



## Online Class Launch--Wellness Without Borders



*Tools for Transformation: A Pioneering Online Course for Mindfulness-Based, Drug-Free Stress Relief by Dr. Mark Farris Pirtle*

**TUCSON, Ariz. - Sept. 29, 2016 - [PRLog](#)** -- Stress in America is at crisis levels, costing the US economy more than \$1.5 trillion per year in prescription drug and medical costs as well as lost wages and productivity. Indeed, 80-90% of all doctors' visits are for stress-linked illnesses, including insomnia, obesity, heart disease, depression, anxiety, addictions, eating disorders, ADD, PTSD, OCD, autoimmune diseases, many cancers, a plethora of chronic pain conditions, and more.

But drugs are not the answer. Stress-linked problems are symptomatic expressions of unhealthy ways of living; treating the symptoms with medicine alone traps people in a downward spiral of dependency and managing side effects with even more drugs.

Dr. Mark Pirtle's mission is to de-medicalize stress-related conditions. Dr. Pirtle is a doctor of physical therapy and a skilled meditator. Over his 28-year clinical career, he synthesized key concepts from living systems theory, neuroscience, Buddhist psychology, CBT, and mindfulness meditation into his unique program for stress relief he calls *Skillfully Aware*®.

The basis for the *Skillfully Aware: The Tools for Transformation* online-course is the curriculum he created when developing the first ever pain program for *Sierra Tucson*, a world-renowned residential treatment hospital. In this program, Dr. Pirtle teaches a systems-based method of meditation, mindfulness and story reframing to better regulate stress and emotions. Pirtle is a firm believer that empowering people with the right information, and, teaching valid and reliable meditation and mindfulness techniques can and will lead to change and healing.

*"People suffering from chronic stress-related problems now have a place to turn. Dr. Pirtle unties the hairball of these complex issues with a truly mind-body approach. There's no one like him. He changes*

*people's lives with his knowledge, compassion, experience and gentle spirit.*" – Keith Arnold, Former Executive Director, Sierra Tucson

Pirtle states: *"Stress-related conditions are not genetic; they develop in a process of learning gone wild. All experience is psychoactive — it changes the brain. If you think or do something with enough focus, those thoughts and actions become well-learned, ingrained habits which alter neuronal chemistry and connectivity. But what you learn can be unlearned, and being dulled by drugs blocks that critical unlearning."* Since attention guides all learning and unlearning, Pirtle is unequivocal, *"If you want to change or heal, you must first monitor and modify your habits of attention."* Attentional training is the central focus of the Tools for Transformation course.

The *Tools for Transformation* Online Program includes 11 hours of video programming and comes with study guides, guided meditations and leading-edge practices. It is designed to fit comfortably into a busy life. The whole program is intended to take 6 – 8 weeks to finish. Additionally, all students are granted LIFETIME direct access to Dr. Pirtle through an online forum.

**About:** [Skillfully Aware](#) is secular meditation and mindfulness instruction specifically designed for people with stress and stress-related illnesses. Skillfully Aware is a unique blend of disciplines, including neuroscience, living systems theory, cognitive behavioral theory, and mindfulness meditation. This curriculum initially served as the didactic foundation for the Pain Program at Sierra Tucson (2007). Since that time, Dr. Mark Pirtle updated the science and techniques. The new programming and practices serve as a recovery model for all stress-related conditions, not just pain.

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