



PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NURTURING A MINDFUL DAY AT WORK

by Orlando Gonzalez, MEd, LMHC, CEAP

The notion of incorporating mindfulness into our workplace may spark images of business-suit-wearing yogis/yoginis meditating atop office desks in lotus position (eyes closed, legs crossed, back straight and arms draped to each knee). While it is possible for some of us to set aside time during our busy workday to engage in this type of formal practice, the majority of us may find it impractical (or even professionally risky) and choose to abandon any attempts to incorporate mindfulness into our day, “throwing the baby out with the bath water.” The application of mindfulness truly does extend beyond this one mode of expression and may be found in an infinite variety of practical approaches which serve to improve the overall quality of our lives.

In his book, *Overworked and Overwhelmed: The Mindfulness Alternative*, author Scott Eblin reminds readers that we practice being mindful when we are, “aware and intentional – aware of what’s going on around you, aware of what’s going on inside you as a response to what’s going on around you, and intentional about what you’re going to do next.” Any person behaving in this fashion stands to gain a great deal from her/his personal experiences. Eblin adds there is also a business case for being fully present; if you’re not, “you’re not going to do your best work.” Therefore, supporting the needs of employees wishing to incorporate mindfulness practices into their workday is a win-win for all stakeholders.

Time management and productivity expert Laura Vanderkam offers the following **5 Ways to Embrace Mindfulness at Work**:

MOVE MORE THROUGHOUT THE DAY

Take 5-10 minute walks periodically to improve your mental focus. Walks afford a mental rest. They allow us to enter into a different world outside the confines of our offices to return feeling more refreshed. During walks, make a concerted effort to be actively present in all the details of your walk.

VISUALIZE POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Take a moment before each meeting to ask yourself, “what am I trying to accomplish in this meeting, presentation, etc.,” and “how do I need to show up to make that happen?” Visualizing a positive outcome and how you need to get there, helps you remain focused and prevent derailment of purpose.

LISTEN FULLY WITHOUT AN AGENDA

Try giving a conversation partner 5 minutes to tell you what he or she wants without you steering it or without permitting other distractions. Listening in this way saves time in the long run because, by doing so, we work to understand and respond to that which is truly important to colleagues.

FIND THE POSITIVE IN SITUATIONS

Learn to see events with greater depth; understanding that each perceived positive, or negative, event holds potential for growth. Approaching challenges with this mindset harnesses our capacity for developing resilient responses to life’s many stressors.

TAKE THREE DEEP BREATHS

Take a moment to focus on your breath and place your attention on taking three deep, cleansing breaths. This will reset your system and permit a moment of calm where you can observe the trajectory of your feelings. It may be a productive way of transitioning between meetings, clearing the mind’s chatter or emotional charge, to enter new meetings free of any residual negative influence.

BANKING THE GOOD

Reminding yourself to take notice of your thoughts, feelings, body sensations and the world around you is the first step to mindfulness. We can amend our natural bias toward negativity by paying attention to the simple experiences that generate pleasant moments.

For the next 5 days (or even better, continue beyond that) make an intention to be aware of those fleeting moments of pleasure (warm sun on your face, a smile, a beautiful sky).

WHAT WAS THE EXPERIENCE?

WHAT THOUGHTS OCCURRED TO YOU?

WHAT EMOTIONS WERE YOU AWARE OF?

WHAT SENSATIONS DID YOU NOTICE IN THE BODY?

If we pay attention to the experience, and we “bank” it as good – life starts to feel richer and more fulfilling.

Source: “A Year of Living Mindfully” by Anna Black

**“EVERY BREATH WE TAKE,
EVERY STEP WE MAKE,
CAN BE FILLED WITH
PEACE, JOY, AND
SERENITY.”**

- THICH NHAT HANH



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Mind and Matter is a quarterly publication from the UM Faculty and Staff Assistance Program that provides helpful tips and articles regarding work-life balance, health and well-being.

If you would like to receive this newsletter directly in your inbox each quarter, as well as announcements about upcoming FSAP seminars, please send an email to cbootle@miami.edu.

Did you know?

Administrative leave with pay is granted yearly by the University for the first three visits to the FSAP office. A letter addressed to the employee seeking assistance may be provided upon request to verify attendance.

Please contact the FSAP at 305-284-6604 if you have any questions.

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FEATURED SEMINAR

Mindful Walking

This month's seminar will focus on walking mindfully. Walking is a great way to integrate mindfulness into your everyday life and has been practiced as a meditative technique for thousands of years. Being mindful increases engagement with the present moment and allows for a clearer understanding of how thoughts and emotions impact our health and the quality of our lives. Attend to awaken your innate capacity for mindful living and nurture a practice to positively inspire every facet of your life.

This seminar will be facilitated by Carol Kaminsky MA, BC-DMT, NCC, a board certified dance-movement therapist and a faculty member in the University of Miami dance program. She has taught mindful movement and meditation for stress reduction (MBSR) for over 20 years.

Coral Gables campus | **Tuesday, January 26**, 12-1:00 p.m.
Meeting in front of the Otto Richter Library breezeway.

Miller Medical School campus | **Thursday, February 4**, 12-1:00 p.m.
Meeting in front of the Lois Pope Center entrance.

ADDITIONAL UPCOMING SEMINARS

Creating Harmony from Within in the New Year | Surviving a Breakup
Parenting the Emotional Child

