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Mindfulness Center

Using Mindfulness to Increase Workplace Engagement and Effectiveness

MMA Annual Meeting and Trade Show
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Brenda Fingold, JD, MA
Assistant Director, Workplace and Leadership Education
Mindfulness Center
Brown University School of Public Health



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Program Overview

- Science, benefits and practice of mindfulness
- Navigating stress and challenge with more ease and effectiveness
- Mindfulness in communication
- Integrating mindfulness into work and daily life

Mindfulness Can Literally Change Your Brain

January 8, 2015

“Mindfulness should no longer be considered a “nice-to-have” for executives. It’s a “must-have”: a way to keep our brains healthy, to support self-regulation and effective decision-making capabilities, and to protect ourselves from toxic stress.”

National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being

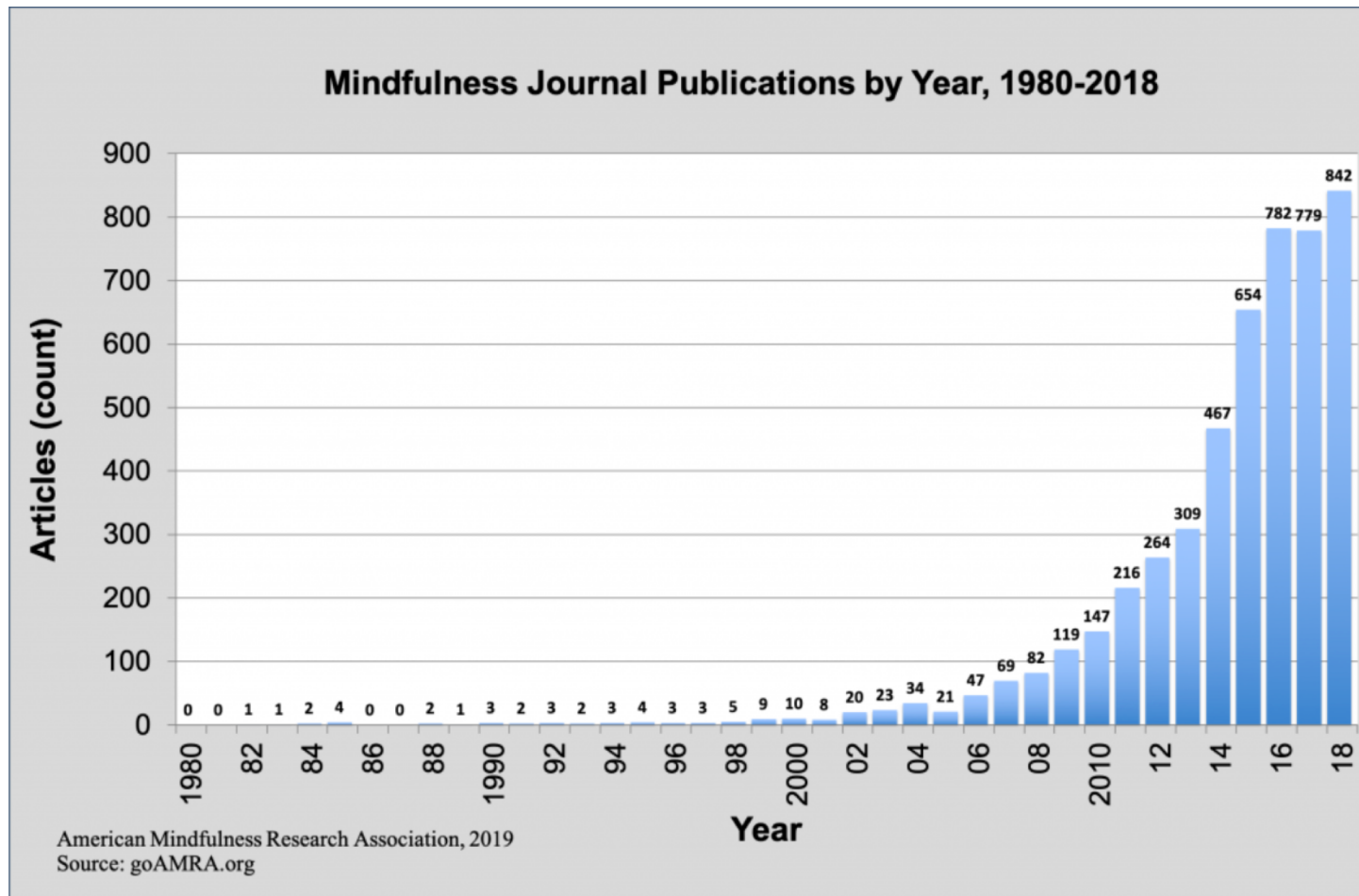
“Mindfulness can enhance a host of competencies related to lawyer effectiveness, including increased focus and concentration, working memory, critical cognitive skills, reduced burnout, and ethical and rational decision-making.”

Well-being is an indispensable part of competence.”

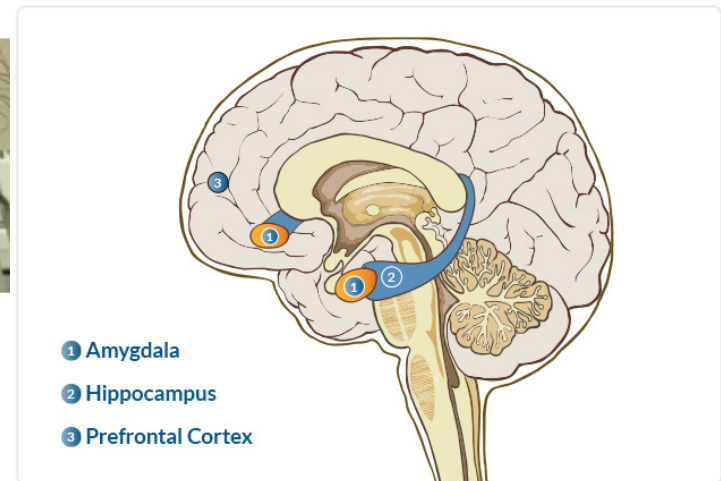
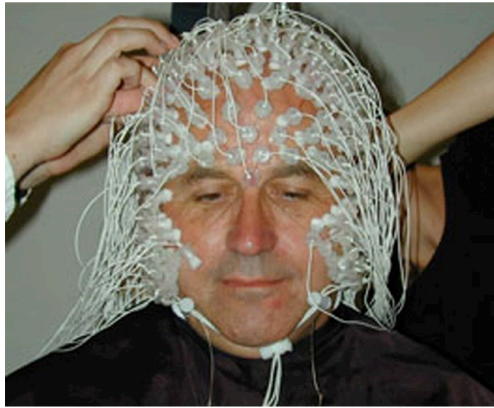
2018 Report of National Task Force on Lawyer Well-Being (consisting of ABA law practice division, ABA CPR Professionalism, Lawyer Assistance Programs, Conference of Chief Judges, etc.)



Growth in Mindfulness Research Publications – Over 4,900



The Neuroscience of Mindfulness



Mindfulness creates functional and structural changes to network areas of the brain involved with:

- Attention regulation
- Emotional regulation
- Sense of self
- Interoception (body awareness)



Applying Mindfulness in the Workplace

- Stress reduction, well-being and resilience
- Improving focus, cognitive skills and innovation
- Preventing errors and supporting workplace safety
- Reducing unconscious bias
- Reducing negative health outcomes for first responders
- Mindful listening and speaking
- Mindful meeting practices
- Leadership presence and effectiveness



Mindfulness: The Power of Enhanced Awareness



Mindfulness is Not

- Trying to relax
- Going slow, being passive or being any particular way
- Stopping thoughts



Mindfulness is

- Being aware of what's happening as it's happening
- An innate capacity for coping and thriving
- A purposeful, clear and available quality of attention
- A way of relating to whatever arises



Mindfulness is Cultivated by

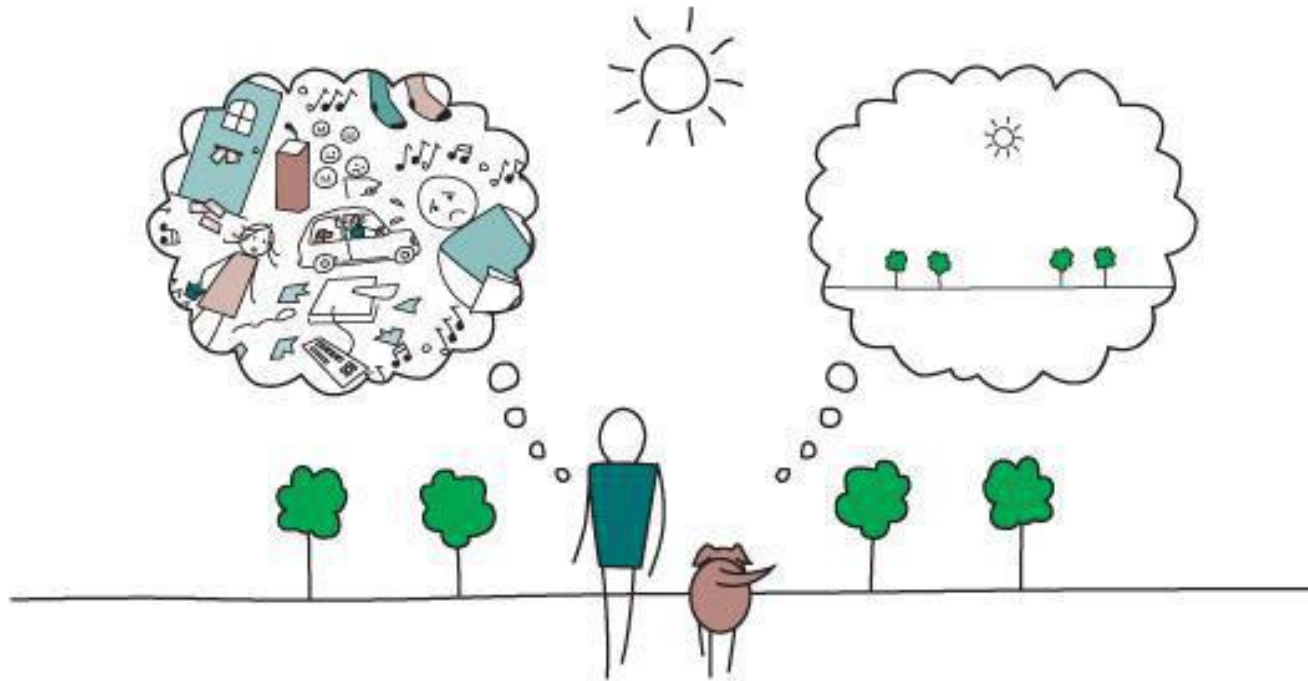
Paying attention in a particular way:

On purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally



47% of waking hours are spent thinking about something other than what is going on

Killingsworth and Gilbert, Harvard University



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindful Task v. Multi-Task

The average worker:

- Checks Facebook 21 times a day
- Checks email 74 times a day
- Shifts computer screens an average of 566 times a day (i.e., switch from document to email to website)
- Distracts and interrupts themselves almost as much as they are getting externally interrupted.

There is a high cost to recovering from interrupted work: forgetfulness, redundancy, increased mistakes, longer completion time, increased frustration and stress, harmful changes in the brain relating to multi-tasking, lost opportunities for creative and innovative ideas.

Study of employees of high-tech companies from Department of Informatics at U.Cal





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MINDFULNESS PRACTICE



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Working With Thoughts and Stories: Focus as a Superpower



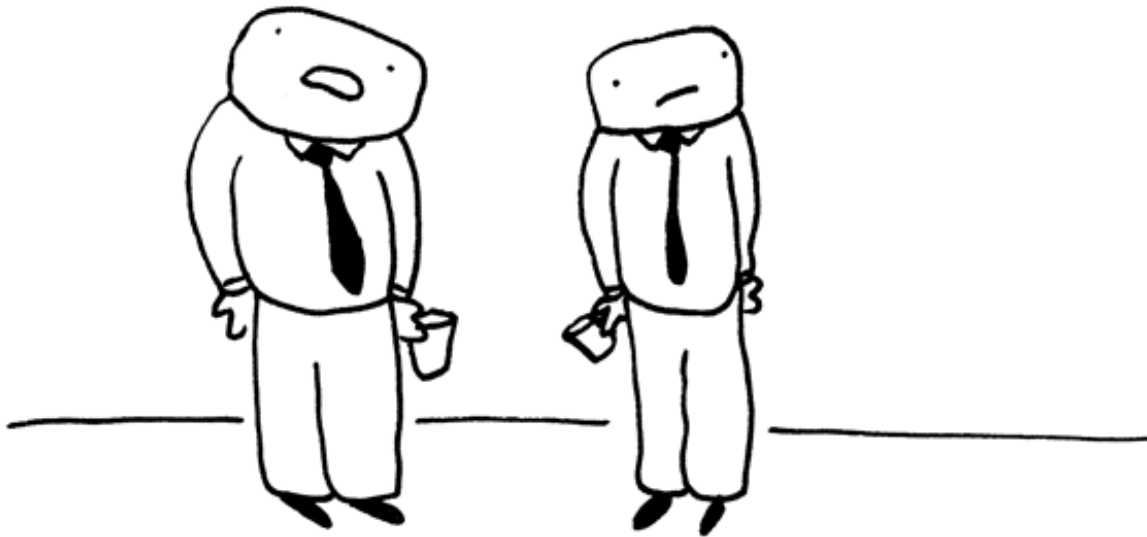
Focus as a Superpower

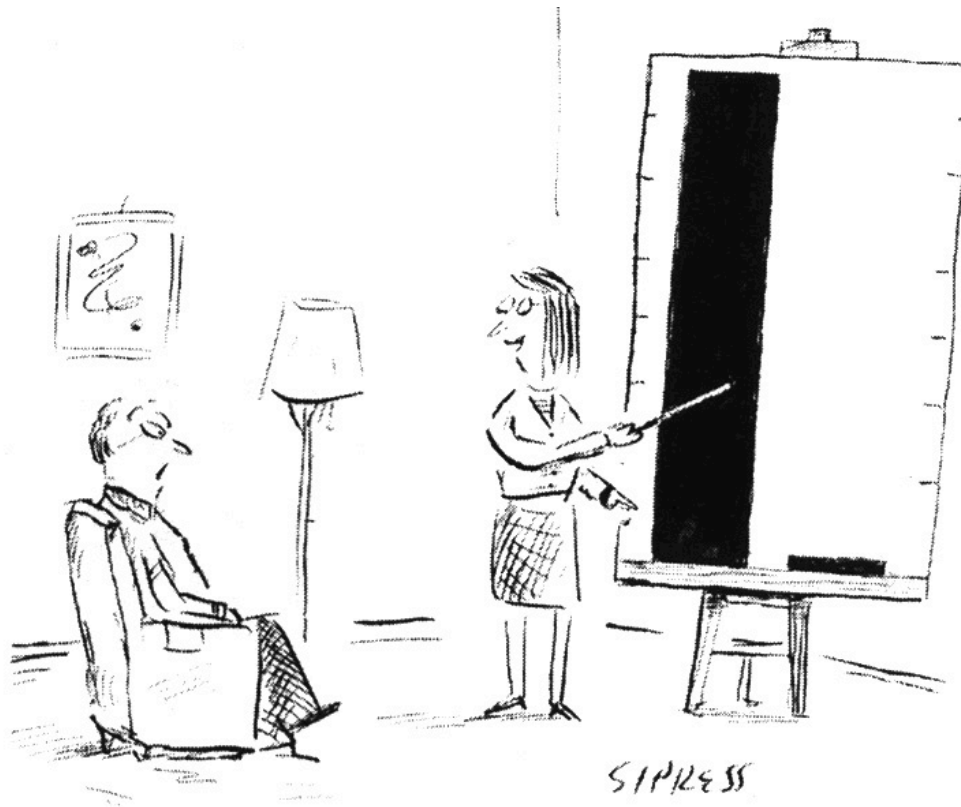
The worst enemy is an untrained mind

Mindfulness helps us “see the waterfall” that is the nature of our human minds and get out from under the cascade.



well, my day was going
ok, but then i remembered
something stupid i said
when i was 14



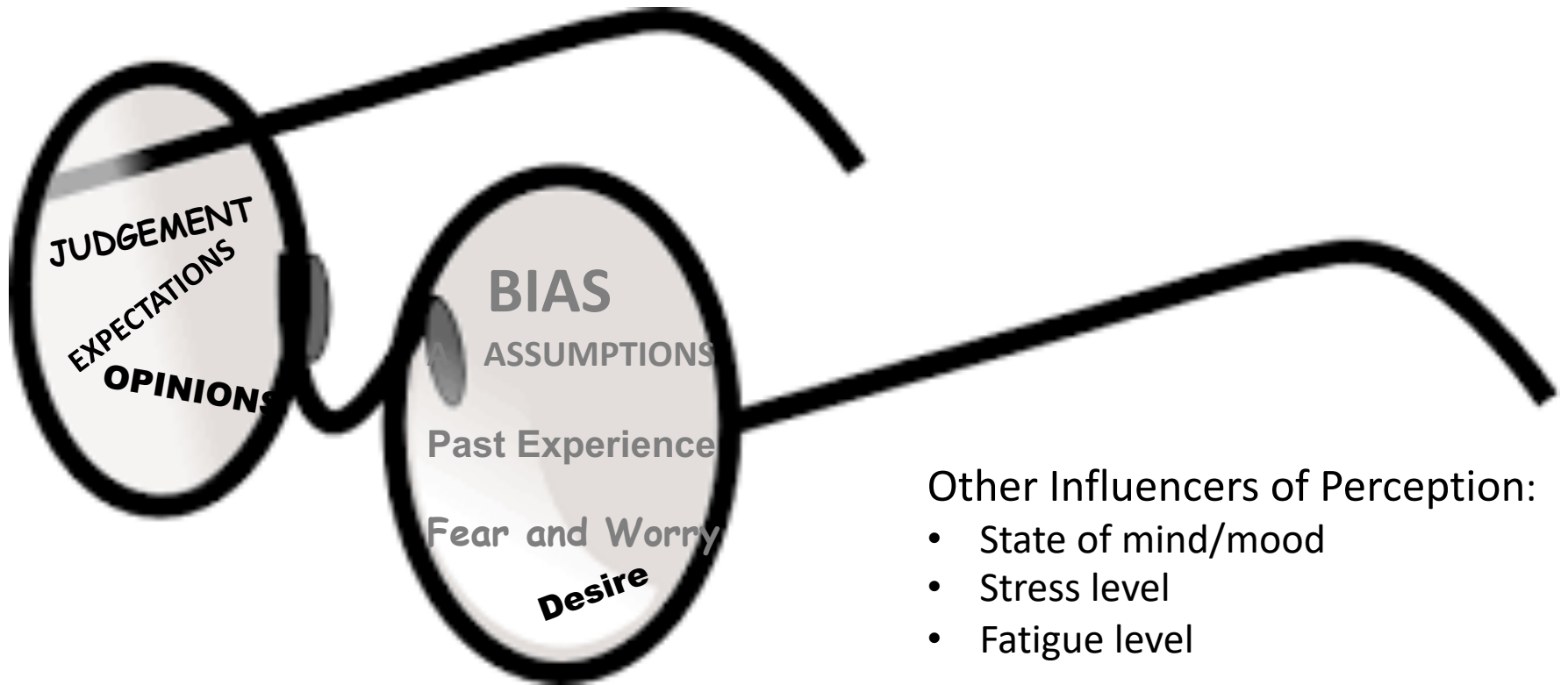


*This is everything you've ever worried about.
That's everything you've ever worried about that actually happened.*





Perception



Other Influencers of Perception:

- State of mind/mood
- Stress level
- Fatigue level

How We See Things Determines How We Respond to Them.



Stress as a Function of Perception

The *perception* of a physical or psychological threat and the *perception* that one's resources are inadequate to deal with the threat.



Reacting vs. Responding To Stress and Challenge





“Anything that threatens our sense of well being – challenges to social status, ego, strongly held beliefs, desire to control things or to have them be a certain way – can trigger (the flight/fight/freeze) reaction to some degree.

--Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living



Top 5 Amygdala Triggers in the Workplace

- Lack of respect
- Being treated unfairly
- Being unappreciated
- Feeling that you are not being listened to or heard
- Being held to unrealistic deadlines

Daniel Goleman, "The Brain and Emotional Intelligence: New Insights" (2011)



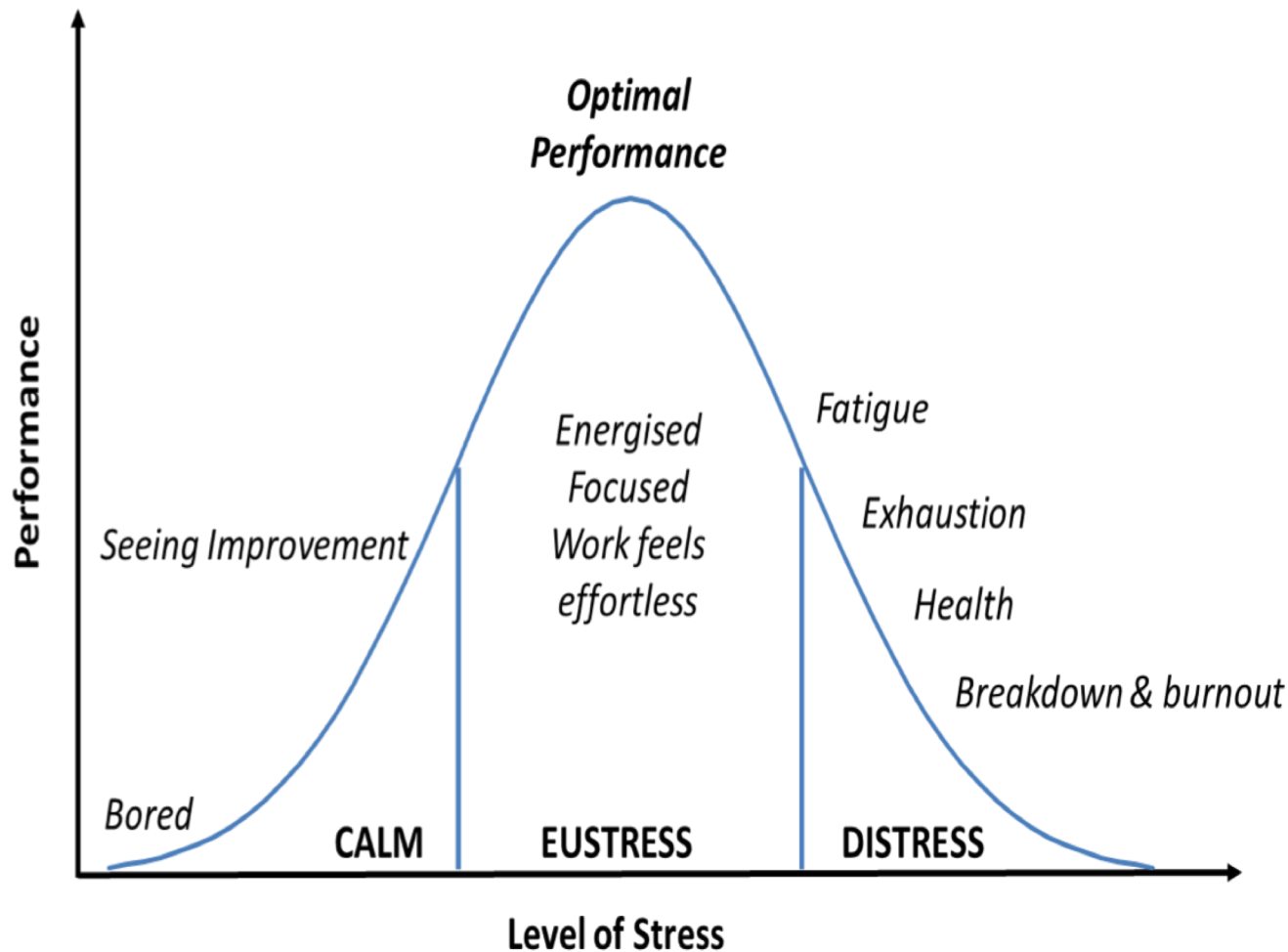
The Amygdala Hijack

If you have an amygdala hijack:

- you can't focus on your work
- can't learn, be innovative or flexible
- will rely on old conditioned habits
- may shut down
- will likely overreact in ways you may regret



Eustress, Acute Stress, Chronic Stress, Burn Out



Chronic stress markedly diminishes:

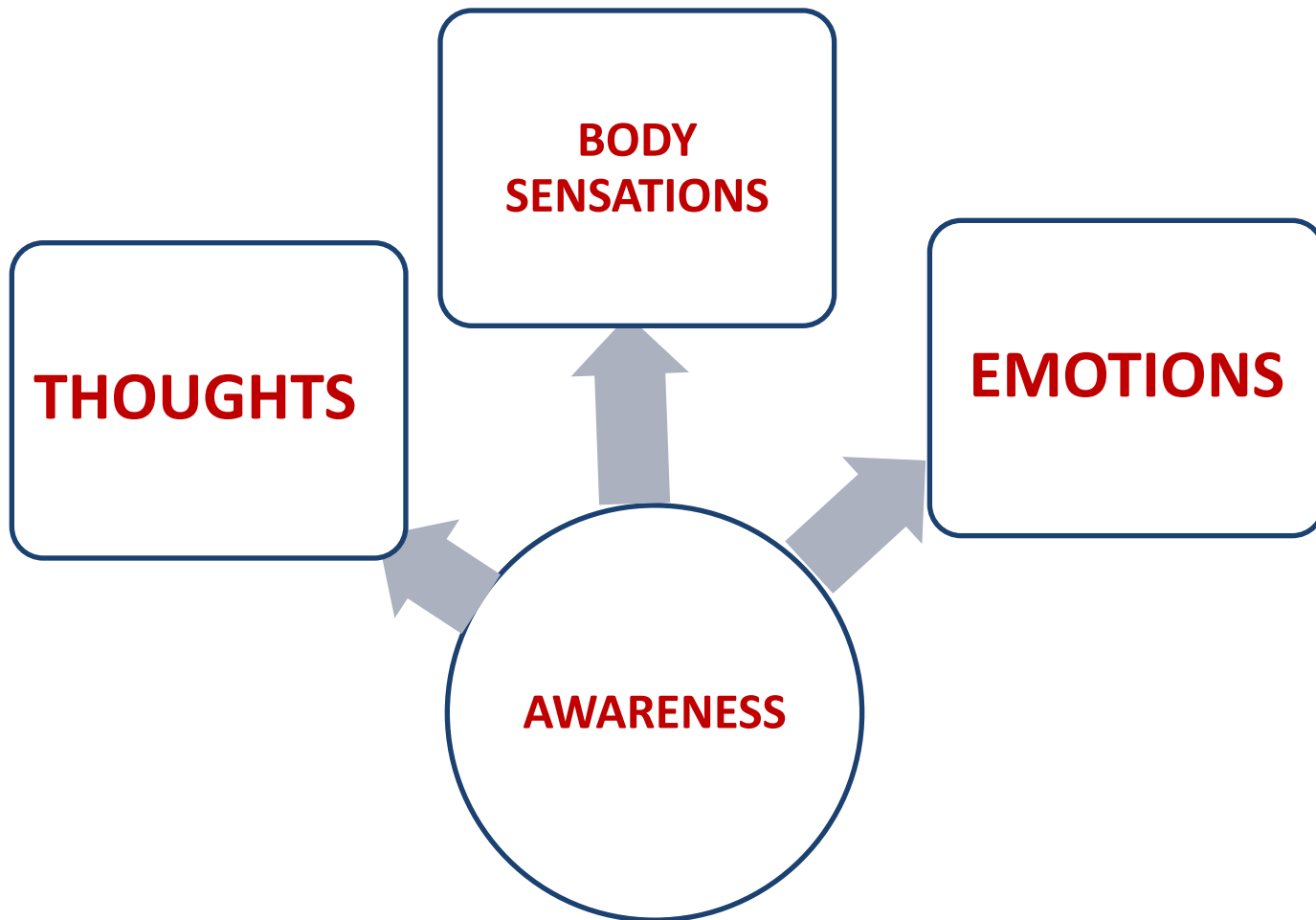
- Focus
- Higher level thinking and problem solving
- Creativity and innovation
- The ability to switch strategies flexibly
- Emotional regulation and the ability to “let things go”
- Impulse control
- Memory and the ability to access information
- The curiosity and self-compassion required for learning
- Physical, mental and emotional health and well-being

Moving From Reacting to Creative Responding

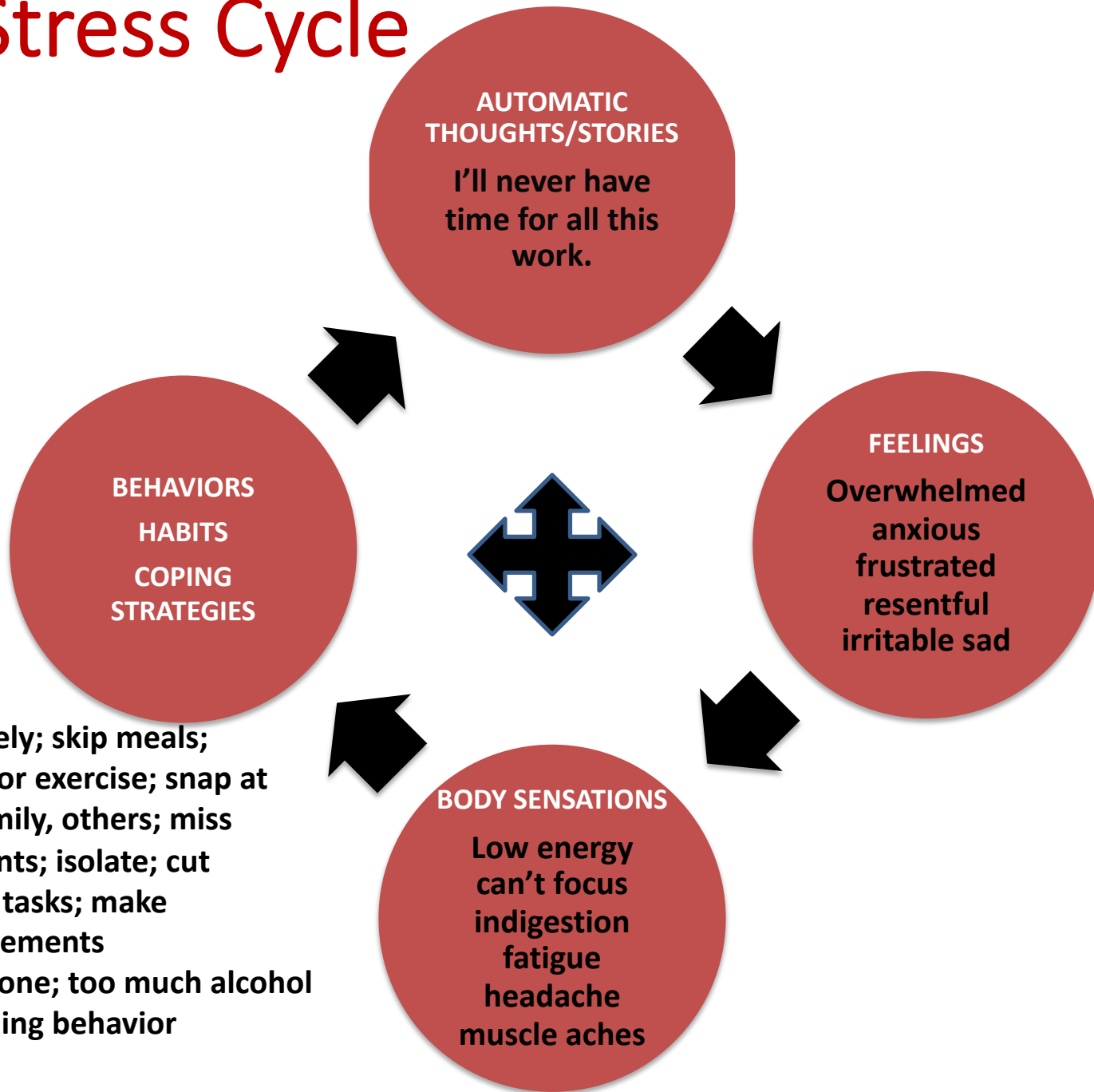
“The very first and most important step in breaking free from a lifetime of stress reactivity is to be mindful of what is actually happening while it is happening.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn, Full Catastrophe Living

The Mindful Check In: Paying Attention to the Direct Experience of the Moment



The Stress Cycle



Work excessively; skip meals;
cut sleep and/or exercise; snap at
colleagues, family, others; miss
important events; isolate; cut
corners; avoid tasks; make
impulsive judgements
to get things done; too much alcohol
or other numbing behavior



As soon as you notice you've been triggered:



Stop

Breathe

Observe with curiosity – What's happening here?

Check in with body, mind states, emotions, urges, environment.

Proceed

By intentionally stepping out of autopilot, reflexive habits, judgements about how it's always been or how you want it to be, or being lost in stories or emotions, you can more fully engage with the nuances of the actual present moment to choose a skillful response to the question: *"What's called for now?"*

** Know your personal stress warning signals **



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ONE MINUTE MINDFUL PAUSE



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Mindfulness in Communication



“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.”

~George Bernard Shaw



MINDFUL LISTENING

How much of the time are we really here when we are having a conversation?

We may look here, but how often are we actually:

- Planning what we're going to say
- Judging what is being said
- Wondering what they think of us
- Coming up with a defense
- Trying to control the situation
- Thinking of something else entirely

"It is often through the quality of our listening and not the wisdom of our words that we are able to effect the most profound change in the people around us."

-- Rachel Naomi Remen



“To listen is to lean in softly with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.”

-- Mark Nepo

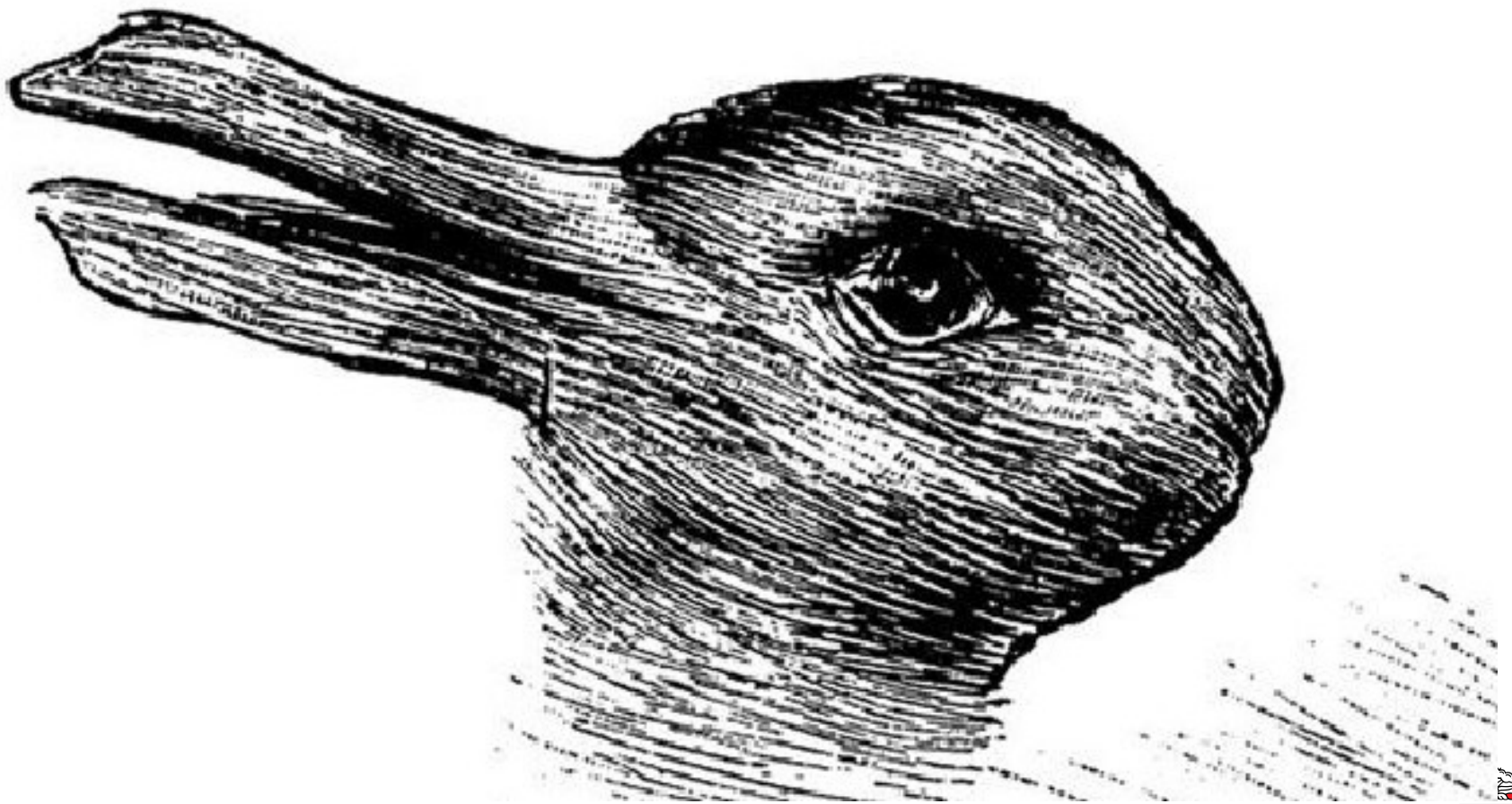
“Listening is considered an essential leadership skill.”

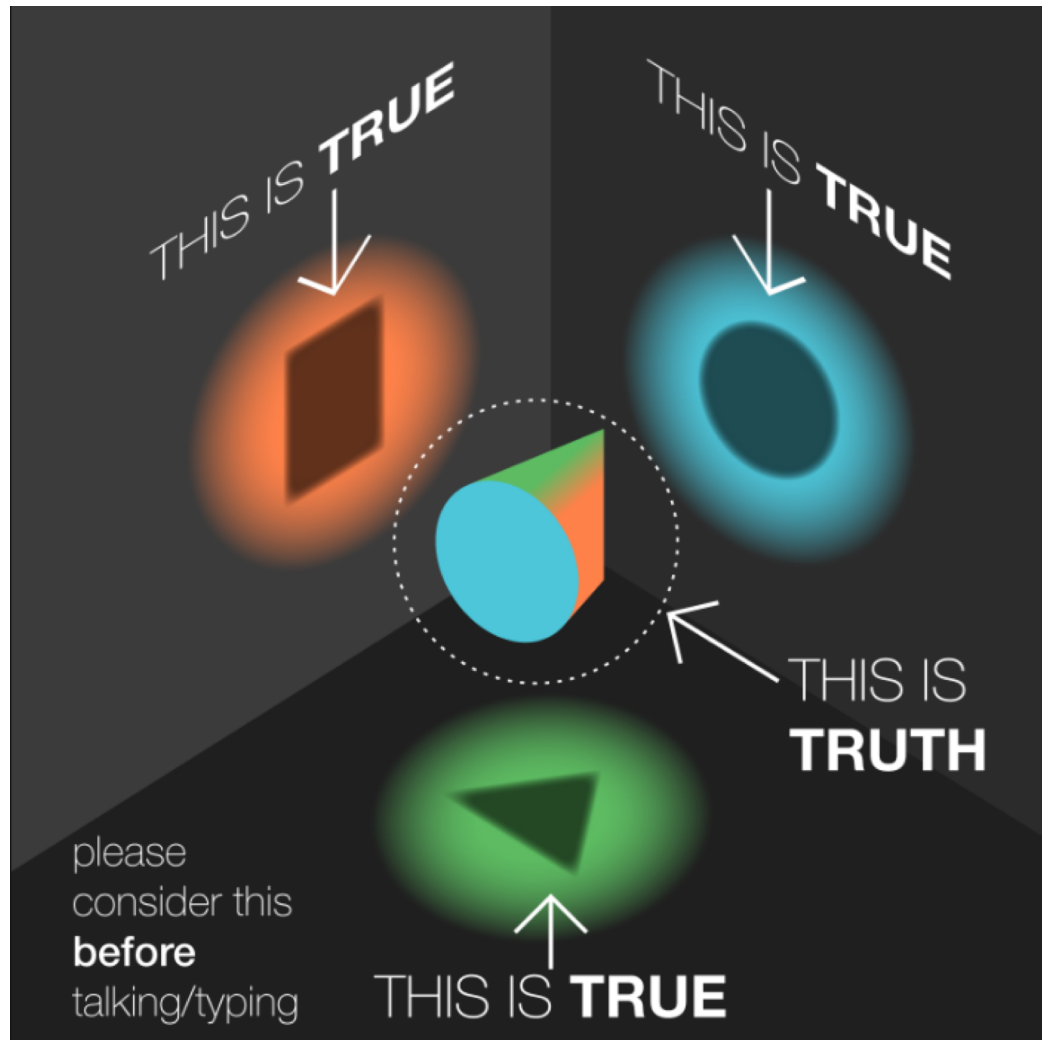
-- Daniel Goleman

“Pure listening is letting go of control. It’s not easy and takes training. The bottom line is when we are listened to, we feel connected. When we’re not listened to, we feel separate.”

-- Tara Brach







Bringing Mindfulness to How We Talk to Each Other

"The truth is when you're overloaded and you need something from somebody else it's tempting to just get in and out as quickly as possible in an effort to get what you need and move on to the next thing."

Dawa Tarchin



"Sometimes I think the collaborative process would work better without you."



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MINDFUL SPEECH

Is it TRUE?

Do I know this for sure?

Is it BENEFICIAL?

Will it serve the needs of the moment, project, discussion, etc.

Is it the RIGHT TIME?

Is now the best time to share it or would another time be better?

Is it KIND?

Is it respectful of the other person, with best intentions for all?



Communication Choice Points

- **Connection Points** – Making the decision to coach, collaborate, or get to know someone
- **Clarity Points** – Providing vision, direction, or commands
- **Courage Points** – Having a direct conversation, giving and receiving feedback, managing conflict, taking ownership, challenging the status quo, committing to an important decision or direction, speaking from the heart



Navigating Conflict

THE MINDFUL PAUSE

- Drop into the body
- Name it to tame it
- Recognize you have choice
- Reorient to intention



Internal Traffic Signals



Red Light: Defensive Reactions

We stop using our innate communication wisdom

Yellow light: Cautious and Curious

Green Light: Open, Available, Connected

From Red, Green, Yellow, Susan Gillis Chapman, Mindful Magazine (May 3, 2013)



Mindful Meeting Practice to Enhance Effectiveness and Productivity

- Center Before You Enter
- Consciously transition to HERE between activities
- Notice when you become distracted and return to the meeting
- Listen mindfully – *“To listen is to lean in softly with a willingness to be changed by what we hear.”*
- Speak mindfully – Is it true, helpful, timely and respectful?
- Notice the strong pull of the mind to react automatically and use the STOP practice when you feel triggered.
- Notice when you are “pre-judging” rather than curious.
- Stay connected to your breath and body (for information and regulation)
- Be kind to self and other as you try new ways of relating



With Mindfulness, we can optimize our capacity to:

- **Stop** habitual, autopilot-driven, reactive modes of activity
- **See** ourselves, others and information more clearly
- **Understand** situations more fully
- **Choose** effective, contextually relevant solutions.



Ways to Integrate Mindfulness into Work and Life



Building the Muscle of Mindfulness



Regular and Consistent PRACTICE

Formal Practice

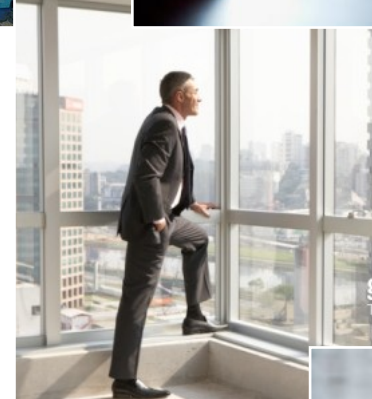
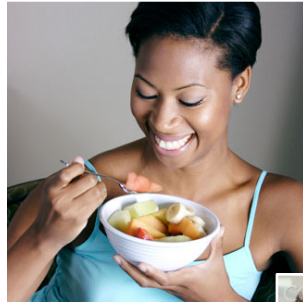
“Money in the Bank”

The more you build the muscle of mindfulness through a dedicated daily practice, the more naturally and consistently it will arise in the course of your day.

- Sitting Meditation
- Body Scan
- Walking Meditation
- Mindful Movement



Informal Practice: Short Moments/Many Times



Mindfulness in the Workday Suggestions

- One minute mindful pauses
- “Staple It” to something you already do
- “Center before you enter”
- Mindful task v. multi-task
- Use recordings or participate in Brown weekly practices
- Mindful Check in – The body is a stress barometer. Stay connected to it; check in with yourself regularly for information and self regulation.

8 Hour/8 Week Workplace Mindfulness Training

Session 1 - Mindfulness

Session 2 - The role of perception and thinking habits in how we experience life circumstances

Session 3 – habitual stress reactivity

Session 4 - Response flexibility and creating space for skillful

Session 5 - Resilience, stress hardiness and the path to flourishing

Session 6 - Mindful communication – listening and speaking for optimal outcomes

Session 7 - Mindful Meetings; Navigating conflict and uncomfortable conversations

Session 8 - Integrating mindfulness into work and life



8 Week Workplace Mindfulness - Chelmsford

Participants who attended 4 classes and practiced 10 minutes/day

- 16% reduction in perceived stress
- 22% increase in ability to notice inner experience
- 12% increase in acting with awareness
- 22% increase in non-reactivity to experiences

Participants who attended at 5 - 8 classes and practiced 20 min./day

- 24% reduction in perceived stress
- 44% increase in ability to notice inner experience
- 37% increase in acting with awareness
- 35% increase in non-reactivity to experiences



8 Week Workplace Mindfulness - Foxborough

- “It has helped me to get through stressful situations and understand perhaps that other people have the same stresses but for different reasons. I am a better listener which helps me to execute my job in a more effective manner.”
- “I feel less stressed at work, because I have learned to stop myself when I “begin making stories up” in my mind... now I try to stick with the facts and look for opportunities, rather than creating negative scenarios of what could have been.”
- “It made me aware of what I do daily and how I could change the way I do things”
- “I believe that my response to [stressful/frustrating] situations has greatly improved because I am becoming more aware of my emotions and I now give myself time before I respond.”
- “Being able to accept and recognize unpleasant moments for what they are and not let them affect my well being and stress level”



OPPORTUNITY

“There is nothing more powerful than
an idea whose time has come.”

Victor Hugo

