



OVERWORKED & OVERWHELMED: The Mindfulness Alternative

by Scott Eblin



Overview

For many professionals, life is a struggle for time. Long hours, growing responsibilities due to job layoffs, and even the state of constant connectedness brought on by the smartphone boom have made it difficult to stay upbeat and not feel overwhelmed. By practicing *mindfulness* and focusing on the present, we can reduce stress and become happier and healthier in both our work and home lives. This book teaches you how.

“The mindfulness alternative is not about sitting with your legs crossed and your eyes closed for hours a day. It’s about putting yourself in a position to be more aware and intentional about what’s really going on inside and out and what, if anything, you want to do about it.”

Part 1. Defining Mindfulness And Knowing Our Story

Mindfulness is the combination of awareness and intention in everything you do. It’s about paying attention to what’s going on right then and there, and taking it in without bias or judgement (described in [The Power of Now](#)). You can come to a mindful conclusion in any workplace and through any stress. Some fear that mindfulness will make them soft and weak, but those who practice it instead become more direct, intentional, and deeply powerful in their actions.

Barriers to mindfulness exist in many forms, such as distractions and mental chatter. A more overlooked obstacle, however, is not knowing our own story. We have two kinds of stories: our *micro story*, (what we tell ourselves is happening), and our *macro story*, (“why” we’re doing what we’re doing). Through our macro story, we can reach our *moment of truth*: a realization regarding whether we are putting in our proper share, or overworking ourselves for something we may never obtain. If you realize you have taken on too much, it’s time to find a more mindful alternative.

In small doses, stress has its uses; it originated from our basic need for survival. Yet too much can be harmful to the body and soul, and can even lead to illness, such as heart disease and premature aging. We must find our *optimal* level of stress by knowing what kind hurts us and what kind helps. Therefore, we must learn to “hack” our adrenaline system to our advantage. Counteract “*flight-or-fight*” with “*rest & digest*.” Take a deep breath, clear your mind, and try new habits that help you relax and process, such as daily meditation and yoga (described in [Why Buddhism is True](#)). Any activity that activates your “*rest & digest*” function will work, as long as you do it regularly and consistently.

Part 2. Building Your Life GPS

“The premise of the Life GPS is that mindful & high-quality actions (showing up at your best) will lead to mindful & high-quality outcomes.”

If you could define your life goals on a single page, what would they be? That is your Life GPS sheet: a concise “blueprint” of what you want in life. Always keep your Life GPS sheet handy, whether printed or on a tablet. Check it regularly and adjust when necessary. Only make one adjustment at a time; too many at once may prove too difficult to manage and less impactful.

To create a Life GPS, we must consider 3 questions from a mindful perspective. The first is: “How are you when you’re at your best?” Focus on what you did at your peak and wonder how to bring that into your current routine. If you don’t know, try this 5-step process:

1. Find a quiet place.
2. Remember being in the zone (discussed in [Flow](#)).
3. Remember how it felt.
4. Look for common denominators.
5. Congratulate yourself.

Ask yourself what actions make you “*calm, confident and focused*” and how they made you feel. Don’t get hung up on outside factors or let yourself take on work that

