

Mindfulness and Compassion at Work

On Thursday evening, October 25, we were warmly welcomed by our Irish friends, in the Copernico building on Rue de Science 14b in Brussels. The name of the street was very appropriate for Dr. Leah Weiss, she is a lecturer at the Stanford Business School (<https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/>) and her normal audience consists of MBA students in Silicon Valley who have a technical and bio-technical background.



Dr. Weiss chose to hold this meeting in the form of a conversation with many specific cases on woman at work. A few highlights summarise her message.

"The woman" in her career still struggles with choosing her path (conflicting roles). In the USA a lot of financial debt is taken on to study an MBA and absolute top academic achievements need to be earned to justify this investment, thus delaying childbearing. Apparently, many millennial women now choose between a career or a family. One of the reasons being, that childcare in Silicon Valley is often more expensive than the income.

Mindfulness is intentional or deliberate use of your attention

and there are different tools to learn it.

-it is important to have **Purpose in your work:**

The purpose for your work can be . to get a pay-check
. to further your career
. to answer a calling

Your frame of mind does influence your results. This has been tested with placebos. If you are convinced that it is good for you, you get a better result.

Learn to: not be nice or impactful but be both!

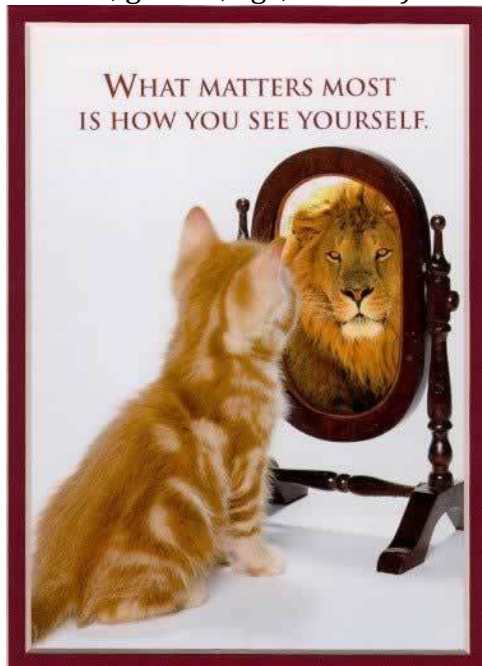
-Self compassion

High performing women are often very critical of themselves. That is to be avoided as fear cripples and self- criticism does **Not** drive performance!
e.g. in Buddhism compassion includes oneself as well as others.

In mindfulness you can be aware of suffering, struggling, but have goodwill towards these – all so human- qualities in yourself and in others. (Even towards colleagues who irritate or bother you!)

-Disagreement with others and Self-Tuning as a coping Mechanism

Avoid emotional reactions, (this is especially important especially for women). Emotion is also unhealthy, it triggers physiological reactions like a faster heartbeat. Train your own tuning and try to see how your co-workers are tuned. (Try to take account of others and your own DNA, predisposition, background, nurture, gender, age, culture.)



For MBA students, apart from the factual study, their MBA time is also important in getting more knowledge about 'knowing who I am'.

Doing practical things together, like moving during sports, hiking, walking or growing vegetables, etc improves the level of compassion within a group.

Between Dr. Weiss and the 50+ attendees, there was a lively exchange of ideas. It was nice to finish with the understanding that 'social emotional learning' anno 2018, is now part of mainstream education in schools.

After this cognitive time, there was time for a nice glass of wine or juice and a chat, during which time Dr. Leah Weiss signed copies of her book : "How we work: Live your Purpose, Reclaim your Sanity, & Embrace the Daily Grind". We want to thank our Irish friends very much for a convivial and very interesting evening and we went home knowing that a healthy portion of self-compassion is good for you and your career.

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