

# CIGL: Mindfulness at Work

## The Power Of Attention

*A concentrated effort (power of attention) is more effective than when we multi-task.*

**Peter Drucker**

Our last Leadership Mindfulness session was about Managing Attention at work, and offered us a perspective on how **Sharpe Focus Practice** competes for our attention and the untapped potential offered. This session explores this potential and qualities related to the **POWER OF ATTENTION**

### Overarching purpose

To explore how the Power of Attention makes for an Efficient and Effective means of working.

Some core questions we may ask are:

How do we cultivate and protect our Attention?

What are the various elements of attention and how can they serve us at work?

### Power of Attention & Attention Economy

Rather than the Industrial revolution mentality of 'working harder' (more of the same), or manipulating our environment for more productivity, (i.e improving 'time and motion') we are shifting to the power of where and how we place our attention for results.

Attention economy recognises;

1. the value and potential of Mindfulness and that we could harness from the 47% not available! (*Research at Harvard University (Killingsworth & Gilbert) Show 46.9% of time mind is wandering!*)
2. that we can improve the quality of Attention (more sustained and focused)
3. that we can Maintain, Protect and Develop the Attention we already have

### Attention Hijacked! Developing Sharp Focus

*Photocopier story;* A worker noticed that whenever she went to the photocopier to copy some work, that she ended up chatting to the colleague who worked on a desk nearby..... invariably, this was frustrating for her, as it represented yet another break in the continuity of her focus and a sense of dissatisfaction at a compromised completion at work.

### Exercise

1. Identify work contexts, (and list in the table below) which compete with your attention and may compromise your work? See if you can identify remedies?

(it may not be a colleague, but distractions from notifications on your computer for example.)

## Corollary to Sharp Focus

We can enhance, or change conditions to support Mindful Attention by reducing potential distractions. However, external competition for attention is only one side of the coin. We could reduce external competition for our attention but still be equally distracted! There is internal competition for our attention too which needs consideration.

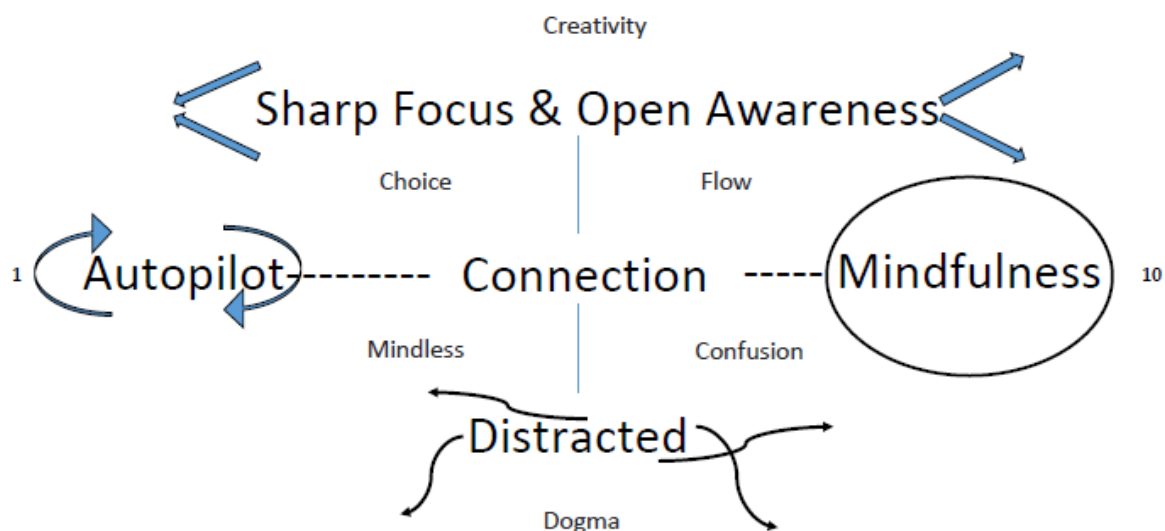
Therefore, whilst we can reduce external competition we can also train ourselves in Sharp Focus in order to take responsibility for where we place our attention, and the quality of focus.

## Foundation of Mindfulness

The foundation of Mindfulness is rooted in our ability to develop a Sharp Focus on a task or interaction in a sustained way.

However there are times when we may need to shift our focus of attention. This requires us to be in touch with the ability to have an Open Awareness so we can make an informed choice as to whether to shift our focus of attention or not. These two faculties Sharp Focus and Open Awareness reduce the tendency to multitask or get caught in distractions.

### Foundation of Mindfulness Map



### Brief Overview of Mindfulness Map

- **CONNECTION:** Intention to connect primarily; with body, feelings, thoughts, other people, environment and sense of purpose
- **AUTOPILOT:** Repetitive reactive behaviour, habitual and unconscious
- **SHARP FOCUS:** Narrowing down field of attention on to one action, one point
- **OPEN AWARENESS:** Opening up to experience in the broader field of awareness
- **DISTRACTION:** Discursive thinking, disconnection, multitasking
- **MINDFULNESS:** A way of being that is experiential, aware, with purpose, in the present

## How the principles of Sharp Focus and Open Awareness work

### *Sharp Focus and External distraction*

You have a task to complete in a set amount of time requiring the use of your computer. There are two people in conversation you can hear snippets of which draw your attention. You chose to not engage with them and continue to focus on your work. You have made a conscious choice to stay with your task. Notification of an email pops up, you deliberately stay focused and continue with your task. Twice now you have continued despite the temptations of breaking your focus.

### *Sharp Focus and Internal distraction*

Finally, a thought arises that you must sort your house insurance out, again you forget, and do not allow this hook to take root, knowing that you can do that later.

## Sharp Focus AND Open Awareness

*'There is nothing so useless as doing efficiently that which should not be done at all.'*

Peter Drucker

You are working on a project at your desk, the boss comes in and announces immediate action on your company's largest account that may be lost without remedial action. Do you stay in sharp focus and continue with your project regardless? Probably not! You would be given your notice the next day. In this case, you exercise your open awareness, and offer the flexibility to meet your boss's call for action.

## THE OPEN AWARENESS MEDITATION

This practice evolves the faculty of Mindfulness that is inclusive and brings about a sharper sensory acuity and vital self awareness. *The Cambridge Game Inner Leadership website will have the live Open Awareness Meditaiton recording from today's session in 7 day's time.*

*The Open Awareness Meditation;*

- is the foundation practice for applying Open Awareness at work and allows for choice, flexibility and appropriateness of Sharp Focus

## FOCUS: Follow One Course Until Successful

- Follow one course, not one task!
  - This Implies following a process, not overidentifying with one task
- Learn how to Chunk Up to overall Goal/Vision
  - Ask: 'How will doing this task contribute to the Goal/Vision right now?'

## **THE SHARP FOCUS MEDITATION**

This complements the Open Awareness Meditation and its purpose is to develop the stability and availability of this sharp focus faculty. *The Cambridge Game Inner Leadership website will have the live Sharp Focus Meditation recording in 7 day's time.*

**Power of Attention** comes from a blend of Open Awareness and Sharp Focus to allow for

1. Greater efficiency and effectiveness at work
2. Choice to shift your focus of attention from one task to another whilst keeping true to the overall purpose
3. Awareness of when you are disconnecting or distracted from the overall vision, so you can come back to Mindfulness

## **3 Minute Grounded Aware Presence (GAP) Meditation**

This practice will offer a means to develop Open Awareness and Sharp Focus whilst in the office, or wherever you may find yourself. It can be adapted to 30 seconds, or longer than 3 minutes. *Please go to the Cambridge Game Inner Leadership website for the live GAP Meditation recording in 7 day's time.*

**POWER OF ATTENTION – This month's reflection questions in readiness for the peer group Skype call and discussion.**

### **Review and Integration Questions**

1. How do you know when you are lost in distraction, and how might you come back?
2. How could you optimise your work environment by protecting your 'Attention space'? (What specific things could you do?)
3. How would you know that your task is the one most appropriate to the overall vision/Goal of the business, in that moment?
4. How does Open Awareness and Sharp Focus fit into the overall vision of Mindfulness?