

One Minute Is All It Takes To Gain Perspective

“Managing stress” has raised its’ profile as a theme with clients quite a bit lately, and I am finding that coaching leaders in a few easy mindfulness techniques is a great way to support busy execs where “work hard – and harder” is a strong cultural driver.

A simple breathing technique is the “One Minute Meditation” which is essentially a way to slow things down and move out of a feeling of overwhelm to gain perspective.

Start by turning off distractions, sit in a comfortable position, and count your breaths – slowing breathing in and out for one minute. Gently push away any distracting thoughts with the words “that can wait till later”.



This has the effect of stopping the fast flow of cognitive brain activity, and allows you to tune back into the body, and can literally be done anywhere, anytime in the day.

Worried about colleagues’ reactions? Just tell them you are recharging your batteries – they will all soon want to know how!

I believe that this ability to stop or “step back” is absolutely key for any senior leader. With practice, you can achieve that “stepping back” in just a few seconds, *within conversations* which enables you to resist that “overwhelming” feeling “in the moment”. You will gain a vital moment of space by saying things like: “I’d like to reflect on that for a while before we make a decision” or “tell me a bit more about your thinking”. As one leader said “these spaces are “punctuation marks” to my thinking and to my day”.

I think that this has the potential to help us as leaders to make wiser decisions by widening perspectives, and minimising the possibility of prejudice colouring our vision. As we role model “taking care”, of ourselves, we encourage our teams to do the same.

Try it for yourself and [let me know](#) what you think.

[Here](#) is a slightly longer mindfulness practice from the Oxford Mindfulness Centre. Just scroll down to the bottom of the page for the video clip.

It’s three minutes long. Short enough though for even the busiest exec!

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