



Performance Enhancement, Awareness & Knowledge

Participant's Workbook and Journal



INTENTACT[®]

Intentions to Actions leadership

Leadership | Mindfulness | Development

www.intentact.com

Pam Marcheski
Executive and Organizational Leadership Coach Owner / Principal

cell: 916-626-2419
www.intentact.com
pam@intentact.com





INTRODUCTION

mPEAK (Mindful Performance Enhancement, Awareness & Knowledge) is an intensive course in mindfulness training for those who seek a more balanced way to achieve their goals, both personal and professional, as well as attain new levels of performance and success. This cutting-edge training program is built around the latest brain research related to peak performance, resilience, focus, and “flow”. The mPEAK program enhances the human capacity of mindfulness through established and empirically supported practices and exercises. Mindfulness is effective precisely because it is a way of being and relating to all aspects of life, rather than a specific technique or tool for a particular goal. As with physical training, this brain-training program is based on the understanding that optimal outcomes occur most often when participants continue to engage in the practices and exercises on a daily basis as a part of their training regimen. The foundation of this program is drawn from the highly respected and empirically-supported Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program, developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD. Additionally, the program incorporates specific practices and exercises formulated to correspond to recent neuroscientific findings, competitive advances, and related research regarding optimal performance.



HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

This workbook is a companion to the mPEAK 3-day intensive or 8-week course. It organizes the informational material about mindfulness and performance into one resource to streamline the didactic portions of mPEAK. In the pages provided, you can also record insights and reflections on the various experiences you'll have along this journey. Your time in the mPEAK course will be distributed over the following categories:

Formal Mindfulness Meditation Practices Meditation is a specific period of practice often done in stillness and silence. Meditation training re-wires the brain through neuroplasticity to increase your capacity for presence, discernment and flow in your life, work and sport. The formal practices introduced in mPEAK are: The Body Scan, Awareness of Breath, Mental Noting, Mindful Movement and Self-Compassion.

Experiential Exercises These exercises are like a mirror to more clearly see the way you relate to various aspects of performance. By observing your own conditioned thoughts, habits and identities in the face of these challenges, you recognize what is serving your performance and what might be holding you back.

Didactic Topics Each section of this course offers just enough science and information to help you build a conceptual framework around mindfulness and ideally inspire you to practice. The emphasis of mPEAK is less on learning about mindfulness and more on actually being mindful.

Journal Exercises The workbook provides dedicated pages to reflect on your past experiences with various performance related topics. Journaling itself can be a mindfulness practice of observing and recording thoughts and feelings onto paper.

Dyads/ Triads Sharing your experience is an important part of deepening your awareness of yourself in relation to others. You are encouraged to connect with authenticity and vulnerability with as many other participants as possible. Participants often say they learn as much from the others sharing as from the course content.

Group Coaching and Discussion After each experiential exercise or formal practice, an invitation is offered for discussion and coaching around challenges or insights that may have come up. Coaching is a process of inquiry intended to deepen self-awareness and personalize strategies to integrate mindfulness into areas of life and performance. Even though only a few participants are coached after each activity, everyone can benefit from these interactions.

Operationalized Mindfulness Practices Sometimes referred to as “Informal Mindfulness Practices”, these are short, on the spot practices intended to integrate mindfulness into everyday life and performance activities. These are offered as home practices at the end of each section.





INTRODUCTION TO MINDFULNESS AND PERFORMANCE

In this section mindfulness is introduced both experientially and conceptually with the intention to expand your perspective on how these practice can be integrated into areas of performance. Mindfulness is more than just brain building or attention training; it's an attitude and a way of being that can be practiced in every moment, before, during and after your "performance".



EXERCISE: MOUNTAIN ADVENTURE VISUALIZATION

Your intentions set the stage for what is possible. They remind you from moment to moment of why you are practicing. ...I used to think that meditation practice was so powerful...that as long as you did it at all, you would see growth and change. But time has taught me that some kind of personal vision is also necessary.

-Jon Kabat Zinn

There is a reason this course begins with the mountain visualization. You've come to mPEAK for a reason. What is it? And why is it important to you? Strong motivation and a willingness to move through difficulty are prerequisites to beginning any new adventure.

This visualization uses the image of a mountain peak as a metaphor for the goal or intention you've brought to mPEAK. As the title of the course suggests, this is about performance enhancement, but it's also about well-being, life balance, and personal fulfillment.

There's no need to limit yourself to running faster and earning more money. A second peak will be revealed that may offer insight into a more grand and personal intention for being here.

You may need to remind yourself of these initial intentions you set here many times throughout this course, especially in the mountain valley or dark forest, as energy inevitably wanes, and doubts arise.



JOURNAL:

MOUNTAIN VISUALIZATION

What did your first and second mountain peak represent to you?

What is motivating you on this journey?

What parts of the path did you most enjoy?

How did you work with difficulties or obstacles along the way?

What was it like to stand at the top?

What other insights about yourself did you get from this exercise, if any?



EXERCISE: APPLE MEDITATION

This exercise is a doorway into the conversation around how mindfulness impacts performance. The intention is to highlight thoughts and feelings that arise when performing in front of your peers, in contrast with the playfully immersive experience of flow. It also highlights the experience of being fully present through your senses to a single object, in contrast with multi-tasking.

What was it like to perform in front of others? What thoughts, emotions or sensations did you notice?

What was it like to play? What thoughts, emotions or sensations did you notice?

How would you describe your experience of being fully present through your senses?

What did you notice about your attempt at multi-tasking?

What did this exercise teach you about mindfulness and performance?



DEFINITION: MINDFULNESS IS...

The awareness that emerges through paying attention in a particular way; on purpose in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to the unfolding experience moment to moment
-Jon Kabat-Zinn

- **"The awareness that emerges":** The quality of perception that arises when being mindful could be compared to shifting from regular television to high definition or from normal headphones to noise canceling headphones. The program or music is the same, but there is greater clarity and sharpness.
- **"On purpose":** Mindfulness often starts with the intention to be present. You may need to exert a *gentle effort* to gather your attention and hold it in this moment without letting it wander off.
- **"In the present moment":** The point of mindfulness is to *be here now*; fully aware of what is happening; alert to all of your senses. This is in contrast to being *zoned out* or lost in memories of the past and plans for the future.
- **"Non-judgmentally":** No matter what is happening in the moment, be it pleasant, unpleasant or neutral, there is a certain attitude or quality of attention that we bring to the moment. Other adjectives for this way of being could include - acceptance, equanimity, kindness, and curiosity.



DEFINITION: MINDFULNESS IS NOT...

- **A Religion:** The mindfulness taught in mPEAK is secular. There is no dogma or belief required to experience the benefits, and can therefore be practiced without conflict by atheists, agnostics, and people of faith alike.
- **An Intellectual Concept:** Knowing about mindfulness is not the same as being mindful. Reading about the neuroscience of mindfulness will make you no more present than reading about exercise physiology will make you fit. The science of mindfulness is valuable to the degree it inspires and motivates actual practice.
- **Stopping Thoughts:** *The brain pumps thoughts like the heart pumps blood.* Trying not to think will only make thoughts louder (known as ironic monitoring, covered later in this workbook). Mindfulness is about seeing thoughts more clearly and changing your relationship them. Rather than seeing your thoughts as true and urgent, you can start to observe thoughts as objects that come and go. Some are useful and some are not. When you see thoughts this way, they lose power and are easier to act upon or let go of.
- **A Relaxation Technique:** It's likely that as your practice deepens, you'll have easier access to relaxation and ease. However, you can also be mindful in the midst of performance anxiety, injury, or overwhelm. Making peace with difficulty may not feel *relaxing per se*, but will allow for a more grounded response.
- **A Soft Skill:** Some high performers are initially afraid that mindfulness is going to make them lose their edge. This comes from the belief that the only way to succeed is through being hard on your self. Mindfulness and compassion teach that you can motivate yourself more effectively from a place of passion, vision and mission, rather than from a place of anger, lack, revenge, comparison, ego, or inner criticism.
- **A Flow State:** Mindfulness is a way of being that can be experienced at all times - from rock climbing to washing the dishes. Flow is a temporary state of high performance that comes with the right conditions and a touch of grace. Mindfulness is a primer to flow and increases the likelihood of achieving this state. We'll cover this later in the workbook.



DEFINITION: MINDFUL PERFORMANCE

Per-for-mance

- An act of staging or presenting a play, concert, or other form of entertainment.
- The action or process of carrying out or accomplishing an action, task, or function.

Rather than seeing performance as an act where you are pretending to be someone different than you are, a mindful performer is being more authentically who they really are. In flow, the act is dropped completely and *perform-ing* happens without a *perform-er*. Performance is indeed a *process*, or way of being that is experienced while accomplishing your work, playing your sport, or engaging in any activity you find meaningful.

A working definition of mindful performer is:

The quality of presence that emerges when one lets go of striving for an outcome and trusts the wisdom and talent available in the moment.

The greatest departure from a traditional definition of performance is the letting go of attachment to an outcome. This doesn't mean there is no goal. It simply means that a future result is not available *right now, in this moment*. But something is - the next appropriate action. By being fully present and *getting out of your own way*, you'll have a better chance of tapping into the capabilities you've refined through years of practice and training your particular craft.



TOPIC: FOUNDATIONAL ATTITUDES OF MINDFUL PERFORMERS

The greatest discovery of any generation is that a human being can alter his life by altering his attitude.

-William James

Mindfulness is not limited to being a tool or technique used during a time of need. In it's fullest expression, mindfulness is a way of being. It's a practice of being present while embodying these Foundational Attitudes of the mindful performer.

1. **Open:** Receptive to insight and creative inspiration from beyond the intellect.
2. **Courage:** *Responsive* rather than *reactive* to stress; abiding and monitoring difficult experiences such as fear and pain but choosing to move forward regardless.
3. **Non-Attachment:** Present to the process rather than a future outcome.
4. **Balanced Effort:** Finding your "sweet spot" by letting go of striving for perfection, or holding back from your full potential.
5. **Compassion:** Meeting failure with kindness and a willingness to learn from the experience.
6. **Focus:** Sustained engagement in the present moment with a particular task or on a chosen object.
7. **Discipline:** Managing impulses, temptations and making choices that are consistent with intentions.



EXERCISE: FOUNDATIONAL ATTITUDES

<i>Foundational Attitude</i>	<i>Give an example of how you already embody this way of being.</i>	<i>What is the cost of not embodying this way of being?</i>	<i>Set an intention for how you could deepen your embodiment.</i>
Open			
Courage			
Non-Attachment			
Balanced Effort			
Focus			
Discipline			
Compassion			



4 STAGES OF A MIND PERFORMANCE...



TOPIC: THE FOUR STAGES

Pre-Event: This is where mindfulness CAN become a technique or tool.

- Success Ritual: A personalized routine, favorite song, special breakfast, physical exercises, visualization or any other way to prepare yourself to perform at your peak.
- Grounding Techniques: Using mindful breathing, a mantra or affirmation, a quick body scan or anything else that will help balance your energy, calm your nerves and manage performance anxiety.

Performance Event: Each performance event has different opportunities for mindfulness.

- Mindful Check-In: An opportunity to pause and ask, *How am I right now? or, How is the performance going?* Of course it is situation dependent: whereas a long distance runner has hours to practice mindfulness, a boxer may only have an opportunity to really check-in between rounds, or possibly during a prolonged clench.
- Self-Regulation: This begins by noticing a moment of mind wandering or judgment of anything that does not serve the performance. This is often triggered by something stressful that occurs. The practice here is to notice and then *respond rather than react*.
- Allowing Flow States: This is the time to let go, get out of your own way, and trust your accumulated skill, ability, and wisdom.

Post Event: Once the intensity of the event has passed it's easy to slip into mindlessness.

- Celebration of win: Rather than rushing off to the next thing on the list to accomplish, mindfulness can make space to fully savor a success – even small ones. Besides the immediate feelings of success and accomplishment, this practice ensures the positive moment is stored as a long-term memory, which builds self-efficacy.
- Compassion around mistakes, loss or failure: Rather than the common default into blame or criticism, compassion can be practiced by offering yourself a kind phrase, gesture, or self-care activity.

Integration: Each performance contains a wealth of insight and self-knowledge to be extracted. This is where the real growth occurs.

- Processing the learning: Non-judgmentally, recap the event from start to finish. Reflect on the thoughts, emotions, and sensations that lead to various outcomes.
- Meet with a coach or mentor: A professional can ask questions you wouldn't think to ask yourself, and offer reflections on your performance from new perspectives.
- Elicit feedback: Ask respected teammates, clients, friends or co-workers how they experienced you and your performance. Be discerning with what feedback you accept, remembering that feedback is just someone else's *story* about your performance and may or may not be useful.
- Make adjustments: Integration comes when you modify beliefs, intentions and behaviors based on the insights and lessons from a previous performance.



JOURNAL: THE FOUR STAGES

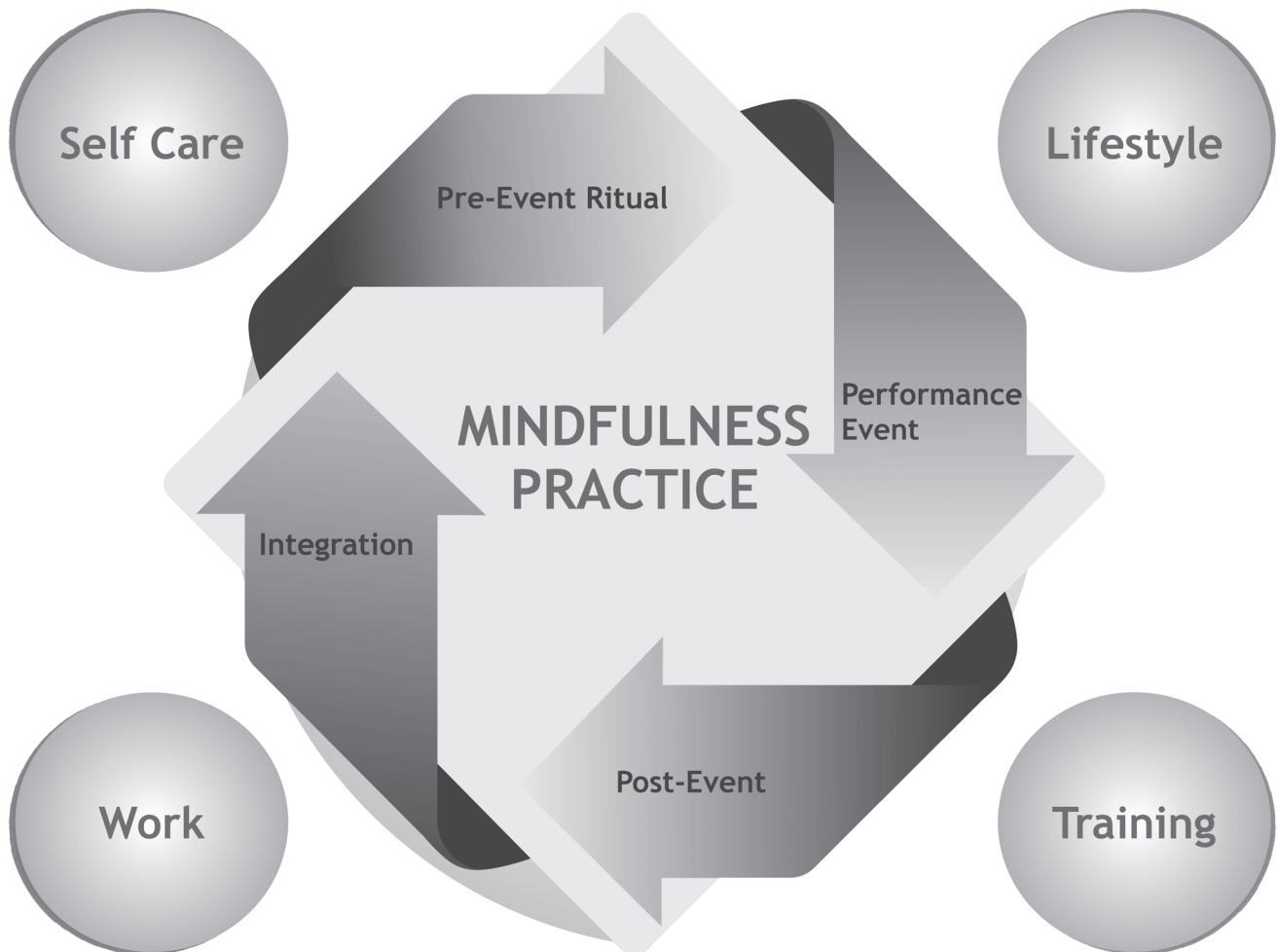
What are some pre-event rituals, techniques or superstitions you could experiment with?

What are the specific opportunities you have to be mindful during your performance events?

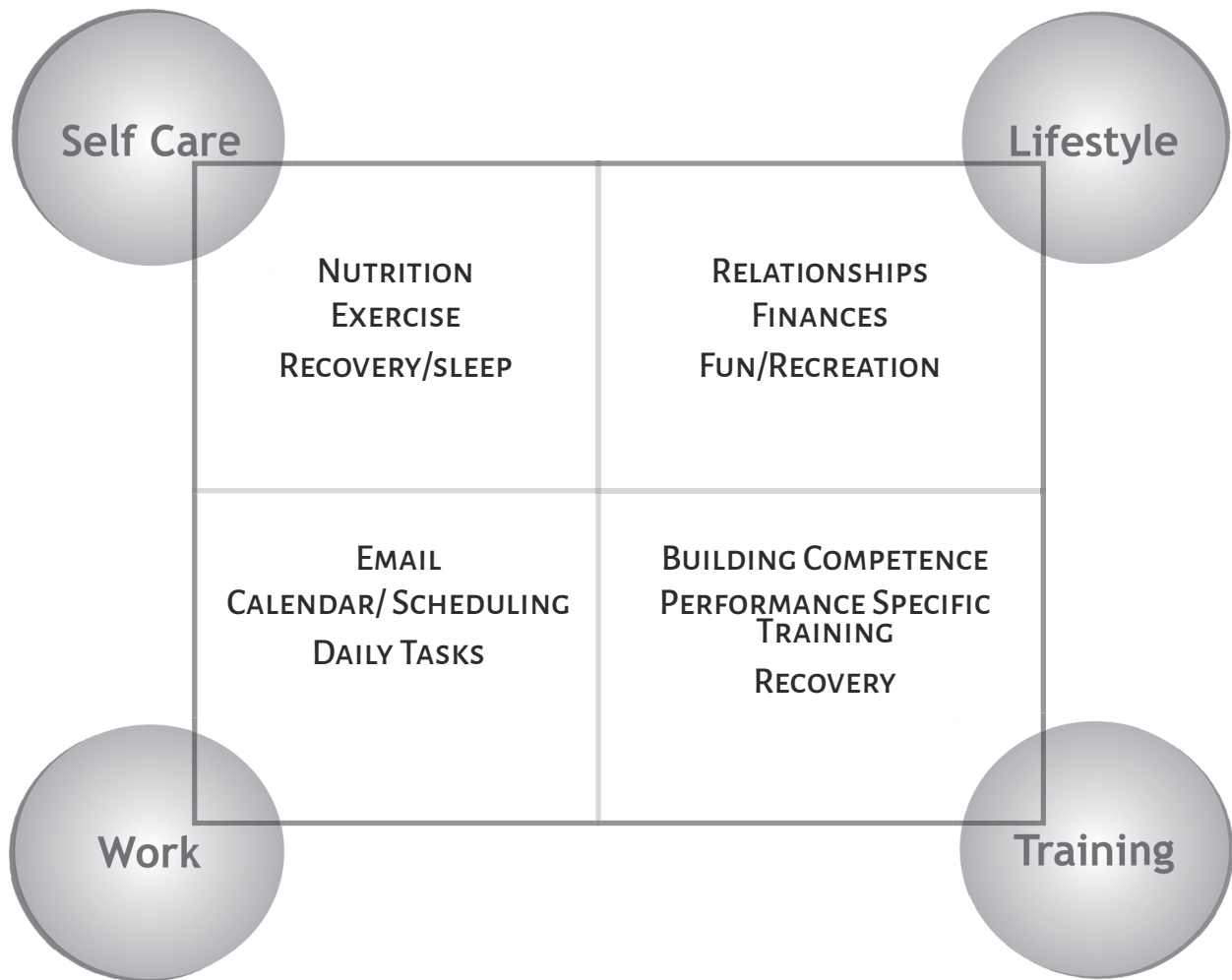
How do you typically celebrate a win? How might you do this more mindfully?

How do you typically react to a mistake, loss or failure? How might you do this more mindfully?





HOLISTIC LIFE PRACTICES - THE FOUR CORNERSTONES



JOURNAL: THE FOUR CORNERSTONES

Which of the Holistic Life Practices do you feel is most balanced already? What are you doing well that is working for you?

Which category has the most opportunity for growth? In what ways could you use mindfulness to enhance performance in this area?



FORMAL PRACTICE: BODY SCAN MEDITATION

If you think of your body as a musical instrument, the body scan is a way of tuning it. If you think of it as a universe, the body scan is a way to come to know it. If you think of your body as a house, the body scan is a way to throw open all the windows and doors and let the fresh air of awareness sweep it clean.

–Jon Kabat-Zinn

The Body Scan is a guided tour through the sensations of the body from your toes up to your head. Although relaxation may be a result, the primary intention is to cultivate the capacity to sustain attention in the present moment, on the body for an extended period of time. This practice also trains the mind/ body for interoceptive awareness, which is associated with higher levels of resilience.



JOURNAL: BODY SCAN

What physical or energetic sensations did you notice in this practice?

How did you work with any difficulty?

How do you imagine being present to your body in this way could impacts your areas of performance?

