

# How Is Mindfulness Helpful? Mechanisms of Mindfulness

# 7

The phenomena contemplated are distinct from the mind contemplating them.

—Dan Goleman (1980)

**T**he previous two chapters responded to the question “Is mindfulness helpful?” Clearly, this line of research is fundamental to validating mindfulness as an efficacious psychological intervention, and controlled clinical trials across diverse populations should continue. However, an equally important direction for future research is to address the question “How is mindfulness helpful?”

Investigating questions concerning the mechanisms of action underlying the transformational effects of mindfulness requires a testable theory of mindfulness. In this chapter we present a theory (developed by Shapiro, Carlson, Astin, & Freedman, 2006) aimed at understanding the mysterious and complex process of mindfulness. It is an attempt to search for common ground on which to build a more precise understanding of the primary mechanisms of action involved

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