

Presence at work: applying awareness and mindfulness to the workplace

Start date 17th February 2017 **End date** 19th February 2017

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Tim Malnick **Course code** 1617NRX064
Lee de-Wit

Director of Programmes Emma Jennings

For further information on this course, please contact Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr
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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Tim Malnick

Tim is founder and director of Different Space Ltd providing education and facilitation in service of social and organisational change and personal transformation. He is also a member of faculty at Ashridge Business School where he teaches the MSc in Sustainability and Responsibility and is a member of the Ashridge Centre for Action Research.

His teaching, consulting and researching interests focus on supporting individuals, groups and organisations to make the deep level transitions required in response to the pressing social, economic and environmental challenges of the 21st century. He suggests that current paradigms of work, organisation and economics are increasingly unable to respond skilfully to the challenges that we face and that individually and collectively there is a profound need and wish to reconsider some core assumptions around work, success, career and personal and societal goals.

An experienced Buddhist practitioner and teacher of meditation, he has long integrated practices and insights from Buddhist traditions, alongside theory and frameworks from contemporary organisation science into his work. With a background in Action Research and other participatory methodologies, his teaching style tends to be informal, highly interactive and experiential.

Lee de-Wit

Lee studied Experimental Psychology at the University of Bristol, and then an Economic and Research Council funded Masters (with Charles Fernyhough) and PhD (with David Milner FRS and Robert Kentridge) at Durham University. Lee then worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Leuven working on the Gestalt Revision program of Johan Wagemans. Lee has also spent time as a visiting researcher with Geraint Rees at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience (UCL), Glyn Humphreys at the University of Oxford, and Catherine Tallon-Baudry at the University Hospital Pitié-Salpêtrière in Paris. In addition to teaching at ICE, Lee is an Affiliated Lecturer in the Department of Psychology, and a Teaching Fellow at University College London.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00 Dinner

20:30 – 22:00 Session 1 **Introductions:**

Introduction to each other, to the programme outline and basic approach and to mindfulness research and application today.

22:00 Terrace bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

07:30 Breakfast

09:00 – 10:30 Session 2 **Awareness practice in the context of work.**

This session will develop the basic meditation practice and explore the worldview of meditation in the context of typical 21st century work cultures, goals and assumptions.

10:30 Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Session 3 **Awareness practice and the paradox of ambition**

We will develop our experience of the basic meditation practice in the context of our work cultures. This session will particularly inquire into personal, organisational and societal ambition from the perspective of present moment experience.

13:00 Lunch

14:00 – 16:00 **Free: [15.00 – 16.00] Optional – guided body & walking meditation**

16:00 Tea

16:30 – 18:00 Session 4 **Awareness practice and the experience of stress and burnout.**

We will continue to build on and deepen our understanding of basic meditation. This session particularly focuses on how body and mind experience stress and what insights may be gained from exploring it as a present moment experience,

18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5 Reflection and dialogue on mindfulness, presence and contemporary work and organisational life.

A free flowing dialogue between the two course tutors on topics responding to the group's core interest. An opportunity to reflect on the application of today's insights to our own personal, and to wider contexts.

21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion
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Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6 Being and doing.

An opportunity to deepen our experience of meditation and to explore what periods of stillness and silence may offer to our busy working lives.

10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7 Re-entering the workplace – finding the space to work with others.

An opportunity to reflect on the workshop as a whole, and to consider how we will apply insights and learning when back at work. A particular focus on working more skilfully with others in the workplace from the perspectives explored this weekend.

12:45	Lunch
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The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

To introduce participants to a simple, but powerful, meditation technique which they can continue with after the course if they so wish.

To introduce and explore some of the core views and background ideas that support the healthy practice of meditation and related awareness disciplines in a busy daily life.

To gain new personal insights and ways of relating to widespread difficulties regarding contemporary work and organisations – specifically questions of stress, pressure and burnout.

Content:

The focus of this course is on introducing and exploring the ideas underlying a healthy approach to meditation and awareness practices, the actual techniques that can be used at a basic level, and how both a worldview and a meditation technique may be useful in the context of a typical busy life in the 21st century.

The course will build up an understanding of and feeling for the essence of basic awareness practice – both through tutor talks and through experiential exercises. Once this basis is established, we will apply the essence of these approaches to specific contemporary workplace and career challenges.

There is a degree of flexibility as to exactly what we focus on – depending on the interests of the group. Topics include – stress, burnout and ambition. Each of these can be understood – within the view of meditation, as arising out of a particular, perhaps unhelpful, way of relating to ideas of self, action, success, future and well-being (among other things).

There will be opportunity for some short spaces of silent reflection. And as we move toward the end of the course an opportunity to consider how any insights arising personally may be useful in developing greater empathy and skill in working with others in the context of work.

Presentation of the course:

The course will include a mixture of: presentation of key ideas – both eastern and western, group discussion, personal reflection and experiential learning through trying out meditation and some related exercises.

In line with traditional presentations of the subject matter, we suggest that only through exploring one's direct personal experience can many of these topics be satisfactorily understood. Thus while there is plenty of discussion and input of new ways of thinking, participants should be open to exploring personal experience through short meditations and related exercises. While aspects of the subject matter (i.e. stress and burnout) may be emotive or raw for some, the approach will at all times be safe, relaxed and supportive.

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

Begin building a basic meditation / awareness practice into their life. While participants will leave with the building blocks of how to do this, they are likely to need ongoing support and further training if they want to continue. We will provide some guidance as to how those who want to might do that.

Gain new insights into beliefs and assumptions that may be contributing to their experience of stress and burnout.

Expand their options for approaching their working lives with a greater sense of ease, openness and courage.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are a number of texts that might be of interest for future reference, but do not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

Going further with Meditation:

Shikpo, R. (2007): *Never Turn Away*. Wisdom Books.

Trungpa, C. (2007): *Shambhala – the sacred path of the Warrior*. Shambhala

Chodron, P (1997): *When things fall apart: heart advice for difficult times*. Shambhala.

Related Ideas from Psychology:

Damasio, A. R. (2006). *Descartes' error*. Random House.

Kahneman, D. (2011). *Thinking, fast and slow*. Macmillan.

Teasdale, J. D., & Segal, Z. V. (2007). *The mindful way through depression: Freeing yourself from chronic unhappiness*. Guilford Press.

Practical applications to life and to the workplace:

Carroll, M (2007). *The Mindful Leader: Ten principles for bringing out the best in ourselves and others*. Trumpeter;

Carroll, M (2004): *Awake at Work: 35 Practical principles for discovering clarity and balance in the midst of work's chaos*. Shambhala.

Williams, M & Penman, D (2011) *Mindfulness, a practical guide to finding peace in a frantic world*. Piatkus.

NB – there are very many books and resources on all of these topics. The course tutors will be happy to recommend wider or more specific reading in response to your questions and interests during the course.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

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