

Mindfulness... ... transforming leadership capability

Difficulties and challenges managers face in this area:

Many leaders are running on autopilot. The constant demands of their roles build strong patterns in how they pay attention, and in their typical responses. While these often serve them well, this can reduce their recognition of and responsiveness to new and challenging situations. It can also result in confirmation bias – the tendency we all have to favour information that confirms our beliefs or hypotheses. The stronger the need for conformity to technical regulation, typically the stronger the tendency to confirmation bias.

Under autopilot, leaders fail to notice small but potentially significant shifts, such as changes in staff behaviour, in the organisation context, or in their markets. This can have technical, safety, or strategic implications. It can also result in “stuckness” – feeling too entrenched to learn new things.

Research consistently shows that agile leaders are more mindful, ie. they are keenly aware of how they pay attention, and what they do with this attention. They are more reflective on their practice as managers, and more attuned to recognising biases and patterns in themselves and others. They are good at creating the space to be able to select from a wider range of responses to situations.

If we can take greater command of our thoughts and self-talk we can increase our capability to develop creative solutions to complex problems more effectively. Mastery of this competence can transform a person from an exceptional technical thinker into a better performer all round. We enable managers and leaders to do this.

“I addressed where I spent time and had some constructive conversations with members of my SMT. I am now better able to dedicate time to the right tasks and with the right people which has increased performance measurably in my area. They were simple things to do but really helped”.

NOMS Manager

What we do and how we do it:

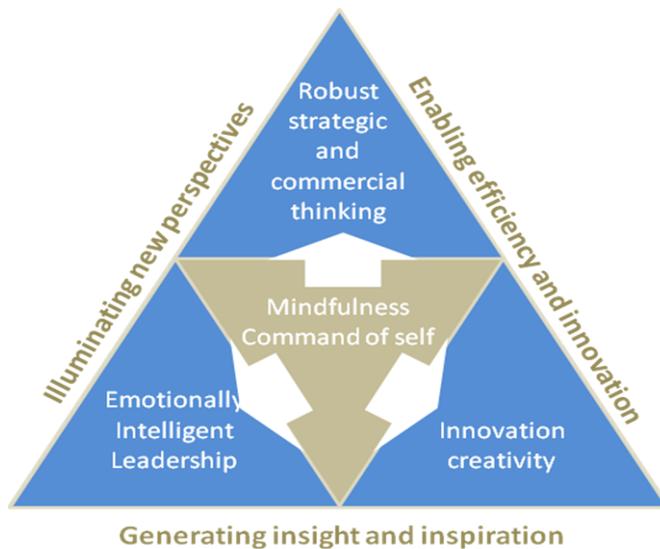
We place mindfulness at the heart of Personal Leadership Transformation. Mindfulness is a range of simple practices that are enjoyable, easy to do, and extremely powerful. Mindfulness has recently established a strong credibility in specialist areas of the Health sector, and is increasingly gaining traction in organisations at the forefront of Leadership Development. For example, Google has invested significantly in mindfulness training and is reaping the benefits in terms of creativity, employee health, and successful organisation growth.

Mindfulness significantly impacts three areas of particular importance to the development of commercial business leaders.

- **Strategic decision making** – the mindful leader is more able to step back and recognise their own biases and patterns. They are also more able to step aside from their own self interests, and are able to carve out more quality time for strategic thinking and planning.
- **Innovation and creativity** – the mindful leader is more aware of their creative process and more able to harness it. With the right awareness and skills, they are also more able to create the conditions to unleash this in others around them.
- **Emotional intelligence** – through becoming aware of their internal emotional impulses and energies, the mindful leader gains in ability to decipher their own emotional process and to build key qualities of emotional intelligence, such as empathy and resilience.



The combinations of these enhanced characteristics lead to outcomes of new strategic perspectives, greater innovation and efficiencies, and more profound insight and inspiration. The diagram below illustrates these relationships:



When we work with leaders, they learn how to develop choice in their patterns of thinking and to take command of their self-talk. Through experiential exercises, practices, powerful questioning, and feedback we invite participants to take a step back and become aware of how they pay attention. We then explore the implications of this and help them to develop other ways of paying attention, and crucially, of turning that attention-paying into their desired outcomes. This has direct impact on the effectiveness of the individual, his or her team, and the organisation.

Outcomes and benefits:

Through “Mindfulness transforming leadership”, participants are able to:

- Redress the balance between their technical and behavioural focus
- Align themselves more fully with their business and personal objectives and purpose
- Innovate more readily
- Empower others more effectively
- Respect differences between people
- Become more consciously competent at tolerating and developing others
- Become an “old dog that can learn new tricks” – many participants who believe they are beyond learning have surprised themselves (and us too!) in their new-found enthusiasm
- Bring crucial skills developed outside work back into the workplace. The club treasurers, the chair of committee, the sports coaches, the writer, are able to reapply these skills in the workplace. In short, the human being reconnects with the business.

Inevitably too, participants find that the techniques and insights prove incredibly useful in reducing stress. We take care to introduce these concepts in pragmatic ways which are accessible to busy leaders.

“I now feel so much less stressed – more in control – I can focus on what is really important”

“I find the technique of stepping back and observing my thinking has really helped me”

Leader Aerospace Sector