

COMMUNITY

How I Use Meditation To Help Me Manage Multi-Million Dollar Projects

By Bart Mendel

by Yitzi Weiner, A “Positive” Influencer

For the past 30 years, I've had two seemingly paradoxical careers. In one, I'm a businessman who manages the construction of fast-paced, multi-million dollar residences. In the other, I'm a meditation teacher. And while I initially tried to keep them separate, over the years the two careers have become delightfully intertwined. I've found that the positive results of this merger, both personally and professionally are worth sharing.



It turns out that meditation and entrepreneurship are a natural fit. It's no wonder that nowadays meditation is a key practice for many great visionaries including Oprah, Arianna Huffington and Jeff Weiner. As an entrepreneur, my background in meditation helps me apply calmness and clarity to a range of challenging business situations. As a teacher, I'm able to use my professional experience to help others with real-life, real-world challenges.

Over and over again, I've seen how meditation fosters the clarity and uprightness that help build a successful business. If you have an entrepreneurial spirit, I believe meditation can help you grow your business too. Here's how.

Meditation fosters genuine integrity

The essence of meditation is being mindful—simply being aware of who we are in the present moment. Working with the present moment helps us set our cluttered, busy minds aside and allows our natural integrity to shine through. I often experience first-hand how my practice naturally helps me and by osmosis those around me become more genuine and uplifted.

In his book **Cheaters Never Win**, Jon Huntsman, Sr, a multibillionaire and philanthropist who died in February 2018, wrote the following, “There are no moral shortcuts in the game of business or life. There are basically three kinds of people—the unsuccessful, the temporarily successful and those who become and remain successful. The difference is character.” For those of us who become and remain successful, integrity is a keystone of our entrepreneurial character. And there’s a bonus—it’s contagious. When business leaders are genuine and principled, staff members and other stakeholders are inspired to follow suit.

Our most successful clients often demonstrate superior acumen — they naturally seek out and recognize positive qualities in others. Not surprisingly, businesses built on awareness, responsibility and honesty promote a greater sense of trust and attract discerning clients. My meditation practice helps me stay on track with my clients’ priorities. As an example, I can’t count the number of times I’ve recommended ways for clients to keep my own company’s fees down, along with cost and time savings in other categories.

Combined with top-level managerial skills, trustworthiness is recognized to be a key component of any brand. It distinguishes us from competitors that are focused on profit margins alone. Who would **you** rather do business with?

Meditation cultivates creativity

According to a Dutch study “open-monitoring meditation” that focuses on awareness of thinking boosts creativity. It promotes a process called divergent thinking which enables the generation of new ideas.

Meditation actively creates spaciousness in people’s minds — it’s a different kind of mechanism than the normal thinking process. This spaciousness not only helps “creators” embark on artistic endeavors, but also allows entrepreneurs to engage in strategic business planning and problem-solving in the field. Instead

of being bogged down by limiting thoughts, mindful founders and creators feel empowered to think outside the box and come up with innovative ideas. All thanks to meditation.

This is something I've experienced first-hand. One of my earliest successful projects required stepping outside the norm into an unconventional opportunity. My team was tasked with building a swimming pool addition for a Boys & Girls Club in Boston. One of the main challenges of urban construction projects is working with concerned neighbors and limited space. So, we ended up putting an Olympic-sized swimming pool in the crawlspace beneath the Club building. When I initially proposed the idea, the entire professional team waved it aside and laughed at such a thought. But, when all was said and done, it was this unorthodox approach that created a project plan that achieved all the client's goals simultaneously.

Meditation leads to skillful communication

According to a paper published in the Journal of Cognitive Enhancement, working with our minds helps us better understand the mental states of those around us. Simply put, understanding ourselves increases our ability to understand others. And when we better understand others, we're better able to find common ground and mutually acceptable solutions.

Meditation gives us the space to examine our own behavior and actions. Accordingly, it increases our ability to listen to others with an open mind. This helps us communicate in a more empathetic and meaningful way, especially in situations rife with conflict. The ability to remain calm and receptive works wonders when it comes to mediating disputes.

I experienced this recently when I was working to resolve a dispute with a contractor. After a protracted project replete with limitless contractor excuses that did nothing to appease an angry client, we painstakingly tried to settle with the contractor to avoid litigation. Even though we had already negotiated the critical terms in our client's favor, the client's attorney began to argue aggressively about the language in the formal release. He even threatened to derail the settlement by intimidating the contractor and his attorney.

Here's where my meditation training kicked in. Instead of getting my dander up

and disagreeing with the attorney head on, which was tempting but would have complicated matters further, I heard him out. Then I calmly raised a few points I thought the attorney might have missed and we discussed them. I pointed out the financial benefit to our mutual client. Slowly, a clearer picture emerged on his side and we ended up settling with the contractor on favorable terms. I've found it is often better to say less and inspire the listener to come to the right conclusion.

Meditation teaches us not to dwell on mistakes

Meditation has taught me that problems are temporary — just like the myriad of thoughts passing through our minds on a daily basis. Obsessing about complications instead of looking for solutions will drive us crazy. When we fail at something we learn about ourselves and the world around us. Success, on the other hand can make us complacent.

Mistakes happen in any business, but construction has more than its fair share. If my employees got stuck on every misstep or were chastised and demeaned, we would discourage growth and creativity. We simply wouldn't be a healthy company that continues to thrive. Instead, we've adopted a culture of safety that promotes transparency, accepts honest mistakes and encourages problem-solving that ensures everyone's input is valued. Not only does my staff feel empowered and appreciated, they do a fantastic job championing our clients' projects.

Giving Back

I'm tremendously grateful for my meditation practice, which continually reminds me of the importance of generosity and genuinely helping others. As a way of giving back, I led a team of other dedicated meditator/entrepreneurs in founding Mindworks (501c3 nonprofit), an innovative meditation app. Seeing a need for more in-depth training and insight delivered through smart phones, we assembled an international team of expert meditation instructors to create content for the app. Mindworks offers easy-to-follow guided meditations, inspiring video-based "Mind Talks" and programs progressing from **Learn to Meditate** to **Mindworks Journey**, a 9-level series that leads to positive personal transformation and lasting well-being.

Meditation can help business executives prioritize, lead better, listen more closely

and be more genuine and creative. No wonder mindfulness has become so ingrained in startup and business cultures. There's no question in my mind that without it, my business wouldn't be the success that it is today.

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MEDITATION



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Yitzi Weiner is a journalist, author, and the founder Authority Magazine. He is also the CEO of Authority Magazine's Thought Leader Incubator, which guides leaders to become prolific content creators. Yitzi is also the author of five books.

In 2017, he created the popular, "5 Things I Wish Someone Told Me" series that highlights the empowering lessons learned from the experiences of high-profile entrepreneurs and public figures.

This series has inspired a mini-movement among writers, with scores of writers worldwide profiling inspiring people to share their positive, empowering, and actionable stories.

A trained Rabbi, Yitzi is also a dynamic educator, teacher and orator. He currently lives in Maryland with his wife and children.

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