

Does the Practice of Meditation Offer a Practical Solution to the Stress-Ridden Workplace?



An examination of the Distinctions Between the Practice of Meditation and YouLeadYou's Internal Management System™ Model for Making the Mind more Productive.

What is Meditation?

Formal meditation is the tools for achieving mindfulness or a state of awareness. While there are different meditation techniques, mindfulness remains the goal.

Mindfulness, positioned as the ultimate answer to the increasing human and capital cost of stress, has become the newest buzzword in the corporate world. That is because studies emphasize the need to rethink profit-motive at the cost of human health, happiness and life.

A 2015 joint study by Harvard and Stanford universities puts the human toll of work-related stress at 120,000 annual deaths. The corresponding healthcare cost is estimated to be between \$125 to \$190 billion dollars annually. According to this study, work related stress leads to a host of harmful behaviors such as spending long hours at work, alcoholism, overeating, drug addiction, and family conflicts. These behaviors then become the source that causes absenteeism, loss of productivity, team work disruptions, terminations and toxic work environment. Companies routinely bear these sorts of indirect costs as well.

This is one among many studies that point to social, cultural and political context of organizations focused on unrelenting demand for productivity at any cost as the cause of individual stress with far reaching consequences.



Does Meditation Deliver on its Promise?

Many approaches including behavioral, motivational or various forms of incentives, such as financial or promotions, have been tried without lasting success? Workplace stress and its harmful side effects continue climbing.



Does mindfulness, correctly positioned to bring focus back to the individual's mindset as the source of causing unhelpful behaviors and problems, actually delivers on its promise? Or is it a "last-ditch" attempt to reducing workplace stress?

Let's examine the practice of meditation in more detail.

1. Meditation, practiced by sectioning off a period of uninterrupted time and sitting in a quiet place on a daily basis, is the tool and method for developing mindfulness. It requires dedicated time, and firm commitment to ongoing practice to get meaningful results. This, given our hectic life styles and increasingly short attention spans, is perhaps the biggest obstacle to realizing the promise of mindfulness.
2. Meditation is a "broad" practice that instructs to notice thoughts that arise in the mind when sitting by oneself. This practice promises to help

us calm the mind so we can positively regulate our thoughts and emotions.

However, the mind becomes unsettled and then reactive primarily during our undesired interaction with others and situations in our daily lives, and not by every thought that passes through it especially when we are sitting in solitude.

As such, meditation does not offer a *conscious learning experience* about our unhelpful thoughts and emotions which mainly surface when we are actively involved in our daily lives and make the mind reactive. This learning experience about specific useless mind states and the conditions under which they arise is a necessary first step for recognizing their occurrence, and returning the mind to a productive state.

3. Meditation practice, aside from concentrating on either breath or an object, does not offer other tools allowing us to handle challenges that invariably and unexpectedly occur in our daily lives which make the mind unproductive. As such, when faced with challenges that unsettle the mind particularly when others or situations are involved, we will be hard pressed to find the opportunity to sit in silence and calm our minds before having to respond.

It's important to note that the brain's neural structure is constantly shaping and reshaping based on our moment-by-moment experiences. With the right tools we are able to intervene and direct those changes in beneficial ways; before they reshape haphazardly and unproductively. Meditation practice will be challenged to undo those harmful changes at a later time as they become fixated at the brain's neural structure fairly quickly.

It's important to note that the brain's neural structure is constantly shaping and reshaping based on our moment-by-moment experiences. With the right tools we are able to intervene and direct those changes in beneficial ways; before they reshape haphazardly and unproductively.

Meditation practice will be challenged to undo those harmful changes at a later time as they become fixated at the brain's neural structure fairly quickly.

What is Internal Management System?

Our Internal Management System[™] (IMS) is designed to make the mind productive through a concise process: tangible knowledge, intervention tools and skill building practices.

IMS differs in the following ways from meditation practice:

1. IMS offers a practical knowledge of how the brain and the mind work, and how their functioning fashions thoughts, emotions and performance. This conscious learning experience allows one to *quickly recognize* his/her "unproductive" mind patterns during interactions. As such, one develops a factual and knowledge-based state mindfulness.
2. Change requires intervention. IMS offers practical scientific tools to intervene in a timely manner to resolve challenges as they occur in any situation. One can thus rapidly redirect the mind toward productivity which leads to beneficially reshaping the brain's neural structure.

IMS differs in the following ways from meditation practice:

3. IMS offers a practical knowledge of how the brain and the mind work, and how their functioning fashions thoughts, emotions and performance. This conscious learning experience allows one to *quickly recognize* his/her “unproductive” mind patterns during interactions. As such, one develops a factual and knowledge-based state mindfulness.
4. Change requires intervention. IMS offers practical scientific tools to intervene in a timely manner to resolve challenges as they occur in any situation. One can thus rapidly redirect the mind toward productivity which leads to beneficially reshaping the brain’s neural structure.

As the brain continues to reshape for the better, the mind also advances toward greater productive, positively influencing thoughts, emotions and behaviors. The productivity at the mind level leads to satisfaction at the personal level. This then becomes the impetus for continuing to advance one’s productivity to gain greater satisfaction. Habit, needed to reshape the brain in real and lasting ways, develops.

Conclusion

The ancient practice of meditation offers many benefits for its dedicated practitioners. As examined in this paper, however, it is not an effective intervention tool usable in our daily lives when the mind through interactions has the highest potential for becoming reactive and unproductive.

We continue to support the ongoing practice of meditation, and believe it is compatible with and offers a great companion to what IMS offers.