

Mind Full, or Mindful?

Developing Leadership Through Mindfulness

Jonathon Hagger, Waiariki Institute of Technology

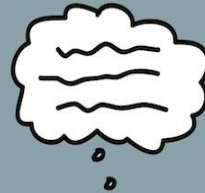
Co-author - Professor Kathryn Pavlovich, University of Waikato

Leadership defined – the new paradigm

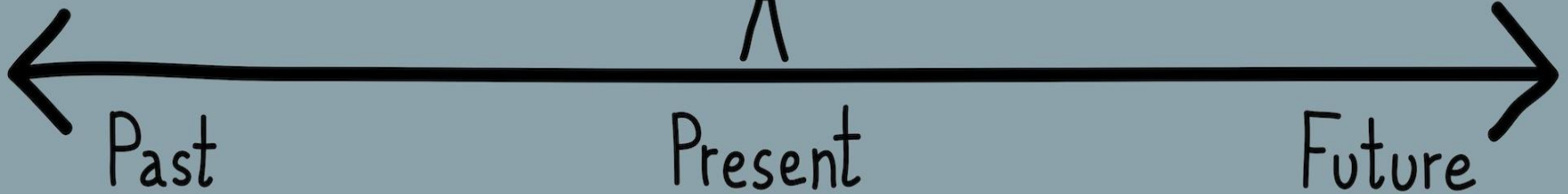
Self–Awareness
Relational Transparency
Internalized Moral Perspective
Balanced Processing of Information

(Opatokun, Hasim and Hassan, 2013)

Your body is present.



Is your mind?



DOUG NEILL

What is mindfulness?

engaging fully in the present in the moment on a particular task

(Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004)

accepting present circumstances without judgement

(Leroy, Anseel, Dimitrova, & Sels, 2013)

describing observed situations, non-judgementally and without pre-determined conceptual analysis

(Dekeyser, Raes, Leijssen, Leysen, & Dewulf, 2008, p.1236)

The Study

Key goals

1. To **understand** the effects and changes mindfulness creates within leadership and management positions in the tertiary education sector.
2. To **provide accounts** of participant's experiences of mindfulness as it related to their leadership skill development.
3. To **develop a conceptual framework** to display the changes mindfulness has upon leadership development in the sector.

Key research questions

How does mindfulness enable a person to lead their team credibly?

How do leaders engage mindfulness to overcome the stresses of crisis and change within the tertiary sector?

How does mindfulness enable optimal performance to occur within the tertiary sector and what impacts does this have?

Participants Criteria

1. Participants were actively engaged in a recognised mindful practice for a period of no less than 6 months e.g. meditation, reflective practice, spiritual practice;
2. Participants were presently employed in recognised positions of management within a tertiary education;
3. Participants had direct line management responsibilities for at least 2 persons.

Participants Criteria

The study was –

- Qualitative
- Exploratory
- Seeking to understand the experiences of others

Leadership Skill Development

Authenticity

- * compassion
- * identity
- * interaction

Resilience

- * perspective
- * decentring
- * positivity

Optimal Task Performance

- * flow
- * focus
- * control

Mindfulness Practise



*“I think that mindfulness and its practice enables us to practise not only better leadership in terms of getting good outcomes but also **compassion** - **compassion** for others, **compassion** for those people who we are trying to work with or deliver for but also for ourselves”*

“Practising **compassion** involves setting aside self-righteousness and judgements that others are less than oneself”

(Kernoohan, McCormick & White, 2007)

*“More and more I’m integrating a single **persona** and I’m very conscious of it because I have complicated parts to my life. So I’m very interested in and committed to having one integrated **personality and identity**”*

When leading from a place of authenticity a manager is able to **recognise their strengths and weaknesses** and behave accordingly.

(Alok and Israel, 2012)

*“I am more at peace with **my leadership** now and **my management**”*

Mindful leaders have **more positive interpersonal relations** at work

(Hunter & McCormick, 2008)



*“The biggest benefit to me (of mindfulness) is that I’m much better at rolling with the punches now and **I don’t think I’m looking back at the past and thinking about whether I do things better or worse; I don’t look into the future and wonder what does this all mean?** I’m really just thinking about this point in time and this is where I am at”*

Mindfulness has been shown to be “significantly and positively correlated with **resilience**”

(Collins, 2009)

*“I have learned a lot through meditation about the process of unclutching. When something happens and it’s in our mind and our thoughts then I know I have to run around, unclutch and **come back to the present moment**”*

Students who complete mindfulness training consistently report that they experience **meaningful positive change** as a result of their participation in the course

(Rogers, 2013)

*“On one hand it was a terrible shock but at the same time it was a wonderful liberation from the constraints of that role. So mindfulness helped me **contain my anxiety, focus my intentions and align my values** with my vision for my own professional role”*

Demonstrated increases in the areas of **hope, optimism, resilience and confidence** or self-efficacy

(Luthans and Avolio, 2003)

Optimal Task Performance

- * flow
- * focus
- * control

*“It’s about a sense of being and **just letting things flow**. I either have thoughts when I’m walking or I find its being near water as well. That normally triggers a lot of **solutions and problem solving**”*

Flow is a psychological state that appears to arise during **optimal human experience**

(Wright, Sadlo and Stew, 2007)

*“Through **being more focused** the outcome of what I’m doing is better because I’m not so distracted and I’m not being distracted by a lot of different information that is irrelevant to what I’m trying to do so **creating better outcomes**”*

Persons who practise mindfulness recorded **higher levels of accuracy** in the work which they completed

(van den Hurk, Giommi, Gielen, Speckens & Barendregt, 2010)

*“It was both the physical space and **the dynamic of the people** within that space. And it was **the feeling that people got** when they came into that space - it was a combination of those factors. I worked hard to create that kind of space”*

Positive and calm environments lend themselves to providing an atmosphere for flow to occur

(Reid, 2011)

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Mindfulness Practise

Further possibilities for research

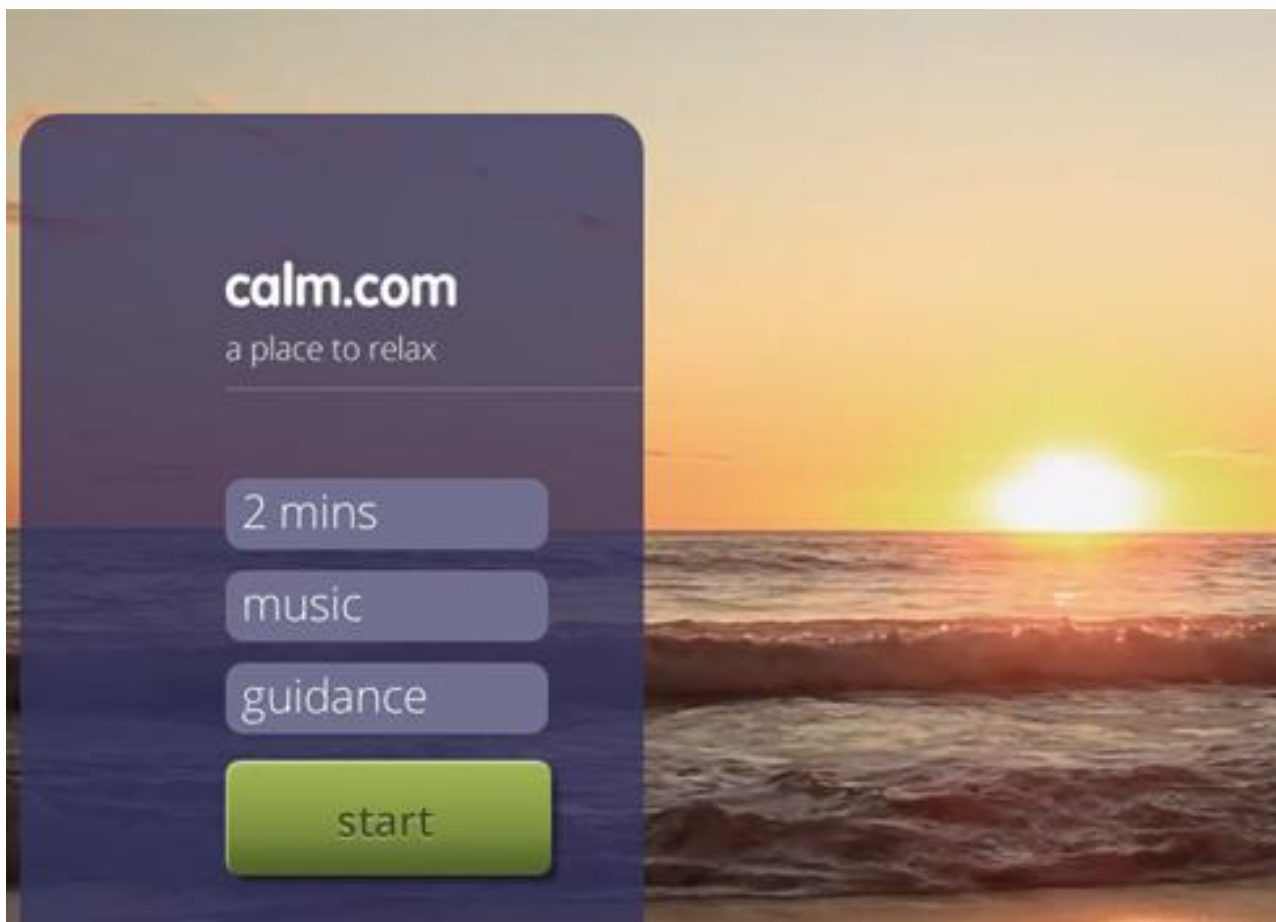
- **Measuring quality and productivity gains**
- **Creating specific leadership based development programs and measuring for effectiveness**
- **Seeking to understand how “spaces we create” (subjective internal/objective external places) may affect or cultivate mindfulness**

Recommendations

Create Space



Find an app that works for you



Reflect





THE MOST PRECIOUS GIFT WE CAN OFFER ANYONE
IS OUR ATTENTION. WHEN MINDFULNESS EMBRACES
THOSE WE LOVE, THEY WILL BLOOM LIKE FLOWERS.

Think What Happ
f SYMPHONY OF LOVE
PHOTO BY JOHN MORGAN

