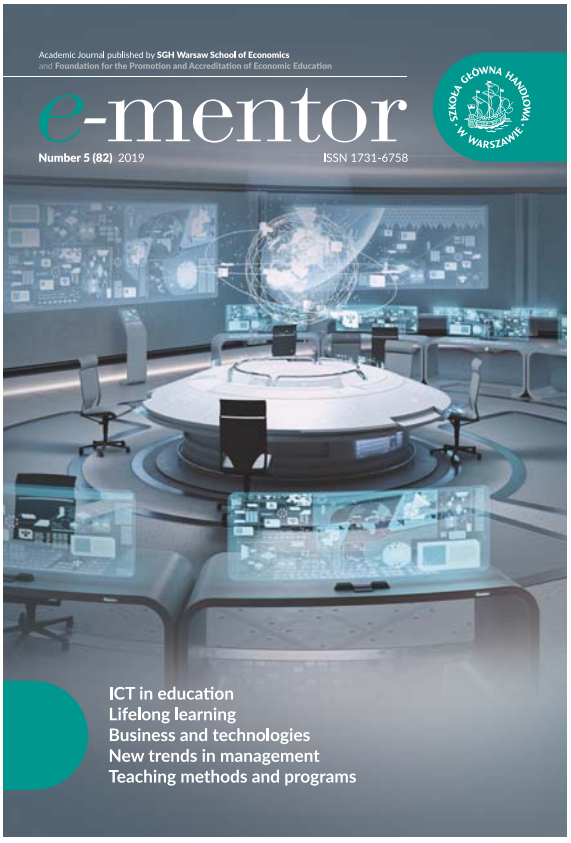
e-mentor

DWUMIESIĘCZNIK SZKOŁY GŁÓWNEJ HANDLOWEJ W WARSZAWIE

WSPÓŁWYDAWCA: FUNDACJA PROMOCJI I AKREDYTACJ KIERUNKÓW EKONOMICZNYCH




2019, nr 5 (82)

Gąsiorowska, B. i Gąsiorowski, P. (2019). Transforming 21st-century Leader Competencies by Developing Mindfulness. *e-mentor, 5*(82), 52–61. https://doi.org/10.15219/em82.1445

# Transforming 21st-century Leader Competencies by Developing Mindfulness

*Bogna Gąsiorowska*[*]

*Paweł Gąsiorowski*[**]

**Abstract**

Mindful leadership is a competency of the future which enables leaders to effectively function in a challenging and changing VUCA world by being able to focus their attention in three directions: at themselves, at others and at what is happening around them.

Mindfulness facilitates intra and interpersonal skills, increases mental fortitude and resistance to time and performance pressure, as well as the ability to think rationally and creatively, which helps us make faster, more rational and innovative decisions to achieve a competitive advantage. Mindfulness also helps us look after co-workers and our own welfare, making it an important factor in preventing occupational burnout. The article assumes an evidence-based approach which, based on the state of the research, indicates that it is viable to conduct positive interventions using a robust theoretical framework and documented empirical research results.

**Keywords:** competencies of the future, attention management, mindfulness, MBSR, self-regulation, mental fortitude, mental training, effectiveness

*This article provides a review of the relevant literature and research results related to developing the psychosocial skills of leaders to facilitate adaption to the requirements of the modern economy. It is important to specify the broad spectrum of the direct and indirect positive effects of developing mindfulness, which results from performing psychoeducational activities in the form of mental training. These benefits can be analyzed from an individual perspective (improved mental fortitude, concentration, productivity) and from the perspective of entire organizations (competitive advantage). It is also worth noting that these training methods have been successfully utilized for many years in sports for the purpose of achieving optimal performance, while their presence in business is best described as marginal.*

*It is also important to take into account new trends in management and actively incorporate innovative methods into HR policies and strategies as part of positive MBIs (mindfulness-based interventions), which have been utilized by some international corporations for several years.*

The article is based on a review of the latest articles and research related to mindfulness, as well as the authors' own experiences and reflections as a practitioner of mindfulness and management. The main criterion was an approach based on evidence and implementation examples which indicate that it is possible to conduct positive mindfulness-based interventions in organizations.

## Attention in a VUCA[1] world and the importance of mindfulness

The modern business environment is referred to as a VUCA world, filled with new global challenges which become increasingly unpredictable as the digital revolution progresses. Due to its universal nature, the term can be applied to any time period, though it is of particular relevance to the modern world, which is filled with unprecedented, dynamic and large-scale socioeconomic changes that have a global effect. The acronym VUCA was first used in 1987 in relation to the theory of leadership by Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus (1985), used to describe and analyze the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of the general state of the world and the situation which arose after the end of the Cold War (U.S. Army Heritage, 2019).

[*]The Polish Mindfulness Institute, Poland
[**]WSB University in Gdansk, Poland
[1] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/VUCA

A VUCA world features challenges and opportunities in business and necessitates companies to take innovative, unorthodox HR policy and strategic actions. The authors of such projects aim to develop the competencies of the future, while utilizing the MBI model enables leaders to develop their internal resources and at the same time facilitate agility and flexibility in adapting to the rapidly-changing environment. This gives rise to a new, previously unknown method of team-leading, and enables the building of mindful leadership by managing one's own attention and by mental and emotional self-regulation.

However, the human mind has a limited information processing capacity. In order to avoid overloading, the human cognitive system uses attention, a mechanism which filters incoming stimuli. This means that only information which is relevant at a given time is processed, and excessive or disruptive signals are discarded.

Attention is thus a mechanism which alleviates information overload (Nęcka, Orzechowski, & Szymura, 2019, p. 187). This complex functionality of the human mind renders it possible to effectively navigate and act in an environment filled with millions of stimuli (both external and internal). Multiple other processes also take place at the same time in the cognitive system, such as memorization, thinking, perceiving, interpersonal perception and speech. Even though all of those cognitive processes are closely interrelated, attention stands above them all, and their proper functioning is dependent on whether attention is functioning properly.

However, research has indicated that various internal and external factors may disrupt attention. Mind wandering is a natural state of mind which occurs 46.9% of the time on average and negatively correlates with the feeling of happiness, as well as concentration and effectiveness at work (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010). It involves being physically present during an activity while being absent mentally and emotionally. Multiple studies have demonstrated a relationship between mind wandering tendencies and shorter attention spans. Questionnaire studies measuring mind wandering tendencies demonstrate a link between increased vulnerability and irrelevant stimuli (Forster & Lavie, 2014). Based on diary studies (Unsworth, McMillan, Brewer, & Spillers, 2012), those whose minds tend to wander are also inclined to experience cognitive failures, i.e. everyday mistakes resulting from being inattentive or forgetful. Mindfulness involves directing attention where we need it and focusing on one thing at a time, which facilitates concentration, helps reduce stress quicker and improves short-term memory (Goleman & Davidson, 2018, pp. 146–148).

How we perceive time, including being relatively focused on the time frames of the past, present and future and our subjective assessment of these time frames, is referred to as our temporal perspective (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). It can also contribute to disrupting the attention process and concentrating on the here and now. Higher levels of mindfulness facilitate a more balanced temporal perspective, rendering it possible to flexibly switch between time frames while being less focused on the negative aspects of the past and negative future prospects, which has a positive influence on creating well-being (Stolarski, Vowinckel, Jankowski, & Zajenkowski, 2016; Rönnlund et al., 2019).

A frequent external distractor resulting from technological progress is "informational noise" (Babik, 2012), whose symptoms include: rapid increase in the amount of information produced, contradictory nature and inaccuracy of available information and its fragmentation. In addition, research shows that the myth of multitasking can have a negative impact on cognitive processes and may reduce effectiveness by up to approx. 40% (Rogers & Monsell, 1995; Rubinstein, Meyer, & Evans, 2001). While multitasking renders it easier for the brain to scatter attention, mindfulness enables us to realize that our attention is scattered, helping us return to the task at hand.

## Attention as a limited resource

As stated by Peter Drucker (2009, p. 143), "if there is any one 'secret' to effectiveness, it is concentration. Effective executives do first things first and they do one thing at a time." Leaders involved in projects which require in-depth analysis and complex, quick decision-making experience the natural limitations of the human mind and how attention works. According to the attentional resources theory, every mental phenomenon requires a certain amount of cognitive resources, of which the cognitive system possesses a limited amount (Kahneman & Tversky, 1973). Also, the dual process theory indicates that two extremely different strategies are used by the human mind to make decisions (Table 1). Faced with several matters at once, the mind uses a single, limited pool of resources to power two thinking systems: S1 and S2 (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979).

The majority of cognitive errors relate to the activity of the subconscious, System 1, which frequently makes important decisions based on a minimal amount of information, and takes into account the experiences gained from previous activities to save resources (energy, attention and time). System 2 requires a great deal more mental effort than System 1. System 2 most frequently works slowly, and focusing on a taxing task eliminates other stimuli in order to reduce energy expenditure. During a "mental sprint", people tend to be virtually blind, and leaders acting in a changing environment and under the pressure of time can make mistakes, overlook important information, experience heightened levels of stress and make ineffective business decisions. This phenomenon is illustrated by the experiment in which we fail to notice a gorilla which appears between players while counting the number of times the ball has been passed between them (Chabris & Simons, 2011).

**Table 1. Kahneman's two systems of thinking**

| | |
|---|---|
| **System 1** | Is automated and fast, reacts effortlessly or with little effort, operates outside of conscious control.<br><br>Most frequently we have no sense of conscious control over it. It is connected to the inherent abilities also present in animals, related to cognition from birth and emerging after long training, both as that which is simple, learned (e.g. multiplication, reading) and that which is more advanced (e.g. chess patterns). |
| **System 2** | Acts carefully and precisely. Focuses attention on actions which require mental effort.<br><br>Used for complex calculations, perceived as a sense of subjective focus and deliberate concentration on the task. It is related to actions that require concentration. It is possible to pause work by redirecting attention to a different object and focusing on it (e.g. focusing on the words of a particular person in a loud crowd, looking for a woman with gray hair). |

Source: authors' own work based on Kahneman (2012).

If there is a high number of impulses and variables which are characteristic of VUCA, S1 and S2 work together, whereby S1 creates experiences and emotions which later become the basis for conscious beliefs and deliberate choices by S2. Leaders of the future must be flexible enough to manage increasing uncertainty, complexity, volatility and uncertainty (VUCA) in their work environment, and also be able to meet growing expectations regarding hard and measurable business performance.

The cult of effectiveness and the expectation of quick solutions forces executives to take shortcuts, both in thinking and acting, which is characteristic of System 1 and ultimately yields results which are completely different from that intended. The context within which a leader is operating increasingly necessitates intentional actions aimed at developing System 2. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) support System 2 and the adaptive potential of leaders, facilitating creativity, constructive thinking, concentration, taking into account key information in rational decision-making and solving complex problems.

Haste and an excess of matters to resolve generate additional tension, psychosomatic disorders and the related emotional states affecting the human psychophysiology (e.g. anxiety, depression, fatigue and stress) and manifesting as behavioral symptoms (e.g. irritability and anger) (Dohrenwend, Shrout, Egri, & Mendelsohn, 1980), which sometimes may lead to occupational burnout. Staying up-to-date with the current job market requires high levels of mental fortitude and self-regulation. The scale of the problem is best illustrated by a study conducted in France (Charbotel et al., 2009) among 2000 call center employees. The study demonstrated that, over a period of 12 months, 24% of the employees used psychoactive medication to alleviate the stress resulting from their work. In a study conducted on a group of 49 people in Canada, a positive MBI resulted in 43 participants experiencing reduced stress, anxiety and fatigue levels, an elevated mood and improved relations with co-workers (Walach et al., 2007).

## Competencies of the future

The definition of competencies and skills is used in psychological and management literature in a wide variety of contexts. In this article, the authors use the two terms interchangeably, assuming "competency" to refer to the belief in one's effectiveness, a certain attitude towards oneself which is based on the belief that one is able to properly adapt and influence the environment. Researchers also use the term "sense of efficacy" (White, 1971) in this context, as well as "self-efficacy" (Bandura, 1989), "self-respect" and "self-esteem" (Smith, 1974). In their opinion, thus defined, competencies are necessary to make an effort to resolve problematic situations. If successful, the result is further reinforcement of one's self-esteem and sense of agency. The term "skill" is used to refer to the adaptive ability of managing one's environment (Moore & Fine, 1996). It involves not only being adapted but also deliberately adapting to our environment. It thus refers to the process of changes which individuals can effect on themselves, as well as those implemented in their surroundings. In this context, it is directly related to the intentional and conscious development of the competencies characteristic of a leader of the future via mindfulness training.

*The Future of skills. Employment in 2030* report (Bakhshi, Downing, Osborne, & Schneider, 2017), indicates that, by 2030, interpersonal (psychosocial) systemic, social and cognitive (originality, creativity, active learning) skills will be in high demand on the job market. In addition, *The Future of Jobs Report 2018*, published by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2018) has for several years included a set of 10 most important competencies necessary to achieve success on the job market after 2020 (Table 2). The subsequent editions of the report contain a majorly similar set of competencies, with only some being replaced.

According to the report, instead of focusing on automation and reducing labor costs, the strategy of expanding roles and retraining employees offers a broader range of value-generating actions which

**Table 2. Comparison of the demand for particular skills in 2022**

| Trending | Declining |
|---|---|
| • analytical thinking and innovation<br>• active learning and learning strategies<br>• creativity, originality and initiative<br>• technology design and programming<br>• critical thinking and analysis<br>• complex problem-solving<br>• leadership and social influence<br>• emotional intelligence<br>• reasoning, problem-solving and ideation<br>• systems analysis and evaluation | • manual dexterity, endurance and precision<br>• memory, verbal, auditory and spatial abilities<br>• management of financial, material resources<br>• technology installation and maintenance<br>• reading, writing, math and active listening<br>• management of personnel<br>• quality control and safety awareness<br>• coordination and time management<br>• visual, auditory and speech abilities<br>• technology use, monitoring and control |

Source: authors' own work based on WEF report (WEF, 2018).

make use of people's talents, those which can be performed by employees who no longer have to spend time on routine, repetitive tasks. The most popular mode of thinking is "man plus machine", not "man versus machine", i.e. expanding human capabilities instead of replacing them.

## Mental training in developing the competencies of the future

According to the 9MMSA (Nine Mental Skills of Successful Athletes) model, all great athletes have nine mental skills (Lesyk, 1998a) which form the basis of their achievements, both in sports and other areas of life. Moreover, these skills can be acquired and improved via training and practice (Table 3). The model is used in sports training by institutions such as the Ohio Center for Sport Psychology and portrays the relationship between key mental skills divided into three levels: performance, preparatory and basic. Each level also comprises the skills from the levels below it and also determines the development of those above it.

The strategic role of mental skills in the high-level performance of successful athletes was demonstrated by Jean M. Williams and Vikki Krane (1998), who discovered that certain mental skills (e.g. goal-setting, self-regulation of arousal, heightened concentration, high levels of self-confidence, motivation and commitment) usually correlate with success. Within the context of the effectiveness of modern leaders, the intentional development of those skills with the use of psychoeducation appears equally valid (Table 3).

## Mindfulness-Based Interventions (MBIs)

The mindfulness-based approach is becoming increasingly popular, year by year, as indicated by the growing number of articles on the topic published in scientific journals. According to the American Mindfulness Research Association (AMRA, 2019), the number of papers published between 1980 and 2009 was 481, and then between 2010 and 2018 this rose to 4441 – which constitutes an almost tenfold increase for an 8-year period compared to the total number of articles published in the previous 30 years.

In common parlance, mindfulness is frequently conflated with the concept of meditation, and is often associated with the religious practices of the Far East. The term "meditation" encompasses a variety of practices which, analogously to various sports disciplines, focus on developing various types of activity. Mindfulness is a secular meditative practice which facilitates mental activities involving the intentional and conscious management of attention. The general lack of knowledge of the nature of the contemplative techniques on which mindfulness is based, and their possible business applications, necessitates educating organizations in this subject.

**Table 3. Key mental skills necessary to achieve success (9MMSA)**

| | Level | Mental skills |
|---|---|---|
| **Level 3** | Performance<br>(performance skills) | (9) concentration<br>(8) managing emotions<br>(7) managing anxiety |
| **Level 2** | Preparatory<br>(preparatory skills) | (6) mental imagery<br>(5) self-talk |
| **Level 1** | Basic<br>(basic skills) | (4) people skills<br>(3) goals and commitment<br>(2) motivation<br>(1) attitude |

Source: authors' own work based on Lesyk (1998a, 1998b).

From the neurobiological perspective, based on how attention processes are managed, two complementary types of meditation exist (Travis & Shear, 2010). These are focused attention (concentration and attention in a state of open perception) and open monitoring (mindfulness – sharpening of attention processes). Mindfulness involves a process of flexible transitioning between one mechanism: focused attention meditation (FAM) and: open monitoring meditation (OMM), where the latter is more dominant than the former. Mindfulness practice reduces the activity of the *default mode network* (DMN) and mind wandering. Meditation affects the various areas of the brain primarily responsible for attention processes, concentration, emotional regulation, increased awareness of external and internal stimuli and feelings (Treadway & Lazar, 2009). OMM involves many attention processes, increasing the ability to concentrate and utilize attention resources, offering better control over automatic processes (Moore, Gruber, Derose, & Malinowski, 2012). Also observed was more in-depth information processing and a positive impact of OMM on attention allocation control (Van Leeuwen, Singer, & Melloni, 2012), as well as physical pain management (Kabat-Zinn, 1982; Zeidan et al., 2010).

Mindfulness meditation is a form of mental training which enables individuals to develop their ability to direct and maintain kind and non-judgmental attention at the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2012). This may not only reduce mind wandering during training, but also influence the level of cognitive abilities after training, improve one's mood and increase one's sense of happiness in everyday life (Brewer et al., 2011). Numerous types of mindfulness-based interventions have been developed, which may be clinical in nature or assume the form of training programs. Research conducted over many years proves that mindfulness has a wide range of positive effects on the human psyche and physiology, which is beneficial to both employees and entire organizations in the business environment (Table 4).

**Table 4. Benefits of practicing mindfulness (potential areas of influence)**

| | Impact of mindfulness | Benefits for the employee | Benefits for the organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Physical** | ↑ immune system<br>↓ recovery time | ↑ disease resistance | ↓ absence costs<br>↓ recruitment costs<br>↓ overloading healthy employees<br>↑ pro-health behaviors |
| | ↔ heart and circulatory system<br>↓ risk of hypertension<br>↓ circulatory system disorders | ↔ blood pressure regulation<br>↓ heart disease risk | |
| | ↑ control over thoughts<br>↓ stress level<br>↑ falling asleep<br>↓ insomnia | ↑ sleep | |
| | ↓ stress-related psychosomatic disorders<br>↓ chronic pain level | ↓ pain | |
| | ↑ self-awareness of one's body and its needs<br>↓ risk of obesity<br>↓ risk of psychosomatic and mental disorders | ↑ awareness of the needs of the body<br>↑ sensitivity to physiological needs | |
| **Mental** | ↑ awareness of stress-inducing factors<br>↑ change of habitual reactions<br>↑ self-awareness in stressful situations<br>↑ reducing tensions makes it possible to restore<br>↑ balance and relaxation<br>↓ cortisol levels – stress hormone | ↓ stress<br>↑ vitality and energy management | ↑ productivity<br>↑ correct decisions<br>↑ timely task completion<br>↑ work quality<br>↑ flow at work<br>↑ job satisfaction<br>↑ involvement |
| | ↑ correct and more rational decision-making<br>↑ memory and attention span<br>↑ ability to filter and select information<br>↑ conscious filtering out of excessive external stimuli<br>↑ effectiveness | ↑ concentration<br>↑ memory<br>↑ personal effectiveness<br>↑ task prioritization<br>↑ managing oneself in time | |

| | Impact of mindfulness | Benefits for the employee | Benefits for the organization |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Mental** | ↑ brain plasticity<br>↑ learning and memorizing processes<br>↑ emotion regulation and empathy | ↑ emotional intelligence<br>↑ empathy and compassion | ↑ timely task completion<br>↓ conflicts<br>↑ positive atmosphere at work<br>↑ quality of relationships and teamwork<br>↑ customer service quality<br>↑ effectiveness of meetings<br>↑ time savings<br>↑ involvement |
| | ↑ proactivity<br>↑ responsible for one's own reactions<br>↑ self-awareness of one's emotions and ability to self-regulate<br>↑ ability to listen and speak attentively | ↑ effective communication | |
| | ↑ ability to think outside the box<br>↑ ability to solve problems creatively | ↑ creativity | ↑ innovation<br>↑ agile teamwork<br>↑ flexibility and openness<br>↑ flow at work |
| | ↑ self-awareness of thoughts and feelings<br>↓ risk of depression<br>↓ risk of occupational burnout | ↓ risk of occupational burnout<br>↑ mental and emotional stability | ↑ organizational culture transparency with people at the center<br>↑ identification with the company<br>↑ employee loyalty<br>↑ CSR actions<br>↑ employer branding |

Source: authors' own work based on research published by AMRA.

In the workplace, mindfulness translates to developing intra and interpersonal skills and is directly related to developing emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1999). It facilitates the decision-making process, increases the efficiency and mental fortitude of employees and improves communication (Shapiro, Wang, & Peltason, 2015).

Mindfulness is a special type of attention: conscious, non-judgmental and directed at the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2012). It is also defined as the self-regulation of attention focused on a direct experience, enabling better identification of mental events in the present (Bishop et al., 2004).

Mindfulness is a competency which can be developed and fits the three-stage process characteristic of behavioral changes: a) knowledge of a given subject (I know what), b) skills (procedural knowledge – I know how and I can do it), and c) stance (I want to and I am ready to put my knowledge to use). The process of learning mindfulness also matches Noel Burch's 1970s model of "4 stages of competence", but only incorporates its first three stages (Jakubczak, 2010): unconscious incompetence (automatic, habitual decisions and actions), conscious incompetence (stopping, noticing and realizing something) and conscious competence (deliberate choice of behaviors, actions or lack of actions). Stage four, unconscious competence (automatic and effortless use of a new skill), directly contradicts the definition of mindfulness, i.e. attention which is conscious, non-judgmental and directed at the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2012).

## Example actions facilitating the development of mindfulness

Currently one of the most increasingly popular psychoeducational techniques in business, as well as a secular form of promoting mindfulness, is the MBSR[2] (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) course developed in 1979 by Professor Jon Kabat-Zinn. It is worth noting that this course is still being used in its original form today. The Institute for Mindfulness Based Approaches (IMA[3]) was able to train an international body of teachers, which enabled the program to become one of the most popular stress-reduction courses in the world. This basic training program consists of 8 weekly sessions lasting 2.5 hours and one Mindfulness Day. The practice part involves exercises, both formal and informal, otherwise known as "meditation" and which entail the mindful performance of everyday tasks (Table 5).

Studies conducted on the MBSR program (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004) indicate that course participants experience a noticeable increase in their quality of life, changes in habitual behaviors, improved concentration and self-esteem, higher understanding of themselves and an elevated sense of responsibility for their own life. It is worth noting that

[2] https://mbsrtraining.com/about-jon-kabat-zinn/
[3] https://www.institute-for-mindfulness.org/offer/mbsr/MBSR-Teacher-Training

**Table 5. MBSR – types of practices**

| Formal practice – concrete exercises | Informal practice – mindful performance of everyday tasks |
|---|---|
| (1) body scan<br>(2) sitting meditation (awareness of breathing, thoughts, emotions, choiceless awareness)<br>(3) mindful movement inspired by joga | (1) waking up<br>(2) brushing teeth<br>(3) showering and bathing<br>(4) eating and drinking<br>(5) walking and walking meditation<br>(6) doing the dishes<br>(7) reading and writing mails<br>(8) conversation<br>(9) all other everyday tasks<br>(10) self-observation in written form (diary of mindfulness) |

Source: authors' own work based on the materials of the MBSR Teaching College.

achieving such results is only possible by being fully committed and via regular individual practice.

Other forms of positive MBIs based on the MBSR program and featuring a concrete structure include Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT[4]), developed by behavioral therapists Zindel Segal, Mark Williams and John Teasdale (2002), as well as Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living (MBCL[5]), developed by Erik Van den Brink, Frits Koster and Victoria Norton (2018).

Since the ground-breaking article by Segal et al. (2002) on the applications of MBCT in treating depression, both clinicians and researchers have begun to realize the therapeutic potential of combining mindfulness and traditional approaches in cognitive-behavioral therapy, which enables patients to gain a different perspective on the pain and suffering caused by depression and other emotional issues, and also to achieve well-being and to function better. Randomized clinical trials have proven the effectiveness of this program in preventing recurrent depressive episodes, and MBCT is recommended by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) as an effective MBI. The MBCT course structure mirrors the basic MBSR course, and the exercises have been adapted for therapeutic purposes.

The MBCL course is considered to expand mindfulness practice and serves as a complementary program for those who have completed MBSR/MBCT. It includes exercises which help cultivate compassion towards oneself and others. Compassion practice, which is a default part of the basic MBSR course, is emphasized in this program, in addition to more in-depth mindfulness training. The advanced MBCL course is based on the scientifically proven application of compassion described by Paul Gilbert (2009), Christopher Germer (2009), Kristin Neff (2011), Tara Brach (2003) and Rick Hanson and Richard Mendius (2009). Neff (2003a, 2003b) lists three components of self-compassion. The first component is kindness and understanding towards one's own weaknesses and errors ("self-kindness"), which is used to avoid frustration, stress and self-criticism. The second component is interpreting one's own experience as part of the general experience of all humans ("common humanity"), which helps prevent frustration and irritation in the face of failure and counteracts the sense of global isolation and loneliness stemming from the belief that you are the only person who makes mistakes and is suffering. The third component is mindfulness, which manifests in self-reflection and the self-awareness of feelings and experiences without judging, controlling or suppressing, which helps achieve greater control over one's own feelings. Research conducted so far has confirmed the theoretical predictions regarding better mental health and emotional functioning of those with higher levels of compassion towards oneself and their generally higher self-regulation potential. The MBCL course structure (Van den Brink et al., 2018) mirrors that of the basic MBSR course, and the difference between the two being the former offers more exercises for participants to select.

Companies which implement mindfulness practices in their businesses include such international organizations as Salesforce[6], IKEA[7], Ford[8], Accenture[9], Dentons[10] and Starbucks[11]. Moreover, Google[12]

[4] http://www.mbct.com/
[5] https://www.compassionateliving.info/mindfulness-based-compassionate-living-mbcl/
[6] https://www.salesforce.com/ca/blog/2019/03/salesperso-practices-mindfulness.html
[7] http://mindfulnessinside.pl/mindfulness-case-study-ikea-w-pracy
[8] https://www.ford.com.au/about-ford/newsroom/2016/as-australians-look-to-mindfulness-ford-offers-company-first-em/
[9] https://www.accenture.com/us-en/blogs/blogs-changing-mental-health-conversation
[10] https://www.dentons.com/pl/whats-different-about-dentons/connecting-you-to-talented-lawyers-around-the-globe/news/2018/december/dentons-launches-an-innovative-mindfulness-program-as-the-first-european-law-firm
[11] https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/starbucks-engages-mindfulness-keith-fiveson
[12] https://siyli.org/

and SAP[13], in an effort to increase the emotional intelligence of their employees, have implemented a program developed by Google manager, Chade-Meng Tan, "Search Inside Yourself" (2017), which involves developing attention management skills that determine success and a personal transformation of both leaders and entire organizations.

The main research institution studying mindfulness, the Greater Good Science Center (GGSC[14]), is part of the University of California, Berkeley and works together with the Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education (CCARE) of Stanford University and the Center for Healthy Minds of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, as well as a number of non-academic institutions. It is known for its research and numerous publications on mindfulness, self-compassion and positive psychology, and its achievements can serve as a valuable source of information and inspiration for developing the organizational competencies of the future in leaders and mindful leadership.

## Summary

Positive mindfulness-based interventions are an example of the effective development-oriented actions already used in Olympic sports and, slowly, also in business.

They can be an answer to challenges faced by organizations in the modern VUCA world and prove to be an attractive management tool, particularly in the case of medium and long-term development activities. Currently, such interventions most frequently assume the form of individual, custom programs inspired by the 8-week MBSR courses rather than that originally proposed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, whose methods are supported by research and evidence.

Thus, the authors note that it is necessary for HR departments to select the correct types of psychological mindfulness-based interventions. In the case of custom training programs based on MBSR and certified MBSR courses, it is recommended to work together with qualified and certified teachers, whose international qualifications are published by the Institute for Mindfulness-Based Approaches (IMA[15]).

## References


AMRA. (2019). American Mindfulness Research Associacion. Retrieved from https://goamra.org/journal-articles-on-mindfulness-continue-to-grow-in-2018/

Babik, W. (2012). Ekologia informacji katalizatorem równoważenia rozwoju społeczeństwa informacji i wiedzy. *Zagadnienia Informacji Naukowej, 2*(100), 48–65.

Bakhshi, H., Downing, J., Osborne, M., & Schneider, P. (2017). *The Future of Skills: Employment in 2030*. London: Pearson and Nesta. Retrieved from https://futureskills.pearson.com/research/assets/pdfs/technical-report.pdf

Bandura, A. (1989). Human agency in social cognitive theory. *American Psychologist*, *44*(9), 1175–1184. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.9.1175

Bennis, W., & Nanus, B. (1985). *Leaders: Strategies for Taking Charge*. New York: Harper & Row. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.3930240409

Bishop, S. R., Lau, M., Shapiro, S., Carlson, L., Anderson, N. D., Carmody, J. … Devins, G. (2004). Mindfulness: A proposed operational definition. *Clinical Psychology: Science & Practice, 11*(3), 230–241. https://doi.org/10.1093/clipsy.bph077

Brach, T. (2003). *Radical Acceptance*. New York: Random House.

Brewer, J. A., Worhunsky, P. D., Gray, J. R., Tang, Y-Y., Weber, J., & Kober, H. (2011). Meditation experience is associated with differences in default mode network activity and connectivity. *PNAS, 108*(50), 20254–20259. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1112029108

Chabris, C., & Simons, D. (2011). *The Invisible Gorilla: How Our Intuitions Deceive Us*. New York: Harmony Books.

Charbotel, B., Croidieu, S., Vohito, M., Guerin, A.-C., Renaud, L., Jaussaud, J., …. Bergeret, A. (2009). Working conditions in call-centers, the impact on employee health: a transversal study. Part II. *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health, 82*(6), 747–756. DOI: 10.1007/s00420-008-0351-z

Dohrenwend, B. P., Shrout, P. E., Egri, G., & Mendelsohn, F. S. (1980). Nonspecific psychological distress and other dimensions of psychopathology. *Archives of General Psychiatry, 37*(11), 1229–1236. https://doi.org/10.1001/archpsyc.1980.01780240027003

Drucker, P. F. (2009). *Menedżer skuteczny*. Warszawa: Wyd. MT Biznes.

Forster, S., & Lavie, N. (2014). Distracted by your mind? Individual differences in distractibility predict mind wandering. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition, 40*(1), 251–260. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0034108

Germer, Ch. (2009). *The Mindful Path to Self-Compassion*. New York: Guilford Press.

Gilbert, P. (2009). *The Compassionate Mind*. London: Constable & Robinson.

Goleman, D. (1999). *Inteligencja emocjonalna w praktyce*. Poznań: Media Rodzina.

Goleman, D., & Davidson, R. (2018). *Trwała przemiana*. Poznań: Media Rodzina.

Grossman, P., Niemann, L., Schmidt, S., & Walach, H. (2004). Mindfulness-based stress reduction and health benefits. A meta-analysis. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 57*(1), 35–43. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0022-3999(03)00573-7

Hanson, R., & Mendius, R. (2009). *Buddha's Brain the practical neuroscience of happiness, love & wisdom*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications.

Jakubczak, M. (2010). *Rozwijanie uważności na co dzień*. Warszawa: Difin.

Kabat-Zinn, J. (2012). *Życie piękna katastrofa*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Czarna Owca.


[13] https://www.sap.com/about/customer-involvement/global-mindfulness-practice.html
[14] https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/who_we_are/partners
[15] https://www.institute-for-mindfulness.org

Kabat-Zinn, J. (1982). An outpatient program in behavioral medicine for chronic pain patients based on the practice of mindfulness meditation: Theoretical considerations and preliminary results. *General Hospital Psychiatry*, *4*(1), 33–47. https://doi.org/10.1016/0163-8343(82)90026-3

Kahneman, D., & Tversky, A. (1973). On the psychology of prediction. *Psychological Review*, *80*(4), 237–251. DOI: 10.1037/h0034747

Kahneman D., & Tversky A. (1979). Prospect Theory: An Analysis of Decision under Risk. *Econometrica*, *47*(2), 263–292. https://doi.org/10.1142/9789814417358_0006

Kahneman, D. (2012). *Pułapki myślenia*. Poznań: Media Rodzina.

Killingsworth, M. A., & Gilbert, D. T. (2010). A Wandering Mind Is an Unhappy Mind. *Science*, *330*(6006), 932. DOI: 10.1126/science.1192439

Lesyk, J. (1998a). *Developing Sport Psychology Within Your Clinical Practice: A Practical Guide for Mental Health Professionals*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Lesyk, J. (1998b). *Nine mental skills of successful athletes*. Retrieved from https://www.sportpsych.org/nine-mental-skills-overview

Moore, B. E., & Fine, B. D. (1996). *Słownik psychoanalizy*. Warszawa: Jacek Santorski & CO Wydawnictwo.

Moore, A., Gruber, Th., Derose, J., & Malinowski, P. (2012). Regular brief mindfulness meditation practice improves electrophysiological markers of attention control. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, *6*(18). DOI: 10.3389/fnhum.2012.00018

Neff, K., (2003a). Self-compassion: An alternative conceptualization of a healthy attitude toward oneself. *Self and Identity, 2*, 85–101. DOI: 10.1080/15298860390129863

Neff, K., (2003b). The development and validation of a scale to measure self-compassion. *Self and Identity*, *2,* 223–250. DOI: 10.1080/15298860390209035

Neff, K. (2011). *Self-Compassion.* New York: Morrow.

Nęcka, E., Orzechowski, J., & Szymura, B. (2019). *Psychologia poznawcza*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN.

Rogers, R., & Monsell, S. (1995). The costs of a predictable switch between simple cognitive tasks. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 124*(2), 207–231. https://doi.org/10.1037/0096-3445.124.2.207

Rönnlund, M., Koudriavtseva, A., Germundsjö, L., Ericsson, T., Åström, E., & Cerelli, M. G. (2019). *Mindfulness, 10*, 1579–1591. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-019-01113-x

Rubinstein, J. S., Meyer, D. E., & Evans, J. E. (2001). Executive Control of Cognitive Processes in Task Switching. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Perception and Performance, 27*(4) , 763–797. https://www.apa.org/pubs/journals/releases/xhp274763.pdf

Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). *Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression: A new approach to preventing relapse*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Shapiro, S. L, Wang, M. C., & Peltason, E. H. (2015). What is mindfulness, and why should organizations care about it? In: J. Reb, & P. W. B. Atkins (Eds.), *Mindfulness in organizations. Foundations, Research, and Applications* (pp. 17–41). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107587793

Smith, M. B. (1974). Competence and adaptation. *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy, 28*(1), 11–15.

Stolarski, M., Vowinckel, J., Jankowski, K. S., & Zajenkowski, M. (2016). Mind the balance, be contended: balanced time perspective mediates the relationship between mindfulness and life satisfaction. *Personality and Individual Differences*, *93*, 27–31. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2015.09.039

Tan, Ch-M. (2017). P*oszukaj w sobie. Zaskakujący sposób na sukces i szczęście (oraz pokój na świecie)*. Łódź: Galaktyka.

Travis, F., & Shear, J. (2010). Focused attention, open monitoring and automatic self-transcending: categories to organize meditations from Vedic, Buddhist and Chinese traditions. *Consciousness and cognition*, *19*(4), 1110–1118. DOI: 10.1016/j.concog.2010.01.007

Treadway, M. T., & Lazar, S. (2009). The Neurobiology of Mindfulness. In F. Didonna (Ed.), *Clinical Handbook of Mindfulness* (pp. 45–57). New York: Springer Science + Business Media. DOI: 10.1007/978-0-387-09593-6_4

U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center. (2019). *Who first originated the term VUCA (Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity)?* – USAHEC Ask Us a Question. Retrieved from http://www.usawc.libanswers.com

Unsworth, N., McMillan, B. D., Brewer, G. A., & Spillers, G. J. (2012). Everyday attention failures: An individual differences investigation. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition*, *38*(6), 1765–1772. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0028075

Van Leeuwen, S., Singer, W., & Melloni, L. (2012). Meditation increases the depth of information processing and improves the allocation of attention in space. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, 6*. https://doi.org/10.3389/fnhum.2012.00133

Van den Brink, E., Koster, F., & Norton, V. (2018). *A Practical Guide to Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living*. London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Ltd. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315268491

Walach, H., Nord, E., Zier, C., Dietz-Waschkowski, B., Kersig, S., & Schüpbach, H. (2007). Mindfulness-based stress reduction as a method for personnel development: a pilot evaluation. *International Journal of Stress Management, 14*(2), 188–198. https://doi.org/10.1037/1072-5245.14.2.188

Williams, J. M., & Krane, V. (1998). *Psychological characteristics of peak performance*, In J. M. Williams (Ed.), *Applied sport psychology: Personal growth to peak performance* (pp. 158–170). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

White, B. L. (1971). *Fundamental early environmental influences on the development of competence*. Paper presented Third Western Symposium on Learning: Cognitive Learning, Washington State College, Bellingham, Washington.

World Economic Forum. (2018). *The Future of Jobs Report 2018*. Retrieved from https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-future-of-jobs-report-2018

Zeidan, F., Martucci, K. T., Kraft, R. A., Gordon, N. S., McHaffie, J. G., & Coghill, R. C. (2010). Brain mechanisms supporting the modulation of pain by mindfulness meditation. *The Journal of Neuroscience, 31*(14), 5540–5548. https://doi.org/10.1523/JNEUROSCI.5791-10.2011

Zimbardo, P. G., & Boyd, J. N. (1999). Putting time in perspective: a valid, reliable individual-differences metric. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*(6), 1271–1288. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.77.6.1271

**Bogna Gąsiorowska** is a graduate of Positive Psychology at Warsaw University, MBSR (Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction) and MBCL (Mindfulness-Based Compassionate Living) certification course teacher, a member of the Polish Mindfulness Institute, HRD BP and FRIS® Certified Business Trainer and a speaker at Happiness at Work conferences. Her research interests focus on mindful leadership and building a learning organizational culture based on mindfulness and the mental well-being of its employees.

**Paweł Gąsiorowski** is a manager with more than 20 years of experience working in managerial positions, including as a board member, as well as an EMCC-certified business coach. He is the academic teacher at MBA Leadership program at WSB University in Gdansk. Paweł Gąsiorowski also holds the position of the Director of Strategy and Development of the Retail Banking Department at Pekao S.A. bank. His professional experience encompasses business processes, as well as developing and implementing programs on a strategic and operational level with particular emphasis on development programs and managing people. He is a graduate of Warsaw University and has studied at the Vienna University of Economics and Business as a recipient of a Ministry of Education scholarship.

# We recommend

**Schools of the Future. Defining New Models of Education for the Fourth Industrial Revolution World Economic Forum Report.**


This white paper is the outcome of a global consultative process initiated by the World Economic Forum's Platform for Shaping the Future of the New Economy and Society to identify promising models of high-quality education for the age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It is the first output of the Forum's Education 4.0 initiative, which aims to catalyze systems change by mobilizing a broad and innovative coalition of all relevant stakeholders around new models, new standards and new actions to transform the future of education.

Based on extensive community consultation, the first section of the white paper proposes a global framework for Education 4.0: eight critical shifts in learning content and experiences to redefine quality learning in the new economy. It provides a set of guiding principles by which to realize education systems in developed and developing economies alike – that more closely mirror the future of work, provide children with the skills to thrive in the new economy, and adapt to children's future economic and social needs. For economies in which education systems are lagging by today's standards, the Education 4.0 framework provides a vision to enable leapfrogging to the learning of the future.

The second section of the white paper illustrates 16 schools, school systems and educational initiatives that are pioneering aspects of the eight criteria and the transition to Education 4.0 globally. These examples – identified through a global crowd sourcing campaign in the second half of 2019 – may serve as inspiration for driving holistic and transformative action on this important agenda.

The final section of the white paper calls for public-private action to connect, scale and mainstream these promising new models, standards and approaches, and ensure access to Education 4.0 for all.

*An excerpt from the Introduction.*

More information at **https://www.weforum.org/reports/schools-of-the-future-defining-new-models-of-education-for-the-fourth-industrial-revolution**