

WELLBEING 101: MINDFULNESS FOR MANAGERS

Mindfulness is a practice that many people use to help focus their thinking, gain clarity, and to reduce their levels of stress. In this video transcript, executive coach and mindfulness practitioner, Kay Young, shares her tips on how to get started.

Transcript

Mindfulness for me is an awareness practice and so it's an opportunity to be in the here and now, to be present, to be with our lived experience. We come with patterns, conditioning, age-old ways of thinking and feeling and being and acting and doing.

And mindfulness offers an opportunity to bring these patterns into awareness so that they're kind of illuminated. It can be uncomfortable actually -uncomfortable - you know your patterns being illuminated for the first time by either yourself or someone else. 'Will I stay the same or can I choose something different? Will I stay with what's comfortable and familiar and has served me well, or will I choose something that actually will probably serve me better?'

I think leaders and managers practicing mindfulness is really important, it's really crucial. We live in a 24/7 connective environment with technology, tablets and phones and laptops and LinkedIn and whatever else. And I think we've never been so disconnected from our own inner journey as leaders and from being in relationship with others and with the environment around us.

My mind goes to one senior leader in particular and that person when we first started to work together was very often confused with their thinking and their head was full of 'I could do this, I could do that, 'I might do this, I might do that.'

And through our work together they began to trust the inner wisdom of their own process and so their thinking became calmer and more settled. And it's hard to explain, but in some ways their body responded to 'This choice feels not right, and this choice feels the right choice for me right now'. It's a felt sense, mindfulness, in an embodied way and an embodied practice supports that felt sense of right choices, right actions. And so maybe just starting with what I see as the basic or the key principles to start off with.

One is being aware of the contact with your feet on the floor and really just noticing your feet with the floor and see if it's possible to allow your feet to be heavier so you're really finding your ground. As part of that then just notice the contact between your body and the chair, so feeling the back of the chair supporting you, your bottom in the chair. And then the third piece is breathing - breathing in and perhaps breathing in a sense of spaciousness into your body and then breathing out and breathing out any tension. And so you're in contact with your feet and the ground, your body and the chair and the quality of your breathing.

Mindfulness leads to a different sense of solidness. Some people might call it 'Centre'. Centre is a place where decisions are known not made, and mindfulness really offers an opportunity for that place of knowing, having the inner wisdom for decisions, for choices – a different clarity, a different focus - something deeper is more possible.