi-billion dollar company in Australia. I loved my job so much and was doing well. It was a great challenge, great people and a great culture—a perfect place to be in my early 40s. Then something started to shift. I had this whisper inside of me saying, **“This is great but this isn’t it. Even though you’ve had great success, you’re not done yet.”** I embarked on a search on what I was supposed to be doing but I spent two years getting very confused and stuck and as a result, started to resent my job. It didn’t help that I was not willing to make a leap to leave the job without having the next challenge all set up.

It was three months before my 50th birthday, and I remember sitting in my lounge at home thinking, **“I know there is something bigger for me. I’ve been waiting for conditions to be right, for money to appear in my bank account to fund my dreams, waiting for all of that to show up before I made the leap. But the thing that is missing is I’m not showing up. I wasn’t owning it.”** I decided I would write up my resignation letter and leave this big, well sought after job and walk away without a plan. I went to work the next day pulsing with adrenalin and nervously walked into my manager’s office. Before I could get my resignation letter out, she turned around and said to me, **“I’ve got some really bad news for you. Your job no longer exists, but we are going to take care of you – here’s your payout.”**

Sometimes, we have to learn the lesson twice. This second time was the happiest moment of my life. Twenty-four hours prior, I had fear around what I was supposed to do and how I was going to fund my dream—and the only

thing I decided to do was to trust and show up! Needless to say, I’m very grateful for both of those moments of being told I was no longer required. They were quite profound.

I decided to take a gap year at 50, setting the intention to explore and discover truly what I was supposed to be doing for the next 20 years. I made a promise to myself that I would not make any decisions during the 12 months—and it turned out to be the most freeing 12 months I ever had. Nothing was off limits. I traveled a lot, dived into learning, attended some pretty cool entrepreneurial experiences in Costa Rica with Mindvalley, reading books and talking to people.

About 9 months in, I sought out old friends and colleagues to interview, asking them to tell me what they thought I was good at. What they played back to me, to be honest was not at first what I wanted to hear. **“You’re the project chick, the girl that has projects in her DNA.”** I didn’t want that to be my superpower because it didn’t sound very sexy. I found myself having a bit of **“purpose envy.”** I had been hanging out with people who were building orphanages in Africa, campaigning for change in elephant tourism, building schools, writing books, etc. These things sounded more exciting and purposeful than my humble talents. But then the light bulb went on.

I ended up deciding in one day—if that’s my purpose, if that’s what I’m on the planet to do, then let’s go make that happen. My mission became to make people’s projects simple and doable so they can go on and play their bigger game to make an impact. I realized I knew that project planning and delivery was no longer a specialist domain of people wearing zippered cardigans and beards. We’ve all got projects going on, whether they are personal, business, service, community or even legacy-building. But why is it that some people either can start things and then not finish them—or can’t get started in the first place? They have ideas in their heads and see other people execute on their ideas, but they can’t get off the couch. Why do they get stuck?

I found that the big motivators are the human needs of More, Better and Easier. How can I do more with what I've got in a shorter amount of time? How can I get a better result? And how can I do it easier? My work soon evolved to helping combat these three things. First and foremost, it was about helping people create a compelling reason and then a structure. This applies both for those who want to wing it and figure it out as they go (a legitimate project strategy), as well as those who want a concrete step-by-step process.

I've watched people change the way they approach life when they look at things through the lens of a project. If we make something a project, it gives it focus for a defined time. Projects have a start, a finish and a reason to live. Projects don't go forever. That's the anti-overwhelm strategy and the good news. If the project is going to the gym and getting in shape, then all of a sudden their attendance goes up because they are focused.

And there's more than one speed on any project – sometimes we need to be more patient with ourselves. Like that great quote from Thich Nhat Hanh, **“Just don't do something – sit there,”** we need to give ourselves the freedom to sit, ponder and do nothing, to let our ideas incubate. We can get more clear, centered and mindful about the choices we're making, and where we need to put our attention.

In fact, I encourage people to have a mindfulness project in their lives and businesses, one that encourages us to practice being present, perhaps tap into that part of us that knows there's more than our current environment. That, in turn, helps us to become better connected to something bigger than ourselves.

Sometimes it shows up as a side project – a passion or an interest. Side projects are seeds for bigger ideas. They are the things that keep the juices flowing, fueling spontaneity and creativity. Not everyone feels they can give up their day job and go live a life of purpose

straight up or maybe ever. There are bills and commitments to figure out first. So I suggest, **“Start something on the side and see where it takes you.”**

I often find it way more interesting to find out about what someone is **“doing on the side,”** rather than often their full time gig. We can learn a lot about humans when they are not under pressure to perform according to a job title, but rather are free to be a true expression of themselves. If finding your purpose arrives later in life, like it did for me, then it's never too late to dust off those dreams and get them off the back burner and into play.

There's no rule about how many chapters we can have in our life and many ways kinds of wonderful ways to serve. Always give yourself a second chance at living the life you desire. Your purpose plus the right project can change lives.

Ali Fowler feels very privileged to be serving GIFT by running the engine room for this global campaign from her home in Melbourne, Australia.

For more on Ali's work as Founder & CEO of World Project Partners, visit www.worldprojectpartners.com



Ali volunteering at Elephant Nature Park, Chiang Mai, Thailand and becoming a Global Elephant Ambassador – another side project.

KEY COLLABORATIONS UPDATE

SUPERPOWER SUMMIT
UNIVERSAL CLASSROOM PROJECT
VETERANS INITIATIVE
MINDFUL NATIONS
DELAWARE - FIRST MINDFUL STATE

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General enquiries about this magazine and the More Mindful World campaign, email us at team@sambeardgift.org
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We are so excited by the incredible content that is being generated through the interviews for the Superpower Summit. When Sam Beard, Suzanne Hall and I all put our heads together last year, we got into this fascinating conversation about... what does it really mean to live, love and do business mindfully?? The Superpower Summit is our way of engaging with some of the most amazing humans on the planet today to explore that very question and find out about their superpowers.

Mindful has become a bit of a buzzword and there seems to be a level of comfort with it culturally that is ever increasing! As a team we are THRILLED about this, it really feels like an opening in the time to engage more and more people in the practical benefits of incorporating some element of this practice into your life.

What we are finding from CEO's to Athlete's to Scientists & Academics from all over the globe is that there are universal benefits that occur from cultivating this level of mind (well that sounded fancy!!) Bottom line here people is less stress, calmer in a crisis and more JOY and creativity! Sound like something you could get into??

I was BEYOND excited/intimidated to get the chance to interview Chade Meng Tan!! Meng was one of Googles first employees and created their mindfulness program *Search Inside Yourself* 10 years ago. His book of the same name became an NY Times Best Seller.

CHADE MENG TAN

CREATOR OF GOOGLE'S MINDFULNESS PROGRAM



He now splits his time between his SIYLI (Silly get it? Meng's job title at Google was Jolly Good Fellow), *Search Inside Yourself* Leadership Institute and One Billion Acts of Peace which has been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize 8 times.

Meng shared with me that his aim in life was very simple... He is committed to creating the conditions for world peace in his lifetime.

Meng shared that in his view there are 2 pillars to creating the conditions for world peace.

1. Mindfulness practices spread far and wide this reveals to us us inner peace, joy and compassion.
2. Compassionate action - as another great man tells us "Change takes place through action, not through meditation and prayer alone." -The Dalai Lama

And for us one begets the other, this is EXACTLY the conversation we are having with people, how inner work leads to outer action and compassionate action at that, mindful as a way of being not just a practice.

As our fearless leader and friendly hurricane Mr Sam Beard says "The more you improve yourself the better the opportunity you have to improve others and improve the world."

As we delve deeper into this conversation with so many incredible humans, it is becoming clear, the superpower summit has the potential to be the seed that joins and collaborates with all the other mindfulness initiatives that are happening across the planet.

By Natalie Alexia, co-creator 2018 Superpower Summit

To help bring Meng's story and all the other Summit speakers to the world, we are seeking partners on this event. If this might be you, please contact Natalie or Suzanne at natalie@superpowersummit.com or suzanne@superpowersummit.com



Jack Canfield



Lisa Nichols

MEET SOME OF OUR SUPER HEROES

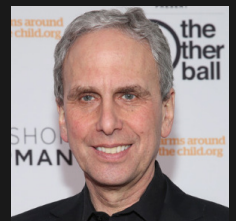
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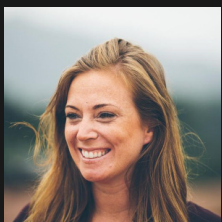
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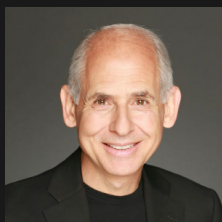
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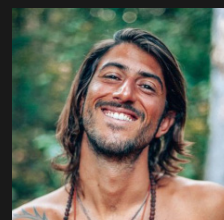
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WHY UP TO HALF OF ALL AUSTRALIAN TEACHERS ARE QUITTING WITHIN FIVE YEARS

“YOU PRETTY MUCH SIGN A CONTRACT AND OFF YOU GO.”

“I think there needs to be more of a structured induction with different focuses on things like your wellbeing and how important it is to get sleep.”

Pallavi Singhal - The Sydney Morning Herald - June 7, 2017



Thank you to all of our current supporters for adding their contributions into the thought development, design thinking and their ‘edge of the seat’ courageous actions.

Forever grateful.

Ali Fowler

“Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life”

- Amy Poehler

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THE GIFT VETERANS INITIATIVE

The Veterans Initiative is gaining momentum. GIFT now has dedicated professional staffing to reach across the country and pilot best practices to engage communities and start impacting lives. We are doing this in Delaware, and will add Arizona and one to two other communities in the next 90 days. In the next five to eight years, the GIFT team will use mindfulness to transform the lives of 100,000 U.S. veterans and active duty military suffering from PTS and war trauma.



While GIFT's broader thrust is advance mindfulness to improve the lives of billions of people and help solve global challenges, this initiative represents a poignant opportunity to demonstrate what can happen when concerned individuals and vested institutions collaborate on urgent, targeted needs and become difference-makers.

Part of the initiative is to educate the U.S. Senators in each state along with the appropriate U.S. House of Representatives leadership that high forms of mindfulness can transform the lives of those afflicted with PTS and war-related trauma. Thanks to Dan S. Press, a partner in the VanNess Feldman DC-based law firm, VanNess Feldman has signed on pro bono to help this process in local communities and then reach up to Washington.

Dan has been a national leader working in communities to apply the science on the causes and effects of historical and childhood trauma to address social and health problems. He has been a leader in creating the Roundtable on Native American Trauma-Informed Initiatives to assist Native communities implement comprehensive trauma informed initiatives.

Simultaneously he has also played a lead role creating the Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice works at the Federal, state and community levels to encourage elected and agency officials to adopt policies that apply the science on trauma to the programs that address the effects of trauma, such as suicide, substance abuse and domestic violence.

Update by Sam Beard

If you would like to support the GIFT Veterans Initiative, please visit giftglobal.org/donate



MINDFUL NATIONS UPDATE

On May 16 and 17, Sam Beard travelled to London to strategize with member of parliament and founder of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Mindfulness, Chris Ruane, and Jamie Bristow, director of the non-profit Mindfulness Initiative policy institute, to update our shared vision on how best to collaborate to strengthen spreading mindfulness in politics and public services worldwide.

We discussed the status of the United Kingdom parliamentary initiative. We included the GIFT United States initiative using mindfulness to transform the lives of 100,000 veterans and active duty military suffering from PTS and war-related trauma in the next 5 to 8 years with an emphasis on stimulating the U.S. Congress to issue a report that mindfulness is important for all of America.

Chris and Jamie are planning a US visit in the late spring of 2019 to speak to state-level legislators, and GIFT has promised to fully support this effort.

Sam was excited to meet Richard Reoch, distinguished Chairperson of the Mindfulness Initiative board. Richard Reoch's profile is one of our featured stories in this magazine edition.

Update by Jamie Bristow & Sam Beard

**To follow the work of The Mindfulness Initiative UK,
visit www.themindfulnessinitiative.org.uk**

GIFT IN DELAWARE IS MINDFULLY MOVING FORWARD TOWARDS THE VISION



This spring GIFT has concluded four successful Pilot Projects at public schools, bringing mindfulness training to over 100 teachers. Our intention is to help teachers manage stress levels, while teaching them practices that can be easily shared with their students. After initial teacher training, GIFT provides Mindfulness coaching every other week, with our Mindfulness teacher meeting with teachers and then circulating to their classrooms to give feedback and ideas. GIFT will be supporting these four initial programs into the autumn.

As a result of our successful work in Delaware public schools in the spring, the summer of 2018 is going to be a very busy time for GIFT in Delaware. We are working with the Delaware State Education Association (DSEA) to bring mindfulness training in June to the teachers in three elementary schools in Wilmington

that serve at-risk youth. Then in July GIFT will train all of the Administrative staff of the Brandywine School District, which has 14 schools throughout northern Delaware. Then in August GIFT will offer training to all faculty and staff of the Brandywine School District. GIFT will continue working throughout the Brandywine School District throughout the fall of 2018 as well.

GIFT will be working with Pathways of Delaware in late August, giving mindfulness training to a staff of over 70 professionals serving at-risk youth attending alternative school programs. These students experience complex trauma and poverty, and have been removed from traditional school environments because of maladaptive behaviors. GIFT's training of their staff is intended to help them stay present despite the challenges and, in the process, share Mindfulness practices.

Update by Dr Jim Walsh & Sam Beard

If you would like to support the work in Delaware, just click below.

I Am Mindful

or visit www.giftglobal.org/Delaware-I-am-mindful

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