

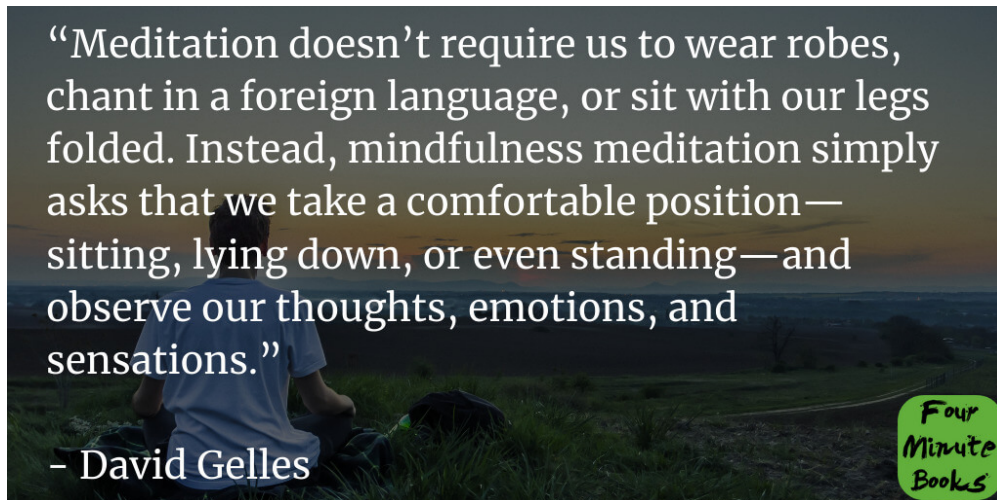
Mindful Work Summary

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1-Sentence-Summary: *Mindful Work* is your guide to understanding how the practice of meditation got its roots in Western society, the many ways it radically improves your brain's ability to do almost everything, and how it will improve your productivity.

Read in: 4 minutes

Favorite quote from the author:



You're busy. Stressed beyond your limits. You wish you could just keep up with everything going on but deep down you know that's impossible. Before long all you can think about is booking a weekend getaway to see if you can beat the burnout.

Although it might sound nice to spend some time away, and there's nothing wrong with a vacation, there are cheaper and easier ways to refresh your energy. If you do it right, you don't even need to leave the office to refocus and re-energize yourself!

All it takes is learning how to practice mindfulness at work.

This trendy technique is already sweeping workplaces all over the world. Many are seeing the dramatic benefits that it has on individual well-being and company success.

If this all sounds nice to you then you'll love David Gelles's book *Mindful Work: How Meditation Is Changing Business from the Inside Out*. You'll learn the benefits of mindfulness at work and how to practice it to reap the benefits.

Here are 3 lessons in this book that have helped me manage stress at work:

1. Science proves that mindfulness works and does wonderful things to your brain whether you're at the office or not.
2. If you want to improve your focus, meditate.
3. The greatest leadership qualities come naturally when you practice mindfulness.

Let's get right to these lessons!

Lesson 1: Science proves that mindfulness changes your brain for the better.

For a long time, it's been difficult for just about everybody in the Western world to accept that mindfulness is more than spirituality. Anyone that talked about the benefits could easily be shrugged off because there was no proof. Until now.

Once fMRI, or functional magnetic resonance imaging technology was invented, we could get a quantifiable understanding of how the brain responds in specific situations.

Because of this, we can prove, with scientific certainty, that meditation will change your brain for the better.

With this machine, scientists have discovered that when a person practices mindfulness their brain becomes calmer. They grow less judgmental, especially of themselves.

Researchers have also only recently discovered neuroplasticity, or the brain's ability to change. Meditation unlocks this power and pushes your mind to modify itself in all the right ways.

Those that practice mindfulness have more activity in their prefrontal cortex, which makes them more compassionate. They also have more overall gray matter, so they have a better memory and more easily regulate emotions.

And as if all that wasn't enough to convince you, meditation also decreases activity in the amygdala. This is the part of your brain that's responsible for stress and activates the fight-or-flight response. In other words, if you practice mindfulness, you'll manage stress better, too!

Lesson 2: Meditation will improve your concentration.

If there's one thing I hated about working in an office it was how many distractions I had to deal with. And even now that I'm self-employed I still don't like having to worry about how I'm going to focus!

Like me, you probably know that you're a lot more productive trying to concentrate on one thing instead of multitasking. But it's really hard to do when you've got all sorts of external stimuli begging for your attention.

That's where mindfulness comes in handy because it lets you focus your thoughts on what's most important. **When you learn how to do it right, you gain the ability to notice your thoughts and feelings and redirect them toward what you choose instead of whatever's convenient at the time.**

Imagine you're wondering about what's next on your work to-do list. Suddenly, you've got thoughts about the phone call you need to make or that birthday present you need to get for your sister. Your mind wanders, and before you realize, it's an hour later and you still haven't started on the next project!

When things like this happen it's best to begin observing your thoughts from an outside perspective. Don't grab hold of any of them, just watch. As you practice this more often, your ability to focus your attention will become almost automatic!

Lesson 3: Practicing mindfulness will naturally give you all the qualities of a great leader.

Think of the best manager or coach you know. What are their characteristics? They're kind, listen well, and are someone you can look up to, right? The good news for you is that if you want to be like this too, all you need to do is meditate.

As we've talked about, mindfulness helps your brain deal with stress better. And is there anything more difficult than being in charge? We've all known a manager that cracked under pressure, and it's awful to watch and deal with.

A person that meditates often, in contrast, doesn't have to deal with this because they manage their stress efficiently. They can remain calm, even when tensions get high.

Mindful leaders are also effective when it comes to managing challenges because they can break them down into manageable parts more easily. Their self-awareness lets them know their own limitations and delegate where necessary, which makes them much more likely to solve problems.

These kinds of individuals also set a good example in many ways, and particularly because their ability to reflect makes them more compassionate. They know when it's time to adjust a company principle or policy to take care of someone, for instance.

The positive effects that meditation has on their brain and character then ripple through the entire company. Employees see the powerful influence their leader has and try to emulate them.

Eventually, everyone grows together and becomes better, all because of the simple principle of mindfulness!

Mindful Work Review

I've summarized a lot of books about mindfulness recently so I was a little bit apprehensive about doing another one. However, I really like the unique take that *Mindful Work* has on the subject, especially the emphasis on practicing meditation for the sake of it and not just for the benefits. If you are the kind of person who stresses out just thinking of work, this book is going to change your life.

Who would I recommend the Mindful Work summary to?

The 32-year-old whose boss is being insensitive to everything going on in her life right now, the 49-year-old manager that wonders why his employees are struggling so much with the heavy workload he places on them, and anyone who wants less stress and more focus at work.