



MINDFULNESS AND MINI-BREAKS TO RECHARGE

Both at the end of the year and around the summer holidays - I hear many of you mention the need for a break or the wish to maintain the benefits of your holidays.

You might have heard about 'mindfulness' at work: a way to take mini breaks during a really packed day, regain focus after you get interrupted or quiet your emotions by becoming more present to the 'here and now'.

DEFINING MINDFULNESS

Let's see first what mindfulness is not and then explore a few ways to try it out. Mindfulness is not meditation.

I started meditating when I was 9, after my self-taught yoga sessions. My yoga book stated that meditation is fundamental to calm thoughts in order to experience a connection with the universe. I still find that statement largely accurate: the goal of meditation is to feel part of a greater whole. Hence it is often associated with a spiritual quest and has been embraced by many religions.

On the other hand, the goal of mindfulness is to experience the present moment more fully, with less internal dialogue and judgment about what should be happening. It is linked with self-development but not with a transcendental vision of the world.

3 WAYS TO TRY IT OUT

It is a nice paradox: by being present in the 'here and now', we actually take a break from ourselves and recharge our busy brains.

Here are three ways to try it out and see if it helps you. Start with 1 minute and consider using a timer:

1. Find a daily activity that does not require your full attention (drinking tea or coffee, travelling on public transport, walking, brushing your teeth, etc.). While you complete it, notice any sounds, tastes, smells along with your physical sensations.
2. Sit in a comfortable position, lower your gaze or close your eyes, breathe out 2-3 times in a row and again focus on your senses: what do you hear, feel and see?
3. Sit or stand, relax your shoulders and focus on your breathing.

It is normal for many thoughts to come up while practicing mindfulness. When this happens, simply focus again on your physical sensations. Choose an activity with movement if sitting still does not suit you.



FURTHER RESOURCES

There is much information on 'mindfulness at work' since this topic has gained increased interest. Here the resources I found most relevant:

- This Forbes article has a variety of links and short videos about the different aspects of this theme: <http://goo.gl/VmR6Sp>
- This HBR article explains integrating mindfulness with other management issues like innovation or listening skills: <https://goo.gl/dnFOvI>
- 9 videos (under 10 minutes) from various experts. New Age-looking web site and yet very factual choice of videos: <http://goo.gl/BxcnoK>

The following are two apps I use:

- 'Buddhify', which is \$5 for both Android and iOS. It selects exercises based on what is going on in your life (waiting, eating, being at home, etc.): <http://buddhify.com/>
- 'Take a Break!', which is free for both Android and iOS. It focuses more on short moments of relaxation. It offers in-app purchases and ads, which could be distracting: <http://goo.gl/dQSmHA>

As always, you can access all the PDF's of the posts: <https://goo.gl/TA37e9>

Sunny wishes of summer well-being and rest,
Giulia

If you wish to receive these posts -the frequency is 5-7 weeks - you are welcomed to join the closed LinkedIn group on Energy Management.
<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=7472737>