

# Mindful Work

## Leaning in

*Mild health warning – you really need to be feeling pretty stable to practice leaning-in – so if you're experiencing mental health problems, this may not be for you, just yet.*

When we experience a strong emotion, in reaction to something the amygdala (the 'fear centre') considers to be a threat, we most likely feel very uncomfortable. Maybe our breath is taken away, we get sweaty, we panic etc. Naturally we don't want this, so the basic reaction is to avoid it. We get very skilled at this – either diverting our attention, pretending it didn't happen, jumping in and shouting at someone else etc. We can get caught in a spiral of negative thought that feeds itself.

These reactions only give the habitual, instinctive reactions more power over us. So the antidote is to 'lean in'. This means giving full attention to the feelings that we're experiencing. It is a brave move, but actually as you do this, with the approach of a scientist doing an experiment and closely observing what's going on, you will generally find that the feeling changes, moves, lessens, then dissipates. These emotions feed on the reaction.

Also, be friendly to these troublesome visitors; they are trying to tell you something. Strong emotions are not our enemies – they are like guards, trying to protect us. So treat them as friends, give them proper attention, hear their message, then say thanks and let them go back to barracks.

Try it please. This is fast and effective. Be brave, and be a good scientist of this amazing phenomenon that is our own mind.

If you really want to hear the truth of it, it's all fiction – every last nuance of it. Our thoughts have no real substance. It's like we're in a movie where we are the director and star. Get a new director and make a new movie.