



Do You Want To Be Mindful? Ask Yourself This Question Every Day.

As a leader, it is critical to be mindful and present in interactions with your many stakeholders throughout the day. While this is very easy to understand in theory, it is incredibly difficult to do in practice.

Mindfulness, a key component of Buddhist philosophy, has become quite in vogue today. In looking up “mindfulness seminars” on Google, I found countless programs ranging from a day to eight weeks in duration.

Our great friend, Dr. Carol Kauffman, was recognized by *Thinkers50* as one of the Most Influential Coaches in the World. Kauffman teaches her clients to repeatedly ask themselves one simple question. This question is the most useful tool for increasing mindfulness that we have ever tried:

“Am I being the person who I want to be right now?”

To us, this question is the perfect summary of what it takes to be mindful.

Nobel Prize-winning behavioral economist Daniel Kahneman has a profound saying that he repeats in his bestselling book, *Thinking, Fast and Slow*: “What I see is all there is.”

As Dr. Kahneman says, our lives tend to be determined by what we keep in front of us. In today’s frenetic world, it is hard to keep focused on anything. If we do not “keep it in front of us,” it just gets lost.

Garry Ridge, the CEO of WD-40, is one of the greatest leaders we have ever met. One of his secrets of success is to keep whatever he wants to accomplish IN LARGE LETTERS in front of him and visible. Ridge practices this every day of his life.

If you want to be mindful, keep a large poster at work and home that asks, “Am I being the person who I want to be right now?”

CEOs often attend multiple meetings in a day. The presentations start to blur together. No matter how tired or distracted they may be, great leaders need to communicate with interest and respect to people in the room.

As Margo Georgiadis, the successful CEO of Ancestry, noted, "While this may be the least important meeting of the week for me, it may be the most important for them."

For busy leaders, mindfulness can be even more difficult at home than at work. In our coaching, we have interviewed many family members of CEOs. In one memorable interview, our client's twin daughters said, "Dad says he wants us to be there to have dinner with him, then he stays on his smartphone during the entire meal. Please tell him to practice what he is asking us to do."

Our client still considers this feedback one of the most meaningful moments of his life. More important than becoming a better CEO, he learned to put away his smartphone and became a better Dad.

Wherever you go, keep this great question in front of you:

Am i being the person that i want to be right now?

When you feel that you are not being mindful at work or, even more important, not being mindful at home, keep going back to this question.

When do we stop being mindful? When we forget!

When can we return to mindfulness? When we remember to ask ourselves this one question.

When asked who he was, Buddha replied, "I am awake."

As Kauffman so eloquently points out, continually asking ourselves this one simple question can wake us up from our distraction and help us become the person we want to be.

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