



VirginiaTech

College of Engineering

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To Whom It May Concern:

I'm writing this letter in support of the Art of Living course which I recently participated in at Virginia Tech. The course was taught to a group of students, faculty, and staff not long after the recent tragedy that occurred on our campus. Although the course was especially good in helping us deal with our emotions related to the shootings, it also had great value in teaching us how to deal with everyday stress and emotions.

I am an academic advisor responsible for about 900 undergraduate mechanical engineering students, and I have 4 children of my own. I enjoy my job, but often feel the common pressure of "too much work to do and not enough time to do it." My husband is a tenured professor who also feels rushed and overwhelmed with responsibilities. I have been participating in a lunchtime yoga class for the past 2 years and I also like to run or bike to help stay calm and relaxed so I can help my students in the best way possible.

About a week after the shootings, the Art of Living instructors visited our yoga class and led us in a short meditation. During the meditation, we were asked to first focus on the sounds in the room, then on our thoughts, then on our feelings. After we finished the meditation, one of the other faculty members, who was from the civil engineering department, mentioned that he couldn't tell what he was feeling. I had the same experience during the meditation – I should be feeling something, but I just felt emotionally numb.

I started the Art of Living course with the idea that I wanted to be better connected with myself. The course definitely helped with this, but it also helped me feel more connected to those around me. The Sundarshan Kriya breathing and meditation helped me release some emotions that I had buried deep inside while trying to help my students through the last few weeks of classes. It really helped me with the healing process. We learned some breathing techniques to help relax or increase our energy levels that can be done in minutes in the office; these are especially helpful during the more stressful times at home and at work. They take a lot less time than yoga!

It was fun taking the class with a wide variety of people – students, staff, and faculty members in a large range of ages. Many of the younger people were amazed at how much they had grown during the course from some of the simple ideas that were presented with group activities. (This wasn't a religious course – the lessons were more like those from martial arts that I had studied some years ago.) I'm hoping to have my two teenage daughters participate in the course, because I know they will benefit from it, too.

I am thankful to the Art of Living Foundation for coming to our campus to teach this course. I also encourage you to promote the Art of Living courses on your campus in support of the foundation's campaign for a violence-free, stress-free world.

Sincerely,

Linda Vick
Academic & Career Advisor
Mechanical Engineering Department, Virginia Tech

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