

The Mindful Day: Cultivating Focus, Calm and Joy

With her new National Geographic book, mindfulness and leadership expert Laurie Cameron has created the ultimate how-to guide for optimizing performance, relationships and well-being

We know that the world is changing rapidly, from broad global trends that are disrupting business models to the more immediate space around our day-to-day lives. Matching the unprecedented pace of change in technologies, the options available to us to meet our needs and pursue our goals are accelerating and are uncertain. This is the paradox: the world changes dramatically, yet our basic needs as leaders, as humans, not so much. We are caught between hyper-connection and loss of connection, the desire for immediate access to everything and the longing for caring and real joy. We struggle to keep clear, focused and present in the very world we have created and continue to create.

We can feel the tension in multiple dimensions – the sense of expansive options and limited time, the sense of missing out or wasting effort, the excitement of new models and the unease of wondering about the impact on our businesses, our people and our communities. Time spans are shrinking – what used to take decades now takes years, what took months takes days, what took days can happen in minutes.

We experience these shifts externally, in the world and in our professions, but also internally. With the accelerated pace of life what it takes to succeed has changed. Experience and education used to be relevant and applicable for a career. Now, abilities like focus, self-awareness, compassion and creativity are more important.

To adapt to the pressures and stress of a new, modern world, leaders are turning to old, established practices, and the research is providing evidence of their power. Mindfulness and compassion practices in the workplace are providing an antidote to the overwhelm and stress, and strengthening resilience, performance, and well-being.

Scientists know that the mind is trainable, and we can tame our turbulent minds and boost our emotional intelligence. Yet many decision makers avoid making this first, most basic, decision. Perhaps they feel that they just don't have time for one more thing in their lives. Maybe they think that a calm mind and compassionate approach is an impossibility for leaders in business today. Or — in some corporate cultures — maybe they wear their frenetic lifestyle as a badge of honor, the business equivalent of a purple heart.

Laurie J. Cameron is on a mission to change that perception with her new book "[The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening](#)" (March 27, 2018). Written to connect with rookies and veterans both new and experienced with mindfulness, Cameron's book uses stories and science to teach professionals how to reduce stress, gain productivity, strengthen relationships, and optimize the life and path they are on right now.

Optimizing performance through mindfulness

When National Geographic needed a vigorously scientific, research-backed guide to mindfulness, they chose Cameron to write it. A veteran corporate leadership and organizational development consultant, she's spent 25 years consulting with hard-driving professionals at Fortune 500 companies, helping them understand how people best learn, grow, change and thrive.

Cameron has practiced mindfulness for 23 years in the tradition of Buddhist monk, peace activist and global spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh, who gave her the name Fresh Lovingkindness of the Heart. The name belies her clear, direct, and empathetic teaching style, which bridges neuroscience and the world of work. Drawing on her experience as a business executive and entrepreneur, she specializes in helping corporations, organizations and government agencies optimize sustained performance and well-being.

It is not about “checking out” or taking the slow road. It is about checking in with yourself in real-time, connecting to the flow and energy of ideas, people and change, to learn new strokes, new habits, new mindsets – to transform how you relate to yourself and others. It is about moving with purpose and being choiceful and wise, to successfully and sustainably live and work.

“A recent meta-analysis of the scientific research on mindfulness in the workplace summarizes the outcomes in three areas: performance, relationships and well-being,” Cameron notes, “and it is what I have experienced training leaders around the world in applying mindfulness strategies to how they lead. It really changes how we communicate, how we show up, how we relate, solve problems and resolve conflict and generate breakthrough ideas.”

“I encourage leaders to adapt their own version of our model of a Mindful Leader. They learn how to treat themselves and their workforce with care and compassion. When we are cared for, we are happier, more collaborative and more productive. It is the key to unlocking human potential.”

A case study of the art and practice of mindfulness in everyday life

In “The Mindful Day,” Cameron reveals the mindsets, structures and practices leaders can use throughout each day to stay connected with themselves, others and the purpose that brings focus, calm and joy to everyday life.

National Geographic calls the book a “guide to living with focus, clarity and intention in a high-tech, fast-paced world,” filled with “simple steps for navigating busy schedules, difficult emotions and important relationships with purpose, compassion and skill.”

Starting with the moment you wake up, Cameron walks through a typical day, offering evidence-based mindful practices that promote calm, concentration and connection in any situation. Fifty chapters provide easy-to-follow strategies for better living, including how to:

- Wake up to joy
- Create a morning routine
- Set intentions
- Transform your commute
- Focus your wandering mind
- Banish multitasking
- Create something
- See your loved ones with fresh eyes
- Transition peacefully from day to evening
- Ease into sleep

Bolstered by the latest research in neuroscience and evolutionary biology, Cameron’s book makes it clear that we all have the capacity to adapt to consistently meet the complex demands of leadership with less stress, greater confidence and more focus, connection and joy.

Some Topics Laurie J. Cameron Can Discuss

- How to create a mindful workplace and a mindfulness path to innovation in business, and how to build a connected team that’s open, empathetic and focused, and that takes risks. Tying in research from Google on the secrets to top teams, Laurie can discuss how mindfulness and empathy fuel workplace performance.
- How having purpose and meaning at work and in life is a key to sustainable happiness.
- The connection between mindfulness and resilience. By virtue of their position, leaders must constantly “bounce back” from unforeseen challenges and setbacks that are often out of their control. Mindfulness in the face of adversity enables leaders to stay resilient and shape their own narrative from an empowered, purposeful frame, rather than acting from autopilot or other people’s narratives.
- The unique challenges made by today’s work environment on female leaders, and how those challenges can be most effectively met by becoming a “peace warrior.”
- How mindfulness benefits female workers, from the executive suite to the front lines. No matter what your role is, we are all leading and influencing, and mindfulness can strengthen our productivity and effectiveness. By increasing self-awareness we can become more confident and efficient, letting internal calm generate external power; this is a foundational skill for warriors.
- How to engage difficult conversations with greater ease and better outcomes.
- Strategies and techniques to tame a turbulent mind.
- The power of kindness and compassion at work — how getting along with peers, clients and even competitors creates success.
- How to find similarities and common ground in a world that’s divided and exhausted by division.
- How to manage the emotions executives wrestle — like fear of failure, decision fatigue, or isolation from colleagues — by shifting your mental state towards greater connection, possibility, and joy.
- How to navigate uncertainty and change using the power of internal narrative: how we relate to our experiences, explain our story to ourselves, and make meaning of events.
- The power of shifting from fear and frustration to gratitude and generosity.

As founder of the leadership and organizational development firm [PurposeBlue](https://purposeblue.com), Cameron speaks internationally to companies about mindfulness and compassion in the workplace. She is a master teacher with Search Inside Yourself (a leadership institute born at Google), a Senior Fellow at the Center for the Advancement of Well-being at George Mason University, and a professor of Mindful Leadership at the RH Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland.

A consultant to corporations such as Deloitte, Capital One and Aspen Leadership Institute, Cameron celebrated her birthday at Thich Nhat Hanh’s Plum Village monastery in Southern France. Her 13-year-old daughter can be seen holding the Zen master’s hand in the new documentary Walk With Me. Yet she teaches that being mindful

does not require long retreats to faraway places. Instead, it's about adopting internal and cultural structures, habits and conditions to create a mindful day in the life you have now.

“My mission is to reduce emotional suffering — the overwhelm, the stress, the disconnection, disengagement and isolation that is prevalent in our modern world — and elevate peace and joy,” Cameron says. “We can cultivate the innate capacities of our mind: curiosity, compassion and creativity and approach everyday situations with greater presence and ease. The message is that mindfulness for you is doable.”

For more information, please visit the public sites www.lauriejcameron.com and www.PurposeBlue.com.

About Laurie J. Cameron

Byline BIO: Mindful leadership expert Laurie J. Cameron is author of “The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening” (March 27, 2018). Laurie is founder and CEO of PurposeBlue, an organization that brings evidence-based mindful leadership programs to companies, change makers, culture-shifters, universities and federal agencies. For more information visit www.lauriejcameron.com and www.PurposeBlue.com.

Broadcast BIO: How often do you feel overwhelmed, stressed out, distracted and unable to focus? Our guest today is mindful leadership expert Laurie J. Cameron. Her new book, “The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening,” has been called the ultimate how-to guide to practicing mindfulness. Laurie is founder and CEO of PurposeBlue (www.PurposeBlue.com), a leadership coaching and organizational development firm. For more information, visit www.lauriejcameron.com. Welcome Laurie. Why is National Geographic publishing your book and why did they choose you to write it?

Full BIO: Mindful leadership expert Laurie J. Cameron is author of “The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening,” (March 27, 2018). Laurie is founder and CEO of PurposeBlue, an organization that brings evidence-based mindful leadership programs to companies, change makers, culture-shifters, universities and federal agencies.

With 25 years of international management consulting and business leadership experience, and a passion for creativity, transformation and human development, Laurie is dedicated to helping people learn mindfulness to live with meaning and lead with purpose-driven performance. As a former Accenture management consultant and business executive with three companies, her clients tell her she “gets their challenges” — in how she translates mindfulness into practical language and applications for everyday life.

Laurie founded PurposeBlue on her realization that mindfulness is the foundational competency for achieving human potential, happiness and optimal well-being. Mindful, resilient leaders deepen their self-awareness and self-mastery, which allows them to be in a place of choice during difficult moments. Mindful leaders are able to stay connected to purpose and thrive during uncertainty, change, and the distractions of our tech world.

Laurie has practiced mindfulness since 1995, following the teachings of mindfulness leader and Zen master Thich Nhat Hanh, Tara Brach and Jack Kornfield. In 2013, she received the Five Mindfulness Trainings at the Magnolia Grove Monastery from Thich Nhat Hanh. In her capacity as founder of PurposeBlue, Laurie leads retreats, speaks around the globe, coaches and teaches leaders internationally how to bring more wisdom, clarity and meaning to their lives and work.

As a Certified SIY Teacher Laurie was part of the first global cohort of teachers for the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI), based on the leadership program developed at Google. Bringing together thought leaders in emotional intelligence, neuroscience and mindfulness, SIYLI is dedicated to developing wise and compassionate leaders. Laurie teaches the SIY program around the world to companies like Google, Gemalto, Sunovian and in SIY Programs in New York; London; Paris; Beijing; Hyderabad; Washington, DC; and Copenhagen. She has taught PurposeBlue's Mindful Leadership programs in Deloitte across the US. Laurie, a TEDx speaker, shares on the power of mindfulness around the world.

Laurie is a Senior Fellow with the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being at George Mason University, working with leading researchers in the emerging field of workplace well-being. She is a Guest Professor at the top-ranked Smith School of Business at the University of Maryland, teaching Mindful Leadership to EMBA leaders in the Leadership Mastery series. Laurie also trained as a Presence-Based Leadership Coach and is a certified coach with the International Coach Federation. She is an active member of Otto Scharmer's Presencing Institute and the east coast chapter of the Neuroleadership Institute. She lives in Chevy Chase, Maryland, with her husband and daughter. For more information visit www.lauriejcameron.com and www.PurposeBlue.com.

Interview Questions for Laurie:

1. Laurie, your new book “The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening,” has been called the ultimate how-to guide to practicing mindfulness. Why is National Geographic publishing the book and why did they choose you to write it?
2. What exactly is mindfulness and how does it differ from meditation?
3. We live in times when distraction is epidemic and our inability to sustain attention drives a sense of overwhelm, anxiety, division and isolation — even for those at the top of the org chart. How can mindfulness help solve these problems?
4. What are some mindful practices that are simple to integrate into the corporate workday?
5. You have been practicing mindfulness since 1995. How did you get started, and how did you come to study under Zen master (SAY tic-not-haan) Thich Nhat Hahn?
6. Through your company PurposeBlue (www.PurposeBlue.com) you have taught mindfulness to major organizations such as Deloitte, Capital One, and Aspen Leadership Institute. Why are corporations so interested in ancient traditions rooted in Buddhism?
7. Scientific research links mindfulness training with improved performance, relationships and wellbeing in the workplace. What does it mean to have a “mindful workplace” and how can it improve productivity, happiness and innovation in business?
8. The #MeToo movement has exposed the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace like never before. What can leaders — both women and men — do to change things for the better?
9. There are things more important than business: as the mom of a 13-year-old daughter, you are concerned about the epidemic of anxiety and depression faced by teens today. What is causing young people to be so anxious, how can mindfulness help, and are the children of busy leaders at increased risk?

10. You have worked more than 20 years in leadership and organizational development. What are the most important lessons you've learned about how people learn, grow, change and thrive?
11. Why do we spend so much of our mental energy ruminating, worrying, obsessing, judging, or occupied with things that have already happened or might happen?
12. What is the secret to snapping out of this kind of thinking and living in the present?
13. We have all experienced the feeling of being "triggered" by things that other people say and do. What's the key to shifting how we react?
14. In addition to serving as a mindful leadership expert, you are an expressionist painter and accomplished writer. How can mindfulness inspire creativity?
15. You have experienced a lot of personal loss in your life. How has this shaped the work you do?
16. I understand your father was a NASA rocket scientist and your mother was the first cheerleader in the NFL for the Washington Redskins. What did you learn from them?
17. After spending a decade working at Accenture in "change management," what are the best mindfulness methods you've seen organizations use to boost performance, resilience, and creativity?
18. Thich Nhat Hahn (SAY tic-not-haan) teaches that joy and happiness are available to us in every single moment of our lives. How can we choose to experience joy when we are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious or isolated?
19. The average CEO works 58 hours each week. With that workload, how can leaders make time for mindfulness practices when they already feel overwhelmed with the pace and demands of leadership?
20. You call mindfulness a "superpower to unlock your purpose." What does mindfulness have to do with purpose?
21. If our goal is sustainable, long-term performance, what are the practices to improve creativity, focus and empathy, and can these help fuel curiosity, engagement and learning?

News Stories and Ideas

The Mindful Day: The Art and Practice of Mindfulness in Everyday Life

From "[The Mindful Day: Practical Ways to Find Focus, Calm, and Joy From Morning to Evening](#)," Laurie shares simple, evidence-based practices people can use to stay connected with themselves and their purpose, from "waking up to joy" to easing into sleep.

How Emotions Impact Results and Unlocking Your Superpower

Mastering your mental state is a key to high performance. Mindfulness allows you to direct your attention where you want it to go, instead of being tossed around by thoughts and turbulent emotions. Laurie shares

how to adapt mindful practices that suit your life and integrate them seamlessly into your routines, promoting self-discovery, alignment and decision-making to lead a meaningful life of purpose.

From the Monastery to the Boardroom

Laurie explains how she brought mindfulness teachings to major corporate clients through her 20+ years of study under Zen Master Thich Nhat Hahn.

Optimizing Team Performance Through Mindfulness

A recent review of scientific literature finds mindfulness training in the workplace tied to improved outcomes in performance, relationships and wellbeing. Laurie explores how creating a “mindful workplace” can help companies build teams that are open, empathetic, connected, focused, and willing to take risks.

Mindfulness & the Teen Mental Health Crisis

Young people face an [epidemic of anxiety](#) and depression. “It’s not just the high-pressure expectations that we put on kids nowadays to get into the right college or to keep up with one another; now, it’s exacerbated by the social media in their hands,” Laurie says. She explains how mindfulness can help.

Tame Your Inner Critic/Calm Your Anxious Mind

Where is your mind when it’s not in the present? Often, we are ruminating, worrying, obsessing, judging, or occupied with things that have already happened or might happen: the constructs of our mind, rather than reality. Laurie shares simple practices to help focus on the present.

How to Manage Difficult Emotions

Do you get easily triggered by a comment, a surprise decision, or by people around you? Laurie shares how to train your mind and body to shift from fear, sadness and other difficult feelings to joy, gratitude, hope and other positive ways of being.

Unlocking Creativity

An expressionist painter who serves on the University of Maryland's Contemporary Art Purchasing Board, Laurie shares mindful techniques to inspire creativity.

Learning from Loss

Laurie has experienced great personal loss, including the death of her father when she was 16 as she performed CPR on him. She tells how “experiencing the truth of the fragility of life” drives her work to help others become more focused, present and compassionate.

How to Live Simply in the Deep Now

Laurie shares the teaching of Thich Nhat Hahn that joy and happiness are available to us in every single moment of our lives. She explains how to direct the mind to choose joy when we are feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious or isolated.

The Next Frontier

Mental fitness for organizational performance is what’s next for developing leaders. National Geographic chose Laurie, a business executive, parent and artist, to write about mindfulness based on her more than 20 years of practice and her study of how people learn, grow, change and thrive. She discusses the “psychology of flourishing at being human.”

Building an Unshakable Core

Your bottom line is related to your performance. Can you afford distraction at work? Laurie shares how to develop a calm, clear, focused mind inside the science of how to grow the inner strengths of resilience no matter what the outer conditions of life may be.

The Upside of Stress

Laurie can scientifically show how your stress mindset impacts performance.

Who Are Your Company Superheroes?

How company cultures can shift by celebrating those who are getting it right, and creating new norms to drive sustainable performance.

Overwhelmed? Here's How to Focus

Laurie reveals practical strategies for training mental focus and getting results that count.

How Mindfulness Fuels Performance

Through meditation practice, Laurie helps you cultivate both an awareness of what needs to be done and the clarity to respond with effective action.

The Surprising Impact of Self-Compassion at Work

Laurie teaches the science of how mindful self-compassion drives motivation, resilience and performance.

Why Busyness is Not a Badge of Honor

“Action addicts” telltale signs are revealed by Laurie. Plus, she provides solutions on how to focus on what matters most.

“May you have a clear mind and open heart.”

