



Cultivate Mindfulness for Leadership Success

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By Ann Golden Egle MCC on April 7, 2015 E-Headlines

(Photo above Ann Golden Egle)

The use of mindfulness practices like meditation, introspection, being present to this very moment and journaling are taking hold at Google, General Mills, Goldman Sachs, Apple, and Aetna, and they are contributing to the success of these remarkable organizations.

To be equipped for the rapid-fire intensity of executive life, leaders need to cultivate daily practices that allow them to regularly renew their minds, bodies, and spirits.

They need to move beyond their accustomed mental models and familiar world views to new ways of listening, observing, thinking, innovating, responding, balancing and leading.

Neuroscientists have observed through MRIs that mindfulness is associated with an increase in grey-matter density in brain regions associated with cognitive “executive” functions as planning, decision-making and judgment, as well as those associated with self-awareness and empathy.

Mindfulness allows you to become more mentally and physically resilient, more easily able to switch between action and reflection, and better equipped at knowing when to focus on yourself, others, or the world around you.

By learning to focus, you learn to work with your team more effectively, solve problems, and build healthy strategies that will benefit you, your colleagues, and your organization.

Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere and anytime.

The key is to create rituals or systematic practices that work for you. So where to begin? Here are the Top '7' Tips for mindfulness practices that work best for my clients.

1) Create a morning ritual. Take two to three minutes before leaving the house, while driving or walking to work to simply notice your breathing. Feel the flow of the breath, the rise and fall of your belly. Notice and release the thoughts that flow through your mind.

2) Before an important meeting. Sit quietly, notice your breathing and the energy in your body. Tune into your senses. Are you anxious, excited, fearful, or impatient? Being quiet and mindful will allow you to see yourself before others do, and steer you to whom you want to be in this meeting.

3) Journal. New clients initially cringe at the idea of journaling by thinking: "What will I write about?" Yet within a few journaling exercises, they are amazed at what their inner wisdom unveils. You cannot write or type as fast as you think, so this slow-down approach provides brilliance not otherwise available to you through your racing mind.

4) Silent Walking Meditation. We know that a run anywhere in Central Oregon provides great insight. Try a silent, walking meditation during your lunch hour or even for a fifteen minute break at any time through the day. Simply notice the colors of nature. Feel the wind and temperature on your face. Let your thoughts come and go as you focus on breathing.

5) After-work practice. Pull off at a scenic spot en route home at the end of your day. Journal or sit quietly noticing the majesty of nature. Close your eyes and breathe.

6) Share your thoughts. What makes perfect sense spiraling around in your mind may not make sense when you share it with someone whom you trust—your spouse or partner, coach, mentor, minister. Allow and honor this special, mindful time.

7) Create alone time. Whether you meditate, journal, run or sit silently, creating a ritual of 'alone' time each day.

Awareness of, and curiosity about, mindfulness generates unparalleled insight, allowing you to notice new things about yourself and the world around you. You become stronger in your leadership and all levels of your life.

I challenge you to put one of the above tips into practice beginning today.

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