

Mindfulness

The complexity, ambiguity and relentless pace of today's world places gigantic demands on business leaders in every industry. More often than not, leaders are working incredibly hard and yet feel that they are not meeting their own expectations of excellence. They are left overburdened and disconnected from their own values. Amid these overwhelming circumstances, leaders are expected to make fast, rational decisions with a focused, clear, compassionate and creative mind.

Mindfulness training is often associated with meditation practice – but it has become much, much more than that. Mindfulness is defined as 'paying attention in the present moment, non-judgmentally'. Mindfulness harnesses our capacity to be aware of what is going on in our bodies, our minds, and our hearts ... as we maneuver in an unavoidable sea of constantly changing events which demands that we change and adapt, often at lightning speed. This demand by the environment for us to continually change and adapt can, and most often does, create stress.

Stress is a relational transaction between our self and our environment during which we perceive and appraise events as threatening -- in that they are over-taxing to us in some way. Changing the way we see ourselves in relationship to these stress-triggering events can actually alter the events themselves.

We have an innate desire for stability, although life itself requires that we must be in continuous change-mode. Mindfulness is a way to train the mind, but also includes paying attention to the body and the world around us, and helps us recognize that we are not a slave to our thoughts, but rather, we can choose how we respond.

There is plenty of evidence, including from the mental health arena and the field of neuroscience, showing how mindfulness can help reduce stress. The practice of mindfulness provides a way to cope with the challenges, complexities and ambiguity of our times. Studies indicate benefits such as heightened emotional intelligence, improved decision-making and strategic-thinking abilities, a heightened ability to focus, enhanced creativity, increased engagement in work, more energized and less anxious, and fewer symptoms of stress.

Mindfulness practices can be used to help strengthen our **skill of Positive Presence – the skill of adjusting and creating a positive and energized mindset within our self through conscious thought processes.**

So put Sharon's 'APBs' and Dina's '3x3s' to work for you, and remember that, we can assess our personal energy flow through our feelings. Feelings such as happiness and optimism can be linked to a positive energy flow, and feelings such as anger and frustration can be linked to a negative energy flow. We can control our feelings with our thoughts. It is through our thought process that we choose how to behave. And the bottom line is ... the measurable result of a person's energy flow is reflected by one's choice of behavior.