

YOUR BRAIN ON MEDITATION

How Mindfulness affects Productivity in the Workplace

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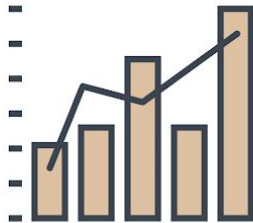
THE IMPACT

adapting to change & prioritizing mental health

MINDFULNESS & THE WORKPLACE.....

Mindfulness-based training programs are gaining traction in the workplace.

Organizations including Aetna, Dow Chemical, General Mills, Goldman Sachs, Google, Intel, Nike, SAP, Target, and the United States Marine Corps have implemented mindfulness-based training for the purpose of reducing stress, enhancing employee well-being, and increasing productivity (Jha et al., 2010; Wolever et al., 2012; Aikens et al., 2014; Gelles, 2015).



GOING VIRTUAL.....

Adapting to the Virtual Realm has become essential. While most healthcare needs can be easily addressed online, overall employee wellness has had the greatest impact.

“One of the biggest challenges employers face is how to support employees’ mental health and emotional wellbeing needs. This is especially true for employees who work from home and feel disconnected,” said Regina Ihrke, senior director and wellbeing leader, Willis Towers Watson.



THE STATISTICS

In a study conducted by Willis Towers Watson, we see the direct impact on employees:

- 83% of those surveyed have some anxiety from the COVID-19 crisis, with 46% indicating a moderate or high degree of anxiety
- 70% of employee participants reported at least some distraction from work due to coronavirus concerns, with 26% indicating a moderate or high degree of distraction

MEDITATION & BRAIN FUNCTION

strengthening the mind

Neuroplasticity allows the brain to reorganize itself. It does this by forming new neural connections throughout our life.

Evidence shows us that mindfulness can help increase our resilience, which allows us to cope better and roll with the punches.

By applying neuroplasticity, you can essentially “re-wire” and “hardwire” the brain helping you achieve greater levels of peace, health, happiness, and joy. (Riopel, Leslie MSc. 2020)



THE STUDY:

Sara Lazar, a neuroscientist at Harvard Medical School, actually uses MRI technology to look at the brain. In her research, she looks at the detailed structures of the brain to see what might be going on during certain tasks like meditation or yoga.

(Riopel, Leslie MSc. 2020)



THE FINDINGS:

In this study, Lazar tested the recipients for the positive effects that mindfulness meditation would have on psychological well-being.

After 8 weeks, brain volume had increased in 4 regions of the brain. The most relevant of these regions included:

- The Hippocampus
 - The Temporoparietal junction
- (Riopel, Leslie MSc. 2020)*

A NEUROLOGICAL BREAKDOWN:

The hippocampus is a structure of the brain shaped like a seahorse. It is responsible for the regulation of emotions, spatial orientation, learning and the storage of memories.

The temporoparietal junction is the area of the brain where the parietal lobes meet the temporal area. This area of the brain is responsible for empathy and compassion.

The study results also showed that the amygdala decreased, which meant the fight-or-flight response, the reaction to threats, also decreased.

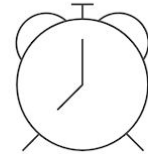
The smaller the amygdala becomes, the better people react to stress. The decrease in the brain's grey matter correlates with the changes in the levels of stress as well, according to the study.

(Riopel, Leslie MSc. 2020)

WHAT'S NEXT?

implementation & practice development

Science teaches us that Meditation is a dose-dependent practice. Meaning, the more often you engage - the more tangible the results.



CONSISTENCY IS KEY.

THE TAKEAWAY:

- *Recent studies have proven an increase in anxiety, stress and distraction due to the COVID-19 pandemic, lack of social justice, and financial distress*
- *Many employees feel their overall wellness is not effectively supported in the workplace*
- *Neuroplasticity shows us that with Mindfulness-Based practices, we can improve overall brain functioning - resulting in more calm, focused and creative output*
- *Understanding basic brain functionality de-mystifies Meditation practice*

AND NOW... WE PRACTICE!

RESOURCES

Buddhas Brain:
The Practical Neuroscience of Happiness, Love and Wisdom

Rick Hanson, PhD

Altered Traits:
Science Reveals how Meditation changes your Mind, Brain and Body

Daniel Colement & Richard Davidson