

SUMMER 2007 NEWSLETTER

Our article for this season:

Mindful Communication

What is mindfulness? It is about being fully aware, focused and paying attention to what is in front of us and what we are doing NOW, not what was there before or what will be there in the future. Mindfulness helps us be aware of our action in the now and the present. If you stay mindful and focused, you will not become a prisoner of your thoughts because you are in the present.

When we are mindful we reserve judgement. We are so focused, our judgement is suspended. Our attention is focused on our action at that moment - there is no space in our heart and mind for judgement. Judgement comes when our attention strays and our thoughts recall incidents or experiences on which we make comparison and then we judge. Try this out- when you are next doing something, give your full attention to it. Utter (silently of course) with attention the act you are performing eg I am eating, I am eating, I am eating... – you will find that your attention is focused on your present act of eating that your thoughts do not wander.

Imagine this experience when you are communicating with another person. Can you imagine the impact that mindfulness will have on your relationship with those you communicate?

Conflicts and misunderstanding arise from poor communication. Poor communication arises from a lack of focus in the act of communicating. Think of the time when you are talking with a colleague – how focused were you? Were you present at the conversation? Was your mind wondering? Were you already thinking of how and what your respond would be? When that happens we start comparing and judging, we are not listening mindfully. We are not listening to what the other person is saying through his/her words or actions. We are not being mindful of where we are and what we are doing.

Mindful communication involves:

- focussing your attention on your listener. Tell yourself 'I am listening to you', 'I am listening to you'
- Be there for that person – be present for that person in both mind and heart, not just a physical presence. Give your attention to that person. Be mindful that the person is there and you are there too and that you are communicating with each other.
- Listen with your heart and mind – not just your ears and your mind. You may not be able to do that right from the start. It takes practice.

When you are so mindful of your action, you will find that your mind will be empty – there will be no thoughts in it because it is all focused on the person and the action of listening. In this state, there can be no judgement because your mind is not thinking and comparing.

I assure you this is not easy. So what can we do for a start?

Take a baby step by practicing mindfulness through the day. Be mindful of the things you do eg. Sitting on the chair or typing on your computer or having your lunch.

From there you progress to giving your attention to the other person you are communicating with. Look at the person, focus on the person and what is being said. Leave your mind blank to receive what the person is saying. Be present with that person.

It does not mean we do it at every conversation we have, that would be great but not realistic. Having a mindful conversation when it matters will be a start to a meaningful relationship.

Mindfulness is the key to good communication and good interpersonal relationship and to our own peace.

"the present is the only time that any of us have to be alive - to know anything- to perceive- to learn- to act - to change- to heal"

(Kabat-Zinn 1990)

(The article is based on my own experience. Some of you might not agree and I would love to learn from your experience. My contact details below)

Molly Lim

Profiles of HongKong Ltd

2519 3985, molly@profileshongkong.com