

LEADING MINDFULLY

By Richard Searle, www.searleburke.com, richard@searleburke.com

Amanda Sinclair's new book "Leading Mindfully" is a wonderful read which I recommend to any manager who is seeking to be more effective and fulfilled in their leadership.

Amanda and I are friends and collaborators, and over the past decade we have presented the "Mindful Leadership Program" for Melbourne Business School Executive Education, and we offer a similar Workshop to organisations through Leaders & Searle. Amanda has been a Professor and Faculty member at Melbourne Business School for a long time, as well as a qualified yoga and meditation teacher.

Amanda says this in her Introduction to her new book: "What I will suggest is that regular practice of mindfulness gives leaders a different perspective on their world, opening them up to ways of being which are both more focused on what matters and more observant and appreciative of what is there. Paradoxically, becoming more present enables leaders to see reality more clearly and act more purposefully and with less of their own stuff getting in the way."

One of the great benefits of this new book is that it explores a large range of applications of mindfulness to leadership, including how to coach a staff member, handle a crisis or build stronger teams. And not only does Amanda draw on her own experiences but she shares inside knowledge of the role of mindfulness in the work of other impressive leaders, such as that of Paul Roos and Tami Roos at the very successful Sydney Swans, or Gordon Cairns as CEO of Lion Nathan and recently Chairman of Woolworths, or the creative boldness of Karen Quinlan as Director of the Bendigo Art Gallery.

Those who are familiar with Amanda will not be surprised to hear that her new book is particularly strong in examining how Identity and Ego can interfere with our leadership and how the practice of mindfulness can help us to extricate from their powerful undertow. "Leading Mindfully" is also very good

in exploring how leaders can ground themselves in their physical bodies, and how our five senses can be the doorway to calming our incessant thoughts and being more present in leadership and in life generally.

The thing that I particularly love about Amanda's new book is how she has written it. She even has a chapter on writing mindfully where she explains her aspiration to write in a direct and simple way where individual readers feel like they are being addressed personally at each stage of the writing. I believe she has demonstrated this beautifully in "Leading Mindfully". Amanda has written the book in such a way that the reader is continually and variously invited to become ever more present and mindful while reading the book, and to taste and enjoy its benefits immediately. She does not just want to talk about mindfulness but she attempts to give you an experience of it as well.

"Leading Mindfully" has lots of references to the latest scientific and professional research on the efficacy of mindfulness, and it also provides a good summary of Recommended Reading on the topic.

Let's give Amanda the last word on leading mindfully. She writes: "Leading inevitable involves doing. But it is also a trap and for many of us it's the place to go when we are under pressure or working in ambiguity – the doing is more familiar and sometimes seductive than stopping and being in a place that may feel aimless, confronting or way outside one's usual competence."

"Leading Mindfully" is available in bookstores or directly through Allen & Unwin or with a 15% discount through the on-line Book Depository.