

I got thrown out of a yoga class once for laughing. I couldn't help it. What was supposed to be a relaxing experience was simply a painful contortion that did nothing to help soothe my mind. So when a notice came around parliament inviting MPs and peers to join a mindfulness class my first response was one of cynicism.

However the invite landed at a time when frankly life, the world, the universe seemed to converge into one crazy melting pot of madness. Mindfulness offered a means of dealing with stress and anxiety by using meditation practices to release the mind from habitual patterns in order to meet new challenges.

Sounds a bit mumbo jumbo...trust me I thought that too...but I didn't want to knock it before trying it and guess what it changed my life! It doesn't bury the babble that infiltrates our lives through the constant imposition of technology, but it does make you deal with it differently.

Unlike other fads that come and go, mindfulness has been developed alongside neuroscientific advances which is possibly what lies behind its increasing popularity. In the USA mindfulness has been introduced successfully into returning armed forces personnel to help them deal with post-traumatic stress disorder, and within the caring professions to help people focus on the very person they are dealing with at that particular moment.

This week a new cross parliamentary group on mindfulness was established, of which I am co-chair. The group aims to look at how mindfulness can be introduced into policy development here in the UK. Some educationalists are already using it to help children deal with anxiety and therefore concentrate better. This is an excellent step forward.

I don't know if readers will think I am mad for confessing that I am a convert to mindfulness but I do know that it has helped me deal with the mad, crazy, chaotic world that we now all live in!