

Welcome to Your Online Course!

Syllabus

Course Name	Mindful Leadership in Schools
Course Number	LE 898

NOTE: This syllabus is an **outline** of the course requirements and is subject to change; the coursework will be completed and submitted in the online environment where you will have full access to a variety of media, links, and other online tools required to satisfactorily complete this course.

Course Description

For school leaders and teacher-leaders wishing to incorporate mindfulness into their lives, this course provides a clear and engaging pathway. Participants will discover how mindfulness can help manage the demands of leadership, improve communication, and support a healthy lifestyle. Beginning with brain research and the impact of stress on the body, learn how to build a self-care practice that serves as a model for colleagues and staff. Explore foundational strategies such as mindful listening and speaking, focused breathing, awareness journaling, and the mindful classroom. Personal stories, practical strategies, and case studies demonstrate the power of mindful leadership to live more focused and balanced lives. There is no time like the present to start living more mindfully!

Goals and Objectives: Upon completion of this course, participants will be better prepared to:

- Reflect on assumptions and insights of practitioners, researchers and self, regarding mindful practices in the classroom.
- Understand the principles and benefits of mindfulness
- Practice mindfulness techniques to reduce stress and improve physical health
- Apply mindfulness principles in leadership roles and educational settings
- Demonstrate effective communication practices to improve professional relationships
- Design an action plan based on mindfulness strategies to meet professional and personal goals

Required Text/Reading:

Text(s):

Brown, V. and Olson, K. (2015). *The mindful school leader: Practices to transform your leadership and school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Article(s):

Tlaka, S. (2015, Sept. 29). Five things that need to happen to bring mindfulness to schools. *Mindful*. Retrieved from <http://www.mindful.org/five-things-that-need-to-happen-to-bring-mindfulness-into-education/>

Knowledge Base: Knowledge base, in part, is affirmed in the writing and research of these references:

Chambers, R. and Hassed, C. (2015). *Mindful learning*. Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications.

Jennings, P. and Siegel, D. (2015). *Mindfulness for teachers: Simple skills for peace and productivity in the classroom*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company.

Kabat-Zinn, J. and Williams, M. (2013). *Mindfulness: Diverse perspectives on its meaning, origins and applications*. London, UK: Routledge.

Marturano, J. (2015). *Finding the space to lead: A practical guide to mindful leadership*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Press.

McKenzie, S. (2014). *Mindfulness at work: How to avoid stress, achieve more, and enjoy life*. Wayne, NJ: Career Press.

Murphy, J. (2016). *Dancing in the rain: Leading with compassion, vitality, and mindfulness in education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.

Rechtschaffen, D. (2014). *The way of mindful education: Cultivating well-being in teachers and students*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company

Wells, C. (2016). *Mindfulness: How school leaders can reduce stress and thrive on the job*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Rubric

Each component of your course has been designed by our team to help you learn new concepts/skills, stay up to date in the field, reflect on your professional practice and apply new ideas in your classroom.

	Below Target Performance	B Grade = Target Performance	A Grade = Outstanding Performance Work meets all "B" requirements AND...
Read and Respond	Work will be returned to student for resubmission.	Writes using correct grammar, spelling, word usage, and mechanics. Each paragraph is clearly organized. Responds thoroughly and completely addresses all question components. Summarizes or paraphrases key concepts from readings accurately. Please respond in one paragraph or more for each question unless otherwise noted.	Makes inferences and draws conclusions to support improvement in professional practice. Supports answers with life experiences and/or expertise when applicable.
Applications	Work will be returned to student for resubmission	Writes using correct grammar, spelling, word use, and mechanics. Each paragraph is clearly organized. Responds thoroughly and completely addresses all assignment components. Demonstrates an accurate understanding of theories, concepts and/or strategies presented in the course. Applies new knowledge and skills to professional practice.	Customizes approach to the application ensuring the greatest impact for intended audience. Predicts and/or evaluates effectiveness of new strategies. Shows creativity and innovation in applying concepts to professional practice. Creates application materials or products, when required, that are polished and ready to use.

Resources	Work will be returned to student for resubmission	Writes using correct grammar, spelling, word use, and mechanics. Each paragraph is clearly organized. Summarizes the main ideas presented in the resource. Explains how the information could impact one's professional practice.	Relates authors' opinion from resources to course content. Analyzes information critically from resources (ask questions, looks for gaps in information, disputes contradictions, etc.)
Reflection	Work will be returned to student for resubmission	Responds thoroughly and completely addresses the reflection prompt(s) in a multi-paragraph format. Writes using correct grammar, spelling, word use, and mechanics. Each paragraph is clearly organized. Examines personal practices, beliefs, biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions. Includes ideas presented and insights gained throughout the course. Reflect and let us know your thoughts and opinions in 2 double-spaced pages, or more.	Shares ideas for changes in one's professional practice based on reflection. Supports responses with examples, evidence or logic. Identifies opportunities for new and future learning in the topic area.

Module 1

1. Read and Respond: *Building Awareness*

Please respond to the following after reading Chapters 1 and 2 in the course text.

- a. Start by taking the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale in Appendix G. Record your score and respond to either question 1 or 2 below:
 - i. If you scored lower on the scale, reflect on the challenges you face to stay present and focused in day-to-day activities.
 - ii. If you scored higher on the scale, describe how you keep yourself focused and present, even during stressful events.
- b. Create a clear description of mindfulness you can share with a colleague or friend. Please include the difference between formal and informal practice in your definition.
- c. In Chapters 1 and 2, the authors present the physical and emotional benefits of mindfulness. Identify and describe the three most relevant benefits to you.
- d. Explain the effect of stress on the body, including the situation known as the “amygdala hijack”.

Mindful Moment: If you have never seen Kelly McGonigal’s TED talk, How to Make Stress Your Friend, we highly encourage you to check it out [here](#). It really changed the way we think about stress!

- e. “Self-compassion and compassion towards others are the heart of mindfulness.” Many leaders find it easy to care for others, but turn a critical eye to their own weaknesses or mistakes. Respond to the following questions:
 - i. Describe any strengths or weaknesses you feel regarding your ability to show both compassion and self-compassion.
 - ii. How do you typically take care of yourself during times of stress or feelings of weakness?

Mindful Moment: Would you like to try a short exercise to help you build self-compassion? Click [here](#) and scroll to the section “Compassion for self.” It only takes a moment to honor your feelings during challenging times.

2. Application: *Stepping-Stones*

Let’s start with a reflection activity the authors often use to open their workshops. Jump ahead to the section in Chapter 7 called “Stepping-Stones in Your Leadership Journey: Know Yourself” (you do not have to read this chapter yet).

Walk through the “Reflecting on Yourself as a Leader” activity outlined in this section. Jot down your answers to questions 1, 2 and 4 as you go (there is no need to share these jotted notes in your assignment).

After you complete the questions, write a summary of your responses in 1-2 paragraphs paying special attention to the sections that were most significant to you. Keep these stepping-stones in mind as you work through the course.

3. Application: *Self-Portrait*

Throughout the text, the authors share Portraits of Practice--stories of educational leaders who have overcome challenges through mindfulness. Share your own self-portrait by responding to these questions:

- a. Describe your typical daily routine, focusing on common stressors and opportunities for activity and relaxation.
- b. How do you hope mindfulness can help you in your daily life?

4. Application: *Happiness is Contagious*

As leaders, it is important to foster positive energy among colleagues, staff, and students. Watch this short video on the research behind the concept of “contagious happiness” before responding to the questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=857TgUKuPQc>

- a. Describe the general mood in your building (joyful, stressed, etc) and why you believe this mood predominates.
- b. Describe one action you take or would like to take to create more joy among your colleagues and staff.

Mindful Moment: Are you looking for daily reminders to practice joy and mindfulness? In addition to the Mindful Leader Facebook page, check out the Facebook pages for “Project Happiness” and meditation master Thich Nhat Hanh.

5. Application: *Becoming Mindful*

It’s time to try some mindfulness activities! The S.T.O.P. technique and Mindful Walking are two activities you can incorporate into even your busiest days. Review these activities by watching these short clips, then complete the questions below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EiuTpeu5xQc>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7IO4rF9qrc>

- a. Practice and then share your reactions to these two activities: What did you notice during the activities and how did you feel afterwards?
- b. Brainstorm a list of two or more situations where you could realistically practice these strategies during your work day to manage stress and center your awareness.

Module 2

1. Read and Respond: *Growing Mindful Through Practice*

Please respond to the following after reading Chapters 4-7 in the course text.

- a. Mindful communication is a cornerstone of successful leadership. Answer the following questions to explore this essential ingredient:
 - i. Describe the keys to mindful listening and mindful speaking.
 - ii. How specifically does empathy improve leadership?
- b. Read through the "Touchstones" discussion guidelines offered under the heading Courageous Conversations (Chapter 4). Make a list of three discussion guidelines you would like to present to your colleagues to improve communication in your school.
- c. Explain how journaling and “mindful check-ins” can help leaders become more effective.

- d. In Chapter 7, the authors claim educators today often suffer from a sense of deficit or a “mindset of scarcity.” Tell us if you agree or disagree with this idea, and how you can promote a sense of abundance within your school.

2. Application: *Mindful Eating*

Mindful eating supports our well-being and can help us take control of our health even during times of high stress, but it’s not always easy! In the video, you’ll see two participants new to mindfulness take on this “simple” task. Click [HERE](#) to watch the video.

- In a paragraph, reflect on your own eating habits, including any challenges you face or changes you would like to make.
- Try out the BASICS strategy in the video or the Mindful Eating Practice Aid in Chapter 6. Tell us about your experience and share your initial reactions to this way of eating.
- Describe how mindful eating can help professionals grow personally and professionally. Please feel free to use examples from the text or your own experiences.

3. Application: *Your Leadership EQ*

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is essential to effective leadership. Let’s review the main components of EQ in this video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dmz9Yb9dWck>

- In your own words, define the 4 components of emotional intelligence outlined in Chapter 6: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and empathy.
- Which of the 4 areas do you consider your greatest strength? Use a real-world example to demonstrate it.
- Explain how you can use mindfulness to improve your EQ in one of these 4 areas.

Mindful Moment: Interested in learning more about emotional intelligence? Try taking this online quiz by Mind Tools. Check it out [here](#)!

4. Application: *Courageous Conversations*

Mindfulness in conversations requires compassionate listening and speaking. Watch this video on the power of compassionate listening, then complete the application below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyUxYflkhzo>

In one paragraph, describe a difficult conversation you had in the past with a colleague, parent, or student.

Then, rewrite the dialogue in which you “turn back the clock” and recreate what you would have said using the foundations of mindful speaking and listening. Include dialogue and reactions that you might expect to hear in response to your more sensitive approach.

5. Application: *Mindfulness in The Classroom*

Educators across the country are sharing the benefits of mindfulness with their students. For this application, consider the possibility of introducing mindful practices into your school. First, watch the video on MindUp, a program by the Hawm Foundation used in many schools:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uR7UfsuJef0>

Then, read the article Five Things that Need to Happen to Bring Mindfulness to Schools to learn more about the work behind implementations. After reviewing these resources, please answer the questions below.

- a. How can mindfulness practices benefit students today?
- b. In two paragraphs or more, share your thoughts on the process of introducing mindfulness practices to your students schoolwide. Consider the following as you write:
 - How can you encourage participation and buy-in from teachers and staff?
 - Will your parent and community groups be open to these practices?
 - What do you consider the most important “first-steps” in implementation?

6. Application: Cultivate Mindfulness

Choose one mindfulness practice aid or activity you have not already tried in the course. Take a few days to practice it, hopefully more than once. In a paragraph or two, share your emotional and physical reactions to the experience, and its impact on your leadership work. There is no right or wrong answer here, we just want to give you the space to try out these techniques!

Looking for a place to start? We love the quick “Practice Pause--Belly Breath” in Chapter 6 and the sheer joyfulness of Practice Aid 7.2: “Count Your Blessings, Dwell in Your Victories”. You can also try out a mindfulness app on your phone if you’re looking for something new!

Module 3

1. Resource Requirement

Here is your opportunity to explore additional aspects of course concepts and to further customize your learning experience.

To meet this requirement, please identify two resources related to the course content that will both enhance your professional practice and deepen your understanding of the course. Resources selected may be blogs, wikis, websites, articles, books, journals or a combination thereof. Resources selected should be recent - published within the last three years.

Summarize what you learn from each resource in 2-3 paragraphs. Include an explanation about how information presented in the resource will impact your professional practice.

For each resource, include:

Title
Author
Copyright or publishing date
URL if applicable

Submit your summaries in a .PDF attachment, or copy/paste them into the text box.

If you choose, you may access the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database [HERE](#). Please keep in mind, you do not need to select your resources from this database. Additionally, we are not able to support questions regarding the database use, subscriptions, functions, or access to articles.

2. Reflection Requirement

The purpose of this assignment is to provide you the opportunity to dig deep and think critically about teaching and learning. We are more interested in the quality of writing/reflection than in the quantity; however, to get at the depth intended, your response should be a minimum of 2 pages.

Through case studies and practical exercises, the authors have provided you with many strategies to build mindfulness. Describe in detail your plan to use mindfulness to reach your personal and professional goals.

You may use the following prompts to guide your writing:

- Share the vision you have for the future of your school and your role as the leader of this school.
- Discuss how specific mindfulness techniques will help you meet the goals you have for the future.
- Balance is the key to strength and longevity in any career. Talk about how you can use mindfulness to balance work life and personal life.
- Describe your ideal self and how mindfulness can help you realize this ideal.

Keep in mind, you do not need to answer each of these questions, they are intended as catalysts for reflection. There are no right or wrong answers. We want you to reflect and let us know your thoughts and opinions.

General Course Info

Important Information

Collaboration & Plagiarism Policy

- All courses require participants to verify agreement with our Honor Code prior to submitting coursework. [Here](#) is more information on the Learners Edge Collaboration & Plagiarism Policy.
- Failure to uphold the Collaboration & Plagiarism Policy may result in a loss of credit and an inability to register for future courses with Learners Edge. Please contact our office if you have any questions about this policy.

American Disabilities Act

- Accommodations will be provided for individuals with documented disabilities or special learning needs. Please let us know how we can help by contacting us at instructor@LearnersEdgeInc.com.

Coursework Requirements & Evaluation

How much time should I be spending on a course?	To achieve the level of learning required, please commit approximately 45 hours to successfully complete a 3-credit course (15 hours per credit).
All coursework is evaluated	Within 5 business days (allow up to 7 days during peak submissions at the end of sessions).
If coursework meets requirements	Grades are available on your My Edge Page within 7 business days from your last coursework module submission. Your grade will then be sent to ASDN for processing.
If coursework does not meet requirements	Re-submit your coursework by the end of session deadline.
If coursework exceeds requirements	We may contact you to congratulate you on your work. We call these “Happy Calls” because they make both teachers, and us, happy! We may also contact you for permission to feature portions of your coursework on our Chalk Blog!

Coursework Formatting

Font	12 pt.
Spacing	Double or single spaced
Labels	Clearly label each section of your coursework

Questions?		
E-mail	Live Chat	Phone
General Questions: Support@LearnersEdgeInc.com	Via website	877.394.4930
Content Questions: Instructor@LearnersEdgeInc.com		

Connect with Us!	
Course Review	Course Survey
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