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Amy Vetter • Jul. 18, 2018

As a culture, we have the tendency to be incredibly skeptical of any concept or idea that comes with the promise of improving our inner lives, especially if it's rooted in a religious practice or delivered by self-proclaimed self-help gurus. Case in point: the increasingly popular mindfulness movement. Danny Arguetty at the University of Washington [discussed](#) common misconceptions of mindfulness, including that mindfulness in itself is a religion, that it's synonymous with meditation, that it requires "constant joy and positivity," and that it takes too much time and is simply a passing fad.

As accountants, we can tend to be people that want to see demonstrable evidence to "believe" something works. However, I've found that wellness isn't about balance sheets or debits and credits. It's about trying what works for you and trusting that the time commitment is worthwhile. Whether any skepticism surrounding mindfulness is simply a product of semantics or if it's more about credibility depends on who you talk to. But one thing I've learned in being in the profession for over 20 years, while also practicing and teaching yoga and mindfulness myself, is that there are indeed many misconceptions about mindfulness and its effectiveness, and fact can easily be mistaken for fiction. Let's take a look at the three most common mindfulness myths that I often hear from people who are skeptical of its usefulness.

Myth 1: Mindfulness means sitting still in a meditative state

Mindfulness is the practice of calming your mind and creating more awareness of your thoughts and how you impact those around you. Since the movement took hold in the U.S., mindfulness is focused less on inwardness, and more on taking stock of the world around you and your place within it and creating better awareness of

those around you. It has been applied to schoolwork, therapy, relationships, and

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appreciate a more mindful lifestyle if they put an effort into it. Mindfulness is a practice that you can use in your everyday life to better interact with your co-workers and clients. Mindfulness can be practiced anywhere, in any situation, and is essentially the practice of paying close attention to what you are doing and applying focus, rather than being distracted by the constant notifications of emails, texts, instant messages, etc. By the nature of our work, mindfulness is essential to the accounting profession in particular, and can be a tool used at to improve client relationships and the quality of work performed.

Myth 2: Mindfulness was invented for businesses to keep employees productive

The New York Times published an [article](#) criticizing the corporatization mindfulness in the business space. And to a certain extent, it's true. Mindfulness has become something of a buzzword, that when attached to a particular practice like parenting or managing employees can seem like an easy way to get people to do better and feel better about their work as a result. But contrary to the belief that the introduction or adoption of mindfulness in the west is a negative, mindfulness, in fact, is a practice that has been proven time and again to help people deal with stress, increase productivity, and [boost their immune system](#).

Firms that encourage mindfulness might do so to improve morale and work-life-harmony, a topic I talk about in my book, "[Business, Balance, and Bliss](#)." Naturally, professionals who are more engaged and happier, will produce better [results](#), Mindfulness produces greater creativity, and can even help improve relationships among colleagues through compassion and collaboration.

Myth 3: In the professional sphere, success is an external process.

As much as we'd like to believe that our successes and failures are all a product of our

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bringing a greater awareness of your thoughts, you can control negativity, improve self-esteem and self-care, and bring a greater sense of meaning to what you do and how you serve your clients. When you are feeling stressed with deadlines or overwhelmed with a client workload, being more aware of how you are being affected internally will help you better respond to those around you. Use mindfulness to create compassion and better interactions based on being aware of your energy levels throughout the day.

Paying closer attention to your inner world is not a novel idea, but many can feel it doesn't fit in the professional environment. However; this should not feel extreme or unprofessional to discuss and practice it in the workplace. Using mindfulness as a tool to use as you go about your workweek, trusting that it's more than buzzword, and having the courage to practice intention is key to showing up as your best self at work and at home.

Amy Vetter is an accomplished c-suite executive and board member with deep experience in cloud technology and transformation, creating go-to-market (GTM) strategies to scale businesses nationally and internationally. Amy has held multiple roles in Fortune 500, startup, small company rapid growth, and is a serial entrepreneur.

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