



## **Mindfulness in the Board Room?**

More often than not, board meetings - or indeed, any management meeting – will start off with a round the table precis of where everyone is at; good news, bad news and a rundown of the agenda.

There will be corporate jargon, a conversation you heard in the last three meetings, numerous facts and figures and an agenda for the next meeting. But what if you could take more control of really being there.....focus on what is going on in your mind and body right there and then. Empty out all of the clutter and confusion from your thought processes and simply relax.... Just for a few moments.... what if.....

## **Mindfulness in Meetings**

OK so you've heard of mindfulness. But it's not for you right? It's not for busy Executives who have no time to spare and certainly not enough time to sit and think. But by putting aside just 10 minutes each day, or at least before an important meeting you can take better control of your thought processes and be truly THERE in meetings. You can actively choose your own level of presence and self-awareness and become more aware of those around you. By taking time to do this and encouraging others to do so, you can really elevate meetings to the next level by reducing anxiety and stress, making way for more productive, creative and collaborative thought processes.

There are a number of ways you can do this and, with practice, you will find those that best suit you. These aren't static either and you might choose to change them dependent on your mood, your time and, well, just how you are feeling at the time.

I list below a few key elements and it really does depend on YOU and just how far you want to explore your own thoughts.

## **CHECK IN, BREATHE, PERCEIVE, LISTEN**

Yes, we are all (hopefully!) breathing! But just try checking in with yourself – say 10 minutes before your meeting. Where are you? What is in your mind? Try and clear your thoughts by taking 3-4 deep breaths and with each one, focus on how your body is feeling, what you are feeling. Keep on checking where you are at – are you ready for this? Can you be fully aware and “in the room”? Can you be non-judgemental and open to listening?

Continually check in with yourself.. just how much % of you is there right at that moment? If you’re going off track, call yourself back to the present – the here and now. We all have a tendency to let our minds wander off in meetings. But if you can remain 100% in the moment, you will be able to gain a better understanding of those around you. Your perception will improve, your awareness will improve and moreover, your compassionate, intensive listening will enable you to recognise frustration and boredom and ultimately improve the quality and output of meetings.

Keep checking your breathing, your thoughts and how your body is feeling. If you drift off or find yourself becoming bored or irritable, check in with yourself. Be aware of how others are behaving in the meeting. Look at their body-language. Should you be giving them more airtime or encouraging one or other to speak?

By practising these simple techniques, you can bring a whole new feeling to your meetings and, if you can encourage your colleagues to do the same – or even better – enlist the help of a professional and someone neutral to do it for you – then you can face every meeting in a better frame of mind knowing the end result will be worth every breath!

*Diane Southwick ©2019*

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