

MindfulLiving™ Module 2

Brain Power & Mindset Reset

Chapter 8 - Readings

Joshua Bell Plays a \$3,000,000 Violin ... and Almost Nobody Notices.

Curated by Shery Clein

In a Washington, DC Metro Station, Joshua Bell, one of the world's greatest violinists, played a beautiful, intricate, moving piece on a violin worth over \$3 million. During the 43 minutes he played, 1,097 people walked by. Only seven stopped to listen, and even those seven paused for only a few minutes. Three days before, Joshua Bell had played the same music to a sold-out audience in Boston, where the seats averaged \$100 each. His minimum fee for playing a public concert was \$75,000.



This is a true story, a social experiment organised by journalist Gene Weingarten in 2007. For more about this, see his Washington Post article, Pearls Before Breakfast, and Judy Woodruff's newscast, which have video clips of the performance that day. Here is a summary of Bell's 43-minute "concert":

After about 3 minutes, a middle-aged man noticed that a musician was playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds, then hurried on to meet his schedule. At 4 minutes, the violinist received his first dollar. A woman threw money in the hat and, without stopping, continued to walk. At 6 minutes, a young man leaned against the wall to listen to him, then looked at his watch and started to walk again. At 10 minutes, a 3-year-old boy stopped, but his mother tugged him along hurriedly. The kid stopped to look at the violinist again, but the mother pushed hard, and the child continued to walk, turning his head the whole time. Several other children repeated this action, but every parent - without exception - forced their children to move on quickly. After 43 minutes, he finished playing, and silence took over. No one noticed, and no one applauded.

The "concert" was conducted during rush hour in one of the busiest metros in the world. That so few people stopped was not a demonstration of the commuters' cluelessness but of how the busyness of our daily lives can sometimes prevent us from noticing the beautiful and miraculous world all around us.

Every moment of every day, if we genuinely look, there is something extraordinary to pay attention to: the stunning earrings worn by the grocery clerk, a child's unselfconscious laugh, the colour of the sky, or the miracle of our breath. This is not to say that we should stand in place, slack-jawed, in such awe of the beauty around us that we make ourselves late to work or forget to pick up our kids after school. It suggests that something unique always happens if we stop to pay attention, even for a moment. We don't have to wait for Joshua Bell to play a concert in the metro.

"There are only two ways to live your life. One is as though nothing is a miracle. The other is as though everything is a miracle." – Einstein.



Shery Clein, Personal Coach and Mindfulness Expert, would like to take the opportunity to thank you so much for your precious participation in the MindfulLiving™ course. We appreciate your dedication and commitment. We expect to help you deal with uncomfortable issues and other obstacles. The main thing is to enjoy, chill out, and have fun! Remember to contact us with any questions or for any assistance.

Blessings ❤ Stay Healthy & Safe