

Presence, awareness and human connection in OD work and beyond

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Individual and Relational mindfulness

Individual mindfulness

- ✓ Awareness that emerges from paying attention, on purpose, to present-moment experience non-judgementally
- ✓ Practice linked to developing leadership capabilities

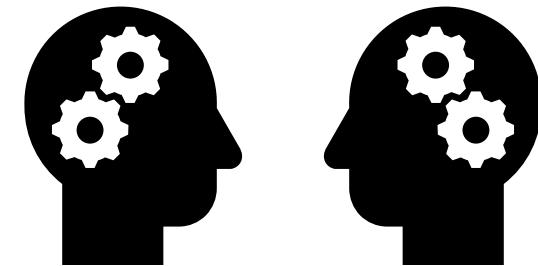
(Donaldson-Feilder et al, 2018)



Relational mindfulness

- ✓ Bringing present moment, non-judgemental awareness of self, other and the relationship – while speaking and listening
- ✓ Practice potentially even more relevant for developing leadership capabilities

(Donaldson-Feilder et al, 2021)



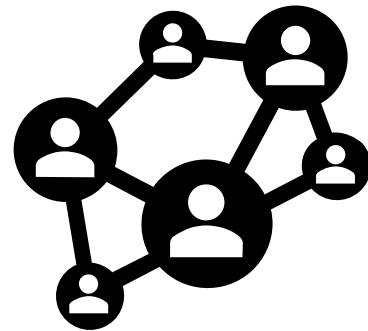
relational mindfulness

in coaching and beyond

Why use relational mindfulness as a support for relationships?

- **Mindfulness can help enhance relationships**
 - Self-awareness and attentional control
 - More openness, curiosity and receptivity

Mindfulness Initiative, 2020/2022



- **Relational Mindfulness can take these benefits a step further**
 - Consciously bringing mindfulness into relationships

Donaldson-Feilder and Hall, 2025



Mechanism in Relational Mindfulness practice

Practise mindfully being with another person



Natural heart-opening and sense of common humanity



Become aware of and observe our relational habits as they arise



Dialogue opens us to new perspectives through seeing another's views and moving beyond individual ways of thinking



Benefits for relationships

Greater awareness, presence, and being fully with others

Enhance psychological safety, deep listening, compassion, and collaboration

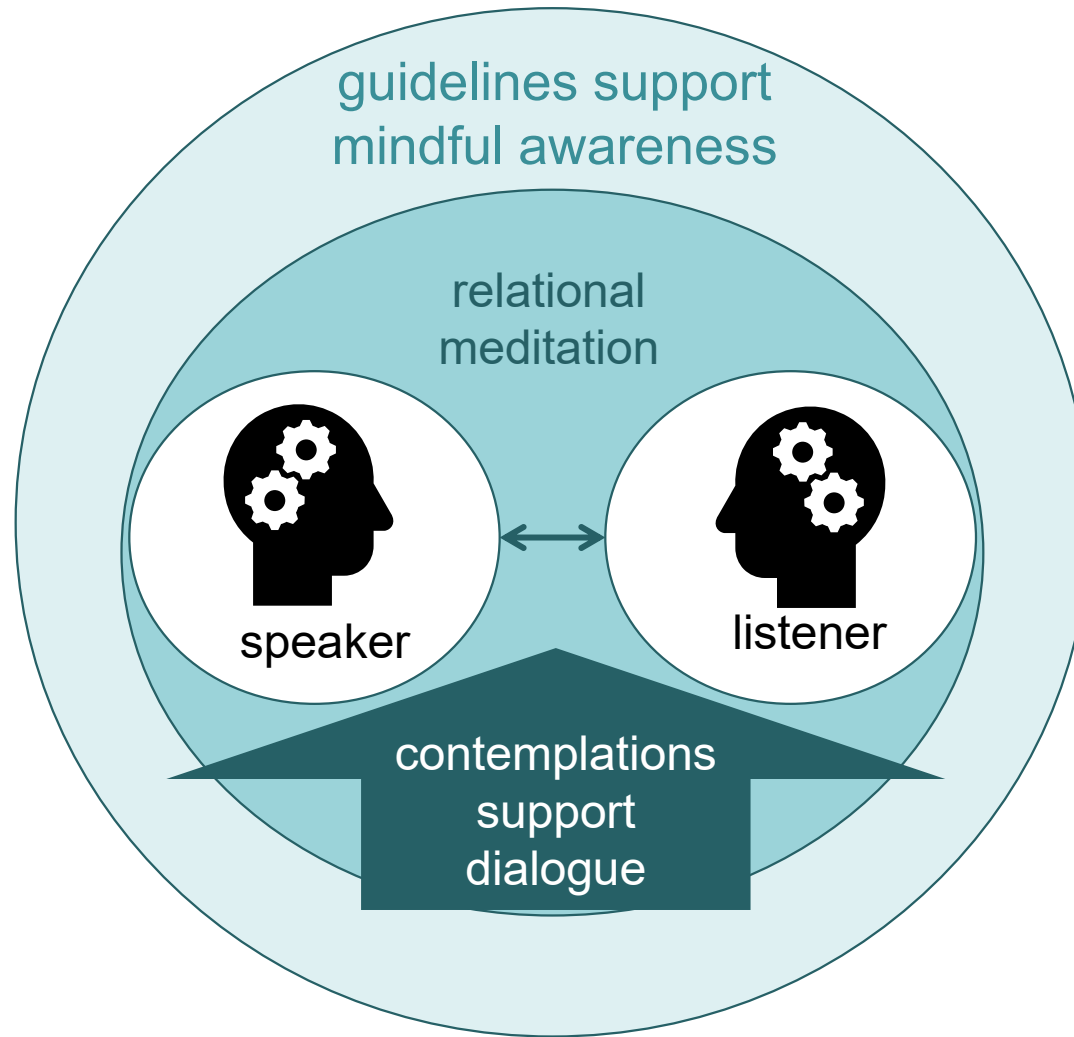
Greater insight, choice and ease with our habits and capacity to change

Openness and valuing of other perspectives, understanding interconnectedness, and supporting insight and wisdom for others

Donaldson-Feilder and Hall, 2025



‘Formal’
Relational
Mindfulness
practice:
meditating in
dialogue



Agreements

As a dialogue partner, I agree to...

- ...keeping all content confidential – speaking only of my own experience, not about others.

As a speaker, I agree to...

- ...only speaking what feels comfortable to share.
- ...not speaking what is divisive, harsh, abusive, or false.
- ...speaking what is kind, honest, appropriate, and of goodwill.

As a listener, I agree to...

- ...listening with no need to comment, ask questions, or give advice.



Learning and development and culture change programmes that focus on or include Relational Mindfulness

Relational Mindfulness programmes for coaches and other helping professionals – in house and open programmes and sessions within other events, conferences etc

Relational Mindfulness modules included within leadership development and management development programmes

Building quality relationships in the workplace through Relational Mindfulness employee development programme

Mindful dialogue to reduce polarisation and support culture change

Imperial College
London

The Kings Fund >



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Thoughts on implications for practitioners



Relational mindfulness appears to be a powerful way to develop compassionate ways of being in the workplace by building awareness, relational qualities, and wisdom



Relational mindfulness (and the qualities that enable us to forge quality relationships) need to be learnt at an embodied level, not just through cognitive frameworks



OD practitioners and others aiming to support quality relationships, compassion and compassionate leadership in workplaces need to embody these ways of being ourselves

“The success of an intervention depends on the interior condition of the intervenor”

Bill O’Brien, Former CEO of Hanover Insurance, quoted by Otto Scharmer



Thank you for listening!

Any questions?

Please do get in touch to discuss further

More resources available on website

Would love you to join one of my programmes

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