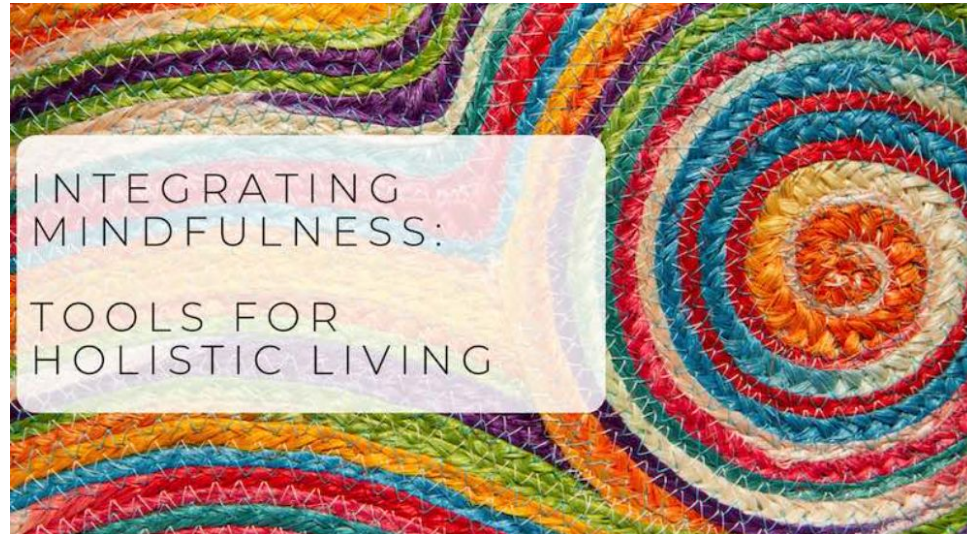




# SVI Alberta 2023

**Creating a supportive mindful container for your health as a  
change maker**

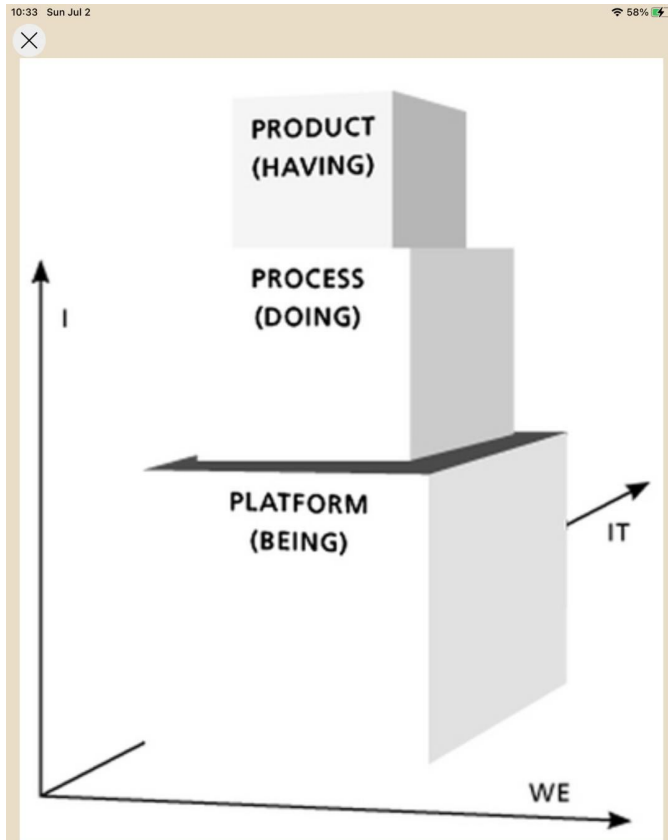


# Common struggles for social entrepreneurs

- Feeling alone and isolated around your mission
- Not feeling supported with your big idea
- Getting too focused on your idea and forget to see if there is an actual demand in the marketplace.
- Working too hard that you literally can't stop and rest
- I'll just do this one more thing, although my body says "STOP"
- Feeling angry and discouraged at another subtle slight because you are a woman or a person of colour
- Using your energy to get ahead and do things rather than delegate
- The urgency of your mission creates big highs and lows. When things are going smoothly, you have infinite energy and race to do as much as you can, and this follows a crash in your mood and energy
- When people don't follow through on their word, or you go down a rabbit hole, you can crash and feel discouraged and depressed
- Carrying too much on your shoulders. Not knowing what the next step is and getting overwhelmed and paralysed.



# Prioritizing a heart-centered approach



- Modern capitalist culture focuses heavily on the product/result.
- We may skip over the process - forgetting the importance of how we get there together
- Even more we forget to nurture our hearts and state of being.
- Yet .... if we nurture our state of being, we can truly be in compassionate service, in flow, find clarity on the next step we need to take (being)
- From a clear state of being, we naturally dance and collaborate with others (process)
- And from this much better, more creative, and more impactful dreams can manifest (product)

*Image courtesy of Fred Kofman's "Conscious Business"*

# Qualities of a good state

At Clear Sky, one meditation tool we use both in our meditative life and in running our 20 year old non-profit is **the 7 factors of a clear compassionate flowing state** - an ancient “checklist” from Buddhist teachings 2500 years ago.

They are surprisingly relevant, powerful and practical today for a modern social entrepreneur! Here they are:

Calm

Concentration

Equanimity

Mindfulness

Investigation

Energy

Joy

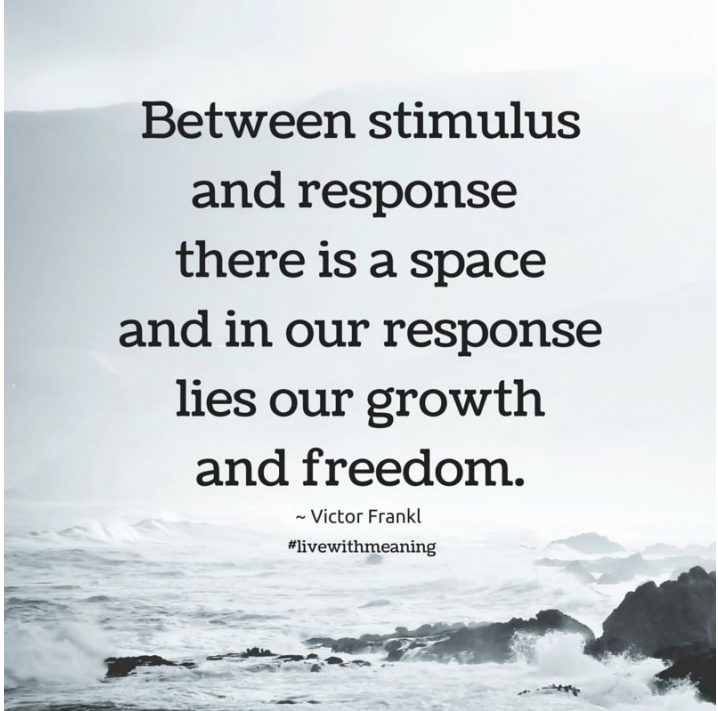
# Radical self-responsibility



The world can often be troubled. People and systems can be cruel and unfair. Our businesses can be rollercoasters of highs and lows.

However we can always make a choice to work to be in a better state in our hearts and minds. We can gradually train ourselves so that no person or situation ultimately has power to control our inner state.

The 7 qualities of a good state are a set of tools for us to **take responsibility and control of our inner peace and clarity.**



**Between stimulus  
and response  
there is a space  
and in our response  
lies our growth  
and freedom.**

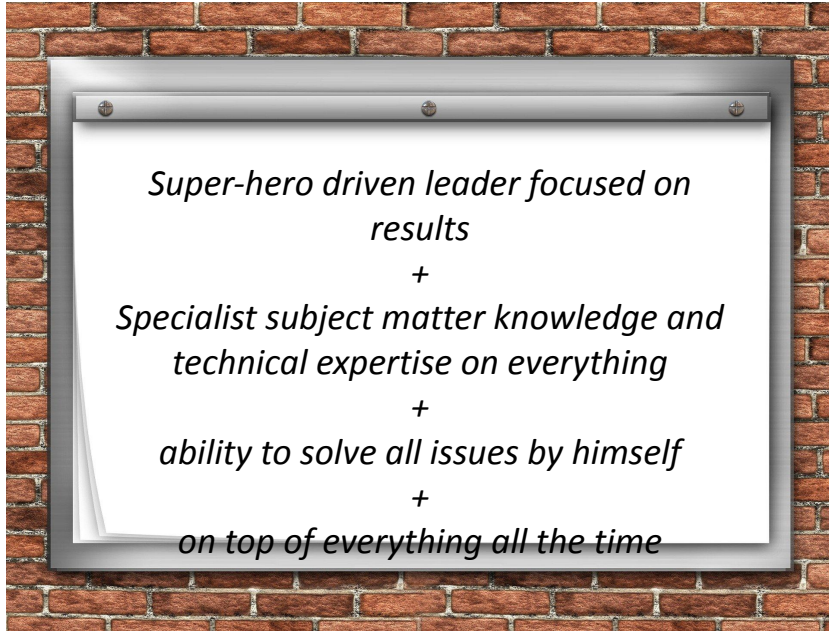
~ Victor Frankl

#livewithmeaning

*From Victor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning", from his experience as a Holocaust survivor*

# Cultivating mindfulness: the mindful leader

Using mindfulness and the other 7 factors, we can cultivate a different way of leading and working, kinder, more creative, more sustainable



**Unsustainable approach**



**Mindful approach**

# Receptive qualities

3 of the 7 are more receptive qualities

- **Calm** ... feeling centred, calm
- **Concentration** ... able to focus on what we care about
- **Equanimity** ... even though passionately engaged, we recognize there will always be ups and downs, and are not thrown by them



# Active Qualities

3 of the 7 are more active qualities

- **Investigation** ... curiosity, engagement, being in a state of question and exploration
- **Energy** ... being vibrant, energetic, managing our energy and effort
- **Joy** ... taking a joy in the difference we can make, in our and others successes, simple gratitude





# Mindfulness: the balancing factor



The 7th factor is mindfulness or awareness ... being aware of what is going on in our bodies, emotions and minds so that we are able to see when we are in a bad state of mind, and take steps to get into a better state.

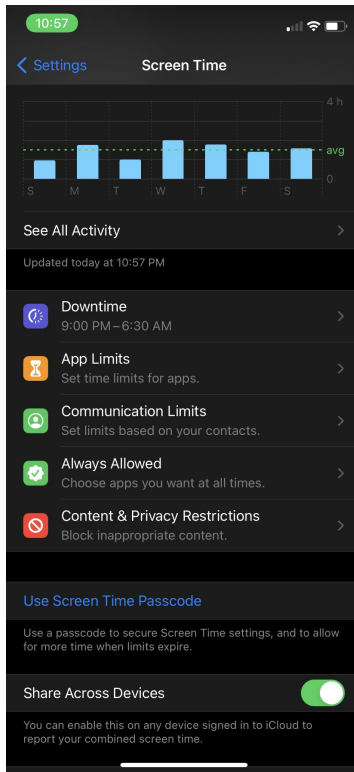


Cultivating mindfulness is like turning on a light in a dark room. Once the light is on, our options for creative action and change multiply hugely.

**That's all great, but how can I apply it?**

**If you notice you are missing calm, and instead are stressed and anxious, here are some simple tips ...**

# Building calm: Remember mindful pauses and taking breaks



## Tips

1. Take regular breaks
2. Move, walk or stretch - get some fresh air!
3. Take a few mindful minutes
4. Mindful snack or drink
5. Use what already works - whether that's walking the dog, watering the plants or playing the guitar! - and bring more intentional mindfulness to it
6. Set downtime on your devices

# Building calm: the importance of quiet time



- It's fashionable to be always on the go, a mover and shaker!
- But human beings need quiet time, time to hear yourself, time to be still, to be human BEINGS, not human DOINGS
- Building in periodic time to be quiet and alone - whether a morning walk, or even a few days retreat at Clear Sky! - is essential for balancing and bringing calm



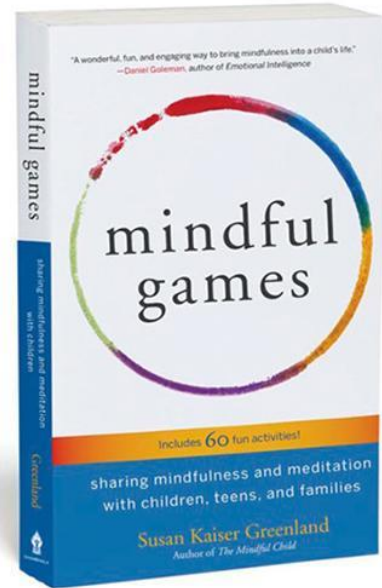
# Building Investigation: “Game of five”

As a way to spark investigation, during the week ahead play the game of five on a couple of days: see if you notice five new things - in your house, walking or driving, etc.

What do you notice? Does it affect your curiosity, investigation, creativity?

Other tips:

- Ask lots of questions
- Talk to new people you wouldn't usually talk to
- Read something new you wouldn't usually read



# Building concentration: Be selective about multitasking

## THE MYTH OF MULTITASKING

YOUR BRAIN  
ON ONE TASK



(HAPPY BRAIN)

YOUR BRAIN  
MULTITASKING



UNUSED BRAIN JUICE

## Tips

1. Be aware that our brains are much happier doing a single task - there's a lot of wasted energy switching contexts when we multitask
2. For bigger topics, book a meeting with yourself in your calendar where you focus on just that topic
3. Leave time in your plans for catching up on emails and details, so when you are single tasking on a big topic you can relax and focus

*“The quickest way to do many things is to do one thing at a time.”*

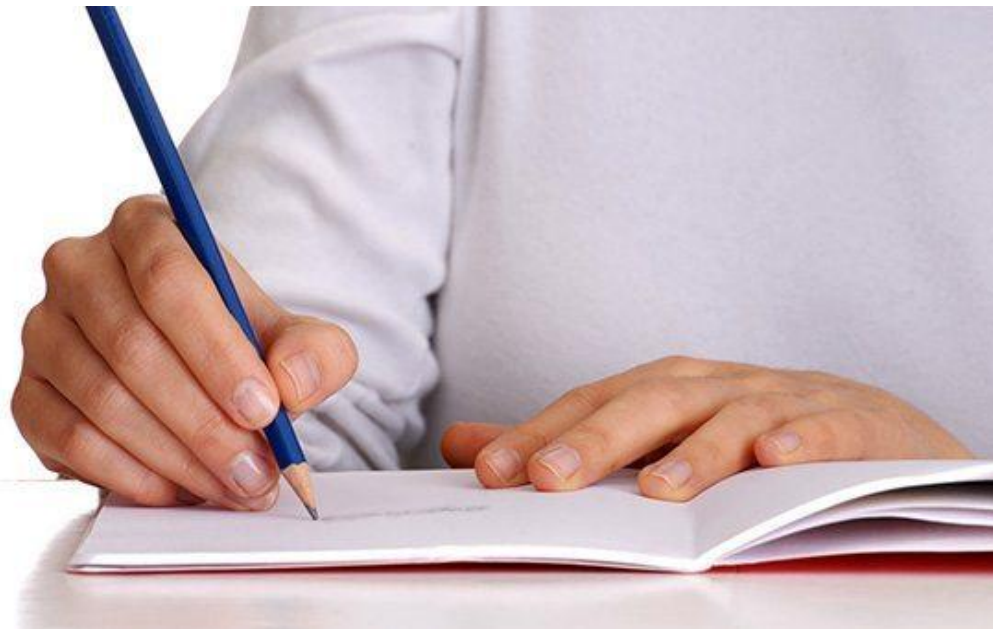
# Building concentration: mindful tips



When you need to concentrate and think more deeply about a situation or challenge:

- Get away from your computer
- Find a comfortable quiet spot
- Pick up a pencil and paper

This helps switch the brain into a more creative “slow thinking” mode





**If you notice you are missing energy, and instead you are tired, constantly swinging up and down, here are some simple tips for managing energy ...**

# Managing energy: beginning well



Healthy consciously chosen structures and routines that serve you are a key to managing energy well. Do you start your day well? Or wake up to a startling alarm, grab your phone, and get stressed before you've made it to the shower?

LIFE LESSON #1 YouTube /UTAustinTexas

*If you want to change the world*

— START OFF BY —

**MAKING YOUR BED**

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN  WHAT STARTS HERE CHANGES THE WORLD



# Managing energy: ending well/boundaries

- Other key to managing energy well is clear boundaries between work and rest
- Create a pleasant and ergonomic space for work
- Make it a separate area if you can
- Close the computer / cover it with a cloth at night to mark the end of the day



# Managing energy: sleeping well

Another key to managing energy well is sleeping well - and a consciously chosen night time routine supports that. Do you work till the last minute, worrying, and fall into a troubled sleep, or insomniac night? Can you craft time away from a screen and stresses before bedtime to settle ready for sleep?



# Cultivating joy: keeping it fresh!



During the week ahead, have fun doing one different thing each day to keep things fresh

- Brush your teeth or use your mouse with a different hand
- Eat different kinds of food or drink
- If you talk a lot in meetings, be a little quieter; if you don't talk much, talk a little more
- Walk or drive somewhere by a different route



Come up with your own - be creative!  
Be mindful / notice what comes up

# Cultivating joy: spend time with what you love



Especially in a social venture, we are coming face to face with people's struggles and difficulties, system issues and injustices, and personal challenges.

It's important to take some time for joy - for doing things we love, that make us laugh



# Cultivating equanimity: take a breath when triggered!



- When we are rushing, tired or stressed our brains switch off deeper thinking, creativity and empathy - we lose all equanimity and balance
- S.T.O.P is a great exercise for leaders to bring back some equanimity and save us from bad decisions

# Cultivating equanimity: remember humour ... and death!



“

*You are going to die –  
and this is a crucial fact  
for time management  
that is very often  
neglected*





# Cultivating mindfulness: a daily practice

A regular daily mindfulness or meditation practice is essential

Even 5-10 minutes is very beneficial

And even if you don't formally meditate, taking a quiet walk, spending some quiet contemplative time, as an intentional practice, is incredibly restorative



# Cultivating a mindful container

At Clear Sky, we've distilled the qualities of a supportive mindful container into five key principles. Together these create an environment that supports and cultivates the 7 factors of calm, investigation, concentration, energy, joy, equanimity and mindfulness. Find out more at <https://www.clearskycenter.org/our-five-principles/>

The infographic features a dark green header with the title 'Clear Sky Retreat Center's Principles of a Mindful Container' in white. A small circular logo with a sun and mountains is in the top right. Below the header, five numbered boxes are arranged horizontally. Each box has a circular icon at the top, a number in the middle, and a description at the bottom. The boxes have a light green top half and an orange bottom half.

**Clear Sky Retreat Center's**  
**Principles of a Mindful Container**

-   
**1**  
Honor your space
-   
**2**  
Structure and routine are your friends
-   
**3**  
Communication shapes the space where we meet
-   
**4**  
Cleaning up big areas of your life frees up energy
-   
**5**  
It's easier with others

# Support from Clear Sky



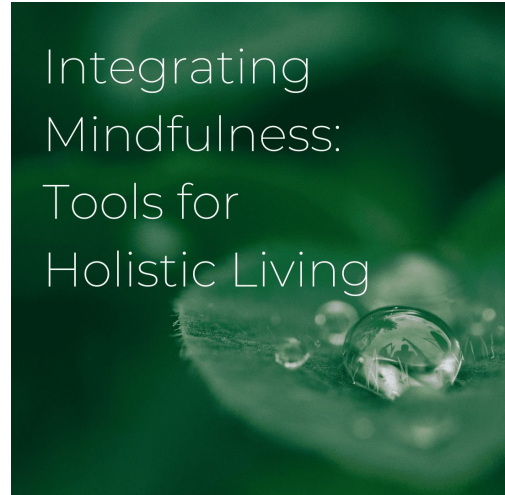
Integrating Mindfulness weekend retreat (online and in person) -  
Sept 16-17

<https://www.clearskycenter.org/event/weekend-retreat/>

Spend some private time in 310 mountains acres in a personal  
retreat cabin

<https://www.clearskycenter.org/private-meditation-retreats/>

You are also welcome to reach out for a one on one call to Karen  
McAllister [karen@clearskycenter.org](mailto:karen@clearskycenter.org) or Duncan Cryle  
[duncan@clearskycenter.org](mailto:duncan@clearskycenter.org) or find us on LinkedIn



**May you be very well and happy**

May these wholesome and powerful activities eliminate negativity and ignorance while producing happiness and illumination for the uplifting of the world!

