



# the toolkit...

the  
**MINDFUL  
LEADERSHIP**  
FOUNDATION

## Welcome

the Mindful Leadership Foundation has developed a range of tools over the last 10 years. Many hundreds of clients have found them useful in the process of understanding who they are, where they have come from, what has informed their patterns of behaviour, thinking, feeling, doing and leading.

The tools aim to help you to find out more about yourself in order that you can healthily and mindfully chose the best, most sustainable, way of being as a leader in a complex world.

As part of our tenth anniversary we are publishing some of these tools so that you can try them for yourself.



# listen carefully...

## stage one listening to yourself

- 1 find a quiet and comfortable place to sit
- 2 close your eyes
- 3 let yourself relax
- 4 be aware of the weight of your body on the chair
- 5 feel your feet on the ground
- 6 feel the sensation of your clothes against your body
- 7 without changing it become aware of your breath
- 8 feel the gentle rise of your diaphragm with the in-breath
- 9 feel the pleasure of the out-breath
- 10 let your thoughts float away
- 11 as you breathe, listen to the sounds, in your body, in the room and as far away as you can
- 12 as you breathe and listen, try to bring to awareness any smells there are
- 13 as you breathe, listen and smell bring to awareness the taste in your mouth
- 14 now continue breathing, listening, smelling, tasting and then gently open your eyes and fix your stare on one thing
- 15 now turn the brightness up on the colour, the volume on the sounds, the intensity on the smells and taste
- 16 let your body relax and be calm

You are now fully-grounded in the moment having observed and lived in all your senses for those moments. This is powerful information and sensing which happens to us every minute out of our awareness. This exercise is really helpful for bringing you fully into the present. Often as leaders we are under pressure and respond in ways determined by our histories. This grounding exercise helps us to be more authentic and to respond freely to what is happening. I have worked with clients who develop this into a brief two-minute routine before a particularly difficult meeting or just to calm themselves when all around appears in turmoil.

## stage two

### listening to others

One of the easier ways to develop listening at a deep level is to sit in silence with someone else. This is often experienced as difficult as people say we are programmed to respond to what people say. However for the first two years of life we could only listen as we had no language and this attunement became sophisticated as we tried to get our needs met.

Once grounded sit with someone and just notice what happens to you:

- your body (heart, breath, temperature, tension, balance, weight, tummy)
- your emotions (happy, angry, sad, scared)
- your sense of connection with them (spiritual intelligence)
- notice any images that come to mind
- notice what impact they have on you
- notice what you want to do (get close, run away, please them, try hard, be strong)

## stage three

### listening to language

As the other person talks firstly just stay with your experience of the first two stages and try to notice how quickly you want to go to language, notice your tendency to try to respond, fix, sort, to be right, to judge etc etc.

- stay silent - allow them to fill it
- use one or two words of their language that really stick out
- try to capture the essence of what they are saying
- name the image that you have
- use the same tone and meaning that they do
- listen to their feelings
- tune the rhythm of your breath to theirs

## stage four

### watch your attitudee

To have greatest impact you need to check your attitude to the person you are listening to:

- Unconditional Positive Regard -free yourself from judgement, of them, of their behaviour, of that of the person they are talking about
- be empathic, feel their feelings, again without judgement
- be congruent, real, yourself
- allow the feeling that they are fully striving to be the person they want to be
- allow the idea of tender loving kindness and compassion towards them (may they be well, happy and free from suffering)
- trust them to find their own solutions
- celebrate them for who they are