Being Present in the Moment Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

There are many things going on around us in our physical environment as well as distractions occupying our minds at any given time. With all of the challenges and noise we face in today's world, it is difficult to be truly present in the moment we are in. This can be especially true at work. It is important to realize when our focus, attention, or mind is not fully present in the moment while completing a work task.

WHAT' S THE DANGER

What does it mean to be truly present? All too often we are physically present somewhere, but our focus and attention are not. We have all been there. Whether it is during a safety meeting or when driving home, we zone out and quickly realize we have no clue what was said in the safety meeting or with the snap of a finger we are home but have no recollection of the drive. This kind of disconnect from the present moment can be extremely dangerous when at work.

The dangers of not being fully present and engaged while at **work** are obvious. A quick scenario:

- A supervisor is going through the safety procedures for a new piece of equipment. Your mind begins to wander and you do not hear much of the discussion. Later that day while you are using the equipment a coworker's hand gets caught in moving parts and you do not know where the emergency shutoff switch is.

OTHER DANGERS AT WORK

- Not focusing in a one-on-one discussion with a customer but

thinking of the report you need to put on the bosses desk by 5 PM.

- You can catastrophize business problems – overreact to them, and put yourself in a situation where you're paralyzed and unable to think clearly.
- You've got a deadline coming and you start to worry, you get caught up in the "what if" thinking, and you get totally stressed out, and become unproductive. You're not focused on the tasks at hand. Rather, you're preoccupied with negative self-chatter and worry.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

It boils down to adopting the philosophy of being present and taking a disciplined approach to stay with it.

- Step 1. Stop, assess how present you are?
- Step 2. Re-acknowledge your commitment to being present.
- Step 3. Focus completely on your breathing for a few moments. Allow yourself to become centered, focused on the now and grounded.
- Step 4. Engage in the business activity.

Being present in business situations may seem easy, but it's not. It takes discipline. However, by making a commitment to be present, you will realize great professional and personal rewards.

WAYS TO BE MORE PRESENT

Set an intention to be present – Our intentions drive our focus. Being present is a moment by moment choice. With every breath we get a "get out of jail free" pass.

Start a "mindfulness" practice – Mindfulness practice is simply training our minds for greater focus on the present moment. The goal is for us to run our minds rather than our minds to run us.

Practice body awareness – Our thoughts drive emotions we can feel in our bodies. If we are doing yoga, we are especially attuned to the wisdom of our bodies. It takes our bodies 90 seconds to

process an emotion. To release the emotion, we can use our “get out of jail free” pass. Here’s the problem: Our judgments create “stories” related to the emotion. These “stories” can stick with us for a lifetime and don’t always serve us.

Notice the “story patterns” and release them – Most of us have patterns in the judgments we have (e.g. “cleaning toilets is not fun” or “Bosses are not to be trusted”). These patterns affect how we operate as leaders. Being present actually helps us to improve our emotional intelligence and personal power as we notice the “stories” we have, but don’t let them drive our behavior.

WHEN YOUR MIND WANDERS

- Take note of how well you are focusing and where your mind is at. From there make the conscious choice to improve your focus and attention if needed.
- When you are part of a discussion or receiving directions make sure that you are actively listening to the person speaking. One way to become a better listener is to treat the information as something you are going to have to teach to a coworker. Receiving information with having the expectation that you will be responsible to pass on it can help ensure that you actively listen to the person speaking.
- Eliminate distractions from the physical work area. Things such as noise, clutter, chemicals, people, equipment, etc. can have a large impact on your ability to fully pay attention to what you are doing in any given moment at work. Eliminating distractions can make all the difference in whether or not you are able to fully focus on the task at hand.
- Eliminate any personal issues that are causing your mind to wander whenever possible. Often times personal issues cause our minds to not be fully present on our work. Try to calm your concerns or worries by making a phone call home if that will help solve the issue. If a discussion will not help the situation then maybe you need to take the rest of the day off.

FINAL WORD

It can be challenging to truly be present at work. Distractions, long hours, health issues, family problems, stress, etc. all plague us and our ability to be fully present in our work. It is only possible through recognizing where our focus and attention is and from there deciding to take the necessary steps to try to be more present in the moment we are in.