



## Episode 40 Show Notes: How to Influence and Inspire Others - Mindful Leadership

Today's workplace is nothing less than demanding, fast-paced, almost frenetic, and constantly changing. This leaves leaders and their teams struggling with the daily frustrations of content overload, high levels of stress associated with changing priorities, and anxiety resulting from trying to fit ten pounds of work into a five-pound bag. In this episode, Josh explains what is meant by "mindfulness", why it's important and how to apply the concepts to form and strengthen relationships and leadership skills.

Dr. Joshua Ehrlich is a leading authority on succeeding in demanding environments. He is at the heart of helping leaders and employees manage these dynamics. He has done research at Yale and NYU and has authored a book titled *MindShifting: Focus for Performance*.

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### Key Learnings From This Episode

- **The launching pad for Dr. Ehrlich's research and work in mindfulness.** Dr. Ehrlich found mindfulness helped him stay focused and be successful in graduate school. He started his consulting career approximately 20 years ago working with executives from leading companies in New York and he found that the same mindfulness strategies helped his clients to be more effective and productive. It was a personal passion where he ultimately saw value for his clients.
- **Defining mindfulness and understanding how it is used.** Mindfulness is essentially a synonym for focused, present and engaged attention - it means 'showing up' with all of ourselves. There are many distractions and reasons why we do not 'show up'. Mindfulness is paying attention to those cues so that we are able to fully engage and listen well, help our employees, influence our colleagues, and do all the things we want to do as an inspiring leader that we cannot do if we are distracted and not mentally clear.



- **How prevalent is mindfulness? Is it a big learning for individuals?** Dr. Ehrlich is an author, researcher, and practitioner, coaching many high-level leaders. There has been a tremendous shift in the awareness of this topic. Individuals viewed the topic very 'out there' 20 years ago, and he had to be very careful in raising the topic. Now when he speaks to audiences or coaches leaders, 75% or more have heard the term or have had some exposure to it, so Josh is now called upon to speak about the topic, about which there is more and more research.
- **How can mindfulness help leaders be more productive?** Many people believe that in the current, hectic work environments, they need to work harder, longer hours, and take on more. Everyone is pressured to do more and to do it faster. We end up pushing ourselves harder, which makes us freeze up and become less open and effective at learning. It also tempts us to multitask. Mindfulness is about working smarter, not harder. We can be more effective if we turn off our email and phones when we are having a conversation and simply be in that conversation, having one conversation at a time. All of us think we are great multitaskers, but in reality, we are not – the research is very clear on this. When we multitask, it takes us 40% longer and we make twice as many errors. How much is a mistake worth in your businesses? We need to think about doing one thing at a time well as opposed to 20 things badly.
- **How difficult is it to be more mindful?** We can find small, practical ways to do this. One way is to schedule 45-minute meetings. Instead of having back to back meetings, can we end at 45 minutes, take a break, use the restroom, check our email, and then go to the next meeting with clarity, purpose, and attention as opposed to running breathlessly from the last meeting and 'winging' it? Strategies like the 45-minute meeting help us to show up and be more effective.



Mindfulness is focused and engaged attention—it means 'showing up' with all of ourselves and listening, **enabling us to form connections and relationships** and taking people on a journey where we can influence and inspire them.



Dr. Joshua Ehrlich // Ep.40



- **Additional mindfulness tips:**

1. **Use your breathing:** Be attentive and mindful of your breathing - not controlling it, but using it as a barometer of your basic level of awareness, presence and stress. Is your breath shallow or coming from deep down? You don't have to try to change how you breathe – just paying attention can cause habits to change. By noticing your breath, it slows and deepens on its own. The hard thing is remembering to do it. People think of mindfulness as meditation. It is not meditation. Meditation is a great way to practice mindfulness, however, mindfulness is about being focused and aware, and can be cultivated at any time.
  2. **Turn off your screen:** If you do not need to be looking at a presentation online during a discussion, set a boundary so you are not distracted by the constant stream of information coming in. Setting boundaries is essential to making sure we are able to think and plan. We are interrupted so often (and we interrupt ourselves so often to check email) we need to get better at setting good boundaries.
- **What are some of the takeaways from your book *MindShifting*?** The basic takeaway is that, when we lead, we can be more effective when we 'show up' completely. When we 'show up' with our bodies, minds, and emotions, we can connect with other people. If we fully 'show up', then we can listen with a clear head. Mindful listening is such an important practice. We are in conversations all the time, and the biggest sin of leadership is not listening. We are racing on to our agenda and wanting to get things done before figuring out where the other person is coming from. We can form a connection and a relationship if we have listened and 'shown up' fully. Once we form that relationship, we can take the other person on a journey, we can influence and inspire them. If we try to influence and inspire before you have 'shown up' and connected, it is a disaster. The other person feels manipulated. 'Show up', clear the distractions, and then form a strong, deep relationship by listening and thinking about what the other person's agenda is before we try to take them on a journey.

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## Recommended Reading and References From this Episode

- [MindShifting: Focus for Performance](#) by Joshua Ehrlich



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- [Dr. Joshua Ehrlich on LinkedIn](#)
- [Global Leadership Council](#) - The Global Leadership Council is an international network of experts in leadership and organizational transformation. Our vision is to create mindful leaders, teams and organizations.



Aired: Oct 17<sup>th</sup> 2017  
Industry: HR Consulting  
Host: Linda Hlavac  
Guest: Dr. Joshua Ehrlich



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