



A WORD FROM OUR CEO

This week I'd like to introduce the concept of mindfulness. The term is used quite a bit these days and starting to be used by corporates as part of their employee wellness programmes to a greater extent. Google offers its employees more than a dozen mindfulness courses, the most popular being "Search Inside Yourself" which it has offered since 2007.

So what is mindfulness? Simply stated, mindfulness is the practice of paying attention in the present moment. Sounds easy enough but if you stop all the busyness for a moment, be still, quiet the mind and observe how long you can stay present in the moment, you'll probably find, like most people on the planet, that it won't be for very long.

Like everything in life we want to be good at, it takes practice.

Here are some interesting observations and a useful practice from Melli O'Brien:

"Most of us would probably describe ourselves as busy these days. Sometimes we feel stuck in the rat race, or locked in the daily grind. Although these phrases point to a not so pleasant state of being, many of us seem strangely drawn to it. We may complain that we're too busy, but much of the time we don't make the changes to help us slow down, relax and create space.

One enlightening thing to know about that feeling of being busy: A lot of the time it's actually the product of a busy mind. You see, we often feel busy because our minds are distracted and racing. We are doing one thing while thinking about the next thing. We're not truly present.

This may be why many of us feel so busy so much of the time. Even when our bodies are in one place, our minds are racing ahead to our to-do list giving us that constant feeling that we don't have enough time to get it all done.

So how can we ease some of this inner pressure?

Well one way is to clear some of your to-do list. This of course can make a huge difference, but for many of us, that is difficult or just not possible. Another possibility is not to change what you do, but how you do it. Instead of changing your outer circumstances you can focus on overcoming busyness as a state of mind.

To do this, we simply need to change the mind state that leaves us feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Here's a simple mindfulness practice to settle the mind that has been used for thousands of years all around the world... The practice is simple—pay attention to the thing you're doing while you're doing it. Do one thing at a time—with your full attention.

As soon as you bring your full focus to what you are doing, you become more mindful and your busy state of mind will start to unwind. Some helpful tips for this are firstly, if you notice yourself habitually rushing, for example when you make a meal or walk from your car to the house—see if you can adjust your pace slightly, slowing down just a little and being attentive to each step or movement. See if you can enjoy the steps, the movements.

Another great practice when the mind is racing is to simply take a deep breath—and then again, bring your full focus to what you are doing. And do just that one thing—letting everything else go.

It's worth noting here that multitasking revs up the mind as we flit our attention from task to task. Research shows that we make fewer mistakes and are more productive when we practice unit tasking instead.

Of course unit tasking is the practice of just doing one thing at a time. If you start to bring this more focused awareness into your life, you'll begin to notice a shift in your perception of busyness. Your day may still have a long to-do list and a full calendar but your experience of moving through your day will likely feel more enjoyable, relaxed and you can enjoy the process of getting everything done. And that matters because, hey after all, life isn't a to-do list, it's meant to be enjoyed."

Thought for the Day

"If things go wrong in the world, this is because something is wrong with the individual, because something is wrong with me. Therefore, if I am sensible, I shall put myself right first.... In the last analysis, the essential thing is the life of the individual. This alone makes history, here alone do the great transformations take place, and the whole future, the whole history of the world, ultimately spring as a gigantic summation from these hidden sources in individuals. In our most private and most subjective lives we are not only passive witnesses of our age, its sufferers, but also its makers. We make our own epoch." - Carl Jung