Mind Your Business: The Mindful Leadership Breakthrough

Unlocking the Power and Potential of the Present Moment to Find Freedom to Lead and Achieve Great Things

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Mind Your Business: The Mindful Leadership Breakthrough.

This book will help you improve your mindful leadership skills. Whether you already are a leader or you are on track to becoming one, this is a simple program for improving your mindful leadership understanding, ability, and skills.

What if you could lead with greater composure and authenticity? What if you had a greater sense of presence and ease, as well as a naturally positive influence?

What if people trusted you more, were inspired by you, and were ready to help you fulfill the vision, purpose, and intention you stand for and are working toward? What if you stood out as a leader others could rely on for sound judgment and intelligent decision making?

What if you could create such a powerful, positive presence in your organization that people would naturally be drawn to work with you, your team, and your organization? What if you could do all that, no matter how much formal leadership training you had or where you stood within your organization?

This is the process. Mind Your Business: The Mindful Leadership Breakthrough can help you get there.

Like all good programs, it can be followed step-by-step and will deliver consistent results for those willing to put in the work and rely on the principles and practices covered in this book.

This chapter is called The Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence Connection: Increase Emotional Intelligence through Mindfulness Practices.

This book is designed as a breakthrough experience. By breakthrough, I am talking about a genuine shift in mindset, attitude, and behavior, so please be willing to examine yourself in those three areas.

To assist you with your breakthrough, I will help you examine many of the underlying beliefs that are currently keeping you at your present level of leadership effectiveness.

You will examine many of the areas where you are holding yourself back or self-sabotaging, and I will give you the necessary scientific facts, data, alternative narratives, and practices that will allow you to make a shift in your awareness and perspective on what mindful leadership is and isn’t, and how it can be practiced most effectively.
Bring an open mind and be willing to suspend your usual biases and limiting beliefs. I am asking you to be willing to re-examine your current understanding so that what you learn in this book can become part of your daily reflection. Let it guide you to new observations. Let it guide you to fresh perspectives. Let it guide you to try new things. You have only your limitations to lose.

If you keep doing what you are doing, you will keep getting what you are getting. If you want to see improvements in your life and in your leadership, you want to be ready to make a shift and try something new.

What helps my clients and me in this process is to view life as an experiment. Be willing to test and assess, re-test, and re-assess. Your life is where you get to test and assess this knowledge and insight continuously, and see if you can get continuously better results. So join the conversation. Stay connected. Get involved.

If you apply what you learn in this book to your life and to your leadership, you will experience a breakthrough in your leadership capacity, effectiveness, and skill. You will become a more mindful leader, able to be of greater benefit to both yourself and the people around you.
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FRAMEWORK

“Whatever is begun in anger, ends in shame.”
—Benjamin Franklin

For starters, Emotional Intelligence is generally our ability to identify and manage our emotions and those of the people around us. It is defined by a practical modern framework, which divides it into four distinct areas of personal capacity and skill.

- Self-awareness
- Social awareness
- Self-management
- Relationship management

Each of these four areas can be further broken down to include the following subcategories:

- **Self-awareness:** emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, and self-confidence.
- **Social awareness:** empathy, organizational awareness, and service orientation.
- **Self-management:** emotional self-control, transparency, and adaptability (achievement orientation, initiative, and optimism).
- **Relationship management:** developing others, inspirational leadership, change catalyst, influence, conflict management, teamwork, and collaboration.

Emotional Intelligence is defined by your **situational awareness**, because it focuses on better understanding yourself and others in real time, in real situations, which means in the present moment, in the here and now.

It is a relief that you can have 20/20 hindsight, and can look back and better understand what happened in your life and how. But it is only when your self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, and relationship management skills become available to you in present moment real time that it becomes effective Emotional Intelligence, a skill that improves your leadership. You become able to make significant improvements in the way you respond, react, and lead every moment of every day.

Let’s briefly explore personal control through the following exercise.
EXERCISE:

On a scale of 0–100, write how much you think that you are currently able to control...

- The world
- Other people
- Yourself

Do you believe that you can control the world? How much?

______________________________

Do you believe that you can control other people? How much?

______________________________

Do you believe that you can currently control yourself? How much?

______________________________

Seeing your responses will give you some insight into how effective you are in using your sense of control and personal power in your leadership.

When I run this exercise in my live trainings, I find most leaders are very aware that they do not fully control the world, nor do they control other people. In every group, though, there usually are a couple of leaders who think they do. Once they realize that they can’t keep people against their will if they want to leave—either by quitting their job, moving away, getting a divorce or even committing suicide in extreme cases—these leaders acknowledge that others are ultimately not under their control.

Yet, even though most do not believe that they control the world or other people, they still admit to spending a significant amount of their personal time, energy, and even their financial resources on trying to do so. Why is that?

Why is there such a gap between what we know and what we do?

Especially when it comes to exercising leadership, the gap between what you know and what you do is where your leadership is shaped, where you succeed or fail. Your ability to close that gap over time will make you into a more mindful and effective leader. This book will help you do exactly that.
What would happen if you could refocus all of that wasted time and energy on the things you can control and take charge of, the things you can actively change and transform?

You would see very significant results over a reasonably short time.
YOUR ROAD TO PERSONAL POWER

“You have power over your mind—not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength.”
—Marcus Aurelius

Know What You Can Control

What you as a leader can control and take charge of are **five personal tools** precisely. These tools can be summarized as how you show up and operate in the world: your internal and external state and your behavior.

All your success and failure in leadership boils down to how you use and manage these **five personal tools** to influence your state and behavior.

**Your state and behavior** can be further broken down into your mental, emotional, verbal, and physical state and behavior.

To help you to remember these **five personal tools**, I like to use the acronym **TAIWA™** for a leader’s state and behavioral choices.

- T—Thoughts
- A—Attitudes
- I—Imagination
- W—Words
- A—Actions

**Thoughts**

T stands for thoughts, which are the thoughts you choose to think, consciously or unconsciously. There is a difference between the thoughts you have and let go of, and the thoughts you have and choose to entertain, sustain, and cultivate. Thoughts that just arise and dissipate are simply the mind’s natural creativity. If you are not buying in, which means you are not investing in the reality or “truth” of those thoughts, they do not directly affect your state or behavior and therefore your outcomes. If you buy in, however, meaning you entertain those thoughts as truth and you sustain and cultivate those thoughts as intentions, beliefs, and opinions, then those thoughts are considered mental actions. They will influence your state and your behavior, and they will influence the outcomes and results you will see from your efforts.

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**Attitudes**

**A stands for attitudes.** Attitudes are states of mind that are based on the thoughts you cultivate and believe in. Attitudes are emotional states that are triggered by the thoughts you think, and they can be positive or negative, constructive or destructive. The important thing to know about your attitudes is that they are perceivable by others and have an important effect on how others respond to you and your intentions, motivations, actions, and plans.

**Imagination**

**I stands for imagination.** Your imagination consists of the images you hold in your mind. Whether you know it or not, you spend much of your time imagining and visualizing scenarios that have never happened and likely never will. This is the source of much of your fear and worry. Fear arises when your imagination has gotten ahead of your real-time experience and you are imagining bad outcomes for yourself or others. By taking control over your imagination, you can better control your psychological and physiological response to the uncertainties and unknowns in your life simply because you are not filling in the blanks with images of fear and anxiety, but with images that support and empower you in your growth and development.

**Words**

**W stands for words.** The words you speak are important. They alone can make or break a relationship or the successful outcome of your goals. By choosing your words to align with your intentions and desired results, you position yourself to be more effective and more influential no matter your place in life.

**Actions**

**A stands for actions.** The physical actions you take are powerful. They say more about you than all your thoughts, attitudes, imagination, and words combined. If you want to see what someone is thinking and feeling, just watch their actions. You will always see what truly motivates people based on the actions they take.

To develop Emotional Intelligence and mindful leadership you must pay attention to the acronym TAIWA™. It represents everything in your life you can and should take charge of and gain control over if you wish to improve the results you create as a more mindful leader.
DISCOVERING THE PRESENT MOMENT

What is important to realize about TAIWA™ is that without exception these creative activities and personal tools are all used in the present moment. Your thoughts, attitudes, imagination, words, and action all take place in the present moment. That is why you must become and stay consistently present. Because if you are not present, how much control and ability to take charge in your life do you have? Zero. None. You have no control over your life or your results.

Your Point of Power

The present moment is your point of power because everything you can exercise leadership in and everything that influences the results you get in life happens in the present moment. More than that, the present moment represents the starting point, the journey and the fruition of your efforts to be a more mindful leader.

When you form your intention to do something, you do so in the present moment. When you are executing your intention with action, you do so in the present moment. When you experience those actions fully ripen into results, you do so in the present moment. You never leave the present moment.

Even though that is quite clear for most people once they hear or read it, they are still up against lifelong habits of projecting themselves out of the present moment, or getting distracted.

According to a study by Matt Killingsworth and Dan Gilbert at Harvard in 2012, people are distracted or mind-wandering on average 30–50 percent of the time.¹ They found that those who mind-wandered most were also the least happy people in their study, even if they were distracted by something interesting or pleasant. People who were present were by far the happiest people they found, and it is clear from our description of TAIWA™ that these people also were likely the most effective.

How to Relate to Time

To calm our anxiety and worry, we often project ourselves into the future and try to foresee difficult or unpleasant circumstances far in advance.

We also get caught up in our recollection and memories of the past. We again and again dwell on past experiences even though they are not what is happening or taking place right now, and they are not what determines what will happen in the future.

This can be a problem because our distraction into the future and into the past causes us to be less present. The less present we are, the less we can effectively use our TAIWA™ tools to create better results in our lives.

Anticipating the future and recalling the past are both methods that should be used with great care and for very specific reasons.

We might, for example, choose to think through our coming year to set clear intentions and measurable goals we wish to achieve. We might think through the coming week on Sunday night or Monday morning to plan our appointments and commitments for the week. We might think through the potential consequences of our actions for the long term to avoid or reduce harm and unwanted consequences. We might also go over a past event to reflect on what we might have done better or different, or how we could have been of greater value to our colleagues, clients, customers, family, or friends.

In each of these cases, projecting our minds out of the present moment into the future or the past is something that is done deliberately, consciously, and specifically.

As a mindful leader, you might even be aware that planning the future and reflecting on the past are both themselves activities that happen in the present, thereby allowing you to fully use these skills in the present alongside your other tools and capacities.

That is why mindful leaders cultivate their ability to stay fully present no matter what is going on.

The commitment to the present moment is clear, deep, and total. If you need to plan or strategize the future, you do it in the present moment. If you need to learn from past mistakes you do it in the present moment. Regardless of your task or challenge, you maintain your present moment mindfulness and awareness as your clear access point to whatever solution will be needed to deal with or transform the situation you are facing.
BECOMING MINDFUL AND AWARE

As you explore and resolve your commitment to being present, you begin to become increasingly aware of what is going on in the present moment. This is described as the natural process of developing greater mindfulness and awareness. You can’t help it. Just as you naturally become more aware of your surroundings the longer you stay in a new house or neighborhood, for example, in the same way you become naturally more aware of your own experience, state, and behavior the more you pay attention to it and cultivate being present.

Four Foundations of Mindfulness

Authentic mindfulness education distinguishes four areas of practice that contribute to the cultivation of mindfulness and awareness: body, feelings, mind, and phenomena. These four areas are often described as four foundations of mindfulness.

- **Mindfulness of Body** includes your physical presence and sensations, as well as your verbal and physical behavior.
- **Mindfulness of Feelings** includes your attitudes and your emotions, as well as your sentiments and appreciation about the many perceptions you have throughout the day.
- **Mindfulness of Mind** includes your thoughts and perceptions, and all the various mental events that are occurring in your present moment experience.
- **Mindfulness of Phenomena** includes everything else you can possibly perceive or be aware of, such as the world around you or the people and other living beings you share the world with. It also includes any genuine wisdom and insights, and the scientific, spiritual, or philosophical frameworks that help you navigate your life.

As you begin to cultivate an appreciation for these four dimensions of your experience, you will become more aware of yourself, other people, and your surroundings. You will be able to see more clearly the stressors, pressures, strains, and influences you and other people are under from moment to moment. You will be able to gain more choice in your repertoire of responses to the events of each day.

TAIWA (thoughts, attitudes, imagination, words, and actions) all fall under these four dimensions as well.

- Thoughts and imagination belong to the dimension of Mindfulness of Mind.
- Words and actions belong to the dimension of Mindfulness of Body.

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• Attitudes belong to the dimension of Mindfulness of Feelings.
• All are exerted in response to the world we live in; the insight, wisdom, and guiding frameworks we apply; and the people we engage with, which is Mindfulness of Phenomena.

“Leadership is a choice, not a position.”
—Stephen Covey

You will also become more aware of your emotions. Emotions are powerful experiences and major influencers in our decisions. Emotions arise from and in conjunction with your thoughts.

How Mindfulness Grows Emotional Intelligence

Greater mindfulness and awareness allow you to gain greater insight into how emotions arise, influence your well-being and behavior, and dissolve. Greater mindfulness and awareness is the foundation to being able to work more skillfully with your emotions:

• Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence complement each other and show strong correlation in research.
• Emotional Intelligence can be hard to teach without mindfulness and awareness practices that aid in the practical application of training in these important skills.
• Mindfulness is easy to start and to get better at and lets you develop Emotional Intelligence progressively.

Multiple studies have shown that mindfulness enhances Emotional Intelligence and that Emotional Intelligence expresses itself in more mindful behavior. There is much brain science that supports this valuable correlation. Numerous studies have explored the relationship of mindfulness to Emotional Intelligence:

• Baer et al. and Brown and Ryan established a positive relationship between mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence.²
• Brown, Ryan, and Creswell established that regular practice of mindfulness meditation can enhance our ability to understand our own emotions.³


• Feldman et al. established that mindfulness is positively associated with more clarity of feelings, attention to feelings, and lower distraction.4
• Also according to Feldman et al., people with a higher level of mindfulness tend to recover more quickly from emotional distress compared with those with a lower level of mindfulness.5
• Cahn and Polich found that regularly practicing mindfulness meditation can significantly enhance the ability of individuals to regulate and control their emotions.6
• Brown et al. and Krasner et al. both found people who regularly practice mindful meditation can more easily develop the ability to detect and understand the emotions of others.7
• Shapiro, Schwartz, and Bonner found that participants who attended a mindfulness program tended to score higher on the overall empathy self-reported measurement.8
• Brown and Kasser (2005) found that mindfulness is positively associated with a felt sense of relatedness and interpersonal closeness.9
• Practicing mindfulness meditation also heightens one’s metacognitive ability according to Zeidan et al., which here refers to a higher-level cognitive ability that allows individuals to better


5 Ibid.


monitor and control their own thought process. Such metacognitive ability is, according to the Emotional Intelligence research by Mayer et al. and Salovey and Mayer, a crucial capacity, which helps people to effectively regulate their emotions.

**Connecting to Emotional Intelligence through Mindfulness**

Overall, higher levels of characteristic mindfulness are associated with higher levels of positive affect, lower levels of negative affect, and greater life satisfaction.

“*Mindfulness and Emotional Intelligence both emphasize people’s abilities to perceive, understand and regulate their thoughts and emotions.*”

—John Darwin

These are just some of the components of Emotional Intelligence that are positively correlated with mindfulness, meaning they increase and expand as you continue to develop your mindfulness practice:

- Understanding your own emotions,
- Detecting and understanding the emotions of others,
- Polishing your social skills,
- Increasing your perspective,
- Bettering your interpersonal closeness,
- Increasing your sense of relatedness,

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• Building your cooperative response patterns,
• Increasing your self-awareness,
• Raising your meta-awareness,
• Building a positive affect,
• Pinpointing clarity of your feelings/emotions,
• Decreasing your distraction due to emotions,
• Building your empathy,
• Recovering quickly from any emotional distress,
• Regulating and controlling your emotions,
• And many more…

**Benefits for Leaders**

Mindful leaders understand that Emotional Intelligence is the ability of individuals to recognize their own and other people’s emotions, to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to constructively and effectively guide thinking and behavior.

That ability is referred to as Emotional Capital and consists of Trait Emotional Intelligence and Ability Emotional Intelligence.

Trait Emotional Intelligence “encompasses your behavioral dispositions and any self-perceived abilities and is measured primarily through self-report.” 13 Konstantin Vasily Petrides developed the framework in 2001. Trait Emotional Intelligence belongs within the realm of a leader’s personality and disposition.

Ability Emotional Intelligence is defined as “the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in self and others.” 14 Developed by Peter Salovey, John Mayer, and David Caruso in 2004, the Ability model focuses primarily on an individual’s ability to process emotional information and use it to effectively navigate the social environment. 15 Ability Emotional Intelligence (theoretically, if not empirically) belongs within the domain of a leader’s cognitive ability, and it includes the ability to accurately perceive, use, understand, and manage one’s emotions.

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Here is another way of looking at the Ability Emotional Intelligence model:

**Perceiving emotions**—describes (the leader’s) “ability to detect and decipher emotions in faces, pictures, voices, and cultural artifacts—including the ability to identify one’s own emotions. Perceiving emotions represents a basic aspect of Emotional Intelligence, as it makes all other processing of emotional information possible."

**Using emotions**—the ability to harness emotions to facilitate various cognitive activities, such as thinking, creativity and problem solving. The emotionally intelligent person can capitalize fully upon his or her changing moods in order to best fit the task at hand.

**Understanding emotions**—the ability to comprehend emotion language and to appreciate complicated relationships among emotions. For example, understanding emotions encompass the ability to be sensitive to slight variations between emotional tone, and the ability to accurately recognize and describe how emotions evolve over time.

**Managing emotions**—the ability to regulate emotions in both ourselves and in others. Therefore, the emotionally intelligent person can harness emotions, even negative ones, and manage them effectively to achieve intended goals.16

Daniel Goleman, best-selling author of *Emotional Intelligence and Focus*, and credited with bringing Emotional Intelligence into the mainstream, has yet another model, which nevertheless responds to the development and cultivation of mindfulness and compassion practice in similar fashion:

1. **Self-awareness**—the ability to know one’s emotions, strengths, weaknesses, drivers, values and goals and to recognize their impact on others while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

2. **Self-regulation**—involves controlling or redirecting one’s disruptive emotions and destructive impulses and adapting skillfully to changing circumstances.

3. **Social skill**—managing relationships to influence and move people and social interactions in the desired direction.

4. **Empathy**—considering other people’s feelings and circumstances especially when making decision.

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5. **Motivation**—being driven to achieve for the sake of achievement.\(^{17}\)

In summary, cultivating greater mindfulness and compassion through a continued present moment awareness that takes into consideration experiences in relationship to one’s body, thoughts, feelings, other people, and operational insight about the world around us is a sure way to build the qualities associated with Emotional Intelligence in ourselves.

Leaders who understand the personal and organizational value that has been thoroughly established for Emotional Intelligence and are eager to have a practice to help them gain and sustain greater Emotional Intelligence are well advised to take up a mindful leadership framework and a daily practice of mindfulness and compassion for their personal and professional lives.

*In theory there is no difference between theory and practice. In practice there is.*
—Yogi Berra

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