

## LEADERSHIP – COACHING AND MENTORING PACK

**September 2017**

**(Established 2006)**

Welcome to this month's edition. Highlights include:

What would people think about you if you were no longer there? When your name is mentioned what would people say about you? My first article in this month's leadership pack is from my 'Being Bettina's Dad' series and it is about leaving a legacy. It came to mind while we were on our annual holiday in Whitby the impact Bettina has on the guests and staff at the hotel where we stay. What would be the legacy you would want to leave for people who are significant in your life?

If you would like to read more posts about Bettina and how she has developed me as a person and as a leader please check out my blog [www.leadershipintheraw.org](http://www.leadershipintheraw.org) Bettina is my youngest daughter who copes with a learning disability and autism, and her parents and big sister think she is awesome.

Simon Bailey, the Managing Director for <http://www.lspleadership.com/> who is part of our leadership network has kindly shared an extract from a book he has read. 'Regrets of the dying' <http://www.bronnieware.com/regrets-of-the-dying/> the piece in this month's edition includes five regrets from the book.

Another one of our regular contributors to the Leadership Pack, and a valued Trainer for my organisation in 'Resilience', is Damian Piper <http://effectivechallenge.com/> I spotted a post on LinkedIn which Damian shared "10 Ways to Be More Mindful at Work" an article adapted from Mindfulness at Work for Dummies by Shamash Alidina and Juliet Adams. It has helped me and I hope it helps you too.

Have you discovered USA 'Success' Magazine yet? I have it on monthly subscription from WH Smith's and look forward to its arrival. You can also access their interviews on YouTube with thought leaders who have been successful in business. The magazine and interviews have given me many ideas for my own leadership and work and I recommend the magazine to you. In this month's copy I have included '6 WAYS TO BECOME A HIGH PERFORMER'.

This month's quotes have been taken from my wife's @JoyceRaw1 and @livelikearaw twitter feeds – thanks Joyce. I am also on Twitter: @DoshLtd sharing leadership thoughts at 7am, 7 days a week. We welcome new followers!

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**It's not about how good you are,**

**It's how Good You want to be**

### **Being Bettina's Dad – Leaving a Legacy**

Holidaying in Whitby, a historical seaside resort in the North East of England, Bettina and I are slowly reaching a point by the harbour where I always stop for a moment and smile. It is where, over 50 years ago my mum (all of 5'2") raised me of the ground by the scruff of my neck and said "Stephen if you don't start behaving yourself I am not going to sign your papers to join the Army"(a threat she always used to bring me back into line). I think we had a unique relationship and even though she passed away 25 years ago, there is not a day goes by that I don't think of her and we still repeat some of her phrases. A favourite was "Steve if your backside was decked out with diamonds you would find one that wasn't polished." What a legacy she left me, but you don't have to wait until you die before you leave a legacy!

As a leader you want to make a dent in the world, to make a difference in people's lives and leave the place where you live and/or work a better place than when you found it. Someone who does this, and from whom I have learned, is Bettina.

**"I believe our legacy will be defined by the accomplishments and fearless nature by which our daughters and sons take on global challenges we face" Naveen Jain**

Spending a week in our favourite place <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2016/09/12/my-happy-place/> I thought about how Bettina leaves a legacy and how I can learn from her. These are the 'Five Takeaways' - this is Bettina's legacy:

1. Bettina lives her life with honesty. Bettina has an integrity, kindness and generosity and this is profound to the lives she touches.
2. Material wealth is not important to Bettina and is not something that she places any value on (I have found that material wealth is not often what you are remembered for)
3. People often remember and remark on her determination, commitment to develop and progress, and her work ethic - she is a shining example.
4. Bettina is a change maker <https://leadershipintheraw.org/2015/05/08/change-makers/> If you check out this post you will see how Bettina changes her world and leaves a legacy
5. Bettina's high standards of politeness and etiquette (she expects these same standards from others too!). They are contagious. She is always remembered by the Hotel staff where we stay and I am sure that's why she always gets the biggest dessert when it is served!

One of the guests at the hotel in Whitby said to Joyce that "Bettina holds herself so well – we could all learn a lot from her" We are always moved when someone compliments Bettina, it means so much to us that it is not just her family who thinks she is wonderful and that others are affected by her presence and the impact she has stays with them until we see them the following year.

If you want to create an enduring and positive legacy then here are our questions for you:

1. What would you like to be remembered for?
2. When someone thinks of you when you have moved on what will they say about you?

3. Will your legacy be one that is positive?
4. Did you change your environment for the better?
5. What would people who know you put as your epitaph?

**"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel" Maya Angelou**

Footnote. After my Mum's threat I got a grip of my behaviour (I stopped being cheeky until I married Joyce) and at the age of 15 my mum signed my papers to join the Army 45 years ago. Thirty years ago Bettina was born during our posting in Berlin – and her legacy began.

Source: Steve Raw [www.leadershipintheraw.org](http://www.leadershipintheraw.org)

Acknowledgement. '100 Things Successful People Do' by Nigel Cumberland

The longer we dwell on our misfortunes, the greater their power to harm us."

- Voltaire

The Ted talk on living passionately reminds me of a book. Regrets of the dying!

<http://www.bronnieware.com/regrets-of-the-dying/> and those type five regrets are;

**1. I wish I'd had the courage to live a life true to myself, not the life others expected of me.**

"This was the most common regret of all. When people realise that their life is almost over and look back clearly on it, it is easy to see how many dreams have gone unfulfilled. Most people had not honoured even a half of their dreams and had to die knowing that it was due to choices they had made, or not made. Health brings a freedom very few realise, until they no longer have it."

**2. I wish I hadn't worked so hard.**

"This came from every male patient that I nursed. They missed their children's youth and their partner's companionship. Women also spoke of this regret, but as most were from an older generation, many of the female patients had not been breadwinners. All of the men I nursed deeply regretted spending so much of their lives on the treadmill of a work existence."

**3. I wish I'd had the courage to express my feelings.**

"Many people suppressed their feelings in order to keep peace with others. As a result, they settled for a mediocre existence and never became who they were truly capable of becoming. Many developed illnesses relating to the bitterness and resentment they carried as a result."

**4. I wish I had stayed in touch with my friends.**

"Often they would not truly realise the full benefits of old friends until their dying weeks and it was not always possible to track them down. Many had become so caught up in their own lives that they had let golden friendships slip by over the years. There were many deep regrets about not giving friendships the time and effort that they deserved. Everyone misses their friends when they are dying."

## **5. I wish that I had let myself be happier.**

"This is a surprisingly common one. Many did not realise until the end that happiness is a choice. They had stayed stuck in old patterns and habits. The so-called 'comfort' of familiarity overflowed into their emotions, as well as their physical lives. Fear of change had them pretending to others, and to their selves, that they were content, when deep within, they longed to laugh properly and have silliness in their life again."

Best Wishes

Simon

Simon Bailey

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Love is not about possession, it's all about appreciation." ~ Chinese Proverb

## **What are you a genius at?**

Time to read: 83 Seconds

Dear Steve

The most uncomfortable question I ever ask at an event is not - "What is your biggest weakness?"

People seem to find their weaknesses hilarious!

The question that causes most discomfort is this:

"What is your biggest strength?"

Or

"What are you a genius at?"

What strengths, passions and abilities do you have that take you to the genius level?

Take someone who recently attended one of my events – Albert.

I asked him the first question – he replied:

"Well David, I have many weaknesses:

- I was reluctant to speak until I was about 7
- One of my teachers said that "I would never amount to much"
- I failed the entrance exam to Zurich polytechnic
- I have a very poor memory – I forget the simplest of things, even now"

He bowed his head.

I was very tempted to make that famous joke from Fawlty Towers:

'Otherwise ok?'

However he didn't look in the mood.

"OK, thank you for that Albert – eh, what would you consider yourself a genius at?"

He suddenly raised his head and said, no, shouted:

"Physics. I won the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1921 for my services to Theoretical Physics and especially for my discovery of the law of the photoelectric effect".

Silence in the room – broken by applause from everyone else present.

Back to you.

There has been no shortage of people in your life telling you what you don't know, what is wrong with you, and what you cannot do.

What about what you can do?

To the level of genius.

And in these times of uncertainty, perhaps the single biggest factor that will decide the success of organisations, teams and people is unlocking the genius in everyone.

And, surely, you don't have to be Einstein to work that out.

David Taylor author of the Naked Leader series and Broadcaster

"The only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance." ~ Alan Watts

### **My Top 3 Picks from Ted.Com**

My monthly recommendations from [www.Ted.com](http://www.Ted.com) talks which I hope will inspire you as much as they inspired me this month

[https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel\\_goleman\\_on\\_compassion](https://www.ted.com/talks/daniel_goleman_on_compassion)

Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence," asks why we aren't more compassionate more of the time.

Daniel Goleman, psychologist and award-winning author of Emotional Intelligence and other books on EI, challenges traditional measures of intelligence as a predictor of life success

[https://www.ted.com/talks/gabby\\_giffords\\_and\\_mark\\_kelly\\_be\\_passionate\\_be\\_courageous\\_be\\_your\\_best](https://www.ted.com/talks/gabby_giffords_and_mark_kelly_be_passionate_be_courageous_be_your_best)

On January 8, 2011, Congresswoman Gabby Giffords was shot in the head while meeting constituents in her home town of Tucson, Arizona. Her husband, the astronaut Mark Kelly, immediately flew to be by her side. In this emotional conversation with Pat Mitchell, the pair describe their lives both before and after the accident -- and describe their views on responsible gun ownership.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/eduardo\\_briceno\\_how\\_to\\_get\\_better\\_at\\_the\\_things\\_you\\_care\\_about](https://www.ted.com/talks/eduardo_briceno_how_to_get_better_at_the_things_you_care_about)

Working hard but not improving? You're not alone. Eduardo Briceño reveals a simple way to think about getting better at the things you do, whether that's work, parenting or creative hobbies. And he shares some useful techniques so you can keep learning and always feel like you're moving forward.

A woman's guess is much more accurate than a man's certainty." — Rudyard Kipling

### **My Top 10 Deluded People**

Time to read: 2 Minutes

Dear Steve

10 Marilyn Monroe...Dropped in 1947 by Twentieth Century-Fox after one year under contract because she was "unattractive."

9 Roger Bannister was a very deluded man – he actually believed a man could run a mile in under four minutes. Doctors even told him he would die if he attempted this feat. And guess what? Within a year of Bannister achieving his dream, over 300 other runners did exactly the same.

8 Thomas Edison "failed" over 9000 times before perfecting the light bulb! How many of us would have thrown in the "proverbial" towel at 20 failures, 150 failures or at the 8,000th failure. After Edison had invented and produced the light-bulb a reporter asked him how it felt to fail over 9000 times. Edison replied, "I was glad I found 9000 ways not to invent the light bulb!"

7 Elvis Presley's music teacher at L.C.Humes High School in Memphis gave him a C and told him he couldn't sing (how many of us learned at school we weren't very good at things and how often we are proved right?). Fortunately Elvis ignored this...

6 Samuel Johnson dropped out of Oxford in 1729 after fourteen months and never received a degree. After moving to London, virtually penniless, he wrote a book that told us what words mean! The man should have been locked up. I mean, who would ever have a need for a dictionary!

5 JK Rowling had her first book rejected "loads" of times by 12 different publishers and she was told "magic books don't sell".

4 Cameron Mackintosh decided to produce a musical about felines at a venue (The New London) that had never had a hit. Most people thought him mad, and certainly deluded. Cats became one of the longest running musicals ever. A few years later, clearly not having learned his lesson, he produced another show, wait for it, and set in pre-revolutionary France, featuring poverty, death and despair. How entertaining is that? It opened to very small audiences at The Barbican in London and almost every critic hated it. Cameron would surely finally accept defeat, wouldn't he? I'm afraid not. *Les Misérables* is now the most successful musical in the world.

3 After years of rejection, an American novelist started a story about a teenager named Carietta White. Disgusted with what he had written, he screwed up the pages and threw them in the rubbish bin. His wife pulled those pages out of the bin, read them, and then convinced her husband to complete the story—which became the huge best-seller *Carrie*. Stephen King is now one of the most successful authors of all time.

2 Nelson Mandela was imprisoned on Robben Island for twenty-seven years as punishment for his efforts opposing apartheid. That's twenty-seven years. Yet he never gave up his beliefs about what was right, he never gave up his dream, and every day he stayed strong in the belief that his work and that of his supporters, would prevail.

1 You. Please, whatever you are doing right now, revisit what you most dream, desire and deserve. Perhaps it is new; perhaps it is an old wish, dusted off anew. It may be personal; it may be reconnecting with your partner or your children. It may be forgiving someone in your family, after many years. It may be to do with your work or career.

Whatever it is – please go for it, and be the very best that you already are.

David Taylor Adapted From The Naked Leader Experience

#### Show Spieth-like Determination

DETERMINATION to win can often mean the difference between a positive result or not. Don't accept defeat. Be determined and more often than not you will succeed.

American golfer Jordan Spieth proved it works when he won The Open golf championship with sheer mental fortitude (July 23). He looked down and out after playing poorly before showing remarkable character to fight back and triumph over what looked like might become adversity.

You can be a winner too by being as determined to make something work. Do it today.

Naked Leader Board

#### MARK OF EXCELLENCE – 6 WAYS TO BECOME A HIGH PERFORMER

1. **SEEK CLARITY** on who you want to be, how you want to interact with others, what you want and what will bring you the greatest meaning. High performers consistently seek clarity again and again as times change. This routine self-monitoring is one of the hallmarks of their success.
2. **GENERATE ENERGY** so you can maintain focus, effort and well-being. To stay on your A game, you'll need to care for your mental stamina, physical energy and positive emotions.

3. **RAISE THE NECESSITY** for exceptional performance. This means actively tapping into the reasons you absolutely must perform well (detailed in part above). This necessity is based on a mix of your internal standards (identity, beliefs, values or expectations for excellence) and external demands (social obligations, competition, public commitments or deadlines).
4. **INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY** in your primary field of interest. Specifically, focus on prolific quality output in the area in which you want to be known. You'll also have to minimize distractions (including opportunities) that steal your attention.
5. **DEVELOP INFLUENCE** with those around you. It will make you better at getting people to believe in and support your efforts and ambitions. Unless you consciously develop a positive support network, major achievements over the long haul are all but impossible.
6. **DEMONSTRATE COURAGE** by expressing your ideas, taking bold action and standing up for yourself and others, even in the face of fear, uncertainty, threats or changing conditions. Courage is not an occasional but a trait of choice and will.

Source: USA's Success Magazine (which I always recommend to you)

"If you don't like how things are change it! You are not a tree" Jim Rohn

### **Don't Fear Failure - Learn From It**

MANY of us live with fear. The fear of failure. And yet if you don't set yourself new challenges, how will you ever learn about yourself and improve?

In Matthew Syed's brilliant book, Black Box Thinking, he quotes a former headmistress at Wimbledon High School, Heather Hanbury. Heather was an advocate of failure, so students were able to challenge themselves more and therefore have a better chance of fulfilling their potential. She said: 'You're not born with fear of failure, it's not an instinct, it's something that grows and develops in you as you get older.

'Very young children have no fear of failure at all. They have great fun trying new things and learning very fast. Our focus here is on failing well, on being good at failure. What I mean by this is taking the risk and then learning from it if it doesn't work.

'There's no point in failing and then dealing with it by pretending it didn't happen, or blaming someone else. That would be a wasted opportunity to learn more about yourself and perhaps to identify gaps in your skills, experiences or qualifications. Once you've identified the learning you can then take action to make a difference.'

Fascinating stuff. Still scared of failing? Don't be.

Source: Naked Leader Board

I'm so busy I don't know whether I found a rope or lost my horse. - Mark Schaefer

## Psychology Living on twitter @LivPsy

People you should surround yourself with:

- ✓ The positive.
- ✓ The passionate.
- ✓ The motivated.
- ✓ The grateful.
- ✓ The open-minded.
- ✓ The honest.
- ✓ The loyal.

“People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in; their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within”

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

**“Authenticity is not something we have or don’t have. It’s a practice – a conscious choice of how we want to live. Authenticity is a collection of choices that we have to make every day. It’s about the choice to show up and be real. The choice to be honest. The choice to let our true selves be seen.**

Brene Brown

Public speaker and research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work in the USA

“Happiness is not matter of intensity but of balance and rhythm and harmony” Thomas Merton

### **10 Ways to Be More Mindful at Work**

You don't need to block out 30 minutes to practice meditation in order to experience the benefits of mindfulness at work. Here are a few ways you can stay in the present moment to do your best during a busy day.

By Shamash Alidina | June 8, 2016

Mindfulness may seem like a great idea, but how do you become more mindful in the context of a busy work day? You may have emails, phone calls, meetings, and presentations to deal with. And, of course, your own work! In the middle of all that, how can you apply the principles of mindfulness so that you feel more alive and present, as well as being productive? Here are a few popular and other more radical ways to be mindful at work.

#### **1. Be Consciously Present**

Mindfulness is, above all, about being aware and awake rather than operating unconsciously. When you're consciously present at work, you're aware of two aspects of your moment-to-moment experience—what's going on around you and what's going on within you. To be mindful at work

means to be consciously present in what you're doing, while you're doing it, as well as managing your mental and emotional state. If you're writing a report, mindfulness requires you to give that your full attention. Each time your mind wanders to things like Helen's new role or Michael's argument with the boss, just acknowledge the thoughts and bring your attention back to the task in hand (see how to stop thinking). This scenario sounds simple, but many aspects of your experience can get in the way.

Here are some ideas to help you stop being mindless and unconscious at work and more mindful and consciously present:

- Make a clear decision at the start of your workday to be present as best you can. Pause for a few moments before you start your work day to set this intention in your mind.
- Make an effort to work more consciously, even if that means that you need to work a little slower at first—doing so pays in the long run.
- Keep all the advantages of working mindfully in mind to motivate you.
- Connect with your senses rather than getting lost in trains of thought when you're doing a task.
- Give your full attention to seemingly mundane tasks like washing your hands, opening doors, dialling phone numbers, and even just feeling your breathing as you're waiting in a meeting room. These little moments add up to make the day a more mindful one.

## **2. Use Short Mindful Exercises at Work**

Mindful exercises train your brain to be more mindful. The more mindful exercises you do, the easier your brain finds it to drop into a mindful state, thus optimizing your brain function. In the busy workplace, finding time for a 30-minute mindful exercise can be difficult. So does that mean you can't be mindful at all at work? Nope. Mindful exercises can be as short as you wish. Even one minute of consciously connecting with one of your senses can be classified as a mindful exercise. You don't need to close your eyes. You don't even need to be sitting down. Be creative about finding slots in the day to practice mindfulness exercises. At times of excessive pressure at work, practicing a short mindfulness exercise can be a saviour. The process helps to rebalance your nervous system, toning down the fight-or-flight response and engaging the wise part of your brain, so that you make reasoned decisions rather than automatically react to situations.

## **3. Be a Single-Tasker**

Single-tasking is doing one thing at a time. Multi-tasking is trying to do two or more tasks at the same time or switching back and forth between tasks. Nobody can actually multi-task. In reality, your brain is madly switching from one thing to the next, often losing data in the process. Most people know multitasking is ineffective nowadays. If multi-tasking is so inefficient, why do people still do it? The reason was uncovered in a study by Zheng Wang at Ohio State University. She tracked students and found that when they multi-tasked, it made them feel more productive, even though in reality they were being unproductive. Other studies found that the more you multitask, the more addicted you get to it.

Here are a few ways to kick the multi-tasking habit and become a mindfulness superhero:

- Keep a time journal of what you achieve in a block of time. Work out when you're single-tasking and when you're multi-tasking. Note down what you achieved in that time block and how mindful you were.
- See whether you can notice your productivity going up when you single-task—noticing the benefits can motivate you to do one thing at a time in a mindful way.
- Group tasks in categories. For example, put together emails, phone calls, errands, and meetings. Then you can do them all together in one block of time rather than switching from emails to calls to running an errand.
- Switch off as many distractions as you can. Silence your phone, log off from your email account, and so on. Then set a timer for the amount of time you need to work, and record how much you get done. Do what works for you to focus on one task for a fixed period of time.
- Practice mindfulness in your breaks between tasks. Stretch, take deep breaths, or go for a mindful walk.

#### **4. Use Mindful Reminders**

The word “mindful” means to remember. Most people who’ve read about or undertaken training in mindfulness appreciate the benefits of mindful living. Unfortunately, they keep forgetting to be mindful! The reason you forget to be mindful is because your brain’s normal (default) mode is to be habitually lost in your own thoughts—running a sort of internal narrative. When you’re going about your usual daily activities, your brain switches you into this low energy state, which is unmindful, almost dreamy. Doing some things automatically, without thinking, is fine but research undertaken at Harvard University showed that 47 per cent of a person’s day can be spent lost in thoughts. The same research found that day dreaming can have a negative impact on well-being. Being on auto-pilot means that you’re not fully present and awake to the opportunities and choices around you. You can’t be creative, plan something new or respond appropriately if you’re operating mechanically.

By using some form of reminder, you can be mindful again. The reminder shakes you out of auto-pilot mode. Try these reminders:

- Setting an alarm on the phone – even a vibrating alarm that doesn’t disturb others can work well.
- Putting mindfulness in your calendar – setting an appointment with yourself!
- A small note or picture on your desk to remind you to be mindful.
- Associating certain activities with mindfulness, such as meal times or meetings or when finishing one task and starting another.
- Using the sound of bells and rings in the workplace as “bells of mindfulness.”

So, every time your phone rings, you take a mindful breath. Every time you hear the ping of a text message, you pause to be mindful of your surroundings rather than immediately reacting by checking the message. All these things are opportunities to come back into the present moment, to see yourself and your surroundings afresh. You take a small step back and reflect rather than automatically react to what's coming at you in the form of demands, tasks, and challenges.

## **5. Slow Down To Speed Up**

Mindfulness at work does seem counter-intuitive. You're considering the fact that, by stopping or slowing down, you can become more efficient, productive, happy, resilient and healthy at work. You may not think that slowing down and being conscious can have such an effect (see [How to Stop](#) for more tips on that).

Imagine being asked to stop sleeping for a week. Sleeping is resting—and resting isn't work. So, simply stop sleeping and just keep working. Maybe you've experienced this when studying for exams or trying to meet a deadline at work. Eventually your efficiency drops to almost zero; you're completely living out of the present moment and perhaps even hallucinating! You need to sleep at least seven hours every night to be able to function effectively.

Clearly, rest can increase efficiency. If you do manage to get about seven hours of sleep and achieve a certain amount of work, imagine what would happen if you also did a few mini-mindfulness exercises during the day? Your brain would become even more efficient, focused, effective at communicating with others, and better at learning new skills.

Being in a panicky rush leads to bad decisions and is a misuse of energy. Instead, pause, focus on listening, stroll rather than run, and generally take your time when at work. Effective leaders, workers, and entrepreneurs slow down and reflect to make the best decisions and actions—they slow down to speed up. That's a mindful way of working.

## **6. Make Stress Your Friend**

Recent research conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, asked 30,000 people the same question: "Does the perception that stress affects health matter?" The results were astonishing.

The researchers found that people experiencing high levels of stress but who believed that stress was good for them had among the lowest mortality rates. Whereas highly stressed people who believed that stress was bad for their health had the highest chance of dying. Your beliefs about stress clearly affect how they impact on your health and well-being. Another study even found that the blood vessels constricted (as is seen in those with heart disease) in people who believed that stress was bad for them, but stayed open and healthy in those who believed that stress was good for them.

If reading this didn't make you go "wow," try reading it again. It's the most exciting research I've read this year!

So if you want to make stress your friend, you need to change the way you think about it and, in turn, your body's response to it.

Mindfulness can help you achieve this change in perception. The next time you're facing a challenge at work, notice how your heart rate speeds up and your breathing accelerates. Observe these responses and then switch your attitude—respond to your stress creatively rather than negatively. Be grateful that the stress response is energizing you. Note that your body is preparing you for your upcoming challenge and that a faster heart rate is sending more oxygen around your body. Be grateful that the process is sharpening your senses and boosting your immune system. By viewing the stress response from this perspective, you see your upcoming problem as a positive challenge and recognize your body preparing to meet it. This small change in attitude can literally add years to your life and improve your productivity and achievements in the workplace.

## **7. Feel Gratitude**

Humans have a “negativity bias.” Essentially, this means that you’re much more likely to focus and dwell on something that’s gone wrong than on things that have gone well. Behaving in this way every day means that you ultimately adopt an excessively negative and unbalanced way of thinking.

Gratitude is the antidote. Plenty of evidence suggests that actively practicing gratitude makes you feel better and has a positive impact on your creativity, health, working relationships, and quality of work. Gratitude makes being at both work and home more positive experiences.

If you feel like you’re stuck in a job you don’t enjoy, the first step is to practice gratitude. What’s going well in your job? Maybe you’re grateful for the money? Even though it may be less than you’d like, you probably prefer it to having no salary at all. You may not like your manager, but maybe you’re friends with a couple of colleagues? You hate the office politics, but they give your insight into what you don’t like in a job, so in the future you know what to look for. After practicing gratitude, you can then consider whether you want to continue in that role or need to find another job.

Being mindful of what’s going well at work helps to improve your resilience. Rather than allowing your mind to spiral into anxiety or dip into low moods as you brood over all the aspects of the job you don’t like, you can feed your mind with thoughts of gratitude to raise your well-being. Then, if you do decide to find another job, your positive mental state can help you select an appropriate position and optimize your performance in the interview. People hire positive people, not those who just complain about what’s going wrong. Use gratitude to neutralize your brain’s natural negativity bias.

## **8. Cultivate Humility**

Humility comes from the Latin *humilis*, meaning grounded. Humble people have a quiet confidence about themselves and don’t feel the need to continuously remind others of their achievements. Humility may seem counter to our culture of glorifying those who make the most noise about themselves, grabbing our attention. But actually, humility is attractive—no one enjoys being around those who continually sing their own praises, and most people enjoy the company of those who are willing to listen to them rather than talk about themselves all the time.

In Jim Collin's hugely popular book *Good to Great*, he identified leaders who turned good companies into great ones. He found that the companies exhibiting the greatest long-term success (at least 15 years of exceptional growth) had leaders demonstrating all the skills of your standard leader but with one extra quality—personal humility. They were willing to work hard, but not for themselves—or the company. If things went wrong, they didn't seek to blame others to protect themselves. And if things went well, they immediately looked outside of themselves to congratulate others. They didn't have an inflated ego that needed protecting all the time.

Humility is often confused with meekness or timidity but they're not the same. Humility does not mean seeing yourself as inferior; rather, it means being aware of your natural dependence on and equity with those around you.

How is humility linked to mindfulness? Mindfulness is about accepting yourself just as you are, and being open to listening to and learning from others. Mindfulness is also synonymous with gratitude—you appreciate how others have helped you. And someone who is grateful for the contribution of others is naturally humble.

To develop a little more humility, try the following:

- Undertake mindful exercises: Mindfulness reduces activity in the part of the brain that generates the story of your self—sometimes called the narrative self. Giving too much attention to you and your own story is unhealthy. Mindfulness practice helps you to be more connected with your senses—the present self. Your attention widens and you can see how much others contribute to your everyday successes.
- Consider who has helped you right now: Spend a few minutes thinking about the number of people who have enabled you to read this page: your parents, guardians, or teachers who taught you to read; your employers who help you afford to pay for it; the people involved in writing, editing and producing the copy; the distributors, sales people, providers of ink; the trees that were used to make the paper. We could go on. Think in this way from time to time to identify just how many people help you every day.
- Show appreciation: When someone helps you out, in whatever way, show appreciation. It sounds obvious, but doing so is an act of humility and reminds you to value the contribution of others: the driver who let you into her lane; the postman who delivered your letters; the person who held the door open and the cleaner who vacuumed your office—they all count.
- Value other people's opinions: If someone makes a point that challenges yours, suspend judgement. You can easily jump in and argue—but that implies that they're wrong and you're right. How can you be so sure? Stop and consider in what ways they may be right, too. This is true mindfulness in action—non-judgemental awareness together with curiosity and respect.

## **9. Accept What You Can't Change**

Acceptance lies at the heart of mindfulness. To be mindful means to accept this present moment just as it is. And it means to accept yourself, just as you are now. It doesn't mean resignation or giving up. But it does mean acknowledging the truth of how things are at this time before trying to change anything.

Here's a workplace example. If you went \$30,000 over budget, that's a fact. It's already happened. As soon as you accept that, you can move forward and try to deal with the situation. Lack of acceptance can lead to denial of the fact (maybe causing you to go even more over budget) or avoidance (you keep skipping meetings with your boss) or aggression (you vent your anger at your team unnecessarily, adversely affecting relationships and motivation). Instead, you can accept the situation, talk to the necessary people, learn from your mistakes, and move on. Acceptance actually leads to change.

When you accept yourself, you cut down on energy-draining self-criticism. You're then much better able to enjoy your successes and smile at your shortcomings.

Personal acceptance is even more powerful. Self-acceptance is embracing all facets of yourself—your weaknesses, shortcomings, aspects you don't like and those you admire. When you accept yourself, you cut down on energy-draining self-criticism. You're then much better able to enjoy your successes and smile at your shortcomings. Through self-acceptance, you can create clarity of mind that allows you to work on those aspects of yourself you wish to improve. The starting point of self-improvement and personal development is self-acceptance.

## **10. Adopt a Growth Mindset**

According to Carol Dweck and her team at Stanford University researcher, people essentially adhere to one of two mind-sets—a growth or a fixed mindset.

People with a fixed mindset believe that their basic qualities, such as their intelligence and talents, are fixed traits. Instead of developing their intelligence and talents, they spend their time hoping their traits will lead to success. They don't seek to develop themselves, because they think that talent alone leads to success. They turn out to be wrong—brain science has proved otherwise.

People with a growth mindset believe that they can improve their intelligence and talents with effort. By applying themselves, they think that they can get better. They see brains and talent as just the starting point, and build on them with hard work and determination. Brain scans have actually revealed that effort does lead to growth in intelligence and enhancement of initial talent over time. People with this mindset have a love of learning and demonstrate greater resilience. Success at work depends on having a growth mindset.

Mindfulness is about adopting a growth mindset. Mindfulness is about giving attention to the present moment and not judging your innate talent or intelligence, but being open to new possibilities. When you adopt a growth mindset at work, you don't mind getting negative feedback as you view it as a chance to discover something new. You don't mind taking on new responsibilities because you're curious about how you'll cope. You expect and move towards challenges, seeing them as opportunities for inner growth. That's the essence of mindfulness at work—believing that you can improve and grow with experience, moving towards challenges, living in the moment, and discovering new things about yourself and others.

Use the following four steps to develop a growth mindset, based on research by Dweck and colleagues:

1. Listen to the voice of a fixed mindset in your head. This is about being mindful of your own thoughts when faced with a challenge. Notice if the thoughts are telling you that you don't have the talent, the intelligence or if you find yourself reacting with anxiety or anger when someone offers feedback to you.
2. Notice that you have a choice. You can accept those fixed mindset thoughts or question them. Take a few moments to practice a mindful pause.
3. Question the fixed mindset attitudes. When your fixed mindset says "What if I fail? I'll be a failure," you can ask yourself "Is that true? Most successful people fail. That's how they learn." Or if fixed mindset says "What if I can't do this project? I don't have the skills," reply with "Can I be absolutely sure I don't have the skills? In truth, I can only know if I try. And if I don't have the skills, doing this will help me to learn them."
4. Take action on the growth mindset. This will make you enjoy the challenges in the workplace, seeing them as opportunity to grow rather than avoid. Use the above system if your mind starts leaning towards the fixed mindset.

Over time, you'll find yourself habitually of a growth rather than fixed mindset, leading to greater success and personal mastery than before.

This article was adapted from *Mindfulness at Work for Dummies* by Shamash Alidina and Juliet Adams.

**"People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in; their true beauty is revealed only if there is a light from within"** Elizabeth Kubler-Ross