

About the Author

Vishweshwar Hegde (Vishu) has been in the IT and Software Services Industry since 1985 and is currently a Principal Partner in PM Power Consulting. He has worked in various organizations, including the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA), Motorola and Mindtree in diverse leadership roles in India and abroad.

He was the Senior Vice President and part of core Management Team at Mindtree, taking it from a startup to ten thousand people global organization. Vishu has practiced mindfulness through out his professional life and believes that mindfulness enhances professional performance, personal well-being and effectiveness. His other interests include playing Tabala, Trekking, exploring the ancient wisdom and bringing them to contemporary management, leadership and life at large.



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Holistic Mindfulness



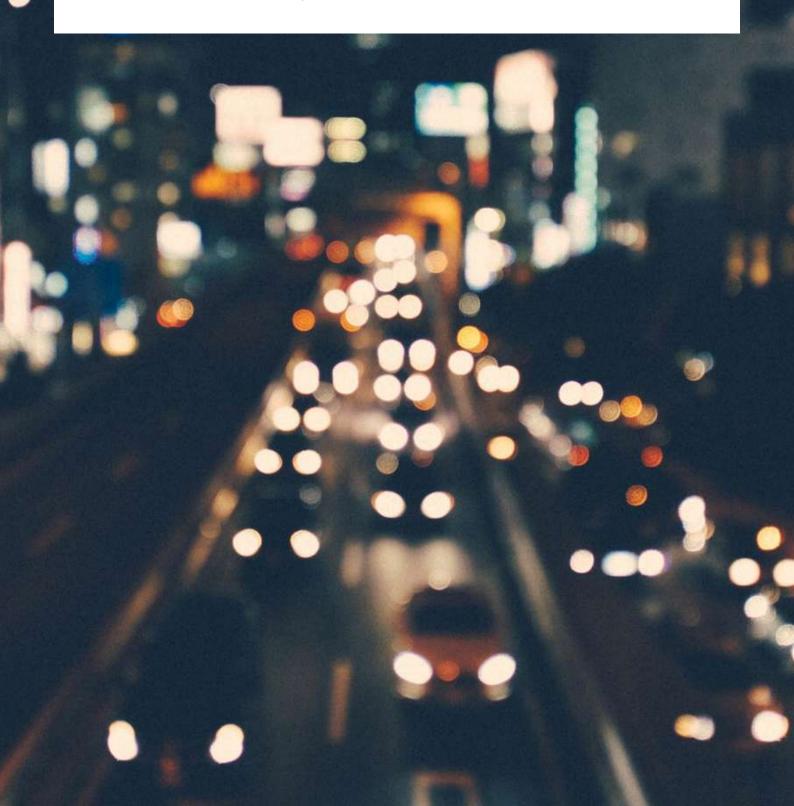
Mindfulness is about **Being** in the **Present Moment** with full **Awareness** of what is happening within oneself (thoughts, feelings and emotions) and outside (situations and people) and **Responding wisely** & consciously rather than **Reacting compulsively**.

Mindfulness practices include certain physical, mental and breathing exercises to improve the conditions of mind in terms of presence, focus and calmness.

Mindfulness as a term and practice was introduced and popularized by Jon Kabat-Zinn, a physician in USA. It was used for improving health conditions of patients in hospitals and Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programs.

Based on the effectiveness of Mindfulness practices in reducing stress and improving mental abilities, it is now being adopted in the corporate sector as part of developing Leadership, improving collaboration and enhancing the effectiveness of employees.

Mindfulness@TWork



So, how is Mindfulness useful in the work context?

Managing Self:

Imagine you had some difficult situation at home or on the way to work, will this not affect your work at office? If you become aware, probably you can notice how it affects your mind's engagement at work and your interactions with people at work — whether you are in a pleasant state of mind or irritated, angry, upset, worried, depressed etc. This can affect not only your productivity and quality of work, but also how you interact with your Customers, Boss, co-workers, subordinates and so on. Many times, this happens without our knowledge, at the subconscious level. Similarly, events at work themselves can affect you negatively. What happens at work can linger at home and affect your interaction with family members.

Mindfulness is a practical approach to deal with one's own mind and body in a conscious/aware way in a positive direction.

Dealing with challenging situations and people, performance pressures and competition are part of the work, which can create considerable stress. It's known in medical science that 90% of the diseases are psychosomatic — caused by mind, and only 10% of the diseases are pathogenic — caused by external invasion of bacteria/virus. Stress is known to be a root cause for several psychological and physiological problems.

Improving Employee Engagement:

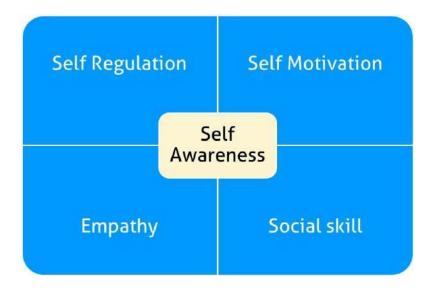
A Gallup survey on employee engagement shows that 70% of the employees are disengaged at work leading to lower personal productivity and company success and only 25% employees feel that they are living up to their creative potential.

Mindfulness provides useful techniques to deal with oneself – one's body, mind and energy, effectively. A calm, composed, pleasant and focused mind is known to foster creativity and innovation and increase one's engagement of mind at work.

Improving Collaboration and Innovation:

Daniel Goleman's research shows that Emotional Intelligence (EQ) has a bigger impact on one's success in work and life, more than that of IQ. People with higher EQ collaborate better with others and help to build a culture of teamwork. Leaders with higher EQ create an environment of empathy which respects diversity of mindsets, thought processes and ideas, which are essential ingredients for innovation. Emotional Intelligence is the bedrock of Leadership.

Emotional Intelligence has 5 key components.



Self Awareness is the core of emotional intelligence; it is about being aware of one's own strengths and areas to improve, one's thoughts, emotions and drivers and being aware of the impact of one's action on others.

Self-regulation is about moderating one's thoughts and actions with awareness.

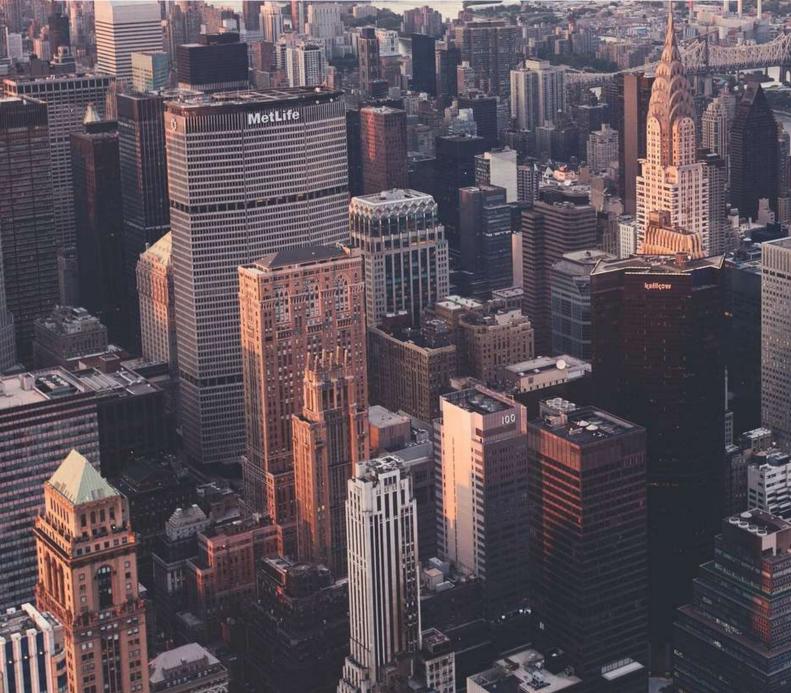
Self-motivation is about being inspired within than by external factors.

Empathy is about putting oneself in others' shoes and looking at things from other person's perspective.

Social skill is the ability to relate and connect to larger set of people at team level, group level, organization level and beyond.

Mindfulness practices are practical ways to build and enhance Emotional Intelligence.





Several organizations in the world are adopting Mindfulness to enhance employee well-being & engagement and Leadership development. Google has created a program called 'Search Inside Yourself' (SIY) which has Mindfulness practices, Emotional Intelligence and Neuroscience evidence as key components. In collaboration with Stanford University, Google has established research-based evidence of Mindfulness impact on Brain, Nervous System and Endocrine System. Based on the effectiveness of SIY, several other organizations like SAP, Ford, Apple, LinkedIn, Sales Force, Intel etc. are adopting Mindfulness practices.

Several organizations have published results from their Mindfulness programs.

In Intel 1500 Mindfulness practitioners reported on a 10-point scale, 2 points decrease in stress levels, 3 points increase in general happiness & well-being and 2 points increase in new ideas, mental clarity & creativity.



1500 Practitioners

2

points decrease in stress levels

3

points increase in general happiness & well-being 2

points increase in new ideas, mental clarity & creativity

Reports on a 10 point scale

In General Mills, out of the 90 Senior Leaders who practiced Mindfulness for 7 weeks, 80% reported improvement in decision making and 89% reported improvement in their listening abilities and focus.



90 Practitioners from Senior Leadership

80%

improvement in decision making

89%

improvement in their listening abilities and focus

After 7 Weeks of Practice

Aetna Insurance Company reported 28% reduction in stress levels, 20% improvement in sleep quality and 1 hour per week productivity improvement in their employees.



28% reduction in stress

levels

20% improvement in sleep quality

In our engagement with a mid-sized IT Services company of 2500 people, after 6 weeks of practice, 86% of the Mindfulness practitioners reported improvement in personal wellbeing, 67% reported improvement in work performance and 81% reported improvement in interaction & collaboration with others.

Mid-sized IT Company of 2500 people

86%

improvement in personal wellbeing

67%

improvement in work performance

81%

improvement in interaction & collaboration

After 6 Weeks of Practice

In another niche software product company of 40 people, 92% of Mindfulness practitioners reported improvement in personal well-being and 69% reported improvement in work performance and interaction & collaboration with others.

Niche Product Company of 40 people

92%

improvement in personal wellbeing

69%

improvement in work performance

69%

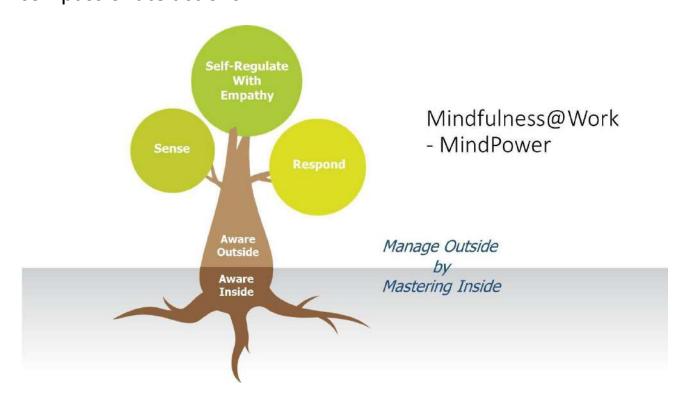
improvement in interaction & collaboration

After 6 Weeks of Practice



Based on our work with individuals, teams and organizations, we have evolved a simple framework for Mindfulness@Work – MindPower

A Mindful behavior will involve Sense and Respond – Sensing or perceiving 360° view of the situation and Responding consciously instead of Reacting compulsively. In order to perceive situations and people as they are, self-regulation and empathy are essential – for example, certain self-regulation like suspend judgement and empathy by putting oneself in other person's shoes. Self-regulation and Empathy are equally important to Respond consciously – for example, self-regulation like think before act and empathy through compassionate actions.



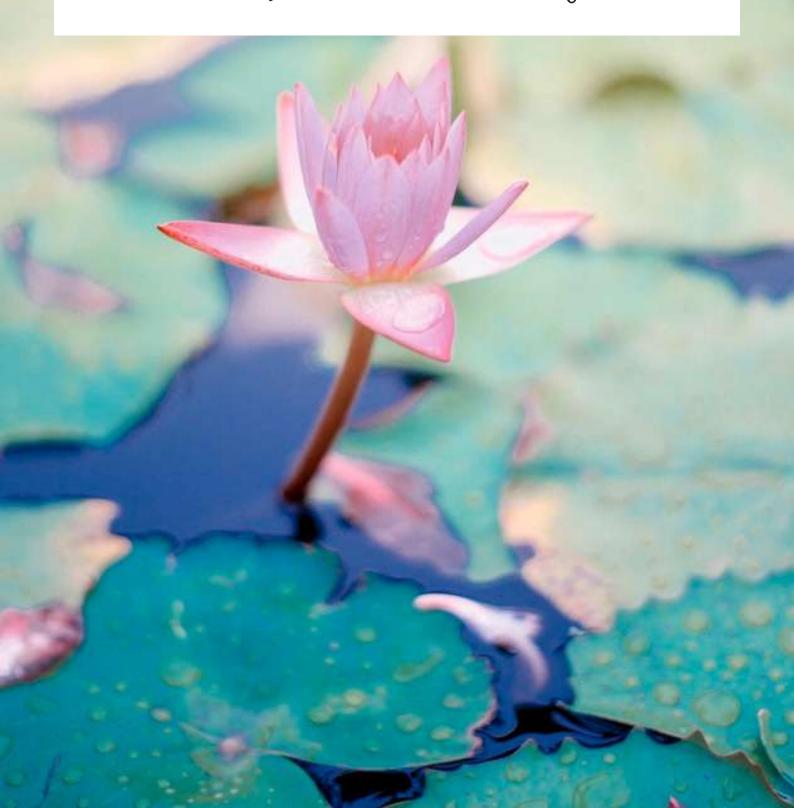
Awareness is the root for Mindful Sensing & Responding with Self-regulation & Empathy. Mindfulness techniques are the practical ways to enhance Awareness — both external Awareness (of situations & people) and internal Awareness (of one's thoughts, feelings, and emotions).

By cultivating techniques that help us to be aware in the moment, we can more effectively sense what is inside as well as outside and choose our response, with conscious self-regulation. Our actions of response would be guided by Empathy, that will help us manage outside with full awareness.

By enhancing Awareness and Empathy, Mindfulness expands respect for diversity which is the source of innovation and collaboration. With improved mental calmness, Focus & Attention, Mindfulness improves productivity, reduces stress and increases one's engagement at work.

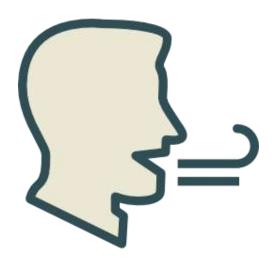
We can Manage Outside better by Mastering Inside through inculcating Mindfulness practices..

Mindfulness Techniques



Below are a few simple Mindfulness techniques which you can practice on your own. Visit our website, www.pm-powerconsulring.com/mindful-leadership for free download or to play text/audio/video guided techniques.

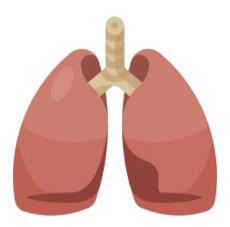
Breath Watch



This practice is about observing breath. This can be done anytime. This practice helps to bring the attention 'here & now' instantaneously. This is a simple meditation technique which brings great relaxation to the mind & body.

This is a great tool to reduce the anxiety before getting into a difficult conversation or challenging meeting or a stressful presentation and BE present during the event.

Balanced Breathing



This is a technique of breathing through alternate nostrils. This is called Naadi Shuddhi Pranayama in Yogic practices. This helps to calm down the mind and bring balance of IQ & EQ aspects in life – helps in balanced choice/decision making in work & life. This can be done anytime except when stomach is full – allow at least two hours after food for doing this practice. Ten minutes of Balanced Breathing in the morning will set the right trajectory for the day.

Body Scan



This is a great relaxation technique. This involves taking attention to different body parts from head to toe and relaxing consciously. This is best done before going to sleep in lying down position – good technique to switch off the thoughts in the mind and go to deep sleep quickly. It can be done at any other time also and in any other posture also like in sitting posture.

Mindfulness Ceremonies



Here are some recommended ceremonies from morning to evening that would help you in integrating Mindfulness practices in your daily work and life. Visit our website, www.pm-powerconsulring.com/mindful-leadership for guided instructions.



Mindful Morning

Generally Mind is calm and sensitive when we wake up in the morning. It is the best time to set the trajectory for the day in terms of moods & emotions. This practice helps to launch the day in a positive and constructive mode.



Sense-Walk

This practice helps to observe and sense other people and situations around better, develop more empathy and build better relationships.

Mindful Minute



This practice helps to reduce the emotional baggage in people before starting a meeting and helps to make the meeting more objective and productive. This is a simple but effective practice to reduce anxiety before getting into any difficult conversation or challenging presentation.



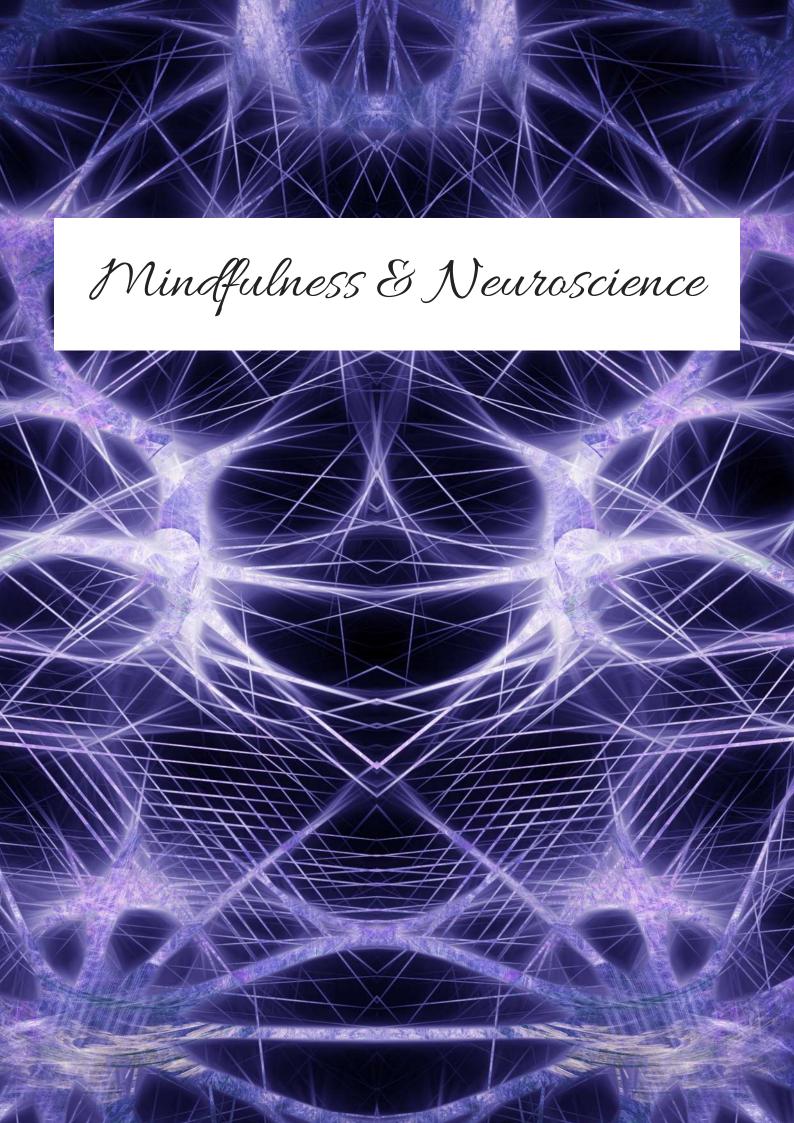
Mindful Eating

This practice helps to improve the state of awareness and better assimilation of food.



Mindful Night

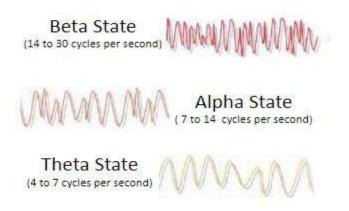
This practice helps to unwind, shutdown the thinking mind and get into good deep sleep.



There is a great deal of of research going on worldwide on the impact of Mindfulness on Brain, Nervous System and Endocrine System which are our key chemical factories producing various hormones. All these impact our thinking, moods, emotions and body functions. Advancements in Neuroscience are showing measurable evidence of impact of Mindfulness in terms of physical parameters.

There are several neuroscience research projects worldwide, notably from Stanford University, University of Berkeley, MIT etc. The results are astonishing:

Impact on Brain Waves



Research shows that Mindfulness practices reduce the frequency of brain waves from normal Beta state (14 to 30 cycles per second) to Alpha state (7 to 14 cycles per second) leading to deep relaxation – deeper than sleep. Relaxed and

calm mind perceives situations & people better and thinks better.

Impact on Brain Cells

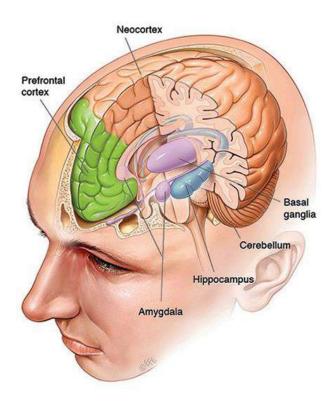


Image Courtesy - Queensland Brain Institute, University of Queensland

It has been observed that Mindfulness practices reduce the gray matter in Amygdala (part of what is called reptilian or primitive brain – brain area responsible for survival instincts) and increases the gray matter in the Neocortex (brain area related to higher awareness and learning). This reduces the fight or flight instinct, fear and anxiety, reduces tendencies towards becoming stressful and builds higher self-awareness.

Neurotransmitters

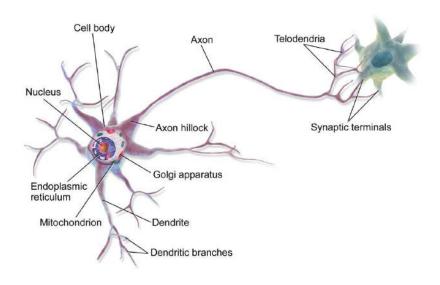


Image Courtesy - Wikipedia

It is found that there are more than 35 kinds of neurotransmitters produced in the brain which influence our mood, emotions, feelings and thoughts. Some of the predominant ones are Dopamine (antidepressant), Oxytocin (love & pleasantness), Serotonin (self-esteem and confidence), Opiate (pain killer) which are positively impacted by Mindfulness practices. This means people become more happy, confident and do not get adversely impacted by ups & downs.

Neuroplasticity

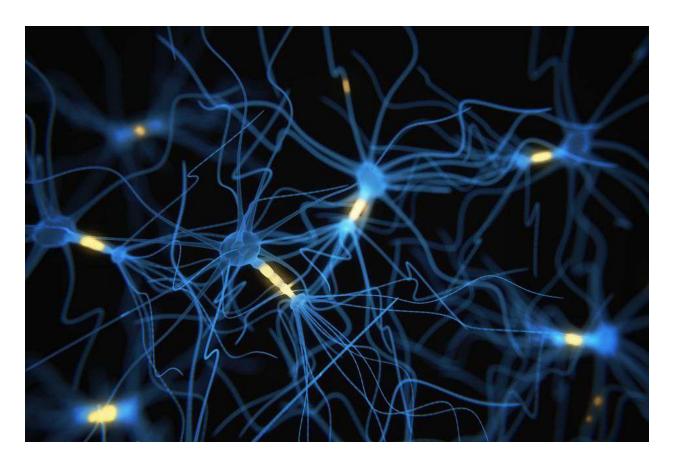
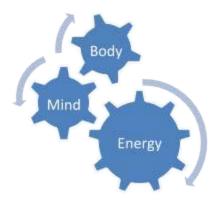


Image Courtesy - Massachusetts Institute of Technology News

Research has shown that through consistent practice, our brain can be re-wired — a phenomena called neuroplasticity. Through the rewiring of the brain and creating new neural-pathways, Mindfulness practices have shown to increase self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy and compassion — making Mindful Leaders.



Though classical Mindfulness practices only deal with certain meditation and breathing techniques, there are many other practices from Yogic sciences which have significant benefits in cultivating Mindfulness. Body, Mind, Energy are highly interconnected. For example, chemicals produced in the body, like hormones, influence the Mind significantly – the thinking, moods, emotions etc. Influence of Mind on Body is well known – for example, stress causing major ailments in the body. Similarly, when Mind is feeling low, Energy is low and visa-versa; when energy is high, for example through playing sports or doing exercises, Mind feels positive.



Yogic practices integrate & align Body, Mind and Energy – Yoga means union. Beyond dealing only with Mind, they provide more holistic and effective way to achieve Mindfulness, using all the influencing faculties. Several Neuroscience Researches are demonstrating the efficacy of these practices through scientific evidence.

Here we invite you to Explore, Experiment, Experience and Excel – Manage Outside by Mastering Inside.

Visit: http://pm-powerconsulting.com/mindful-leadership/

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