

SUMMARY

DONOTHING

ROB DUBE



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Summary of “donothing” by Rob Dube

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If you’ve ever wondered how meditation can improve your professional success and work-life balance, donothing (2018) will teach you how to unlock your potential and inner peace!

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Introduction

Meditation-- we see it everywhere. From our Instagram feeds to ads around town which extol the benefits of yoga and guided meditation, it seems like everybody's doing it. And chances are, we've all heard someone gush about the impact meditation has had on their personal life or its ability to bring them peace. But we hear a lot less about the relationship between meditation and leadership or its ability to help you become a better employer. So, in this summary, we're going to dive into meditation's role in the business sphere and learn how it can help you strengthen your leadership!

This is a Story of Personal Experience

Unlike a number of personal development books which are written from a primarily theoretical perspective, author Rob Dube's advice stems from his own personal experience with using meditation in his business. This is especially significant because in 1991, when Dube and his friend Joel Pearlman founded imageOne, a company that specialized in recycling toner cartridges from laser printers, meditation was the last thing on his mind. But as of 2004, the company had skyrocketed to boast an annual earning of \$6 million and they had been bought out by a billion-dollar corporation. And even though this deal was meant to make them more successful, the partners soon felt that they had sold out and lost their real vision.

The sense of losing control of his company also made Dube feel as though he was losing his passion for business. And in place of his drive and excitement, he felt a surge of anxiety and fatigue. It was this feeling which motivated him to try meditation. Although his first session started as a simple five-minute exercise he could do without ever leaving his desk chair, it opened the door to a new daily practice that revolutionized his life. And after including meditation as a regular habit in his life, Dube learned that it offered a number of surprising benefits for his mental and physical health.

For starters, he learned that it allowed him to approach his work day with a clear mind and offered him the freedom to disconnect from any distractions which might interrupt him. This, in turn, enables him to be more productive, to access his creativity for the purpose of brainstorming innovative solutions, and to attack the day's problems with a fresh prospective. And in so doing, he's also found liberation from the fear of failure. Unsurprisingly, the ability to relax more and approach your day with a sense of peace was revolutionary and it's something every working professional could benefit from! And although he didn't expect it to have that affect, Dube found that his daily practice of meditation gave him the strength to buy back his company nine months later!

So, now that we've examined a brief overview of the impact meditation can have on your life and business, we're going to dig a little deeper into Dube's personal journey to discover how you can unlock the benefits of meditation for your own career.

Everyone Whens You Listen

Losing his company and taking up meditation were two life-changing experiences for Dube and he allowed them to inform his future decisions once he got his company back. Although he had not yet made a conscious decision to start employing meditation in the workplace as a business strategy, he did know that applying what he'd learned from his own daily practice could get his company off to a smoother start. So, using his newfound clarity of mind, he began re-evaluating his priorities in an effort to determine what mattered most to him. Together with his partner, Dube decided that the core values of his business included creating a positive company culture, valuing his employees, and making a difference in his community.

This effort at revitalizing their company culture ultimately lead to Dube and Pearlman being featured on a 2017 Forbes' list entitled "Small Giants: America's Best Small Companies." But as amazing as that success was, what mattered most to Dube was the love, effort, and determination he'd put into making his company stronger. And he attributed every bit of that success to meditation. Because his daily practice not only enabled him to turn his company around, it helped him to stay calm and maintain a successful course even in the face of adversity. One of the most notable examples of meditation's power in action occurred in 2014 when the company suddenly started flailing. The alarming discovery that they were going to miss their sales targets prompted a number of "panic meetings" among the executives, but Dube didn't feel panicky at all!

Because his regular meditation sessions kept him calm, clear, and collected, he had the peace of mind to brainstorm new solutions, including the bold new idea to switch to open-book finances. This new form of transparency meant that the company's balance sheets and income statements would now be shared with everyone on the team, which meant that everyone would feel included and have the freedom to offer suggestions for improvement. By including extra perspectives, Dube found that he could

increase the flow of possible solutions and improve his company culture-- and it worked! The new input meant that they were not only able to turn the company around, but they hit record-breaking revenue targets in 2016 and 2017!

And in so doing, Dube also learned a lesson about the power of attention. Because meditation enabled him to be more present in meetings and really listen to what everyone was saying, Dube discovered that developing his listening skills was crucial to the company's success. Because one of his core values was making his employees feel important, he recognized that listening to them was a vital part of that. He also learned that, because feeling heard is a basic human need, giving someone your undivided attention isn't doing them a favor-- it's giving them the basic courtesy they deserve.

As such, listening is a form of empowerment; the more Dube demonstrated his willingness to listen to his employees, the more valued they felt. This inspired them to speak up and brainstorm solutions and the whole company benefited from it. So, as you can see, when you lead by listening, everyone wins!

Meditation is Backed by Science

Meditation's popularity on social media can give the perception that it's nothing more than just a fad, but it's actually so much more! In fact, it's even backed by science! So, let's take a look at some of the data which supports the power of meditation. For example, a 2015 study conducted by the Pepperdine University School of Business revealed that a person's attention and concentration can be radically improved by just a few hours of mindfulness. This is uniquely beneficial because statistics estimate that our brains spend 50% of our waking hours bouncing from daydreams to distractions. If we could harness our brains' energy through mindfulness and channel our concentration onto more productive things, we could truly optimize our productivity!

But as great as that sounds, the benefits of meditation don't stop at increasing our focus. A 2011 study conducted by Harvard University used MRI scans to demonstrate that after only two months of practicing mindfulness, the subjects showed increased density in the amount of gray matter in their hippocampus, the area of the brain associated with memory and learning.

So, if we consider these benefits-- increased attention, sharpened focus, and an improved ability to learn and remember information-- it's no surprise that meditation has the power to maximize our productivity! And if a workplace institutes a holistic mindfulness practice which requires everyone-- from the CEO to the janitor-- to practice a little bit of meditation, just imagine what your company could accomplish!

Meditation Offers a Number of Personal Benefits Too

Now that we've taken a look at the lesser-known benefits of meditation in the workplace, let's explore the impact it can have on our personal lives. One of the most amazing elements of meditation is its ability to heal any part of our lives from everyday work stress to deep personal trauma. For example, many soldiers have found meditation invaluable in combating the stress and trauma brought on by active warfare. Similarly, many veterans have found it helps them cope with the lasting after-effects of PTSD. These benefits of meditation have been studied by Holly Richardson and Matt Jarman, who work with cadets at the Virginia Military Institute. One of their primary classes involves teaching cadets meditation and Richardson and Jarman believe that meditation gives new recruits a valuable toolkit for preventing trauma.

Their work is supported by a wide array of studies which have reported that when active-duty soldiers practice meditation, they are calmer and more prepared for the trauma of war. They're also better equipped for fighting off early-onset symptoms of PTSD and thus reducing the overall impact of trauma on their lives. It works by helping soldiers to recognize the onset of flashbacks and enables them to bring themselves back to reality in a safe and non-disruptive manner that prevents them from experiencing a traumatic episode.

And if this is how meditation can help with the horrors of war, imagine what it can do for other forms of trauma! Dube has experienced these benefits firsthand in his experience with marathons. The sense of calm and clarity inspired by meditation is especially helpful during what is known as the "taper period," or the phase of marathon preparation in which runners begin to hold back and run fewer miles during training to conserve their energy. This phase can often generate spikes in anxiety which decreases a runner's overall speed and wellbeing, so Dube has found meditation invaluable in combating anxiety during this period. But as a survivor of the

Boston Marathon bombing in April 2013, Dube has also drawn heavily on meditation to help him recover from this trauma and find the strength to run the New York Marathon a mere seven months later.

Meditation in Practice

Now that we've taken a look at the comprehensive benefits of meditation, let's examine some practical ways you can apply it in your daily life. The first step to any successful session is to make sure it's uninterrupted; after all, it's pretty tough to find inner peace if you're being disturbed every five seconds. So, seek out a quiet corner of your own at home (or even a supply closet at work if need be!) and close the door. Once you've established your safe haven, the next step is to find a comfortable position. Many people enjoy sitting cross-legged on a meditation pillow, and Dube finds this works best for him too, as it helps him to feel more grounded and connected to the earth. But if that's not your thing, don't sweat it; there are many other positions that can work for you.

However, as you seek your ideal position, keep in mind that you're looking for comfort, not relaxation. So, while you don't want to be on pins and needles, you also don't want to be sprawled out or slouching in your chair. In fact, the very best posture for meditation involves sitting upright while avoiding extremes of rigidity or floppiness. Point your chin toward your chest so that your eyes are aimed slightly downward. Whether you keep your eyes open or closed is up to you. Once you're settled, start by taking stock of your body and how you feel in it. Note the positioning of your feet, legs, and bottom in relation to the ground and consider whether you feel connected to the earth.

From there, the next step is take note of your breathing. Pay close attention to each inhale and feel the breath coming into your nose and down through your lungs. Feel your body expand with the intake of air and lean into the release as you exhale. You may find yourself being interrupted or distracted by thoughts, especially early on, but that's okay; don't attempt to fight the thoughts as they come. Instead, just gently refocus your attention back to your breath and continue this process for the remainder of your session.

Develop a Regular Practice

If you've ever played sports, you might find it helpful to think of meditation as a muscle. And just like a muscle, it has to be exercised regularly in order to avoid atrophy. That's why developing a regular meditation practice isn't just a good idea, it's absolutely crucial. So, here are a few helpful tips for sticking with it. As a manager or business leader, you probably already know the importance of setting goals and sticking with them. So, why not do the same in your practice of motivation? Start with a simple goal like sitting down for 20 minutes of meditation every day for three weeks. You probably already know that it takes 21 days to form a habit, so if you can stick with this goal, you'll be helping yourself to cultivate a healthy habit. And as we all know, once something becomes a routine, it's easier to stick with it! So, start by forming a meditation habit, even if it's small.

You can help your habit develop by setting some consistent boundaries like sticking to a regular time and place for practicing your meditation. Many people find that meditating in your bedroom first thing in the morning is a great way to start the day! Once you find your routine and your spot, it's also helpful to remember that consistency is key, even in small doses. If you find that it's too difficult to do 20 minutes right away, start with 15 or even 10. And even if you're only capable of finding one mindful minute on some days, that's okay too! The important thing is that you practice some form of meditation each day, no matter how small.

Final Summary

We often hear a great deal about the benefits of meditation for your personal life, but studies-- and the personal experience of author Robe Dube-- demonstrate that meditation can help you achieve tremendous results in your career as well. By leading with mindfulness, encouraging your employees to engage in meditation as well, and remembering to practice a little bit of meditation every day, you can overcome stress, fear, and anxiety and replace them with clarity, creativity, and calm.



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