

Calendar Reflection

*From the book—
Finding the Space to Lead
A Practical Guide to Mindful Leadership*

Purpose

- ✓ Get honest and clear about how you spend your time
- ✓ Get clear about what's really important, rather than constantly reacting to, or chasing, what is "urgent"
- ✓ Practice using body sensations, thoughts, and emotions as objects of attention and feedback

What you will need

- ✓ A quiet place
- ✓ 30 minutes
- ✓ Written or printed copy of a typical week from your calendar
- ✓ Journal or notebook

- 1) Take a comfortable seated posture, allowing your body to become still and to feel supported. As you are ready, bring your attention to the sensations in the body, including the sensations of the breath. Notice when your mind is pulled away, or drifts away, and redirect your attention to the sensations in the body. Practice with the body sensations as the object of attention for few minutes.
- 2) Begin to slowly read your calendar page as though you have never seen it before, one entry at a time, paying close attention to the sensations arising in the body, as well as any accompanying thoughts or emotions. Be open and curious about what you are noticing. Notice if your mind becomes entangled in problem-solving or judging a meeting or event on the calendar, and let that go, returning to slowly reading through the appointments and tasks on the page.
- 3) Are the sensations, thoughts, and emotions familiar to you? What else do you know about them? Write a list of what you noticed during this reflection. Use this reflection as a purposeful pause each morning for a couple weeks. How has your list changed? Stayed the same?

The language of your body often begins to reveal something about certain activities or meetings, and something about your schedule in general.

Did you notice a tightening in your neck as you saw a particular event? Or a queasiness in your stomach when you noticed a deadline? Perhaps you noticed tightening in your chest when you saw your mile-long task list alongside your packed daily calendar?

Did you notice frustration, anxiety, or anger? Ask yourself if you need to make changes to the schedule in order to meet those emotions with clarity, creativity, and compassion.

Perhaps you noticed a feeling of tiredness. When you stop to look at the intensity and speed of your day, just reading through the list of commitments can set off a powerful wave of fatigue.

**Do you notice a thought like “There is nothing I can do”?
Is that really true?**

What is your body telling you? Be curious. Be compassionate.

Begin to question the status quo that may have left you believing that there is no alternative to a calendar filled with activity after activity, with no time to prioritize and make conscious choices. Is the schedule that is often created for us by other people really carved in stone?

By following this practice, you can become more intentional in your choices.

What is the best use of your time?

Is your calendar aligned with your deepest values?