

Mindful Work

Getting the day off to a good start

Getting the day off to good start is very important. Waking up, the very first moment of waking from sleep, can be a moment of open and pristine awareness. This doesn't work if the alarm makes you jump out of bed, or if you wake up groggy-headed from too much wine the night before. However, if you have a good night's sleep and wake up naturally refreshed, there is an opportunity waiting for you, as you take your first in-breath of the day, to tune in at that very moment.

If you can do that, before all the thoughts and worries kick in, it can be a moment of great insight into the default nature of mind – open, spacious and calm. If you go to sleep with the intention that you will wake up in this way, there is a good chance that it will happen.

However, it's not always like that! We can often wake up with our worries ready and fully formed, waiting to absorb us and force us into our habitual patterns of coping, and resultant behaviours. Right at that point, we can start to be kind to ourselves. Right at that moment we can ask ourselves what we need to do, to set the day off to a better start.

This is where habits begin to really matter. Are we able to make space, between rushing in and out of the shower and shovelling down some breakfast, to allow even 5 minutes of practice. If not, why not? What can you do to make this space for yourself and invest in the day ahead?

However much time there is for practice, it's useful to follow these guidelines:

- 1. Do some stretching, yoga or general warming up.*
- 2. Before you start to sit, walk, or do any of the core practices, set your intention for this session, and for the day ahead. For example, this could simply be a commitment to being kind and patient to yourself and everyone you will meet that day.*
- 3. You then carry out your chosen practice. Do not jump around between practices; it is better to stick with one thing such as body scan, mindful breathing, or mindful listening. In all practices, the key is present moment awareness.*
- 4. The conclusion of the practice session is then twofold. First a quick review of the feelings or insights that may have arisen. Secondly, you restate your intention, and commit to approaching the day with curiosity, energy, and acceptance.*