Mindfulness for Effective Leadership

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Reflection and Self-Assessment

• In 1-2 words, share one learning or take-away from today

• Right now, are you...
Meditation Practice

• Breath as focus, anchor

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Overview

• Context - A VUCA world
• Mindfulness
• Mindful leadership
• Building your capacity as a mindful leader
Context: A VUCA World

Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity
To Lead Successfully, We Need to be Able to:

• Set strategy
• Empathize and develop trusting relationships with others,
• Take risks, and consistently do the right thing based on personal values
• Be present
  • Presence engenders creativity, agility, resilience, and authenticity, all key requirements of great leaders. When we are present, we are maximally resourceful and responsive to what our circumstances require of us.
    - Doug Silsbee, 2008

....Lead from our “whole selves”.

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Multi brain model

Cephalic brain
- HEAD
- cognition
- strategising
- making sense

Enteric brain
- GUT
- identity
- self protection
- activation

Cardiac brain
- HEART
- emoting
- values
- relationships

Reflection on Head, Heart, and Gut

Reflect on decisions you’ve made with head, heart, and/or gut –

• *Separately? In conflict with each other? In sync?*

• *Outcomes?*

• *Which one is your inner leader?*
  
  (Alan Seale, 2016)

• *What would be possible if we led from all three (whole-mind thinking)?*
Living and Leading from our Whole Selves

**Whole-mind thinking**
• Using all of our intelligences

**Whole-body awareness**
• cognition (thoughts, language), emotion, internal sensation, external perception, relational awareness, and intuition

**Whole-being presence**
• centered, grounded, internally anchored and flexible and agile
• authentic, acting in alignment with our values
• fostering inclusion and collaboration
Mindfulness increases our awareness, our ability to be present, and our capacity to lead from our whole selves.
Partner/Trio Exercise (in 5 words or less)

• What is your understanding of mindfulness?

- OR -

• What is on your mind in this present moment?
What is Mindfulness?

The awareness that emerges through:

- paying attention
- on purpose,
- in the present moment, and
- non-judgmentally
- to the unfolding of experience moment to moment.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn, 2003

With an orientation of:

- Curiosity
- Openness
- Acceptance
- Lovingkindness
Mindfulness is not pushing away or grasping onto the moment, but rather seeing reality through a lens of calm acceptance.

- Tara Brach, 2003
Why Practice Mindfulness?
(http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/mindfulness/definition)

• Improved focus, attention, and memory
• Increased self-awareness
• Greater emotional awareness, understanding, acceptance, and the ability to self-regulate
• Greater sense of well-being
• Changes in the structure and function of the brain (neuroplasticity)
• Enhanced immune system function
• Greater empathy and compassion for self and others
• Applications to diverse environments and populations
8 Pillars of Happiness In The Workplace

• Balance
• Concentration
• Compassion
• Resilience
• Communication & Connection
• Integrity
• Meaning
• Open Awareness
Companies Incorp’g Mindfulness Training
Mindfulness Training in the Workplace

• Enhances/improves:
  • stress management
  • memory and focus
  • sense of well-being and control
  • decision-making (all stages)
  • productivity and performance

• Lowers healthcare costs and absenteeism

• Can transform organizational culture
Why Does Mindful Leadership Matter?

Mindfulness enables leaders to be fully present, aware of themselves and their impact on other people, and sensitive to their reactions to stressful situations. - Bill George, 2017: http://www.billgeorge.org/page/mindful-leadership-compassion-contemplation-and-meditation-develop-effective-leaders

Mindful leadership contributes to:

- Better listening
- Improved strategic thinking, prioritizing, and decision-making
- Stress management
- Staying focused and engaged
(Mindful leadership contributes to...)

- Engaging and re-engaging others
- Facilitating effective meetings
- Our ability to hold ambiguity
- Improved personal reactions to conflicts
- Creating the space for innovation
- Responding with clarity under pressure
- Our capacity for having difficult conversations
- Beneficial relationships with colleagues
- A positive team atmosphere

(Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Ehrlich, 2015; Gates & Gilbert, 2016; Hunter & Chaskalson, 2013; Pipe & Bortz, 2009; Raney, 2014; Wells, 2015)
When we are no longer able to change a situation – we are challenged to change ourselves
- Victor Frankl
Building your Capacity as a Mindful Leader

- Meditation
- Intention
- Reflection
- Centering
- DiSCO
- 3 Q’s
Intention: FTSOW? *What’s your Why?*

- Personal Aspiration Reflection
- Professional Aspiration Reflection
Centering Practice

Length

Breadth

Depth

Care/commitment

(Richard Strozzi-Heckler, 2014)
• **Stimulus:** Perceived threat to physical or emotional safety, connection with others, dignity and respect

• **Reaction:** Fight, Flight, Freeze

• Reduced capacity for rational thought (Dan Siegel’s hand model of the brain – “flipping your lid”)
Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

Viktor Emil Frankl, M.D., Ph.D., Holocaust survivor (1905-1997)
Returning to Center

(Best practiced under low-stakes, low-pressure conditions)

• Recognize the “grab” or trigger, and/or your reaction to it
• Pause purposefully (Janice Marturano, Finding the Space to Lead, 2014)
• **Reorganize - Return to center** (LBDC)
• Choose a different/new response (action, attitude), make a skillful decision
DiSCO
(Alan Seale, transformationalpresence.org)

• Drama
• i – filler 😊
• Situation
• Choice
• Opportunity
Hypothetical scenario:
• You’re having lunch with co-workers and find out that while were on vacation, another co-worker (not at lunch with you) presented your idea as her/his own in a team meeting, and everybody thought it was “genius”!
Partner/Trio Exercise: Perspective Shifting Through DiSCO

• Start at Drama and work your way up:
  • Drama – in the “story” and upset; “he said, she said”; blame, gossip, bias
  • Situation – facts on the ground
  • Choice – how we want to be
  • Opportunity – actions we can take

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Reflective Journaling

Consider a current or recent scenario

• Start at Drama and work your way up:
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  • Situation – facts on the ground
  • Choice – how we want to be
  • Opportunity – actions we can take
Transformational Presence Model (Alan Seale, transformationalpresence.org)

(Consider a current or recent scenario)

3 Questions (Beyond the Drama)

• What wants to happen? (Situation)
• Who is that calling me/us to be? (Choice)
• What is that calling me/us to do? (Opportunity)
Mindfulness is called a “practice” because it doesn’t have to be perfect. Isn’t that a relief?

- Heather Stang, 2014

And, we can develop our capacity to be mindful by PRACTICING 😊
You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn how to surf.

- Jon Kabat-Zinn -
Review

Context: A VUCA world

Mindfulness

Mindful leadership

Building your capacity as a mindful leader
Thank You!

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Find your edge, Play it well,
Transform your life!