



MEDITATION: GREAT FOR PEOPLE GREAT FOR BUSINESS

By

M. H. CURTIS

Quotes in support of this work have been
graciously provided by...

HIS HOLINESS the 14th DALAI LAMA
and

GESHE NGAWANG SONAM

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GREAT FOR PEOPLE
GREAT FOR BUSINESS**

(expanded edition)

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Published by: M. H. Curtis

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ISBN:

Cover photo by “mikegi” on Pixabay

Dedicated to A Divine True Friend

Foreword

As I write this, reflecting on often feeling like I was being joyfully pushed and carried forward in this work with the sincere intention of helping people, it is with the deepest gratitude and humility that I am thankful for this opportunity.

In the workplace we are surrounded by measures of performance, expectations of performance, corporate goals to achieve more, and helping our managers, peers, and team members look like more. The more is often measured by material gain, status, perks, advancement, and other visible objectifications. We are inundated by external more, but what about our inner selves, what about making ourselves more? What about more internal growth?

One intention of this book is to present a very simple equation for success, to help businesses be better, simply by helping their employees be more of who they naturally are.

Hopefully HR personnel involved with training, along with executives looking for a way to maximize their organizations, will reflect on the truth of this message. In my career, of the HR people I have had the opportunity to meet and work with, there is one question if asked of them the answer would be the same, "Did you get into HR to help people"? Of course, the answer is yes!

Having a meditation program at work is an extraordinary way to provide help to people, employees, and businesses. So why not give it a try...you might end up with a group of truly grateful and dedicated employees on your hands!

M. H. Curtis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to thank my friends and relatives who provided insight into this work, editorial support, patience with this process, and encouragement. It has been a new process and one undertaken with the recognition of a need. For all those whose input was based on that understanding, I am truly grateful. I would also like to thank Richard for the exploration of a mutual connection and his input and guidance for this undertaking. I am eternally grateful for spiritual guidance in this work and for all of the blessings I have been given in this life! I also offer sincere and humble thanks to His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama for providing his quote in support of this work, and to Geshe Ngawang Sonam for his interest and involvement in reviewing this work in addition to providing his quote.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

No question about it, meditation is amazing!

It can provide so many benefits for people, from improved health and reduced stress to increased focus and even a softer approach in dealing with some of the work-related, and other issues we face on a daily basis. It's no wonder some big businesses offer meditation training and promote meditation for their employees. They know that providing meditation for their employees will help people in their personal lives, and help make them better on the job!

What these employers are also aware of is meditation works in a natural way. It is not intensive training made to mold employees into a specific way of thinking or acting, potentially creating a lot of inner conflict along the way.

Meditation works to help every individual develop themselves to be the best they can be. What a novel concept, and one that works!

So why aren't all employers implementing a meditation program for their employees? Don't all employers want their employees to be the best employees they can be? Don't all employers want to provide a benefit to their employees helping them personally as well as "on the job?" Employers should want those things for their employees, and there are a lot of reasons why. First of all, the cost of meditation training is low compared to other intensive training programs, and meditation training can and should be performed on-site. On-site training gets employees used to and associated with engaging in meditation on the job, rather than feeling like it is foreign to work which can happen with off-site training. Meditation training will pay

off for employers as well as their employees in both the short and long term!

Having worked in business for many years, and having experienced many different training courses during those years, meditation is one thing I have been doing on a personal basis that sticks, and where the rewards are apparent. True, it sometimes takes a while for the results to be obvious, but inside there is often the recognition of the progress. Sometimes progress is made one little step at a time, and sometimes in what seems like a leap of benefits all at once! The only way to experience it is to engage. The only way for employers to benefit is to provide the opportunity for their employees to engage. Why not start now?

Employees everywhere can and should encourage their employers to sponsor meditation-at-work training programs. As an employee,

meditation can benefit you personally and also help you become a better more desirable employee. Both you and your employer will benefit from the win-win training experience of meditation!

The quote from His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama:

“The key to successful meditation is mindfulness that combines introspection with diligence. Our every ethical action involves the practice of mindfulness and conscientiousness. Mindfulness of the object of meditation is lost when our mind becomes distracted or lacks alertness. These are the two pitfalls we must avoid in order to engage successfully in either analytical or single pointed meditation”

Also provided is a quote from Geshe Ngawang Sonam:

“This work has achieved well the documentation of the benefits of meditation and may be useful for people for whom the purpose of meditation is to calm their mind, or bring benefits in this life. That being said, it is not to promote Buddhism nor does it align with many of the concepts of Buddhist meditation”

CHAPTER 2 ABOUT MEDITATION

What if there is a way for you to be healthier, increase your focus, develop a more discerning approach to problems, reduce stress, and generally deal with life in a more positive and fulfilling way? What if you could achieve these results by simply spending 10 to 20 minutes twice a day, would you? You can...meditation is the answer! Studies have shown in the short-term meditation can help relieve stress, increase focus, and even help make it through a tough day! In the long run it has been shown meditation can improve health, lower blood pressure, and provide many other benefits. For anyone at any age meditation is a practice that cannot be encouraged enough.

What is Meditation

Meditation is a way to focus your mind, to reduce the noise of seemingly non-stop thoughts and emotions that continuously nag for attention and seem to shatter your focus sending you in all directions simultaneously. Meditation is a way to help you change the way you view life and how it impacts you. Meditation can provide you with different outlooks about problems and help develop a more positive attitude, or more focus, or provide health benefits, or all of the above!

It may also be important to discuss what meditation is not. Meditation is not something new to the world. It has been around for centuries, even in the western culture. Meditation is not a means to escape reality and daily activity. Meditation is also not a fad. Even though it seems to be just coming into the mainstream focus of society in the western

world, meditation has been around a long time. Getting into the western mainstream in recent years does mean the benefits of meditation are being recognized, studied, and proven!

Some of the Different Types of Meditation

Mindfulness meditation is defined as being in the moment. Essentially not worrying about the past nor planning for the future, but being right here right now. Most meditation techniques have the goal of clearing the mind in one way or another, by chanting, by focus, by viewing thoughts until the mind is clear of them. By emptying the mind of other thoughts, one is able to focus on a single thought or object.

Raja yoga is another meditation technique clearing the mind of thought, meaning clearing worries about the past and the future. Removing these thoughts allows one to be in the moment. If focus is internalized and thoughts about past and future are gone, we are left with discovering more about our inner selves.

Loving kindness meditation supports positive emotion through the practice of repetitive reinforcement of verses or mantras, instilling a loving approach to life. This is a great technique to develop a stronger sense of love for the world and people around us and also develop positive feelings about ourselves!

Other types of meditation use exercises that increase focus by watching the breath or other objects of concentration, or by chanting. One example of the benefits meditation can have on focus relates to my own personal experience. After having meditated for several years I found that often when crunching numbers, I become so focused a co-worker might come to my desk and stand behind me and watch me work for several minutes without my even being aware of that individual's presence.

Over time meditation can help clear the mind and provide that kind of focus for you!

Different types of meditation are discussed more thoroughly in chapter 9. Chapter 10 contains “how to” guides for practicing some of the meditation techniques referenced herein, and introduces some new techniques not referenced in the research. All of the techniques presented are aimed to help you with your specific needs and goals for your meditation practice!

Why is Meditation Great For People and Business

In undertaking this work about the benefits of meditation for both people and business and considering the title, I want to answer the questions: why is meditation great for people? and, why is meditation great for business?

There are many studies and articles, actually thousands it turns out, documenting that meditation is good for people. The benefits of meditation studied are quite varied and include: improved health; increased focus; reduced stress; higher levels of patience; and even some success when used as a therapy for certain disorders like attention deficit and others.

Coincidentally (or perhaps not really a coincidence), in the work environment many of the

personal benefits of meditation are also the qualities employers look for in their employees. These include: increased focus which can also provide greater attention to detail; increased patience which can also provide the ability to help multitask; reduced stress which can provide the ability to stay on task without stress becoming overwhelming; as well as several others. Having been on the meditation path for years I have experienced and recognized many of the benefits myself, both personally and at work.

The goal of this work is to show the variety of ways people benefit from meditation, and how that translates to being “better” employees, and hence more valuable assets to employers.

What is the time commitment for improving yourself through meditation? Several of the sources I came across claimed even a little bit will help.

Instead of spending a 10-15 minute break at work socializing, the same time spent twice daily meditating may provide a big difference in how you feel and how you work. Other benefits of meditation at work include the possibility of increasing your pay and improving your advancement potential.

A personal example deals with just clearing one's mind. Many times I have, while sitting at my desk at work, closed my eyes for a few minutes to clear my mind, getting to the mental place I needed to be in order to effectively deal with a tough situation. I know if it has worked for me it can work for you!

Hopefully you will, if you are not already practicing meditation, review the different ways meditation has helped people, review the associated meditation techniques discussed herein, find one

that fits personal goals you may have, and give meditation a try. Effort may be required initially, but after a while you may very well look forward to that "quiet time." You will also find that meditation helps you, your life, and your career!

CHAPTER 3 EVERY PERSON / EMPLOYEE IS GREAT

Meditation is great for people which means it is great for employees! It can provide many benefits to you, and do so at your own pace while fulfilling some of the needs of the “inner you.” As mentioned in the last chapter, there are many studies documenting areas in which people have benefited from meditation including: improved ability to deal with stress; improved ability to deal with pain; increase in focus; improvements in multitasking; developing better feelings about yourself and others; increased confidence; and more. Many of these benefits translate into becoming an employee that is more focused, more collaborative, more confident, more engaging, and better able to deal with stress. This also means becoming more valuable to your employer.

With meditation, sincere results require sincere efforts. Meditation is a long-term solution rather than a short-term fix. It is also strongly recommended meditation be used to bring out the best-in-you rather than attempting to develop an “alternate you.” For example, using confidence building meditation techniques to develop a “fake-it-till-you-make-it” approach to business success would not provide the long-term satisfaction and personal development intended from meditation, and could backfire in a very big and unfortunate way. That is not to say that having success at one step in life should not lead to having the confidence in taking that next step, and under those and other circumstances meditation can help!

Let’s say as an example, that you are often distracted at work by the many, seemingly never-ending demands in your job function and

workplace. Increasing focus might help you become better at prioritizing those demands, allowing you to address the ones that are urgent and put aside the demands not so important. Is that the kind of support you would like to receive from your employer? Meditation is the one tool that can help you help yourself. The meditation approach does not subject you to a mind-numbing inundation of “one size fits all” training, but rather allows you to develop focus and other skills within yourself. Meditation can also help you be more patient and learn to deal with stress! So, ask your employer to provide a meditation program, enabling you to pursue the skill sets that will help make you a better employee and a better you!

What can your employer do to motivate and inspire you? Most people will answer money first, but after the money issue, don’t we all want more? Wouldn’t we like more recognition, more sense of

teamwork, to feel like our employers actually value us more than we normally feel? The following example involves money, but I am using it to illustrate how employers sometimes say they value employees but don't actually show it or forget to follow through.

Once when I was being hired for a new position, I was told by the CFO the company really valued hard work. It was conveyed to me when the company did well they would share in the success. The position I was filling was new for the company and critical for continued growth. During the course of the next year, great strides were made in developing a product costing system, getting a handle on inventory related issues, working with the quality department to improve quality-related reporting, and a slew of other areas needing help. The company had a very profitable year, and when it was time for a review and raise, I was told by my

team leader that I was being given an average increase. It should be noted that my team leader had not been present at the meeting where the CFO committed to sharing the wealth. I inquired if the CFO was aware of and approved my raise. My team leader told me yes. My response was to convey what I was told when hired, and if that offer of an increase was the best they could do, then the company probably needed it more than I did. As it turned out, my team leader left and later returned with the CFO who was actually quite humble in offering a significantly higher raise.

The bottom line here is that people, especially managers should have integrity, be confident with that integrity, and meditation can help! After all, how effective is an organization really going to be if what people say has to be second guessed, or managers are conveying words turning out to be nothing more than “lip service?”

Actually, some managers providing lip service may be fairly successful, yet organizations supporting such an approach may not necessarily be great places to work nor have the long-term success they truly seek. Meditation can provide people with tools to help deal with tough issues and resolve them in a straightforward and beneficial manner!

As an employee, if you believe meditation can assist you in benefiting your work performance, write a suggestion to your human resource department requesting meditation training be provided to employees. Compared to other types of training meditation is relatively inexpensive to provide, and your employer can reap the same rewards that you do. By engaging in the training, you will show you are working toward self improvement, an indication to your employer that you care and are willing to take action to prove it!

CHAPTER 4 MEDITATION IS GREAT FOR PEOPLE / EMPLOYEES

As mentioned previously, thousands of studies have been performed and documents written about the benefits of meditation. The wide range of benefits include: improved health; increased positive emotion; decreases in anxiety and depression; improved ability to be productive by increasing focus; pain reduction; improvement in the ability to multitask; and others. Most of the studies referenced herein have a footnote with a hyperlink (non-PDF versions). For those readers with an electronic version, this will allow you to easily access and read the full articles, providing you the opportunity to dive deeper into the subjects. Based on the results of many of the studies, the positive effects meditation can have on life are amazing. Hopefully by reading about some of the

results, you will realize how meditation may be able to help you as well!

This chapter is devoted to providing a wide cross-section of articles and studies highlighting the benefits people can realize from meditation. These include improving health as well as several other personal benefits which might encourage a person to meditate without an employer sponsored meditation program. Some of the studies and articles relate to how meditation can benefit employees.

Improved Health

The health benefits of meditation are many and include: reduction of anxiety; increase in positive emotions; and reduction of stress. In this book many of the health benefits have categories of their own for a number of reasons. Some of the “great for people / employee” benefits identified herein are specifically related to the benefits of meditation for employees, and include traits employers seek in their employees. Actually, all the topics identified and discussed herein may in some way or another be considered a health benefit.

The article, “Stress, Meditation, and Alzheimer's Disease Prevention: Where The Evidence Stands,” is an abstract of one study showing that only 12 minutes a day of meditation successfully improved the memory of people with subjective cognitive decline and mild cognitive

impairment. The meditation technique used in the study, KK (Kirtan Kriya), is easy for aging people to learn. KK is a cost-effective meditation technique successfully employed to improve memory in people with subjective cognitive decline, mild cognitive impairment, and in highly stressed caregivers. All of these groups are at an increased risk for development of AD (Alzheimer's Disease). KK has also been effective in decreasing depression, reducing anxiety, improving sleep, supporting healthy genes, and has been shown to increase telomerase, which aids in healthy cell division. Along with the health benefits, KK also has a very favorable spiritual effect.¹ KK is a great meditation method for helping to ensure continuing mental health for the elderly, for some at risk individuals, and probably the rest of us as well!

¹ Stress, Meditation, and Alzheimer's Disease Prevention: Where The Evidence Stands, published on the NCBI website, author not identified, J Alzheimer's Dis. 2015;48(1):1-12. doi: 10.3233/JAD-142766.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26445019>

Kirtan Kriya is discussed more in chapter 9, and the technique is detailed in chapter 10. It involves the repetition of specific sounds while touching the thumb and the finger which corresponds to each sound. It is amazing such a simple practice can provide such wonderful benefits!

The article, “Meditation: Should a cardiologist care?,” is an abstract in which the benefits of meditation on the cardiovascular system are discussed and evidence is cited suggesting meditation may have beneficial effects on autonomic tone, autonomic reflexes, and after having practiced meditation over a long term, significant reduction in blood pressure. The article also indicates meditation may benefit patients who already have cardiovascular disease.² This abstract

² Meditation: Should a cardiologist care?, published on the International Journal of Cardiology website, Stephen Olex, Andrew Newberg, and Vincent M. Figueiredo [Int J Cardiol](#), 2013 Oct 3;168(3):1805-10. doi: 10.1016/j.ijcard.2013.06.086. Epub 2013 Jul

does not mention the specific type of meditation used for these beneficial effects, however it sounds like most of the “stress-reducing” meditation techniques could help in these areas.

The articles and the benefits they focus on in this section are really just the tip of a very large iceberg about the health benefits of meditation. The benefits to the two health issues discussed above, for cognitive decline and cardiology, are amazing by themselves. If these and the other areas of health discussed herein are benefitted by meditation, in time it will not be surprising to find many other health-related benefits achieved through various methods of meditation.

24.

[https://www.internationaljournalofcardiology.com/article/S0167-5273\(13\)01141-8/abstract](https://www.internationaljournalofcardiology.com/article/S0167-5273(13)01141-8/abstract)

Increased Positive Emotion

The article, “Positive Emotions and Well-Being,” states practicing TM (Transcendental Meditation) provides increased positive emotions and well-being. The article discusses EEG (defined in the article as the recording of increased electrical activity on the brain’s surface), and how the practice of TM increases EEG coherence resulting in: more positive psychological traits; less negative psychological traits; and TM increases gamma radiation produced by the brain which is associated with happiness and love.³

This article about TM came from the TM website. The details of the results were not provided and as such have not been verified, yet

³ Positive emotions and well-being, author not identified, website Transcendental Meditation News and More <https://tmhome.com/benefits/mental-health-wellbeing-and-positive-emotions/>

they seem to parallel the results of studies involving other types of meditation. TM seems to be one of the most organizationally controlled meditation types and also was found to have the most literature challenging it, including challenges from former users. Not having taken a TM course, my comments here are simply related to what I have discovered while researching for this work. Each of us need to take steps to research various meditation types and find something that aligns with our own personal goals and is comfortable. Hopefully one of the techniques provided in chapter 10 will work for you! Along with being comfortable, practice will help, and more practice will help more in most cases!

The article, “Positive Emotion Correlates of Meditation Practice: a Comparison of Mindfulness Meditation and Loving-Kindness Meditation,” is the abstract of a study analyzing mindfulness

meditation and loving kindness meditation. Both types of meditation were found to increase positive emotions and resulted in no change in negative emotion. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects on emotional profiles of middle-aged people using one of two meditation techniques, either mindfulness meditation or loving-kindness meditation. Positive and negative emotions were also measured. There were 339 participants who took part in a 6-week course of one meditation type or the other. The participant's meditation practices, both duration and frequency, were monitored daily for 9 weeks beginning with the first week of the course. With both types of meditation, positive emotion significantly increased while no change in negative emotion was measured. Frequency and duration of meditation effected the amount of positive emotion increase, and the loving-kindness meditation had a stronger effect on “within-person” tests than mindfulness meditation.

The study revealed either type of meditation can improve a person's emotional well-being.⁴ These results indicate in some situations similar types of meditation have similar effects!

Increasing positive emotion has many beneficial impacts on our lives and meditation seems to provide a great way to boost our emotions and our well being! This in turn also applies to the benefits positive emotions can have not only in our relationships with others, but also in the workplace. Just recall all of the times we have wished challenges at work had been approached with a more positive outlook!

⁴ Positive Emotion Correlates of Meditation Practice: a Comparison of Mindfulness Meditation and Loving-Kindness Meditation, Barbara L. Fredrickson, Aaron J. Boulton, Ann Firestone, Patty Van Cappellen, and others, published on Research Gate's website Mindfulness 8(6) · May 2017 with 307 Reads DOI: 10.1007/s12671-017-0735-9

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/318132323_Positive_Emotion_Correlates_of_Meditation_Practice_a_Comparison_of_Mindfulness_Meditation_and_Loving-Kindness_Meditation

Reduced Stress

Abstract article, “Stress Reduction Through Mindfulness Meditation,” reviews a study based on an 8-week stress reduction program using mindfulness meditation training. Mindfulness meditation focuses on helping people get into “the present”. The conclusion of the study was that mindfulness meditation, with its detached approach of observation and awareness, can be a strong coping strategy for cognitive behavioral disorders and in the prevention of relapses.⁵ Most people can use a good way to deal with the stress encountered in life from time to time and mindfulness meditation sounds like it could be a solution for many of us!

⁵ Stress Reduction Through Mindfulness Meditation, Astin J.A. Journal of Psychotherapy Psychosomatics 1997;66:97–106
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/9097338>

The article “Meditation: A Simple, Fast Way to Reduce Stress,” discusses the benefits of meditation including the reduction of stress. A number of types of meditation methods are listed in the article with brief discussions about each one. The article begins stating meditation can eliminate the build up of stress during the day and provide inner peace. This article also discusses benefits of meditation including the ability to practice it wherever you are.⁶ It is a very encouraging article, but because of the nature of meditation and the need to focus without distraction, it is recommended to avoid meditation in situations where being alert and actively “in the moment” is important, like when driving a car or operating machinery, or other similar situations.

⁶ Meditation: A simple, fast way to reduce stress, author not disclosed, Mayo Clinic website; <https://www.mayoclinic.org/tests-procedures/meditation/in-depth/meditation/art-20045858>

The article, “A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Clinical Trial: The Effect of a Mindfulness Meditation-Based Stress Reduction Program on Mood and Symptoms of Stress in Cancer Outpatients,” reviews a study conducted to determine the effects of mindfulness meditation on cancer patients, revealing some amazing results. Authors of the study concluded the results showed MBSR, mindfulness-based stress reduction, can reduce stress-related fatigue and mood disturbances. It also stated people (subjects) who meditated more had better results than those who meditated less. One additional conclusion from the results was the more people are engaged in meditation, the greater the benefits received!⁷ Because this study was

⁷ A Randomized, Wait-List Controlled Clinical Trial: The Effect of a Mindfulness Meditation-Based Stress Reduction Program on Mood and Symptoms of Stress in Cancer Outpatients, published on the Shamrock Design website http://shamrockdesign.com/sitesOffline/sp/pdfs/Med_The_Effect_of_a_Mindfulness_Meditation-Based_Stress_Reduction_Program_on_Mood_and_Symptoms_of

based on the effect of meditation on cancer outpatients, it could easily have been included in the Health sub-section above, but was included here because of the favorable results specifically related to stress.

The reduction of stress can have a big impact on the way we interact with life generally, and certainly in the workplace. It is wonderful to discover meditation, such a simple and easy exercise, can definitely help with stress!

Better Decision Making

In the article, “Evidence Builds That Meditation Strengthens The Brain,” the author discusses the results of a study of 50 meditators compared to similar subjects who were not meditators. The meditators were chosen from a variety of meditation disciplines. The study included taking MRI brain scans of the meditator group compared to on-file-scans of people similar in age, handedness, and sex. The researchers found that people who meditate have larger amounts of gyrification, the folding of the cortex, which is thought to increase the speed at which cells communicate. There was a direct correlation between the number of years of meditation and the amount of gyrification. The author concluded increasing gyrification means increasing folds which should also mean increased processing memory, attention, and other functions utilizing the

cortex.⁸ Who would have thought meditation provides actual changes to the brain? I have run into other material from Eastern Yogis which asserts changes in the brain from meditation, and now we have science proving it is true!

In another article, “Mindfulness Meditation May Improve Decision-Making, New Study Suggests,” sunk-cost-bias is studied. Sunk-cost-bias is stated to mean, having trouble letting go of losses and a tendency to throw good money after bad. This phenomenon is associated with bad economic financial decision making. Findings from the study indicate meditation focused on the present, also commonly referred to as mindfulness meditation, helps to reduce the sunk-cost bias. The study included conducting four tests to determine if

⁸ Evidence Builds That Meditation Strengthens The Brain, Mark Wheeler, UCLA newsroom website; <http://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/evidence-builds-that-meditation-230237>. Mark Wheeler | March 14, 2012

mindfulness meditation could improve resistance to sunk-cost bias. The results were summarized by using a two-step process. The first step reduced the amount people focus on past and future by getting them in the moment. The second showed reducing negative emotion helped the subjects let go of sunk costs. The conclusion was mindfulness meditation did help people let go of sunk-cost-bias. This helps employees perform better.⁹

Having a business background, the concept of “sunk-cost” is not unfamiliar to me, and neither is the bias which tends to go with it. Overcoming sunk-cost-bias might be of particular interest to employers and organizations having to deal with “cut our loss” scenarios, because sometimes it is quite challenging to “let go!”

⁹ Mindfulness Meditation May Improve Decision-Making, New Study Suggests, February 12, 2014 Source: Association for Psychological Science

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2014/02/140212112745.htm>

Reduced Anxiety, Depression, and Worry

The article, “Mindfulness Meditation Can Help Anxiety and Depression,” cites a number of other articles discussing the benefits of meditation and are supported by empirical studies. One type of meditation, MBSR (mindfulness-based stress reduction) is represented to be very beneficial in helping people deal with anxiety and depression. In this study, MBSR was used in an 8-session process where people were guided to train the brain to stay in the moment. This is accomplished by training people to let go of both past regrets and anxieties about the future.¹⁰

¹⁰ Mindfulness Meditation Can Help Anxiety and Depression, Allison Aubrey, published on the NPR website; <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2014/01/07/260470831/mindfulness-meditation-can-help-relieve-anxiety-and-depression>

Another article, “The Benefits of Meditation for Generalized Anxiety Disorder,” shows meditation can help people with GAD (Generalized Anxiety Disorder). The author discusses how meditation is associated with paying attention, and meditation allows people to slow down and observe the world without judgment. It also states meditation can help bring about balance, calm, and focus, and can help the almost 7 million Americans who have GAD.¹¹ It sounds like mindfulness meditation may have been used in this study based on similar results from other studies using mindfulness meditation.

The article, “Meditation for Anxiety: Proven Way to Calm Your Mind,” provides a comparison of anxiety treatments, from drugs, to cognitive

¹¹ The Benefits of Meditation for Generalized Anxiety Disorder, Arlin Cuncic , published in VeryWellMind website; <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-meditation-for-generalized-anxiety-disorder-4143127>

therapy, to meditation. The article asserts research shows meditation works as well as commonly prescribed anti-anxiety medications for controlling anxiety. There is also discussion about how meditation can change the brain, and reduce rumination by breaking the cycle of negative thinking, which drives anxiety.¹²

Worry is a catch all phrase, and yet it is a mental activity that many people engage in on an almost continuous basis. There are many studies and articles about the benefits of meditation dealing specifically with “worry.” Some of the benefits of meditation tend to de-personalize the causes of worry and promote looking at issues causing worry as an observer rather than a participant. After all, if issues do not affect us on a personal level, we will

¹² Meditation for Anxiety: Proven Way to Calm Your Mind, Deane Alban and Dr. Patrick Alban, published in Be Brain Fit, <https://bebrainfit.com/meditation-anxiety/#the-benefits-of-guided-meditation-for-anxiety>

naturally be more objective and less stressed about them. This can translate to dealing with issues and worries in a more constructive and positive way.

The article, “Best Type Of Meditation If You Always Worry,” provides research-based support for 3 different types of meditation and how they can help worry less. Acceptance-based meditation, which is also a type of therapy, helps to reduce negative thoughts occurring repetitively. This is especially true for people suffering from depression and anxiety. Another way to deal with anxiety-causing thoughts is to stop resisting them, becoming more aware of them, and learn to observe them and acknowledge them. Consistency in the practice of meditation is emphasized, the more one practices, the more one benefits!¹³

¹³ Best Type Of Meditation If You Always Worry, Jenn Ryan, published in Elite Daily, February 14, 2017; <https://www.elitedaily.com/wellness/meditation-cant-stop-worrying/1787746>

The message of consistency and repetition in meditation has been highlighted in many of the studies and articles. Meditation is a solution which takes time. It is not a quick fix solution, but rather a process becoming part of a person's life.

Increased Focus and Attention

The article, “Study, Meditating can Help You Focus and Keep Your Brain Young,” reviews an extensive study revealing focus improves through meditation. The study, with participants ranging in age from 22 to 69, evaluates the results of various types of meditation by assessing traits both before and after a three-month retreat to a meditation center. Initial results showed participants were able to have improved sustained focus, increased positive feelings of compassion, joy, and equanimity for others and themselves. Seven years later the participants were reevaluated and it was found all of them continued to meditate in some capacity and the original results generally held up.¹⁴ This again highlights the need to “stick with it.”

¹⁴ Study, Meditating can Help You Focus and Keep Your Brain Young, Yoni Blumberg, published in CNBC “Make It” in the

The article, “What 5 Studies Say About Meditation and Attention,” reviews 5 studies supporting the benefits of meditation on improved attention. The 5 improvements from the studies include: meditation as a general benefit; improvements in concentration for people who have struggled with concentration; a treatment for ADHD; benefits for young people; and meditation can help treat attention issues arising from some types of mental illness.¹⁵ Again, more studies supporting the benefits of mediation on focus and other areas of our lives.

Focus and attention are big factors in our lives, especially as technology and information-

Careers section; <https://www.cnbc.com/2018/04/06/study-meditating-can-help-you-focus-and-keep-your-brain-young.html>

¹⁵ What 5 Studies Say About Meditation and Attention, Maren Hunsberger, published on doyouyoga.com; <https://www.doyouyoga.com/what-5-studies-say-about-meditation-and-attention-17263/>

overload seem to derail our attempts to remain focused on any one subject for very long. As previously mentioned, focus has been one of the big benefits I have gained with meditation. Employers benefit from employees who can focus and work without being easily distracted. As the studies indicate, benefits from meditation relating to the ability to focus is very significant and provides benefits to people at any stage in life including students, the elderly, and everyone in between. I did not come across research on the ability of meditation to improve the attention span or focus of a 5-year-old...but maybe it would help!

More Effective Collaboration

The article, “Mindfulness in the Workplace: 3 Benefits for Every Organization,” references a HBR (Harvard Business Review) article. The article states mindfulness meditation can help improve EI, Emotional Intelligence, benefitting employees by helping create better working relationships, enhancing group dynamics, and improving relations between employees and their managers.¹⁶

Another article, “Why Meditation in the Workplace Can Encourage Teamwork,” provides some pretty compelling reasons why meditation improves teams at work. Stating a team is the sum of its parts, the article points to research suggesting

¹⁶ Mindfulness in the Workplace: 3 Benefits for Every Organization, Liz Alton, published in Spark (ADP); <https://www.adp.com/spark/articles/2017/09/mindfulness-in-the-workplace-3-benefits-for-every-organization.aspx#>

people on a team meditating together work more effectively together and solve problems faster than teams which don't meditate together.¹⁷ This is a unique approach, but it makes sense since meditating as a team would be a team-building exercise and provide a strong basis for the team to explore the common experience of meditation and gain understanding about how meditation effects all team members. This in turn would provide insight about how each individual works and how their strengths can best support the team efforts! This article provides a very strong statement about the benefits of meditation on teamwork and why organizations will find it beneficial to establish meditation programs and meditation groups!

¹⁷ Why Meditation in the Workplace Can Encourage Teamwork, Leslie Boyer, published in the Huff Post
https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/why-meditation-in-the-workplace-can-encourage-teamwork_us_5823c6d6e4b01022624121dc

Increased Confidence

The article, “Feeling Insecure? How to Get a Self-Esteem Boost,” discusses written quotes from the Dalai Lama and from the authors meeting him in person. The authors asked him what the most common issue was from people who came to him for help and the Dalai Lama replied, “Self Esteem.” This was initially hard for him to understand because self esteem was not an issue in Tibet, where all children were welcomed and loved by the entire community. The article asserts meditation is the key for improving self esteem, and discusses the two ways meditation can help with confidence. The first way meditation supports confidence is by helping a person get in touch and become friends with themselves. The second way is, as you get in touch with your inner self you also become aware of an inter-connectedness between everyone. This moves a person from being self-centric to feeling

and being part of a much larger whole.¹⁸ Buddhists are known for meditation and with all of the knowledge and insight the Dalai Lama has, it is great to see him support meditation on a general level for society, as he has also graciously done with this work!

The article, “Meditation and Mindfulness: Combatting Negative Mindsets and Mental Health Afflictions While Promoting Positives Such as Confidence and General Well-Being,” reviews some empirical studies to date, and provides the results of a study the author conducted on her own. Discussed is how data from various studies shows mindfulness meditation reduces anxiety attacks and

¹⁸ Feeling Insecure? How to Get a Self-Esteem Boost, Ed and Deb Shapiro, published on Oprah.com; <http://www.oprah.com/spirit/boost-your-self-esteem-with-meditation/all>

depression, and shows meditation is beneficial for confidence and well being.¹⁹

In some ways it seems that confidence, anxiety, depression, worry, and positive emotion are all interrelated. Perhaps many, if not all of the benefits of meditation are as interrelated as the parts of ourselves. Based upon what the studies and articles reveal, meditation techniques help make our lives better.

¹⁹ Meditation and Mindfulness: Combatting Negative Mindsets and Mental Health Afflictions While Promoting Positives Such as Confidence and General Well-Being, Charlotte R. Dicharry;

<https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1261&context=honortheses>

Reduced Migraines

The article, “Mindfulness Meditation for Migraine,” reveals behavioral interventions compare favorably with migraine medication, and includes mindfulness meditation as one of those behavioral interventions. Studies show mindfulness meditation has positive results, not only with those issues affecting migraine, but also life in general. The article explains some migraines result from a hyper-excitable brain and mindfulness meditation works because it slows down the brain by helping to stop the constant flow of thoughts generating the hyper state. This is accomplished by training observing, the ability to observe, which tends to disconnect a person from the thoughts, allowing

non-judgmental observation of the thoughts and the thought process.²⁰

Even people with migraines, in at least some cases, can benefit from meditation. In conducting research for this book, I ran across studies revealing in some circumstances meditation also helps reduce other types of physical pain.

²⁰ Mindfulness Meditation for Migraine, author not disclosed, published on the American Migraine Foundation website; <https://americanmigrainefoundation.org/understanding-migraine/mindfulness-meditation-for-migraine/>

Increased Determination and Persistence

The article “Meditation: Persistence and Perseverance,” discusses the benefits of meditation in developing the habits of persistence and perseverance, and how meditation helps in all other areas of life.²¹ This probably sounds like a broken record by now, but significant general benefits are obtained from meditation through continued practice. This is true in our personal lives and also in our roles as employees!

²¹ Meditation: Persistence and Perseverance, Clarity West, published on Urban Yogi website; <http://urbanyogi.ph/meditation-persistence-perseverance-clarity-west/>

Summary

With all of the positive studies about the benefits of meditation, it sounds like every facet of life may benefit from meditation. Home, school, socializing, and work life to name some. The next chapter moves on to the employer side of the equation!

CHAPTER 5 EVERY EMPLOYER CAN BE GREAT

I don't know of a single employer who would not agree with the statement, "improvements in employee performance on-the-job lead to improvements for the organization." The question then becomes, how to best improve the performance of employees on-the-job?

Many employers inundate new employees, and occasionally old employees, with company programs and approaches to work, in an attempt to indoctrinate the workforce to the "company way." Sometimes this may be necessary to educate people about the organizational practices, but often the excessive training ends up molding employees into workplace cultural automatons. Under those circumstances what the organization often ends up

with is a culture where there is status quo, not much room to challenge status quo, and employees not interested in change whether it is in the best interest of the organization or not.

Most of the organizations I have been associated with often recognize the need for fresh thought and insight, people with an organizational focus who also bring something new to the table. Some organizations hire “new blood” to obtain a fresh new look. The thing is, often the new blood is represented by ladder climbing individuals who promote change for the sake of change, to make their mark or leave their impression, instead of for the long-term benefit of the organization.

People already in the organization often have tribal knowledge about what is and what is not working, so why not develop those employees? Broaden their minds by giving them meditation in

the workplace. Let them become the best employees they can become, and be open to change. The results can be amazing and cost effective in several ways. Meditation works and what follows is an article highlighting how in the area of health.

In the article, “10 Benefits of Healthy Employees,” the author states that overweight employees file more worker’s compensation claims and cost over \$70 billion per year. That is a big number and one somewhat falling under the meditation umbrella. Meditation can help employees be happier and healthier, improving blood pressure in the long run as well as reducing turnover because happy employees turn-over less. This in turn potentially associates some cost savings to employers with meditation programs. This article is reviewed in more detail in Chapter 6.

What other benefits can meditation provide to employees and also benefit employers? Besides improved health, additional benefits can include: improved communication; more effective collaboration with fellow team members; increased positive attitude; increased confidence; increased emotional intelligence; and increased ability to deal with stress in a positive way. Explanations and documented research about each of the benefits follows in more detail in Chapter 6 and includes benefits for employers and benefits for people, both in their roles as employees and personally.

Considerations For a Meditation Program

There are some things for employers to consider when implementing a meditation program for their employees. Not being an advocate of throwing good money after bad, one suggestion prior to making a decision to implement the meditation program would be to have the employees answer a short questionnaire asking if they would be interested in participating in an employer sponsored meditation program. Unless there is an almost unanimous negative response, the program should be considered because the few, or several, or many who sign up, and are meditating during breaks and lunch, will influence others. Let's face it, another reason to adopt meditation training is because it may at times provide a much-needed way for people to disengage, something it is supposed to do. As we have already learned, there is also

research indicating when people in a group or team meditate together, they make better decisions together!

Once the decision is made to begin a meditation program, for the employees participating a questionnaire should be given to both the employee and the employee-manager inquiring how the employee can benefit from the meditation program. The goal in this case is to understand if the employee and manager are "in-sync" regarding what might be the most benefit to the employee, such as increased focus, or increased ability to deal with stress in a positive manner, etc. This is important from the participant standpoint because different meditation techniques might be used for different goals. One example is an OM mantra might be used for focus, whereas for stress reduction a different technique or mantra could provide more benefit.

One real life situation happened recently and although not work related, I think the reader will get the picture of the effectiveness of the correct technique for the situation. The mother of a friend does not handle stress well and my friend asked if I could work with her and provide her a helpful meditation technique. Working with her for 15 - 20 minutes I walked her through some deep breathing exercises to clear her mind and then we practiced the “Peace, Joy, Love” technique together. This technique is a great one for stress reduction. After we finished she told me that before we started her head ached and when we were done the ache was gone. I’m not saying people always get results so thoroughly and so fast, but the techniques can work for most people.

This leads to the next issue, not all employees are the same...thank goodness. I can’t

tell you the number of bosses I have had who were thankful the mold was broken after me! Because different employees may have different goals from meditation practice, whomever the organization hires to implement the meditation program needs to provide a variety of meditation techniques suitable for those different goals. Some will claim one meditation fits all, but for people who are just starting out and have different goals, it isn't the case. Every employee engaged in the program should be able to benefit and begin to see results helping them to achieve their specific goals. The best way is to provide a technique targeting the area the employee needs help in!

This chapter is named “Every Employer...” because I believe every...well ok there may be exceptions so, “almost” every employer can benefit from having a meditation program for their employees. As can be seen from the results of

studies contained herein, the number of benefits are amazing and there is something potentially benefiting everyone, both personally and as employees. Employers, why not have a meditation program? The cost is low compared to other forms of training, and meditation can be tailored for the needs and potential of the employee!

There was a saying going around recently that went something like, “the CFO asks the CEO, “what if we spend the money to provide training and people end up leaving?” The CEO replies, “what if we don’t and the people stay?” I don’t know the source, but it is great food for thought and a very valid point. I reiterate, meditation is a very cost-effective training method providing sharper, more confident and focused employees. These are key traits for all employees, and a reminder that the managers, as employees themselves, will also benefit from meditation!

Here is another story to shed light about the differences in employees, and illustrates why all employees are valuable. About 20 years ago I lead a team of cost accountants. They were a hard-working group and knew the ins and outs of the business we were in. Being a new team leader for the group I approached my responsibility as the lead to provide as much filtering and prioritizing as possible while learning the deliverables, the workload, and making sure the work could be done with the resources available. I also felt it was important to share information about the work being done by the group with other managers, and how each department impacted the development of product costs, which comprised many of our deliverable requirements. My manager, a director from a different location, once made a comment to me about how the people in my group were not aggressive or ambitious. I asked why that was

important. The director started to explain how employees should be ambitious, always seeking more. I believe the director may have been conditioned by one of the popular motivational books at the time. I thought about what the director was telling me and respectfully stood up for my team members and tactfully disagreed with my director. I explained that we needed people who enjoyed doing their work, keeping their nose-to-the-grindstone, figuratively speaking, and that everyone was an important cog in the big wheel of business. Not intending to preclude opportunities for people who would embrace them, I ended up passing along an opportunity to one team member to be our group representative in a new software conversion for the organization. It was a great thing for the business and the employee, but rather than being forced, it was developed. This is basically what meditation can do, develop a person's abilities. By the way,

the team member given the opportunity is still a personal friend.

How do companies motivate their employees and keep them inspired to perform well? There are a lot of things employers can do, and of course those things depend on what employees truly care about. At one time it was believed the number one motivator for employees was money, recognition through economic incentivisation. Not that money isn't important, but employees are motivated by other factors perhaps more than money, or at least highly important after the money issue is taken care of. Employees care about making a difference, being recognized, being part of a team where teamwork is more than words, and being shown employers really care about them. And yes, employees still want a life outside of work! So, what is the best way employers can show their appreciation to their employees and still motivate

their most valuable resource? By giving back in ways that benefit employees while giving them the opportunity to become more. We are not talking about throwing more poop on an already overflowing pile of work, we are talking about meaningful responsibility, meaningful collaboration, and meaningful input. How do employees become able to rise to those challenges normally not part of their culture? By providing them the one tool that can help make them the best “them” they can be, meditation!

Not so many years ago, and well into my second decade of meditation, I was managing the costing for a large manufacturing organization with international subsidiaries. There were a lot of issues and the place was a perpetual firefighting exercise. Along with those issues was a major shift in manufacturing from domestic to international with upper management having high expectations for

large cost savings. Working closely with one of the VP's and a small group of other individuals, we started costing out the new products. The costs savings were not even close to the predictions due to a couple of major reasons and based upon decisions which could not be undone. Sure enough, as happens often under these circumstances, everyone started looking at areas where costs could be cut and the CFO even went so far as to commit to eliminating trade tariffs which probably could not be eliminated. The numbers were solid, and because they were I was not asked to the cost cutting meetings because no one wanted a tempered voice of reason contradicting the efforts to squeeze blood out of a turnip, so to speak. This was a case where meditation helped survive in a dysfunctional work environment.

Often considering how meditation might have helped one organization or another, one group

of people or another, I have come to the realization that it can potentially help all people who will honestly recognize their own needs for improvement, and who want to improve.

Top Motivators for Employees

Research into the top motivators for employees resulted in finding a great list from Adecco, one providing some relevance. The number one thing employers can do for their employees is to have an interest in the employee's well-being. From my own perspective, and probably many other people's, interest in the employee's well-being needs to be genuine, not lip service. Additional motivators on the Adecco list included: providing a clear vision from senior management; providing challenging work; allowing for employee decision making and input; providing advancement opportunities; providing a collaborative work environment; and providing the resources to get the work done.

Have an Interest in the Employee's Well Being

To repeat, having an interest in the employee's well-being needs to be genuine and not just "lip service." Most employers will have the window dressing of the employee's well-being. Many will provide benefits such as medical, dental, vacation, holiday, and others, claiming they have the employees interest in mind. Of course, employers do have employee's best interests in mind, but actually all of the boiler plate benefits could be viewed as the standard compensation package necessary to attract and retain an effective work force, part of the competitive requirement to get and keep employees. What this really means is the interest in employee well-being needs to be "more." One way to accomplish this is for an employer to say to every employee, "we are offering more and providing an opportunity

intended to help you the employee, and help us the employer.” A meditation program is the ideal solution and will be shown later to be one of the most beneficial and comprehensive programs an employer can offer an employee when it comes to offering “more.”

Clear Vision From Management

This one motivator is more management centric than any of the other motivators listed herein. In the case of the other motivators, the employer is going to want the employee to engage in such a way the employee can “meet the challenge” of each of the motivating factors. A clear vision from management may be quite dynamic, and is often tempered by external factors including: changes in the business environment; changes in management itself; changes in the industry; and potential demands from a parent company or financial expectations from external stakeholders. All of these are generally, “out of the hands” of many employees to directly influence.

One of the biggest challenges for management on this particular motivator is for the vision to not only be clear, but also specific enough

so the employees “get” the vision. Too vague a “vision” and dedicated employees may remain directionless. In the example sighted above about the new product build (previous section, Considerations for a Meditation Program), the clear vision was to increase profit through shifting production to an international production site, but lacked the definition for the “track-to-success” to remain clear. Through meditation employees may develop the focus and depth of inquiry to help management provide the specifics of the vision. This can occur because with meditation, employees can become more focused, more confident, and have the clarity to challenge managers to provide more specific directions. Of course, this is also dependent upon having a culture where employees are given the opportunity and encouragement to do so.

Provide a Challenging Work Environment

Many people, after getting their arms around their jobs, would like more challenges. This is not true for everyone, but it is for many employees. Seems natural in taking on more challenges in the work environment, employees would want to do things accomplishing professional and/or personal goals in the process. Again, for people to embrace more challenges at work, they really need to feel they have a handle on the responsibilities already on their "plate." The goal then is to have a team of employees who do not feel continually overwhelmed, have interests in performing additional tasks for professional and/or personal reasons, and who feel competent and confident in what they are already doing. There is some training that over time will help in all these areas, yes - meditation. Meditation can help employees help

themselves become more focused, more confident, and more engaging. All of these attributes add up to employees who will embrace more challenges at work!

Allow For Employee Decision Making and Input

Employees want to be heard. At times employees want to be able to express themselves, their ideas, and sense about what is going on in their work areas. Employees are doing the work and should be listened to. We may have all heard the expression, there is no dumb question. I also believe there is not a dumb opinion either. Sometimes people just need to be heard. Employees also want to make a difference and there is hardly a better way than to let them make decisions about their jobs, and to have management ask for their input. The question then becomes how to get employees to be confident, to want to make decisions, provide input, and engage in discussions? Meditation is the answer and can help provide confidence and focus, enabling employees to be

better at engaging in both decision making and providing input!

Provide a Collaborative Work Environment

For employers who want collaborative employees, this is a really important attribute in the workplace. What about the introvert who is somewhat shy and perhaps not totally comfortable engaging in collaboration on a regular basis, or at all for that matter? There are some really brilliant people in the workplace who fall into this category. What those shy people need is more confidence giving them the tool to be more collaborative. Studies, some presented herein, show meditation can help people become more collaborative!

Provide Adequate Resources

This one motivator in the workplace seems like it almost encapsulates all of the others, at least the others directly impacting employee efforts. Without the necessary resources at work, it can feel like we spend a lot of time banging our heads against the wall, so to speak. Sometimes as an employee we need to inquire, sometimes we need to have confidence and speak our minds, sometimes we need to collaborate, sometimes we need to let stress run off our backs, and sometimes we need to focus. All of these tools needed by employees can be developed and sharpened with the practice of meditation.

Chapter 4 presented details of some different studies showing how meditation has helped people in these areas and more, including helping with the general well being of the meditator, in this case the

employee. The very first motivator on the list we reviewed is an employer interested in the well-being of the employee. With so many potential benefits to the well-being of the employee, a meditation at work program could and should easily be the number one training program after all of the required HR training. Yes, number one on the list of optional training to help the employer and the employee. Research cited in Chapter 4 even showed teams meditating together provide better results! In the next chapter, additional studies that are more "work-focused" are reviewed.

CHAPTER 6 MEDITATION IS GREAT FOR BUSINESS

Benefits of meditation for people were reviewed in chapter 4, and many of those also represent benefits for people at work. The ability to improve health, deal with stress, reduce anxiety, and improve working with others, are all benefits both in an employee's personal life and in the workplace! Research showing how meditation can help people improve traits employers are looking for in their employees are provided in this chapter.

Improved Communication

Employers are looking for people with good communication skills. In the article, “Top 10 Qualities and Skills Employers are Looking For,” communication was listed as the number 1 skill desired by employers!²² Communication is one of the personal benefits of meditation we discovered in a previous chapter, and for many employers it a highly desirable trait of employees!

In the article, “5 Elements of Effective Communication You Wish Your Staff Had,” three of the five most important elements of communication are listed as: stress management; engaged listening; and the capacity to communicate

²² Top 10 Qualities and Skills Employers are Looking For, author not disclosed, Employment North website; <https://employmentnorth.com/top-10-qualities-and-skills-employers-are-looking-for/>

with self confidence.²³ These three important elements of communication can be directly benefitted by meditation.

In the article, “The Importance of Good Communication in the Workplace,” the importance of communication for both employer and employee is stressed. The article discusses effective communication as necessary in maintaining good working relationships and achieving higher productivity.²⁴ This is especially true when clear lines of communication are established by employers helping to build trust with employees. This then leads to increases in productivity and positive moral. Emphasized here is the axiom...

²³ 5 Elements of Effective Communication You Wish Your Staff Had, author not disclosed, Weave website; <https://www.getweave.com/5-elements-of-effective-communication-you-wish-your-staff-had/>

²⁴ The Importance of Good Communication in the Workplace, author not disclosed, Michael Page website; <https://www.michaelpage.co.uk/advice/management-advice/development-and-retention/importance-good-communication-workplace>

employees who communicate effectively are valuable assets in any organization.

Based on the findings, if the goal is to be an excellent employee in the area of communication, meditation can help. This is an example showing how meditation is an activity both you and the organization you work for can benefit from!

Effective Working in Harmony With Others

Working in harmony with others is another big plus for employees and potential employees, and in direct alignment with the section on the benefits of meditation on collaboration and working with others presented in chapter 4. Meditation helps your ability to work with others by: helping you deal with stress, providing patience, and being present, “in the moment.”

In the article, “Mindfulness in the Workplace Improves Employee Focus, Attention, Behavior, New Management-based Research Concludes,” reveals mindfulness meditation has an overall positive impact to human functioning. Specifically mentioned are stability, control and efficiency. The results of the study show people who received mindfulness training were able to remain focused

longer. Mindfulness also helps in areas of interpersonal behavior and workgroup relationships.²⁵ Mindfulness can help with interpersonal relationships at work by keeping you focused and in the moment.

In many working situations and environments, teamwork is a big part of the job. It is great to know there are meditation techniques providing personal benefits and improving teamwork. These benefits help employers as well as you the employee!

²⁵ Mindfulness in the Workplace Improves Employee Focus, Attention, Behavior, New Management-based Research Concludes, author not disclosed, published in Science Daily, from Case Western University;
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/03/160310141455.htm>

Increased Positive Attitude

On several of the sites providing lists of top skills employers seek, positive attitude was at the top of the list. Of all the qualities employers seek in their employees this one attribute may be affected more by the employer than any other, because of the culture of the business environment and leadership style. Meditation can help develop more positive emotions and therefore a positive attitude...yes even as it applies to you in your workplace!

In the article, “15 Ways to Stay Sane in a Toxic Office,” 15 different ways to deal with challenging work environments are listed, and the number 1 way is to have a positive mindset which can be helped with meditation.²⁶ Several of the

²⁶ 15 Ways to Stay Sane in a Toxic Office, Raven Ishak, Bustle website; <https://www.bustle.com/articles/154978-15-ways-to-stay-sane-in-a-toxic-office>

studies and articles reviewed in chapter 4 deal directly with positive mindset and emotions, translating from personal benefits to employment benefits!

In another article, “18 Simple Ways to Keep a Positive Attitude at Work,” two of the ways to maintain a positive attitude at work include, 1) Fill Your Mind With Positive Input, and 2) Don’t Rely On An Outside Source For Positivity.²⁷ Both of these ways can be accomplished through meditation!

The ability to create a positive mental state is discussed in the article, “Open Hearts Build Lives: Positive Emotions, Induced Through Loving-Kindness Meditation, Build Consequential Personal

²⁷ 18 Simple Ways to Keep a Positive Attitude at Work”, author not disclosed, wheniwork.com; <https://wheniwork.com/blog/18-simple-ways-to-keep-a-positive-attitude-at-work/>

Resources.” The article reviews many empirical studies undertaken relating to meditation and the impact of meditation on positive emotions and other related topics. In one of the paragraphs, the “broaden-and-build” theory of positive emotions is reviewed, concluding positive emotions are generated in response to broad opportunities as opposed to focused threats. Because of this, positive emotions broaden thinking allowing people to draw on a wider-than-usual range of ideas. The article also asserts people with positive emotions are better equipped to deal with a variety of circumstances including both social and physical, and have the ability to meet life’s challenges and be more successful.²⁸

²⁸ Open Hearts Build Lives: Positive Emotions, Induced Through Loving-Kindness Meditation, Build Consequential Personal Resources, Barbara L. Fredrickson, Michael A. Cohn, Kimberly A. Coffey, Jolynn Pek, and Sandra M. Finkel, published on the NCBI website;

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3156028/?_hstc=3584879.d50a3c91e72c280a7921bf0d7ab734f9.1523750401948.15

Positive attitude is important at work, in our personal lives, and for our health. Meditation can help with positive attitudes benefiting employers and you as an employee!

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Improved Health

This one issue, having healthy employees as a benefit for employers seems obvious. It is great for people to be healthy! In chapter 4 the benefits of meditation on different areas of health were explored and now we see being a healthier employee translates to lots of benefits for your employer. The list from the article below shows many ways this is true!

The article, “10 Benefits of Healthy Employees,” lists 10 ways healthy employees benefit employers. Many of those benefits impact the bottom line and thus become compelling for any employer. The list includes the following:

- 1) Healthier employees reduce risk due to having a higher level of awareness

- 2) An employee who is healthier is better equipped to deal with stress without becoming ill in the workplace
- 3) Healthier employees are not as sick, reducing the amount of money employers pay out for sick-pay
- 4) Insurance costs can be less for healthier, more health-conscious employees
- 5) Unhealthy employees subject to stress has a ripple effect because when employees are out sick, the stress for other employees goes up
- 6) Greater employee health helps to be a moral booster
- 7) Absenteeism has been shown to be reduced significantly by employees who are healthy
- 8) Overweight employees, who in this case are put in the unhealthy category, file twice as many workers' compensation claims at a cost of over \$70 billion per year

9) Happier employees turn-over less which reduces recruitment and training costs

The last one, not listed, is related to the reduction of stress, which is covered above.²⁹ One thing apparent from this list is happier and healthier employees can save employers a lot of money in a variety of ways, from reduced stress to higher efficiencies. This list is definitely supportive of employee health being great for business, and meditation has been shown to help people be healthier!

²⁹ 10 Benefits of Healthy Employees, Anthony Diaz, published on gohealthhero.com;
<https://www.gohealthhero.com/blog/10-benefits-of-healthy-employees/>

Increased Confidence

One successful trait of employees and employee candidates is confidence. It is also one of the benefits of meditation. Meditation helps build self-esteem as well as eliminate negative feelings, and both help build confidence. Employers appreciate you being a confident employee!

The article, “Why is Confidence Important to Employers? Top 13 Reasons,” presents some very good reasons about the importance of self confidence in the workplace for the employer. The list includes: confident employees get engaged in their work; confidence tends to add a positive brand to an employee; confidence is a leadership quality; confident employees reflect a good employer image and tend to be hard working; confident employees are willing to take risks and handle pressure well;

and confident employees provide positive support for other employees.³⁰

³⁰ Why is Confidence Important to Employers? Top 13 Reasons, Chitra Reddy, published online on WiseStep; <https://content.wisestep.com/why-is-confidence-important-to-employers-top-reasons/>

Other Ways Meditation Benefits the Workplace

In most cases it is reasonable to assume things helping employees personally also benefit employers, and meditation is shown to help people in many ways. So, to those managers and HR personnel reading this, why not start a meditation program at work now? Points for successful work-based meditation programs are presented in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 7 MORE ABOUT MEDITATION

Meditation is a way to focus your mind, to reduce the noise of seemingly non-stop thoughts and emotions many of us experience continuously. We are in a world where we have input from what seems an unending number of sources, causing us to feel the need to speed up rather than slow down. Meditation is a way to help manage those responsibilities and inputs. Meditation can also help you slow down and approach the world in a more objective and less personal way, providing more focus and reducing stress, as well as many other benefits.

As indicated in Chapter 2, it is important to recall what meditation is not. Meditation is not something new to the world, nor a fad, nor a

religion. Meditation has been around thousands of years and it continues because it is proven to benefit those who engage in it.

What follows are continuing descriptions of some types of meditation to help provide a better understanding of different methods.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness seems to be a buzz word used in place of all types of meditation. Mindfulness meditation is a way of being in the moment in a non-judgmental way, as an observer rather than participant.

Sometimes the term mindfulness is used to mean having attention in the moment as part of a participating group, which would indicate engaging rather than just observing. It can be said that mindfulness is a part of all meditation. Actually, the word mindfulness is almost a misnomer because one purpose of meditation is to clear the mind of thought, bringing the mind to the present without judgment. This enables one to focus on one object or idea and I believe this is what His Holiness was referring to in his quote supporting this work.

Mindfulness is not an all-encompassing state. An example will show some possible effects of mindfulness in the workplace. Assuming a new product is being considered and a group of 5 people from different areas of the company were asked to engage in mindfulness about the product. You would effectively end up with 5 different non-judgmental viewpoints, with the mind of each participant colored by their own experiences and education. The marketing person might be considering the marketing and sales aspects of the product, the finance person could be considering risk along with profitability, the production person could be focusing on capacity and complexity of manufacturing the new item, the quality person might be considering regulatory requirements for the new product, and an analyst may be evaluating how much more the item would add to the analytical workload. Each person will have a non-

judgmental perspective based upon what they know, and are familiar with.

On a separate note, this is another reason organizations should strive for team approaches in new product development, encouraging sharing product development requirements from a wide range of input.

Kirtan Kriya Meditation

KK (Kirtan Kriya), as noted in the research in chapter 4 within the “Improved Health” section, may be beneficial for people with cognitive disorders including AD, and also provides benefits for mental and general health.

Kirtan Kriya has been part of the Kundalini yoga tradition for thousands of years. As mentioned previously, Kirtan means singing and Kriya means action. So together Kirtan Kriya is singing while performing a specific action, and in this case the purpose is to bring the body, mind, and emotions into balance. It is sometimes referred to as a singing exercise because it involves singing the sounds: Saa Taa Naa Maa. This singing/chanting is performed while repeating finger movements, known as mudras.

The words are specific trigger sounds which, when made while the tongue is placed on the palate, are believed to stimulate the brain. This stimulation is also enhanced by the movement of the fingers while singing the specific sounds. It was also found replacing the sounds with different sounds is not effective. The specific sounds are important! This technique is provided in the next chapter.

Loving Kindness Meditation

Loving kindness meditation involves chanting loving phrases reinforcing a loving and secure state of being. It is also beneficial for positive emotion and increased focus.

Loving kindness meditation is a popular meditation technique because of the positive results in increasing the capacity of forgiveness, connecting to oneself and others, as well as general benefits from meditation. Basically, loving kindness meditation focuses kind and loving energy inward toward oneself and outward toward others. The loving kindness technique is provided in the next chapter.

Raja Yoga Meditation

Raja Yoga is primarily a meditation technique. It has been around for a long time according to some of the sources encountered when researching it. The benefits of Raja Yoga include: focus; discipline; concentration; peace of mind; and inner joy. This technique is also provided in the next chapter.

Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental meditation, also known as TM, is a form of meditation that uses the repetition of silent mantras. TM is offered through an organization which was formed around the practice several decades ago. Though not having taken this form of meditation myself, there is a lot of information available about it online, and as is the case with many organizations, there is both controversial as well as beneficial information available.

Summary

There are other forms of meditation besides those provided herein. Some are very similar to those presented here, and some very different. There are also many different techniques. All of the techniques should, in one way or another, have the goal of helping us get rid of inner noise so we can focus on a specific technique or object, to provide benefits such as more confidence, ability to better deal with stress, etc.

CHAPTER 8 MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Below are some general “getting ready” guidelines to prepare for meditation, followed by several meditation techniques. A few of the techniques are referenced in the research provided, and others are being introduced which do not relate to the research. Some of the techniques are good for improving focus, some good for building confidence, some good for dealing with stress, and all provide multiple benefits such as being good for general health. If you perform your own research you may find variations of the techniques provided here...and that is ok. The important thing is understanding what you need to work on in your own life and finding a technique supporting and resonating with you!

Meditation Techniques – Getting Ready

With meditation you need an open mind and feeling that what you are doing can and will help you, so please try to maintain that perspective when you engage in and practice meditation.

You also need a quiet place in which to meditate. This means a place without distraction. This may also mean having to adjust your meditation times to find solitude. The absence of distraction (depending on the type of meditation) is very important.

Next, meditation is generally performed in a sitting position. If you can sit comfortably in a typical yoga position, such as sukhasna or padmasana for several minutes or longer without discomfort, then a yoga position is the one for you.

If the traditional yoga positions are not for you, sitting in a chair will work. Either way, you should also be wearing comfortable clothing!

If you are sitting in a chair, your feet should be flat on the floor, your back should be straight, and your arms should be at your side with your hands facing up near the juncture of your legs and hips. If you are like me with very long arms for my body size and putting your hands at your hips makes you look like you are imitating a chicken, you should bring your hands forward and relax a little...after all, being comfortable and relaxed is one of the goals!

Why is being comfortable so important? Because if you are not comfortable instead of focusing on your mantra, or sound, or breathing, your attention will be drawn to your discomfort. If you have some discomfort, you will be distracted.

If you are distracted, it may be better to not meditate until you can get comfortable. This is also true when we are in pain – which is why it is important to exercise and stay healthy! If you are sitting in a chair, don't hesitate to use a cushion to sit on to increase your comfort. Also, it is a good idea to have a cushion turn up in the back a little to provide support. This can help prevent you from leaning against the back of the chair, which is not recommended. Having a small wool blanket or a silk cloth to sit on helps with energy flow and is encouraged if available.

It is acceptable to meditate with eyes open or partially open, as long as things in your line of sight do not stimulate thoughts and feelings or otherwise distract the meditation process. Closing the eyes is perfectly acceptable – especially when first beginning to meditate. Whether open or closed, your eyes should be pointing ahead and slightly up.

At this point it may be appropriate to reaffirm one goal of meditation is to “shut off” external stimulation so there are not distractions during your meditation. You have five senses with which you experience physical life including: sight; smell; touch; hearing; and taste. The objective is to shut off stimulation causing sensation response to all five senses.

Once you are sitting in a comfortable position, in a quiet place, what’s next?

To help the mind get into a good place for meditation, practice breathing...5 to 10 seconds of the inhalation phase, the same amount of time during the holding phase, the same amount of time during the exhaling phase, and then the same amount of time holding again before another inhale. This practice should be done with the duration of

time that is comfortably consistent during each breath phase for you! If 15 or 20 seconds for each phase works for you, that is what you should do.

During this breathing, you should focus on your breathing and holding of breath. Repeat this breath exercise 3 or more complete cycles of inhale, hold, exhale, and hold. It is a great way to get "in the moment" and often I have engaged in up to 10 or even 20 full cycles of the breathing exercise.

If the breathing exercise does not completely get you relaxed then try tensing and relaxing your whole body a couple of times and then repeat the breathing exercise, or if you find it is beneficial, make it a habit to perform the tensing exercise prior to the breathing exercise.

Once the breathing exercise is complete, begin the meditation exercise which you feel is right

for you. The suggestion is to start out working with a meditation technique supporting your primary goal.

Mindfulness Meditation

Mindfulness generally refers to being “present,” “in-the-moment,” or here, rather than somewhere else.

The Mindfulness meditation technique.

1. Sit comfortably, either in a chair or traditional yoga position that is stable and comfortable.
2. Your legs should be comfortable. If sitting in a chair they should be straight in front of you with your feet flat on the floor.
3. Your upper body should be straight with the natural curve in the spine.

4. Your arms should be relaxed and your hands should have the palms up in your lap as comfortably near the hip/thigh intersection.

5. Your eyes do not need to be closed, your chin should be parallel to the floor, and your gaze may be slightly downward.

6. Focus on your breath, both in and out of your nose and or mouth and notice the effect of breathing on your body.

7. Your mind will wander from the breathing and when you recognize that it does wander, gently bring your attention back to your breath.

8. If your mind wanders a lot, don't feel bad or be hard on yourself...it is normal, just gently bring your focus back to your breath. Eventually

your mind will get used to focusing on your breath without distraction.

9. After you find you have been able to remain focused for a while, or when you feel that you are done, slowly allow yourself to become aware of your surroundings, the sights and sounds, and how you feel!³¹

³¹ Mindfulness Meditation, Mindfulness website;
<https://www.mindful.org/meditation/mindfulness-getting-started/>

Peace, Joy, Love – Reduce Stress

If you want to better deal with stress and/or feel more love and kindness in your life try this technique twice a day, once in the morning and once in the evening.

Repeat the following phrase 3 times with deep focus on each word:

I am Peace, I am Joy, I am Love

Then repeat each one 3 times, pausing after each repetition to feel what you are saying:

I am Peace (3 times)

I am Joy (3 times)

I am Love (3 times)

Now repeat each key word, Peace – Joy – Love, one at a time until you feel that condition within yourself. In other words, repeat “Peace” until the feeling peace is within you and you do feel Peaceful, then repeat Joy until you feel Joyful, and then Love.

Once you have completed that process, allow yourself to bathe in those feelings for a few minutes! Then when you are about ready to end your meditation, feel inner appreciation for the experience.

Observing Breath – Increase Focus

If you want more focus in your life, one method is to simply focus on your breathing.

You do not want to control it, only observe it as if it is separate from yourself.

Perform this exercise from 10 to 20 minutes at a time, twice a day.

Om Chant – Connecting With Your Inner Self

This meditation will help clear your mind and if you want answers to questions such as, “who am I,” etc. this is a good place to start.

Internally and slowly chant OM (pronounced AUM) repeatedly for 10 minutes at a time, twice daily. This can be a very powerful technique that provides many benefits as well as increased inner connection!

Raja Yoga - Focus, Inner Peace, Joy, Discipline

Focus on your breath or another point of focus, (as an example sometimes a lit candle is used for this), to turn your attention away from all other potential distractions. Allow thoughts to pass, without ownership or judgement. Relax and continue to focus on breath or another focal point you have chosen.

After your attention is fairly under control, develop one thought upon which to focus your attention. It should be a peaceful and supportive thought, such as “I am a peaceful soul.”

As you continue to focus on your one thought, it will fill you and you will become absorbed in the feeling.

As you finish the meditation, remember the thought and the feeling, and recall it whenever you want or feel it will help you during your day.

Another goal of Raja Yoga meditation is to have more self-realization, which occurs with practice over time.

Loving Kindness - Confidence, Positive Emotion

Imagine experiencing complete wellness, and inner peace, and love. Focus on the inner peace and love. Watch your breathing and how it removes all tension from yourself

Repeat three or four positive, reassuring phrases such as:

I am happy.

I am safe.

I am healthy.

I appreciate all that I have.

Absorb yourself in those feelings for a few moments.

As you continue to absorb the feelings yourself you can also project those feelings to your loved ones and other people you care about as well as your external life. As you change your focus to others you can change your phrases to include them and repeat:

You are happy.

You are safe.

You are healthy.

You appreciate all that you have.

You can extend this outward projection to not only your loved ones and friends, but also to people who make your life challenging, and to people you do not feel care for you. After all, love is mostly an outward expression!

When you feel that your meditation is over, stay with the feeling for a moment and remember

the feelings of warmth and joy, and feeling secure and loved. Then you can recall those feelings whenever you need or want to do so!

Kirtan Kriya - Balancing Body, Mind, & Emotion

Repeat the Saa Taa Naa Maa sounds (mantra) while sitting with your spine straight. With each syllable use the correct mudra (provided below) and imagine the sound flowing in through the top of your head and out the middle of your forehead.

For two minutes, sing in your normal voice, for the next two minutes sing in a whisper, and for the next four minutes say the sound silently to yourself.

Then reverse the order, whispering for two minutes, and then out loud for two minutes.

To come out of the exercise, inhale very deeply, stretch your hands above your head, and

then bring them down slowly in a sweeping motion as you exhale.

The mudras, or finger positions, are very important in kirtan kriya and each sound is made with the following finger positions:

Saa - Index finger touching thumb

Taa - Middle finger touching thumb

Naa - Ring finger touching thumb

Maa - Little finger touching thumb

CHAPTER 9 IS MEDITATION ALWAYS BENEFICIAL?

During my research, some negative feedback about meditation was discovered – including some empirical data suggesting meditation is not for everyone. The following article provides points about the negative aspects of meditation. This section is presented to give an unbiased view of meditation.

The article, “7 Surprising Ways Meditation Could Be Hurting You,” reviews some potentially negative effects of meditation. The 7 ways are listed one at a time followed by some discussion about why meditation might result in a negative effect for each issue.³² The discussion about each

³² 7 Surprising Ways Meditation Could Be Hurting You; Chelsea Greenwood; March 21, 2018; Business Insider;

issue or “effect” is not part of the article, but generated from personal insight, experience, and observation.

1. It may prompt negative thinking:

Both negative and positive thoughts are a part of who you are, and in meditation one objective is to view all thoughts as separate from yourself and look at them objectively and unemotionally. The inability to detach from the negative thoughts could very well lead to focusing on them. This is why it is so important to disconnect when meditating, allowing you to be more objective about who you really are and how you interrelate to the world around you, as well as your own thought process.

2. Your sensory perception might change:

<https://www.businessinsider.com/why-meditation-can-be-bad-2018-3>

Meditation affects people differently. One person I know can easily induce visions many other people actually seek during meditation, but because of the anxiety it causes him, he does not go there. It is important to remember that not every type of meditation is right for every individual. If one meditation technique isn't working positively or comfortably, then another technique may be better and you should move away from the meditation method that isn't working.

3. Motivation may go right out the window:

Considering meditation is basically a withdrawing of senses externally, and engaging in meditation is with the hopes of a beneficial change, then perhaps reduced motivation in some areas of your life becomes normal.

4. You might re-live negative memories and emotions:

As mentioned above under negative thinking, the possibility of having negative memories and emotions can occur as you allow thoughts to come and go observing them objectively in a disconnected way. If you are not successful in completely disconnecting from your thoughts there is a possibility you can be overcome with negative memories and emotions. This is why disconnecting is a very important thing to work at when you engage in meditation techniques which allow thoughts to flow. This process can be like the feeling of having the “need to vent,” after which you feel a lot better and issues no longer nag at you.

5. You might experience some physical side effects:

Getting comfortable before beginning meditation is a huge priority. In meditation you should also not try to push yourself beyond your comfort level. Meditation can be absolutely joyful,

but like most other things in life, it should be done with balance rather than using an extreme approach. If one form of meditation is not comfortable, find another method rather than inflicting pain or discomfort upon yourself. One other issue relating to this is the possibility of being overwhelmed by emotions, which need to be viewed without judgment and without ownership.

6. It might damage your sense of self:

This particular side effect in some ways relates to the other negative thought issues listed above. In extreme cases meditation may cause you to see yourself and your world differently than your perceptions have previously made you think of yourself. This can be shocking and cause you to self evaluate. For some people the ability to handle this self evaluation is more challenging than for others, and may cause feelings which tend to lead you to question yourself. If this is the case for you,

then the type of meditation you are engaged in may not be the one you need in your life at this point in time. Seek out a different meditation technique. Loving Kindness meditation seems to help without the self dissection that other types of meditation may invoke, either intentionally or unintentionally. One thing to consider as you begin the meditation journey, you start from today.

7. You may become antisocial:

Some forms of meditation can be so intensive and self absorbing they cause what seems to be a separation between yourself and those around you. Part of meditation can involve evaluating your values and beliefs and effect not only how you perceive yourself, but how you perceive others as well. This can definitely be a two-edged sword.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

M. H. Curtis, has a BS and MBA, and has been working in Finance for his career of more than 30 years. Having a spiritual inclination from childhood, he started taking meditation training more than 20 years ago and has been on the meditation path ever since pursuing spiritual success.