

Mindful meetings – 9 tips for your agenda

Many of us spend a lot of time in meetings, but they can be a terrible waste of time, or even worse, can be used as a platform for people's egos where views get entrenched and personalities clash.

Alongside general good practice for meetings (I'll skip over these and assume that the basics of meeting management are in place), there are many skills we learn in mindfulness training that are highly useful. Here they are:

1. Before you enter the room, recall your **personal values** and purpose. Stop for a moment, even while your hand is on the door handle, to remember what matters to you and why you're there.
2. At the start of the meeting, agree the house rules, and recall **organisational purpose**. Agree that this bigger picture will inform the current discussion.
3. Agree to make space to **listen fully**. The basic rule is that everyone will be heard, and given time and space to say what they think and feel, without interruption or signs of judgement from others.
4. Allow **silence** and be **patient**. Silence can be a highly effective time, when real creative processing goes on. Do not cut it short. Get used to waiting.
5. Stay acutely aware of your own **body tensions** arising. Your body will tell you when something is 'not right'. It's quicker than your thinking brain. You could simply say that 'something feels wrong about this' and you may find that others feel that it too, and will thank you for your insight.
6. Be disarmingly **honest**. Say what you really think and feel, with respect. Trust that your good intention is guiding you. Be brave.
7. **Pause before responding**, don't react automatically. Notice your reactions and internal judgements, and wait for them to subside.
8. Agree to speak with **kindness** towards each other. It can change everything.
9. Take a long-term view and **get perspective**. Whatever seems difficult or stuck now, will change. It can't stay the same. If you can't see a solution, it doesn't mean there isn't one out there. Don't sweat the small stuff.