

IMPROVE YOUR PRODUCTIVITY WITH MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is really just another word for focus. When you focus your attention you can markedly improve your productivity as well as your memory, your ability to think creatively and most importantly, the way you feel.

The concept of being mindful has been around for thousands of years. US researchers have recently begun to measure the changes in the brains of Buddhist monks who have been practicing mindfulness for many years. Their findings were not surprising – being focused and calm has a significantly positive impact on the activity in the brain.

The good news is that you don't need to be a Buddhist monk to reap the benefits. The simple act of focusing your attention on whatever task you are undertaking will change your experience and improve your productivity.

Use mindfulness in the workplace to create surprising results

Notice the difference when you phone a prospective client away from your computer or any other distractions. When your only focus is listening intently to what that person is saying, you're likely to make them feel that the conversation is important to you. Making a genuine connection with your clients helps you build trusted business relationships – by being mindful in the way you interact with your customers will have a positive impact on your business.

When we're mindful and attentive, our memory improves

One of the key inhibitors of good memory is being distracted. Many people tell themselves that their memory is poor without considering what makes it so. Not paying attention is one of the key reasons we find it difficult to recall information.

Next time you meet someone new, listen 'mindfully' when they say their name. Pay proper attention to the conversation and bring your mind back when you find it wandering. You'll be surprised at how much you remember about that person next time you meet them and how good your overall memory becomes!

Being mindful improves your ability to be creative

When you're calmly focused on a single task, your brainpower is multiplied. Whilst it may seem more productive to multi-task, in fact it often reduces our efficiency. Sometimes just sitting quietly and allowing yourself to observe your thoughts as they arise helps you solve problems from a more intuitive place. Some of the best business decisions I've made in business have been on meditation retreats!

Mindfulness improves your sense of enjoyment

Rather than resisting a task, when we indulge ourselves completely into the activity without judgement, we often find that there's less to dislike about it.

Paul Wilson, author of *The Quiet* and long term meditation teacher uses mindfulness when he does the dishes. He pays attention to the feel of the bubbles in the sink and the movement of the water; he enjoys the smell of the detergent and takes his time to make the process an enjoyable one.

He admits it takes him twice as long to wash his dishes as it does anyone else but being able to find pleasure in life's more mundane tasks can only be beneficial to our wellbeing.

Key to mindfulness is paying attention to only one thing at a time. It might be the task that you are engaged in or something more sensory, such as listening to a piece of music, really tasting the food you are eating, looking at the beauty around you or enjoying a fragrance or touch.

How often, if ever, do you experience mindfulness?