



THE CASE FOR MINDFUL LEADERSHIP

What is the business case for Mindful Leadership? And how to get started.



THE CASE FOR MINDFUL LEADERSHIP

OVERVIEW

This report presents a case for Mindful Leadership and offers a few free resources to get started. The report is organized as follows.

- An examination of the current state of Leadership and Work Culture
- What is the case for Mindful Leadership?
- What is Mindful Leadership?
- Resources to get you started

CURRENT STATE OF LEADERSHIP & WORK CULTURE

We live in a time of great **fear, uncertainty, and self-destruction**. Tribalism is on the rise, and thanks to fake news, we can feel like we're living in a post-truth world. To distract ourselves, we turn to our smartphones whose apps are hardwired to keep us addicted, and social media often works to keep us in a bubble.

[According to the 2013 "State of the Global Workplace" by Gallup](#), engagement at work is down; only 13% of employees are engaged worldwide. But companies with the highest engagement have:

- 17% increased productivity
- 20% higher sales
- 21% higher profitability

[2018 Annual State of Industry Report](#) from Virgin Pulse stated that workplace culture is the biggest roadblock to improving employee engagement.

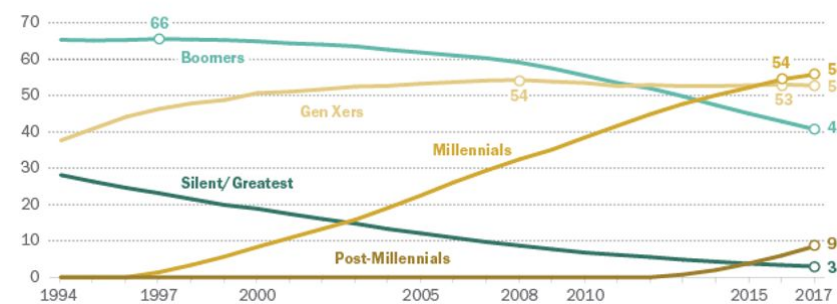
The workplace has become a **biohazard**. It poses a threat to the health of the human beings who spend so much of their lives at work. Over the course of 24 hours, [CNN reported 3 different instances of violence](#) that took place in the office on September, 19th 2018. And if that wasn't frightening enough, doctors have one of the highest rates of suicide, [with 1 every 24 hours in the U.S.](#)

WHY NOW?

Now is the perfect time to introduce mindfulness into leadership and our workplace cultures, because **the game has really changed**. The make-up of who's in the workplace and their belief systems are very different from before. This shift is creating a new possibility for workplace culture and what effective leadership is.

Millennials became the largest generation in the labor force in 2016

U.S. labor force, in millions

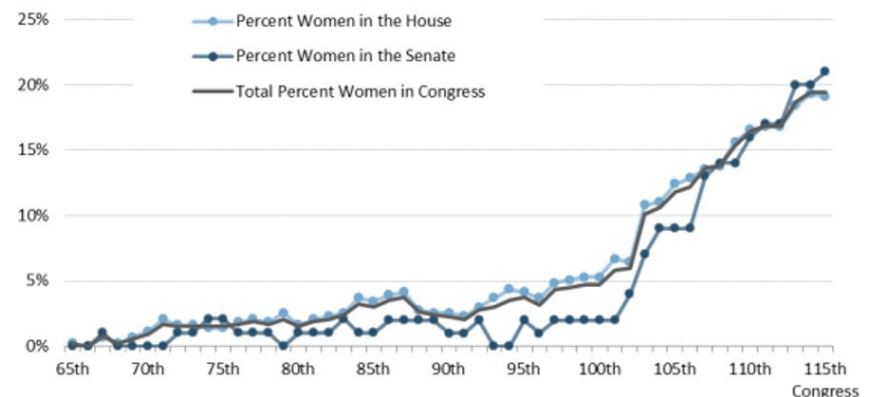


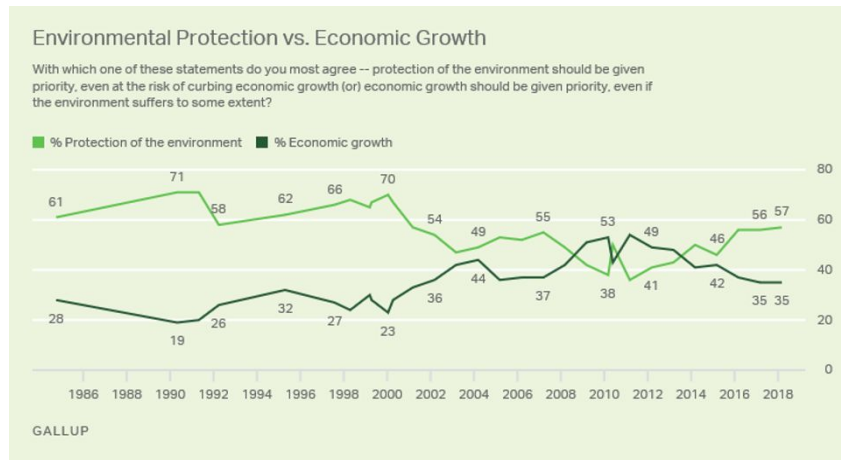
Note: Labor force includes those ages 16 and older who are working or looking for work. Annual averages shown.
Source: Pew Research Center analysis of monthly 1994-2017 Current Population Survey (IPUMS).

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

For the first time, millennials make up the majority of the workforce. A study by the [Pew Research Center](#) in 2016 stated that they became the largest group with 35%. Millennials have a different understanding of what work should be and how they should be treated.

The increase of women in the workforce and their movement into positions of power forces a shift in perspective and to notice where things could grow.





[In another Gallop study](#) that took place over several decades, people were asked what they cared about more: the environment or economic growth. People now have greater concerns about the environment.

J. Bradford De Long at UC Berkeley [reports rapid wealth and prosperity growth](#). This is causing people to shift even more from thinking about their basic needs to looking for meaning.

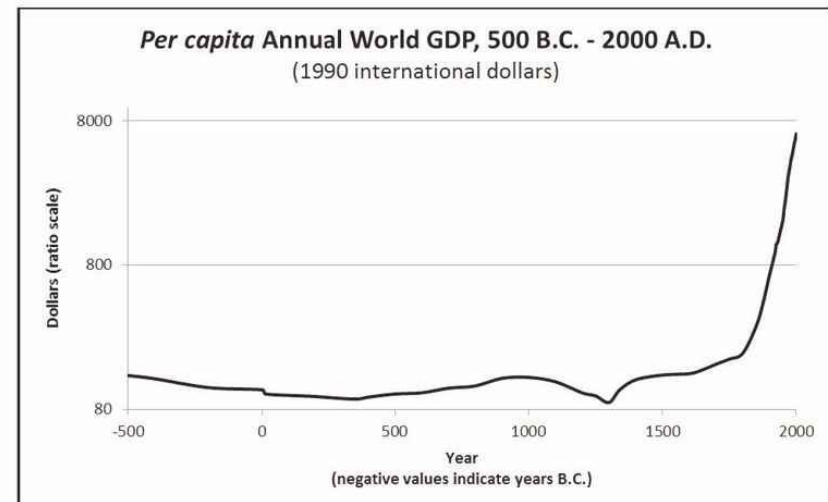


Figure 1

WHAT IS MINDFUL *LEADERSHIP*?

Leadership can be defined a dozen different ways. But we asked attendees of our 5th annual Summit to think about leaders in their lives who made them feel good. The characteristics of the leaders they identified were: **inspirational, authentic, compassionate, honest, trustworthy, transparent, generous, and open.**

According to an article from [Harvard Business Review](#), the most important competencies of leaders are: strong ethics, sense of safety, empowering others to self-organize, fostering connection & belonging, encouraging organizational learning, and nurturing growth. What experts have learned is that **engagement makes a difference**. In an article from the 2015 Gallup Business Journal, studies showed that [leaders account for 70% of variance in employee engagement](#).

We like the Oxford's Dictionary definition of mindfulness which describes it as, "a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations."

Mindfulness when incorporated into leadership **reduces rumination, decreases stress, boosts working memory & focus, provides less emotional reactivity, and increases cognitive flexibility and satisfaction in relationships**. These benefits were [reported in a 2011 practice review for the American Psychological Association](#), and they suggest that you and your leaders can cultivate a better workplace.

What a Mindful Leader is can be defined many ways. We'll cover that in another report, for now you can explore definitions and deeper explorations from our friends in the Resources section below.

RESOURCES TO GET YOU STARTED

FREE RESOURCES

- [FREE VIDEO - INTRODUCTION TO MINDFUL LEADERSHIP](#)
5th Mindful Leadership Summit - Mo Edjlali
- [What It Takes to Be a Mindful Leader – and Why It Matters](#)
Happify Daily - Janice Marturano
- [Making the Mindful Leader: Cultivating Skills for Facing Adaptive Challenges](#)
Chapter from the Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Leadership, Change & OD - Jeremy Hunter and Michael Chaskalson
- [Mindful Leadership: Achieving Results by Managing the Mind](#)
Wiley Online Library - Rasmus Hougaard, Jacqueline Carter, and Gillian Coutts
- [The Mindful Leader: Developing the capacity for resilience and collaboration in complex times through mindfulness practice](#)
Hult International Business School - Megan Reitz, Michael Chaskalson, Sharon Olivier, and Lee Waller
- [How to Meditate](#)
The New York Times - David Gelles

USEFUL PRACTICES

- [Mindfulness Meditations](#) from Mindful Magazine
- [Guided Meditations](#) from Search Inside Yourself