

Mindful Leadership: Thriving from Within

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Session Goals

- Explore mindfulness concepts and the intersection of mindfulness and leadership
- Understand how mindfulness practices help us connect fully with ourselves and others to elevate leadership
- Develop meditation skills practicing breathwork
- Apply mindfulness techniques to improve workplace well-being

Agenda

- Welcome & Opening Meditation
- Defining key terms
- Mindfulness Myths
- Benefits of mindfulness
- Mindful Leadership Exercises
- Gallery Walk
- Wrap Up

Opening Mindfulness Meditation

My Mindfulness Journey

- Bamboo reflects my mission because it is a symbol of strength and can withstand harsh conditions
- Similar to the resilience of bamboo, mindfulness helps us to better respond to managing stress and challenging situations



Mindfulness vs. Meditation

Meditation - any practice that trains the mind to focus and calm; what we do to learn about and practice mindfulness so that we can start to experience the benefits of present-moment awareness in our lives

Mindfulness - the practice of paying attention to whatever is happening in the moment, with curiosity and kindness; specifically emphasizes cultivating awareness of the present moment without judgement

Myths About Mindfulness	What is True?
<p>It's a passing New Age fad based on "magical" thinking.</p>	<p>Through research studies conducted in fields including health care, neuroscience, psychology, and education, mindfulness has been proven to enhance brain function, mental health, physical well-being, and behavioral responses.¹ However, despite its rapidly growing popularity, mindfulness is not a magical quick-fix for feeling and performing better. Its benefits arise and deepen gradually with continued practice over time.</p>
<p>It can conflict with traditional religious beliefs.</p>	<p>Mindfulness is not limited to a particular belief system. Many cultures and all of the world's major religions have practices that foster self-awareness, clarity, and calm.</p>
<p>It's the same thing as meditation.</p>	<p>Mindfulness is being aware of your thoughts, feelings, environment, and everything else. It can be practiced wherever you are, at any time, just by paying attention to what's happening in the moment. While meditation can enhance mindfulness, it is usually practiced for a limited period of time.</p>
<p>It requires clearing the mind of thoughts, which encourages passivity and a lack of emotional engagement.</p>	<p>Mindfulness is about observing our thoughts and how they affect us, not eliminating them. Instead of making us more passive, it supports our ability to engage in more conscious thought and action.</p>

Leadership Starts from Within

“When you align your
inner growth with your
outer actions, you gain the
power to inspire and lead
authentically.”

-Center for Creative Leadership



Mindfulness Concepts

“Building our Mindfulness Muscle”

- Seeing mindfulness as exercise for our brain
- Training our minds in the way we train our muscles to get stronger by lifting weights
- The more mindfulness practice we get, the better prepared we are for challenging situations



“Rushing River of Thought”

- Seeing our mind as a “river of thoughts”
- When we meditate, **we are not trying to stop our thoughts**, we are just trying to change our relationship with them by climbing on the bank to watch the river flow by vs. drowning in our thoughts
- Learning to observe our thoughts and emotions to be less reactive



The “Roommate” Who Won’t Leave

- Likens our thoughts and emotions to a “roommate” who lives within us, constantly talking, judging, and reacting
- Learning to observe this “roommate” without getting caught up in its narratives and judgments

Michael A. Singer, *The Untethered Soul*



Mindful Leadership

Why does mindfulness in the workplace matter now more than ever?

- Increasingly fast pace of modern life
- Stress created by long hours
- Reliance on technology
- The “new normal” - being constantly plugged in is not only accepted but expected



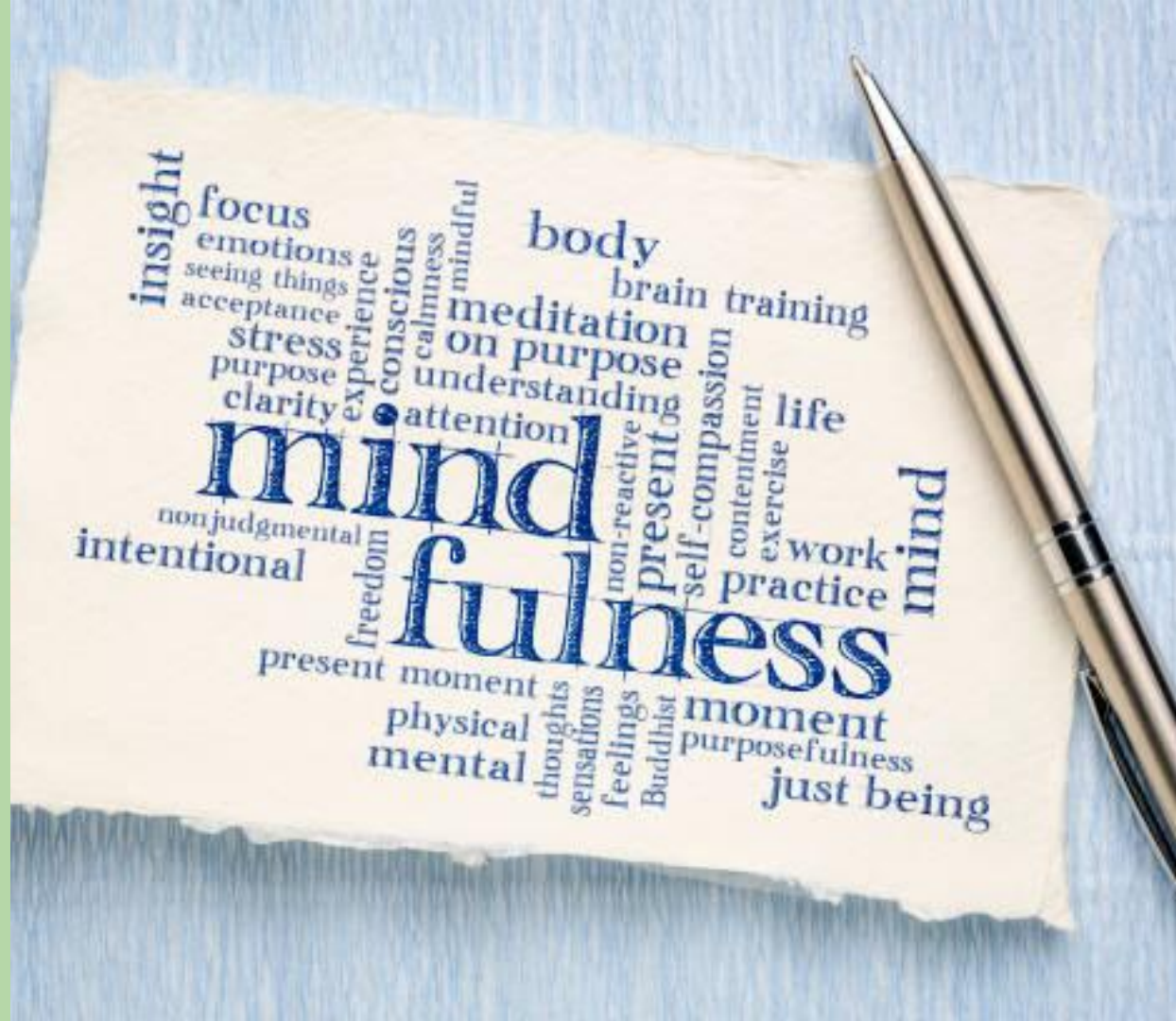
12 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LEADER

- | | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| 1. SELF-AWARENESS | 7. COLLABORATION |
| 2. RESPECT | 8. INFLUENCE |
| 3. COMPASSION | 9. INTEGRITY |
| 4. VISION | 10. COURAGE |
| 5. COMMUNICATION | 11. GRATITUDE |
| 6. LEARNING AGILITY | 12. RESILIENCE |



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Benefits of Mindfulness

Overall Benefits of Mindfulness

Evidence-based mindfulness research has proven that it greatly benefits our mental capacity and overall well-being by:



Reducing Stress and Anxiety



Building Compassion



Enhancing Body Awareness



Increasing Patience



Improving Focus and Productivity

Benefits of Mindfulness in the Workplace

Studies find that mindfulness training:

- Builds self-confidence in leaders by fostering a deeper connection to one's self leading to greater well-being
- Leads to higher job satisfaction among employees with mindful supervisors
- Enhances overall well-being - reduces stress, builds resilience
- Improves emotional regulation
- Increased attention and focus

Mindfulness Leadership Exercises

Meditation
not your
jam?



Practicing Mindful Leadership:

Mindful Leadership Exercises for the Workplace

Modeling Behaviors

- **Connect** - check in with your team daily
- **Set intentions** - start/end meetings with intention setting
- **Integrate transition times between meetings**

Mindful Movement

- **Mindful walking** - during breaks without devices
- **Deep breathing** - at the beginning of a meeting or before a presentation
- **Stretching**
- **Mindful eating** - smaller bites

Strengths Development

- Build self-awareness by recognizing personal strengths
- Invest in strengths development for your team

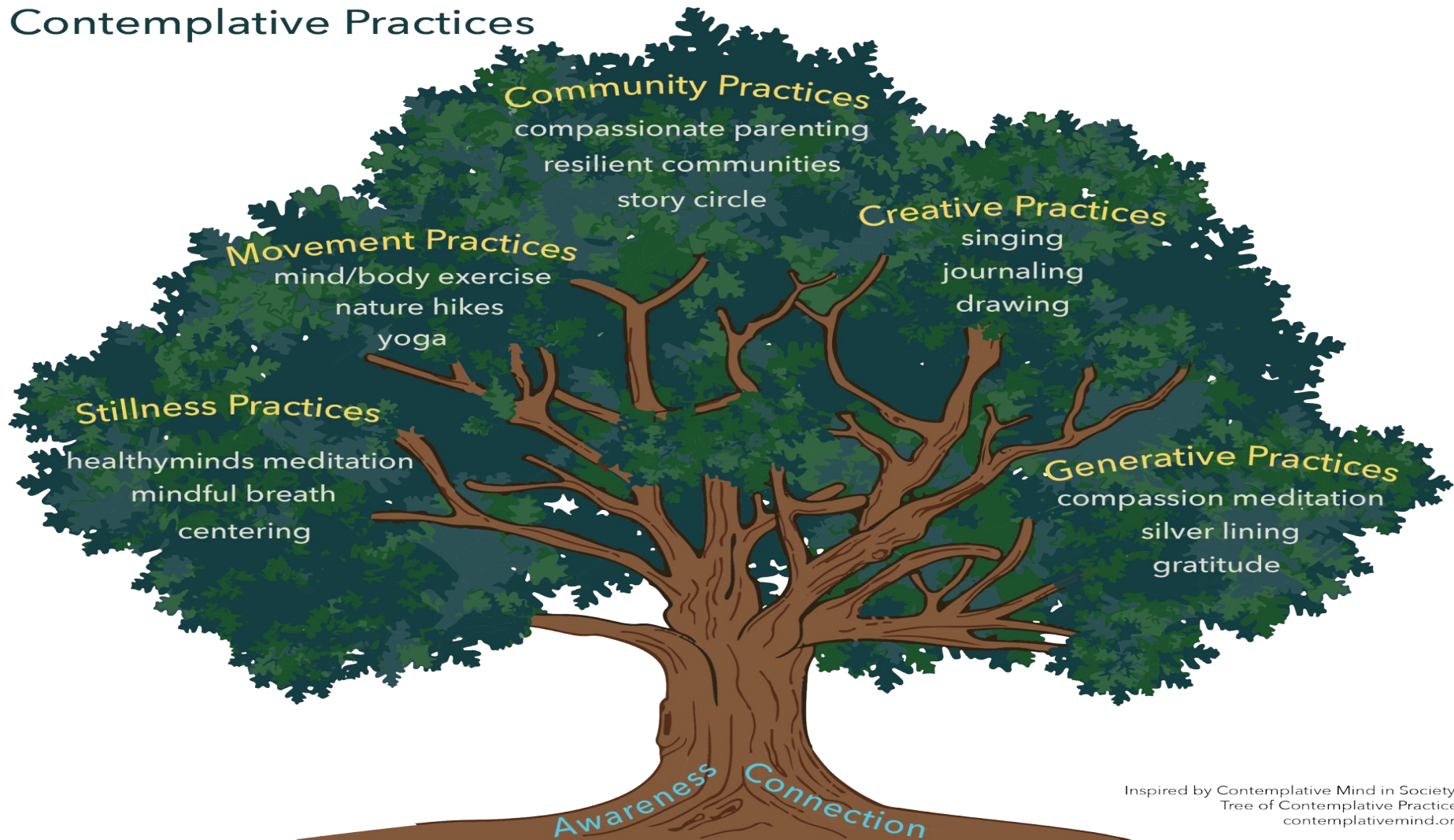
Mindfulness and Contemplative Practices

What are Contemplative Practices?

Contemplative Practices:

- Mindfulness practices that promote creativity, collaboration and connection
- A wide range of exercises that quiet the mind
- Rooted in exercises that cultivate self-awareness and connection
- Categorized into large branches of stillness, movement, community, creative, and generative practices

Contemplative Practices



Gallery Walk

Which question would you most like to discuss/explore?

Question #1: How does stress and being overwhelmed affect your decision-making, relationships, and ability to be an effective and leader?

Question #2: How can mindfulness support your work? For example, what are potential benefits of mindfulness that connect to your goals and strategies?

Question #3: Which mindful leadership exercise(s) resonated with you the most? Why?

Question #4: Did you relate to any of the information that was shared based on your own experience?

Question #5: What insights, feelings, or questions arose? Do you feel curious, unsure, inspired?

Question #6: How will the information shared influence your own actions as a leader? What commitments will you make to be a more mindful leader?

Gallery Walk: Instructions

1. Head to the chart paper with the question you would most like to discuss/explore. Bring a writing utensil - pen or marker!
2. Reflect on this question using the information you've learned about mindfulness.
3. Write down some notes on the chart paper.
4. Discuss as a group: What key takeaways did your group have about this question?

“The real difficulty is to
overcome how you think about
yourself.”

-Maya Angelou

Thank you!

Let's connect:

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