Narelle Lemon · Sharon McDonough
Editors

Mindfulness in the Academy

Practices and Perspectives from Scholars

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ISBN 978-981-13-2142-9 ISBN 978-981-13-2143-6 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018950944

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Singapore Pte Ltd.
The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Foreword

Since their origins in the tenth century, universities have championed knowledge creation, teaching, research and knowledge transfer. While honouring this heritage, today universities also accept the central role they play in generating the knowledge needed to navigate our future. In this context, bringing the science of the mind into university work is crucial.

When applied, the science of mind has been shown to improve our decision-making, creativity, focused attention, perspective-taking, deep thinking and collaborative engagement. This science has implications for those working in organisations—including in universities.

While there is still much to learn about the processes of the human brain and how the mind evaluates our behaviour and influences our actions, advances in the science of the mind have already made it clear that improving our levels of self-awareness and emotion regulation are important developmental skills.

Mindfulness is now the subject of numerous research investigations and science is showing that when we can consciously manage our breathing patterns, emotions, thoughts and physiology, such as our heart rate variability, we are able to calm ourselves and take more considered action.

However, as this volume notes, mindfulness has also been the subject of criticism—sometimes tagged 'McMindfulness' as a condemnation of its mainstream nature, its marketing as a commodity, and in some instances because it has moved away from its ethical origins. The authors themselves recognise this shortcoming by referencing the neuroscience of mind awareness and perspective-taking. This research acknowledges the benefits of this new learning not only for individual personal development but also for wider organisational and social development.

Therefore, this volume of essays is very timely—coming as it does from university academics and administrators reflecting on how their mindful practices inform their work. These thoughtful essays outline the many ways in which they are engaging in mindful practices including for their own professional development, in collaborations with their peers and employees, in knowledge transfer with government departments, professional associations, industry, other universities and research institutions, and in teaching their students.

Research indicates that the human mind has continued to evolve and we are more intelligent now than ever before. For example, one measure of IQ, the Flynn effect, tells us a person whose IQ is considered average today, would have tested in the top 2% of IQ only 80 years ago.

This does not mean we are wise, however, far from it. The reason for that, psychologists tell us, is that we now have a mind capable of overthinking and ruminating. Our 'new brain' sits over an ancient survival emotion regulation system. This combination can cause us undue stress, if we do not have the practices to calm ourselves.

The concept of mind is complex, and the mindful practices described in this volume derive from many disciplines including psychology, evolutionary biology, neuro-education, leadership, management theory and neuroscience.

These essays contribute to this accumulating knowledge—by demonstrating how the skills and motivations of mindful awareness are crucial in growing our levels of self-awareness and emotional intelligence, and how the capacity of the brain to develop informs the learning process.

I was invited to write this Foreword as someone who has long worked in academic and knowledge transfer roles in universities; and as the Founder of the Mindful Futures Network. This Network was established to inform, inspire and connect those who are working to apply:

- the science of mindfulness—which delivers improved mental clarity and emotional health,
- the competency of empathy—which delivers improved perspective-taking for better connections with others and
- the motivation of compassion—which delivers the capacity to see and respond to the suffering of others and ourselves.

The Network has connected with leading universities across the world working in this research field, including the Oxford Mindfulness Centre, Oxford University; Compassionate Mind Foundation, University of Derby, Centre for Positive Organisations, University of Michigan; Greater Good Science Centre, UC Berkeley; and Centre for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, and, Stanford University.

Indeed, the University of Massachusetts Medical School has just announced the creation of a new division dedicated to the academic study of mindfulness. The Division of Mindfulness, the first of its kind, encompasses the university's existing Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society, started by Jon Kabat-Zinn in the 1980s.

These universities are finding that mindful skills and motivations are exactly those needed for today's global world. Mindfulness and empathy are often referred to as 'soft skills'—but in reality these skills are anything but 'soft'—they take emotional intelligence and courage. It is time to rename the skills of mind awareness, empathic perspective-taking and compassion as other than 'soft'. The noted

UK psychologist Prof. Paul Gilbert is on the record as saying that 'compassion is the courage to descend into the reality of the human experience'.

What I like about the reflections in these essays is their recognition that by better shaping our social interactions and improving the complex decision-making processes now required, it is possible to create universities that offer the psychological safety necessary to nurture the deep thinking and creativity of their staff and students.

Looking inside ourselves is difficult and many people find stillness very challenging. In reflecting on their own experiences, the authors in this book give us their personal stories of resolution to become more self-aware, not as an end in itself, but as the editors' note, 'to enable us all to be more humane and compassionate in developing more mindful systems and organisations'.

I congratulate the editors Narelle Lemon and Sharon McDonough for the foresight they have shown in conceiving and producing this book. It is a timely and important contribution to the application of mind awareness within a vital sector. Universities are key to shaping and creating our future leaders and thinkers, and in determining the ways in which the world evolves. In this age of social media where years of research inquiry can be equated to someone's opinion, it is crucial that those working in universities are developing and applying these skills and motivations.

Mind awareness is important not only for the individual well-being of those working within institutions of higher education but also in guiding the personal reflection and practices that will enable and empower positive organisational change within the academy, so that it can make its rightful contribution to the knowledge creation and knowledge transfer needed in the world today.

Ballarat, Australia Dr. Lynne Reeder
March 2018

Acknowledgements

Creating an edited volume can be both a challenging and a rewarding process, and as we outline in this volume, we were fortunate that this book contained more rewards than challenges. This is due to the wonderful academic community of writers and reviewers who have been part of bringing this volume to life. Without their honest and compelling writing, their attention to deadlines and their willingness to share their knowledge, this volume would not have come to fruition.

Thanks also must go to Nick Melchior at Springer for his enthusiasm for the volume and for his prompt advice and support.

Bringing an edited book to life cannot happen without the support of family, and both of us would like to thank our partners, Rohan and Mat, for their ongoing love, support and encouragement.

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Chapter 1
Mindfulness in the Academy: An Examination of Mindfulness Perspectives

Sharon McDonough and Narelle Lemon

Abstract In a complex and demanding higher education, environment wellness for scholars is an ethical imperative and is an essential component of self-care, required to prevent burnout, distress, and impairment. As we navigate the contemporary higher education environment, it is important to look at ways of working that bring to the forefront self-care and mindfulness. In this chapter, we explore how scholars understand and apply the concept of mindfulness in higher education contexts. We examine ways academics implement mindfulness practices that build the capacity to accept, tolerate and transform mind and body states without reacting so intensively to them by drawing on concepts such as compassion, kindness, gratitude, curiosity, self-awareness and non-judgmental stances. We explore how mindful ways of researching, writing, learning and teaching, leading and engaging with others leads us to be self-aware and engaged in the present. We introduce the notion of Dramaturgical Theory of Social Interaction as a framework for examining mindful practices in academia. This chapter presents a thematic analysis of the work of the authors presented in this volume, situating this in a broader discussion of mindfulness, and we raise questions for further consideration.

1.1 Introduction

There can be little doubt that higher education institutions (HEIs) globally have experienced massive changes in the past three decades that have impacted on the work practices of academics. New public management has introduced: corporate governance structures; strategic plans; performance management; quality assurance

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_1

processes; a client-focused approach to students and curriculum; a commodification of higher education that has seen an unprecedented growth in international student numbers; increased levels of administrative tasks carried out by academics; and demands on research and funding, all of which have contributed to increases in burnout, mental health issues and expectations surrounding workload. Mountz et al. (2015) contend that increasing work demands on academics result in a "psychic and physical toll that is neither reasonable nor sustainable" (p. 1237), with this illuminating the need for a disruption "in today's frenetic and constantly changing higher education environment" where "faculty and professional staff are in need of balance in their lives" (Beer et al., 2015, p. 161). Mindfulness helps interrupt this way of being and begins to place a spotlight on how we as scholars work, and provides opportunities for changing how we work. When integrated, it offers opportunities for contemplation and feelings of stability in the present moment that encourage an openness of mind to new concepts and a deepening of understanding of research, scholarship of learning, and leadership (Beer et al., 2015; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Ryan, 2013; Wang & Cranton, 2012). The reality for higher education staff in the current contemporary climate is that they are subject to high levels of stress and uncertainty, and this leads to critique and questioning of this way of being, along with a need for a transformation in how we work. As Berg and Seeber (2016) remind us, psychological wellness as scholars is an ethical imperative and is an essential component of self-care, thus preventing burnout, distress and impairment. It is not something 'extra' or 'nice to do'. Self-care is worthy of our attention.

This collection, *Mindfulness in the Academy: Practices and Perspectives from Scholars*, explores the way that academics understand, embrace and enact the concepts of mindfulness in approaching their work in demanding and dynamic environments. Mindfulness is the experience of the present moment. When being mindful you approach experiences with curiosity, rather than judgement. Mindful living is about bringing self-awareness into as much of your life as possible—personal and professional. Mindfulness is about making what you are doing right now the most important thing. Mindfulness brings us to the present, rather than being focused on the past or the future, it focuses us on being present in our interactions, relationships and work practices. Through mindfulness, we can bring awareness to what is happening in our lives, and our work. It is based on accepting and embracing the now, the present and coming to know in great detail all the aspects of self. We do this without rejecting the uncomfortable, shameful or embarrassing parts. Mindfulness practice builds the capacity to accept, tolerate and transform mind and body states without reacting so intensively to them. Compassion, kindness gratitude and curiosity are integral to experiences with self and others, with mindfulness training us to respond skilfully to what is happening right now, be that good, bad or indifferent.

In relation to higher education and the academy, discussions about mindfulness and mindful practices are expanding "not coincidentally, as the scientific research on mindfulness is expanding and producing results relevant to teaching, learning, and knowing" (Bush, 2013, p. 183). There are emerging trends focusing on mindfulness and academic success specially for the student in transition (Dantiz & Orsillo,

2014; Tillot, O'Donnell, Harper, & Leinonen, 2015), in the higher education classroom (Block-Lerner & Cardaciotto, 2016), for academic success to reduce stress and anxiety, to improve focus and more efficient study (Health and Wellbeing, Monash University, 2017; McCloskey, 2015), and with meditation offering an interruption to the fast-paced presumption of knowledge production and consumption (Ramsburg & Yumans, 2013).

As scholars and academics, mindfulness also has an integral part in our roles as researchers, educators, leaders and in the way we perceive our identities and practices as academics. Scholars are interested in the calming, quieting and focusing qualities of mindfulness that help reduce stress and promote being present in the context of the classroom, within meetings and in relation to leadership, partnerships and engagement, and research. However, little empirical research exists in regards to how this is being done, formally or informally, and the impact it has in regards to disrupting current and often accepted practices of higher education that are in opposition to mindfulness. What is also lacking is ways of understanding how mapping the mindfulness practices of individuals can lead to a collective understanding of how mindfulness as an activist and ethical stance can be applied in higher education contexts.

There is no doubt universities are stressful places (Beer et al., 2015; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Mountz et al., 2015; Ryan, 2013; Sullivan & Weissner, 2010; Wang & Cranton, 2012). As Les Back (2016) in his Academic Diary states

> …[t]here is also a sense of being beleaguered by the changing priorities and systems that aim to audit scholarly value. The pressure to publish, the confidence-withering hierarchies of what is deemed 'cutting edge' or academically worthy all contribute to a kind of extreme vocational anxiety. (p. 9)

Fitzgerald and Gunter (2017) talk about "the 'uberisation' of the field, whereby increased access, rapid delivery, hybridisation, open competition, outsourcing and consumer scrutiny have rapidly become markers for how we ought to engage in creating and sustaining quality approaches to business, including the 'business' of education" (p. 257). Their argument highlights the just in time actions of higher education that result in the increasing pressure that academics experience. Furthermore, McNaughton and Billot (2016) argue that the "deeply personal effects of changing roles, expectations and demands" (p. 646) have been downplayed and that academics engage in constant reconstruction of their identities and work practices. We argue that mindfulness enables us to engage in the complex cognitive and emotional work of higher education.

Adopting a mindful approach as scholars working in and with the academy, our perspectives on mindfulness have different meanings and applications. Some of the authors of this book have an explicit focus on mindfulness practices and explore their understanding of the concept of mindfulness in the space of their lives, while others write less explicitly about mindfulness per se but rather examine the ways that they enact mindful, conscious or intentional practices in their work. We acknowledge that some of our authors do not make explicit connections to the philosophical

underpinnings of mindfulness, however, we regard that as part of the strength of the collection, as it enables readers to see how academics approach their collaborations and work practices, but in ways that are mindful for them individually. For us as editors, this highlights that there is no one right way 'to do' mindfulness, but rather, for some of the academics, being mindful and adopting mindfulness perspectives, is simply being aware of how, and why, they approach their work and their care of self.

Each of the authors in this book has collectively and individually disrupted and considered different ways of working that allow us to connect with our own values, and indeed our identity, as individuals and scholars in mindful ways. This occurs through—changes in practice; management of time; strategic planning and enactment of jobs; how we engage with others; or indeed how we wish to instil our scholarly aura—but for each, there is the existence of being self-aware and being present in the moment. There is an infusing of mindful ways of being in research and writing to support flow, and exploration of mindful leadership practices that support others. It also explores how we are with our self, that is how we try not to be judgmental in our own thinking about how we handled a situation, or how we try to decode a meeting or outcomes that challenges one's values. It is about how we interrupt a way of being in the academy that at times is focused more on how much research income one gains, how many publications are made, who has the highest teaching scores, and who has the highest ranking, rather than at the individual, relationships and community levels, and a mindful practice that simply is not about number of publications, or assessing marks to successful receive funding.

In the context of pressurized university schedules, significant changes in structure and policy, and pressure to research impact on academic life (McAlpine & Åkerlind, 2010) and listening to the voices of scholars assist in illuminating insights and struggles. In carefully looking at how mindfulness in higher education is interpreted, applied and reflected upon, we individually and collectively analyse the lived experiences that are lived, told, retold and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998) as we navigate the complexity of what it means to be a scholar in the twenty-first century. In so doing, we also explore how a mindful approach to higher education might provide a disruption to the system.

1.2 Mindfulness in the Academy

The principles of being accountable, of doing more with less, and being an academic who works across all areas of the workplace, are not new in 2018, yet the intensification of academic work practices are represented as new developments despite these principles having existed for many decades now. What currently exists, however, is a grappling and critique of how to manage academic work and evidence that past practices persist with Cannizzo (2017) reporting that in many younger academics' accounts of their work lives there is an acknowledgement of the discomfort that still takes place in regards to the 'publish or perish' mentality. This reveals the discourse

of accounts "for their career narratives in terms of 'survival'" (p. 104). What exists is a competitive nature within individuals and institutions and a lack of kindness and compassion. There is a lack of kindness to self, kindness from the institution, kindness from the sector and a kindness towards others that is compassionate, forward thinking and underpinned by a self-awareness of what is happening in the present time.

The frenetic pace of life in higher education institutions has led to a focus on the ways in which those working in higher education might integrate the principles and practices of mindfulness into their lives in order to 'slow down'. Beer et al. (2015) question how higher education professionals can bring about transformative learning for students if they do not have the time or scope to support their own creativity and self-renewal. Similarly, Webster-Wright (2013) questions if "there any hope for occasional stillness in the turbulence of contemporary working life?" (p. 557). She argues that incorporating the principles of mindfulness, meditation and reflective practice among those working in higher education, can provide renewed focus, insight and sharpen ideas, by providing the time for stillness and space which is crucial to the creative thinking process in which academics engage. In considering how academics and others working in higher education understand and enact principles of mindfulness in their practice, however, it is important to argue against mindfulness in higher education being appropriated as another performative tool that subdues agency and places the blame for stress purely on the individual.

1.2.1 Mindfulness as an Activist and Ethical Stance

Mindfulness is about being present and being in the moment with Kabat-Zinn (2016) arguing that mindfulness is "awareness, cultivating by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally" (p. 1). Drawing on this definition, mindfulness is about noticing what you are doing, thinking, being and saying at a moment in time. It is a present self-awareness as opposed to a focus on the past or the future. Rather than paying attention in your head to worries, or things that make you anxious, how you would have changed your reaction, or what you said, mindfulness encourages a focus on the now.

One of the key challenges associated with the appropriation of the concept of mindfulness in a range of contexts and settings is that it is "at some risk of losing its meaning" (Kabat-Zinn, 2017, p. 1126). In thinking about mindfulness, it is important to remember that it is not ethically neutral, but rather that a key characteristic of Buddhist mindfulness is that it "is always socially engaged, focused on remedying the causes of worldly suffering and oppression" (Purser & Milillo, 2015, p. 18). While Kabat-Zinn (2017) argues that the 'mainstreaming' of mindfulness "has always been anchored in the ethical framework" (p. 1125), he notes the danger of it being commodified for financial gain by those who do not recognize, or appreciate the ethical foundations that lie at the heart of traditional Buddhist informed mindfulness practices. This danger is addressed by Purser and Milillo (2015) who critique the ways that

understandings of mindfulness are incomplete and they challenge an overemphasis on technique rather than on the ethical foundations and activist stance of traditional practices. They argue that a secular focus on mindfulness, divorced from the ethical, civic and political dimensions of mindfulness leads it to be operationalized in ways that focus solely on the individual. Driscoll and Wiebe (2007) contend that "individualistic and superficial spirituality is reductionistic in that it sees human beings as instrumental ends, 'human resources' to be managed to improve productivity" (p. 339), with Purser and Milillo (2015) arguing that this is the risk mindfulness faces in contemporary society, and particularly within large corporations. The rise of *McMindfulness* (Purser & Loy, 2013) results in intervention programmes that are designed to assist employees deal with workplace stress but which do not address or critique the broader structural conditions and inequities which led to employees feeling stressed and overworked in the first place. Rather than seeing mindfulness as a practice for individual stress reduction, it is important to consider the ways that it can be seen as having transformative social potential (Healey, 2013).

Identifying the ways that mindfulness might enable transformation of society, requires moving to asking questions about how we live (Forbes, 2012). These broader questions enable individuals to move beyond a focus on "a permanent independently existing self" (Purser & Milillo, 2015, p. 19) to an examination of the nature of society and organizations that retains a focus on the ethical roots of mindfulness. One of the critiques of the ways that mindfulness has been operationalized as yet another performative measure is associated with the way that understandings and enactment of mindfulness are measured and captured. While there exists a range of psychological scales to measure mindfulness, Purser and Milillo (2015) argue that in-depth interviews and first-person descriptions of subjective experience are also required, along with a focus on institutional level analysis rather than a sole research focus on individual analysis. Similarly, Forbes (2012) argues that we need to express and make explicit what mindfulness is. In this book, we draw on the narratives and experiences of individuals in order to develop a collective understanding of the ways that mindfulness practices are understood and enacted by those working in higher education and to explore what potential such practices offer for the transformation of the system more broadly.

Morrissey (2015) argues that "the first challenge in reworking conditioned agency is recognising it" (p. 628) and goes on to contend that "if we wish to successfully respond to the forms of neoliberal governmentality inflecting universities everywhere today, we must work together to insist upon, author and enact alternative subjectivities" (p. 630). The integration of mindfulness practices and of the ethical, activist foundations of mindfulness offers the potential for those working in higher education to first become aware of their own agency and to enact alternative subjectivities. In this book, we present narratives of those who are actively constructing new subjectivities that act as a form of productive resistance (Courpasson, Dany, & Clegg, 2012) and disruption to the dominant discourse of higher education.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In structuring chapters for this book, we have drawn upon Erving Goffman's (1959) notion of Dramaturgical Theory of Social Interaction to try and explain why we do what do we in our work in higher education, by means of comparing us to actors in a theatrical presentation (including using analogies with drama for analysing social interaction such as actors, scripts, props, backstage, etc.). This has formed the theoretical framework for how each author has examined their interpretation and implementation of mindfulness in all or part of their scholarly life. The dramaturgical approach allows each author to realize how when we act as 'scholars', we worry about our 'audience' and how they will judge our performance to see if we will slip up and show how we really act 'behind the scenes'. Through employing this framework, we question if our personal disruption of the stress associated with the contemporary higher education context requires us to stop and take on mindful practices in order to change experiences or to bring a sense of being present more so to the forefront of our professional lives. We also explore how mindful practices in academia might foster a sense of connection and empathy with our colleagues, enable a transformation of the system and enable us to bring our authentic selves to our work as academics and scholars.

We invited authors to respond to the following questions as they considered the way they enact mindful practices in their work:

(1) What experiences have you encountered that caused you to pause and consider your work in more mindful ways?
(2) What do we do to survive and prosper in academia?
(3) How do you enact mindfulness in your practice as an academic? What are the possibilities of this focus?

Each chapter is presented in the same format and shares a lived experience in relation to how we have each applied practices and perspectives of mindfulness in our work as academics. The outline as to how each author approach their chapter is provided, along with overarching questions to trigger show you how each author engaged with their lived experience.

1.3.1 Structure of Chapters

Abstract

Introduction

Outline of the lived experience and setting of the context. This is connected to a stress authors have noticed in relation to any aspect of working in higher education.

Literature

Situates the chapter within the relevant fields.

Performance

Goffman (1959) uses the term 'performance' to refer to all the activity of an individual in front of a particular set of observers, or audience. Through this performance, the individual, or actor, gives meaning to themselves, to others and to their situation. These performances deliver impressions to others, which communicates information that confirms the identity of the actor in that situation. The actor may or may not be aware of their performance or have an objective for their performance, however, the audience is constantly attributing meaning to it and to the actor. Some of the prompt questions for authors were:
What has been your 'stress'? What have you had to disrupt? What experiences have you encountered that caused you to pause and consider your work in more mindful ways? How can you extend your broad overview to your stress?

Setting

The setting for the performance includes the scenery, props and location in which the interaction takes place. Different settings will have different audiences and will thus require the actor to alter his performances for each setting. Some of the prompt questions for authors were:
Without naming the institution, describe the type of scene you work in, that is, type of institution/space, work, who with, expectations, hidden stories, problems, overarching or specific stresses, disruption required in something relevant for you, audiences, etc. *in relation to your stress. How can you provide the context*?

Appearance

Authors were invited to consider how appearance functions to portray to the audience the performer's social status. Appearance also tells us of the individual's temporary social state or role, for example, whether they are engaging in work (by wearing a uniform), informal recreation, or a formal social activity. Here, dress and props serve to communicate things that have socially ascribed meaning, like gender, status, occupation, age and personal commitments. Some of the prompt questions for authors were:
We question if our personal disruption of the stress associated with the contemporary higher education context requires us to stop and take on mindful practices in order to change experiences or to bring a sense of being present more so to the forefront of our professional lives? How does your appearance influence this? What do we do in order to survive and prosper in the setting? How is mindfulness possible in this setting? How do mindful practice(s) in academia support the fostering of a sense of connection and empathy with our colleagues, and enable us to bring our authentic selves to our work as academics and scholars? What do you have to consciously do? How do you enact your appearance? Does your appearance change depending on the setting and who you are working with?

Manner

Manner refers to how the individual plays the role and functions to warn the audience of how the performer will act or seek to act in a role (for example, dominant, aggressive, receptive, etc.). Inconsistency and contradiction between appearance and manner may occur and will confuse and upset an audience. This can happen, for example, when one does not present themselves or behave in accordance with their perceived social status or position. Some of the prompt questions for authors were: *In thinking about your stress and the conscious decision to be mindful, what strategies do you use and why? What does being mindful in academia mean to you? How have you had to negotiate your manner? Can you be specific with the strategies and unpack how you use them and the impact on your stress/lived experience?*

Front

The actor's front, as labelled by Goffman (1959), is the part of the individual's performance which functions to define the situation for the audience. It is the image or impression he or she gives off to the audience. A social front can also be thought of as a script. Certain social scripts tend to become institutionalized in terms of the stereotyped expectations it contains. Certain situations or scenarios have social scripts that suggest how the actor should behave or interact in that situation. If the individual takes on a task or role that is new to them, he or she may find that there are already several well-established fronts from among which they must choose. According to Goffman (1959), when a task is given a new front, or script, we rarely find that the script itself is completely new. Individuals commonly use pre-established scripts to follow for new situations, even if it is not completely appropriate or desired for that situation. Some of the prompt questions for authors were:
When has your new approach not worked? What triggers have occurred for you? What rethinking have you had to do? Does your front change according to different settings or people you engage with? Do you have to prepare a script (self-talk) to assist you disrupt your stress? How has this worked/changed/developed? When has your new approach confronted others?

Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

In stage drama, as in everyday interactions, according to Goffman (1959), there are three regions, each with different effects on an individual's performance: front stage, back stage, and offstage. The front stage is where the actor formally performs and adheres to conventions that have particular meaning for the audience. The actor knows he or she is being watched and acts accordingly. (*What are the conversations and strategies that come into play here? How do you move your approach to academia forward? How do you manage stress?).*

When in the back stage region, the actor may behave differently than when in front of the audience on the front stage. This is where the individual truly gets to be herself and get rid of the roles that she plays when she is in front of other people.

Finally, the offstage region is where individual actors meet the audience members independently of the team performance on the front stage. Specific performances may be given when the audience is segmented as such. Some of the prompt questions for authors were:
How do you keep moving forward? How do you keep growing? How do you keep trialling and implementing your mindful practice? What are the conversations and strategies that come into play here? How do you move your approach to academia forward? How do you manage stress—is it ongoing, has it changed? Do you have conversations with trusted colleagues or others about how you are progressing? How are you at the front of stage, compared to the back and offstage? Do you notice a difference between your professional and personal life?

1.4 Mindfulness in the Academy: A Thematic Analysis

In curating this edited book, we have identified key themes that represent the mindful practices that each of the authors have shared. Through using Erving Goffman's (1959) notion of Dramaturgical Theory of Social Interaction as a structure for sharing narratives of experience, authors have been able to identify stress points and resolutions that are informed by both informal and formal mindful practices. In this section of the chapter, we present our thematic analysis of the chapters within the collection and offer questions to encourage readers to reflect on their own experiences and practices.

1.4.1 Integrity, Ethics and Care

Adopting an ethic of care for self is explored in the chapters by both Chang, and Wilson (this volume) and each of the authors engages in deeply personal and reflective writing to share their mindfulness journeys and practices. In so doing, they are able to share the ways they have enacted care for self and have adopted practices and actions which are aligned with their personal values and sense of integrity. In her chapter, Wilson examines the way that mindful practices have enabled her to come to deeper understanding of her authentic self. The discomfort of moving from being a PhD student to an early career researcher is illuminated in her chapter and the formation and shifting boundaries associated with being both ambitious and a perfectionist are shared. Her description of her journey as a doctoral student highlights the multifaceted pressures that doctoral students face and which are reflected in the literature (see for example Goller & Harteis, 2014; Hunter & Devine, 2016). The pressure to present a capable and confident self that may be at odds with what is internally felt, can lead to dissonance for the individual, with Wilson highlighting the impacts that this can have on mental health and physical wellbeing, an experience of being in the higher education environment that is likely to resonate with many readers. She

presents a range of intentional mindful strategies that enabled her to reclaim an authentic self, with her chapter presenting powerful visual images that provide the reader with an insight into her journey. As Wilson argues "A mindful practice and inward observation brings a way of experiencing perpetual clarity and a sensation of expansion" (this volume). Through these intentional practices, she contends that the difference in selves, "between the front stage and back stage, the performer and audiences, the one and the many, all merge to present a consistent and coherent expression of existence" (Wilson, this volume).

Chang too considers personal mindfulness practice and does this through the lens of epistemologies of change to examine how mindfulness "can inform periods of stress and intolerable pressure in university work" (Chang, this volume). Through exploring particular mindfulness approaches and practices which are grounded in Buddhist philosophies, Chang presents an argument for the ways mindfulness can be used to care for others, but in keeping with her Buddhist underpinnings of mindfulness, Chang also seeks ways to improve the world and conditions for others. She presents the intentional practices that she draws upon and offers suggestive possibilities of ways a mindful practice might inform care of self particularly in times of institutional change, arguing that "our breath, our practice is always available. We have the freedom to pause" (Chang, this volume).

In considering ways to maintain integrity in our practices, an authenticity of self and care of self and others we ask:

How do we approach mindful practices in higher education?
How might we use our mindful practices to improve the conditions and experiences of others?
How might mindfulness empower us and enable us to align our authentic selves?
What mindful strategies might we enact in order to bring ourselves back to the present?
What opportunities exist for drawing on mindfulness practices to enable us to identify our authentic versus a presented self?

1.4.2 Becoming, Identity and Professional Transitions

The position of self, becoming and identity is revealed in each of these chapters. The trajectory of becoming an academic is varied, and the chapters in this section provide insights into these different journeys—from industry located in different industries and disciplines, and across institutions. Being an academic ignites ongoing identity work with the nature of the higher education environment making it a necessity. Almost on a daily basis our roles, responsibilities and the work, we carry out requires looking at self—where are we, what are we doing, whom is impacting us, what is required? It is a push and pull experience; with Pinnegar (2005) arguing that professional identity is fluid and dynamic and consists of different roles where "we respond to the space available by accepting, rejecting, or negotiating that role through

the way we position ourselves in the space or shape the space to reflect our identity" (p. 260). In each of these chapters, we see the ways that the authors have positioned themselves within a changing space of higher education and the way that mindful perspectives mediate their identity.

The conversational nature of the chapter by Binder, Martin and Schwind (this volume) models a mindful collaboration that explores the nature of becoming, identity and professional transitions. This has been a conscious action by the authors and illuminates how it takes time to find like-minded colleagues within higher education, who are positioned within and across institutions and disciplines, and who align to similar values and vision. At the heart of this work is a philosophy of connection, caring, relationship and collaboration that scaffolds professional, and indeed personal, being and becoming via a spirit of generosity. Binder, Martin and Schwind's is an approach that draws on the importance of mindfulness practices (Hanh, 2009; Hanh & Weare, 2017) for their self-care, as well as a consideration of how they bring this awareness to the students they each engage within teaching-learning encounters. This chapter addresses ways of approaching interconnected collegial and restorative experiences with others and of disrupting what is possible with mindful practices. It encourages and engages others to consider "mindful and creative performance to encourage self-care and wellbeing" (Binder, Martin & Schwind, this volume).

In her chapter, Vigurs (this volume) considers her ongoing identity construction as an academic and explores how the mindful use of social media has shaped her sense of a community in academia. She highlights the deleterious impacts of an increasingly intensified higher education environment and contends that networking provides an "antidote to working in an increasingly accelerated and pressurised system" (Vigurs, this volume). Vigurs examines the tensions that exist in using social media in mindful ways that do not exacerbate feelings of intensification, and that support self-care and the development of supportive online communities. Her description of exploring Twitter during the "liminal spaces of my academic day" (Vigurs, this volume) is a powerful image that encourages others to consider where the liminal spaces of academic work might lie and how mindful approaches to practice might be employed in these spaces.

Morrison's chapter (this volume) also highlights the ongoing identity work and construction carried out by academics, particularly when they have to carry out multiple roles and meet the needs of a number of stakeholders. His role is focused on collaborations and relationship building, primarily in association to the place and value of professional experience (or work integrated learning) in teacher education, something which has been the subject of scrutiny in national government reviews within Australia (Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG], 2014). In this role, there is a need to form relationships with external educational providers, schools and educational settings within the community, and the need to align outcomes for various stakeholders. Being the facilitator of these relationships is exciting but difficult as there are multiple needs, wants and assumptions that need to be negotiated. Morrison (this volume) brings to the forefront the continual transition between settings (Professional Experience Programmes) and performances (roles within initial teacher education), and how his manner and appearance can be a source of tension.

He examines how these tensions lead him to adopt practices that we might consider informal mindful strategies as he argues that "Mindful practice in this context and in this point in time now means remaining reliably focused on the meaning and purpose I derive from my work. This means returning to what attracted me to initial teacher education in the first place" (Morrison, this volume). There is a revealing of what is required at the front of the stage versus at the backstage or offstage—the hidden stories that impact mindful practices and decisions about ways to best enact personal values in changing contexts, and with colleagues.

In an attempt to uncover the hidden stories that impact mindful practices, we invite readers to consider the following questions:

How can your identity formation slow down the hectic and frantic pace of academia?
What does being present look like and feel like in higher education?
What does care for ourselves and the students we engage with look like?
How does passion engage you and others?
How can mindful practices, care and compassion, be a part of the scholarship of learning and teaching?
What can we learn from our discomfort? How do we create safe places?
What does it mean, and how can we learn from experiences, when the authentic self is challenged?
How can we use social media to develop authentic and collegial networks that support care for self and others? What are the tensions that exist in using social media platforms as part of regular academic practice?

1.4.3 Collegiality, Collaboration and Relationships

Collegiality, collaboration and relationships are an imperative to our roles as academics. They highlight the vocational aspect of our roles that is connected to the social—working with people, training and guiding actions, working in groups and teams, cooperation, morale, care, harmony and being good listeners. In our analysis of chapters relating to this theme, we identify that each author presents a different perspective and offers approaches to the formation and maintenance of relationships. Authors highlight ways they seek collegial support, a sense of belonging and a safe place within the context of the institution to express themselves openly and honestly—to share vulnerabilities—and to feel cared about in the work they carry out. The development of these collegial relationships and collaborations is at odds with a neoliberal system that has a focus on the individual (Manathunga, Selkrig, Sadler, & Keamy, 2017).

Taylor and Klein's chapter presents a feminist epistemology of friendship in academia and they explore the way their collaboration has enabled them to navigate their experiences within and beyond the walls of the institution. Taylor and Klein describe the way their "epistemology of friendship empowers us to disrupt the institution" and assert their use of self-care as a "mantra" (Taylor & Klein, this

volume). They are "committed to caring for one another in our personal and professional lives and believe that doing so has the potential to nurture" (Taylor & Klein, this volume), a nurturing that is sorely required in a higher education environment that according to Lynch (2010) suggests a carelessness for self and others.

In her chapter, Lemon takes up the notion of what mindful research collaborations might look like in the game-like landscape of higher education driven on competition, stating that she is "learning how to mindfully collaborate in a competitive environment" (Lemon, this volume). Using the analogy of the *Hunger Games*, she advocates for a more ethical, authentic and caring framing of collaborations, arguing that "I've been looking for a through line of kindness in my approach to research collaborations" (Lemon, this volume). In describing her own strategies, Lemon encourages readers to rethink their approaches to research collaborations as a means of individual and collective empowerment against a competitive higher education environment.

McPherson and Lemon (this volume) draw on a conversational style to position the act of co-writing and academic writing as a creative practice, arguing that "there is always an abstract, and always a conclusion but it is neither where it begins or ends" (McPherson & Lemon, this volume). The authors' own credentials as artists/practitioners contribute to the argument and they place value on making time to create through playfulness and curiosity and explore how this sits alongside valuing of thinking and problem solving to enable shifting of feelings of being stuck. They describe how mindful attention and the process of writing sits with their relationship of making and curiosity and they draw on powerful metaphors: making and dharma, conversation as part of the creative process, and the notion of *unfinished* as an intentional artistic exploration.

In considering the nature of collegial and collaborative relationships within higher education, we encourage readers to reflect on the following:

What might mindful institutions look like?
How can we collectively support each other in mindful actions?
How can we develop collaborations mindfully?
What mindful practices might we engage into explore our own roles, actions and ways of being in collaborations?

1.4.4 Leadership, Professional Vulnerability and Change

The tensions of being a mindful leader in higher education environments are presented in the chapters from Fotinatos and Tairi, respectively. Finding ways to be an authentic leader while meeting the demands of the system and institution can be challenging and in these chapters, it is possible to identify the way mindful practices enable an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be a leader and to care for both self and others.

Tairi's chapter is a powerful representation of the way mindfulness strategies and the feminist framework of mana wāhine has enabled her to explore and transform

her leadership practice. Her move back to Aotearoa (New Zealand), her country of birth after 27 years provided Tairi with multiple challenges and opportunities. Tairi describes a strong vision for what she wants to be as a leader and the way she wants to use her leadership role to advocate for women and the Indigenous people within her university context. Tairi describes how her use of impression management enables her to be "reflective and intentional in how I interact with others", contending that this "helps me to consciously be both authentic and mindful in leadership" (Tairi, this volume). Similarly to Vigurs (this volume), Tairi uses social media as an intentional practice that "gives leadership a human face, flawed and imperfect but authentic" (Tairi, this volume), and she shares the mindful practices that enable her to cope with the demands of the sector and to be vulnerable and take risks in her role as a leader.

In her chapter, Fotinatos presents a narrative that examines the tensions of being a leader and the impact that leading in challenging environments can have on personal wellbeing. In her chapter, she argues that the implementation of mindfulness practices contributes to the development of a positive perspective enabling leaders to continue to lead despite challenging and dynamic changes to higher education environments. Fotinatos describes her lived experience as a female leader in a central academic development unit, a journey that involved "immense highs and devastating lows" (this volume). She identifies a turning point when she realized that she was not "living or leading mindfully", stating that "My pattern of thought over many years of academia, had led to my extreme self-criticism, impulsive behaviour and pessimistic thought process" (Fotinatos, this volume). In similar ways to Wilson (this volume), Fotinatos describes how her exterior presentation was in stark contrast to her feelings and mindset and led to the intentional use of mindful practices and strategies that enable her to "lead mindfully".

In considering the role of mindful practices and leadership we question:

How can mindfulness be a part of the leadership role?
How can a more holistic approach support us as leaders and others? What is the place of care?
How do we carve out time to be mindful?

1.4.5 Conscious Decisions, Being Present and Voice

Drawing on the principle of mindfulness as having an awareness of the present and being intentional in our interactions and practices, the chapters by Correia and Strehlow, Pinto and Close, and by Bone (this volume), all examine a conscious decision to consider how mindfulness approaches might shape the higher education context. Correia and Strehlow examine how mindful care and compassion in higher education might support and cultivate communities of practice. Taking their own foundations in mindfulness and contemplative practices as the starting point for their work, they consider the question of "how we develop valued qualities" (Correia & Strehlow, this volume) in themselves, colleagues and students. They note the com-

petitive and aggressive culture of higher education that is at odds with their own values which "emphasized present moment stillness, care, compassion and connection" (Correia & Strehlow, this volume). In identifying the need to "practice what we preach" Correia and Strehlow explore the tension of embedding authentic mindful practices that move beyond a quick fix for student and colleague stress, rather they present a conscious decision and intention of mindfulness: "Being mindful in academia to us means adopting a stance of mindful awareness as we engage in the *doing* of academic work" (Correia & Strehlow, this volume).

Similarly, Bone presents an account of a conscious decision to embed a mindful approach to pedagogy in her practice. She argues that "a mindful practice can become a new way of *being* and presents a new way to think, speak and act differently while negotiating an academic role" (Bone, this volume). She contends that yoga is a form of mindfulness practice that enables her to focus on the ethical nature of pedagogy, stating that "Being 'on the mat' as the yogis say, is a democratic and spiritual position that brings ethics and mindfulness together" (Bone, this volume). Her chapter traces the ways in which she makes conscious decisions to be present with her students and with herself, and like many of the authors in this volume (for example Binder, Martin, & Schwind; Correia & Strehlow), the ways she models these for her students.

In their chapter, Pinto and Close adopt a critical sociological mindfulness framework in order to explore the problem of casualization in the contemporary university. They engage in a critique of the individualistic focus on mindfulness that "does nothing to address the structural causes of stress, anxiety and pressure in the university sector" (Pinto & Close, this volume) and look beyond individual approaches to consider "what might happen when we pay mindful attention to the problems of casualisation?" In so doing, their work connects to the Buddhist traditions of mindfulness as an ethical practice and they present a powerful narrative that draws attention to the boundaries between continuing and casual staff and which highlights how mindfulness and contemplative practices may support self-care. They do, however, note that "even a critical sociological mindfulness is no match for the kind of structural, institutional and managerial frameworks that cause so many of the problems of casualisation" (Pinto & Close, this volume). This drawing attention to the persistent, structural challenges of higher education environments is taken up in the questions we present below for readers:

How do we maintain mindful practices in chaotic environments?
How do we develop and support mindful practices and communities?
How might we mindfully approach discussions with those skeptical of the place of mindfulness practices in higher education?
How might we model mindful practices in our interactions with students and with colleagues?
How might mindfulness practices address structural inequalities within higher education contexts?

1.4.6 Resistance, Self-awareness and Being the Change

As Lynch (2010) notes, the contemporary higher education system is predicated on the notion of carelessness, where individuals are assumed not to have care for themselves or others. In this final selection of chapters, the theme of resistance, social justice and being the change are explored. In Khoo's chapter, she examines her mindful decision to resist the pressure to work in intensified and accelerated ways. She provides an insight into the strategies she employs in order to intentionally resist unsustainable work practices, while also considering the challenges facing women in higher education. She contends that "necessary changes in our sector will not come about by training more women to play the game better", but rather argues, "the board on which the game sits must be transformed" (Khoo, this volume). Similarly, McDonough draws upon the analogy of higher education as a machine to argue that those who resist what she describes as the mindless intensification of academia are not glitches in the machine, but rather are glimmers of hope as she suggests they "hold tight and break the machine from the inside" (McDonough, this volume). She examines her personal experiences in teacher education in order to contend that mindful practices and the sharing of stories provide an opportunity to rewrite the scripts of what it means to be an academic in contemporary contexts, and to reclaim an authentic sense of purpose in work. In thinking about the ways, academics might resist the acceleration of their work practices, we pose the following questions:

What does it mean to make mindful decisions to opt in or out of the competitive academic system?
What mindful strategies and practices support healthy and realistic workloads and expectations?
How can adopting mindful practices encourage others to consider their own practices as academics?
How can self-awareness lead to more mindful decision making?

1.5 Conclusion: A Way Forward for Examining Mindfulness in the Academy

There has been a growing rise of academic literature focused on mindfulness (Kabat-Zinn, 2017) and as we have identified there is contestation about the ways in which mindfulness may have been appropriated in Western society and as a tool for neo-liberal agendas. In response to this, Kabat-Zinn (2017) argues that it is too early to tell about the impact of the "mainstreaming of mindfulness in the world" (p. 1125). The perspectives presented in this volume highlight the ways that mindfulness practices have been implemented in intentional and authentic ways for each of the authors. Within their approaches, there are a variety of philosophical viewpoints, a diverse range of practices and different levels of implementation. What unites each of the authors, however, is a desire to bring about meaningful and mindful change and

habits in their work. At the essence of all chapters is an ethical and activist stance of mindfulness where the academics see themselves as empowered to bring about improvement both in their own experiences and in the experiences of others.

The chapters in this collection offer an in-depth view into the lived experience of academics in Australia, New Zealand, UK, Canada and USA. Each of the authors has individually or collectively responded to the provocative questions and theoretical framework provided by us as editors to share vivid stories of what it means to strive to be an academic in the current contemporary climate. This collection provides an insight into the 'job of being an academic' and how people strive to be a caring teacher, a supportive colleague, a compassionate leader and a responsible citizen within the realities of the academy. The collection both celebrates and documents the challenges of being a mindful scholar in an open and honest way. The chapters presented in this collection are the stories of now and are heavily underpinned by reflective practice. We acknowledge that these stories will change and develop over time, as occurs when we reflect in and on action. In all of these chapters what is evident, though, is a connection to remain mindful and whole in the midst of what Jon Kabat-Zinn (2013) describes as "Full Catastrophe Living". The collection as a whole creates an intimate portrayal of western academic life in current times and offers inspiration for readers who seek to live and work mindfully, to nurture what's most alive in them, and to be true to their deepest held aspirations, values, and wants. This is what Kabat-Zinn (2013) illuminates as being mindful, and he contends that it can be done by anyone and that both our health and wellbeing depend on it individually, and, collectively.

Although we celebrate the collection as a first step into placing mindfulness and academia together in ways that extend notions of mindfulness beyond being a Human Resources solution to contemporary issues and tension points, as editors we do acknowledge weaknesses in this collection and wish to place these at the forefront of our text. We note that we write from a privileged stance in the academy, and that what is shared is primarily the experience of white, western, women from the education and the social sciences disciplines. In collating this text, we sought to include culturally and gender diverse perspectives, however, despite being interested in the scope of the text, some of these authors were not able to commit to contribute, whether that be because they were not ready to be visible in their sharing, or because they felt unable to make connections that they felt would be of benefit for the reader. As editors, we acknowledge that the development of multiple perspectives is important work and we seek to address these limitations in future work, while also inviting others to address this and to share their perspectives.

If we question what a future mindful academic might look and feel like, then this collection provides an insight into the multifaceted representation of mindfulness and to the embodied, lived experience of being a mindful academic. The narratives contained in this book offer suggestive possibilities for how mindfulness perspectives and practices might transform the lives of all those involved in higher education.

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Part I
Integrity, Compassion, and Care

Chapter 2
Doormats and Boulders: Uncovering Mindfulness Traits and Wise Discernment During Stressful Experiences in the Academy

Rosemary Chang

Abstract Life is constantly changing. Some changes, including those in the academy, can be very stressful. Mindfulness approaches can be sustaining and enriching, especially during periods of stress. However, situations of precarious employment in universities can not only be stressful, but also outright intolerable. What can mindfulness offer? In this chapter, I draw on contemplative science to explore how our conceptions and practices of mindfulness can inform periods of stress and intolerable pressure in university work. I unpack theoretical frameworks where mindfulness is constructed as a practice, state, trait and/or a life path. I consider personal mindfulness practice through the lens of epistemologies of change, where mindfulness can be constructed as extrinsic or intrinsic to ourselves. I argue that by approaching mindfulness as an intrinsic trait, we can take the pressure off ourselves in terms of the "best" ways to practice. Simply observing non-judgmentally may be enough. Paradoxically, I refer to the "McMindfulness" critique of mindfulness training in the workplace, where a non-judgemental approach could position employees to experience passive exploitation. I argue that the key to deciding between non-doing or action is in our wise discernment, which at salient times can empower a practitioner not to be a "doormat", but instead to sidestep metaphorical "boulders". Throughout this chapter, I weave through my experiences of mindfulness as a personal path including: following daily practice and ritual; using Thich Nhat Hahns' mindfulness pebble as a skilful approach to anger; and supporting LGBTQI + staff and students' legal rights.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_2

2.1 Introduction

Life is constantly changing. Anālayo (2003) argues that in mindfulness approaches, our central task is to notice the change: in ourselves, in those around us, in the world. Some changes are small: a teaching timetable is altered. Some changes are big: you lose your faculty job. And some changes overtake all: your loved one dies.

Change is always with us. I would be going against the grain of change and impermanence, then, to declare in bold letters: this is who I am! Indeed, the Buddhist practitioner, Stone (2017) was so moved by her husband's death that she wrote: "The goal of practice is not shoring up a solid self; it's waking up to the reality of the fluid, ever-changing ground we live on…" (p. 25). It is this ground of change and stress, and related conceptions and approaches to mindfulness practice that I'm exploring in this chapter.

However, I don't have firm answers. I have not completed a traditional three-year Tibetan retreat. I am not a scholar of classical Pali. What I can offer is my experience from a long background studying and practicing Buddhism, working in higher education and, more recently, researching in contemplative studies. I offer my understandings and reflections today, while I also understand life to be a process of learning.

This chapter is rooted in three places. First, the roots stretch down into the very thoughtful text that the editors, Narelle and Sharon, provided authors as a starting point. I engaged deeply with these prompts, right down to my sense of their epistemological underpinnings. This has guided the theoretical discussions in this chapter. For those reading this piece in isolation, Narelle and Sharon provided Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical framework for presenting the self as a basis for the section headings. In some sections, I write directly to the ideas in the Goffman headings, and elsewhere I write against them. Second, this chapter is rooted in my lived experience of mindfulness practice. At times I aspire to share a felt-sense in my "heart-mind" [or *kokoro* in Japanese (Littlefair, 2017, para 1)]. I may not be able to give you a narrative in a straight line. There are reasons for this. While mindfulness is a universal quality, I am drawing from my personal experience, especially of contemporary Buddhism. In turn, Buddhist approaches are built on a distinct "but complimentary" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 147) epistemology or science of knowledge. Traditions (such as Tibetan Mahāyāna Buddhism) can be rigorous, robust and even "muscular" in their logical reasoning (Sharples in Mackenzie, 2003, p. 100), but I have responded best to teachings that translate mindfulness as a feeling. This has been my experience. I hope that through the various strands in this chapter you may gain a sense of these too.

Finally, this chapter is rooted in the sociological tradition of Richardson (2000)—specifically her seminal work on bringing one's whole self to research and academic writing. This chapter is an attempt to respond to Richardson's (1997) question: "How … do we write ourselves into our texts with intellectual and spiritual integrity?" (p. 2). I aspire to write myself, and also to write you—the reader—into this text, because I am approaching mindfulness as a universal, human quality. I am

not positioning myself as an elevated expert in the realm of human experience. We're all in this together. As a result, I am deliberately including two rhetorical techniques: I am using the pronouns I/you/we throughout the text; and I am using a relaxed tone that includes contractions (such as "we're", "can't", or "don't").

In this chapter, I include a criss-cross of personal narratives, theoretical discussions and lived examples of mindfulness practice. These are offered in an interwoven, tapestry approach. I draw on the knowledge fields of contemplative science, Buddhist studies and psychoanalysis. I discuss multiple meanings of "mindfulness". I argue that by engaging in practices that bring out the trait of mindfulness, we can influence our experiences of stress. I explore how our understandings of change through mindfulness might influence the timing of mindfulness practice. I describe a particular mindfulness approach for use during periods of angry stress, specifically Thich Nhat Hanh's mindfulness pebble. I discuss the stresses of precarious employment conditions in the academy. In this context, I explore the use of wise discernment to move into action—as opposed to a "non-doing", passive acceptance sometimes called "McMindfulness". I also broadly describe my approach to practice.

First, let me introduce myself. I was born and currently live in Melbourne, Australia. I am in my mid-40s. Apart from one year in corporate training, I have served my working life in the academy. My career spans roles at five Australian, public universities as a lecturer, researcher or academic developer. In addition, as an undergraduate student, I worked as a faculty receptionist and office manager.

Alongside stresses in university work, viewed through the lens of social inequality, I'm writing from positions of both privilege and disadvantage. As a non-white person, I experience disadvantages due to the effects of structural inequality (McIntosh, 1988). Nevertheless, my attributes of unearned privilege include being located as a middle-class, cisgender, non-disabled and postgraduate-educated person. In the context of this piece, my privilege is evident in the opportunity to work in universities, and I will return to this theme.

Change, the stress of change and insecure employment have been common threads in my work. The largest changes involve jobs ending. Sometimes I have left positions through choice, but other times I have been forced to leave due to lack of work and redundancies. In parallel to my working life, I am also a student and practitioner of Buddhism, partly—if unexpectedly—due to being raised Catholic.

2.1.1 Wider Than the Sky

My path to mindfulness began in church. As a child, we attended our parish each Sunday. Our church was three blocks away. The building was orange bricked, sunlit and airy. I don't remember understanding what the priest said. But I remember raising my face up to the vast, coloured windows above the altar. I remember the sweet pleasure of singing, and I remember that all the kids in my street came to Church. I remember knowing, this is what you do.

In Church, this is how we understood the world: that there is meaning beyond the surface. We may not comprehend that meaning, but we know that our aspirations towards meaning count. We can be in community with others who seek meaning, who are interested in morality, who come together to give space to the bigger things through practice and ritual. We understood that we can contribute to that which is bigger, that which is more generous and loving, that which is wider than the sky. These are ways of being that I was given through Church. And although that form of Church no longer speaks to me, I still seek those ways of being.

Starting in my mid-teens, this brought me to two Buddhist traditions. I made contact with Zen, through Japanese calligraphy practice, and (in my late 20s) Tibetan Buddhism, through the Sakya school. In my research, I explore practices from these two areas: Zen arts practice and formal sitting meditation. I'm interested in how these practices can enrich our relationship with, and contributions to, life. Personally, I gain nourishment from both traditions. It is hard to describe how it feels to sit in an auditorium with teachers like His Holiness the Dalai Lama or his teacher, His Eminence Chogye Trichen Rinpoche—for me it is an experience of loosening the knots, of fully arriving.

As a student of Buddhism, I am an everyday person. I find ways to practice while tag-teaming with my partner to get kids to school, go to work and do chores. Like you, we keep the wheels of life turning. And sometimes the car stalls, the wheels fall off, and I hit the ground. *Plonk*. The "dharma"[1] (Harvey, 2013, p. 2; Kabat-Zinn, 2011, p. 283) doesn't shield me or my family from life's difficulties; it simply helps me to make sense of life. Through stressful times of change in the university, and through smoother times, the dharma also gives me practices and philosophies that help me to take heart.

2.2 Literature: Mindfulness States, Traits and Procedures

The first strand in the tapestry of this chapter is: Why are we discussing mindfulness, dharma and stress? Why can you open most magazines or lifestyle blogs and find articles on mindfulness? Back in the late 1970s, the molecular-biologist Jon Kabat-Zinn was a keen meditator and yoga practitioner in the US. He had the revolutionary insight that if he replaced the religious framework of Buddhism with a scientific framework, mindfulness meditation practice would become much more accessible to Western audiences (Kabat-Zinn, 2011). That's what he and colleagues did. And to gain the scientific evidence that meditation is effective, much of the initial research agenda focused on meditators and stress. Put bluntly, mindfulness meditation can help you with stress (Kabat-Zinn, 1990).

[1]The dharma are the teachings of the Buddha, or the reality/laws that the Buddha realised. I am following the mainstream convention to write "dharma" with a lower case "d".

What is mindfulness? Mindfulness is a universal trait, which is open to all. Mindfulness approaches are practiced by people from many religious groups, cultural groups, and occupations (Hassed, 2010; Mace, 2008; Williams & Kabat-Zinn, 2011). Nevertheless, for historical reasons, Buddhist traditions have exerted a strong influence on the contemporary mindfulness movement in the United States (Wilson, 2014), and in similar countries such as Australia.

Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003) proposed an operational description that mindfulness is: "the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience" (p. 145), although Kabat-Zinn (2011) did not design this to become the primary definition. As the science of mindfulness matures (Goleman & Davidson, 2017), researchers are extending the conception of mindfulness through additions such as dimensions of practice (Lutz, Jha, Dunne, & Saron, 2015).

Importantly, mindfulness practice is not about pursuing a goal to "fix" or "improve" ourselves (Hassed, 2010; Piver, 2015; Chödrön, 2013). Mindfulness is a way of being with ourselves and life, however, it unfolds. Again Kabat-Zinn (1990) offers a rich explanation:

> The practice of mindfulness involves finding, recognizing, and making use of that in us which is already okay, already beautiful, already whole by virtue of our being human—and drawing upon it to live our lives as if it really mattered *how* we stand in relationship to what arises, whatever it is. (p. xxxvii) (Italics in the original.)

In this explanation, Kabat-Zinn emphasises that mindfulness fundamentally involves how we are relating to our experiences and the world.

Beyond the common definition, the literature includes additional conceptions of mindfulness,[2] which, in turn, can inform our experiences of stress in the academy. The term "mindfulness" is used to describe a STATE, TRAIT, PROCEDURE or PATH (Davidson & Kaszniak, 2015; Lutz et al., 2015), although this is not an exhaustive list[3] (Table 2.1).

These facets of "mindfulness" are not mutually exclusive nor hierarchical, but rather are interconnected. During a formal meditation session, a practitioner may follow a mindfulness PROCEDURE (instructions) to gain a given STATE of mindfulness. At the same time, the accumulative results of STATE experiences gradually lead to the TRAIT of mindfulness coming out in the practitioner's life. In turn, these experiences might be aspects of the practitioner's life PATH of mindfulness. The interconnected aspects of mindfulness can be useful in our thinking about mindfulness practice and stress in the academy—especially as there can be conceptual slippage between concepts such as trait, procedure and path. Importantly, it is the

[2]The psychologist Langer (1989) has developed a distinctive conception of mindfulness, which draws from cognitive science and does not involve meditation. Conceptions within Langer's school of thought are generally incompatible with conceptions more aligned to Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and related approaches.

[3]Dahl, Lutz and Davidson (2015) offer an alternative typology that categorises mindfulness approaches in terms of "attentional", "constructive" and "deconstructive" practices.

Table 2.1 Usages of the term "Mindfulness"

Mindfulness can signify a…	Meaning…	Everyday examples
STATE	The experience of mindfulness during formal practice, typically evidenced by measuring brain states in research settings.	*I felt super alert in that session.* Or *I felt dull and sleepy in that session.*
TRAIT	The benefits that carry over from formal meditation practice into a practitioner's everyday life.	*Alice meditates and she has a calm, wise quality when she makes decisions at work.*
PROCEDURE	The instructions or steps that a practitioner follows during formal or informal mindfulness practice.	*Now, notice your breath as it enters your nostrils. Is it warm or cool?*
PATH	A vast concept extending to all that informs and enriches a practitioner's experience of life.	*The Dalai Lama is an example of a person living the path.*

TRAIT of mindfulness—the ongoing and positive benefits—that represent the motivation for many practitioners to engage with mindfulness practice.

Let's assume that we engage in mindfulness practices because we hope for some kind of change in ourselves. This may be a change that brings relief from stress, or insight through noticing, or simply a break from what we're doing. Perhaps our experiences and understandings of these changes shift and alter over time as we practice.

I am arguing that the way that we think about changes through mindfulness practice can affect when and how we practice. Put another way, the epistemology (theory of knowledge) that practitioners hold about changes from mindfulness practice can influence their approach to practice. In part, practitioners' idea or construction of mindfulness contributes to this. As an example, let's look at two constructions of "where mindfulness exists" (Goleman & Davidson, 2017, p. 268). In the first construction, mindfulness is thought to exist as a quality outside of ourselves. In this construction, we learn mindfulness as an add-on skill. In the second construction, mindfulness is thought to be an innate quality that exists within ourselves. In this construction, we cultivate or deepen an inherent quality. Viewed these two ways, mindfulness might exist extrinsically (outside) or might exist intrinsically (already inside) ourselves. I explore the position of mindfulness as an extrinsic or intrinsic quality in Table 2.2.

Our perception of change through mindfulness can influence how and when we practice mindfulness in the face of stress. Regardless of which construction a practitioner leans towards, mindfulness practice can be beneficial. In both constructions, the practice can bring out traits, which can influence our experiences of stress in the academy. Importantly, to cultivate positive mindfulness traits, the key is ongoing,

Table 2.2 Epistemologies of change through mindfulness practice

	If Mindfulness is understood to exist outside oneself (or is EXTRINSIC)	If Mindfulness is understood to exist inherently within oneself (or is INTRINSIC)
Construct:	Mindfulness is a learned skill that is added on to oneself	Mindfulness is constructed as a human quality, which one uncovers, recognises, cultivates and deepens
Lends itself to thinking of mindfulness as a…	Procedure: the steps that a practitioner follows	Trait: the qualities or benefits that are strengthened in the practitioner
Timing of mindfulness practice	A mindfulness procedure might be applied at the time of stress or soon after	A mindfulness practice is followed regularly, during stressful and non-stressful periods
Potential motivation	Mindfulness as assistance in life	Mindfulness as a path in life

Table includes language from Goleman and Davidson (2017, pp. 267–270)

regular mindfulness practice. While pausing and noticing stressful points in the day is useful, it is also okay if we do not remember to apply a mindfulness procedure during or right after hard moments. Mindfulness approaches are not so much like a torch or flashlight—which we turn on, then turn off and the benefits cease. Rather, cultivating the trait of mindfulness is an ongoing, long-term process, in the way that eating an orange allows us to benefit from sweetness at the moment and vitamin C into the future.

As the next strand of this tapestry, I will share a personal story of using a mindfulness procedure, which I have used during a stressful time in the academy.

2.3 Performance: Approach Anger as if It were an Infant

Like almost every academic, professor or scholar reading this, the stresses of change and precarious employment have characterised my professional life. I have held over 18 roles, including zero-hour positions (precarious work arrangements where workers are paid-by-the-hour with no guaranteed hours) and three-month contracts. Early on, I spent four years lecturing in Japanese language and Japanese studies. I thrived but the role was cut from full time to part time. After that I worked in university out-reach, corporate training, then established an independent consultancy in higher education research in practice and policy. I moved cities four times to gain employment in this period.

I got tired of shifting house. I wanted to belong somewhere. I hoped a large university would be the answer. So, I leveraged my consultancy background into a short contract at a suburban university in Melbourne. The role was for nine months

and involved complex systems change with an emphasis on genuine stakeholder involvement. The work offered a lot to get your teeth stuck into. It was a good job, but a job with an end date. I had performed 110% and creatively networked my socks off, but as the project came to an end, it became clear that there was no path into another role. I began to feel more and more angry. I was angry with my boss. I was angry with my bosses' boss. I'm not sure if my emotions snuck through, but this was stress turning up as a fire within me.

There was a narrative of hard work[4] in my family. You applied yourself, got good scores in high school and "uni" (college), and then got a job—where you followed the formula again. This had allowed my parents to maintain decades of stable employment in their fields. However, in the words of Jim Stanford (2017), "The world of work is under incredible pressure. Jobs are harder to find and keep and less secure" (p. 1). At the time, I didn't understand that. Partly my stress came from the belief that excellent results would pay off. I now know that the formula no longer holds, so when the project ended, I lost my livelihood. Again.

I had known the role was a short-term contract, but I was still furious. Around this time, in a local shop, I found a book by the Vietnamese Zen teacher, Thich Nhat Hanh, called *Anger* (Hanh, 2001). In very gentle terms, the book gave me compassionate ways to approach my fiery feelings. In an extended metaphor, Thich Nhat Hanh likens anger to an infant. He encourages us to approach our anger gingerly, as if approaching a baby. Hold it gently. Then he suggests that: "We continue the practice of mindful breathing and mindful walking, as a lullaby for our anger" (Hanh, 2001, p. 34). It was a new idea to me that we could cultivate a positive relationship with angry feelings. I found it empowering. Later in the book, Thich Nhat Hanh suggests that we carry an object to remind us. At work, I began carrying a small stone in my pocket. I stopped being consumed by my fuming thoughts. Instead, I walked between meetings, pebble in hand, tending the anger by watching my breath. This felt like a relief valve. Thich Nhat Hanh showed me that a simple mindfulness procedure could shine new light on my experience of angry stress in the university. Please know, this is not a call to repress anger. After all Das (2016) powerfully argues, when harnessed skilfully with an understanding of dharma, anger can be an "exquisite fuel for change" (para 17).

2.4 Setting: Endings

In some ways, we all share the same setting for our work. Our setting is life, this human experience. In that sense, I see the project job as part of life's endings. Change is always with us. In universities, we see small changes and bigger changes. Then there are changes that overshadow everything. Last week, my mother-in-law died. She had been in good care and was surrounded by family. Now we're feeling her absence.

[4]My parents took "hard work" to mean diligently striving for excellent results. They would not recognise the contemporary usage, where "working hard" implies working inefficiently, or overworking.

I'm watching my husband and children ride the waves of losing her. They're bobbing in the sea. My five-year-old says, "Daddy doesn't have a Mummy." It's her way of understanding. Missing my mother-in-law; watching my husband, my children and his family grieve: these endings bring us to the rawness of our lives. This is the "place of meeting our edge" (Chödrön, 2013, p. 11).

2.5 Appearance: But What Is This?

Before turning to another personal thread in the tapestry of this story, let's weave in the broader picture of employment in Australian public universities. There are profound structural reasons for stress in the contemporary academy. University work is increasingly temporary, insecure and precarious. On-going work is drying up. "Less than 1 per cent of new university positions since 2005 have been ongoing teaching and research jobs" (Rea in Lane, 2017, para 1) in Australia. Zero-hour or casual contracts are extensive. Staff in these roles are colloquially called "sessional" academics in Australia. It is challenging to measure the rate of sessional academic employment. In the UK, in the academic year of 2014–2015, there were 75,560 hourly paid academic staff, out of a total of 273,895 academic staff—which points to a casualisation rate of 27.6% (HESA, 2017). The literature suggests that there are at least 67,000 sessional academics in Australia (Hil & Lyons, 2017, p. 44). Anecdotally, colleagues in Australia talk about a mid-size course of 600 students being taught by up to 90% sessional staff. As Mewburn has argued, this amounts to academics being employed like "fruit pickers" (Lane, 2017, para 16). Moreover, the pathway from postdoctoral fellow roles into secure academic employment has hit a dead end. Again, anecdotally, I hear about people moving countries to take their fourth or fifth postdoc job because there is so little ongoing work. This lack of employment beyond postdoc postings has gained the name #postdocalypse (or "post-doc apocalypse") (O'Donnell, 2014, para 3). For contract and ongoing staff in Australia, there are high rates of unpaid overtime (on top of the standard 38-hour working week), with academic staff reporting an average of 14.6 hours weekly overtime in 2017 (Evans, 2017, p. 27). These structural pressures can tip over into exploitation, whether intentionally or not. I know this first hand. In one role, I was supporting myself through casual work at a major university and went unpaid for ten weeks. I have been unemployed through numerous summers with the expectation from others that I will be available the following semester. These pressurised conditions in the Australian academy have led to one academic recently observing: "That two colleagues I happened to run into while out for lunch … shed tears as they described difficulties they are facing at work speaks to levels of stress and dis-ease in our universities" (Lyons, 2017, p. 27).

The stress, the difficulty, the suffering (to borrow a term from the dharma) of these extreme working conditions are very real. Speaking of meditation practice, the Tibetan Buddhist teacher Mattis-Namgyel (2016) has written: "Our ability to bear witness to suffering without pushing it away or getting overwhelmed is linked to liberation. What is experience before we shrink from it, try to subdue it, or manipulate it?

This is *the* question for practitioners" (para 14) (Italics in original.). I will explore this question in the context of dharma and mindfulness further, shortly. First, let me draw in a thread about stress at work and the use (or misuse) of mindfulness.

2.6 Manner: On Wise Discernment, Doormats and Boulders

The psychological literature points to stress as: "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, p. 19). This understanding that stress comes out of one's relationship with circumstances dovetails well with mindfulness approaches. Mindfulness instructions such as those in the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program encourage a non-judgemental attitude towards the present moment (Kabat-Zinn, 2005), which can be part of its empowering effect in stressful situations. MBSR programs began in hospital settings to assist patients and medical consumers with stress. Over time, MBSR, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2002) and other approaches have moved from medical settings to schools and universities, prisons and workplaces.

Importantly, in workplace settings, non-judgemental mindfulness could be deployed in ways that are harmful to employees who experience excessive work conditions (Purser & Milillo, 2014). Specifically, the mindfulness attitudes of acceptance, non-judgement and letting go (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, pp. 21–29) could be inappropriately harnessed to discount employees' high levels of stress. Such a "compartmentalised" (Neale in Fisher, 2010, para 16) form of corporate mindfulness practice was noted by Neale when he coined the term "McMindfulness" (Fisher, 2010, para 16) and further popularised by Purser & Loy (2013). (See Walsh (2016) for a discussion of mindfulness in relation to neoliberalism.) Bringing an attitude of non-judgemental acceptance to formal meditation practice is not a call for passive acceptance or numbness in the rest of one's life. Again I think of Mattis-Namgyel's (2016) call for us to ask: *What is this moment?* (para 14). Yes, when we follow this question, we connect with an aspiration to see reality, to see the true causes of our stress. Once seen, an action may be required. As a teacher of mine used to say, *The dharma doesn't mean that you become a doormat*. In other words, let's not interpret the dharma to mean that it's okay for people to walk all over us. The distinction here is between how we experience the moment (non-judementally), and how we choose to understand and follow through in our actions outside of formal meditation practice. We have to remember—me included—don't be the doormat.

Viewed another way, it is important to make the distinction between everyday stress and exploitation. In some situations in the academy, if stress feels intolerable, then it is. Working for five–ten years on zero-hour contracts is intolerable. Not having money to buy your child a school pullover is intolerable. Having no income each

summer, year after year, is intolerable. Seeing your friend's mental health plummet as they move countries for their fourth postdoc is intolerable. A non-judgemental mindset is not the answer here. Yes, mindfulness approaches may help us to stay afloat in a stressful moment. However, I'm arguing that sometimes a situation of intolerable pressure requires us to move past mindfulness as a procedure. Sometimes the situation requires us to reach from the ground of mindfulness traits to our wise discernment[5] (Paṇḍitābhivaṃsa, 1991), and to act for the protection of ourselves and others (Gleig, 2017). Sometimes wisdom and self-compassion (Neff, 2011) call us to author our own ending to an intolerable situation. Sometimes we have to get out. We need a place where our expertise is properly valued (in whatever place and form that may be). And other times, if we are able to remain, we might work together to improve conditions in the contemporary university (Hil & Lyons, 2017).

I write this with acknowledgement of my privilege (Mcintosh, 1988), especially my position of being repeatedly employed in universities. Collectively in the academy, we are watching the university reinvent itself so rapidly, it is as if substantial parts of the university are undergoing collapse. While something new is coming, this feels like watching an avalanche in slow motion. What's more, living through the collapse is incredibly hard. My wish is for individuals to be able to sidestep the falling boulders.

2.7 Front: Rainbow Posters

I'm going to follow the thread of wise discernment leading to action with a further illustration. Goffman's (1959) idea of "front" is how an actor appears to others. However, in terms of managing stress, I'm going to suggest that rather than appearance, it is action—however modest—that has empowered me in stressful circumstances (Kabat-Zinn, 1990). Here is another lived experience.

When I wrote this piece, marriage inequality was a salient issue in Australia. Until this point, Australian laws had excluded same-sex-attracted people from marriage. Australian citizens had been invited to vote in a national, quasi-plebiscite on "yes" or "no" for equality marriage. The vote caused deep and unforgivable stress (AAP, 2017). I needed to do something. I became active in my university's group for LGBTQI+ staff and allies. I worked to encourage the yes-vote for marriage equality across campus by distributing rainbow buttons, posters and lanyards. I joined a working party to devise an action strategy for inclusion in the university. I did something. I made a small, small contribution towards changing a fundamental legal flaw in human rights in this country. Following a process that caused extraordinary pain for too many in the Australian community, marriage equality laws were passed in December 2017 (The Age, 2017).

[5] I would connect "wise discernment" with the broader classical idea of wisdom informing "skilful" action, which authors such as Harvey (2013) explore with great precision.

In terms of "front" and how others saw me, on this issue they saw me putting up rainbow posters in the office. Here I connect again to Mattis-Namgyel's (2016) question—*What is this moment?* (para 14). I feel that building from mindfulness into wise discernment enabled me to see a moment that required action. This is aligned with Gleig's (2017) observations of a "collective turn" (p. 41), which is motivating actions for social justice in contemporary, Western Buddhist communities.

2.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage: Mindfulness Practice Backstage

In the last thread of this tapestry, one of the prompting questions asked: When faced with stress in universities, how do you respond with mindfulness practice? On the one hand, the sequence of this question implies mindfulness as an extrinsic quality, separate from the practitioner. It implies that we are limited to immediate mindfulness states through applying mindfulness procedures close to the time of stress. On the other hand, as noted earlier, I have been influenced by the traditional conception of mindfulness as an intrinsic quality that we all share. Viewed this way, the sequence of ideas in the question then shifts: Given the stress in universities, how do you engage with regular practice? (This final thread in the tapestry of stories connects again with my practices as a lay-person in the face of stress in the academy.) I will approach regular practice on two levels. There is the level of technique, of describing which practices I do and when. I will return to this later. Then there is another level of how to approach practice: how to think and feel about practice; how to be informed and motivated by understandings and frameworks that enable the practice to be fruitful. In some Buddhist traditions, this is known as "the view". The metaphor of a "view" makes me smile. It makes me think of being high up on a hilly landscape and looking across a valley to more hills.

First, I am taught to start with motivation. Sometimes my motivation is simply to stay afloat amidst the stress of the world and work. However, in my tradition, we also cultivate a motivation to liberate all beings from suffering. We aspire to hold out our hands and lift everyone up onto the big bus, which is the "Mahāyāna", the greater vehicle, (Harvey, 2013) for their passage out of suffering. This is the motivation.

This is how I practice (Gyatso, 2002):

- **Study**: I keep in touch with the dharma by studying dharma books and magazines, listening to recordings of Buddhist teachings (usually free, online) and, when I can, attending teachings. My tradition talks about the "warm breath of the teacher", and I find that listening online or in person to teachings is incredibly heartening. My reading of contemporary mindfulness researchers, such as Jon Kabat-Zinn and colleagues, also buoys my practice. Right now I'm reading Thich Nhat Hanh's (1991) story of the Buddha, *Old Path, White Cloud*.
- **Practice**: I follow formal practices on my own and in groups. My main practice is *shamatha* meditation, or "calm abiding" meditation (Lekshe, 2016; Wallace,

1999). I book-end my morning meditation with observances. When I can, I sit in group practice with others, and (depending on what I can afford) I attend group retreats. My children are still small. A community in my city offers non-residential, urban retreats, which work well for my family.

- **Ritual**: I follow small rituals through the day, such as setting my motivation before work. I follow a small dedication practice at the end of a working day and before I sleep.
- **Community**: At the moment I loosely belong to five communities who are interested in mindfulness and related practices. Three of these communities are formally organised, and two are simply networks of dharma friends. Contact with dharma friends, meeting with everyday "sangha" or community (Harvey, 2013) is a key part of my experience of practice. I'm still a beginner. My path is enriched by contact with friends who have a deeper wisdom, more finely tuned morality, more deeply realised practice than I. And it's in everyday contact with dharma friends that I learn so much, just by something they might casually say over a cup of coffee.

In practical terms, I like to wake early, while the kids are asleep or at least still in their rooms. I start the day with a speech blessing. I go to a small shrine we have in the living room while still in my pyjamas. First, I say prayers to set my motivation. I offer fruit to the Buddha statue at my shrine, so that all beings may be nourished and sustained. Then I sit and follow calm abiding meditation. When I was younger, I sat cross-legged on the floor, but now have a knee injury. I sit in a chair with my back unsupported and my feet flat on the floor. I fold a flimsy cushion into a wedge and sit on this to raise my hips above my knees—in a technique I learned in a workshop from Zen Buddhist teacher and writer, Martine Batchelor (2001). Sometimes my five-year-old likes to offer the Buddha statue his food, or to play beside me while I sit. One of my difficulties is that I have insomnia at times. This makes it hard to wake early. On work days my "plan b" is to meditate in the train. I finish my practice with closing prayers for the benefit of all beings.

It's hard to explain what effect these daily practices have. I experience them in ways that are not verbal. Perhaps the practices and rituals sustain me in ways that feel organic, much like drinking cool water or eating an apple.

However, I'm not romantic about being a student of Buddhism. It hasn't always worked for me. In the past, I became very disillusioned by the behaviour of one of my teachers. There was a lot of conflict at the centre. At that time, when I looked at my teacher, I didn't understand that the finger pointing to the moon is not the moon (Sharpels in Mackenzie, 2003, p. 97). For me, something broke. I walked away from the centre and Buddhist studies, and plunged into a period of deep grieving. It was a peculiar, private experience because I couldn't talk about it much. When your parent dies, for example, it's relatively straightforward to tell people. When your Buddhist centre falls apart, what do you say? In the end, I took MBSR as my central practice for a full year. MBSR is very beautiful, but it just didn't touch me in the same way. I didn't feel as nourished. Through time, I found my way back. I now know that the rituals and symbols, the observances and prayers, and "the view" or mental outlook

in Tibetan Buddhism work for me. These allow me to connect in ways which are a continuation of all that I first found in Church. Dharma is the path that I am drawn to, and which sustains me during the stresses of the academy.

2.9 Conclusion

Mindfulness can be used to mean many things (state, trait, procedure, path) . While mindfulness practices can be sustaining through periods of stress and change in the academy, I have argued that by approaching mindfulness as an intrinsic quality within ourselves, we can take off the pressure to engage in practice in stressful moments. We may not need to *do* anything. However, a non-doing, non-judgemental attitude in the moment is not an instruction to be passive or unassertive. "Non-doing" comes with a warning: Don't be the doormat. I argue that the key to deciding between non-doing or action lies in connecting with our wise discernment. I posit that wise discernment is an antidote to passivity and empowers us as practitioners to take action—however we can—in individual and collective spheres. Most of all, our breath, our practice is always available. We have the freedom to pause.

Acknowledgements I am indebted to Dr. Janette Simmonds for her rich and insightful conversations and feedback; to Jonathan O'Donnell for his optimism and generosity during stresses in the academy; to Dr. Kate Brabon for her keen eye at the last minute; and to Moira Brown. I gratefully acknowledge support through an Australia Government Research Training Program fees-offset scholarship.

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Chapter 3
Emerging into Authentic Academic Life: Anxiety, Masks of Selves, Mindful Observation and Perfectionist Performance

Anat Wilson

Abstract This chapter describes experiences associated with the demands of a doctoral program, which is known to pose personal and professional risks for candidates and sees low attrition and completion rates. Current studies suggest that problems in areas of supervision, finance and academic performance increase candidates' feeling of isolation, anxiety and emotional exhaustion. Perfectionist tendencies, anxiety and the very real risk of non-completion are discussed in this chapter as triggers for negative self-preservation behaviours. Drawing on my personal narrative of the candidature years, I explore my lived experience of the disintegration of the self through the use of dramaturgy framework. I highlight the complexities of the academic setting and the grappling with appearance and performance. I trace the shifts in my personal capacity to see and regulate masking of self through describing the struggles of an eating disorder towards an experience of an authentic Aware Self. Extracts from my personal journals are used to share some strategies based on yoga and mindful practice that have helped to break free from measured perfectionism. The chapter offers ways of knowing the self(s) in a Ph.D. candidature and may help doctoral candidates and supervisors to identify points of need to support those who seem to have it all under control.

3.1 Introduction

Growing up, I had a clear plan to complete a Ph.D. and have two kids by the age of 30. Such specific plans were normal for my perfectionist mind and I strove to fulfil them in detail, except that my strategic plan brought about unexpected angst and turmoil. In addition to challenges posed by juggling work, parenting and studying and my

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_3

self-inflicted expectation to phenomenally exceed the candidature's milestones, I also suffered from uncontrolled gashing anxiety. Some of my fears were healthy motivators experienced by many: would they see my worth and potential? Would I be accepted into academia? What if I drastically failed? Alongside these fears hissed my old existential fear of dying, also known as Thanatophobia. Braving up and embracing an opportunity to fulfil the Ph.D. dream has meant for me committing and accepting life. Inevitably, it has also meant reconciling with the fact that life will eventually end; a fact I have struggled with so deeply. For as long as I can remember, I suffered from panic attacks. As a 6-year-old, I would lie in bed, tormented in a swirl of dizziness, drowning in breathlessness over the agonising realisation of my own mortality. So strong was the sensation that it felt like my skeleton and the whole universe were defragmented and merged into the void. It was horrifying and painful. It still pains—but not as often. This narrative, and actually every authentic narrative about my life, begins with this torment and my uncompromising desperate attempts to find peace of mind.

For some academics, such personal childhood experiences may seem irrelevant; however, describing our unspoken dispositions may help us to better understand individuals' motivation in the Ph.D. journey. My disposition was closely attached to existentialist thought, literature and art, which had a strong grip on my soul. My mind tended to quickly attach to the absurd of the human condition, pondering on the doom that expects us all and hurting our inability to change the ending that awaits. A cruel joke. Then quickly, my heart aches in a stab, my blood sizzles and a panic attack is just moments away. My own response to living in the absurd was to hide behind delusions of control and detachment. The point at which this was no longer optional presented a challenge and an opportunity greater than all others—to live an authentic life.

Amongst my lifelong attempts to avoid, combat or accept my fear of dying (some more successful and positive than others), was the mindful journey I took during my Ph.D. candidature. It was a stepping into life, not only for me, but for my selves. My anxious self, my perfectionist self and the inner bully to name just a few, who all played a part in this great performance. This chapter provides a rich description of my personal experience of the doctoral candidature and provides an insight into managing perfectionist performance and an eating disorder. Extracts from my personal journals and some of the mindful practices I learnt during that transformational period are outlined. Though the account in this chapter is incapable of depicting the complete lived experience, it is justified by its authenticity. Sharing my mindful practice may provide an anchor for those who find that my truth echoes in their own.

3.2 Literature

The pursuit after a doctoral degree is often associated with significant life changes that follow admission (Hunter & Devine, 2016). In Australia, the average completion time of a Ph.D. is 4 years particularly amongst scholarship holders, who are

more likely to study full time and have a greater sense of urgency and commitment (Bourke, Holbrook, Lovat, & Farley, 2004). However, many take up double of this time. It is estimated that between half to two-thirds of those who start a Ph.D. do not complete it (Bourke et al., 2004; Goller & Harteis, 2014; Hunter & Devine, 2016). Withdrawal at a late stage of the candidature has an emotional, financial and psychological damaging effect, often associated with the long-enduring feeling of failure (Goller & Harteis, 2014). Successful completion does not make the journey easier. Many doctoral candidates experience depression, anxiety and emotional exhaustion during their program due to problems in areas of supervision, finance, feeling isolated, high workload, frequent evaluations and a range of academic difficulties (Bourke et al., 2004; Hunter & Devine, 2016).

Furthermore, negative institutional environments can also have a detrimental effect on a doctoral student, resulting in dysfunctional emotions and poor well-being (Hunter & Devine, 2016). University departments and faculties act as structured cultural groups of "collective voices that function as social positions in the self … constantly subjected to differences in power" (Hermans, 2001, p. 272). These groups hold shared meaning about who is allowed in, what constitutes success, which voices are allowed to be heard and which are to be silenced (Hermans, 2001). Individuals within workplaces construct a perceived need to be silent based on normative pressures to conform to the dominant discursive practices (Brown & Coupland, 2005). In the absence of an open dialogue, withholding of information, pushing hidden agendas and engaging in public criticism result in an influential breakage of trust (Ford & Vaughn, 2011). Like many workplaces, universities declare to have support services and open processes, however, unspoken rules of organisational survival, the level of perceived support and the extent to which doctoral students feel recognised, appreciated and cared for, greatly affect their emotional experience (Brown & Coupland, 2015; Hunter & Devine, 2016).

In order to survive and integrate, doctoral students use self-presentation behaviours, including intentionally presenting impressive and competent aspects of self and conform to shared organisational values (Devine & Hunter, 2017). Brown and Coupland (2015) identify the kind of 'schizophrenic' work environment created by emotional dissonance and stress, when silence functions as a resource to position oneself as a legitimate 'able'. Psychologically, parts of the self that are incapable of meeting external demands are more likely to be disowned and ignored, driving them into the unconscious and causing fragmentation (Stone & Stone, 2007). For some Ph.D. candidates, a healthy 'never-give-up' attitude, high internal locus of control and unbreakable commitment (Goller & Harteis, 2014) present in association with perfectionist standards, psychological fragmentation and extreme anxiety. The strong forces of desire experienced by the Self-oriented Perfectionist (SOP) (Speirs Neumeister, Fletcher, & Burney, 2015), could be seen in a doctoral candidate's desire to meet the Ph.D. hard-to-attain milestones and scholarship conditions (mastery-approach); to avoid the very likely incompletion or withdrawal (mastery-avoidance); to appear competent relative to others in academia (performance-maintenance); and, to avoid appearing incompetent before supervisors (performance-avoidance). High-achieving self-oriented perfectionists may be quickly judged as healthy and capable

students, nevertheless, internally they may attach their self-worth to their performance and suffer from low self-esteem (Speirs Neumeister et al., 2015).

Emotional exhaustion through doctoral candidature is experienced by many, particularly by women and may stem from incidents of bullying, harassment or from inadequate positioning in the postgraduate context (Devine & Hunter, 2017). Additional complexities and barriers to academic career trajectory are posed on women (Lemon & Garvis, 2014) and despite having a strong desire to achieve, they may carry a sense of self as false and fear being shamefully exposed as an incapable imposter (Simmons, 2016). Increased academic pressure and high level of perfectionism experienced by young women is also a known trigger for the development of eating disorders (Bould et al., 2016).

At least one prior anxiety disorder underpins and contributes to the onset of eating disorders (Godart, Flament, Lecrubier, & Jeammet, 2000). The origins of eating disorders are complex, and are associated with the disruption of an empathic environment required to maintain the integrity of the child's self, which then "prevents the internalization of certain soothing and tension-regulating structures … promote dissociative defences" and this can underpin the foundation for later attempts to "fill in the structural deficit" (Geist, 1989, p. 1). For some research students, the very real risk of non-completion, the low academic status and the isolating experience of a doctoral course, amplify the absence of a strong sense of self and contributes to low self-worth and psychological dissociation. For anxious doctoral students who are characterised by these psychological structures, the non-empathetic academic environment is a double-edged sword. In what follows, I describe a personal path toward psychological integration, the academic setting of the events and present mindful strategies the readers might find useful.

3.3 Performance

At the start of my Ph.D., I held a full-time leadership position at a school, presented at conferences twice a year, worked part time for government educational bodies and parented two young school-age children. I also maintained a meticulous house, a busy social calendar, a loving relationship with my husband and family commitments—leading a hectic lifestyle that many readers would be quiet familiar with. The more I kept busy, the less I suffered from panic attacks. I held a false sense of control and accomplishment keeping my mind focused on a never-ending task list. The busier I got, the more exhausted I felt; yet, I still expected that in every aspect of life I would perform to excellence. In turn, this performance made me even more anxious. In her book about anxiety, Sarah Wilson (2017) identifies this to be a vicious perfectionist paradoxical cycle that eventually drives anxiety sufferers to collapse. To my audience, I presented a capable accomplished self while internally I had no concept of capacity and saw basic needs as an inferior disruption.

I enrolled in a Ph.D. with the presumptuous intent to study in my free time, except that such time did not exist. It was unsustainable and delusional. When there was nothing else in life to take from and nothing else I could add, my levels of anxiety spiralled and my desire for control took over. I began to count calories, restrict food intake, exercise excessively and weigh myself numerous times a day. I was on a mission to be successful in managing my body weight and determined to maintain control. Striving to get to an ideal weight was soothing, a delusional yet empowering way to concur mortality and a manner to visibly see self-worth despite its painful absence. Driven by euphoria, I substituted sleep with work. I tripled the expected performance rate and completed in the first 7 months of the candidature tasks that were estimated to take 2 years. Despite the internal collapse, I was successful at winning a prestigious scholarship. At the peak of this performance, I lost myself.

A quick recipe for losing your mind: two kids, three jobs, one Ph.D., then take out food and add (in no particular order) a dash of sleep deprivation, a handful of demanding academic expectations and a generous amount of self-inflicted perfectionism. Stir it slowly in a melting pot of anxiety and hunger. When I arrived at my first candidature milestone, I was determined to put on a great show and to dazzle the panel with my successes. In the words of Goffman (1959), both the opportunity to perform and the presence of an impressed audience served me in delivering a selected impression of self that confirmed my identity and life choices. It was both a professional and personal Confirmation, viciously affirming my obsession with external measures and appearance and pushing away the residues of my authentic self. After losing 10 kilos, the capacity for lucid rational thinking was replaced by hunting voices, nightmares, great fear and confusion. None of this was known to my supervisors or fellow researchers, leading us to ask what can be done to support better coping with the candidature milestones.

3.4 Setting

I have the privilege of writing this chapter from an academic position at a university located in Victoria, Australia. I use the word privilege with all honesty. When I was writing my Ph.D., the prospect of securing an academic job was far from being a reality. Similar to many other doctoral students, I was teaching sessional units, hoped to be noticed and waited for the right opportunity. I perceived universities as a hierarchal culture. At the top, stood faceless decision makers who controlled the finances; below them, internationally known academics proudly flagged their research and brought fame and fortune to the institution. Following that were the large group of junior and semi-senior academics who carried most of the teaching and administrative roles and were kept keen and grateful by constant threats to forever perish. Beneath all, an unseen buzzing hub of nameless hard-working teaching assistants were casually employed to fill in the holes in the system and mark hundreds of essays in impossible timeframes. I was one of those hole fillers.

I once received a feisty email from one of my fellow casual colleagues, inviting us to unite in an industrial step towards better conditions. I felt sorry for her, for us, getting all worked out in false hope for the chance to be seen or heard in this rigid system. While others in academia were successful in actively taking matters into their own hands (Goller & Harteis, 2014), the idea seemed ludicrous to me; not ethically or ideologically unjustified, just pointless. I perceived reality through a lens of conformity (Brown & Coupland, 2005) and felt a great need to silently accept normative pressures and practices. Besides, I was so accustomed to ignoring my own basic needs that it was easy to avoid big value-based revolutions. Furthermore, the compromises I made in my professional, personal and family life to pursue the Ph.D. were far too great to risk. As some readers would appreciate, compliance and efficiency were my only feasible choices. I was 'all in'.

There was no pride in those years. I recall a meeting with an acquaintance, a successful multilingual novelist who just published her third book and completed her own Ph.D.. 'What do you do?' she asked me. 'I teach at university' I declared with false pride. She was surprised and questioned whether I have an ongoing job. 'No, I am a teaching associate' I said, trying to hold on to the words as they were coming out of my mouth, dropping between us like heavy stones. She was quick to dismiss 'Oh, that's nothing! They will get anyone to teach casually!' she said, as I was scraping my self-esteem off the floor.

Throughout my candidature, I refrained from the academic spotlight at all costs. I remember my supervisors questioned why I stopped presenting at conferences after regularly doing so for nearly a decade before. I said I was 'formulating my academic identity', describing that I was like a 'caterpillar in a chrysalis; how can I present my wings if I still don't know their colour and form?'. Yep, I actually said that! While there was some truth in that saying, it failed to address my overwhelming experience of shame and fear. I was mortified by the thought of being seen by the members of the academic community as a desperate 'wanna-be'. Staying away from other research students and changing my supervisor midway through the candidature also contributed to my professional and social isolation. Like many doctoral candidates who experience isolation (Ali, Kohun, & Levy, 2007), I focused on qualifying and regaining my health. Keeping my head down, I tirelessly applied for jobs and pushed towards the thesis submission date.

3.5 Appearance

There are many things one can do to cope with the upheaval of life; starving oneself may not naturally come to mind. Eating disorders are frequently misunderstood. Mistakenly, sufferers are labelled as superficial individuals who are obsessed with appearance, vanity and social ideals of beauty. In actual fact, anxiety disorders and psychological disintegration often pre-date and underpin eating disorders (Godart et al., 2000). The organisation *Eating Disorders Victoria* tells us that stressful midlife events can trigger the development of an eating disorder in many adults regardless

of their age and gender. Common risk factors include change or loss of identity, heightened external stress and a desire to gain control over certain aspects of life (Eating Disorders Victoria, 2017). My own mental preoccupation with measuring was emotionally numbing and gratifying, allowing me to feel just safe enough to go through another day. The appearance of success, the appearance of perfection, the appearance of control enabled me to make-believe that I was 'doing life' despite an underlying sense of panic. Failing to see myself beyond controlled appearance, I was caught up in a process of dissociation and slowly, one by one, the cords of self-awareness were broken.

Working in an environment that congratulates appearances of success can influence individuals' inner dialogues. We know that people engage in an active process of positioning, negotiation, agreement and opposition with their place in institutions (Hermans, 2001). A work environment that does not create opportunities for individuals to feel comfortable being their authentic selves, can cause a mask-wearing experience and negatively impact emotions and behaviour (Atira & Dunbar, 2015). Goffman (1959) suggests that external appearance function to portray our social status. It can moreover be seen as the internal masking of aspects of self we wish to hide such as the fear of rejection, fear of failure and the fear of not being worthy. We mask these fears by adopting a know-it-all persona that presents to the outside world capable sides of ourselves. This over masking is exhausting. Devine and Hunter (2017) claim that the emotional exhaustion experienced by doctoral students, which is similar to that of a workplace burnout, is associated with the dependency research-students have on their supervisors and the system to complete their degree. With limited or no room to show fragility, doctoral students engage in self-preservation behaviours to disguise their difficulties (Devine & Hunter, 2017). I was so committed to my appearance of success that when the load was too heavy to bear, different sides of self took over: the martyr that surpasses and ignores basic needs like food or sleep; the inner bully, who would angrily put me down for the most minor imperfections; the judging self-loathing self; and the defeated self, surrendered in overwhelming shame (Image 3.1). Their role in self-preservation was key in ensuring I was able to perform impeccably; disturbing them was equally crucial for survival.

3.6 Manner

The contradicting manner in which I perceived myself had me coming to a halt. No longer could I pretend that the façade was real, no longer could I rely on masks of perfection and so I made a conscious decision to reach out for help. At that point, four mother figures came into my life providing pillars of energetic support: a doctor, a naturopath, a psychologist and a yoga teacher. Each afforded me care, teaching and guidance through which I began to reconnect to a sense of self. I invested as much

Image 3.1 Sides of self and their ways of coping, personal journal

time and effort in self-care as I did in my studies, running between university teaching on one side of the city to therapy sessions on the other side of town, from evening yoga classes three times a week, to early morning thesis writing. Perfectionism was not gone, only the brief had changed from self-destruction to searching after balance.

Through yoga practice, meditation, journal writing, creative expression, self-analysis, psychotherapy and all kinds of natural supplements, the spinning finally stopped. I was lucky to have had the resources that allowed these changes: financial support, good people around and internal resourcefulness. The work I have done with my yoga teacher, Lee Treloar, taught me how to listen to my system rather than manipulate my body. I had to unlearn and relearn the basics of human needs and capacities, to accept simple biology (humans need food) and to acknowledge simple physics (under pressure, matter breaks). Consistently working with asana (poses), the practice of yoga has now meant applying mindful and skilful listening to my energy level, thoughts and emotions, body and actions, spiritual integrity and overall well-being—involving the whole system.

Written language cannot fully convey the transformational nature of yoga practice. New understandings began to emerge: I learnt to follow my internal lines, noticed the impact of loading on energetic support, mindfully observed my actions and began to perceive and respond to reality rather than be pushed and pulled by ideas and ideals. Inversions such as handstand, headstand and shoulder stand brought light, sharpness and awareness. Checking-in for subtle energetic support created an alternative to the obsessive controlling thoughts. A shift from a preoccupation with form to a feeling for support was transformational. Unconsciously, the practice of yoga instilled in me trust in being that I could not have gained through rational thinking. I was brought back to experience the here-and-now and learnt to stay with, not jumping ahead or be blinded by ambition.

I began to approach my work mindfully, tracing back the origins of energetic support and unpacking each stage of the thesis writing back to its fundamental starting point. Drawing illustrations of yoga asanas (poses), I explored the relationships between actions and positioning. For example, in this journal illustration of the literature review as Trikonasana—Triangle Pose (Image 3.2), I explored the positioning of the feet and the pressure points of support as the establishment of a strong theoretical framework; the lines of energy directed upward as the main arguments that emerged from the review; I clarified the point at which these theories support my study, placed at the base of the spine; from which an extension to the findings could be reached, manifested in the rotation, breath and spreading of the upper body. My thinking shifted from worrying about meeting a prescribed word count to a systematic positioning. Metaphors of yoga continued to direct my daily experience as the manner of observation was both internalised and projected outwards, changing previous dissonance and fragmentation caused by constant measuring, to a more balanced sensation of expansion and being.

3.7 Front

At the front of my new approach now stood an aware side of self that enabled me to deal with both internal and external relationships. Being able to sustain self-awareness was due to the work I have done with my psychologist Diana

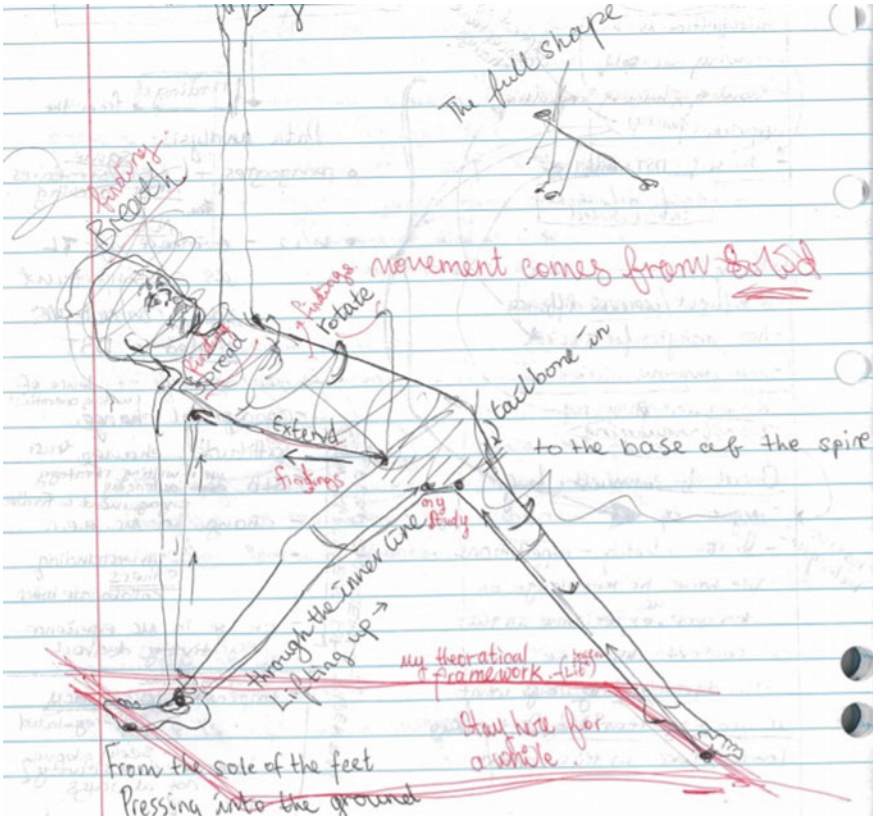

Image 3.2 The literature review as Trikonasana—triangle pose, personal journal

Scambler, who taught me a method of self-observation through the Voice Dialogue approach, first developed by Sidra and Hal Stone. Despite the differences between psychotherapy and individual mindful practice, they both draw on similar metacognitive and introspective observation of self and often seen in integration (Cayoun, 2014; Marx & Marx, 2012). Non-judgmental listening to different voices of the mind gave me a safe distance from the turbulence of emotions and the forces of desire. I then was able to extend self-negotiation to work through the candidature milestones, consciously bringing forward a side of self that could function as a designated 'I', or a functioning front, which I called the 'project manager' (Image 3.3). Knowing and naming the parts of self that came into play, 'I' was able to notice when their voices were triggered and manage the volume and intensity of the disturbance.

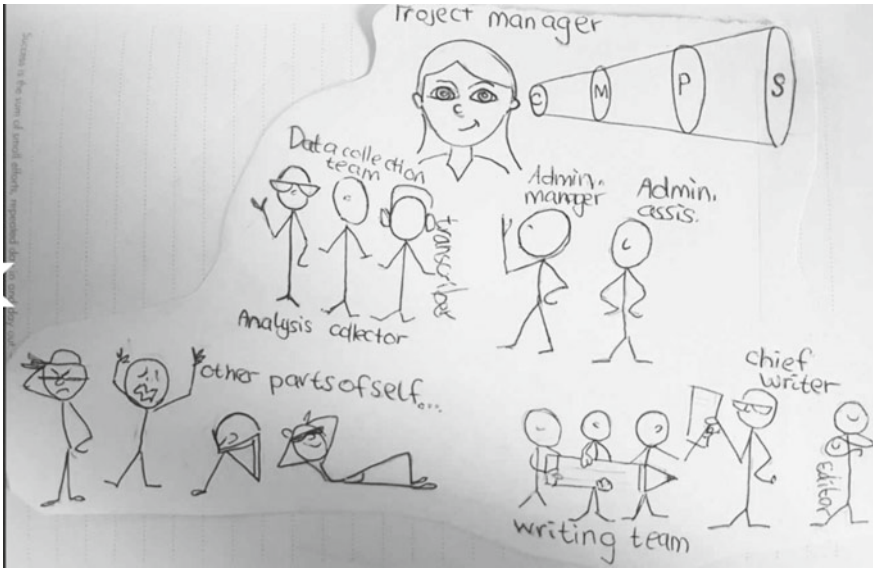

Image 3.3 Project manager and other selves, personal journal

The 'project manager' is the self-aware side of self, able to navigate through external demands and internal conflicts to successfully accomplish the Ph.D. candidature milestones (**C**onfirmation, **M**id-review, **P**re-submission, **S**ubmission).

Through introspection, a distinction between collective cultural voices of others and the voices of self also became clearer. These cultural messages are known to be received through non-linguistic and embodied experiences, perceptually becoming part of the individual's self-space and psychological functioning (Hermans, 2001). Voice Dialogue enabled me to recognise and extend compassion to my subpersonalities, also known as "discrete units of consciousness and ways of being" (Berchik, Rock, & Friedman, 2016, p. 88). Each unit, or self, emerged from a different time in my development with the intent to protect the self(s) from perceived loss of love. Self-awareness was necessary to rise above the segmentation of the unit and observe the whole as a system. Stone and Stone (2007) identify the ability to clearly see and compassionately accept all different selves as the Aware Ego. The authors explain:

> Aware Ego surrenders to all energies or selves. This is quite different from surrendering only to the spiritual energies. This means very simply that the Aware Ego is committed to hearing, seeing and feeling all the different selves. It excludes none. When one self starts to dominate, it is the job of the Aware Ego to find the opposites on the other side and to consider their input as well. In this sense the Aware Ego is like an orchestra conductor who welcomes all the instruments and then uses their individual contributions to sing the song of the soul. (Stone & Stone, 2007, p. 18)

For me, tapping into my Aware Ego as an experience beyond and across selves (Berchik et al., 2016) evoked a sense of unified calmness. From this higher aware

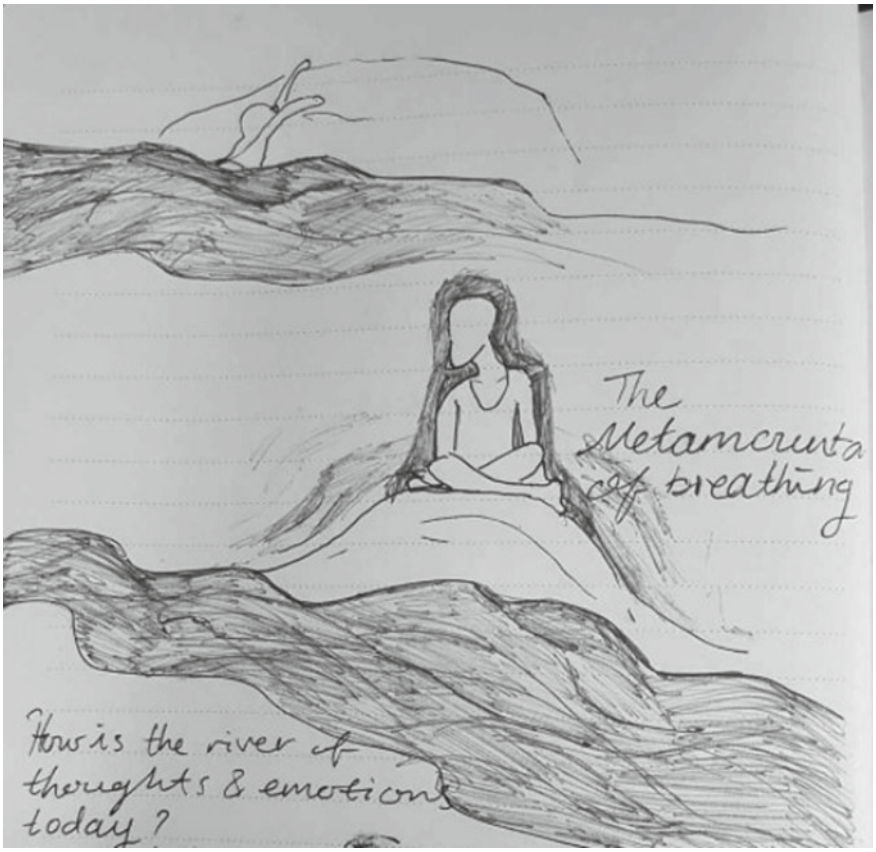

Image 3.4 Mindful strategy—Observing the river of thoughts, personal journal

mindful state, I was no longer stuck in the disjointed confined energy of the fraction and moved from the limited experience of a measured reality to an elevated extended transcendence. Daily mindful practice had kept me a grounded observant. Two practices characterised the new approach. On daily walks, I practised observing my 'river of thoughts' (Image 3.4).

I imagined myself swimming in a gushing river of thoughts and emotions until reaching a dry elevated hill. Hanging on to the bankside, I fought the forceful pull of the stream and pulled myself up to its warm surface. I would then find a comfortable and safe place to sit. The hill would rise and fall gently as if breathing. I connected my own breath to its gentle movement. Looking down at the 'river of thoughts' I began to observe its colour, clarity and intensity noticing the swirl of emotions within it. One day it would be muddy and green, another day—calm in crystal transparency. The breathing hill became my solitude; a place of refuge from selves and from the outside world.

In A-void Am I mentally in a void, daydreaming or staring at the page?	**In stress** Am I mentally stressing about writing, thinking about concerns and worries?
In the future Am I thinking about potential future successes or failures, imagining the worse or hoping for best outcomes?	**In work mindset** Thinking about content related to writing, producing language, checking, editing, rewriting etc.

Image 3.5 Metacognitive checking-in routine to identify a readiness mindset for writing

Another mindful strategy involved noticing my mindset during writing. In this metacognitive checking-in routine (Image 3.5) I evaluated whether or not I was cognitively engaged in my work: am I thinking about writing (content, coherence and expression) or about worries relating to future outcomes? Am I stressing or catastrophising what can go wrong or lost in procrastination and avoidance? Gaining a level of metacognitive self-awareness was crucial in creating and maintaining healthier work habits for my thesis writing, which I find equally useful for other academic writing activities. I noticed the true impact of looming deadlines and expectations to succeed on my mental culture. I was committed to refrain from negative self-judgment and made healthier decisions for myself. My front also changed accordingly, as I developed new abilities to negotiate external work demands and regulate my habits. These were valuable lessons I then shared with fellow doctoral candidates, as I reached out to form meaningful connections.

3.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

The personal work I did during my doctoral candidature has seen me closing the gaps between what Goffman (1959) calls front stage, back stage and off stage. It has also proved beneficial for those students with whom I shared strategies for introspection, for fearing the negative consequences of revealing our true self is a position shared by many doctoral students (Devine & Hunter, 2017). Much work has occurred in those candidature years including building bridges of authenticity, trust and healing between different areas of life. It was also a process of breaking free from external power relationships (student-supervisor, trainee-academia) and a letting go of the need to please and obey powerful selves within.

The move into an Early Career Researcher position brought positive change and new challenges; yet, authenticity and alignment continue to be at the front of my daily practice. My attachment to life is held by strong chains of pain and passion and it is this authentic experience that I bring from the back to the front stage. No shying away from self, no masking. Segmentation causes disintegration, which, in turn is perceived as an experience of falling and dread that triggers anxiety. Reframing the concept of success is necessary; applying the mind on nurturing my system is where my energy lies. Similar journeys to integration may serve well for some candidates who may feel similar stresses.

3.9 Conclusion

For a long time, I mistakenly thought my problems were based primarily on fears of rejection and abandonment. I have carried these conflicts as I entered the academic world, transferring and projecting my needs to feel a sense of belonging, acceptance and love. While such conflicts did exist, I came to see that living in fear was based on an energetic experience of falling, existential pain and fragmentation. Dealing with challenges associated with this experience required me to show up and go through.

Showing up has meant being aware of all parts of self in full, their narratives and worldview. A deep exploration does not exclude any part of self or that of reality in favour of preferable biases, for only full inclusion can potentially support "a new, self-transcendent way of relating to each part", which, in turn, can be experienced as "a broadening … greater freedom and choice" (Berchik et al., 2016, p. 88). *Going through* has meant being present to observe what exists and, more importantly, that which is absent. In the Hebrew word for observation/insight (*hitbonenut*) lie the words for wisdom and intelligence (*bina/tvuna*). The discovery of this investigation has brought to the front the importance of finding a Seer within and practising non-judgmental knowing oneself.

Conceptions, misconceptions, experiences and beliefs leave impressions on the mind and those impressions take us along a path of delusion. A mindful practice and inward observation bring a way of experiencing perceptual clarity and a sensation of expansion. It is then that the difference between the front stage and back stage, the performer and audiences, the one and the many, all merge to present a consistent and coherent expression of existence. Doctoral programs that seek such learning for their candidates might want to accompany the academic work by guided personal development, mindful introspection and metacognitive pedagogies.

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Part II
Becoming, Identity, and Professional Transitions

Chapter 4
Mindful Networks? Navigating and Negotiating Life and Work in Academia

Katy Vigurs

Abstract In this chapter, I unpack my use of social networks (and social media) as a means of being more mindful about the role of research and scholarship in the construction of my academic identity. I have found it to be a restless, shifting identity that has to be carefully and continually navigated and negotiated. On the one hand, I explain how participation in social networks has actively shaped my sense of academic community and also the scholarly relationships that contribute strongly to my academic health and well-being. On the other hand, I question the extent to which social networking and the use of social media in academia allow truly mindful practices to be enacted. For example, I sometimes worry that social networking for academic purposes through social media contributes to the acceleration of higher education practice—never switching off, always being connected—potentially further exacerbating academics' levels of labour, stress and pressure. By reflecting upon and analysing my scholarly use of Twitter and Instagram, I explore how this practice (usually) keeps me acting mindfully as an academic and evaluate the extent to which it enables me to engage better in the complex cognitive and emotional demands of working in higher education. Finally, I reflect upon my recent change of both role and institution, which saw me unexpectedly and temporarily suspend my regular use of social media for academic purposes.

4.1 Introduction

It is widely recognised that a large proportion of academics in higher education are working increasingly long hours (over 50 hours a week), often intensively and quickly (Kinman & Wray, 2013; Tight, 2010; Tytherleigh, Webb, Ricketts, & Cooper, 2005). Avoiding academic burnout and stress as a member of staff in universities is a strong discourse in higher education at present. There are increasing examples of institutional interventions being trialled which are designed to reduce stress in aca-

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_4

demic settings, such as the provision of once-weekly yoga sessions for 10 weeks (Brems, 2015) and 6-week mindfulness-based stress-release programmes (Koncz et al., 2016). This chapter, however, critically reflects upon my individual attempts over the past 5 years to enact self-care in academia by using social networks to create more mindful approaches to the practices of research, teaching, leadership and writing. Looking back, my attitude to social networks has been hugely influenced by the literature I engaged with during my doctoral study (Vigurs, 2010), which has allowed me to engage conceptually as well as practically in social networking practices.

Since 2012, I have been employed in two higher education institutions in the UK. Both are newer universities (Post-1992 institutions), which may be significant since Tight (2010) found that research has a less significant position in newer UK universities than in older ones (Pre-1992) and Darabi, Macaskill, and Reidy (2016) found that working as an academic in newer universities was experienced as more stressful than in older ones. In my previous university, I was a senior lecturer employed on a full, academic contract (i.e. teaching and research), with programme responsibility for two postgraduate courses. I was later promoted to associate professor at the same institution, which did not significantly decrease my teaching workload, though it did increase the ways in which my academic performance would be judged. I then moved to another university for an Associate Professorship in an applied research centre, which is where I am currently based. Here, I do not have responsibility for any taught programmes, instead I am involved in the leadership of the research centre, which primarily means generating research income, leading and managing a number of research projects and researchers, writing for academic publication and supporting others to write and publish too. What I found in my first university was that I became increasingly pulled in different directions by different senior members of staff according to where *their* accountabilities lay and where they thought that I could support them. Of course, in principle, it is not unreasonable that I assist senior managers and academics with their work. However, I found that this contributed to my experiencing of a gradual splitting or diluting of my own academic identity, which left me feeling, at best, spread very thin and, at worst, taken advantage of by others. In 2012, following a conversation with Helen Kara, I decided to join Twitter with the explicit aim of creating a set of academic social connections to help me better craft and communicate my academic identity on my own terms.

4.2 Literature: Introducing the Analytical Dimensions of Social Networks

In the UK, academics are likely to be experiencing increased levels of pressure and stress due to changes in the university sector over the last 25 years. For example, UK universities are now expected to compete for students, research income and national and international rankings, which has resulted ‘in more pressure on, and tracking of, academics performance’ (Guthrie et al., 2017, p. 7) . Moreover, Shin and Jung

(2014) found that UK higher education reforms have brought increased demands on academic staff, including more entrepreneurial activities, more teaching and more bureaucratic paperwork. Their study found that academic life in the UK is categorised by low levels of autonomy, pressure to perform in both research and teaching and the highest workplace stress among the 19 countries studied. More recently, Guthrie et al. (2017) conducted a literature review for the Royal Society and Wellcome Trust to develop understanding of the mental health and well-being needs of academics. They identify six key factors in the workplace that can influence people's levels of stress:

1. Demands (workload and work patterns);
2. Control (the extent to which a worker can control how they work);
3. Support (provided by the organisation, manager and colleagues);
4. Relationships (and promotion of acceptable behaviour in the workplace);
5. Role (workers' understanding of their role; having conflicting roles); and
6. Change (how changes in the organisation are managed and communicated to staff) (Guthrie et al., 2017, p. 32).

This context is important as it has shaped (and continues to shape) my everyday practices as an academic. The main thing I want to reflect upon in this chapter is my approach to social networking for academic and research purposes (both within and beyond whichever higher education institution is employing me) as an antidote to working in an increasingly accelerated and pressurised system. This section explores some of the theoretical concepts that inform my need for social networks and my approach to social networking in academia.

Let's begin by defining what a network is. It is a 'flat', informal model for social coordination that comprises lateral rather than vertical connections between people (Thompson, 2003). Networks can exist *within* and *beyond* organisations. Whereas hierarchies usually rely on 'top-down' communication flows, operating as a network often avoids bureaucratic structures and relies instead upon reciprocal flows of information and interaction between people in the network (Hannah, Dey, & Power, 2006). Being part of a network can lead to more fluid, dynamic and creative working practices than can often be achieved in a bureaucratic, hierarchical organisation. Participating in a social network can create bridging social capital by putting people in contact with others who are potentially different in outlook, interests, education and social circles (Granovetter, 1973; Taylor, 2003) and therefore can create access to different ideas as well as resources.

For networks to function social connections must be developed between people, and in practice these connections will vary in strength, directionality and density (Gilchrist, 2004). Indeed, network theorists see value in being able to analyse social connections in order to describe the quality of relationships within a network or social group (Burt, 2005; Lin, 2005; Wellman, 1999). 'Intensity' describes the extent to which members of a network are strongly connected to one another. Multistranded social connections are thought to be more 'intense' because the individuals know and interact with one another frequently in multiple social contexts (Wellman & Potter,

1999). 'Reciprocity' refers to social connections that involve exchanges or transactions, which can be seen as being directed from one person to another (Misztal, 2000). These can be analysed in terms of the extent to which the exchange is reciprocated (Scott, 2000). In terms of 'durability', some social connections are highly durable and long term, whilst others are more transient and short term. Connections that are regularly being activated are more likely to have a high level of durability. Frequent contact can foster shared values, encourage reciprocal exchanges and facilitate the delivery of support (Homans, 1961). 'Reachability' is a measure of accessibility, referring to how easy it is for members of a network to contact one another (Scott, 2000). Finally, 'density' describes the 'mesh' and 'connectedness' of social connections within a network (Mitchell, 1969). High-density networks have a large proportion of members who are directly connected to one another. Low-density networks include members who are not directly connected but are linked indirectly through other members (Jewson, 2007). Analysing the density of social connections within a network can allow you identify clusters of social connections and also 'structural holes' within the network (Burt, 2005).

I will draw on these five dimensions of social networks throughout the chapter to help me explain the process and value of participating in academic networks beyond the organisation that employs me and how this contributes to my becoming a more mindful academic.

4.3 Performance: Joining Twitter for Academic Purposes

Shin and Jung (2014) conducted research with university staff in 19 countries and found that academics working in higher education systems where they were expected to balance teaching and research reported lower levels of job satisfaction than those where the focus was either on teaching or research. As raised in the introduction to this chapter, I was looking for a way to deal with the splitting of my academic identity that I was experiencing as a senior lecturer in my previous institution. I began by looking at where my support was coming from at the time. Moeller and Chung-Yan (2013) identify different types of support: emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support. In 2012, I felt that my institution was providing useful instrumental support in the form of competitive internal funds for research-informed teaching projects, opportunities to become teaching excellence fellows and the chance to take part in European exchange visits to other universities. However, at the time, I found there to be a lack of emotional, informational and appraisal support. I was keen to start engaging with peers both outside of the small department I belonged to and also beyond my employing institution in a bid to locate wider forms of academic interaction and support. Opstrup and Pihl-Thnigvad (2016) found that receiving recognition from peers appeared to alleviate stress among academics.

Elsewhere in their study, Opstrup and Pihl-Thnigvad (2016) found that undertaking interesting research activities often validated academics' professional identity. However, as I suggest above, higher education reform in the UK, and specifically

the marketisation of the sector, is putting increasing demands and pressure on senior managers, which is then directly passed down to other academic staff. Therefore, in the UK, and I suspect in newer universities in particular, there is often less time during the working week to spend on 'interesting research activities', which means that activities like academic reading, writing for publication and conferences and the development of research proposals for external funding has to be completed during evenings and weekends. Torp, Vinje, and Haaheim-Simonsen (2016) concluded that academic institutions need to ensure that researchers can focus on what they consider to be their central activities, rather than increasing time spent on tasks seen as 'illegitimate' such as administration. In 2012, this was not easily observable in my institution; in fact, cost-saving measures and institutional restructuring meant that administrative activities increased significantly for academics with course leadership responsibilities. Elsewhere in their studies Opstrup and Pihl-Thnigvad (2016) and Torp et al. (2016) both identify that the opportunity for personal and professional development is seen as important for researchers' well-being. In 2012, I decided that I needed to create my own approach to professional learning. I wanted to find a way to get involved in outward-facing professional conversations on a regular and less formal basis. My learning from my Ph.D. suggested that I needed to find a way to create bridging social capital with other researchers and academics beyond my small department. I saw Twitter as a social media platform that might enable such external academic connections to be made, which could lead to a visible concentration of my academic interests, skills and aspirations. I hoped that using Twitter daily in this way would help me to be more mindful about research and scholarship as a core part of my professional identity, even if the academic day job seemed to be diminishing space for this.

4.4 Setting: Let the Informal Professional Learning Begin

As introduced above, I am an academic who has primarily worked in newer universities in the UK. In my previous institution, I worked predominantly on leading programmes with part-time, professional postgraduate students (Vigurs, 2016) and in my new role at a different institution I work as part of a team of researchers who conduct educational research projects for external clients. In my previous role, I worked hard to craft my professional identity around two key areas: doctoral education and researcher development, and equity in higher education. This identity work included making decisions (where possible) within the institution to align my everyday practice to these two areas, but it also saw me actively seek out and participate in a range of external networks in these same areas of academia. The deliberate resolution to join Twitter as a step towards activating wider, external networks in these fields was my way of attempting to disrupt the anxiety I was increasingly experiencing due to cultures of micro-management and managerial panic.

I desired to see another way of being in academia, but to do this I first needed some props. The props that made a difference were primarily switching to a smartphone

and a mobile phone contract with an unlimited data package (i.e. unlimited uploads and downloads). Prior to 2012, any social media activity of mine was completed only when connected to the Internet on a desktop computer. This now feels like a lifetime ago. Armed with a smartphone and having set up a Twitter profile and downloaded the Twitter app to my phone, I now began to navigate the app during the liminal spaces of my academic day. For example, in 2012 I was delivering MA Education seminars to lecturers in a further education college in Manchester, which involved a 40 min train ride each way. I used this time each week to think about the two main research areas I wanted to construct my identity around and to then find people on Twitter who identified an interest and practice in one or both of these fields of scholarship. Then, I clicked 'follow' and waited to see what sorts of things they communicated on Twitter. I can remember how alien yet exciting this form of academic connection felt. For months, I concentrated on just following a range of interesting and relevant individuals and analysed what they tweeted, when, how often, whom they interacted with on Twitter, how they interacted and so on. This was a form of professional learning via digital lurking and was vital to working out how I would use Twitter to enable social networking for the curation of academic identity and community.

4.5 Appearance: Enacting Online and Offline Identities

In terms of starting to establish an online academic identity, I was reminded of the social network theory drawn upon in my Ph.D. thesis and I began to carefully consider how I could build dimensions of reciprocity, durability and reachability into my nascent social networking on Twitter. These concepts became useful thinking tools for my practice and emboldened me to tweet for the first time and to interact with other academic Twitter users. In terms of demonstrating reciprocity, I began by 'liking' other people's tweets to silently indicate that I had read and engaged with their message. Five years on this remains a key way for me to build initial reciprocity with other Twitter users, and to date I have 'liked' 38.8 K tweets from other people, which means that I have on average 'liked' 20 tweets per day. Other ways for me to build presence and reciprocity was to 'retweet' others' tweets so as to share them with my followers. I also began to comment on tweets that asked questions in my field of interest or shared common challenges of working in academia. My comments usually involved the sharing of resources and knowledge or showing moral support. I think the fact that these acts of academic reciprocity were taking place regularly meant that it wasn't long before people were following me back and reciprocating in similar ways to my own tweets. Finally, my response to thinking about social networking practice that could be characterised as being both durable and reachable saw me endeavouring to be visible and active on Twitter on a daily basis and to be receptive and responsive when people directly communicated with me.

One of the ways I continued to reflect upon my online academic 'appearance' was by looking at how others appeared to be enacting their research identities on

Twitter. About a year into my use of social media, I had found a number of role models whose digital practices I respected and admired. These included @DrHelenKara, @CelebYouthUK, @ThomsonPat, @RFMacDonald, @thesiswhisperer, @rellypops, @Sharon_McD and @profcolinclark. I think what I particularly related to in the online scholarly practices of these academics was their openness, humour, willingness to publically engage with others and their use of images as well as text. I also appreciated their honesty and transparency in communicating how they juggle the demands of research and academic writing, including the real-life challenges shared in real time. This was refreshing and gave me the confidence to start making publicly visible some of my everyday academic practices in a bid to contribute to the demystification of research labour in academia. This included sharing daily images of my scholarly work, such as what I was reading at different points in the day, handwritten mind maps of the structure of a paper, the front page of a thesis I was examining, the blank form of a peer review to be completed, or the flyer for a conference I had submitted an abstract to. I felt committed to communicating some of the practices of academia that are often hidden from early career researchers. At times, I found I could more easily shape and control my online identity than I could my offline academic identity. This often created frustration, as the academic I felt I could be on Twitter frequently did not match the academic I was expected to be (at that time) in my institution. In fact, in the early days, I think my institutional colleagues thought my perceived dalliance with social media was a distraction from the day job (and in a sense, it was) and that it was without substance or academic merit. However, the underpinning concepts of social network theory gave me the conviction to continue.

4.6 Manner: From Online Connections to Offline Connections and Back Again

One of the positive outcomes of using social media to curate academic social networks across the globe has been the development of genuine, reciprocal relationships with researchers from different disciplines and who I respect for their honesty, generosity, openness and integrity. The connections I have developed with these people feel alive and real. It is worth noting that I had not met many of these people in person when I joined Twitter and yet these online webs of academic connections created networks that pulsed with ideas, knowledge, resources, questions and support. They were intellectually and emotionally sustaining and created academic stimulation, motivation and encouragement. Despite the online nature of the relationships, it felt refreshing to be around these people, to get to know them and to interact with them. What then started to happen was that some of these initial online connections developed into offline connections. Often the development into offline connections happened in serendipitous ways, usually because of the information we were sharing online. For example, a few years ago one of my online connections @profcolinclark,

a sociologist at the University of the West of Scotland, tweeted that he was flying to Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam. I happened to be travelling to Denmark for work via Schiphol on the same day and responded to his tweet to see if our timings might coincide. We ended up meeting for a cup of coffee in the airport and had our first face-to-face conversation about academic life. This was repeated a year later; again due to sharing work visit locations on Twitter, but this time we met to discuss academia in the café at Sheffield train station.

Other examples where online academic connections have developed into deeper offline professional relationships include those with @rellypops (Narelle Lemon) and @Siobhan_ODwyer. I ended up meeting Narelle for the first time in Chicago during a large international education conference. We had been following each other on Twitter for some time and we could see that we were both at the same conference from what we were sharing on Twitter. Narelle tweeted from the session I presented at but I was unable to go over and say hello as—despite knowing each other quite well on social media—I didn't know what she looked like (she wasn't using an image of herself on her Twitter profile at the time)! So, we arranged to meet up in person later that day in a café near the Cloud Gate sculpture. When I mentioned this to colleagues they asked 'Weren't you nervous?' but the thing about meeting up with people that you've known for a long time in an online capacity is that you don't feel like strangers. You already know each other's academic backstory and where your shared interests lie. So, when Narelle and I met up in person we were able to quickly get around to discussing potential areas of academic collaboration. This resulted in me contributing a paper to a special issue of a journal she was co-editing (Vigurs, 2016) and then I hosted Narelle on a research visit to the UK, which led to us developing a book proposal together with @DrHelenKara. My online academic connections haven't just developed through Twitter. For example, I met Siobhan O'Dwyer on Instagram (an image sharing social media platform). I really enjoyed following Siobhan's Insta-stories in a more passive fashion to begin with. She has a great story to tell as an academic working in the field of ageing and family care, who has emigrated from Australia to the UK. Our online connection became more interactive and reciprocal when she opened up about a specific academic challenge she was facing at the time; I was compelled to get in touch to offer moral support. Our online interactions became more reciprocal and frequent, which meant that when Siobhan was giving a keynote lecture at a university near to where I live, I was able to offer to host her at mine and give her a personalised tour of the city, whilst we discussed all things academia. Reflecting on these online–offline–online academic relationships, it is clear to me that these social connections can lead to strong, durable social networks. This is not only because the individual connections between two people are characterised by reciprocity and reachability but also because they are part of larger webs of social ties where many network members are directly connected to one another, thus creating a higher density network (Jewson, 2007).

4.7 Front: Challenges that Have Arisen

Over the past 5 years, my social networking practices have certainly contributed to an active sense of mindfulness in relation to the role of research and scholarship as a core part of my academic identity. I am now connected on a weekly basis to hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of researchers, and this increased number of connections means increased opportunities. In one sense, I welcome this as it provides a constant source of 'interesting research activities' (Opstrup & Pihl-Thnigvad, 2016), but at times I have also allowed opportunities through my social networks to double my workload, which then affects my capacity to be mindful in other areas of my life (as a parent, partner, friend, sister and daughter). As will be discussed in the next section, this has led more recently to a need and desire to unplug and switch off from social media at particular times. However, when I moved institutions in 2017 (also changing academic role), I had anticipated consciously using social media and my social networks to help me make a positive professional transition. I envisaged sharing snatched glimpses in real time through Twitter of what I was learning in my new post and also using Instagram to document images of both aspects of my role and the campus as I explored my new academic environment. But in reality, I found myself surprised by needing to adjust quietly and privately away from my social networks for a few weeks. I think this was partly because segments of my social networks at that point somewhat mirrored my research interests that I would subsequently be losing in my new post (i.e. the leadership of doctoral education programmes) and I worried that both they and I would experience slight cognitive dissonance if I suddenly started behaving differently on social media, so I retreated from social media for a short while during which I thought carefully about how to align my social media use with my new academic role in a new institution.

4.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage: Attempting Work/Life Balance

I've alluded above to the difficulty of achieving a healthy and sustainable work/life balance. When I started out using social media I had clear boundaries, so Facebook was only for 'real' friends and family (no work colleagues or students) and Twitter was only for professional purposes (no sharing personal events or interests) and I have only started using Instagram relatively recently (my boundary rules on social media had shifted by then). In the early days of using social media, I was also only connected when sitting at my desktop computer, never on the move. Over time, as connecting has become more mobile (any time, any place), and as connections have developed and deepened through online and offline interactions, what counts as front stage, back stage and off stage has become less distinct to me. This reflects a situation where some of my academic social networks are now marked by social connections that have increased in intensity and density. This is positive for these sets

of relationships. Some of us now interact on both personal and professional levels across a number of social media platforms (namely Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) on a weekly, sometimes daily basis. This frequency and quality of contact makes you feel closely bonded and invested in one another despite being physically miles apart. I value these academic relationships immensely. I am able to be front stage, back stage and off stage with these people. However, it is important to acknowledge that my social networks don't only contain such connections. Over 4000 people currently follow me on Twitter. Many of these connections at the present time are less intense, less multistranded, and if I'm honest I'm not sure that I will be able to foster many more clusters of connections that are high in density and intensity. The high number of heterogeneous connections that I have on social media means that I now often experience Twitter (and Facebook) as noisy, sometimes unruly and overwhelming spaces. As a result, when I go on holiday I choose to delete the Twitter and Facebook apps from my phone to ensure that I have some weeks of the year when I am unplugged from my social networks. It is probably time to review whether my practice on these social media platforms is still helping me to be mindful in relation to some aspects of academia. This may be one of the reasons I am particularly enjoying Instagram as an online social space for visually sharing experiences and ideas. I am only following 178 people on Instagram—a mix of personal and professional connections—many of these I knew first on Twitter, but I have got to know them in more multifaceted ways through Instagram. For me, Instagram is a space where I can currently share more of the back stage and off stage parts of my life, rather than focusing solely on what front stage (my academic identity) looks like. It allows a more holistic representation of myself across my different identities, which I have begun to crave.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have attempted to unpack my use of social networks and social media as a means of being more mindful about the role of research and scholarship in the ongoing construction of my academic identity. My participation in social networks has been fundamental in allowing me to actively shape my sense of academic community and the scholarly relationships that contribute daily to my academic health and well-being. However, after 5 years of using social media in academia it is probably time for me to review my practice to check whether it is still allowing mindful scholarly work to be enacted. I'm aware that my digital practice has shifted over time, sometimes quickly, and with increasing numbers of connections, and an increasing number of platforms (e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram), I worry that I'm at risk of becoming digitally disoriented. I sometimes feel that my growing digital practice solved one initial problem but now threatens to create others, such as contributing to an accelerated higher education system that is always connected and that never sleeps. Having said that, my more recent use of Instagram is currently allowing me to be more mindful in my higher education practice, because I mainly follow academics here who are explicitly engaged in mindful academic practices themselves.

Currently, I would say it is my use of academic networks on Instagram that is helping me to engage better in the complex cognitive and emotional demands of working in higher education. But for how long that will continue to be the case, I cannot say.

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Chapter 5
Mindful Practice as Professional Identity Work

Chad M. Morrison

Abstract This chapter reflects on my professional identity work as a teacher educator, shaped by mindful practice and explained using Goffman's dramaturgical framework (1959). As a teacher educator, I have experienced regular transitions between settings (Higher Education Institutions) with each setting requiring unique performances (roles and functions performed) within initial teacher education (ITE). During this time, there has also been significant and rapid reform within Australian ITE, with particularly focus within my area of expertise, Professional Experience. As a result of my constant grappling with new settings, roles and expectations, my manner and appearance as a teacher educator has often been the source of great tension for me. Often what has been scripted for these performances demonstrates a difference of what has been required front of stage and what has been in contrast to what has been required backstage or off stage. This has impacted on the ways in which I have understood my roles but also how I have understood myself and my motivations for this work. The performances of my work have therefore produced feelings of ongoing transition and perpetual identity work, scripted amongst changing sets, for diverse audiences and alongside a cast also grappling with the same inconsistencies between their required appearances and the manner by which they have sought to perform. This complexity has emphasised the importance of key members of the cast (fellow teacher educators) as community in shaping my evolving professional identity. This professional identity work as mindful performance (practice), co-scripted and co-directed by others, has enabled me to navigate trying conditions and wrestle with the manner by which this performance occurs and why.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_5

5.1 Introduction: Being Drawn to and Performing on the Stage

I have long been interested in the influential experiences of early career teachers. Recounts of their transitions into the profession have often emphasised experiences that have reverberated within their personal and professional lives in powerful ways (Willis, Crosswell, Morrison, Gibson, & Ryan, 2017). Accounts of their subsequent professional identity work (Morrison, 2013; Pearce & Morrison, 2011) have provided valuable insights into the ways that they have sought to align personal motivations with professional goals. These insights have often illustrated their attempts to create coherence between the enduring sense of self that first attracted them into teaching and their imagined future selves, regularly forged under immense pressure.

My own transition into ITE was connected to this interest in supporting early transitions into teaching. Observations of a steady flow of graduate and early career teachers into and promptly out of hard-to-staff schools around me reflected what was already apparent in the literature; the challenges associated with career entry proved difficult for many and was contributing to high attrition. Idealistically and naïvely, I felt that I had something to offer in this space and entered teacher education.

I made my transition to ITE at a time when the discourse about the quality of Australian teaching and schooling was confronting. This was a time of continual critique of teachers and of schooling generally, fuelled by comparisons of student achievement and performance indicators between schools, systems and countries. It was a time of rapid reform within education, characterised by a policy environment geared to generate more. This setting formed the stage and props for Australian federal and state election campaigns and reflected the performance space in which teachers and teacher educators existed. The broad audience for this performance included everyone from politicians to pre-school schoolers and the bleachers were regularly lined with crates of rotten tomatoes.

The role that I have played in this performance has been as a teacher educator working predominantly in Professional Experience (also known as practicum, placement, or work-integrated learning). This performance space, between the settings of university and school, is where pre-service teachers perform their own theory-informed practice. This performance space shines the light on elements of teaching that are hard to learn without experiencing them first-hand and is the space that allows practice to contextualise theory. This complex interplay between university and school brings together disparate audiences (children and young people, parents, teachers, principals, teacher educators, regulators, policymakers) with disparate needs. It is therefore a complex performance space (Bullock & Russell, 2010) where all of the tensions and contradictions are revealed. Just as in other demanding professions (Warnecke, Quinn, Ogden, Towle, & Nelson, 2011), this complexity inhibits what sense can be made of important preparatory experiences and impacts on transitions into the field (Crosswell & Beutel, 2013).

As a teacher educator working predominantly in the area of Professional Experience, the cast I work with has always been large (including pre-service teachers,

supervising mentor teachers, school leaders, teacher educators and school communities). The challenges of performance (what happens during Professional Experience placements) have always varied and the outcomes associated with this work always delicately pursued. These realities have highlighted my need to be present and aware of my surroundings and to retain a sense of self (my purpose, priorities and meaning derived from this work) while effectively supporting and working with others through ever-present complexity (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, 2005).

This complexity has been the impetus for mindful practice as a teacher educator. Epstein, Siegel, and Silberman (2008) draw attention to self-monitoring as fundamental to mindful practice, as a means for observing and managing emotional responses to complex interactions. Additionally, mindful practice aids individuals to consider novel problems from multiple perspectives and enhance awareness for productive responses.

5.2 Literature: Professional Experience as Moving Between Back Stage and Front of Stage

Professional Experience is a performance space that attracts a disparate group of performers and audience members. Pre-service teachers use Professional Experience to assess their fit for teaching and their alignment with teachers (Ure, 2010). They want to understand teaching and extend their capacity for it and Professional Experience affords them opportunities to do this. This performance represents an exchange enacted by individual performers (in this case pre-service teachers) in collaboration with others to bring about significant change (Billett, 2008). This interaction between pre-service teachers and their more experienced supervising teachers and leaders represents a focus on shared meaning, development and priorities (Greany & Brown, 2015; Le Cornu & Ewing, 2008).

Policymakers and regulators want to ensure that those prepared for teaching are capable of doing it well (Department of Education & Training, 2015) and Professional Experience has found favour within these groups. Equally, supervising teachers and school leaders also convey their emphasis on the value of school-based learning over more theoretically driven ITE content (Korthagen, 2001), and their perspectives are invaluable to Professional Experience programmes (Le Cornu, 2010). Parents also hold a range of important perspectives about their children's learning (Australian Scholarships Group, 2016) and these intersect with pre-service teachers venturing into schools.

As a teacher educator, I appreciate the needs of this disparate and diverse audience. What unites these stakeholders is positive outcomes associated with effective teaching practice and the range of benefits that stem from this. Importantly, I also appreciate the rapidly changing needs of members of this audience and how these are likely to shape future priorities within ITE and Professional Experience (Le Cornu, 2016).

5.2.1 *Pre-service Teachers Drawn to the Stage*

There is an influential relationship between why people want to enter this performance space (and all of its complexity) and how they make sense of their early teaching experiences (Chong, Low, & Goh, 2011). The drivers that pull them into teaching often reflect a determination to be significant in the lives of others. An altruistic drive to teach connects with a belief that teaching is a vocation imbued with personal meaning and significance (Abbott-Chapman, 2005). Pre-service teachers therefore seek meaning through the roles that they perform and through the quality of personal interactions with others. They map this meaning-making within their emerging teacher identities, grafted on to earlier notions and observations of what it means to teach and to be a teacher.

Contemporary framings of this professional identity work characterise it as dynamic (Gaudelli & Ousley, 2009) and responsive to individuals' experiences and interactions throughout their careers (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Beijaard, Meijer, & Verloop, 2004). The function of identity work in the early career phase is to grapple with one's sense of fit within teaching (Beijaard et al., 2004) while also gauging how others see this fit within the complex sociocultural framework of teaching (Gee, 2000). This identity work operates in relation to others and in response to ascribed teaching roles and the broader contexts of teachers (Curry, Jaxon, Russell, Callahan, & Bicais, 2008; Day & Gu, 2010; Lasky, 2005). This makes professional identity work highly malleable and responsive to the influence of others.

5.2.2 *Professional Experience as (a Shifting) Centre Stage for Professional Identity Work*

Recent changes introduced through accreditation of ITE programmes in Australia (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2015) have sought to strengthen the outcomes associated with Professional Experience. This has included an emphasis on partnerships between ITE providers and school-based teachers and leaders, to collaboratively conceptualise and deliver Professional Experience. This priority has been a central tenet of Le Cornu's influential contributions to Professional Experience (see 2008, 2010, 2015, 2016) and featured heavily in the recommendations of the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group [TEMAG] (2014) review of ITE. This agenda has sought to create communities of practice around pre-service teachers to support their development while connecting theoretical components to placement activities in meaningful ways, thereby overcoming the challenges of ITE components becoming divorced from one another or being inadequately or poorly designed (Darling-Hammond, Pacheco, Michelli, LePage, & Hammerness, 2005; Ure, 2010). This agenda to strengthen ITE through Professional Experience is one which I strongly support; however, the rate and extent of reform has produced

significant disruption. In turn, this has impacted on how our broader Professional Experience team interact and function.

The relational work of teacher educators to boundary-cross between university and school placement settings has long underpinned the success of Professional Experience programmes but has gone largely unrecognised (Carter, 2014). This is due to the complexity of placement issues that regularly demand complex solutions that go beyond the teaching and learning arrangements of either setting. A re-orientation in ITE toward Professional Experience, emphasised by the TEMAG (2014) review, values this shared vision and responsibility for the preparation of pre-service teachers, however does not necessarily recognise the complexities that exist within this space (Le Cornu, 2015) or how to overcome them.

A particular feature of this current agenda to strengthen ITE has been an emphasis on evidence and outcomes and a concentration of attention on the transition to the field (Mayer, 2015). The introduction of a teacher performance assessment with a concentration on evidence of student learning (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2016) has been a response to the call to ensure that graduate teachers are *classroom ready* (TEMAG, 2014). These drivers to strengthen ITE concentrate attention on Professional Experience but in ways that radically shift the emphasis and in ways in which teacher educators and school-based teachers and leaders alike have yet had time to prepare. As a result, tensions have emerged because of the changing manner of pre-service teacher performance and the ways in which teacher educators' roles are being re-construed. My role as a leader within this space has compounded and accentuated this complexity, as I am charged with driving these reforms within our institution.

5.2.3 Receiving the Script at (or After) Curtain Call

Teacher educators involved in Professional Experience have sought to understand the challenges associated with this work. They have long been influential in shaping the preparation of pre-service teachers through Professional Experience (see Sim, 2006) and continue to engage in scholarship and research to establish an evidence base to guide practice (Cochran-Smith et al., 2015; Le Cornu, 2016). The contemporary challenge for teacher educators working in this space is that right now the script is being rewritten just as we are stepping onto the stage to perform. The scenes and props are being changed, shrinking budgets are impacting on costumes and the performers are not completely sure of starting positions. What this means is that teacher educators' work associated with Professional Experience is changing rapidly. The required timelines for implementation of new ways of working do not give teacher educators time to plan for these changes. Additionally, the outcomes associated with this work are being determined without significant input from them. This has made many sceptical of the changes and of those teacher educators charged with leading the implementation, like me.

5.2.4 *Professional Identity Work (Performance) as Mindful Scholarship*

The experiences of transition into ITE have gained attention from scholars, as they too have grappled with new roles, new expectations and new understandings of themselves (Gee, 2000). Importantly, the narration of professional identity for teacher educators' hinges on co-construction of meaning about shared experiences, just like it does for pre-service teachers (Clarke, 2008). In addition, it captures the unique experiences of navigating the settings of teacher education and ongoing deliberations and reflections on this shared experience amid rapid reform and contestation around what constitutes quality ITE.

While the challenges associated with professional identity work within teacher education are perhaps not as confronting as that of those coming into the field for the first time (Huberman, 1989), the challenges associated with performing on this rapidly and continually changing stage have introduced a level of complexity that has been unsettling for many. This has manifested itself as mistrust and misalignment between teacher educators. Colleagues' frustrations about the rapid implementation and nature of reform have resisted attempts to locate them within the broader context and have stifled momentum. This, in turn, has impacted on our capacity to respond quickly to change, just at the time when we need unity, flexibility and momentum.

5.3 Performance: Attempting to Direct My Script (and *the* Script)

Many academics see their work settings as stressful places to perform (Guthrie et al., 2017) and this stress is often exacerbated by concerns relating to a lack of control over their work. Australian teacher educators report concerns about the nature of change in their roles and some of this concern relates specifically to ways that Professional Experience is conceptualised and realised within contemporary framings (Morrison & Le Cornu, 2014). This reform agenda is shaping their roles and functions within ITE in ways that are unfamiliar or in ways that are in conflict with how they conceptualise the priorities for their work, and this is of critical importance.

Over the past couple of years, and in response to the rapid reforms within our sector, I have experienced these tensions first-hand. As my colleagues have grappled with a shifting professional landscape to one with much greater external accountability and monitoring, my need for mindful practice has escalated.

To manage this challenge, much of my professional identity work has been intentional (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005), as I have sought to align myself with collaborative colleagues who are responding in positive ways to the new agenda. At a time of such contestation about what to prioritise within ITE and Professional Experience in particular (Morrison & Le Cornu, 2014) the intent of my

identity work therefore adds much complexity as I search for stable anchor points (e.g. trusted, close colleagues).

Presently, my professional identity work reflects new challenges associated with being a teacher educator as well as being a product of what has transpired along the way (Olsen, 2008). It is reflecting how I am having to respond to my new settings and who I am able to share this journey with. This emphasises the deliberations about the priorities for my work that are ever-present and how these new priorities connect to or conflict with the ones that directed me to this professional space in the first place (Hong, 2010). The value that I place on the new and the existing priorities of my work inevitably inform how I see myself and others (Zhao & Zhang, 2017) (and how they see me) and so this identity work is pronounced and consuming. In response, I am having to reach out to teacher educators beyond my context, who are also 'in the trenches' in their own institutions, for help to make sense of this new context.

5.4 Setting

Since entering teacher education, colleagues have regularly referred to Professional Experience as a poisoned chalice that will be a dead end for my academic career. This is due, in part, to the complexity of operating between university and school settings. Working across systems and constant boundary hopping between them means that the complexities associated with this work often require sensitive responses and innovative solutions to hidden stories. These responses have regularly needed to be quietly advanced but were made possible through networks of teachers and teacher educators working closely with one another around shared goals.

My colleagues now face new and immense pressures. Many of these actively steer them away from Professional Experience and introduce measures that create great dissonance for them about what this work entails. This is leaving them with little capacity to engage with or support the new agenda, or to work with me to drive responses that we can collectively feel comfortable with.

These realities mean that our team often splinters around key issues relating to reform and we find ourselves passively arguing for irreconcilable outcomes. As a consequence, my need for mindful practice has never been more pressing.

5.5 Appearance

These past 2 years have been a time for mindful practice and action. Rapid reform has impacted widely, and there is a palpable sense that even the ground beneath our feet has become unstable. Ongoing conversations with colleagues from around the nation have regularly included a shared perspective that the pendulum must start to swing back, such has been the extent of impact over a brief period.

Within this time of great disruption, the need for mindful practice has been striking in order to survive the uncertainty and even preserve some sense of normality. In the past, order and process where mechanisms that helped me to navigate the pressure of ITE and this gave the appearance of purpose and intent to my work. Over the past 2 years, these have been eroded by unachievable deadlines for enacting change and change that has been ambiguous in the extreme. The stress produced by this uncertainty has played out in the interactions between colleagues and reflected in the struggles to advance our work.

The cumulative effects of this context have been evident within many teacher educators, pre-service teachers and colleagues within schools, meaning that the days have been long and the challenges have been regular. Under these conditions, there has been an ongoing need for self-monitoring, for reviewing my colleagues' response from multiple perspectives, considering the conditional nature of rapidly changing priorities, and being active and present in the evolving processes that are shaping this work.

Mindful practice under these conditions has been about regular debriefs with colleagues working across other institutions who have faced the same dilemmas. In these safe spaces, out of view of the much of the audience, I have benefitted from others' perspectives on the new stage, the props, the cast and crew and on whom is contributing to the new script for Professional Experience and ITE. These conversations have included suggestions for reconnecting colleagues with the priorities and outcomes of their work in ways that they can live with and be motivated by.

This complexity, and a focus on mindful practice, has generated a renewed intention to remain focused on quality ITE. This has allowed me to regroup and to consider how new priorities can be grafted on to those that have provided the motivation and meaning up until now. Thankfully, through self-monitoring and some self-correction (when required), these expressions of mindful practice (self-awareness, interpersonal care, exploring multiple perspectives and emphasising support for others) have re-emerged as resources to draw on to manage this complexity. This is a work in progress, but it is proving to be generative. Importantly, I can also start to see signs of others around me starting to lift their eyes with renewed intention and motivation to respond productively and in mindful ways.

5.6 Manner

Mindful practice in this context and at this point in time now means remaining reliably focused on the meaning and purpose I derive from my work. This means returning to what attracted me to ITE in the first place. I intended to make productive contributions to the preparation of pre-service teachers in order for them to remain in the profession, and for this to be sustainable. This was about pursuing purposes through my work beyond utilitarian ones and in connection with others. Understanding the complexity of people's lives and recognising their vulnerabilities has always been something I

have been drawn to do and using insights from mindful practice in supportive ways has given me a great deal of satisfaction, despite the difficulties of my current work.

5.7 Front

Where this has not worked, and what has been the greatest source of challenge, has been where others have perceived me in ways fundamentally different from the ways I perceive myself. On understanding the nature of change that was being imposed on the sector and the requirements to comply, I felt that it was important to bring my colleagues and pre-service teachers on to the stage and into the light (to direct their performance). Their performance was and is to be critically reviewed so I felt that it was in their interests for me to do what I could to prepare them for this new reality. What I failed to recognise was the ways in which this could be interpreted (as of my complicity in the reform agenda and my support for it).

I have had to work hard to disrupt my own responses to others' anger and frustrations over changes to their work and lives. I have also had to work hard to appreciate the time necessary for individuals to do this work independently. As this has occurred on multiple fronts (with teacher educators, school leaders, supervising teachers and pre-service teachers), I have also had to work hard to remain focused on long-term goals to position these groups for success.

This has meant focusing on my capacity to listen to concerns without providing responses and acknowledging my part in the change process. This has been confronting but immensely beneficial.

5.8 Conclusion

My initial motivation for entering ITE and the need for connection between ITE and the profession attracted me to Professional Experience. Recent drivers for change within ITE and Professional Experience have been the source of considerable tension within our field and my role has placed me at the heart of much of this reform. Professional Experience provides the settings for great performance, for connection and productive partnerships, however, it has also been the setting for much uncertainty and concern. As I have navigated these challenges, I have been forced to reflect on the things that motivate me most about my work and have been drawn to informal mindful practice as a basis for my own ongoing professional identity work. Grappling with imposed changes to my work has emphasised what really matters to me within it. This has allowed me to narrate a script about my performances across the many settings of Professional Experience within ITE and to think about ways of supporting others to narrate scripts that they can subscribe to. Often my colleagues' generosity of spirit and interpersonal awareness has created the conditions for productive, mindful identity work and performance. Importantly, this mindful practice has been in the

midst of considerable change. As a result, the conditions of teacher educators' work and the criticality of making collective sense of this changing performance space have generated new understandings about myself and my role. Under these circumstances, informal mindful practice has positioned me to remain connected to others, influential in the processes of reform and committed to (and responsive to) how this reform impacts on those within the field.

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Chapter 6
Exploring Mindfulness in Teaching–Learning Scholarship Through a Reflective Conversation

Marni J. Binder, Jennifer Martin and Jasna K. Schwind

Abstract We are three scholars in early childhood studies, child and youth care, and nursing in an urban university in Canada. In this chapter, we offer a conversation about our experiences as we explore the significance of conscious mindful practices within the context of our respective teaching–learning roles within academia. Drawing on a performative framework, this chapter offers a conversation shaped by reflections on our current collaborations in leading workshops on personal–professional well-being of our peers. Significant to the conversation is how, as actors in the classroom and research, we also engage with our students in mindful and creative performance to encourage self-care and well-being. Our reflective dialogue thus serves to inform not only our teaching–learning, but also our research undertakings.

6.1 Introduction

We are three colleagues from three different disciplines at an urban university in Canada: Marni in early childhood studies, Jennifer in child and youth care and Jasna in nursing. As three mid-career teachers in academia, we share in conversation our stresses, challenges and joys of the teaching–learning scholarship at a university that appears to increasingly value research over teaching. In this chapter, we live out our reflective conversation through a performative framework.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_6

Jennifer: Prior to academia, I was a clinical practitioner providing trauma assessments and treatments for children. At the heart of this work is a philosophy of connection, caring, relationship, and collaboration; my approach to teaching and research is grounded in this philosophy. This is what led me to collaboratively develop the mentorship circle (Waddell, Martin, Schwind, & Lapum, 2016) for new faculty shortly after being awarded a tenure-track position in a practice-based faculty. As new faculty, we hit the ground running and often feel isolated in our teaching and research—I know I did—and the pace does not slow down. While trying to live up to increasing demands as academics we are also seeking collegial support, a sense of belonging, and a safe place within the context of the institution to express ourselves openly and honestly—to share our vulnerabilities—to feel cared about.

Marni: My scholarship of teaching and learning and research is informed by my role as an arts-based and holistic educator who spent over twenty-three years teaching in the inner city public school system prior to arriving in academia (Binder, 2011, 2012). I brought the importance of the arts, heart, mind and spirit to my teaching and learning practice and research. However, as artist/teacher/researcher, embodying these relational qualities created a feeling of isolation. It took time to find like-minded colleagues with whom to share what I cared about most and to try and manage the stresses from the increasing demands entering academia.

Jasna: A little different from you both, I have been teaching in higher education for many years. Although I started my professional path as a critical care nurse, I quickly realized my passion for teaching-learning and moved to teaching nursing within a college system. To learn how to teach, I pursued graduate work on curriculum development. As senior college faculty, I took a post at this university. I had imagined the transition to be only a little "bump in the road". However, the change was tsunamic. The adjustment for me as a mature educator and a novice researcher was a steep learning curve. Once I found my footing, like Jennifer, I was one of the co-creators of the faculty mentorship circle. I recognized the importance of peer support that creates a sense of belonging and safety.

6.2 Literature

Over the years much has been written on the scholarship of teaching and learning (Delay & Martin, 2015; Dirkx, 1997, 2006; Greene, 1978; Knowles & Cole, 2002; Miller, 2007; Schwind, 2016). It is more recently, that we, as a society, have become more intentionally concerned about the whole person experience of teaching-learning, which encompasses both the teacher and the student wellbeing (Miller, 1993, 2012). Increasingly, a greater attention has been paid to the effects of stress in education (Hassed & Chambers, 2014; Smalley & Winston, 2010), causing deleterious mental health effects for all concerned. Mindful activities have been found to mitigate such stress, and help both students and teachers, to enhance the teaching-learning encounters (Miller & Nozawa, 2002; Miller, Irwin, & Nigh, 2014; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2013; van der Riet, Rossiter, Kirby, Dluzewska, & Harmon, 2015).

Jasna: In our work and collaborations, we have drawn on the importance of mindfulness practices (Hanh, 2009; Hanh, & Weare, 2017) for our self-care, as well as to consider how we bring this awareness to the students we engage in teaching–learning encounters (Schwind et al., 2017). From the perspective of person-centred care and the constructivist framework, (Schwind, Lindsay, Coffey, Morrison, & Mildon, 2014), knowledge is co-constructed, and teaching-learning situations are relational encounters. Consequently, if students are feeling anxiety and stress, which affects their mental health and well-being, then teachers too are impacted. We have noticed this occurring spontaneously throughout the university, as more and more workshops and groups, which speak about the importance of mental health and wellbeing of students and teachers, are popping up.

Jennifer: I agree, teaching practice-based courses that explore sensitive material, such as the effects of violence and complex trauma, can be charged with strongly held opinions and intense emotions, as well as the potential for psychologically intimate classroom interactions (Delay & Martin, 2015). It may be that some students have experienced similar critical events as those being discussed in class. This is important given that the American College Health Association's (2013) National College Health Assessment of just over 34,000 post-secondary students indicated that 73% of Canadian participants had reported experiencing overwhelming anxiety within the past 12 months, and nearly 90% reported feelings of being overwhelmed by all they had to do. As teachers-learners, it is therefore important that we acknowledge the likelihood of anxiety in the classroom (theirs and ours).

Marni: Yes, and we need to consider how this manifestation of anxiety and stress within the classroom may impact how we teach. That is to say, how we introduce ideas, and how these could be understood by our students. This whole process has further consequences on how those concepts and ideas are adopted and carried out in practice.

Jasna: This brings us to the recognition of the importance of self-care practices. We need to begin with ourselves, before we can support those in our care, in academia it is our students.

Jennifer: Agreed; practicing mindfulness in the classroom contributes to creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment. Such activities help students respond, rather than react, to course materials by helping them engage in reflective dialogue, which further helps to manage their anxiety.

Jasna: As colleagues who share the value of the holistic approach to teaching-learning (and research), we recognize that for effective learning to take place both the students and the teachers need to take into account mind-body-spirit.

Marni: Our collaboration has been one of incredible synchronicity. Through our interconnectedness, I have found renewed energy and support for additional humanistic qualities that I value as important in teaching and learning: the importance of compassion and relationships.

Jennifer: Yes, I think we have offered mentorship to each other through an honest and open sharing of knowledge and experience. Kabat-Zinn (1994) defined mindfulness as paying attention, with intention, in the present moment, without judgment and with an attitude of kindness. Marni, both you and Jasna have always been generous

and attentive in our collaborations—a generosity of spirit; and you have both done this with kindness and enthusiasm … and a sublime sense of humour. That level and quality of collegiality is energizing.

Marni: In a recent publication (Guiney Yallop & Binder, 2017), I explored with a colleague the importance of collegiality, our approach to teaching and learning and how our academic trajectory took a parallel path in many ways. So much of who we are now and what we do is connected to the tensions often felt when between two worlds. In my case teaching and academia. I suggest our collaborations emerged out of two worlds coming together for the three of us. Jasna, I think to our rediscovering each other at a new faculty session when we both arrived at the university. We had not seen each other since 1998 when we first met in Professor Miller's graduate class on spirituality in education.

Jasna: Yes, as you had alluded to earlier, it is a gift to (re)connect with colleagues who share similar philosophical perspectives on what it means to engage in teaching-learning. For all three of us, the notion of holistic student engagement, which also includes us as teachers, is something that we believe can be nurtured through such practices as mindfulness.

Jennifer: When I consider the aim of mindfulness in the scholarship of teaching-learning, I understand it is not about feeling better about expectations and demands of academia (as a teacher or a learner) nor is it about making us better at accomplishing specific tasks. Rather, it is about (well)being and becoming: becoming more attuned versions of the self-empathetic—more humane. Marni, when I consider the concept of attunement I think about the tension you just identified that occurs between the "two worlds".

6.3 Performance

Jasna: One significant challenge for me, over the years, has been introducing mindful and creative practices into the discipline of nursing. Although, more recently, there has been a shift towards the quality of teaching-learning experiences, the traditional values and paradigms still persist.

Marni: Jasna, I can relate to your challenge and perspective on teaching and learning. There are two challenges I have experienced over the years in working within my discipline. One is using creativity in teaching and learning situations, which is a shift from the traditional paradigm. And the other is using mindfulness practices in my teaching, though there is a shift occurring. While a shift from solely a cognitive lens has occurred and one observes more experiential approaches being explored, creativity has often reflected as an artistic and aesthetic perspective that is not readily embraced and valued, though there is literature to support this in teaching-learning (Butterwick & Lawrence, 2009; Klein, 2000; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Mantax & Miezitis, 2008; Paley, 1995; Palmer, 1998).

What I see offered at the university level is a more individualistic, competitive approach, instead of creating a compassionate and caring teaching-learning environment. We focus on faculty and student wellbeing, but the missing piece is the collective whole. For example, the increasing direction for larger class sizes disrupts relationality and strips some of the intimacy we can bring to our teaching and learning. I believe we risk by revealing that human side. I think this perception needs disruption. How do you both think we can do this? How does risk-taking inform but also shift what we do in our teaching? Do we open up vulnerable spaces in our teaching?

Jennifer: A number of years ago, I developed an undergraduate course on trauma-informed practice. The first three weeks of the course focused on self-care in direct practice. It is a challenging course to teach, in part because of the sensitive subject matter, and because I reflect on my own experiences working with abused children. I remember looking around the room mid-lecture and seeing—and feeling—students' reaction to the case study. I felt it too. This moment of discomfort awakened in me the need to bring self-care directly into my classroom. That day we ended class with a "lovingkindness" (Salzberg, 1995, 2011) mindfulness meditation. It seemed like a risk at the time but the students were engaged. The next week we began and ended the course with mindfulness exercises and then students wanted to lead the mindfulness activity. It is my responsibility to create a safe learning environment as stories and experiences are shared and in those shared moments, I am not only teaching about trauma or abuse, I am also role modeling how we can respond to and connect with others with care, sensitivity, kindness, and compassion including being compassionate with the self. Since then I have integrated mindfulness into all of my classes and it is a vital component of my scholarship of teaching-learning and research. This is something that the three of us have in common and that has drawn us together in our scholarly work.

Jasna: I agree with both of you. In order to live and practice holistically, requires the full engagement, mind-body-spirit, of the teacher and the student in a respectful and professional manner, living the I-Thou (Buber, 1996/1970) philosophy within academia. This way of living and practicing professionally, requires energy and time. In today's fast paced society, being the "slow professor" (Berg & Seeber, 2016) is a challenge. And, this aligns with the challenges we heard about from the students in our study (Schwind et al., 2017), that they found it challenging to find the time to practice mindful breathing outside the classroom's brief practices.

Also, in our collaborative workshops on wellbeing, we have heard from our colleagues, that they too find it difficult to find and give time to self-care practices, both at home and in the classroom. Yet, each person recognizes the importance of self-care for personal wellbeing, as well as for role-modeling healthy behaviours for our students.

6.4 Setting

We are qualitative researchers who work within a variety of progressive approaches to inquiry. While we identify in this chapter a number of potential stresses within our professional roles, it is the traditional separation between research and teaching–learning that concerns us. While we see teaching–learning as part of the scholarship of discovery, we often feel pressed to defend our holistic and iterative view of teaching–learning and inquiry. Our holistic view of academia, also includes mental health and well-being, of both teachers and students. While there are similar lived experiences within academia, we also encounter different relational aspects that derive from our respective disciplines and personal professional landscapes.

Marni: Our three schools are connected to a professional practice and service faculty. The faculty come from a variety of related and sometimes overlapping disciplines. For example, some of us come from the field of education, sociology and psychology. While this makes for an enriching environment for engaging in early childhood studies, building relationships takes time, the separation of personal and professional image, and philosophical differences, are not often easy to bridge. Sometimes I feel like I am dancing as fast as I can, doing more with less. I have noticed with a shift in new hires and leadership, that acknowledgement or acceptance of what I do has increased.

Jennifer: There does seem to be a shift taking place, however, the onus is still on the individual to incorporate care of self into their work lives. It is not a way of practicing/being that is necessarily embraced by the university writ large.

Jasna: I work within a school of nursing. Nursing as a profession is traditionally situated in the liminal space between science and art, at once encompassing both. Considering this from a traditional perspective, this is a drawback, and a challenge, often resulting in internal struggle, in the shape of "What camp do I as a nurse-educator-researcher belong?" This is indeed difficult, when one is measured by a traditional positivistic paradigm. However, when one considers nursing from a holistic perspective, it is seen as a charmed profession: it creates and utilizes both the science and the art to offer its service to humanity.

Jennifer: I like your idea, Jasna, of utilizing both the science and the art in service. In child and youth care we often refer to the art and craft of our work with children and families. Relationship is the foundation of child and youth care practice and compassion exists in relationship—self-compassion and compassion for others. Mindfulness focuses on acceptance and moment-to-moment non-judgmental awareness. When we introduce students to mindfulness, we are encouraging relationship through care, empathy, non-judgement, interconnectedness—all of which encompass compassion, including compassion for the self. We are also preparing our students to be future leaders—compassionate leaders—and compassionate leadership requires diligence, reflection, insight, creativity and a passion for the future. I endeavour to embrace and role-model this in my teaching-learning.

6.5 Appearance

Jennifer: I have recently stepped into a leadership role in our faculty. As such, there are various implications about how I enact my appearance and how that may change dependent upon what it is I am attending to or who it is that I am working with. Much of this is to be expected and the process of becoming comfortable in my new role is at times stressful.

Marni: I find my new role as a teaching chair for all the schools within our faculty, which is administrative and puts me in situations in both the overall faculty and university level, interesting and disruptive at the same time. While I don't change who I am essentially, I am continually responding to the needs of others and in many cases, timeline demands. I almost feel pressured to conform and continue to resist.

Jasna: I understand what you both mean. Your observations help me recall when I was a lead faculty for the fourth-year of the nursing baccalaureate programme. In that role, overseeing approximately 460 students and 60 teachers, required me to think beyond my teaching role, and consider multiple philosophical perspectives of other colleagues, who may not share my holistic view of teaching-learning, for example. There were many times when I was trying to reconcile my own philosophy of teaching-learning with that of others, trying to find common ground that is ethical, respectful and inclusive.

Jennifer: What has been less obvious to me is the day-to-day setting in which I conduct my new role; specifically, the setting in which I work with administration staff. From the moment I assumed my new position, they were welcoming and supportive and did all they could to ensure that all was running smoothly. More recently, I was at a meeting where a member of our leadership team talked about the 'care giver' role that the person who was previously in my position, had taken on in the office. As I reflected on the acts of selfless generosity by the staff, I became aware that during this time of significant transition I had been more of a 'care taker'—taking more than I was giving; I wasn't paying attention to the stress that staff may have been experiencing. This was another moment of discomfort for me that takes me back to my philosophy of the scholarship of teaching-learning/being—being grounded in connection, caring, relationship, and collaboration. This awareness for me is about cultivating mindful/selfless generosity, initiating giving, and being replenished by that energy.

Jasna: Yes, I too had experienced similar support when I took on the role of lead faculty, several years ago. The support of administrative staff, and other colleagues, the ones I knew and the ones I did not, all seemed to want to support me and be made known to me.

Marni: I too, have found so much support from everyone during this learning curve period, from colleagues in my school and in the faculty. As well, I have noticed that this generosity of spirit, from others has magnified for me. While always a part of my relational interactions, I feel this incredible sense of responsibility to respond to others almost immediately.

Jennifer: For me it is about being mindful of day-to-day everyday interactions especially when there are uneven power dynamics even in a practice-based faculty such as ours that actively resists traditional institutional hierarchy and values collaboration, consultation and caring. We all matter and we are all trying to find a way of being—a way of *being well*—while at the same time running as fast as we can and hoping for a shift in the values of the institution towards a more holistic approach.

Marni: While I witness and feel caught in the same power dynamic at times as you do, I keep reminding myself that mindfulness and creative practices are acts of resistance and our attempt to enact change and allow for faculty and instructors voice, and student voice needs to be front and centre. It is this mindful daily interaction that I too find challenging where I am situated. Perhaps being part of an administrative team in a new role has something to do with this. I feel the stress of performance expectation that comes with the role, in addition to all the other roles I still carry. Whether we like it or not, we are always under scrutiny, especially when we blur the boundaries of the personal and professional.

6.6 Manner

Marni: Palmer and Zajonc (2010) challenge us to deepen our teaching, as well as the university culture, through contemplation, and mindful presence. I ask: What does it mean to embody a mindful presence in a teaching and learning environment through creative practice? I think I often have more questions than answers. Our collaboration and the continuing network of like-minded professionals we have encountered contributes to stability in challenging situations. I need to remind myself to allow for those contemplative moments of thinking, pause and stillness to work with the pressures.

Jasna: With seemingly ever-increasing demands on our time, it is challenging to carve out time to think deeply about, and to reflect on our teaching-learning practices (Miller, 2014). I agree with Dewey's (1938/1963) declaration that, "without some reconstruction, some remaking" of our life experiences there is no intellectual evolution (p. 64). As academics and scholars, we therefore need to take that space to allow our imagination and creativity to flourish, thereby nourishing our mind-body-soul (Schwind, 2008). I think that by giving ourselves that permission, we role-model that action for our students.

Jennifer: As I consider my conscious decision to be mindful in the classroom I consider the ways in which I attempt to help students connect meaningfully with the course material and how do I do that thoughtfully, sensitively and with respect for each student and their experiences. I ponder how we think about the stories of others, and about our own stories; how do we understand the dynamic of empathic connection? Trust becomes an essential component in creating a safe, respectful and mindful learning environment for students, particularly in those courses that explore sensitive topics. To teach well I need to move with my students through the learning

process with creativity and compassion and model approaches that reflect the care and the mindful practice of child and youth care work.

Marni: For me dealing with the pressures and seeking a balance in my personal and professional life is critical. I need to be mindful of others in my life who are not moving at a similar fast pace, relationships outside of the academy. I need to give them my time and attention too. While it is understood that there are many intense times, does it need to be 24/7? I also need to say *no* to the immediacy when it is not doable.

Jasna: Yes, I know what you mean. My professional demands seep into my personal life … constantly threatening to squeeze it out. I find that it takes increasing energy to draw the boundaries and to re-charge my own light, so that I can be more fully present with those in my care, my students.

Marni: Too often, wellbeing initiatives often focus on the individual, rather than on the interconnected collegial and restorative experiences with others (Berg & Seeber, 2016; Jordan, Richardson, Fischer, Bickel, & Walsh, 2016). I view this restorative experience as a way to push back within the neo-liberal environment, the university. While we have a responsibility to build the capacities of our students, we need to support the efficacy and wellbeing of our colleagues, afford the spaces for listening, and so support each other in meaningful ways. For me, how I embody spirituality and the arts (Binder, 2016) has provided the restorative moments needed in my lived experiences. Engaging in creative active experiences such as drawing, playing with pastels and watercolours in my office, as does being in nature. Being, near water, gives me those liminal spaces I need—those in-between spaces as a way of being.

Jennifer: In my life, when I am experiencing stress, I am drawn to nature; I want to be outdoors hiking or canoeing surrounded by trees and plants and water. And so, I have sometimes held classes outdoors in the park or the botanical gardens that are near our campus. I suggest this to the students in the context of self-care and they always embrace the experience. I have memories of sitting silently with twenty-five undergraduate students in the conservatory at the botanical gardens in mid-winter surrounded by waterfalls and tropical plants, feeling the warmth and the humidity, smelling the damp earth and the flowers in bloom. My students tell me that they never want to leave that space or that feeling of tranquility, calmness and peace of mind; and they always want to return.

Jasna: Yes, nature is a beautiful healer … nourishing our soul and our wisdom.

6.7 Front

Marni: Coming into academia as a second career was challenging. I found my authentic self challenged; who I was and what I believed in. I was confronted with power hierarchies around tenure and trying to find a place to situate myself. I did not think the transition would be so difficult but it was. I learned quickly that I needed to translate my many years of work in the arts and holistic education in the field into research that could be understood by those with more traditional viewpoints. I

remember that my initial discussions around breath work/meditation were not valued. There was skepticism about discussing the spiritual world of the child. Slowly, over time, through networking with like-minded colleagues across other schools, my creative arts research, holistic practices and acknowledgement of teaching at the faculty level contributed to the credence needed to step out of the academic costume and remove the mask. Significant was the increase in awareness for addressing mental health issues with students and consequently looking deeply into how we as a faculty addressed our own stresses. Introducing breath work and lovingkindness meditation at the beginning of each class role models not just for students but also for faculty. My collaboration with you both—Jennifer and Jasna—emerged out of this increased need by others to address and support what we all knew as critical to our being.

Jennifer: I remember moving into a tenure-track position in child and youth care—and it is a track—a train track—and as soon as that train left the station it was full steam ahead. And while traveling at high speed I was trying to navigate my way and sort out where and how I fit into my new role in this great institution. I found it very challenging trying to live up to the expectations of the academy. This is why mentoring was and is so important to me and why finding trusted colleagues for teaching and research collaborations is so important.

Jasna: Finding like-minded colleagues, who share similar philosophical perspectives is like raindrops on a flat surface, coalescing with one another until they create a larger puddle, a more significant body of water. That is how we survive and how we thrive … supporting one another through the challenges and demands of academic life.

Jennifer: Daily, we have opportunities to create interactions with students and colleagues that build trust and support learning and collaboration. Academia is both an exciting and extremely competitive environment where we are evaluated and assessed and where "tall poppies" are elevated and celebrated. It is also a place where we can follow our dreams, our big ideas, and engage with brilliant thinkers and amazing students and colleagues.

Marni: Yes, I agree Jennifer. Dealing with the competitive nature of academia; an artificial imposition that builds walls and not trust presents so many challenges. Now I try and support new faculty so they feel validated, have someone they can trust and realize that while they are moving through the challenges and stresses, there are those of us who will be there to hold space for them.

6.8 Front Stage, Back Stage, and Off Stage

Jennifer: The three of us are fortunate to be part of a faculty that values self-care and reflexive practice. Together we have offered mindfulness workshops that address the integration of mindfulness in teaching; mindfulness and student wellbeing; and the use of mindfulness for faculty/staff in their parenting. We have collaborated with each other and with colleagues in research and writing on mindfulness in academia. I have been practicing Tai Chi for most of my life and now I am teaching tai chi

on campus to faculty—because we need to make space for this. Integrating mindful practices into teaching, research and service is an integration of the personal and the professional—it integrates a way of being in the world.

Jasna: By living our truth authentically and respectfully, we demonstrate and role model to our students, and our peers, how living and practicing holistically benefits not only us, as individuals, but us as a human community. Lovingkindness practice, for example, by its very nature expands, like circles on a pond after a pebble drops, and encompasses not only our small corner of the world, but all of the world. The energy of goodwill expands, and I believe, eases the mental health distress that so many of us encounter in this frenzied pace of life, academic and personal.

Marni: This has helped us move forward and we do have conversations now with others who have come to our sessions or have approached us individually. I think we have found a space through our work together where we can move through authentically individually, but also with others. It is the confluence of many factors that have offered this teaching-learning space to us, so that we may lead by example.

I agree we need to make space for mindful practices. I too, practice Tai Chi and have for a long time but more in the summer when I can be outside. I go to yoga once a week for the moments of stillness and African drumming for the focus and movement. Ongoing and a challenge is my artistic practice. I make many a promise to myself to approach certain creative endeavours daily. Sadly, I do find myself falling short. These artistic and mindful practices are who I am and help me move my academic world forward as I begin to integrate the many aspects of my identity. I do not see myself as separate. Marni the person is Marni the academic. While there may be aspects that are off stage or backstage, generally I strive to present myself upfront. It is my way of being in the world and is interwoven into my teaching, research and service.

Jasna: I agree. Who I am as a person is who I am as a professional … only a different aspect of my greater wholeness.

6.9 Conclusion

Marni: And so we come to the end of this conversation, for now. But unlike most conclusions, we offer more of our thoughts for what it means to be human in teaching-learning. We are coming to the end of our fall term. With this comes time constraints for marking final assignments, ongoing meetings, personal projects to wrap up before we break for the holidays. We recognize the challenges it took for the three of us to craft this chapter—the technological demands of being tied to our computers, finding the time to write together, hold space for the ideas we share and the collaborative work that shapes the profound deepening of our scholarship of teaching-learning. And then there is 'life' outside of the academy.

Jennifer: Yes, mindfulness and self-compassion enhance our capacity for resilience and well-being both within and beyond our work in academia and enhance our intention to approach our day-to-day everyday encounters and relationships with

an open mind and an open heart. And as teachers, we recognize the importance of nurturing kind, compassionate, and courageous individuals—reflective and mindful innovators, creators, collaborators, scholars, designers, planners and builders—capable of caring about and understanding multiple perspectives and solving problems in order to propel positive, enduring change.

Jasna: And, all of that begins with ourselves. We need to regularly practice self-care and self-compassion, so that we may hold the safe and sacred space for our students as they make sense of their exploring and expanding minds. I look forward to continuing our conversations and ponderings … as three mid-career teachers …

Marni: I do too Jasna. And to add to the pondering, I am reminded of the words by my colleague, Celeste Snowber who writes:

> My invitation to students, colleagues and myself
> is to let out our narratives,
> and in particular our body narratives with education,
> but always to co-create a better world,
> one more human, creative and filled with possibility
> of being more conscious and generative. (as cited in Snowber, 2016, p. 2)

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Part III
Collegiality, Collaboration and Relationships

Chapter 7
Tending to Ourselves, Tending to Each Other: Nurturing Feminist Friendships to Manage Academic Lives

Monica Taylor and Emily J. Klein

Abstract This chapter explores how two feminist academics and close collaborators have tried to navigate the patriarchal hierarchies of traditional academic spaces. We unpack how those relational ways of knowing and being in the world have supported our living as women in academic worlds, how we have together navigated the pressures that discourage collaboration, and how those pressures affect us individually and as partners. Our epistemology of friendship empowers us to disrupt the institution and explore what that looks like in our day-to-day experiences as women, mothers, academics, friends, sisters, daughters, and teachers. It is important to consider our epistemology of friendship as means of resistance that sustains ourselves and our partnerships and within sometimes oppressive institutions.

7.1 Introduction

Michael Lewis, in his work *The Undoing Project* (2016), about the partnership between Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky wrote,

> In a funny way, they didn't even want themselves in the room. They wanted to be the people they became when they were with each other … 'They wrote together sitting right next to each other at the typewriter,' recalls Michigan psychologist Richard Nisbett. 'I cannot imagine. It would be like having someone else brush my teeth for me.' The way Danny put it was, 'We were sharing a mind.' (pp. 181–182)

As we sat down to write this chapter, Emily did a search in her emails for the phrase "one brain." Peppered throughout 8 years of emails is this expression, times when we noted bemusedly that the other had sent an identical response or articulated what the other had been thinking in the shower only moments before. Sometimes, it happens on social media or in a meeting; through either disposition or years of

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_7

collaboration, we make sense of problems in a similar, if not identical, way. We often speak to each other in a shorthand, something our colleagues mention with both a mix of frustration and amusement. When we are writing a piece together, we rarely use track changes or a different colored font because we do not think of our work as parsed out. We have become so comfortable with how we blend our knowing that it is not important for us to delineate who wrote what sentence. There is a fluidity to our writing, a symbolic representation of how we collaborate. We value each of our individual contributions but we also understand that together we are more insightful and detailed. Similarly, if we could, we would insist that our publications are all coauthored, with no designated first author. In order to address this tension, we take turns with the first authorship, rather than spending time determining who actually led the work or did the majority of the writing. We recognize how rare this collaborative model is within the academy and see it as a means of resisting or disrupting the academy's insistence on competition and individualism. We would not say that we are identical (for example, Monica tends to work hard and play hard while Emily prefers to pace herself). We are quite different in terms of personality and strengths, and yet these attributes complement one another rather than compete. We call each other "my work wife" acknowledging that we spend more time together than we do with our spouses.

More than once teachers with whom we work, who themselves collaborate closely, say "when we grow up we want to be Monica/Emily, but we are still deciding which one of us will be which one." In many contexts, we are recognized as an example of an effective collaborative team. Last spring when Monica was attending a meeting with the Provost and was asked to provide an example of a pilot assignment, she referred to "Emily," using an example from Emily's teaching to illustrate her point. Another colleague interrupted her to clarify that it was "Emily Klein" she was talking about, and the Provost said dismissively, "Oh you don't need to clarify who Emily is. I know all about this dynamic duo: Monica and Emily, Emily and Monica. They get things done."

Despite this acknowledgement, over the years, we have been told either that we are not collaborative, or that we make people uncomfortable. We do not seem to fit the mold of academics with whom we grew up. Yet others have noticed (as did we—most importantly) that we are more productive working together, that the synergy from our partnership is greater than us as individuals, and that our experience in academia seems less fraught and isolated than it was before our partnership began. Both of us have had and continue to have other powerful collaborations with female academics, yet we have noticed there is very little in academic culture about those relationships.[1]

As we sat down to write this, we realized that it is not just that collaboration is devalued in the academy, but that specifically feminine relationships and feminist ways of knowing are marginalized in the academy (Luxton, 2012). Our chapter

[1] For discussion of this see the work of Pauline Reynolds, specifically: Reynolds (2009). The celluloid ceiling: Women academics, social values, and narrative in 1940s American film. *Gender and Education, 21*(2), 209–224 and Reynolds, P.J. (2014). Representing 'U': Popular culture, media, and higher education. *AEHE, 40*(4), John Wiley & Sons.

explores how those relational ways of knowing and being in the world have supported our living as women in academic worlds, how we have together navigated the pressures that discourage collaboration, and how those pressures affect both our partnership as well as us as individuals. Our belief is that we do not have to comply with is that we do not have to comply with academic, patriarchal norms of individualism and competition. We understand that our epistemology of friendship empowers us to disrupt the institution and at the same time allows us to, as hooks (1994) writes, "maintain the fidelity to the idea of the intellectual as someone who sought to be whole," placing an emphasis on "spiritual well-being, on care of the soul" (p. 16).

We refuse to adopt male ways of knowing to be successful. We do not measure our worth based on the standards set by institutions with traditionally masculine values. Instead, we construct other ways of being that operationalize the importance we place on relationships and reject individualism and competition. We value an epistemology that is always under construction, dynamic, and in flux. Our epistemology stems from the whole being, connecting mind to body. We know through our minds, body, and emotions. Our emotional knowing is an epistemology that is dynamic, in flux, in construction. It draws from a feminism that is "a collective movement … made out of how we are moved to become feminists in dialogue with others" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 5). Our epistemology of friendship relies on how we are moved by our emotions to act.

7.2 A Feminist Epistemology of Friendship

What does a feminist epistemology of friendship look like? For us, we construct knowledge collaboratively, allowing for space to individually generate ideas that we weave together. We make meaning through collaboration, connection, cooperation, and caring (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986; Maher & Tetreault, 1994). Our ways of knowing, built through our feminist friendship, invite "multiple knowledges" that "are contradictory, partial, and irreducible" (Ellsworth, 1994, p. 320). We recognize that this feminist paradigm of friendship helps us to destabilize the patriarchal framework of the academy which continually asks us to participate in hierarchical power structures that situate us as gendered subjects (Gore, 1993; Ropers-Huilman, 2001). We use this way of knowing to "confront the technologies through which we make ourselves into subjects" (Gore, 1993, p. 155) and promote socially just initiatives for more than just ourselves at our institution but for all who are mechanized by the system. We embrace the charge of our foremothers (Lather, 2006; St. Pierre, 2000) who ask us to shake things up, disrupt and destabilize norms, and invite new possibilities of who are becoming as feminist academics. Our feminist epistemology of friendship manifests in how we negotiate our personal and professional lives, through our teaching, scholarship, and service at the university.

Upon what is this feminist epistemology of friendship constructed? The key tenets of our friendship are humorously illustrated by Gay (2014) when she writes: "If a friend sends a crazy email needing reassurance about love, life, family, or work,

respond accordingly and in a timely manner even if it is just to say, 'GIRL, I hear you'" (p. 50). Regardless of the content of our communications, first and foremost we acknowledge that our experiences are shared, we actively listen to one another, and we demonstrate that we relate to what the other is saying. There is rarely judgment or critique. Rather those three simple words: "I hear you" convey that the other is not alone or isolated. Tending to our relationship and being there for one another supersedes all else. We embrace the feminist ethic of care drawing from the work of Lorde (1988) and Ahmed (2014) and have adopted "self-care as warfare" as our mantra. We do not think of self-care as it has been co-opted by spas and fancy yoga retreats (although we do not discount the importance of a massage). But rather, we understand that caring for ourselves, each other, and our colleagues and students is a politically disruptive activity within an academy which devalues such practices (Mountz et al. 2015). We understand that our own self care is part of the work of caring for others.

For us, our friendship transcends the personal and political and draws its strength from what Porter (1996) describes as a "shared participation in a common world" (p. 64). According to Porter (1996), three qualities encompass this shared participation: namely unique supportiveness, genuine affection, and a responsive particularity. Unique supportiveness to De Beauvoir (1975) involves "moral ingenuity" and "truthfulness" where "women help one another, discuss their social problems, each creating for the other a kind of protecting nest" (p. 55). We create a shared intimacy through countless heart to heart talks, emails, and texts where we share knowledge of ourselves and our feelings. We feel a genuine affection for one another which manifests in the ways that we interact and support each other. Our relationship is not superficial or filled with small talk. It is instead a dynamic force which helps us to grow and change for as Raymond (1986) writes "women affect, move, stir, and arouse each other to full power" (p. 229). Finally, our friendship exists because of a responsive particularity which dictates how we "care, be responsive, listen, be honest, and be good" (Porter, 1996, p. 69). We are committed to caring for one another in our personal and professional lives and believe that doing so has the potential to then nurture "caring academic cultures and processes" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1238) that exist beyond our collaboration.

7.3 Performance

By any objective terms, we have been successful in academia, have been tenured and promoted, and promoted again. We have gotten grants, published books, and articles, been invited to speak at conferences, planned them, and worked extensively with doctoral students. We have similarly been personally successful—we have long and deep friendships with people around the globe who we see and speak with regularly despite busy lives. We have marriages that have survived the rigors of academic life and children who thrive (one soon to enter college). And yet we both have found the

toil of this academic world to be high, with a relentless and demanding pace that has brought us to tears again and again.

Academia is an institution built around hierarchies, and those hierarchies matter—from the titles (assistant versus associate versus full professor) to the lines of authority (were we funded to attend a conference? Is our work mentioned in the opening college meeting? Have we been invited to attend a meeting with a new funder?) to how our work is praised and acknowledged. Academia values the lone—often male—scholar. Noble's (1993) work, *A World without Women,* describes how the Christian church firmly excluded women from science (and therefore academia) building centuries long institutions where women and feminist ways of being and knowing were rejected. When you go up for tenure you are warned to make sure you have single authored publications, or at the very least first-authored publications emphasizing a kind of suspicion of collaboration, as if somehow collaborative work is not as meaningful—not as much "work." It is also harder to assess—how do we assess an individual outside the markers of individual writing and projects? Could one be riding the coattails of one's collaborators for one's entire career? Sheepishly we apologize for our collaborative work—"well that piece was good, but I was only second author."

Academia is based on the separation of mind and body; with images in popular culture of the solitary academic so lost in his thoughts that he cannot be bothered to tend to the body, being fed and clothed by a slightly frustrated spouse. As hooks (1994) notes, "Indeed the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structures seemed to denigrate notions of wholeness and uphold the idea of mind/body split, one that promotes and supports compartmentalization" (p. 16). For both of us, lifelong dancers with deeply held beliefs about the importance of the mind/body connection in our work, we found this both foreign and stressful. How could we exist solely in our minds, cut off from our bodies with only ideas to sustain us? We both knew that we worked best after an hour of running or barre class, yet we furtively hid those activities from our colleagues, fearing they conveyed frivolity—a lack of earnestness about our work. Yet our bodies spoke to us, insisting on their presence. Emily developed chronic, almost daily migraines, a new offshoot of her fibromyalgia. She largely hid this from her colleagues as well, worried that she would be seen as incapable.

Academia cares little for the connections you bring to the rest of your life. But as mothers, sisters, friends, wives, and dancers, we wanted to bring our whole selves to our work. Used to excelling in our chosen life arenas, we were forced to make unconscionable choices—did we stay at home with our sick kids? Make it to the Halloween parades at school? Or did we attend that additional meeting, write another conference or grant proposal? Our parents' words ringing in our heads, "Just do your best" became a kind of inverted curse—our best means being in two places at once—are we the best parent or the best academic? How is it possible we can sacrifice either?

Our collaboration became a way to disrupt those notions. We wondered, what would it look like if we worked in institutions that valued the whole person, ourselves in relation to others? How would it feel to work in a place where the responsibilities

were reciprocal and less competitive? What would the institution look like if it were a feminist institution? What supports would there be for faculty? In essence, disrupting these norms became acting "as if" instead of waiting for the change. Our partnership allowed for this—what if you went to the Halloween parade and I stayed home and wrote the proposal? And then, what if I stayed home with my son and you wrote the first part of that article? What if we said that author order did not matter and we just switched back and forth without evaluating who did what for each piece, but rather trusting that the work would even out because we both cared?

7.4 Setting

Our institution is one that will be familiar to many in academia. Originally a normal college to prepare teachers, it has grown to become the second largest university in the state and is what others refer to as "striving" in that it has become increasingly scholarly, seeking to continually grow in grant money, top-tier publications, and national prestige. We were recently ranked a research three school. Additionally, we work in a field that is hybrid—as teacher educators we are expected (and expect) to be practitioners who work with schools and teachers while we are also scholars.

Overall, the university structure does not support collaboration (not unlike many institutions). Those who want to co-teach will receive half the number of course credits and therefore those who value co-teaching would have to teach additional courses in order to meet the required number of courses a year. Whereas, private institutions have flexibility in how they navigate this, there is little to no space for such negotiations in a public university.

As it is typical at many universities, the work is literally endless. There are few boundaries, with students and colleagues emailing days, nights, and weekends. There is always another article to write, grant to apply for, and conference paper to give. The relentlessness of the workload and the few opportunities to collaborate for "credit" can be exhausting. Meanwhile, the rungs for promotion hang ever further out of reach; what was enough 10 years ago no longer is—one must not only be prolific, but publications must go in top-tier journals, and scholars must have both a national and international reputation.

Our heretical and relentless partnership emerged partially from administrators who understood what it meant to be subversive. Shortly after the birth of Emily's first son, we embarked on a years' long project to build a grant funded program in a nearby urban center. Monica, whose husband took a position that allowed him to work from home and be more present in the lives of their children who were 10 and 7, saw the grant as an opportunity to innovate and grow professionally. The largesse of the grant bought us some freedom, and an understanding dean urged us to think creatively about how to structure the work. She literally invited us to dream, and dream we did. With young children and a significant amount of responsibility in our homes, the flexibility that emerged was considerable. As mothers, we understood the pulls from home that meant we sometimes had to cover for each other (and now as

co-facilitators and teachers we could). Grateful for that space, we compensated and even overcompensated. Out from under the watchful eye of institutional bureaucrats, we merged courses, co-taught, and co-wrote, entering one of the most productive times of our careers both in terms of scholarship and in terms of our work in schools.

And yet, further tensions existed as this collaboration blossomed. At our home institution, administrators and colleagues expressed concern that we were too isolated from the lion's share work of our programs. Others worried that we did not have independent research agendas (although we both did and continued to write with others). Feeling the responsibility and obligation of those needs meant continual negotiation and renegotiation of the work we did. In some ways, it means the setting of our work has shifted dramatically over the course of our partnership—it exists both in the schools where we work throughout the state, as well as in the corridors of our university, and in our conferences and national and international academic lives. Our partnership also exists in our lives outside of institutions. Throughout our years of work together, we have lost parents and friends, served as caretakers, collaborated on pieces while in hospitals, sick beds, and even abroad on vacations. These shared events have strengthened our awareness of the power of our friendship in the ways in which we uniquely provide tailored care and support for one another.

7.5 Appearance

How do we navigate the tension between our collaboration and the expectations and norms of the university? Resistance and disruption often have to be subversive and therefore we have cultivated, and sometimes the hard way, strategies to mask the strength of our feminist friendship in order to appear as if we fit into the academy. These strategies can be as superficial as how we dress and physically present ourselves to our academic community but they also manifest in the language we use, the ways in which construct relationships with students, staff, faculty, and administrators, and in how the personas we don in our professional lives.

We have a reputation for wearing fierce fashion and in many ways, this is a kind of armor. We dress to the nines, disrupting the frumpiness more common of academia, and of academic women in specific—who are often urged to tamp down on their female expression. Since we have been told that our collaboration can at times intimidate, we assert ourselves through our clothing, shoes, makeup, and accessories. This is also a way for us to flaunt our womanhood with pride. Our students and university colleagues often comment about how we dress, remarking that they never see us in jeans, are impressed with the height of our heels, or even situate us in a fashion magazine. We are conscious of how we are perceived and therefore take care in the way we look. We each have our own unique style but we dress the way we engage in the world: boldly, taking risks with new trends, and often without fear.

Aware that our boldness and assertive nature and collaboration sometimes threatens others, we counter by very consciously developing caring relationships with our students, staff, colleagues, and administrators, something we doubt would be required

of male academics similarly perceived. We painstakingly craft emails, letters, and even presentations that are positive, gentle, and nonauthoritarian, inviting others to contribute or decide for themselves rather than be told or commanded. We are careful to always buy birthday presents, flowers, and small gifts for administrative staff and for faculty who have been ill or had a child. It is not unusual for Monica to ask questions like: "Does that make sense? What do you think? Do you understand what I am trying to say? How do you feel?" These questions serve to soften authority and create a more democratic relationship. Emily has even noted that Monica uses more exclamation points in her texts and emails, demonstrating her enthusiasm for others' ideas.

We know how valuable blending our personal and professional lives is for our own collaboration and therefore, we intentionally try to do the same with others in our workplace. Rather than get right into business, we often begin conversations by asking personal questions: "How was your weekend, party, play, or concert?" or "How are things going with your daughter, mother, sick friend, or partner?" We try as much as possible (and sometimes this involves taking turns) to show up to personal events, again acknowledging that we care for those with whom we interact as whole people. When we worked on our grant-funded project, it was not unusual for us to attend the weddings of our students and their mentor teachers, funerals of family members, or even a bris or baby shower. We always try to give a thoughtful gift or card as an extension of our care for others. This may be just because or to recognize a birthday, accomplishment, or celebrated holiday.

If our fierce fashion or caring relationship building does not work, then we resort to sharing of ourselves through humor, lightheartedness, and enthusiasm. We tell funny self-deprecating stories about ourselves that are not boastful, trying to help others see that we are humans who make mistakes, have sleepless nights, and struggle. With a teenage son who is a budding actor, Monica often shares stories with the professional staff in her office about her own nervousness about auditions and callbacks. After a particularly stressful day, we may bring chocolates or talk about needing to go to a happy hour. Recently, Monica shared with one of the professional staffs that her day had gone so badly that she went home and drank an entire beer in one seating. Emily is clear to make fun of her own compulsiveness with email or the foibles of her son. We realize that these strategies soften our perceived authority and invite others to trust us and value our potential.

7.6 Manner

In an ideal world, we would be able to maintain our professional appearance and remain calm, positive, and cool-headed throughout the interactions in our professional lives. We would perpetuate personas who are fierce, but caring and collaborative, and smart but also quirky, endearing, and human. Unfortunately, it is not always easy for us to control our emotions and the ways in which we are perceived especially in the context of the university where we are bombarded with meetings,

problems to solve, demands to produce, and the constant reminder that what we do as a team is not valued. If we react with strong emotion or passion, we have been accused of getting hysterical or overreacting, something noticeably lacking in critiques of passionate men. Our quick responsiveness and urgency has been perceived as overly emotional or even inappropriate. We are reminded to "calm down," "not to get hysterical," and "to slow down." Our minds are continually encouraged to be privileged and used over feelings or the body. Our academic context often feels like an insurmountable weight that we cannot remove from our shoulders and often we reach our breaking point and begin to feel like we will explode. Our explosions are often emotional—ranging from fear, anger, and even sadness or a combination of all three. Over the past 7 years, on more than one occasion we have found ourselves sobbing in a meeting, angrily verbally attacking a colleague, or defending one another. Monica has shared that when she gets the sense that Emily is under attack, her response is visceral, almost feeling how she feels when she is trying to defend or protect one of her children. On a couple of very unfortunate occasions, she has composed an email to Emily expressing her anger that mistakenly is addressed to the very person with whom she is angry. Embarrassing as those emails have been and the aftermath of the apologies, Monica realizes that they occurred because she could no longer contain her emotions to appear stable, calm, and approachable. As she works on a more balanced mind/body connection through the work of Five Rhythms as well as Theater of the Oppressed, she has begun to realize the tensions that emerge when attempts are made to repress emotions or conform to a persona that is feelings-free. Together we work to find ways to support one another to use the emotions rather then shut them off.

7.7 Front

Using the body has been one way that we try to navigate the strains of so carefully measuring our outward manner. At moments our passion and our commitments—to each other, to ourselves as whole people, have backfired against us. When we fight too hard, come on "too strong" in our commitment to our work, we have shut down others, even if inadvertently. We have constantly turned to each other in frustration that our carefully applied strategies do not always serve us. It could perhaps be in an attempt to be democratic that comes across as authoritative despite the attempts to engage our colleagues through humor, self-deprecation, and connections to their lives. Because all of those strategies may do little to compensate the underlying deep passion we have for our work, our belief that we do, in fact, have talents and knowledge that matter and should be heard; that we should not have to subvert the system to engage in the work we want to do it as well as *how* we think it should be done. The emotional engagement that sustains us and is so deeply central to who we are, has been challenging as it bubbles over into rage or despair when we feel isolated or weighted down by the burdens of institutional forces. Some of the practices that have helped us work through the strains and tensions include:

1. We encourage each other to find spaces for our needs as humans in a world where constant work is the norm. We support our efforts at turning off email, in taking vacations, now often rotating who takes a vacation because we know the other will guard our time away as nobody else will. Dance, running, and friendships—hours for these must be jealously guarded. Sometimes one of us needs the other to give permission to the other to miss one of the endless numbers of meetings scheduled (often without thought to the scheduling demands of parents), to say no to an invitation, to take some days away from the university and work from home.
2. We seek to model collaboration for others, particularly our students, thinking about what it looks like to honor the person and the professional. We attempt to bring this to our work when we lead the department, mentor faculty, mentor doctoral students, and write collaboratively. We believe we grow through empathy, listening, and through giving back to one another. We nurture each other's intellectual and emotional needs, sometimes in partnership and sometimes through encouraging work with others or on our own. Recently, Monica published a book dear to her heart that she had labored on for years, a book deeply personal and cherished. Our partnership meant the obvious—that Emily would encourage her writing of it even if it meant collaborative projects were placed on the back burner (although Monica's strong and overwhelming sense of obligation meant that was rarely the case) that Emily would read it and be able to talk with her about it. Imagine how this scenario felt for Monica—to have her research partner provide her space and encouragement to work on a project dear to her heart amid the pressures of academia. Even though Emily was not involved with the book, she helped to finish it through her love and support.
3. We make space to celebrate one another's accomplishment, however, great or small. The daily affirmations of the ways in which we succeed serve as a means to resist the ways that academia limits our accomplishments to numbers of publications and dollars of grants. We recognize that what is often meaningful for us are the connections we foster and build, the ways in which we challenge ourselves. Celebrating these moments sustains us.

7.8 Front Stage, Back Stage, and Off Stage

In addition to the concrete ways we describe above, as the strains of academia have intensified, we have turned towards each other to help us navigate the pulls and pushes at our time and ourselves. We have resisted the ways that academia demands us to be isolated, solitary, hierarchical, and competitive—and have brought our feminist values to our work and collaboration. Below, we detail the overarching philosophical shifts we have tried to make in our friendship as a means of resistance:

1. *Changing time*: Our collaboration disrupts the neoliberal university's agenda. We value each other's time. We understand that to be thoughtful scholars and teachers we need time to think, process, and reflect. In order to do this, we resist

continually being on the proverbial hamster wheel. Besides pressure to produce, produce, produce, we could potentially attend meetings and answer emails all week long. Our collaborative partnership has helped us to get off the hamster wheel. We share the work as much as possible and divide and conquer. We rarely both attend meetings or answer the same emails. Instead we take turns, allowing for the other time to work on scholarship or participate in some self-care.

2. *Engaging as full humans*: We acknowledge each other as full human beings. We do not separate out the work and the person—both in our conversations and in the enactment of that work. This manifests in a variety of ways; in our conversations, we move effortlessly from a conversation about a student, an assignment, or scheduling demands to one about our families or lives outside of work. Those conversations about our lives are not incidental or "outside"—they feed our work and our thinking. Once at a conference, sightseeing along the water in Chicago with Emily's son (when we were "stealing" time from the conference) became the source of the introduction to a chapter that had been stymieing us. We do not assume that the person is meant to be outside of work, rather we understand and view the two as inextricably connected.
3. *Tolerate change*: We recognize and accept the contradictions in who we are—that we are ambitious and not ambitious at the same time; we know that humans are complex that we change and that we have to allow each other to be different from who we were yesterday.
4. *Express gratitude*: We intentionally express gratitude to one another for every act and favor and to those with whom we work. These are ways to acknowledge what the other has done, another disruptive tactic to the academy that asks us to produce, produce, produce but rarely demonstrates gratitude. We are building each other up because we know that this care for one another nurtures the whole self. We try to infuse gratitude in our everyday interactions with staff, faculty, and students as a way to model and disrupt the normal tone of our community.
5. *Resist*: And finally, we continue to push boundaries even if that means making others in the academy uncomfortable. We value our relationship over what we are able to produce. We strive to put into practice Mountz et al. (2015)'s call to action: "What if we counted differently? Instead of articles published or grants applied for, what if we accounted for thank you notes received, friendships formed, collaborations forged?" (p. 1243). Our intentions echo Mountz et al. (2015) further as we too value collective authorship even amidst the pressures for individuality. We too believe that "collective authorship and the decision not to identify individuals by name or otherwise represent a feminist politics: a commitment to working together to resist and challenge neoliberal regimes of time and the difficult, depoliticizing conditions they impose on work and life for all of us" (Mountz et al., 2015, p. 1239). Together, we have the strength and determination to challenge the patriarchal structures and epistemology of the university.

7.9 Conclusion

Recently, we have wondered, what it might look like to dramatically try to restructure the academic world to reflect both the feminist values, particularly as they relate to caring, friendship, and mind/body connections and wholeness. We wondered—how do we make time for our whole selves in the work place? We are reminded by Meyerhoff, Johnson, and Braun (2011) that we should not be focused on "making more time" for our work. Rather, we need to think about ways to change how we frame time. We do not need more time, "but rather eventful time; not just more hours to work within the linear time of capitalist development, but rather conditions in which our work—individually and collectively—can become its own productive, self-positing and self-differentiating movement" (p. 487). We wonder what it might look like to "change time?" and to move beyond our small collaborative resistance (and in some cases rejection) to better align the university to the self. Do our actions of resistance amount to any meaningful change when, ultimately, we continue to work within the same structures we find oppressive? Is the act of our blossoming friendship enough to change institutions that deny it? Is saying "GIRL I hear you" enough? Even if that hearing is enacted within spaces that would have us not hear each other? These are the questions with which we are willing to live in limbo because our collective mind and body know intuitively that without our feminist friendship, we might now be able to continue to exist within the academy.

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Chapter 8
It is About Fun Stuff! Thinking About the Writing Process in Different Ways

Megan McPherson and Narelle Lemon

Abstract Publish or perish! Publish or perish! The alarm rings out. The academic under pressure to publish is a significant issue in the contemporary academy because of the constraints of what this productivity means and what this pressure to publish does. Publish or perish is an active force because of its permeation throughout the contemporary academy. But we think this force can be encountered and made into a response, positioning ourselves differently in relation to academic writing. In this chapter, we focus on the notion of making academic writing together as a mindful activity interspersed with moments of creative making. The chapter draws on our reflexive thinking with our writing collaboration for the project *Academics who Tweet* which is an investigation of our, and 34 other academics', practices, identities and use of social media in academia. We are attending to this thinking and writing to show that the force of publish or perish thinking can be mindfully counted through a response of creatively making. We present a case to rethink the approach to academic writing and the ways we creatively construct a response; a response that encompasses making in different ways that sustain collaborations, networks and relations. We argue that in thinking mindfully through and with the process of making academic writing, we are able to transform it into a pattern of generative thinking and writing. We conclude by suggesting that it is the relations we are making that become a way to encounter the force and material of academic writing.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_8

8.1 Introduction

Our ethnographic work begins in the midst of socially understanding our way of being in higher education. Although we write on the topic of social media, specifically academics who tweet, we are also observing ourselves outside of this space—across, in between real life and virtually. We are also noticing others. Our investigations into how we negotiate higher education are as Biehl and Locke (2017) illuminate, 'challenged by the figuring out, disfiguring and refiguring of lifeworks and subjects' (p. x). We are challenged, from a state of curiosity, by our own becoming but also our collective becoming—we are unfinished, in fact, in a constant state of unfinished as we dis/re-figure out our place and way of being. This also pushes us; it is a motivation and inquiry into how we navigate higher education, how we write together, and how we explore our identity.

> Becoming troubles and exceeds as ways of knowing and acting. It pushes us to think against the grain, to consider the uncertain and unexpected in the world and to care for the as-yet-unthought that interrogates history and keeps modes of existence open to improvisation. (Biehl & Locke, 2017, p. x)

Working in higher education does all of this for us. We are aware of this. Aware of others, traditions, assumptions, expectations, boundaries, hierarchy, gentrification, age-ification and things in between. We are self-aware. We are present. We are mindful to our becoming and we are open to being *unfinished* in this space to wonder and ponder the complexities.

What happens when you open up possibilities instead of making judgements when it comes to working together? We found fun! We found a curiosity to explore both ourselves and the research we do together as well as noticing how we work, write, co-write, collaborate, think, problem solve and take time away through our creative practices. We come from this as Gilbert (2015) reinforces with a playfulness and curiosity of creative making. We experiment with the 'lived tensions between power and flight, morality and vitality, history and invention, creation and ruination, care and disregard, and belonging and fugitivity' (Biehl & Locke, 2017, p. xi).

We are both multidisciplinary and passionate creatives. We also happen to work in higher education. Megan is an academic, educator, researcher, writer and printmaker while Narelle is an academic, educator, researcher, writer, photographer and crafter. We negotiate within and across academic contexts as academic and educational developer, we also engage with creative practices as a way to mindfully engage with our work, ideas, creative processes, thinking and coping. In this chapter, we use a self-study methodology to contextualise life stories that are lived, told, retold and relived (Clandinin & Connelly, 1998). Utilising vignettes of short narratives in a conversational style, we focus on how we use formal and informal mindful practices in how we work individually and collectively. 'While living and telling often shapes field texts, as we engage in thinking narratively with these lived and told stories in the co-composition of interim and final research texts, the possibilities for retelling and reliving open up' (Clandinin et al., 2015, para. 20).We reflect on the notion of *unfinished* (Biehl & Locke, 2017), and being forever in process, as we

reflect upon how we approach writing, collaboration, and mindful acts of creativity to support processing of ideas, side projects, how we have learnt to write together and bounce ideas off each other. We support each other through friendship and collegiality although we are viewed as coming from different life cycles in academia by others. We thrive on how our collegiality is a part of our energy, where we can push one another and engage with our identity formation as creative's and individuals who work within higher education.

Narelle: I met Megan in person on my third last day working at a university in 2012, I was just about to take up a senior lectureship at another institution. We had engaged with each other via Twitter and had some of the same colleagues and friends, but we only met each other at a workshop I was invited to deliver on the use of social media in learning and teaching in higher education. Megan live tweeted my presentation which at the time I was very touched by. We went for a coffee post workshop and hit it off like we had known each other for quite some time. Over many cups of coffee and tea we chatted for a few hours about all things social media, working in higher education, and how we engaged with various different creative pursuits to extend our thinking and calm our minds. I was really touched by her way of seeing the world and her ability to deeply consider the intricacies of the environment we were working in as well as enact a multi passionate approach to creative endeavours—writing, printmaking, knitting and crochet. What I just loved was Megan's background in learning and teaching, her Ph.D. topic, and also how she works as a printmaker and artist. I was quite captivated by her ability to still create art work while also undertake her Ph.D. and carry out her commitments within the university space. I found a like-minded soul. Our coffee chat was full of energy and many ideas. It really was the beginning of a lovely friendship and working relationship—it was the start of our *Academics who Tweet* research undertaken together which started with our colleague Kylie Budge but who later left the collaboration due to moving interstate and into a different industry. It was the beginning of what would be, and is, the way we work together; cafe, coffee, tea pots, our laptops, and much insightful conversation about our writing and mindful strategies to navigate the higher education environment.

Megan: I had been watching Narelle's use of Twitter with her creative arts pre-service teachers in the Education faculty and I was fascinated with the ways that the students used Twitter to connect with each other. Her students were taking photos of their work, sharing it with their peers and having conversations. This was not happening from what I could see in the art school I was working in. Art students kept blogs where they showed artwork or had Facebook groups, but I couldn't see or find examples of teachers using Twitter in their classes to support the peer relations and learning. I knew something in this was important. In 2009, I had been discussing with a gold and silversmith student why she blogged her artwork practice. She said quite simply she wanted to join 'her community', the practitioners she admired had blogs, used Twitter and social media and she could see 'her' network that she wanted to be a part of (McPherson, 2015). I could see how Narelle encouraged her students to make a network with other teachers and find resources through these networks, and was I wondering what were the other motivations and dispositions of people using social media in their teaching.

At the time, I was working out the different types of networks I wanted to be connected into. I had been a practicing artist for around 20 years and sessional lecturer for 15 of those years. I had just started a Ph.D. in educational research into studio pedagogies and had started work as a research project manager. Meeting Narelle was a way to start incorporating different ways of doing research, and the ways to make and think through knowledge into the research I already undertook in the creative arts.

In this chapter, we explore how a side project is one way we have fun. This is a way we interrupt the pressures that are present in the measured higher education context. We share insights into our side project, *Academics who Tweet*, and subsequent projects that have come out of this, while also connecting to our interests in social media use as academics and how we mindfully write, work together, use friendship and different spaces to enable us to enact our work. We also utilise our creative practices to explore and support our thinking, time together, and problem solving of our work and careers. Through this, we aim to disrupt the higher education rhetoric of 'publish or perish' and the systematic assumptions that come with finding collaborators in a highly competitive environment.

8.2 Literature

In the contemporary higher education climate, there is an underpinning need to meet key performance indicators associated to research outputs and income. Some argue this is to the 'dearth of quiet contemplative thinking' (Webster-Wright, 2013, p. 558). This is evident through the 'publish or perish' mentality and reflected in many academics' accounts of their work lives '… [as it is] far more common to hear them account for their career narratives in terms of 'survival' (Cannizzo, 2017, p. 14) when talking about this approach. The rhetoric of 'publish or perish' ignites what Delaney (2009) talks about when describing the concept of academics 'churning' through life, where 'restlessness was the new default speed' (p. ix), and this churning and restlessness can be seen at play in contemporary academic practice, especially in relation to research and publishing. As Berg and Seeber (2016) bring to the forefront, there is a constant intensification of pressure to produce knowledge, to seek funding for this and to publish and disseminate immediately, quickly and do not forget in high-quality journals.

This is juxtaposed with recent narratives of being a slow academic in relation to honouring thinking time, giving space to the writing process, slowly forming meaningful collaborations, or honouring the 'slow conversation with these ideas and things' (Mewburn, 2011, para. 4). If we mindfully look at this, there is a need to be strategic from a place of curiosity, working with emotions to effectively remove the reactionary response. Part of our strategy to observe the 'publish or perish' rhetoric is the acknowledgement of re/un-figuring it out (Biehl & Locke, 2017).

We come to our co-writing from a space of curiosity. As Hassad and Chambers (2014) remind us 'this is what makes mindfulness really work, especially when responding to strong emotional experiences' (p. 101). As they go onto share:

> … the reason for this is that most people tend to think they are relating to their experiences with acceptance and openness, but they are actually fostering a subtle resistance to them. It is tempting to 'accept' an emotion in the hope that it will go away … bringing genuine curiosity to our experience circumvents any resistance: we can't be genuinely curious about something and at the same time try to get rid of it or ignore it. This is why curiosity is a central part of mindfulness practice. (p. 101)

We are curious and learn through making. As Matthews (2017) reiterates

> … it is possible that the things we make deliver messages that other languages or actions cannot clearly express. Colour, texture and shaping express our identities in sublime and subtle ways. Sometimes these messages can inspire life-changing conversations, or reveal something memorable about ourselves. (p. 20)

As we navigate higher education and the 'publish and perish' mentality we use making, the act of craft and printmaking to 'cultivate thoughts and feelings sincerely through the journey' (Matthews, 2017, p. 25). This is meditative for us. Time manages itself differently. And the making 'experience is as much about the occupation of mind as it is the working of fingers and the finished fabric' (Matthews, 2017, p. 27) or artwork. The making process, like mindfulness, 'offers a great lesson in how to observe … concentrating on our breathing and deportment, we learn to monitor our thoughts while relaxing at the same time' (Matthews, 2017, p. 11). We are conscious of the textiles we use, of the feel, of the patterns, of the making and remaking and through this, we allow our 'feelings [to] flow in and out of our mind' (Matthews, 2017, p. 56). Making allows us to connect to the Buddhist grouping of the mind that is the five dharma's: bodily or physical form, feelings, perception, mental functioning and consciousness (Matthews, 2017). Making along with the dharma's helps us connect to our being, and it allows for the promotion of an attentiveness that helps the slowing down in other parts of life and to savour overlooked occasions and actions (Corbett, 2017; Gauntlett, 2011). From this perspective, we are 'given the opportunity to reflect, and to make … thoughts, feelings or experiences manifest and [become] tangible' (Gauntlett, 2011, p. 4).

And, we also learn through conversation—in person, virtually through social media platforms, email, shared Google Docs and text message and through our writing together and our making. We try something new and we support one another. Through conversation, we move back and forth as we explore our open-endedness of becoming (Biehl & Locke, 2017). Clandinin and Connelly (1998) wrote that

> the promise of storytelling emerges when we move beyond regarding a story as a fixed entity and engage in conversations with our stories. The mere telling of a story leaves it as a fixed entity. It is in the inquiry, in our conversations with each other, with texts, with situations, and with other stories that we can come to retelling our stories and to reliving them. (p. 251).

We do this as an ongoing state of collaboration, through a collaborative autoethnographic style of working (Chang, Ngunjiri & Hernandez, 2016).

As we write and work together we are in a state of *unfinish*. As Biehl and Locke (2017) remind us 'unfinishedness is both precondition and product of becoming' (p. x) and it is through this acknowledgement we investigate continually. We are 'figuring out, disfiguring, and reconfiguring' (Biehl & Locke, 2017, p. x) our collaboration, our ideas, our ways of working together, how we write and indeed how we navigate the complexities of expectations in higher education associated to writing and research. We figure it out together through the writing process, through conversation and the act of making. We refigure how we write and how to best do this. As we are doing this, we are mindful of paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment without

being judgmental or too hard on ourselves (Kabat-Zinn, 2016). This is as Richardson (1997) reiterates in *Skirting a pleated text*: *De-Disciplining' an academic life*:

> I believe that writing is both a theoretical and a practical process through which we can (a) reveal epistemological assumptions, (b) discover grounds for questioning received scripts and hegemonic ideals—both those within the academy and those incorporated within ourselves, (c) find ways to change those scripts, (d) connect to others and form community, and (e) nurture our emergent selves. (p. 1)

8.3 Performance

The phrase 'publish or perish' is often used to describe the pressure in academia to rapidly and continually publish academic work to sustain or further one's career. What comes with this phrase is an action to survive in the academy, alongside the valuing of publishing quantity over quality (Back, 2016; Cannizzo, 2017). As Rawat and Meena (2014) have highlighted

> the emphasis on publishing has decreased the value of the resulting scholarship as scholars must spend time scrambling to publish whatever they can manage, rather than spending time developing a significant research agenda. The pressure to publish-or-perish also detracts from the time and effort professors can devote to teaching undergraduate and postgraduates. (p. 87)

This is a stress we are aware of.

> Narelle: We have fun! We laugh, share all sorts of things about life including personal celebrations and curveballs that allow us to grow. We cry, well I do, and we problem solve together. We ponder, wonder and are curious together. We bond on life inside and outside of the academy. We also consider ways we can reclaim back what makes us excited; what drives us.
>
> Our research on academics who tweet has been a part of this. It's always been our side project. We call it this fondly. It doesn't mean it is any different in importance to say Megan's Ph.D. or research I'm working on with others. But it had been, and still is, a project that brings joy, wonderment, passion and genuine excitement. We need this. We are mindful of needing projects like this, as this is one way we approach and disrupt the discourse in higher education of 'publish or perish' in order to survive.
>
> We: Making research and academic identities visible is one of the primary ways we can see researchers using Twitter and social media. Wooing, hooking up and spinning stories are some of the ways we talk about how academics are using Twitter and social media with their research (Budge, Lemon, & McPherson, 2016; Lemon, McPherson, & Budge, 2015; Lemon & McPherson, 2018; McPherson, Budge, & Lemon, 2015; McPherson & Lemon, 2017). We see research relationships forming, work being done on the #acwri discussions (academic writing hash tag on Twitter), we see collaborative publications being celebrated and publicised on Twitter, we see conversations between colleagues discussing research, conferences, sharing resources. We think this is a why using Twitter is important. It makes our research visible and our collaborations tangible and current.

In mid 2013, the three of us got together for a coffee at the State Library of Victoria's coffee shop. Kylie and Megan knew each other from working in the same office,

and Narelle at the time was based at the same university, but on a different campus. We had been following each other on Twitter, and decided to meet up with an idea to do something together. We decided to work together to think about why we used Twitter as academics. This was something that we were all curious about. We set up the project, *Academics who Tweet* and set out with a narrative inquiry methodology to document how we used social media. In early 2014 we decided to widen the focus of research, developing the project with an ethics application, interviewing protocols and then participant recruitment. In mid 2015 Kylie decided to be less involved in the project as she moved interstate for work. We now still research in this field and have extended to looking at museum education use of social media, and learning and teaching use as well.

> Narelle: As we have connected we have had an underpinning inquiry into how we use social media to form a community, to support the work we do, and to remain connected to resources and conversations about both higher education and creative fields. As we talked more, pondered and observed we became increasingly interested in our own practices. We found similarities. We wanted to know what others were experiencing in their practice as well. At the same time, we were also having heavy talks about the pressure to publish, publish, and publish. We saw this as a part of our work but were also questioning the value of this especially around quality. We saw this as a performance required by academics. Essentially, however, we were asking could this be achieved in a different way? We took the time to reflect. We wanted to pause from the rhetoric of higher education to produce, produce, produce with whoever you can. We were wondering, what is possible?
>
> Megan: Coming from a creative practice-based research background the notion of publishing journal articles and book chapters was not at the forefront of my scholarly practice. I needed to learn how to do this. I needed to learn how to write. So I read. I consumed academic writing books and 'how to do a Ph.D.' books. I needed to become as a friend said, 'a triple threat; she makes art, she writes, and she researches'. Still not sure of what and how to do this transformation, my supervisor showed me her publishing plan for her next years' publications. I realised it was just like how I planned my artwork practice, breaking it up into steps, series, pieces and times. Writing with others is a part of this plan. It is a way to put into practice the ideas I had been thinking about how to become an academic, an academic who collaborates, and an academic who publishes with others.

The written work could be made generative. It could be unmade; the produce, produce, produce could be remade into a response that both was satisfactory and satisfying. I could respond to other things like social media use of academics without detracting from my Ph.D. work or creative practice. In fact working with Narelle became a way to try out different theorists, seeing how their work could inform our discussions and unpacking ideas in analysis. In making writing generative, it has become a way of thinking through and with the problems of academia. The pressure to write, to publish, then transformed into becoming fun, social, and a dialogical shift in my relationship with the problem of writing. This relationship with writing changed to one of doing an unfixed formulation that we know how to do. There is always an abstract, and always a conclusion but it is neither where it begins or ends.

I realise now it is about becoming a transdisciplinary researcher. The skills are not just of writing, researching, analysing but of translating a becoming, translating patterns, actions, doings, and disciplines.

8.4 Setting

Academics who Tweet is not our primary research focus, we set loose annual goals of what we would like to do in the project and what outcomes we would like. Writing is planned by dialogue; we meet in various cafes around Melbourne and talk through what the plans are for writing and schedule. We write in Google Docs, each with our own colour text, so we can see how each other are progressing and how the ideas are developing. Each written outcome takes between two and three months with (loosely) fortnightly meetings. Each meeting we set a clear expectation of what is to be written for the next meeting so it can be discussed and progressed. Once the big ideas of the article are discussed, we get down to the planning and word allocations of each section, divide up the data, and who is doing what. Our challenge is how to make the analysis and discussion sections in the writing, coherent and collaborative. We do this by discussion in these meetings, asking questions, and offering other ways of considering about what we are thinking.

Relations in academia can be difficult to maintain, we have many competing things that we need to do. Building research relationships to enact research together and to write together is a building of trust. Seeing how people want to present themselves on Twitter gives an insight in how they operate, what their interests are, and what they value. It gives a facet, a partial view that can lead to interesting ways of working in academia that crosses boundaries of disciplines, time and spaces. In the *Academics who Tweet* project, we followed each other through Twitter and Instagram for about a year and a half before we met together. We had conversations on Twitter that progressed our thinking in our individual projects and saw how each one of us instigated individual articles, projects, artworks and activities. We also celebrated each other's successes and commiserated our failures. We knew a facet of each other before we started to collaborate.

Our setting is the higher education environment. Although we united at the same institution, we have since moved to other locations. We are, however, very aware of the need to publish, to build a research trajectory, and for the need to collaborate.

Through the growth of our collaboration, we have been able to mindfully observe how we wish to engage in the rhetoric of the measured university. To write in certain journals, to demonstrate engagement and impact and to build a trajectory that is revealed over time. We have also been conscious that this is difficult. We have both had numerous experiences of unproductive collaborations and times when our ability to write has been used against us, that is to do the work with little recognition and in environments that are highly competitive with colleagues displaying undesirable behaviours.

We were interested in how we could play in this environment as a whole. We as the actors in this performance have changed the scripts. We have edited the script, so to say, to be self-aware of each other's needs and to find ways to work that does allow us to engage in meaningful research and outputs but in a way that is supportive, comes from a space of compassion and kindness, and builds each other's skills (writ-

ing, research methodologies, practice-based research approaches and productivity strategies).

Alongside this has been the practice of making. Writing can be making, but for us as creative arts practitioners making is heavily embedded in the process of the creation of an arts product. Playing and exploring with textiles, tools and the physical act of making and remaking using our hands is important to us. Our connection to hand and mind has been imperative in this process.

8.5 Appearance

Narelle: We both come from an arts background, and there is a part of me that's curious about our discoveries into finding how we could write, individually and collectively. We are trained to honour the process as much as the product. In writing this is much of the same. However, with the pressures to write, and beginning from the doctoral experience, the love hate relationship seems so much more tension packed than with drawing, photographing or painting for example. We learn as we do in both creative endeavours, but for me I have had to be much more strategic in how I approach writing. I have had to learn tips and tricks along the way. Patterns of what makes a good abstract for example. It is how Pat Thomson (2012) has written about patterns in working with data, writing has different genres in academia and we need to learn about each of these genres and what is expected. Making through drawing and painting for example has this as well but for me it has much more of an organic approach.

Megan: Early on in my Ph.D. research, my supervisor reading my early draft literature review, asked me 'Have you been working to the studio while you've been writing this?' When I answered no I hadn't been for about 6 weeks, she immediately replied, 'You write better when you've been to the studio, I think it gives you time to think. Make some time for the studio each week even if only a couple of hours'. This leave to go to the studio began a pattern of writing and studio work and making which I have continued to today. Building patterns of working are an important part of building a thinking and writing practice.

Each of my thesis chapters has a crochet or knitted blanket made for a warm thesis. When I get stuck in the writing, I pick up the sticks or hook and do some work with my hands, to settle into the stuckness. It is a way for me to think about being with the stuckness and also how to counter the stuckness. Usually I work out my next step, my next move with a repetitive action: reading with and through the thread. Attending to the weaving and unravelling, and following, and unfollowing a thread.

Narelle: I've been to music school and art school. I've learnt a lot but essentially my flow just didn't come in these environments. Not like I know now with writing. Music school killed my love for playing. The strict routines and the pressure around this didn't align to my ideas of creativity. But I now engage in art making as a mindful practice, and I enjoy the chance to develop new skills and experiment across disciplines. My activities with knitting, crocheting, painting, photography, and drawing complement my writing. I use them as a way to refocus my thoughts, to stop thinking and be present, and to also process ideas. Mindful creativity through making has also aligned to writing through inquiry; it has been a significant mindful approach in how I write. It has also been Megan's practice of picking up the stick or hook that inspired me. She was instrumental in me reconnecting to making to help me think through the writing process. The feel of the wool, the action of focusing on a stitch, the growth of a project, and the mindful act of being in this space alone (not multitasking) has been a substantial mindful practice for me. My mindful blanket habit actually begun with Megan's

help. She took me shopping for wool and a pattern to extend my childhood skills. All to help me reconnect with the act of making to mindfully tune into quiet time to reflect.

Megan: In my work I think a lot about making. Making is not always just a straight forward progression with the material (Ingold, 2011) but also the unmaking and remaking as a going backwards, and sideways; a slipped stitch and then, a need to unravel, or to frog it as the knitters say. Knitters will sometimes go through a process of steaming the yarn to unkink it, others will start to reknit with the inherent kink adding to the material. The touch of the kink recalls and amplifies the pattern before becomes a part of the new pattern. I think writing is much like this. The patterns remain of past and the present to hold the future potential, sometimes with success and at other times not. But it still holds it close.

Clandinin and Connelly's metaphor of narrative inquiry (2000)—*inward* and *outward, backward* and *forward*—is a way of thinking through the dimensions of pattern making in research. It is '*to experience an experience*—to do research into an experience—is to experience it simultaneously in these four ways and to ask questions pointing each way' (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50). In our questioning, these movements of our experiences of writing together, we move through the experience of becoming and being an academic in different ways. It is in recognising these differences that add to the complexity of our work and writing in ways that we had not predicted. Our experience become overlapping, and gives structure and strengths in ways we had not thought of.

8.6 Manner and Front

Mindfulness strategies enable us to be more resilient. Our formal and informal practices are individually experienced but collectively shared. In this way, our manner of approaching writing together also reveals out front, when it has not worked for us and how we have mindfully adjusted to acknowledge, accept and change our approach.

Narelle: I have participated in the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program created by Jon Kabat-Zinn (2003), as shared in Lemon (in this collection), as a part of my personal disruption to the stressors of higher education. It was through this that I was able to reconnect with my love for making, and to also form more formal mindfulness practices. I now meditate daily and attend Iyengar yoga on a weekly basis. I found bringing attention to the breath through meditation a way to quieten my mind and to notice what thoughts and feelings keep emerging. It also helps in how I have shifted off-loading all my stories and the anxieties to Megan when we caught up. For me the rhetoric of publish, publish and 'publish or perish' has been evident since I began my doctoral studies. And it has been a message I have repeatedly heard throughout my career as I have moved across institutions. It was my mindfulness coach that brought this to my attention. It was especially my being in a state of unrest and resentment about how much I had been publishing and maintaining this alongside all my other responsibilities that contributed to burnout. When I was sharing a story I had created about it not being acknowledged and that the goal posts kept changing that my mindfulness coach replied 'Ah, so you are allowing yourself to be milked like a cow'. Wow. This just landed me. As I observed this with curiosity. I began to consider how I could write but in different formats that meant I could connect with the creative aspect of writing but was not at the beckon call of higher education expectations. This is when blogging for me became a mindful practice to capture my thoughts and share with others. In sharing this

with Megan, she just smiled. A smile of, hello, yes. A knowing smile. My mindful learnings and personal reflection have allowed me to share with Megan and be able to bounce ideas and ways of being with her. In helping me, I also help her.

Megan: I think that the ways of working with and within the systems of academia Narelle has developed and maintained over the last four to five years as we have worked on the *Academics who Tweet* project really speak to her engagement of becoming an academic on her terms. It is a powerful and forceful stance to take. And I see that it is not easy. Working together however, the writing has become easier (yes, it's still hard) and an easier conversation as we have both learnt what is to work together, transforming ideas into unpredictable outcomes.

In learning how we work together, we figured and refigured out that we like to meet in cafes. And cafes that we know. We block out a few hours. We quickly talk about the pressing personal things first; the new pressure, the job search, and the research issue that cropped up. We want to talk to each other, first as friends and to be supportive. Then, we talk about the writing. To talk about what we have found a new book, a different way of looking at the data and what theory could fit with a pattern we have found in the interview data. We assign jobs and section word counts according to who is interested in doing what and more importantly what is going on in our worlds. We tried to Shut Up and Write (SUAW) at our cafe meetings but it did not really work for us. I like to talk and to unpack the problems at hand and then to write. From this process of talking, the structure of the article becomes more tangible. So, we devise a plan to be present with our writing but also present with ourselves and the energy we gain from each other when we mindfully listen, share and support one another.

Narelle: Megan observed how we had tendencies to chat for hours and then have only ten minutes to talk work before heading off to our next engagement. This noticing without judgement profoundly changed how we write together. Our manner and front changed in that we developed strategies to honour the face-to-face time for connecting about all things exciting in our lives and for decoding and reconstructing our experiences in higher education, sharing news on our latest making endeavours, and talking about our *Academics Who Tweet* work. We set deadlines together, accepting each other works to different schedules and external pressures. And we set up a system where we talk together, play together on ideas then write away from each other in a Google Doc. We colour code our writing and make comments along the side in the pop out boxes to acknowledge interesting thinking or ideas or to pose a question because we are experiencing writer's block. We promised each other that we will write the sections allocated by the next time we meet for a cup of tea in a cafe. We also stay connected through text messages and social media. We share our craft or making process as a way to celebrate our mindful time making but to also advocate this action to support writing and thinking.

Megan: Alongside our regular order of a green tea and extra hot water for Narelle and a soy caffe latte for me, laptops, colour pens, post-its, notebooks at the ready, we share the experience of academia. In making the experience of academia shared, we gain ways of being and becoming academic that enriches the ways we think about the research we do. We have both enjoyed when we can present our work together and share the travel experience of going to places which are different to our regular lives.

8.7 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

We keep moving forward and growing because we love what we do. We love working together. We thrive on our friendship and we are energised by each other. Over the years, we have begun to know each other so well that we can support one another to navigate the 'publish or perish' rhetoric but also everything else that comes with working in higher education. We know about each other's triggers, idiosyncratic behaviours, passions, visions and styles of working. We relish in our passion project together. And we just have fun. We smile, laugh, cry, celebrate and problem solve together. We know that our *Academics who Tweet* project is the break between other projects and the stressors that can often be associated to other projects.

We write about academics using social media, but we also are active users as well. We use social media as a way to network, engage with ideas, seek emotional support, generate ideas, extend thinking, access information we cannot access in other situations, for peer-to-peer learning, to keep connected with each other and with friends and colleagues who are not physically located near us, and to hook up with other like-minded people. We also share our work together through blogging, Twitter and Instagram as a way to disseminate our publications but engage with others about the work itself and how other academics use this technology.

At the back of and off stage, we mindfully engage in practices that enable us to grow together as co-writers but also as individuals.

We are present—When we are chatting about our writing we honour this conversation. We know we need to talk about other topics and lived experiences but we always make time to connect to our work and the thinking that drives our writing and inquiry. We are present with each other. We have found that a cafe allows this to occur as we select a location that is away from any distractions that occur if we met on campus. We listen attentively without judgement and enjoy being in the moment of ideas and flow.

We are curious—We have a genuine curiosity to our research and the writing we are working on at the time. We are also curious about strategies we can engage with to support our writing.

We are compassionate and honest—We show compassion for each other and are honest with each other. If we have to negotiate timelines for example, we accept this and work towards finding solutions that work for the both of us.

We love what we do and we have fun—We may be focusing on work but it energises us. We cannot help but smile.

We talk—Communication has been key to our co-writing relationship and to the growth of our friendship. It is rare we are not sharing ideas, new theories or books, and of course new making projects.

We make—We thrive on the making through writing and through the acts of craft and printmaking. We know that this action helps us connect to our ideas and thinking.

We learn from each other—We are always learning from each other. This comes from a space of having developed respect and trust with each other.

We help each other in other areas—We are mindful that sometimes we need to talk through blockers or barriers to our work together and in navigating higher education. We mindfully make time for this when we meet and in how we engage with each other via other formats.

We know when to give each other space—we know each other so well that we know when to mindfully give one another space to process lived experiences. These are often not associated to our co-writing but do impact our ability to write.

We push one another—As we are working on other projects away from each other, we are open to learning new things and being pushed with our thinking. Working with theory and how we apply this labour to our research and writing has been a highlight of this mindful curiosity to the work we do.

We set realistic goals—This has been something we learnt very early on and we negotiate and find ways to support our co-writing.

We publish—But we do not put pressure on our self to publish or use the perish model—thats survival and not helpful. We are mindful of this as we plan, co-write, and research. We give the impression we produce—and we do, but on our agenda.

We share with others—We are aware that how we work is unique and through our presence on social media we have been observed by others so we write for blogs on our approach and openly share our strategies with others to support their approach to co-writing and collaborations.

8.8 Conclusion

Working together with the *Academics who Tweet* project has been pivotal for both of us in realising ways of being and becoming in academia. To think that we are in a state of becoming unfinished is to think with the possibility that the work we are doing is always a part of a process, and a part of a pattern of making. The patterns of how we write together change as we do more in our collaboration but what becomes visible to us is the trust we have in pushing and encouraging each other to go further. It is a way to work on our limits of knowledge, to create knowledge in different ways and to touch the material of our making and its inherent kinks and slips.

We see co-writing, making and our collaboration as a way of mindfully connecting. It comes from a space of playfulness and exploration (Gilbert, 2015), or fun as we call it! Our connection to the creative process is deeply invested in making as connecting (Gauntlett, 2011), as we

> connect things together (materials, ideas or both) to make something new … [we engage in] acts of creativity usually involv[ing], at some point, a social dimension and connect[ion] … with other people … and through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments. (p. 2)

Creatively making in response to the pressure of ‘publish or perish’ in academia is also about making friendships that endure. Making friends with academic writing is a part of our response to the force of ‘publish or perish’ but it is also a response that

is generative. It is generative because it challenges us to be mindful in the ways we respond to the stuckness, to our collaborative attempts to create texts, or our approach to our friendship. We come to this from a stance of curiosity, and through formal and informal mindful practices. Becoming an academic we think can be 'made' fun by responding to the forces that call for answers in particular ways. This has worked for us, it may not work for others. We acknowledge we have certain privileges and affordances in the academy that others may not. But we have found that by making, playing with patterns, and creating ways of becoming that counters the force of 'publish or perish' in unexpected ways—and by having fun becomes a response worthwhile to us.

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Chapter 9
I am not Playing the Academic Hunger Games: Self-awareness and Mindful Practices in Approaching Research Collaborations

Narelle Lemon

Abstract The university is a game. It has rules, transparent and hidden. Some of these rules, though, are essentially driven by competitiveness, much akin to the notion of hunger games. In this chapter, I refer to a 'performed character' that we enact in everyday life, in relation to approaching research collaborations. I consider my own lived experiences and mindful practices as I question: *What character do we perform as we navigate being a researcher? A negative emotionally abusive colleague? A competitor who sees others as a threat? or a learner who is open to new experiences and curiosity?* I choose to be self-aware and present and enact mindful practices at the front, back and side of stage. I refer to the competitiveness and reference the hunger games metaphor where we are placed against each other—institutionally, within our own department or faculty, and indeed within some collaborations. I consider a disruption to this way of being; a mindful approach to with whom and how we collaborate. I enact a self-awareness of my own approach to research collaboration. I share a self-study narrative, which is underpinned by impact of others, and motivated by engagement in rewarding interpersonal relationships and curiosity. In writing this chapter, I invite a rethinking of the narrative of competition for academics working in research collaborations to one of choice—about whom we collaborate with, how we collaborate and how we can be open and curious to continually learning about the collaboration process and our self.

9.1 Introduction

I begin this chapter with a list. It is not an exhaustive list, but it is lengthy. I specifically write it this way to share with you the extent of the hunger games, that is, how diverse they can be in nature. It is constant. I wanted to reflect this in my sharing with you. For some of you, it may resonate. Others of you may find it a surprise. I did have

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_9

to stop myself and I think you will understand why. It is a list written in a way that supports a dipping in and out, a journey. I write it not from a place of resentment or listing as a way to prove something. I come at this list from a place of curiosity. I am curious about what has been said or actioned, what space someone comes from when they behave this way, what can be learnt and how we can shift this abuse. I remember these moments, but I do not ponder on them in a negative way, rather I observe them from a mindful space of acceptance.

"If I did it hard, so should you".

Aggressive and condescending comments in ear shot.

Taking advantage of my early career status.

Competitive tensions and self-promotion at the detriment of others specifically targeted.

Inappropriate sexual advances.

Inappropriate and unsolicited conference behaviour carried out by senior staff – told to cover up an affair; "you can't enter this door unless you kiss me"; "here's my room key, I'll meet you there in 10 minutes".

No mentoring or supervision.

Glass ceiling.

Take credit for my work, but do not acknowledge in any capacity.

Steal my grant application draft.

Bullying to achieve their goal.

Undermining my work; saying "it's my job to critique you negatively."

Hierarchy used to get what someone else wants.

"I'll proof read your paper that you are about to submit, but my name will go on the paper as an author."

Agreed resources are removed at a key time without explanation, consistency to policy implementation, or in a transparent way.

Continual lack of support and feedback leading to being disengaged.

Blocking ideas consistently across multiple areas of my KPIs.

"You are performing really well, exceeding, but you are not ready for promotion".

"Congratulations on your 12 publications this year, but you cannot have more research time …

you have shown you can produce with no time allocated to you."

No workplan acknowledging research even though outputs exceed the expected targets.

"You can't go to conferences this year,
we need you to carry our administration".

Evaluations completed when senior staff member is angry.

Sexual advances by men in power on entering a conference room to belittle my voice and contribution in meetings.

"I love it when you don't answer your phone, then I get to listen to your sexy voice".

Stealing intellectual property without acknowledging my work.

Senior colleague continually does not turn up to meetings that sabotage deadlines. No need to communicate at any stage.

"You are organised and competent,
I'm going to keep giving you tasks.
No one else can do them …"

Flood of tasks to do that are overdue for someone else and they are delegated to relieve their pressure but disregarded the pressure put on me – with no option to say no.

"You should wear a bikini to class, that will be a way to get the students to attend".

Do this, it's good for promotion. [But really, it's not].

Excluded from research team decisions.

"Suck it up".

We'll transfer the agreed grant money to your institution. [But really, we won't].

Publicly put you on the spot about a project you literally have just been briefed on.

Consistently do not meet deadlines that impact project progress, and other's workload.

"I'm a professor, I have to lead this project" [just before submission]

Wasted meetings, no agenda, one person speaks, nothing is achieved, time not valued.

Sabotage meetings with own agenda.

Copy my work.
No recognition.
Publish it.
No recognition.
Raised as an issue and concern.
"I can do this, I'm a professor".

"You have no children, no wonder you have written so much".

Don't turn up to prearranged meetings.

"I must be first author".

Attend meetings at the last minute about the research grant that is about to be submitted.

Ignored.

Targeted bullying.

Passive aggressive attacks at the photocopier.

Work without pay.

"Write that grant on the weekend, that is what you are expected to do."

Not pass on key information.

Judgements on age, gender, and appearance.

Hijacking of academic debates.

Verbal attacks to make me cry publicly.

What this list reveals are just the beginning of the academic hunger games. The things in this list have all been said or happened to me. They are snap shots, insights, to reveal to some and to reinforce for others, the types of hunting, attacking, stealing and back-stabbing behaviours that occur within the competitive environment of higher education. Although at the time of some of these events, I thought they were unique to me, they are not. They began not long after I started my doctoral studies and they continue to this day. How I handle them now is very different though. But unfortunately, the more I work in this industry the more I hear about similar comments and witness these types of behaviours. I share these as a back drop to this chapter, and they serve as an illustrative support for the discussion.

Collaborations in the higher education context are expected now more than ever. In higher education as academics, there are requests to perform in our role as collaborators across a variety of areas (Macfarlane, 2017). We work with colleagues as part of a team in learning and teaching, within a department and/or faculty, across the university for research, with other institutions and industry partners, and in our everyday activities such as meetings, marking and moderation, curriculum planning, policy enactment and development, and even problem solving for student experiences. Although these are important actions amongst the areas we work across, in the contemporary higher education context, the feelings of being siloed, alone or isolated still exist (Back, 2016; Smith, 2015). We see this through the acts of individualisation of performance, such as closed office doors, colleagues not being visible, and the ever-present working from home being used as a strategy to cope with pressures and a competitive environment (Back, 2016; Gill, 2010). The 'silo effect' (Hilborn, 2014) is exacerbated since "it's a cornucopia of conflicting visions, motivations, and group mentalities, all of which are somehow supposed to work together toward a common mission of education and research (which, in themselves, are sometimes at odds with each other)" (para 1). This presents us with a confusing and complicated environment to navigate. The more that we are faced with the pressures to collaborate (Olsson, Cliff, Cheah, Christie, & Käck, 2015) the more that the nature and definition of collaboration are made visible. Therefore, past, unwelcome behaviours need to be disrupted, and future practices should be considered. In this chapter, I look specifically at a mindful approach to research collaborations. My underpinning reflective questions include: *How does one approach research collaborations mindfully? How can we learn to navigate the competitive nature of research? What character do we play in collaborations? How do we become more mindful in approaching research collaborations? Do we have choice? How can we mindfully consider the character(s) which we play when working with others in higher education research partnerships?*

My own personal and professional interest in mindfulness emerged in an unexpected way.

Stress.

Burnout.

Complete mental and emotional exhaustion.

As Kabat-Zin (2016) shares

> the people I know who have incorporated the practice of mindfulness into their lives remember quite vividly what drew them to it in the first place, including the feeling tone and life circumstances that led up to that moment of beginning. (p. 9)

I am no different. In fact, my experience led me partially down a path of leaving academia. As a result, I was confronted by thinking about what sort of environment I wanted to work in, what I valued and how I saw myself. I realised that working fast paced through intensity and working long hours to try and avoid the aspects of academia and academics that I do not care for just was not sustainable. I was running, but not getting anywhere. My curriculum vitae may have looked good. I had developed a reputation of being a 'can do' person, and I could move across multiple projects and maintain momentum, but I was incredibly unhappy. My body forced me to stop and listen to my mind. It was through personal inquiry, professional support and social support by tremendous people who care for me and whom were encouraging of me that I was able to disrupt the experiences of stress, burn out and the emotional toll this was taking to find a new way to do something about what I was experiencing. My finding of a mindfulness practice and connecting to the essence of this way of being, was very much connected to being the change I wanted to see. Or, to be honest, it was time to get out!

Keeping in mind my educational and research background, I was looking for something more than talking about what I was feeling. I wanted practical strategies. I wanted to know the research, the evidence for how I could shift through what I was experiencing. I wanted to know the impact. When I left my 'head' (and I call it this as I was looking at myself as a 'client', before I let go and became present and 'felt'), it was by undertaking the Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) programme created by Kabat-Zinn (2003) that I was able to shift my way of observing the higher education environment. MBSR is an 8-week programme that connects you to the mindfulness practice of being present, being self-aware and being able to experience without judgement. There is support for both informal (for example, mindful movement, connecting to sense, noticing and observation) and formal practices (for example, learning how to meditate and how to connect to breathe). At the time of enrolling in this programme, I thought I was attending because I was stressed and about to burnout. But I soon found out, and so did everyone else in the room, that in fact I was right in the middle of burnout. I **WAS** burnt out! The programme enabled me to connect to a mindfulness coach and was indeed the best investment for myself—on so many levels! It is through establishing a guided practice, formally through meditation, and then later Iyengar yoga, and informal practices through breathing, gratitude, slow walks and creating mindful moments such a making (e.g. I reconnected to knitting and learnt how to crochet), that I have been able to become more aware, present and find connections in ways that I just did not ever consider. It is through this lens that I began to be present with what was happening around me, and indeed how I wanted to be in the ups and downs of the contemporary higher education environment as a researcher, in working with others, and thus as a research collaborator. For me, this was important as research and working with others is one of my passions as an academic.

For me, one of the most significant impacts has been the connection to my belief that we are always learning. I am learning to navigate higher education. I am learning how to navigate the complexities of the contemporary climate. I am learning how to cultivate an experiential understanding of mindful awareness. I am learning how to mindfully collaborate in a competitive environment. I am learning how to be true to myself. I am learning that I do not like competition and that I need to approach these situations from a place of self-awareness and compassion for myself and others. This is what Siegel (2007) reminds us as we come 'not only to know our own minds but to embrace our inner worlds and the minds of others with kindness and compassion' (p. preface). This awareness is key to examining how one person focuses attention on the internal world of another and thus highlights a focus on the mind and the harnessing 'of the neutral circuitry that enables two people to 'feel felt' by each other. This state is crucial if people in relationships are to feel vibrant and alive, and understood, and at peace' (Siegel, 2007, p. 8).

From this stance, awareness through the perspective of mindfulness is a form of a healthy relationship—with yourself and others. Our experiences and understandings of mindfulness can very much assist one to navigate the everyday life of the higher education collaboration. This is a tuning into the why and how mindfulness supports an awareness that increases our capacity for rewarding interpersonal relationships (Siegel, 2007) as a part of the research collaboration navigation.

In this chapter, I build on the work of Goffman (1959) who refers to a 'performed character' that we enact in everyday life. I ask the questions: *What character do we perform as we navigate the experience of being a collaborative researcher? A negative emotionally abusive colleague? A competitor who sees others as a threat? or a supportive open collegial colleague learner who is always learning and thus open to new experiences and curiosity?*

In doing so, I refer to the metaphor of academic hunger games, which is the competitiveness of research collaborations. I reference this from the perspectives of personal, institutional and/or the higher education context. In referring to the hunger games metaphor, I suggest that some of the actions that see academics back stab, hunt, ignore, isolate, attack or steal, for example, come from spaces that are not so mindful, supportive or collegial. In research collaborations, the hunger games are enacted by some through behaviour such as placing one against another, passive-aggressive attacks, spreading untruths behind someone's back about their research approach, putting others down, and—where young colleagues are concerned—taking advantage of them in ways that effectively eat them up. I refer to how we see each other as a threat, to the fables of the 'publish or perish' dialogue, to the fact that we need to apply for grants NOW. I refer to actions such as attacking researchers at conference question time, stealing others' intellectual ideas, not citing intellectual models, meeting without all team members to exclude some from significant decisions, writing from data collected as a team without acknowledgement, working excessive hours after office hours, all while perpetuating the fairy tale that everyone does their part in a team. And most significantly, I refer to behaviour where colleagues who consistently treat each other badly is greeted with only an eye roll, and the expectation that nothing will be done because s/he has always been like that.

These are just some of the actions that can be played out in the competitive arena of research collaborations.

These practices are not mindful but are underpinning behaviours that (unfortunately) are such a large part of the academic experience. They impact and impede how we feel about our self. They influence our impression of our colleagues, the outcomes, our values, and approach to who we work with. They impact how we think about ourselves in the role of being an academic. They impact how we feel, behave and approach our work. They impact us personally.

I share aspects of my narrative of learning to collaborate, and to look at myself in what I bring and, indeed, how I wish to behave. There is an openness to believe that 'we learn to view ourselves as other people see us, adjusting and transforming our self-understanding' (Ingold, 2010, p. 32). I consider how self-awareness and curiosity (Siegel, 2007) are integral to a mindful practice for me. I refer to specific strategies that have been beneficial to my interactions within the academic hunger games. I challenge the performative stance of high outputs, competition within and outside of the institution, and how working excessive hours is rewarded, and where competition between one another that is not productive is harmful. I invite a disruption through a conscious 'performed character' that is mindful, present and learns with and alongside others through the research collaborative process (relationship formation, development, and growth) while the addressing the deliverables.

9.2 Literature

Nostalgic ideas still exist, strongly in some areas, of the ideal of academia. For example, Santoro and Snead (2013) discovered in their study of academics who had a career path from industry that there is still a sense of universities as 'places of intellectual elitism and curiosity-driven research and scholarship' (p. 384). This reality for some is not the experience for many of us in the current climate (Anderson, Johnson, & Saha, 2002; Lemon & Garvis, 2014; Santoro & Snead, 2013). Yet, this rhetoric is ever present and permeates the hunger game actions that are associated with competitiveness and winning, and in turn are closely linked to how we enact our roles, and indeed construct our academic identity. The role of the academic has changed. The tension between ideals of academia, the current contemporary climate, and what is expertness in day-to-day academic work is well documented (for example, Barnett & Di Napoli, 2008; Churchman, 2006; Clegg, 2008; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Harris, 2005; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Lemon & Garvis, 2014; Mountz et al., 2015; Pitt & Mewburn, 2016; Ryan, 2013; Santoro & Snead, 2013; Wang & Cranton, 2012; Winter 2009). The academy now focuses on a 'need for cross-disciplinary work, greater diversity in student cohorts, more awareness of the academic workplace, collaboration, professional ethics, teaching and outreach activities' (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016, p. 89). If there was any doubt of change, there is also substantial work that illuminates the increase of reported stress among academics associated with higher education funding reductions, higher student numbers, role ambiguity, poor commu-

nication, longer working hours, heavier workloads; and high levels of accountability and quality control measures (for example, Archibong, Bassey, & Effiom, 2010; Darabi, Macaskill, & Reidy, 2017; Kinman, 2008; Mountz et al., 2015; Opstrup & Pihl-Thingvad, 2016; Rutter, Herzberg, & Paice, 2002; Winefield & Jarrett, 2001).

If we connect specifically with research collaborations, the complexity that exists just within this area of our work presents a

> … moral continuum. At one end of this continuum are other-regarding interpretations of collaboration involving the free sharing of ideas for the common good of scientific advance (collaboration-as-intellectual generosity), nurturing the development of less experienced colleagues (collaboration-as-mentoring) and disseminating knowledge claims. However, other forms of collaboration are essentially self-regarding illustrating the pressures of performativity via increased research output (collaboration-as-performativity), through practices that reinforce the power of established networks (collaboration-as-cronyism) and the exploitation of junior researchers by those in positions of power and seniority (collaboration-as-parasitism). (Macfarlane, 2017, p. 472)

Collaboration now in the university is deemed an essential performance. Research collaboration among academics worldwide has increased significantly in connection to measures such as publication, engagement and impact (Postiglione, 2013). Structures have been put in place to support research collaboration, through the development of research networks and centres of excellence promoted by national funding agencies (Abramo, D'Angelo, & Di Costa, 2009; Griffin, Hamberg, & Lundgren, 2013), while at faculty or departmental level, collaboration between academics is encouraged via the creation of research groups aimed, in part, at encouraging the growth of research cultures and mentoring practices (Lucas, 2009; Macfarlane, 2017). The paradox is that collaboration from the research perspective in higher education is centred around working with others, so 'academic staff are exhorted to collaborate, particularly in respect to research activities, yet their career and promotion prospects depend increasingly on evaluations of their individual achievements as authors and in obtaining research funding' (Macfarlane, 2017, p. 473).

Collaboration is widely defined as the action of working with someone to produce something (Gharehbaghi, 2015; Orrell, 2004). Yet, 'these contradictions or paradoxes are evident in the manner in which the word 'collaboration' is used as part of the sacred vocabulary of the measured university' (Macfarlane, 2017, p. 474). And this complex nature requires much consideration, especially from the perspective of the emotional and social politics of collaboration.

If we consider the metaphor of hunger games, in the world of academia, as academics we are in competition with ourselves from the perspective of own work ethics, expectations and inner voice, usually a critic, that is often connected to perfectionism or imposter syndrome (Zhang, 2016). We are in competition with others' notions of being an academic, our managers' notion of being an academic, and the institution and indeed workforce notions of being an academic. As Odinshoot (2014) reminds us, the odds are never in your favour in higher education and failure is ever present. We have workplans that are aligned to the key performance indicators of departments, faculties, university strategic plans, and to the strategic visions for research, learning and teaching, and for working with industry. Research excellence frameworks have

been aligned with the Tribunal judgement in how they require individuals to meet standards within an institution, and then the institution itself is put up against other institutions. The metaphor of hunger games in higher education is often about competitiveness (Van Den Besselaar, Hemlin, & Van Der Weijden, 2012) against one another within institutions and across institutions, consistent measuring, notions of being seen and being accountable, and at the same time there is a defensiveness, a push and pull between ideal and reality, a resistance, but a notion also of exploring and openness of problem solving to finding other ways including the place of mindfulness, self-care and voice. This metaphor emerges partly from the tensions that exist from nostalgic views of academia versus the wants of institutions versus the reality of is this actually possible. I acknowledge that there is shift towards a 'new' academic who is simultaneously autonomous and a team player '… [and that] [t]his new academic … is a multi-talented, always ready and available worker' (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016, p. 99). Or as Pitt & Mewburn (2016) label it the "'academic super-hero', capable of being everything to everyone" (p. 99). As a part of the neo-liberal academy, we have to learn how to play the game strategically and align with university strategic priorities; direct our research focus to the university's focus; undertake pastoral care of students and colleagues; be able to deal with multiple uncertainties and constant change; teach; research; read; write; publish; lead; manage; be an administrator; undertake outreach work; engage with industry; successfully gain research funding; market the university; be policy savvy; complete institutional paperwork; be mobile; network on institutional, national and international levels; communicate well and across multiple formats; maintain professional currency; and undertake professional development (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016; Mewburn, Cuthbert, & Tokareva, 2014). But we cannot be all of these things at once. It raises the question; can one person be all of these things at all? There is a need to look at a tilt point, where we tilt towards focusing on some of these areas more than others at any one particular point in time (McAlary, 2017). The current climate is calling for us to address the 'academic super hero' (Pitt & Mewburn, 2016, p. 99) notion but in a more strategic and mindful way.

In this chapter, I look at mindfully shifting the hunger games notions of competitiveness (which is unproductive, punishes failure and focuses on lack of resources for example), in the context of more administrative tasks placed on academics, work needing to be completed in tighter timeframes and in different modes and locations, and difficult pathways to perceived success. Most importantly, the negative competitiveness of academic hunger games includes behaviours that cause tensions and emotional stressors for others. I am an advocate of being the change you want to see. If we mindfully approach our collaborations using a genuinely collaborative process (such as relationship formation, development, and growth), then there can be space to disrupt the competitive aspects, at least within our self, and potentially amongst each other and within the institution. The choice is key to this.

9.3 Performance

Recently, I listened to a colleague, a professor, from my institution speak. She was requesting a call to action:

> The nature of academic work has changed enormously, especially in how people identify as an academic. It is no longer Hogwarts, dressed in an academic gown, pondering over problems. We have to find ways to deal with it, work with it, and shift how we see it in terms of it being something 'bad'. We have to justify what we do and how we do it, as a part of accountability. The neo-liberal university challenges our sense of autonomy and professionalism, it is not all good, but it is not all bad either. We have to think about how we place our self, how we want to work within this context. Uncertainly can be there in this environment - there are challenges for identity, what you value and what kind of academic you want to be. What will we buy into and be known for? There are opportunities. What will these be?

This resonated profoundly with me. *What will you be known for? What challenges will you take on as an academic? How will you be the change you want to see? What do you value?*

This invited me to reflect upon what mindful strategies I had been engaging with as I navigate research collaborations. Here, are some ways forward: I seek out colleagues who are my allies. I know the rules of the game and strategically play to these; seek advice; trust my close colleagues to establish a supportive through line of collegiality, establish relationships underpinned by emotional and cognitive support; learn to collaborate with those with different skills sets; create my own path; advocate for more resources; take up the shift in the discourse of resistance; and think about how I can construct my identity and how I view myself in the academy (Layfield, 2013; Lopez, 2014). It is from this stance that an awareness of what you want to be known for can emerge. It is possible to disrupt the hunger games, to be true to yourself, and to create more opportunities to be mindful of how you can contribute. It is all about choice.

As we study the self, we are reminded that 'self is not a fixed entity, but is rather actively constructed' (Elliot, 2008, p. 11). We are capable as humans of 'incorporating and modifying knowledge that influences [the] sense of personal identity' (Elliot, 2008, p. 11). In relation to working with others and developing a collaborative approach to research, we are constantly looking at who we are, what are needs are, what our interests are, and how these align with others'. In negotiating research partnerships, we are indeed looking at what others bring, both from a cognitive perspective but also from the personal perspective—their identity, strengths, personality, traits, values, and ways of working. One of my stresses in the academy is the pressure to collaborate, and most significantly to collaborate with competitive colleagues who transfer emotional stress and negativity that are harmful and damaging. As I have sustained a career in academia I have become more sensitive to what a nurturing, but productive collaboration looks and feels like. I have also become more confident in knowing that I do have choice, at times, about who I will collaborate with. Developing my research profile has afforded me the chance now to form my own teams and bring together people who align to my values. I have also learnt a lot

from the dysfunctional collaborations that have left their scares, leaving me with lots of learning and an armour, whereby I am determined to protect myself and others from receiving further wounds.

9.4 Setting

As an active researcher in higher education I have certain expectations placed on me: to collaborate with others, to contribute to new knowledge and to support the development of collaborative skills. I have these expectations placed on me in my role and level. As an academic in an Australian institution, I am expected to work in multiple collaborations across the different areas of academia as a leader, manager, and mentor. The institution I currently work at has a high stakes investment in collaborations with industry and in impacts for the community. There are pressures around building a research trajectory with a cross-disciplinary team to demonstrate capacity for gaining funding. And there are additional pressures in relation to working with industry. This is juxtaposed with the pressures to mentor early career researchers and to support them to develop a research profile centred around publications in highly ranked journals. Mentoring is complex, and involves taking into account if an early career researcher: has the confidence to write, knows how to write, is aware of the different writing styles across different publication formats, knows what their research focus is, can articulate their research plan, is aware of expectations from the institution, can meet deadlines, knows how to balance all the areas associated to being an academic, is open, is self-aware, is organised, can manage time, can seek and take feedback, can work with others, can communicate, has a research area aligned to the mentor if they are to collaborate, and so on. There is much that could be said about these pressures, and these are only some aspects.

As with the hunger games audition phase, when we come together for a collaboration, we reveal a persona, so that we may neatly fit the 'slot that casting directors are looking to fill' (Layfield, 2013, para 4). It is through conversations that we reveal layers of who we are and what we want to be in the collaboration. We construct our true selves as a representative of the particular group persona that we *think* will be valuable to our colleagues. The character we play can vary depending on who we are working with, what is to be invested, and the relationships that exist or wish to exist or indeed may be developed. There is a construction of one's identity according to the process and desire of the context. Who is watching can complicate the layers of which self is revealed (Layfield, 2013)—senior staff, mangers, university, external stakeholders, yourself, etc. We enact a noticing of self in the mask we wear. As Mason (2002) says 'when we do notice, it is often mixed up with evaluation, judgement, or self-justification' (p. 29). This is ever present in the higher education collaboration arena.

9.5 Appearance

I have been looking for a through line of kindness in my approach to research collaboration, of care and compassion towards each other in the higher education context. At times, I am perplexed at how inquiry for knowledge, a higher education mission, has led to such a competitive, measured environment that creates the very opposite of a mindful state and treatment of others. I can understand the creation of the competitive university versus the collegial university. But what I find hard to process is the internal competition between colleagues within the same department or faculty. This is one of my stresses. Why can't competition be healthy? Why does the negative competitive 'performed character' Goffman, (1959) often dominate the higher education environment? But more importantly, how can one still be successful, meet requirements applied as per institutional and higher education boundaries, while also being true to oneself and have an experience that is, well, mindfully aware? What do I mean by this? I mean that I have a vision for collaborating in positive ways. We can still influence, we can still achieve, but we can do this is a way that demonstrates a level of compassion to self and others. Listening, mutual respect, a non-judgemental approach to others, awareness of impact on others, intentional inclusion, learning from one another—all of these are important for me. Taking care of each other and showing more self-care. These need to be present within and across institutions, with industry and through all our collaborations.

Mindfulness helps with us become aware and to directly shape our attention and to not be on automatic pilot (Siegel, 2007). So, in academia for me in my approach to collaborations and working with colleagues internally or externally, I approach a collaboration with an awareness of how I want to be, who I want to work with, and what values and behaviours support a more mindful way of being in the academy and with self (see T-chart in Table 9.1). I still have an anxiousness about the process and relationship building of a research collaboration. By this, I mean an internal feeling of anxiety. I am not angry, worried or pessimistic. I have an awareness around the environment and the levels of competitiveness that can emerge in research collaborations. This makes me anxious. Anxious for myself as a collaborator. Anxious for team members. And anxious for those who have to display undesirable behaviour that is underpinned by fear but has to be transferred to others. I am anxious as I am very aware that there is a culture of bullying, attacking, back stabbing, hunting, ignoring, isolating, attacking or stealing, and at times acceptance through non-action of addressing these actions. I am aware I do not want to personally accept this. And I do not want to see or hear about it occurring to others as frequently as I do currently.

In my mindfulness training, I have learnt about being and observing through the riding of a wave—that is, being with the flow, the natural ups and downs like that of a wave in the ocean. I can ride the wave of these emotions and that they assist me to be self-aware in how I see myself and how I work with others. I would not collaborate when I have a choice with someone who sees their peers as a threat, as competition, and enacts behaviours that do not align to my values, and mindful practices, especially

Table 9.1 T-chart unpacking my appearance to others and how these are juxtaposed to moments of awareness in association to research collaborations

Appearance to others[1]	**Moments of awareness …**
• Listens • Supportive • Care • Generous in time • Team player • Attention to detail • Ethical • Leader • Coach • Mentor • Can make decisions when need to (often quickly) • Productive • Organised • Actions • Loves ideas • Always learning – adaptable, moves between changing contexts and groups well • Enthusiastic • Project management skills • Smiles • Friendly • Doer • Energised • High expectations on self • Believe good people can finish first • Easy to get along with	• Can I support? • Can I contribute? What will I contribute? • Why does so much have to be competitive? • Am I doing the right thing? • Can I do this? Am I the right team member? • Can we all be true to ourselves and work together? • What skills do I bring? • Why do they want to work with me? • What about… • I have too many ideas. Slow down. Don't overwhelm my peers. • I don't have any idea. • Am I too pushy with deadlines? • Am I too organised? • What will self-care look like in this collaboration? For self? For others? • How are others coping? • Don't forget to check in on the team members • Where is this collaboration going? • Will our ideas make an impact? • Do we have momentum? What happens if we never get anything done? What happens if the collaboration just stops? • What do I do if this doesn't work for me? For others?

[a] These actions and values are important to me, but in the interest of this book chapter I did seek some feedback from my co-collaborators on what my appearance is to others – just for authenticity.

when they have a negative impact and cause tension and emotional stress for myself, and/or my colleagues. I do give colleagues a chance, but I have an expectation of an exchange—you give to me, I give to you. It is not always an even exchange. Not a take. It is about an openness of learning. This confidence for me to say this, even putting these words on this page, has taken time. It is a part of my academic growth and connection to my academic identity. It is a conscious decision. It is highly connected to my 'why' of always learning, and my strong belief in care, compassion and kindness—to myself and to others.

9.6 Manner

What does it mean to experience self in relation to others, when considering the construction of identity as an academic who works with others? Elliot (2008) considers 'self is the agency through which individuals experience themselves in relation to others' (p. 32). As a result, we are routinely constructing our experiences through manners such as 'prodding, pushing, suggesting, advertising, criticising and praising as we create the flow of our action in the social world' (Elliot, 2008, p. 32). We view our self through the experiences of others and this 'implies an ability to take one's actions, emotions and beliefs as a unified structure, viewed from the perspective of significant others, as others would view and interpret actions of the self' (Elliot, 2008, p. 32). From this stance, self is emergent and an ongoing work in practice. In relation to collaborations in higher education, we take on roles and work with others who enable us to grow and consider self as we orient our self. This is where the dynamics of conversation and dialogue involve roles, ideas, attitudes, dispositions and tacit understandings and emotions through a tangled and intersecting manner (Elliot, 2008; Ingold, 2010).

As I consider my manner, I think mindfully about how I approach research collaborations. This is not an exhaustive catalogue of strategies but a sharing of some of the key informal mindful approaches I now engage with as I approach research collaborations. These are conscious decisions and driven by my formal (meditation and Iyengar yoga) and informal mindfulness practices and choice (see Table 9.2).

This table is a way to connect mindfulness, my understanding of collaboration and my questions about actions and embodied values. They are embedded in the experiential approach that is mindfulness. If you like, the 'mindfulness practice' column connects to actions and philosophies. They are small mantras in a way to how I have learnt to approach collaborations. They are an expression of the lived experience of mindfulness from my perspective. These have emerged over time, both from reflection of the experiences I have shared in the opening of the chapter, from learning alongside others, and from flipping negative experiences. They are underpinned by being present and self-aware. The 'connection to research collaborations' column unpacks the practice, and the last column, 'examples of guiding questions', is a way

Table 9.2 Mindful practices in research collaborations

Mindful practice	Connection to research collaborations	Examples of guiding questions
Being present	'Mindfulness is awareness, cultivated by paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally' Kabat-Zinn (2016, p. 1). It is one of many approaches that can support our relationships to others and the world. I always approach a research collaboration with being present, to be true to myself, my commitment, and to others I am going to work with	*How do I want to collaborate? What is it that a future collaborator is asking me? Why do they want me to be a part of their team? What contribution can I make? Do we have a shared understanding of this?*
Self-awareness of commitment	In each moment, we can be present and self-aware of what is happening. Of course, we all come at this with different lived experiences. This includes being self-aware, including awareness to the commitment of the research collaboration, so that participation is an act of kindness toward self, not something that we regret or that moves us to be hard on our self	*How can I contribute? When can I contribute? How can others be included? How can I come back to awareness? What am I aware of? How can I be and sense while suspending judgement?*
Listen non-judgementally	When you begin paying attention to what is on your mind, you rapidly discover that basically everything is a judgement, of one kind or another. Enact an ability to listen with care and compassion. Know when to model, to directly pass on best practice, or to observe and support. Display an openness to learn together. Research collaborations require non-judgemental listening as a part of the approach especially when coming from a place of appreciation, gratitude, and compassion	*How can I be gentle and non-judgemental with myself? With others? Am I listening? Have I heard? Do I need to clarify?*

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

Mindful practice	Connection to research collaborations	Examples of guiding questions
Build relationships	Find collaborators who you enjoy the company of as individuals and as a collective, personally as much as professionally	*Do we have similar values? How do we approach time, working with others, respect of being an academic? How do I and can you learn from each other? How are the relationships building? How do I understand how others work? Who do I need to gather around me? How can I nurture others and build a good research collaboration culture?*
Learn how you can best utilise time together—negotiate this and be open to it changing	My most successful collaborations honour a negation of how we work together best. Often this is about a shared space for writing and storage of files (everyone has access, everyone can contribute anytime, anywhere); we know how we work best together face-to-face (usually this is centred around idea generation and the art of conversation); we action what we say we will do when we said we will do it, and if we cannot we let each other know sooner rather than later. Embrace the chance to work with diverse colleagues—have an openness that you can learn from everyone, even if you are mentoring them or they are more experienced. Trust develops this way	*How can I be present while exploring my own and team members' approach/es to collaboration? How are we going to listen to one another? How can an open approach support the collaboration's development—relationship and addressing outcomes? What are you going to do with what you have learnt? Who is completing the work?*
Mutual respect	In research collaborations, it is essential to form a mutual respect and an openness to be honest	*How can I connect on a regular basis with getting to know my team members? How can I frame my thoughts to display a mutual respect? How do I authentically want to engage with others?*

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

Mindful practice	Connection to research collaborations	Examples of guiding questions
Connect, breathe and smile	For any research collaboration, whether I am a leading or a team member, I make sure I connect with others. This is vital for building the personal and professional links, common interests, ways of working, and awareness of strengths and weaknesses. It is crucial at the beginning phase which includes the 'Can I work with you?' stage. Breathing, and being aware of it, brings us back to self. It is one way of paying attention to the sensations of the body and mind. It is especially powerful for those newly connecting to mindful practices. And a smile is a powerful gesture to non-verbally connect with others. It shows so much	*In what ways can I connect with my colleagues? How can I show care and compassion for myself as I work with my colleagues? What is unexplored? What might be possible in new ways of being in the collaboration? What can I learn about myself? How can I connect to my breath?*
Book myself	When working in a collaboration I like to forward plan. This helps with my anxieties and with being present for what the collaboration needs to achieve and by when. I like there to be a plan for all the steps and actions, then for these to be allocated times frames, and then to have these booked into the diary. This is all attached to booking myself. I can then book the time into my diary over the days, weeks, months with time attached to a specific task. This helps meet an activity deadline and relieves my anxiety around contributing to the collaboration, encouraging me to be present in what I need to do, while being aware of what other team members are doing	*How can I inhabit a sense of well-being in any given moment by being true to myself and the tasks I need to complete? How can I take care for myself and be mindful of time commitments, competing deadlines, and the collaboration? When will I complete the work?*

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

Mindful practice	Connection to research collaborations	Examples of guiding questions
Boundaries: Clear roles and responsibilities, and time frames	Establish the ground rules and expectations for all members of the team and do this face-to-face initially. Think smart about alignment to other areas of academic life. Think about balance with teaching load and how the areas can overlap and support one another	*What boundaries do I need to establish to take care of myself? Of my team members? What boundaries need to be set for the collaboration?*
Always learn. Be curious	An openness to learning about yourself, about others, and about how you work together as a research collaboration should always be present. Intellectual disagreements are good, they allow for more exploration and learning both personally and professionally	*How can a curious stance support me? What can I learn from others about myself? How can I add value to others, and they add value to my experience?*
Learn who you can collaborate with	The only way you learn who you can collaborate with is to explore this. Be open to opportunities but aware of what is involved—professionally and personally. Work with those you admire. Relationship building takes time in a research collaboration, test the waters. Write something together, it soon reveals strengths weaknesses and tension points for the collaboration, and you learn lots about each other	*What can I learn about myself? What can I learn about others? How can I develop my skill set in collaborating and in research?*
Hatch plans that excite you	Work with ideas and in collaborations that excite you	*What excites me? Who excites me? What ideas excite me? What gives me energy? What is energy zapping? How can I be self-aware of these energy levels and how they impact my contribution?*

(continued)

Table 9.2 (continued)

Mindful practice	Connection to research collaborations	Examples of guiding questions
Care	Care but don't do emotional heavy lifting and solving for others, instead empower them. In being mindful in the moment, it is possible for the next moment to be hugely different, as there is opportunity for you to be aware and not impose anything on it in advance. Taking care in the moment can have a remarkable effect on the next, and future moments	*How can I care for others while also showing self-care? How can I take care in the moment?*
Have an exit plan	Have a self-awareness that at times you need an exit plan, a strategy to leave the research collaboration, if remaining becomes not healthy or negative for your mental health and/or career	*What happens when you pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally, in relation to the research collaboration? Your contribution? Your place? The impact on your mind and body? What can you learn about this? What do you need to do?*

to connect to a curiosity and inquiry of approaching these practices. The guiding questions are examples, samples if you like, of questions that can guide the practice. They are not exhaustive, rather triggers and supportive of a curious non-judgemental stance.

I invite an approach of mindful emotional support that is not used against others. Rather to support, resonate with and sit with as an observation of the higher education context, collaboration and self-development. I encourage you to read and consider the table with a curiosity for growth, not as a competitive stance of knowledge to use against someone for benefit of self. Collaboration is not about taking your team members out. That is a competitive and a negative action. These questions assist in the individual and collective trajectory building while also supporting personal growth and establishing trust and mutual respect. The questions acknowledge a mindful approach around what a collaboration can actually be.

9.7 Front

It has been through my interaction with others over time as an academic that my understanding of how I am, who I want to be and how I want to work with others has emerged, and indeed developed. I have shifted through being told to work with a certain professor on a project of theirs, because apparently, it would be good for me and my career, then doing most of the heavy lifting with little to no recognition, and subsequently working out that there is more than one professor in my field. As a result, I have learnt to look out and listen to more than one piece of advice from those in leadership roles who can be so good at telling you what you think you want to hear with a spin that addresses their needs but does not have your best interests at heart. There is a saying that there is no 'I' in the word 'team'. I have worked on teams where the word 'I' really does feature. I have experienced the narcissistic colleague who does not listen to other's perspectives, does not communicate or share, and who likes to take the glory, while forgetting they have actual team members. I have been on teams where no one meets deadlines. I have worked in sustained collaborations that appear to others to be productive and supportive experiences, but behind the scenes are dysfunctional, despite a professionalism existing to deliver the outputs. And I have been on teams where the research outputs just are never reached, and the work is just slowly forgotten about and left to sit to the side while other priorities take over. I have led teams that just do not mix, where we have been forced together and there is no connection for the work or with each other.

These situations have been learning experiences; some at the time, others through processing a period of time later. Not all have been comfortable. Many in fact have provoked tears and questioning of academia. These have made me more aware over time of how badly some academics behave towards others, how hierarchical the system is, and how there just are some nasty people in the academy who get away with attacking and back-stabbing others for their own benefit with no apparent consequences. I have stopped asking 'Why?' about this now and have empowered myself and those with whom I work. I am determined to disrupt this seemingly accepted way of how things occur. I approach this with small steps and actions—like the throwing of a pebble in a river and watching the ripples permeate out. I do not accept the saying that 'Academia eats its young'. I do not believe in 'That is how it is done, how it has always been done'. There has been a rethinking for me on how I approach collaborations. I do this as a leader, and, as a team member. For me, my self-talk is ever present to guide me through future research collaborations. I need to know my 'why' of participation. Sometimes, it is based around the research idea, sometimes the skills that I can bring, or I can learn from others, or sometimes how the team members have different ways of thinking that can promote interesting outcomes. Other times, it is not about the knowledge production but rather the experience of the collaboration—leadership, coaching, supporting, modelling or promoting a positive experience for others that perhaps disrupts undesirable behavioural patterns or stress points for others. Conscious decisions are made to disrupt the hunger game's negative competitiveness. Sometimes this works, sometimes it does not. And if it

does not work that is okay as it feeds into my understanding of collaborations and indeed who I want to work with. This acknowledgement and awareness is about trialling and implementing my mindful practice in relation to research collaborations. These past experiences help me identify quickly when they may occur again and allow me to have the confidence to pay attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally, in relation to research collaborations.

But I have been in teams that have worked wonderfully. Where there is a link professionally and personally, where the work just flows, where we are making a contribution to the field, and we enjoy each other's learning experiences. Many of these collaborators I still work with today, as we keep finding ways to work together. This book is an example of this.

9.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

The front stage, back stage and off stage are the spaces that are crucial for self-reflection and being present for me as I consider my research collaborations and how I engage, or do not, and how I can be true to myself while also supporting others. It is a complex interweaving of emotions, thoughts, conversations, and observations. These intersections are integral because as our identity grows 'we learn to view ourselves as other people see us, adjusting and transforming our self-understanding in light of ongoing social interaction and dialogue' (Ingold, 2010, p. 32).

The front stage is where the actor formally performs and adheres to conventions that have particular relevance to the audience (Goffman, 1959), and this is where the building of relationships is a significant part of research collaborations. It is about being present and self-aware, as Goffman (1959) reminds us:

> … when an individual enters the presence of others, they commonly seek to acquire information about him [or her] or to bring into play information about him [or her] that are already possessed. They will be interested in his [her] general socio-economic status, his [her] conception of self, his [her] attitude towards them, his [her] competence, his [her] trustworthiness, etc. Although some of this information seems to be sought almost as an end in itself, there are usually quite practical reasons for acquiring it. Information about the individual helps define the situation, enabling others to know in advance what he will expect of them and what they may expect of him [her]. Informed in these ways, the others will know how best to act to call forth a desired response from him [her]. (p. 13)

As a part of this front stage performance, mindful practices are key for me. I am always practicing and exploring new ways of being present. These assist me to connect with others. I am very aware of the connection formed through smile, engaging in conversation, listening, being present and making time. These are integral to my manner.

Off stage time is where I energise. It is not visible to other members of my research collaborations. It is my 'me' time, and this maybe professional individual time, social support with trusted colleagues, or my personal time. This is an essential time for my mindful practice and for survival in academia. As much as I love working with

others, for me to survive I need 'me' time. I need this to reenergise, to process, to refresh, and to reflect. As I have progressed through my academic career, I have learnt to do this. I honour off stage time to benefit my own mental health, to be able to do my job, and to be productive. This has been closely connected to setting boundaries and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1970). I now very rarely work on the weekends, and I do not work after hours. I have had to set these boundaries as I have become more aware of how I work. I like generating ideas, and if I were to do this after hours I just would not stop. What I choose to do, though, is work early in the morning after self-care practices of exercise, conversations at home with loved ones and green tea. This is when I work best and is my time to write and develop ideas that are conducive to research collaborations. Meetings, planning, and administration associated with collaborative teams are afternoon tasks for me. These are closely connected to my back of the stage. These are intersecting through-lines for how I mindfully manage myself within research collaborations.

9.9 Conclusion

While collaboration features strongly in academic work, it is juxtaposed against individual goals and potential power plays. Further, the performed characters associated with individual promotion and measurement can impede mindful collaborations. These systematic practices have unfortunately encouraged a culture of competitiveness, which I have compared to that of hunger games in this chapter. Through this acknowledgement, I want to encourage a shift towards more mindful practices that change the narrative to one of individual choice. That is, choice in how we approach collaborations, how we engage with those who are competitive in a non-productive or unsupportive way and in how we navigate the increased performance measures and the overall game of higher education. This rethinking is possible. It is about self-awareness and being highly present during participation in research collaborations in the competitive contemporary higher education environment. It is highly framed in the curious, that is being curious and constantly learning about how you behave, how others behave and how a mindful state can support positive and more collegial collaborative interactions.

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Part IV
Leadership, Professional Vulnerability and Change

Chapter 10
Ko Wai Au (Who Am I)? Authentic Leadership and Mindfulness in Higher Education

Kim Tairi

Abstract Identity is a huge part of leadership. This chapter will describe the challenges of returning to my country of birth, Aotearoa (New Zealand) after 27 years of living and working in Australia, to take on a senior leadership role in a mid-sized, urban university. It will reflect on the value of intentional and mindful construction of professional role identities and how I, as a brown woman in a position of influence, have used conscious impression management and mindfulness strategies to navigate the complexity and challenges of the higher education sector and the new context in which I perform. These techniques provide me with tools to build my emotional resilience and maintain an optimistic mindset thus allowing me to visibly take calculated risks and lead. The espoused values of the organisation I work for, cultural expectations, and the feminist framework of mana wāhine are informing and transforming my leadership practice in this new context. In the language of my indigenous culture, te reo Māori—*Ko Kim Tairi au. He Kaitoha Puka au*—I am Kim Tairi. I am a University Librarian. It is through this self-construction of role identity, visibility and performance in different spaces that I have gained the confidence to effectively manage impressions and fulfil the expectations of the role.

10.1 Introduction

In 2016, I packed up my life in Australia and moved back to Aotearoa after 27 years, to take on a new role and be a fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) higher education worker. Although, not the norm, more people working in the higher education sector are living in two places. Going where the work is whilst maintaining a life in another town or city.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_10

Life in Melbourne was great. Living in the inner west and working in the east. I was surrounded by people who loved me, a wonderful partner and an extensive social network.

Two months prior to making this mammoth decision, I had started working with an executive coach. Through this work and extensive reflection, I realised that although I enjoyed my job, after 8 years in one organisation, I had stayed too long. Serendipitously, a recruiting agency contacted me to consider a role in Aotearoa. I talked it over with loved ones and applied. I went to the interview, conflicted. When they offered me the job, I was still conflicted. Leaving the security of the familiar for the unknown is scary. My partner, at the time, was incredibly supportive. Having also worked in the sector, he understood that I was looking for the next big challenge. With his support, I found myself, living on my own for the first time ever, in a strange city and travelling back to Melbourne, once a month. For anyone who has done it, you will know, living in two cities and nurturing a distance relationship is difficult.

10.1.1 Ch-Changes

Bought in as a change agent, I began to reflect on how I would be perceived. Not only was I from *across the ditch*, a common phrase used by Australians and New Zealanders to describe our proximity. I am also one of a few indigenous women, in higher education, senior leadership. I was feeling self-conscious, the weight of expectation and a little anxious about being the new kid on the block.

Afforded the freedom of little or no shared history with my new colleagues, I consciously started to construct role and social identities that reflected not only my lived experiences in other leadership positions but also my aspirations. I wanted to be seen as a creative, innovative, caring, participatory, empathetic and an authentic leader of an edgy, progressive academic library. Furthermore, I also was keen to actively contribute to improving the participation of women and other indigenous people in our university community.

In essence, I started to practice mindful impression management and careful self-presentation. Impression management according to Ward and Ravlin (2017) refers to a person's attempts to change the way they are perceived in social interactions. Some view impression management as manipulative. However, the way that I practice impression management is to be considered, reflective and intentional in how I interact with others. This helps me to consciously be both authentic and mindful in leadership. That is, through authentic leadership (self-awareness, transparency and an openness to different viewpoints) (Baron, 2016) combined with mindful practice (awareness of what is happening in the moment) I have been able to influence the way people think about the value of the Library and the strategic contribution I bring to the organisation.

10.2 Literature

It is helpful to briefly explore the literature on impression management, mindfulness and mana wāhine. In this narrative, they are interwoven like flax in a *kete* (basket).

10.2.1 Impression Management and Presentation of the Self

Much of Goffman's work including the seminal *Presentation of Self* is concerned with impression management. When exploring identity and leadership in the context of this narrative, *face* that is, the positive self-value garnered by an individual such as myself, is dependent on following the rules and values for social interaction, as defined by the institution in which you are embedded. To be perceived positively, one needs to mirror these values. (Dolezal, 2017; Edgley, Lemert, & Branaman, 1998). Politics and culture of an organisation can take some time to ascertain, therefore it is vital that a newcomer understands the endorsed behaviour of the organisation so they can manage perceptions (Ward & Ravlin, 2017). Much like the television series, *Game of Thrones*, one must read situations to discover, what is being communicated, through the way the players interact. And then, act accordingly based on how that aligns with their own values and ambitions. I chose to work in this organisation because it has three core values: integrity (*tika*), respect (*pona*) and compassion (*aroha*). These align with my personal values and I believe that if I adhere to these, then I am doing my best as an authentic leader.

I am conscious that women, in particular, can experience intense scrutiny as newcomers to leadership roles because leadership is still perceived as the domain of men. It means that women are often misidentified or perceived in negative ways. They may need to make use of coping mechanisms to deal with the scrutiny and spend extra time managing the perceptions of others (Meister, Sinclair, & Jehn, 2016). Therefore, I have made it a personal goal to support other women in the sector, especially those who are aspiring leaders.

10.2.2 Mindfulness, Reflection and Self-monitoring

Through self-monitoring leaders can engage in self-serving impression management. According to Sosik, Avolio and Jung (2002) 'leaders that are adept at modifying behaviour in situationally appropriate ways, may possess a repertoire of behaviour suitable for impression management' (p. 223). Thus, mindfulness that is, attention to and awareness of, what is happening in the present moment (Kroon, van Woerkom, & Menting, 2017) enables leaders to successfully manage impressions (Sosik, 2005).

Reflection is a mindfulness strategy that I use regularly. Essentially, I self-monitor and reflect on how particular interactions went including what the outcomes were,

what went well or not and what I would do differently. Often, I will chat with colleagues to get their impressions of how these interactions went. It enables me to be more attuned to situational cues necessary for managing impressions. Informed mindfulness as described by (Perlman, 2015) combines self-awareness with knowledge, skills, values and the wisdom to help make more informed choices about what to do in a given situation. He states that those that practice informed mindfulness are better leaders.

10.2.3 Mana Wāhine/Intersectionality

Mana wāhine makes visible the diverse narratives and experiences of Māori women (Simmonds, 2011). This narrative will become part of that discourse because I am, a Māori woman. Mana wāhine sits within a feminist framework that focuses on giving Māori women a voice and returning power to them (Herd, 2006; Palmer & Masters, 2010; Smith, 1993). It also recognises the impact of intersectionality which states that inequity and disparities, such as racism and sexism, interrelate, creating a social system of oppression and inequality that can be amplified when an individual belongs to a number of socially disadvantaged groups (Moorosi, 2014; Sanchez-Hucles & Davis, 2010a, b). Māori women do potentially experience overlapping inequities—as women, they experience sexism and as Māori, many are socially disadvantaged (Marriott & Sim, 2014). Yet, not all our stories are stories of oppression, despite a growing gap of inequity between Māori and non-Māori in Aotearoa. Mana wāhine seeks to raise Māori women up. Sharing our stories, gives us a voice. It is a discourse that I have deliberately chosen to engage with because it is important to me as an indigenous woman.

10.3 Performance—He Rangatira Au (I Am the Chief)

Rangatira means someone with the qualities of a leader in te reo Māori. The first time I was referred to as a rangatira in my new job, I was taken aback, as it is something that is conferred and earned. I am the chief or boss in name but I felt honoured to be called a *rangatira*.

After nearly 3 years, I still feel like a relative newcomer. As such, I am aware that the corridors of power continue to be complex to navigate as alliances shift and personnel change. Again, I liken the experience to *Game of Thrones* with its waring kingdoms, and shifting political alliances. Despite this take on working in higher education, I have been fortunate in my own career to work with many incredible people and mentors who have encouraged me as I moved into senior leadership roles.

I am mindful that higher education is an intensely competitive environment. Universities compete against each other for resources, funding, rockstar academics and

to attract the best students. Faculty, schools and departments compete against each other for internal resources and academics compete for grants, promotions and to get published.

The University Librarian is a member of the University's senior leadership team and a professional rather than academic role. It comes with its own set of expectations in such a hypercompetitive environment. I am required to:

- successfully manage a large division;
- be fiscally responsible in times of constraint;
- transform culture and lead change;
- engage with community internally and externally;
- be dazzling and innovative.

This is a big ask even for the most experienced and charismatic of leaders. The pressure sometimes keeps me up at night and low-level anxiety is not uncommon. Managing expectations, perceptions and self, is hard work. Early on in my career when I started to move into leadership roles, I decided to share my performance in the leadership space through social media. Everything from 'ugly crying' when things are hard, to happy dancing when things go well. My performance as a leader because of my ethnicity and gender makes me more visible. Instead of trying to assimilate, I have embraced the difference—my individuality—and I share the emotional ups and downs of my leadership journey. It is one way that I express authentic leadership. I believe that being open and transparent about the joys, failures and hardships will inspire others to either become leaders themselves or be more open about their own leadership journey. It is my view that these stories are valuable and need to be shared. It gives leadership a human face, flawed and imperfect but authentic.

The benefit of the social networks that I participate in, is that they are virtual communities of practice, with mutual support and encouragement. I refer to them as *circles of kindness*. The following examples illustrate how these communities of practice provide support when I am dealing with stressful situations.

10.3.1 Disappointment, Heartbreak and Kindness

Not long after I began work in Aotearoa, the budget that was allocated for a significant library refurbishment was put on hold as university priorities were reassigned. I took the role on expecting to be working on a major project including redesigning services and spaces. I was disappointed. The sobering reality of leadership is that there are many things out of your control but it is still your job to manage not only your own disappointment but the disappointment and expectations of others, when things change unexpectedly.

At the time, I knew very few people in Aotearoa. My social networks were invaluable as a back-channel for support. People were affirming, sent silly memes, and virtual hugs and also offered sage advice. It helped me to navigate my way through

a tricky time. Again, in the middle of my second year back in Aotearoa, my 8-year relationship ended. I was heartbroken. I decided to announce the spilt publicly, with my ex-partner's permission. I told people at work and on social media. For a time, the emotional rollercoaster affected my work whilst I grieved. Acknowledging that the spilt was a direct consequence of my decision to return to Aotearoa, I began to second guess other decisions. It remains my biggest regret about returning. I was incredibly grateful for the kindness shown by virtual friends, colleagues and even complete strangers who identified with my story on social media. It was amazing.

Aroha (empathy and compassion) is abundant in the circles of kindness, I affiliate myself with. I seek out networks where peers mutually provide each other with tangible support in different contexts. I try not to be a *net borrower* of support that is, I hope that I give as much support and encouragement as I take. My work colleagues, a global network of friends and my whānau (family) are there for me. Although being so open can have its downsides, I am rarely trolled, my experience is overwhelmingly positive.

10.4 Setting—Whare Wānanga (University)

I work in a mid-sized, young, urban university that has grown quickly and significantly over the last decade and a half. It prides itself on being student-centred, courageous, collaborative and open-minded. The University operates within a fiercely competitive market for both international and domestic students. It has reached a crossroad, where its origin story of once being a vocational tertiary institute and now a fully fledged university has shaped its genesis. The need to prove that it is a credible and reputable university, producing great graduates and research is nearly behind it. The brand is strong, and it is one of the biggest universities in the country.

Yet, maintaining steady growth in such a competitive global industry is proving a challenge for all universities in the Australasian market. The New Zealand government which came into power recently has promised: '…one year fees free full-time equivalent for everyone starting tertiary education or training for the first time from 1 January 2018, and extending this to three years' free by 2024' (New Zealand Labour Party, 2017). This and other policy changes are sure to have considerable impact on the sector in Aotearoa. Universities are still unsure as to what this means for enrolments and funding going forward.

The dilemma for young universities is how to take on more traditional, higher ranking universities in the market, without becoming more like them and giving up the nimbleness that comes with being a younger institution. The balance between tradition and emerging practices of new scholarship and delivery of education is an ongoing challenge within the organisation. Traditionally, universities are slow to change, making it tricky for those of us bought in to transform culture.

Often employees within organisations like ours, received mixed signals about what the organisation actually wants. Our infrastructure and decision-making processes can hinder agility and innovation. Traditional paradigms and structures privilege cer-

tain ways of behaving and doing things. Change is slow. Legacy, corporate memory and risk adversity can make change unpalatable for many, hence informed mindfulness is vital when performing in these spaces. It is easy to lose face when you are bought in as an agent of change because you are challenging the organisations' perceived norms. Alliances and endorsement by influencers in the organisation can counterbalance some of the loss of face or negative feelings when challenging these norms. However, it can be difficult to maintain a positive attitude when attempts to change processes, policies, etc., needs to be channelled through committee after committee, to show that you have adequately consulted and appeased the governance gods. Agility seems like an anathema to some committees.

10.4.1 Transforming Culture and Mindset

Bringing new ideas and ways of working into this mix requires resilience and a positive mindset. I choose to view challenges as par for the course. It is exactly what one should expect when in leadership and working closely with people in a meaningful way. But, how I approach and think about this work is entirely up to me.

I am confident that I know tertiary institutions because I have worked in them my whole career (20+ years). Knowing that they can be slow to move and that I may meet a little resistance along the way, helps me to think about creative ways of overcoming barriers. I much prefer to work in less traditional educational institutions that are striving to be different and innovative. Finding my tribe that is, people who think and work in similar ways, within the organisation has made the challenges less daunting because we can collaborate on projects.

The division that I lead—the Library is large, with over 90 staff and a leadership team of 3. As with any modern, forward-thinking academic library, it offers a broad range of facilities and services. Our vision is evolving but speaks to crossing traditional boundaries to inspire and empower and being at the very heart of our community. We like to think that we boldly engage with students and faculty and that the Library provides an environment that encourages curiosity, creativity and experimentation whilst fostering learning, teaching, research and openness. We developed the vision and mission statements recently and they signal a new direction for the Library. It is the first time the division has articulated our commitment to openness and creativity. These directions will shape Library planning until 2025. I am excited about the possibilities. Only time will tell how successful we are.

10.5 Appearance

It is rare to get through a day without some kind of challenge or issue arising. It can be something as simple as a power cut at one of our locations, to a complex staffing issue. Every problem that arises is an opportunity to learn something new

about myself as a leader and about the organisation that I am embedded in. Most solutions require working with different parts of the university.

In my experience, hierarchies, status and reporting lines are sacrosanct in universities. I spent the first year in the role, fostering relationships and getting to know other senior leaders and their go-betweens. Forming relationships with people in the organisation who can get things done is essential. Organisational structures can vary from faculty to faculty, division to division and therefore, corporate intelligence from those who have worked in the organisation for some time is invaluable. They often know of work arounds or the right person to speak to, and to get something done quickly. Thus, allowing you to circumvent unwieldy legacy, decision-making hierarchies that prevail throughout universities, whilst still keeping everyone that needs to be informed, in the loop.

Fostering these kinds of relationship requires you to mindful of your own actions but also the reactions of other's in different settings (Marchiondo, Myers, & Kopelman, 2015). It comes back to the values espoused by the organisation. Here, they are respect, integrity and compassion. There is fine balance between respecting the hierarchy, when nimbleness is required to get things done within certain deadlines. The status of my office is often called upon to get communications or requests in front of the right people. The perception being that without it, there would not be enough gravitas or clout if someone else in the division were to send it.

Hence, the leadership team in our division is enthusiastically increasing their individual visibility, credibility and status within the university. This means that when they act on behalf of the division, it is given the status required to get noticed and action taken. Libraries are too often sidelined in the senior leadership of universities and it is a worrying trend in academia. This is one of the main reasons I lobbied and successfully gained a seat at the university senior leadership table. Libraries need to be a part of strategic conversations in universities. Fortunately, this was recognised where I currently work. For the first time, the University Librarian is a member of the university senior leadership team. It is a privilege and a position of influence that I do not undervalue.

10.5.1 Being Visible and Mindfulness

Sharing leadership enables me to manage the expectations of the job. I am self-aware enough to know that I do not have the bandwidth to micromanage (nor the will). I need to be able to trust my team and in their capability to do their jobs well. I continue to maintain an open-door policy which means that I am readily accessible to anyone who walks in my door. But I do need to be mindful that I do not overstretch or overcommit.

Ultimately, I am a pragmatist and I believe that I perform best when I have meaningful, fulfilling work that does not creep too much into my personal and creative time outside of work. Fortunately, most universities have flexible work arrangements to make this possible. Occasionally, working from home or in a café can really switch

things up and break me out of ruts and I try to do it every few weeks. Simple mindfulness techniques like this help me juggle different expectations from different audiences.

10.6 Manner

Mindfulness strategies enable me to be more resilient in my professional and personal life. Knowing I am able to bounce back after setbacks, is one of the keys to managing the complexity of my job.

10.6.1 Mindful Aroha (Empathy/Compassion)

Not long after returning to Aotearoa, I attended a *Tea and Empathy* workshop facilitated by sex educator, Kate Kenfield. The workshop gave me insight into the value of non-judgemental empathy in relationships and workplaces. Often, situations escalate quickly when emotions are heightened. Just providing a calm space for people to process and identify their feelings can take some of the heat out of a situation. With my open-door policy, those I work with can come in and talk. While, not every one feels comfortable doing so, those that do, often leave with the headspace to work on solutions. By practicing mindful empathy, I can be more focussed when dealing with difficult situations.

10.6.2 Mindful Boundaries

To manage the workload and model expected behaviour to others, I try to set clear boundaries between work and personal time for example, I:

- Do not respond or send email at all hours of the day and night (anymore).
- Do not work unreasonably long hours.

These practices allow me to be present, focussed and aware when I am at work. They clearly signal to others that I have a clear delineation between work and personal time. By sharing my success and failures at maintaining these boundaries via social media (Twitter and Instagram), I am making public covenant with myself to continue to strive for this separation.

In the past, work in the higher education sector was seasonal that is, busy during semester, less busy during semester breaks. However, now the busyness lasts all year round. Meaning, occasionally, I need to work long hours or on weekends. But I try to ensure that I keep this to a minimum so I do not burn myself out. Furthermore, I always look forward to and use my annual leave for restorative breaks.

As a leader, I am often expected to be charismatic, extraverted and sparkly. Being 'on' all the time at work, can be emotionally taxing and requires oodles of energy. I need down time to replenish my reserves so that when I perform professionally I can be the kind of leader I want to be—present and mindful. I describe myself as an omnivert. I can be either extraverted or introverted depending on what the situation requires.

10.6.3 Mindful Exercise

I practice yoga. I try to practice every day, even for a short time. I find that the practice is good for both my mind and body. If I am having a particularly busy or stressful day, a few yoga breaths can help to refocus my attention on what I am doing. One of the staff benefits at the institution I work for, is free gym membership for all permanent staff which I take full advantage of to help maintain my well-being. I get to the gym at least 3 times a week. The key for me is doing exercise that I enjoy.

10.6.4 Mindful Creativity

I am a maker and artist. I crochet, draw, write, stitch and I am learning to make ceramics and sew. Mindful creative practice has so many positive benefits. I like to make things that bring joy to others, adding a little bit of whimsy to the world.

I also use creative practices in the workplace such as visualisation, sketch-noting, design-thinking and play. According to Tavares (2016) employees' experience of meaningful work, along with their positive affect at work, can be enhanced through their engagement in creative behaviours. We opened a maker studio in 2017. It provides a dedicated space where people can come to create, think, make, play and learn. Encouraging creativity is part of our divisional ethos.

10.6.5 Mindful Social Media

Social networking is a big part of my mindful practice. Twitter and Instagram are the two platforms that I use most in a professional capacity. Social media allows me to stay connected to my virtual networks. I try to keep the accounts as authentic as possible and use these platforms to reflect on my practice as a leader and a librarian. Over the years, I have built up a reasonable following.

I find that I need a range of mindfulness strategies to cope with working in the sector and to help keep the different parts of my life in balance. Different strategies work in different contexts. I am quite open about my practice and it is clear to others I work with, that maintaining boundaries, looking after my well-being and social

media are all important to me. I hope that I model behaviour that endorses the benefit of such practices to others.

10.7 Front

There is a lot of research around to say that consistency is the key to lasting behaviour change. Unfortunately, it is one of the first things to disappear when I am stressed. The strategies that I struggle most with when under pressure are mindful boundaries and exercise. I find it hard to maintain routines. Things can start to unravel and sometimes the stress will trigger insomnia. I am much better at recognising how long I can sustain working under pressure without regular exercise and mindful boundaries in place.

Recently, I had an intense month of travel for international speaking engagements whilst dealing with some tricky situations back on campus. I was very busy, working longer hours to keep on top of everything and started skipping gym classes. I thought that I was managing it all quite well until the inevitable happened. I was spending a lovely morning in sunny Canberra the day after delivering a keynote at an education conference. I went for a run, visited the National Portrait Gallery and was walking towards the National Library of Australia. I thought to myself, I will just check my travel itinerary one more time to make sure I do not miss my flight and I was immediately struck with dread. I realised to my horror that I had been looking at the wrong flight and had missed my flight to Sydney and hence my connecting flight home.

After metaphorically beating myself up for being incompetent, I swung into action and got myself on another flight, so I could be back in time for an early meeting the next day. When I reflected on what had happened, whilst I filled in the hours waiting for the next flight out of Canberra, I realised that I had simply overextended myself and was not practicing self-care. I promptly forgave myself for messing up, posted about what happened on social media and tried to enjoy the rest of my time in Canberra. It was an expensive lesson in what can happen when I overcommit. When I returned to work the next day, most people had heard about what happened either through social media or word of mouth. We laughed about it and I got on with my day.

10.7.1 Without a Script

The way I perform my leadership practice in public is not scripted. Although many others in the university have a public face, it is usually as a researcher or expert in their field, where they have received media training and their performance is endorsed by the organisation. I sometimes worry that I will be challenged about how I perform on social media platforms. But I have not as yet. I am mindful that people associate me

with my workplace, thus though I can be outspoken, I respect the employee/employer relationship and endeavour to always represent the University in a positive light.

10.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

> Make the best of every moment. We're not evolving. We're not going anywhere. (David Bowie: What I've Learned', 2016)

I am conscious that depending on the situational context I act differently. In my personal life and with those I trust and love, my guard can come down. In the workplace, I am more guarded because I am aware that we are constantly being measured and judged on performance.

Keeping firm boundaries between home and work is an ongoing challenge. Even though I am feeling more comfortable that I am living up to expectations. People now have a sense of what I offer the organisation and how my world view, and leadership style can help to transform the university in positive ways. I really want to make a difference and am committed to the organisation.

10.8.1 Growth and Moving Forward

I love my job but I also love my life outside of work. The mindfulness strategies that I employ enable me to lead a fulfilling and rich life in both spheres. Curiosity about how do things better, work smarter, be more productive and creative, keep me moving forward and trying new things. I also use tools like the *Tea and Empathy Feelings Cards* produced by Kate Kenfield to check-in with myself and practice self-care.

10.8.2 There is an App for that

I am also a keen advocate for apps to help manage mindfulness practice and productivity. I have apps for many different aspects of my life—exercise, yoga, productivity, games, creativity and much more. They help me to have a sense of control over my busy life.

10.8.3 Asking for Help

In the past when I have struggled to manage stress, I have used Employee Assistance Programs (EAP). They provide confidential access to counselling services. I have no

qualms about using such services if and when I need them. I also encourage others to make use of them. Although for some, there remains a stigma attached to seeing counsellor, I have always found talking to a trained counsellor beneficial. Recently, during Mental Health Awareness Week (#MHAW), I reflected on things that I do to look after my wellbeing. To borrow from a proverb—*it takes a village*. I have trusted colleagues at work but I am also conscious that as a senior leader in the university there are boundaries. Out of necessity, my most trusted confidantes do not work at the same institution. They are whānau (family) and friends. My sister is the one I turn to the most when I am stuck or need a sounding board because her advice is always sensible and she knows me better than anyone. Whatever the situation good or bad, to paraphrase the Bowie quote above, I try to make the best of every moment and keep moving forward.

10.9 Conclusion

Mindfulness strategies helps me to cope with the complexity of my role and enable me to continue to take risks and lead. I perform on a public stage, unscripted but mindfully, in the hope that my story will encourage and inspire others like me—brown and women. With a lot of moxie and virtual army of supporters I am striving to make a positive difference. Navigating the return to Aotearoa after 27 years and the upheaval to my personal life whilst remaining positive, required gumption. Without it, I would have jumped on a plane and returned to my family and friends in Australia. Social media continues to serve as a platform or stage for sharing my mana wāhine and leadership narratives publicly. Since returning, I have accepted that my difference (race and gender) is a positive. It makes me more visible. Instead of assimilating, I have embraced my difference and I am more open and public about the ups and downs of leadership and risk-taking. With only one or two regrets. I am still finding my way, but with more confidence and finesse.

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versity Librarian). Ms Tairi has worked in the higher education sector for 20+ years as a librarian and sometimes educator. She like many of her peers, believes that libraries are fundamental to a healthy society as places for community building, creativity, fun and learning. In her spare time, she is a maker and crafter who loves to dance, travel and explore new places with her camera. Her favourite thing to photograph besides herself, is street art. She is thrilled to be part of this publication.

Chapter 11
The Role of Mindfulness in Managing HRM Challenges for Senior Higher Education Learning and Teaching Leaders

Nina Fotinatos

Abstract In this chapter, I focus on common challenges encountered by senior, higher education learning and teaching (L&T) leaders, within a central academic development unit (ADU). An ADU is primarily a central service area in higher education institutions, which provides varied services and functions to students and staff, associated with teaching quality, learning quality and product quality (for example, programs, courses, units design and delivery, etc.). I highlight the role, function and importance of central ADUs within higher education institutions. I discuss the types of broad and human resource management (HRM) challenges that occur in ADUs and the associated impact on service, team functionality and leader well-being. I provide an honest and raw reflection on significant health and well-being challenges that I faced as a senior L&T leader in this environment. I discuss key mindfulness strategies most useful in my personal situation and demonstrate how they can be incorporated into everyday practice of leading and managing. I highlight how mindfulness practice can be useful in maintaining a positive, optimistic perspective particularly in times of uncertainty and change.

11.1 Introduction

I commenced my professional career as a diagnostic pathology medical scientist (1997–2008). This career was both rewarding and challenging and fostered my keen interest in helping people within the healthcare system. In 2009, I became a lecturer and I embarked on a journey to combine my passion of medical science and higher

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_11

education L&T. Adjusting to my new academic role (teaching, research and engagement) required considerable sacrifice and patience. With enormous effort, exemplar time management skills and persistence, I excelled in my teaching responsibilities, and established a flexible research area linked to my recently completed PhD (2010). With institutional and national recognition, I became engaged with school leadership opportunities as an Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching (2012–2014).

In June 2014, I commenced my current, most senior leadership and management role as institutional Director of a central ADU. During the past 3 years, I have experienced my most steep leadership learning journey, underpinned by immense highs and devastating lows. As the leader of between 35 and 45 staffs, I continue to face several broad and HRM challenges which at times, eroded both my personal and professional confidence, capacity and performance. While managing such challenges, I developed unhealthy work-life balance issues, heightened anxiety and unproductive work and home habits, which hindered my personal and professional happiness. I describe the lived experience from the perspective of a senior, female higher education L&T leader and manager operating from within a central ADU. Throughout the chapter I discuss the implications of the challenges on personal health, well-being and team/service effectiveness. As I navigate my lived experience, I provide reference to a range of mindfulness strategies which I found useful in overcoming a range challenges over the past 2 years.

11.2 Literature: The Role of Mindfulness in Managing Workplace Stress for Senior Higher Education Leaders

The art of cultivating mindfulness is underpinned by paying attention, being accepting, non-reactive, non-judgemental and self-compassionate (Hassed, n.d). According to Bright and Pokomy (2013), mindfulness practices 'facilitate the development of deep concentration and insight, enabling one to step back, gain distance, question and reflect, sharpen focus, manage stress and its impact on the body/mind and generate a sense of calm and well-being' (pp. 9–10). This definition encompasses many facets of mindfulness which are useful for all leaders and managers. From my experience, overcoming higher education L&T challenges requires varied approaches such as those defined by Bright and Pokomy (2013). Mindfulness renowned expert Dr. Craig Hassed (Hassed, nd) describes mindfulness as 'a mental discipline that involves training attention' (p. 1). Hassed (nd) defines mindfulness as a practice which 'teaches us how to use the mind in a different way and to focus on the things that are most useful and helpful in our lives thus helping us to live more consciously and fully' (p. 1). Good and Yeganeh (2006) (cited in Bright and Pokomy, 2013) present mindfulness at an organisational level. In this context, individuals within organisations are:

1. Aware and accepting of changes in momentary experiences based on present centred awareness,
2. Aware of and flexible with cognitive patterns/categories, and
3. Are in control of attention in the moment to scan for new information. (p. 9).

Mindfulness practices continues to expand their reach in numerous settings including workplace environments.

Kinman and Wray (2013), report that the 'incidence of workplace stress has generally risen since the mid-1990s, especially among public sector workers' (p. 5). There is much hype around how mindfulness strategies can reduce workplace stress. Workplace stress can be associated with 'work overload, long hours, low salaries, limited resources and supervisory/co-worker conflict' (Brard, 2018, p. 5). In Australia, higher education institutions can choose to engage with the nationally available and benchmarked 'Voice Survey' (administered by Macquarie University). This whole of institution survey can explore organisation culture including factors associated with workplace stress such as staff wellness, reacting and adapting to change, supervision, workload and work-life balance. From my personal experience, many of these higher education organisational culture indicators are particularly relevant as the sector continues to undergo resourcing and delivery change. In the United Kingdom, workplace stress within the higher education system can be measured using the self-reporting 'Higher Safety Executive Indicator Tool' (Cousins et al., 2004, as cited within Kinman & Wray, 2013). This tool focuses on workplace demands, level of autonomy, peer support, managerial support, relationships, role clarity and managing change. These indicators continue to be useful in exploring stress-related triggers in higher education institutions. Brard (2018) suggests that mind–body intervention and mindfulness meditation positively influences work-related performance, improved mental/physical health and interpersonal relationships. Similarly, de Vibe et al. (2013) reported that university students exposed to a 7-week mindfulness program, had less self-reporting of mental distress, study stress and increased well-being compared to the control population. There is currently limited literature which explores the impact of mindfulness and levels of higher education workplace stress.

University governance is led by a range of formal and informal leaders. One faculty leader career pathway is via advancement into middle or senior executive roles including those leading central L&T and/or research, and/or engagement services (Collins, 2014). Academic and professional staff who are incumbent in such roles, can bring a combination of desired skill sets including discipline expertise, lived academic experience (i.e. L&T, research and engagement), course/program/school and faculty expertise and understanding of academic culture. There are several leadership styles commonly utilised in higher education sector including distributed, transformational, situational, servant and autocrat (Covey, 2004; Alonderiene & Majauskaite, 2016). Alonderiene and Majauskaite (2016) reported that job satisfaction was significantly higher where Lithuanian higher education leaders used servant style leadership. Gallos (2008) highlights the relationship between managing workplace stress and leadership. This author highlights how handling strong emotions in the workplace over varying periods of time 'can be hazardous to body and soul' (p. 1). She

also describes several strategies which support leaders in managing such challenges. These include focusing on personal traits including emotional intelligence, setting and refining boundaries and maintaining resilience. Similarly, Claude-Hélène, Sabie, and Delene (2016) explored the relationship between personality traits, mindfulness and sense of coherence with psychological well-being and HRM. This chapter seeks to share authentic, lived experiences from a senior higher education L&T leader who continues to manage and overcome workplace stress using a variety of mindfulness practices.

11.3 Performance: Delivering a Service Amidst Managing Broad and HRM Challenges

In my personal experience, leading and managing a central higher education L&T support service, is both extremely rewarding and challenging. As a leader in this environment, my performance is under constant scrutiny, from both internal stakeholders (i.e. members of your own team, etc.) and external stakeholders (i.e. senior management, faculty staff, etc.). My personal stress levels began to increase when I faced challenges that hindered my ability to demonstrate key performance measures of impact and positive change and a misalignment between my personal values and actions of those around me. Over time, I became overwhelmed while balancing internal challenges (i.e. performance managing staff, dealing with staff conflict, redirecting staff work, etc.) and external challenges (i.e. working with senior faculty stakeholders who struggled to coordinate and monitor academic professional learning needs in alignment with university expectations and central resources). Working with faculty stakeholders required a great deal of patience, negotiation, collaboration and full attention to their specific needs. Working and dealing with internal challenges also required high levels of emotional intelligence and objectivity focused on ADU practice and service while nurturing my staff. From my experience, the stress and ongoing tension as part of leading in an ADU, is vastly different to that experienced in my previous role as a lecturer/senior lecturer/researching in the field of medical science and public health. From my perspective, while part of a discipline/school/faculty environment for 6 years, the intensity of pressure was more easily managed in a controlled, less volatile and less public environment. The nature and configuration of my teaching and research was within small class environments (normally under 40 students) and I found it simpler to navigate both the teacher-student learning environment and establish positive committed work collaborations with colleagues in both teaching and research settings.

One of the most challenging aspects of leadership, is learning to steer personal and professional vision in challenging environments. Within 6 weeks of commencing my director role, I began to experience unfamiliar and intense HRM challenges. The challenge was linked to unrealistic expectations and demands of staff, who had become accustomed with minimal accountability and commitment and instead

focused on ego and status. It was at this juncture, that I had to disrupt my optimistic mindset and accept alternative views of practice relative to ADU objectives. Fast forward 2.5 years with ongoing and intense periods of internal and external challenges, I realised my current pace and practice was not sustainable. I managed minor issues such as managing damaging rumours, professional jealously, workplace politics and hierarchical standoffs regarding unrealistic expectations and alignment of central resources. I managed major issues such as ongoing exhaustive performance management practices, managing dysfunctional teamwork behaviours and dealing with repeated unsubstantiated vexatious claims of bullying and harassment. Eventually, the toll in dealing with these broad and HRM challenges, began to negatively impact, both my personal and professional mindset. The impact of the stress led to high emotional instability and reduced emotional intelligence impacting all areas of my life.

Despite all the internal and external challenges I had faced, my 'on-stage' work performance continued to be largely underpinned by a dedication and focus on delivering high-quality goal outcomes with others. During such experiences, I continued to gain energy from sharing knowledge, having open authentic communication, having a positive attitude and demonstrating unwavering commitment to the goal and team around me (Curtin, 2016). I welcomed professional learning opportunities, particularly in leadership and management and continued to work in complimentary skill teams. This performance has definitely influenced my positive career trajectory within the higher education sector over the past 9 years.

11.4 Setting: The Role of Central ADUs

Central ADUs provide a number of key L&T services, functions and practices that support staff, students and the broader community. In my 3.5 year experience, ADU services and functions are focused on building staff and student capability and capacity relevant to their teaching and learning roles as part of the higher education community. All services are interlinked between teaching quality, learning quality and program/course/unit quality. The most common challenges in any central ADU is how to provide a high quality service to key stakeholders (i.e. students and staff in faculties) which is consistent, sustainable, adds measurable value and impact and meet needs in an integrated, seamless and supportive manner. Providing this important service in times of change (i.e. internal and external sector change), regular restructures and varied school/faculty infrastructure/leaders to coordinate staff professional learning and internal quality assurance, is a constant tension experienced in any ADU. It is crucial that ADUs develop and sustain strong, authentic relationships across a range of academic organisational units and respective leaders in faculties, schools, disciplines and programs. In addition, ADUs must remain agile to the university requirements and offer resource efficient solutions to both familiar/unfamiliar and expected/unexpected situations.

The changing higher education landscape presents opportunities to refocus the business of education. I see opportunities in reviewing practice with student-centred innovation in L&T and discipline/industry cross-pollination. Generally, in higher education institutions, the infrastructure and organisational culture largely influences employee attitudes, actions and behaviour. In my experience, team behaviour can also mimic attitudes, actions and behaviour and occasionally manifest as key team dysfunctions (i.e. absence of trust, fear of conflict, lack of commitment, lack of accountability and inattention to results) as described by management guru, Patrick Lecioni (2002). In such situations, it is imperative that leaders and managers continue to focus on institutional goals, positive vision and working collaboratively with human resources and other experts to address team dysfunctions.

In my personal situation, my stress is particularly influenced by three specific HRM challenges: (1) Managing underperforming staff; (2) Managing vexatious accusations; and (3) Managing staff and team dysfunctions. Dealing with these challenges is not uncommon however managing these challenges within a central higher education ADU, presents its own unique performance complexities. These challenges had acute and long-term direct impact on faculty relationships and the provision of services to faculty staff for a length period of time. I had been dealing with these challenges 'on and off' for 2 years and eventually, my mindset, positive attitude and factors linked to my emotional intelligence, had been severely diminished. I was so focused on maintaining the external performance of a strong and passionate leader that I did not see the signs and symptoms associated with internal mindset chaos. Progressively, these signs and symptoms increased in severity and presented in both my personal and work-life environments. Small issues became large and my team became acutely aware of my inability to focus and lead effectively.

11.5 Appearance: Getting Closer to the Edge

Progressively over time, my appearance and reactions to situations in the workplace became less stable. I remained in a mindset focused on either the 'past' (i.e. replaying historical difficult conversations) or the 'future' (i.e. pre-empting difficult conversations, the detailed follow-up, the constant deception). I recall feeling periods of 'empty' and not knowing how to appreciate all the amazing facets in my life. I remember feeling withdrawn from my amazing team and temporarily having less focus on strategic leadership and management issues related to the ADU. My personal well-being and work performance began to suffer given the lack of mindfulness leadership. I became less connected to the needs of the team and target audience. Whilst remaining focused on seeking positive outcomes for the workplace, I continued to ignore the personal signs and symptoms associated with 'burn out' (i.e. feeling sad, tired, and helpless). It became increasingly difficult to accept that these challenges in a higher education context, where more frequent than I had ever experienced in a non-academic environment. After managing both broad and HRM challenges over an extended period of time (almost 2.5 years), I was diagnosed with severe anxiety and

became physically exhausted resulting in emergency medical assistance. Although I tried to mask my emotions, I developed physical reactions linked to long-term over-activation of the stress response (i.e. allostatic load) (Hassed, nd). 'Allostatic load' is defined as the 'physiological wear-tear in the body …is seen in chronic depression and anxiety'. High allostatic load can also be linked to immune dysfunction, cardiovascular associated disease, blood pressure issues and early aging (Hassed, nd). I continued to hide my emotions regardless of the workplace environment and thought that with sufficient planning, commitment and dedication, I could overcome any challenge. I was wrong, very wrong.

Six weeks after seeking medical assistance, I was returning from counselling when I was involved in vehicle accident. Although not physically injured, my personal car was not repairable and this incident cemented for me that everything had to change. This was the turning point for me and a realisation that I was not living or leading mindfully. I finally realised that I could not use the normal logic and reasoning strategies to improve my current situation. My pattern of thought over many years of academia, had led to my extreme self-criticism, impulsive behaviour and pessimistic thought process.

Given the recent events, I found it particularly challenging to open up about my personal experience and be emotionally vulnerable to internal and external colleagues. My stresses had negatively affected my leadership capacity and I began to demonstrate poor judgement and impulse reactions to colleagues closest to me. I was embarrassed to admit failure in my inability to navigate specific HRM challenges. I was fearful that my professional challenges would negatively influence the ADU reputation. Although I knew things had to change, I was still naive regarding what process to follow.

11.5.1 Reality: A Frightening Reminder

This environment became a very isolated and lonely one. I recall becoming obsessed with performance management documentation, process, consultation and logistical planning. I found myself debriefing to managers which inadvertently shared the burden and caused them unease. I felt an immense injustice in managing such challenges within the current industrial relations environment. Occasionally, I hid from key stakeholders to mask my pain and suffering. I also felt that shifting my attention to positive focused projects (i.e. reward and recognition projects) helped with changing the mindset into one filled with optimism and positive reflection. It was pivotal to accept that the mask and distractions from the actual challenges could only last for so long.

Mindfulness practices can be incorporated into all settings. Enacting mindfulness in academia can be demonstrated by clearly focusing on one task at a time, whether that be teaching, research or engagement responsibilities. Within the L&T leadership context, is it associated with focusing attention to lead or manage a project or initiative which has significant implications for staff and/or student development.

It is embedded in working with like-minded colleagues who have similar invested interests in reaching target goals and aspirations. Mindfulness activities within my specific setting commenced with identifying my current thought patterns. I eventually paused and considered what had led me to this path? I realised I was not living mindfully and instead was solely focused on the past or future.

11.6 Manner: New Horizons, New Beginnings

As a result of managing ongoing HRM challenges, I experienced significant personal health and well-being issues. My actions, attitudes and behaviour were unproductive, unhealthy and unsustainable. I had prioritised desired workplace outcomes over personal health. I was afraid of disappointing colleagues, faculty staff and senior key stakeholders. My exterior presentation was strong, focused and process driven. My interior mindset was fearful, exhausted and disappointed. Several key stakeholders were impressed at my outwardly consistent, unwavering, diligent leadership approach, however, those closest to me, could see me unraveling before their eyes. This contradiction in expectations was difficult for my closest confidants to experience. Finally, the walls fell.

With realism of turmoil, comes deep reflection. I became committed to making strategic choices that would enhance my recovery within my personal and professional life. Upon seeking extended advice and support from senior academic and professional university stakeholders, I enrolled and completed a free 6-week massive open online course (MOOC) title 'Mindfulness for Wellbeing and Peak Performance'. It is offered by Monash University and lead by renowned Mindfulness expert, Dr. Craig Hassed (nd). This MOOC is embedded in scientific and psychological literature and highlights practices and perspectives associated with mindfulness and meditation. As a result of the engagement with the MOOC, I reset positive sleeping habits, made improvements in my eating routine, introduced accountable routine exercise patterns and increased purposeful family and friend social interactions activities. I introduced improved workplace changes such as setting clear boundaries between my work and personal life and expanded delegation and decision-making with trusted members of my team. I incorporated several mindfulness strategies into my daily work habits. This included setting and focusing on one key task at specific times and days and reduced the volume of busy/unproductive work. I became committed to walking and developed an increased appreciation of silence and sounds of nature. I increased my engagement and awareness of staff conversations, meetings and key discussions. I became an avid reader of cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) literature including the four CBT pillars: perspective, acceptance, non-attachment and presence of mind (Hassed, nd). As a shift in my leadership style, I introduced mindfulness strategies to my ADU team members an alternative way to view and manage broad and HRM challenges. I sought and fully engaged with varied counselling supports (medical, personal relationship and employee assisted program counselling) and was grateful for the university support regarding an external leadership coach.

I extended my professional learning with specific mental health training, situational leadership theory and mindful leadership practice. I also engaged with the 'The Emotional Intelligence 2.0' questionnaire which explores a number of scales and sub-scales as described in Bradberry and Greaves (2009). I found this tool particularly helpful as it highlighted for me, the importance of emotional intelligence scales and sub-scales as a leader. It also assisted me in making positive changes to improve my levels of emotional awareness, impulse control and problem solving skills.

Slowly, I developed an inward perspective of my challenges and felt that it was important to disseminate learnt lessons with peers in similar positional roles. In an effort to demonstrate the impact of managing challenges and the benefits of implementing several mindfulness strategies, I began to share aspects of my journey with both internal and external academic and professional colleagues. My journey was filled with raw emotion, deep reflection and purposeful daily strategies to sustain a healthy mindset. Upon sharing my journey, many internal and external peers also shared their varied current or past experiences. Surprisingly, colleagues began to seek my advice and guidance, requested support resources and engaged with open and honest discussions which humanised their personal challenge. My journey had unknowingly humanised my appearance in my workplace. It highlighted that senior higher education L&T leaders and managers can experience extreme stress, yet recover drawing on embedded and authentic academic and professional support strategies including mindfulness.

11.7 Front: New Ways of Seeing Challenges

My current approach to managing both broad and HRM challenges has significantly changed over the past 12 months. It is now more considered, consultative, less impulsive and underpinned by mindful leadership principles, as described by Professor Amanda Sinclair (2016). 'Mindful leadership' re-conceptualises traditional leadership behaviour within a reflective awareness model which is open, expansive and not judgemental. For example, from 'doing' to 'being', from being 'action driven' to 'still', from 'talking/telling' to 'deep generous listening' and from 'striving to meet future goals' to 'valuing the present'. The change in my approach has been positively noticed by new and existing colleagues.

Over the past 12 months, my new approach has led to increased collaborations, discussions and opportunities. On occasion, unfamiliar and unexpected situations can still cause me to panic and react impulsively. These situations are much less frequent and are followed by periods of personal reflection and considered action. I have particularly noticed, that my emotional awareness is tested when I face situations associated with fair and reasonable staff recruitment. Due to current internal and external HE resource challenges, recruiting staff into roles previously possible (i.e. backfill) or supporting the development of new roles, is much more constrained. Whilst dealing with such situations, I have temporarily experienced emotional peaks and troughs regarding decision-making and partaking in courageous conversations.

In these situations, my triggers are linked to recruitment transparency within the boundaries of my workplace (i.e. ADU and the university) and my personal core values, morals and beliefs. I address workplace issues in a timely manner rather than ruminating negative and often unsubstantiated thoughts with family and/or friends. I use short reflection writing to manage intense periods of challenge and revisit thoughts in a week and re-evaluate its importance. I use a combination of mindfulness and CBT techniques as a self-paced script (i.e.,work through the four pillars) which can refocus my attention and awareness in a variety of environments. The purpose of this technique is to improve my level of happiness and change unhelpful behaviour. When I experience emotionally charged situations, I give myself permission to pause and consider situations from various angles. I deliberate alternative perspectives, consider levels of influence, focus on the current end desired outcomes and value self-compassion and letting go.

As a senior higher education L&T leader, I will always face familiar/unfamiliar and expected/unexpected challenges. It is important to differentiate the type of stress that may be associated with such challenges. According to Dr. Craig Hassed (nd), it is vital to differentiate the usefulness of 'performance stress' compared to 'ongoing negative stress'. 'Performance stress' is associated with internal and external commitments, accountability and focus on results. I welcome this type of stress and know that I respond well within a highly supported area. In my situation, however, the personal impacts of workplace 'ongoing negative stress' exposure, included a lack of focus, internal turmoil, negative physical and emotions reactions and poor performance. My personal challenges and newfound knowledge and strategies, are essential in maintaining and sustaining an effective ADU and passionately leading high performing individuals.

11.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

Given the many facets of academia, I have definitely developed a persona for my actions, attitudes and behaviour based on whether I am front stage, back stage or off-stage. When I first moved into a senior L&T leadership role, these appearances were more varied as I navigated the social and political environment. However, after 3 years of being in the Director role, my persona is more consistent and draws upon background discipline knowledge of science, L&T experiences and varied leadership and management experiences.

My academic performance is influenced by the situational context. In formal environments (i.e. formal committees and events), I remain focused on the political environment created by the audience. I actively collaborate in a transparent manner, remaining engaged and are keen to pursue high and medium goal targets. In a back-stage environment (i.e. informal or formal working groups), I gauge the political environment, gradually build trust with the members and then if appropriate, share

my views with greater ease. The backstage environment conversations are essential in building relationships across the academic domain. In the offstage environment (i.e. meeting with senior faculty executives on a one-to-one level or other senior faculty or university stakeholders), I present with a more humanistic, open and vulnerable approach. During this performance, I feel increasingly comfortable to share relevant lived experiences and make an authentic connection with the target audience. This may be related to L&T, implementing strategic priorities interlinked with teaching quality, learning quality and/or product quality or managing broad and/or HRM challenges. When off stage with those I lead, I reflect on situational leadership quadrants and provide either direction, support, coaching or delegation as appropriate.

Although I describe key differences in my performance relative to the three stages (i.e. front stage, back stage and off stage), there are also strong similarities. I now purposely choose to lead mindfully and remaining open and expansive to new ideas and innovations to improve practice. I also regularly reflect on my personal emotional intelligence performance within social and political contexts, and better align ADU strategies and goals with target audience needs (i.e. faculty and institutional needs).

11.8.1 Onwards and Upwards

I continue to weave mindfulness practice into all aspects of my academic role. I have realised the importance of balance and connectedness to L&T, research and engagement. Underpinning my academic responsibilities is my commitment and accountability to effectively lead and manage. I centre myself through breath and reflection while focusing my attention on valuable and impactful key priority tasks. I regularly benchmark my behaviour in accordance to leader emotional intelligence scales/sub-scale expectations (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). I commonly refer to the CBT mantra as described by Dr. Craig Hassed (nd). I now feel much more equipped to manage broad and HRM challenges from within an ADU. In addition, I feel much more comfortable to navigate the specific challenges that arise between central ADUs and other key stakeholders across the university, particularly the faculties and schools.

11.9 Conclusion

My academic journey is real, passionate and complex. I acknowledge that there are many aspects to my role that are not unique to central ADU leaders, however I highlight that the stress associated with managing both internal and external stakeholder challenges can have a devastating impact on leader's well-being. I highlight that while managing potentially two large sets of challenges, the best of leaders may need extra strategies to see them succeed. I share this personal journey with the reader to give voice, meaning and context to senior leaders in academia who can and are

responsible for managing broad and HRM challenges, particularly from within an ADU… I fully acknowledge that my lived leadership challenges, their impact and my strategies to overcome them, have shaped the leader I am today and into the future.

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Part V
Conscious Decisions, Being Present, and Voice

Chapter 12
Mindful Care and Compassion in Higher Education: Cultivating Communities of Practice

Helen M. Correia and Karin Strehlow

Abstract Higher education settings are often a place of intense competition, striving for productivity in a world of scarcity, where the academic environment is defined by reactivity as attention is focused towards threats, and the experience of excessive stress becomes marked. The mindfulness movement in recent times may be seen as an alternative to this paradigm, attempting to provide a space for stillness, contemplation, and compassion. While mindfulness based interventions and mindful practices in academic settings may confer individual benefits, there is a need to more broadly consider how the culture in higher education contributes to and maintains the experience of stress and distress in academic communities, and how this presents opportunities to develop more mindful communities. This chapter will explore pathways, challenges and considerations in supporting communities of practice in mindful care and compassion in a range of higher education settings, with students across different disciplines, within different cultural contexts and amongst staff communities.

12.1 Introduction

Academic environments in higher education are noticeably affected by various stressors (Winefield, Boyd, Saebel, & Pignata, 2008). As academics, we experience this daily as time pressures, resourcing constraints, competitive performance or interpersonal conflict, amongst others. We also witness students' experiences of stress and distress, particularly in response to highly competitive learning environments and balancing multiple demands. Stress in some form may be an expected element of academic environments, as it is in many contemporary workplaces. Yet, while we accept the reality of our own stress, as teaching academics, it was our attention to the

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_12

well-being and mental health of our students that made the visible impact of stress in different student groups, as well as ourselves, difficult to ignore.

We each had established our own personal mindfulness practices over many years, which we had developed separately in very different contexts. However, it was from this foundation of mindful care and compassion that we became more present to the possibility of cultivating a practice of mindfulness within an academic setting. For us, personally, this meant applying our mindfulness practice to the everyday academic environment, with a willingness to pay attention, observe, and explore non-judgementally the experience of stress within ourselves, our peers, and our students, so that we could, with intention, begin to address the issue.

This, first, raised the issue of *what* we could do to promote well-being and enhance resilience in academic environments. Over several years, we each have had the opportunity to introduce different parts and learnings about mindfulness to our academic community to support mindfulness practices. The initial focus was on students, as both staff and students at our institution showed increasing concern about student stress, and we recognised the importance of this emotional context in learning (Vogel & Schwabe, 2016). Given the emerging evidence of the benefits of mindfulness at the time (Regehr, Glancy, & Pitts, 2013) and our own experience and practice, supporting mindfulness-based practices in these contexts became possible.

Yet, our own practice led us also to be mindful of a second equally important issue of *how* we implement such strategies in a way that is consistent with mindfulness principles yet sensitive to context. This also acknowledges how we ourselves can be part of systems that may contribute to, or exacerbate, damaging experiences of stress. This has meant recognising that our systems tend to place the burden of responsibility and change on the individual, expecting students, and indeed staff, to absorb any stressors with the kind of calm and equanimity that is promoted by mindfulness approaches (see Hülsheger, 2015). Yet, what we most likely need is to support practice that facilitates the development of more mindful systems and communities as a balance to the kind of competitive academic environments that can become hostile and counterproductive.

12.2 Literature Review

In the context described above, the emphasis on stress in academia was increasingly salient. There has been increased awareness of the problematic effects of excessive stress on health, well-being, productivity, and learning (see e.g. Kröll, Doebler, & Nüesch, 2017; Thoits, 2010; Vogel & Schwabe, 2016), whilst recognising the differential impact of individual responses to different kinds of stressors, such as daily hassles (e.g. Charles, Piazza, Mogle, Sliwinski, & Almeida, 2013). The challenges of work stress for academics have also been acknowledged (Kinman & Court, 2010), such that some authors recommend implementing, and increasing awareness of organisational interventions and coping strategies to reduce stress and improve well-being for university staff (Pignata, Winefield, Provis, & Boyd, 2016).

Parallel concerns have been echoed, and are perhaps amplified, in relation to problematic stress in higher education student populations. Despite limited research, there are emerging reports of comparatively high rates of mental health difficulties and distress in university students (Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health 2017). This experience may be due to risk factors associated with individuals or youth in general, as well as academic factors such as high expectations (Kruisselbrink Flatt, 2013) and field of study (Larcombe et al., 2016). Further, while there are important efforts to widen participation in university education, emotional difficulties are barriers to continuation in university studies (Lisciandro & Gibbs, 2016). Regardless of contributing factors, university students collectively represent an at-risk population (Stallman, 2010), with recommendations that mental health of university students requires a response at the institutional level (Veness, 2016).

As educators, there is a clear responsibility for us to consider our role in addressing these issues. Mental health services for students are often offered on campus at Australian universities, although the delivery and accessibility of services vary (see Orygen, The National Centre of Excellence in Youth Mental Health 2017). A recent analysis suggested cognitive, behavioural, and mindfulness programs as possible options in reducing stress in university students and making such interventions more widely available (Regehr et al., 2013). Mindfulness based interventions, in particular, have gained recent popularity and have been used in health professional training for over a decade (McConville, McAleer, & Hahne, 2017). While mindfulness is less readily discussed as part of university staff interventions, the advantages of mindful practice have been acknowledged for caring professions such as therapists (O'Donovan & May, 2007), and health practitioners (Dobkin, Bernardi, & Bagnis, 2016) to reduce stress, risk of burnout, and improving client-centred care. Thus, to the extent that, as educators, we value an ethic of care in student-centred education, developing mindful academic practices seems beneficial for our students, as well as to improve our own well-being and resilience to academic stressors.

In discussing mindful practices here, we acknowledge the challenges in defining mindfulness, but recognise that it includes paying attention with awareness, often with an attitudinal quality or emotional intention (see Van Dam et al., 2018). The attitudinal component of compassion and self-compassion, in particular, has emerged as a significant contributor to mental health and well-being (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012; Zessin, Dickhäuser, & Garbade, 2015). Here, compassion may be broadly considered as a willingness to engage with suffering, with the desire to alleviate it in a skillful way (see Gilbert & Choden, 2014; Neff, 2003). In our work, each practice of mindfulness typically includes attributes relating to guiding *attention* to the *present moment*, cultivating *awareness* of our external world and internal landscape (e.g. thoughts, feelings, impulses) with an *attitude* of non-judgemental acceptance, gentle curiosity and compassion, to facilitate our capacity to *act with conscious intention*, rather than from automatic habits and reactivity to threat.

Yet, how we translate such knowledge into practice for ourselves, our colleagues, and our students, is a challenge. Much of the focus in the stress literature to date has been on individual level change. This recognises individual factors, such as cognitive

appraisal, in reducing the impact of stressors (Gomes, Faria, & Gonçalves, 2013), but neglects the importance of social context and shared experience (Tucker, Jimmieson, & Oei, 2013). In addition, concerns that mindfulness may be unrealistically viewed as a 'quick fix' panacea have been recently reflected in the literature (see Hülsheger, 2015; Van Dam et al., 2018) suggesting the need for mindful consideration in how we support mindful practices. Perhaps most importantly, we also recognise that supporting the practice of mindful care and compassion in our academic community may in some ways be the antithesis of an academic culture more clearly defined by hard competition and individual achievement.

12.3 Performance in Academia: The Competitive Drive to Strive

Higher education environments are characterised by competition, within universities as well as between universities (Marginson, 2006). For academic staff, internal and external reward systems are structured around competition and limited resources. While competition itself may be deemed necessary or advantageous, government funding restrictions, budgetary constraints, grant schemes for research, publication processes and promotion pathways, amongst others, translate into reduced resources, increasing workloads and potentially aggressive behaviours as academics compete more often for fewer prizes to demonstrate successful performance. This imbalance between demands (e.g. excessive workload, work pressure) and resources (e.g. insufficient resources, poor autonomy), leads to stress and strain (Boyd et al., 2011).

In a system where there is increasing pressure to gain control over scarce resources, attempts to maintain collegiality can be eroded by attention that is intensely focused on individual survival of multiple threats, and success at the cost of fellow academics. Under these conditions, we have observed an environment that is more volatile and highly reactive. The cocktail of internal and external reward systems can drive conflict in how power over resources is sought and maintained. At best, it may result in increased pressure to perform, at worst it can create conditions for unethical behaviour, such as the falsification of research results (Fanelli, 2009; Nosek, Spies, & Motyl, 2012) to produce what is deemed to be successful performance. We are all expected to demonstrate peak performance within this reactive context, independently, resiliently and continuously, without too much complaint. This is the case even when chronic stress and demands to adapt to disruptive change lead to widespread observable signs of fatigue.

These experiences are not unique to us, the higher education sector is replete with similar concerns (see e.g. Kinman & Court, 2010). Yet, it was in stark contrast to our own personal experiences in contemplative practice. In many ways, the initial stress we experienced was the emerging discrepancy between two distinct ways of being, producing two conflicting worldviews. On one hand, our own values, intentions, and mindful practices emphasised present moment stillness, care, compassion, and

connection and, on the other hand, the dominant academic culture we were expected to perform in, and conform to, was defined by future-focused striving, aggressive competition, and individual status and power. Of course, resilience, and persistence in high pressure, competitive environments are important qualities for academics, just as they are more broadly in contemporary western workplaces (e.g. McEwen, 2011). However, for us, the disjunct raised the question of *how* we develop valued qualities in ourselves, in each other, in our students, and whether there could be a different balance in the characteristics that define the academic communities we participate in.

Importantly, we observed parallel elements of the stress in academia within student learning environments. Whilst higher education is necessarily characterised by assessing performance and standards, student attention may become hyper focused on evaluation and the threat of potential failure. In different students, we observed counterproductive comparison or competition with peers, threat focused attention and reactivity which disrupted engagement in learning, as well as perfectionism, harsh self-criticism, and low self-compassion, a characteristic implicated in mental health difficulties (MacBeth & Gumley, 2012).

As educators, one of our primary goals is to improve the learning experience for students and to cultivate environments that are conducive to learning (Biggs & Tang, 2011). The experience of student stress and difficulties coping were similarly observed by others across our academic community, and which invited a compassionate response. Given the increasing media attention, mindfulness itself became the solution. Yet, even this created further tensions as broader expectations of mindfulness as the 'quick fix' solution to individual stress became apparent. At the risk of our mindful approach itself becoming an inauthentic performance, it required each of us in our own settings to pause, step back, observe and again bring our own knowledge and practice to the fore to be mindful of *how* we supported the development of mindful practices across different parts of our academic community.

12.4 Setting and Background

Like many Australian universities, we are embedded in a dynamically changing environment, with ongoing uncertainty about future funding sources, which changes with government policies and priorities (see Heffernan, 2017). The threat and impact of financial changes are likely felt more intensely by younger universities that do not have a long history of alternative revenue streams. For us, however, this is combined with an institutional context that has seen several significant changes in leadership over the past few years. Broad sweeping and relatively sudden changes in direction are implemented as strategic directions are recast, and there are significant tensions between executive management and staff as working conditions are negotiated. With such significant changes in context, the atmosphere is marked by instability as goalposts for performance shift depending on the priorities of the prevailing executive.

In our own immediate work settings, this instability has been visible through, and intensified by, significant staff turnover and major changes to curriculum and course design. Each of us in our own settings has experienced teams fragmenting as colleagues depart and we feel the loss of some strong and positive working relationships. The emotional and physical impacts are of course hidden, as the expectations to 'carry the load' and perform in the absence of resources takes priority. We are pushed forward into the next moment in reaction to an increasing set of demands. These experiences are recognised more broadly across our institution. The elements of our particular setting add fuel to the broader competitive climate in academia and set the scene for our daily work practices.

Our substantive academic work takes each of us separately into different learning and teaching contexts, from enabling programs where students are attempting to enter university, through undergraduate and postgraduate programs, where outstanding achievement is demanded in order to progress. One of us works more closely in training health professionals who are expected to develop and demonstrate skills in caring for community members, while one of us works more directly in Aboriginal teaching and learning contexts. We also have collaborative links to other parts of the academic community and across different disciplines, many of which espouse an ethic of care and connectedness.

Yet, in some disciplines or programs, especially those that demand high achievement for progression, academics may extend habits of intense scrutiny of each other to criticism of students, focusing on deficits and threats of failure to meet performance standards rather than providing a balanced focus on strengths or measured critique. Thus, while student-centred learning approaches attempt to shift the focus away from competition between students (Biggs & Tang, 2011), the culture of aggressive competition may still be reflected in student learning experiences. While not always overtly acknowledged, these typically hidden practices provide a context that can sometimes be the antithesis of what we are hoping students will demonstrate in their chosen fields of study. It also provides a context for us, in which we are trying to balance the tension of modelling and cultivating more mindful and compassionate practices with our students, with feeling pressure to perform in line with the hard, competitive culture of academia.

12.5 Appearance: Demonstrating Different Ways of Being

Our existing contemplative practices in our personal contexts also set the scene for possible change more directly in our academic work settings, as stress was increasingly being acknowledged across student and staff communities. The impetus to initiate more mindful practices came from multiple directions. For each of us, separately, we attempted to bring a more mindful perspective to our observations of stress, in ourselves, in our students, and in our colleagues. It was from this practice of mindful care and compassion that we each brought a specific intention to explore how we could best respond to the stressors that we were observing.

This initial intention was met with different opportunities to begin introducing more mindful approaches within learning contexts with students. For one of us, it was working within an Aboriginal learning centre to develop a health focused program that embedded mindfulness approaches alongside other health education. Separately, one of us had collaborative relationships with different parts of the academic community, where embedding mindfulness practices in highly demanding programs were viewed as a possible way to address concerns about student well-being. Whilst our work in these initial settings was largely separate, we each viewed these opportunities as the seed for possible change in cultivating opportunities for mindful-based practices. We viewed these opportunities as important for several reasons.

First, introducing mindfulness into these learning environments was student focused. The possibility of implementing such programs coincided with the increasing popularity of mindfulness, as the potential benefits became increasingly reported (Regehr et al., 2013). Importing mindfulness-based practices into the curriculum appealed to members of different faculties as a way of addressing concerns about student well-being and developing resilience. For us, it was intended to provide students with the opportunity to develop skills that could facilitate academic engagement and improve well-being, in part to improve the emotional context of learning (Hassed & Chambers, 2014). Specifically, programs included mindfulness practices that incorporated the development of present focused attentional skills, increasing awareness of internal and external experiences and cultivating attitudes of care and self-compassion (e.g. Correia et al., 2017). These practices were intended to create opportunities for conscious intentional actions, in contrast to the automatic reactivity that often accompanies the stress response.

Second, by participating in the development of mindful practices with students, it also gave us more opportunities to cultivate, embody, and model an alternative way of being for students. For us, this allowed students to visibly observe in us more moments of awareness, reflection, equanimity, compassion, and other mindful compassion oriented attributes (e.g. Gilbert & Choden, 2014). For some students, these characteristics would be part of the ethos of the profession they were training to become part of. In other words, it allowed us to 'practice what we preach'. This, in turn, afforded us more opportunities to act more authentically, in line with our existing contemplative practices that underscored the attributes that expressed our personal and professional values.

Third, these opportunities served as reminders to more readily bring mindful practices into other aspects of our daily work. It allowed us to bring greater balance to the attitude dominating our academic environment. Instead of being habitually driven by future focused striving, we were reminded to pause and attend to the present moment, to listen with greater acceptance and less judgement, to become more aware of our own automatic reactions and act with conscious intention. Instead of defaulting to aggressive competition, we could create more opportunities to act from a collaborative or compassionate stance. Instead of solely pursuing individual status and power, we were reminded to cultivate our relationships and foster greater connectedness in our communities.

12.6 Manner: Being Mindful of How We Are Mindful

At the core of bringing mindful approaches into our daily work is experiential practice. Regardless of whether mindfulness is viewed as a state or a disposition (Kiken, Garland, Bluth, Palsson, & Gaylord, 2015), practice is key to building and sustaining a mindful orientation, in contrast to the 'wandering mind' of the default mode network (Gilbert & Choden, 2014). For us, this is supported by our own personal practices including body and breath meditations, awareness of internal and external stimuli, mindful movement and yoga, and compassion-based meditations. These formal practices strengthen our capacity to integrate a more mindful approach into our everyday, in the same way that music training and practice helps to prepare one to engage in musical endeavours.

We have also incorporated personal practice into our work day, including brief meditation sessions sometimes before work or during breaks, as well as with each other and with colleagues, as we seed the possibilities of mindful practice communities. These brief structured practices allow us to create a breathing space (Williams & Penman, 2011), to be mindful of *being*, and to take a break from doing. While in mindfulness practice we do not directly seek to induce a state of calm, rather, our focus is on being present, our practice typically leaves us with a greater sense of peace and connectedness. It provides a space to set, or reset, our intentions, to bring mindful awareness to other parts of our day. By adopting a mindful posture each time we practice mindfulness in our academic work spaces, we develop cues in those spaces to be more mindful. Sometimes, this can be enhanced by specific reminders (e.g. the prompt of a chime on a phone or a computer), to take several mindful breaths. The more often we pause to engage in mindful practices, the more often we step out of default mode and the more we de-escalate the reactivity as we respond to stressors and demands that arise in our work day.

It also means integrating the orientation and principles of mindfulness into occasions that are not structured by formal mindfulness practice. Being mindful in academia to us means adopting a stance of mindful awareness as we engage in the *doing* of academic work. This may mean adopting a stance of mindful compassion in our relationships (Gilbert & Choden, 2014), and in the middle of a staff meeting or supervision with students, bringing our attention to the present moment to notice when our attention has drifted away, or to become aware that we or others are responding reactively with stress to a trigger. It means, in the moment, consciously and intentionally bringing our attention back to being present and listening, cultivating an attitude of non-judgemental acceptance of ourselves and others, to reset our intention and act accordingly. This may also mean that we acknowledge and accept the moments when we have acted counter to our intentions and values. Rather than intensify our sense of threat and escalate our reactivity through harsh self-criticism (Neff, 2003), we accept non-judgementally our limitations, take responsibility for our mistakes or failures, and seek to address the situation from our intentions, such as care and compassion (e.g. Gilbert & Choden, 2014).

Adopting and maintaining a mindful orientation in *how* we support mindful communities of practice has also been prominent. A noteworthy example has been in working with Aboriginal students. Like others who have reviewed suitability and acceptability of mindfulness in different cultural contexts (e.g. Dreger, Mackenzie, & McLeod, 2015), we have, over several years, revised mindful practices in response to student feedback. We attempted to maintain the underlying scientific principles of mindfulness, but flexibly adapted the form of delivery to enhance cultural sensitivity, such as mindful walking. Being mindful of how we introduce mindfulness has led us to link the underlying principles of mindfulness practice with existing Aboriginal cultural activities that promote a mindfulness mindset. This recognises the capacity of each student to practice mindfulness in a way that may enhance psychological skills in attention and awareness that may be of benefit to their study but also cultivates a socio-emotional context in which cultural heritage is respected. This learning and application of mindfulness is supported by reflective practice in students about how mindfulness is relevant to their learning in the unit and the program.

12.7 Front: Responding to Tension with Conscious Intention

While we have observed benefits from supporting mindful practices, working within different cultural contexts is just one example of the need to reflect upon, and revise, the manner in which we develop such opportunities. This rethinking has been necessary due to several kinds of tensions surrounding expectations and popular conceptions about mindfulness, adapting mindful practice to different settings, and active opposition to mindfulness.

The proliferation of reports in the media about the benefits of mindfulness has prompted some scholars to comment on problematic issues regarding the potential 'hype', particularly for the public (Van Dam et al., 2018). Popular conceptions about the nature of mindfulness have also presented challenges, where the idea that delivering one or two sessions on mindfulness as a 'quick fix' antidote to stress has needed amending. Discussions about the limited benefits and potential difficulties of brief exposure to mindfulness practice have meant a need to differentiate *education about* mindfulness from developing a sustained *practice of* mindfulness.

There is also ongoing reflection, evaluation, and revision when adapting materials to fit within time constraints or shaping mindful practices to be relevant to particular academic and professional skills (see Correia et al., 2017). For example, mindful listening may be linked to interpersonal communication, loving kindness meditations linked to care in veterinary work, or attention in breathing practices related to sustained study despite distractions. Each occasion of bringing mindful practices into these new settings created tension between maintaining the principles and practice of mindfulness and accommodating requests to change the form for relevance and engagement.

Moreover, in some contexts, student feedback suggested a potential disjunct between the mindful practices being proposed, which emphasised stillness, calm and self-compassion, and an academic culture that some reported was characterised by intense stress, a focus on threat, and hostile criticism. Introducing mindfulness was initially implemented as a way of addressing student stress and well-being, yet a sole emphasis on mindfulness practice for students places excessive responsibility on the individual, rather than acknowledging important contextual factors. Thus, more recently, there have been more opportunities for both students and staff to develop mindful practices and begin developing mindful communities.

Regardless of the settings or forms in which we engage in mindful practices, we have also at times encountered active opposition from colleagues to the idea of engaging in mindful practices. While there are of course queries about the merits and benefits of implementing mindfulness-based programs (e.g. Van Dam et al., 2018), discussion regarding mindfulness has sometimes been met with contempt or mockery. Negotiating the contrast between parts of the academic community that are either exuberant or disparaging about mindful practices calls on us again to adopt a mindful approach to those interactions, so that we can be discerning in our responses.

12.8 Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage: Sustaining Mindful Connections

The growing popularity of mindfulness and increasing requests to support mindfulness practice have generated numerous links and collaborations with interested academics across the university. In order to connect the fragments, we have begun to identify a network of academics who may play key roles, either in supporting the development and exploration of mindful practices, or who wish to develop a mindfulness practice of their own. This will serve two main functions, first to better coordinate and resource mindfulness oriented activities around the university and second to support a shift to cultivating more mindful communities through supporting staff in their own mindful practices.

We have already initiated our own mindful practice in small groups, and whilst the expansion of the network serves to support other academics in their own mindfulness practice, it also serves to support us in maintaining our own practice. In a busy work environment with frequent demands, regular meetings and heavy workloads, integrating opportunities and reminders for mindful practice can be a struggle, and it can become sporadic rather than regular. Whilst our personal practice may continue, cultivating more mindful relationships within a broader community of mindful academics offers solidarity in resilience when the stressful and sometimes hostile culture of academia becomes salient.

We have also had the benefit of regular conversations with each other as well as other colleagues regarding how to maintain our own mindful practices, both personally, and within academia. As is the case with students, we also question suggestions

that academics in any university developing mindfulness and compassion practices should simply 'cope' with systemic factors such as the stress of poor resourcing, excessive workloads, or aggressive behaviour from colleagues. Adopting a stance of mindfulness and compassion does not mean passively accepting a situation. Rather, it means bringing attention to the present situation with openness, in a way that enhances awareness of relevant factors so that we can accept reality for what as it is, with discernment, and to subsequently act with conscious intention rather than automatic habits and reactivity. Of course, this is an ideal. We, like others, struggle to maintain mindful practices in environments defined by chronic stress and increasing demands and may need reminding that *how* we develop and support mindful practices is just as important as engaging in the practice.

12.9 Conclusion

Developing and maintaining a practice of mindful care and compassion in academia is in many ways at odds with the expectations and stressful demands of competitive striving for individual achievement that can define higher education. For us, this tension has been present from the outset; it was the catalyst for our attempts to develop and support our students and our colleagues in considering alternative ways of engaging in academic endeavours. Negotiating these tensions in everyday work is challenging, but they are precisely the kind of moment-to-moment opportunities that invite mindful practice. They invite us to clarify and reset our intentions for the kind of relationships and contexts we hope to cultivate in academia. They invite us to pay attention, with an attitude of gentle curiosity and compassion, to become aware of habits and automatic reactions in our contexts, and ourselves, so that we can pause to make mindful choices and act with conscious intention. These everyday moments of stress and tension invite us to be more mindful, not as a quick fix antidote for personal distress and not just in our own practice as individuals, but in how we support sustainable mindful and compassionate practices in our academic communities.

Acknowledgements We would like to acknowledge the students who have contributed to our understanding of mindfulness practice in education, and who have inspired us to develop more mindful and compassionate approaches to learning. We also acknowledge colleagues, collaborators and students, who have worked with us over the past few years, providing feedback on ideas and materials, and in creating opportunities for more mindful and compassionate academic communities: Melinda Bell, Martin Cake, Kathryn Choules, Teresa Collins, Christopher Cunningham, Angela Ebert, Tsin Koh, Caroline Mansfield, Pamela Martin-Lynch, Lynlea Polak, Karee Stewart, and Fiona Wilkes.

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Chapter 13
Yoga and Pedagogical Mindfulness in Higher Education

Jane Bone

Abstract The practice of yoga is only one route towards the development of mindfulness and in this chapter, a yogic approach is applied to teaching at a university in Australia. An autoethnographic methodology was used and short narratives are inserted through the chapter in order to show how mindfulness was performed by a lecturer at the beginning of semester in a busy and diverse academic environment. The author's practice of yoga, and knowledge of yoga philosophy, was used to support the lecturing/pedagogical role in higher education while teaching a unit about the workplace and well-being to a class of future early childhood teachers. A further layer of analysis emerged through this link to early childhood education and to the philosophy of Levinas, whose ethical thought encourages a consideration of the face of the Other. From the beginning of their professional life, teachers are required to acknowledge and accept difference and diversity. In this case, the lecturer reflects on how this works in terms of mindful practice and suggests that the complexities of the pedagogical relationship can be transformed by bringing yoga principles into the classroom.

13.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a short narrative that sets the scene for this discussion of mindfulness. It is a moment that many people involved in higher education will be familiar with.

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_13

13.1.1 Evaluations

> It is the end of the year and my lecturer evaluations have just appeared. I find myself hesitating before clicking onto the link and opening them up. At coffee times and in our teams we deride these processes and yet also know that they 'count'. This time they affirm that I engaged the students, was prepared, gave appropriate feedback and was organised. These are the usual focus questions that students are asked to respond to and they were encouraged to do so by being offered a prize. I think this improved the number of responses. There is always this tense moment because having worked hard over the semester I know that it comes down to this quantified assessment for the institution: how well did you do according to what those numbers say?

In this chapter, I will include important work from the early childhood field that brought forward the possibility of critique in the field of education that I am involved in. The writing of Dahlberg and Moss (2005) and Moss (2014) has been pivotal in bringing a political viewpoint to the fore and they suggest new ways of thinking in order to challenge the dominant discourses that drive education at all levels. The percentages that control my fate in the example above are symptomatic of how educational institutions work within neoliberal agendas. My argument here is that a mindful practice can become a new way of *being* and present a way to think, speak, and act differently while negotiating a demanding role. The practice that enables me to bring a mindful approach to pedagogy is through yoga—action and philosophy. I suggest that bringing a completely different philosophy towards life in a hierarchical and competitive educational setting supports holistic well-being and provides benefits on many levels.

Aspects of (my) yoga practice will be described and writings from iconic yoga teachers, like B. K. S. Iyengar, will support this work. I also turn to the core philosophical ideas of Emmanuel Levinas (1906–1995), including his notion of the face of the Other and his conceptualisation of alterity. In a time of diversity and the globalisation of education the ethics of Levinas come forward as relevant and in this chapter, I also take up Dahlberg and Moss's (2005, p. 23) call for "border crossing". In writing, as in life, the resulting remix, or assemblage, is a means of bringing richness and complexity to this analysis of my work as lecturer. Short narratives that illustrate the events that wove through a busy semester will be inserted throughout the chapter. This is a story about the process of mindfully thinking through my experience in the context of a busy academic life as I prepared to teach a unit (course; programme) about wellbeing and workplace safety in early childhood.

13.2 The Literature

In their influential work about early childhood education that brought ethics and politics together, Dahlberg and Moss (2005) proposed the idea of preschools as utopian. For them, utopia is not a dream place but is possible through utopian thinking, a way of thinking that "both deconstructs the present and reconstructs the future"

(Dahlberg & Moss, 2005, p. 179) and a way of evading "education as a stifling fate" (p. 179). This opening up to new thought is an exciting aspect of educational practice that encourages a renewed sense of commitment. I am conscious that these writers are suspicious of ideas like the soul and transcendence, where such ideas are a means of increasing power and control over oneself and others. However, they do discuss the notion of an ethic of care and here I find the connection to mindfulness and in this brief review bring together ethical and mindful approaches to education.

Relational aspects of education, like caring and well-being are the concern of educators who connect mindfulness and spirituality to pedagogical practice. One of the most influential advocates for a relational approach to teaching is Parker Palmer (1998, p. 2) who said that teaching "holds a mirror to the soul". This attitude towards teaching was expanded upon by bell hooks who also saw the spiritual in pedagogical relationships and wrote about the value of creating a "utopian environment" (Hooks, 2009, p. 79) focused on community, caring and connectedness. She mentions a college in Kentucky founded on these principles, a challenge to the dominant racist discourses that prevailed at that time. The notion of utopia is central to the work of Peter Moss. The importance of having a vision, even if that vision is, as Derrida (2007, p. 441) might say, an "impossible possibility", underpins what Moss (2014) calls a transformative and experimental approach to pedagogy; an approach embedded in attention to ethics.

In her book about pedagogy and ethics, Martusewicz (2001, p. 130) proposes that there is a possibility of transforming the usual educational processes into a space that affirms "ethical attention to the lives of others". She refers to Buddhism as a way to "create passages to other ways of living, of being" (p. 112) and says that in education "we bring our questions, our judgments, and our evaluative capacities to all the possibilities generated in our relationships to each other" (Martusewicz, 2001, p. 112).

Also connecting with a Buddhist orientation, Bush (2011) discusses mindfulness in the context of higher education and suggests that bringing "calming, quieting focusing qualities of mindfulness" (2011, p. 184) can reduce student stress and help them to be present in the classroom. Mindfulness is often connected to Buddhism but in this chapter, I bring a different perspective from another tradition, although the similarities are always there.

Mahani (2012) refers to contemplative educational practices in higher education and in her review of research finds that mindfulness has the capacity to create a more broadly knowledgeable faculty (staff and students). She concludes that mindfulness can usefully be introduced into higher education. Also, in the higher education context, Burrows (2015, p. 135) found that introducing mindful practice brought an increase in "personal and professional responsibility" to teachers through a process she describes as an "inner alchemy" (p. 127). Walker and Mann (2016) argue for mindfulness as an aspect of compassion and empathy in nursing and discuss the feedback given by students when this was introduced into the curriculum. To return to early childhood education, Capel (2012) builds on the work of Langer (2000) and speculates that mindfulness in education is a way to increase teacher performance and

responsibility. She suggests that a mindful classroom in early childhood education is more able to address curriculum concerns.

This chapter is centred upon my own teaching practice with students involved in early childhood education and my approach is autoethnographic and narrative (Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011). Unlike much of the literature mentioned above, my focus is on the way a mindful approach might enhance my own teaching rather than on how it can be taught to others. My perspective is that by practising mindfulness in action I can influence the learning of others in ways that may not be immediately known, measurable, or readily articulated. In the Foreword to a book by B. K. S. Iyengar, a text that helped introduce yoga to the West, the violinist Yehudi Menuhin says that over time he has become convinced that "most of our fundamental attitudes to life have their physical counterpart in the body" (Iyengar, 1993, np) and yoga is most often attached to stretching and flexibility rather than mindfulness. He credits yoga with the ability to encourage tenacity, calm and continuity when adherents of yoga work with alignment, freedom of movement and balance. This introduction to the book summarises the power of the āsanas; the movements and positions of the body that constitute the physical yoga practice. Bringing yoga into the classroom in a subtle way and reinforcing my pedagogical approach to yoga as a mindful practice, and by writing about it, represents a contribution to another aspect of mindfulness in education.

13.3 The Class/Room

As a busy lecturer, it is always my intention to put other aspects of the work aside and to focus on the *class/room* as a community of interested individuals gathered in a specific place. In the space where I do yoga there are choices and there is always an easier option to choose when deciding how to teach. At the beginning of this semester, I wanted to resist the easy pathway and reflect on what that might look like. It is easy, after teaching for a while, to recycle lecture notes and PowerPoint slides and to simply perform the role of lecturer without bringing passion or meaning to the role. In this unit that I was down to teach it would be simple to launch into the 'content' of the topic without engaging with the students as beginning teachers or as individuals who might be a long way from home and learning how to work in a completely different place. I could have chosen to assume that these individuals are a merely homogenous group, relating to them with a touch of the 'empty vessel' or 'banking' approach as described by Paolo Freire (1970).

I realised that teaching in this mechanical way would just be a reaction to a few relevant factors: it was my first teaching after a sabbatical, the majority of students are international so the demographic has shifted and I had to contend with the fear that we will not begin from a shared understanding of what well-being in early childhood looks like and in particular what it might be like in the workplace. Another fear also arose, as follows.

13.3.1 Feeling the Fear

> At the start of semester I received an email from The Conversation. This is a reputable and interesting online site that enables academics to share their viewpoint or research in an accessible way. In this case, in the week I was due to teach, The Conversation topic was about the phenomena of the empty classroom. A lecturer at a neighbouring university walked into class on the first day and there were no students at all, just a row of empty desks. In my workplace this conversation and photo were shared and it made me realise that this scenario is always a possibility. I asked myself, surely not on the first week of semester? Preparing work and activities and in general psyching oneself up to teach is time and energy consuming. To enter the room and maybe find it empty was a confronting thought. I also thought about the opposite scenario. What will it be like walking in and a large number of students are all there staring at me and what if the unit doesn't interest them? Is this even worse? The question arose, how would I truly meet these students, really meet them, not just be in the same designated learning space with them. And, in that moment of meeting, would it be possible to build a future commitment to each other despite the hurdles and problems that exist and that make this possibility more challenging than usual.

When I considered this, it became clear that an approach that valued well-being, taking a considered, mindful and care/ful approach, and being aware of the classroom as a microcosm of a future workplace, was especially relevant to the unit I was teaching. I decided to look at my own long-term practice of yoga as a way to approach this and to take a calm and middle pathway that fits the yogic tradition. Yoga is a balance between effort and ease. From this perspective, the pedagogical decision making would not be about easy/difficult dualisms but would be centred and balanced.

13.4 Waving or Drowning?

I work at a large Australian university and, as is the case with many universities, there is a drive to attract international students. This is, in many ways, an exciting vision especially in relation to my field, early childhood education. One of the programmes of study on offer is a teaching qualification in early childhood education at Masters' level. This presents a number of issues to consider that are predictable, for example, making sure that content is at the right level, checking that it is culturally appropriate, and making sure that there is a balance of information and activity with opportunities for communication. It was also important to make sure that the context of Australia is clear, but that knowledge of Australian early childhood settings is not taken for granted. The balance has to be found because this is an Australian qualification, but students come in from all over the world and in this class the majority are from the Asia-Pacific region. I wanted to be clear that I find them resourceful people with much to offer the field of early childhood in Australia. The Master's students already have a first degree and this can be in any subject. When we meet it will be a significant face to face moment and I asked myself questions about the potential of our meeting to be an ethical encounter that will keep us working together well for the next twelve weeks.

13.4.1 Help!

> My first response was questions along the lines of "oh my god (small g), how do I keep 130 students interested in this unit, they are not used to thinking about workplace issues and this is a whole new policy context, also, wellbeing may have different meanings to them and I don't want to impose my own beliefs and values on them and also, help, probably only by the end of semester will I be putting any names to faces in a useful way and this is something I am critical about in myself but also I am not superwoman… and also I have a new lecturer who I have not taught with and have to encourage and give resources to… help!

A number of these issues would be dealt with by planning, planning and more planning. But something else arose for me. I asked myself how I could embody well-being and communicate a sense of calm into the classroom as I did not want to convey a sense of apprehension. I decided that an experience of well-being and being valued would help the students to think about this aspect of work more deeply. I considered this before going into the classroom.

What my reflections came down to was that some of my questions concerned apprehension about the face of the Other in Levinas' words. In a literal sense as a lecturer, I am often confronting what might be called a 'sea of faces'. Recently, we have been given classrooms in different configurations, rooms and not lecture theatres. We can also communicate online and f2f (face to face). But the thought remained, and concerned alterity (Levinas, 2006, p. 143), the situation whereby "this one, is other to that one, and that one is, by the same token, other to this one". This is the core notion that leads (Levinas, 2006, p. 143) to discuss obligations to the *face* of the Other, and to discuss "the face in its alterity and its ineffaceable and assumable authority of *confronting* [faire face]" (author italics). I asked myself if this confrontation was the cause of my fear and the slightly irrational thoughts I had before stepping in to meet my class. From the first, there is "the response of responsibility that already lies dormant in a salutation, in the *hello*, in the *goodbye*" (author italics) (Levinas, 2006, p. 143). I was conscious that from the beginning my *hello* would be an English/Australian *hello* and from this first greeting the scene would be set, and in that moment, a collective response to the face of the Other in the deeper affective and more esoteric sense proposed by Levinas would be in play.

My chosen pathway to achieving a mindful state is through yoga and this was the practice I chose in relation to these challenges. I follow the precepts of Iyengar (1996, p. 32) who said that yoga is "the conjunction of effort, concentration and balance" and that this is what makes it possible to be alive and aware in the moment. I am also aware of the popularity of yoga in early childhood settings (Bone, 2018; Stapp & Wolff, 2017) so bringing yoga into teaching at the university was relevant to the field of Early Childhood Education (ECE). Being 'on the mat', as yogis say, is a democratic and spiritual position that brings ethics and mindfulness together. I am aware of Dahlberg and Moss' (2005, p. 22) critique of disciplines and technologies designed to continually improve the self but argue that a mindful practice was used here in order to support well-being within an educational context that is not without its stresses and challenges.

13.5 Performing Mindfulness

One of the aspects from my yoga practice that I intended to incorporate was a sense of inner peace. I realised that this was essential in order to create a calm classroom and to meet each other in a useful way. I wanted to communicate that our learning sessions would be in a friendly, safe and peaceful space. In my preparation and online introduction, I made it clear that my PowerPoint slides were resources only and that we would not be working through them. I explained that they included a number of links to policy and websites and these were available if students wished to include aspects of the lecture in their assignments, or if they needed some information in the future. By slowing everything down we had time to meet, to get to know each other and hear each other's stories.

I decided to make our differences explicit so that a new story could begin to be told between us. The class would see from the beginning that I have a different *face*. In terms of the power dynamic my role was lecturer, co-ordinator and leader of the unit. I looked different and have a different accent (i.e. not Australian). I only speak one language fluently. Many students live in the city, so we also live in very different places. I have a different background and my age and family configuration are different.

13.5.1 Realisation

> I realised that my embodiment of difference was not a block to good communication. How many times as an academic did I simply pretend that bodies didn't matter, that the differences that were so obvious could be erased by ignoring them? I felt then that what was important were ideas (disembodied ideas?). Staying in the head is sometimes not completely useful, it must be balanced with feeling grounded, as when one is in the āsana Tadasana. Tadasana is the Mountain Pose and feet are on the ground, spine is straight. To be in Tadasana is to be strong and still. According to Swami Sivananda Radha (1995, p. 31), "standing still, when repeatedly practiced with observations on the body AND the mind, will bring many insights".

Having time to talk, gave the students an opportunity to share some stories and I tried to have a genuine relationship with them. I told them about my problem, even fear, about not being able to remember all their names and some students shared their 'English' names and told me something I had never thought about before, that they had enjoyed choosing another name for themselves. One student said that she was now called her dream name from when she was a child. I reflected on how hard it was to put oneself in the position of the Other, the challenge of fitting in and adjusting to the demands and norms of the dominant party and yet the students found the positives in this. Dahlberg and Moss (2005) write about Levinas' warning that we always want to make the Other into the same. I could see this in operation, in the relief of only having to cope with English names, and yet it was also helpful. Another dilemma was created. It all felt messy, and what had presented as a simple solution was leading to

some uncomfortable ethical considerations. However, as usual, I had lists, the names were written and could be practiced phonetically if the 'English' name was not a preferred choice, I had been in this position for years and was used to working on pronunciation and also, by teaching slightly differently I began to attach a story to each face. The face is simply a focus of affect and Dahlberg and Moss (2005) point out that the face of the Other calls us and makes demands that it is our responsibility to confront no matter what the discomfort.

13.5.2 The Edge

> Being on the mat gives you a sense of humility. There is always going to be an 'edge', something challenging, or too difficult, one can only do what the yoga guru Sri Pattabhi Jois advised 'practice and all is coming'. (Awaken, 2013)

This was a very specific situation and moment in time. There is probably nothing unexpected in this experience in and of itself, but I found myself dealing with difference differently through a confrontation with my own challenges rather than by ignoring or normalising the situation. I noticed that I felt more energised in class and by entering a space of uncertainty with mindfulness I noticed that a sense of community began to grow, and opportunities opened out for more humour, for sharing prior experiences and for listening to what the students had to say.

In our unit, about the workplace, we discussed issues like bullying and some students shared significant moments when things had been said or done when in an early childhood setting. They shared that some incidents they had experienced in the workplace had made them feel uncomfortable and even rejected. It was important to listen. I began to be more conscious of listening through the body and to listening to the bodies of others, seeing how they positioned themselves and what they were communicating in our shared language of the body. I wondered what I had missed by not being more aware of this before.

13.5.3 Body Language

> Paula was laughing, nudging, and distracting a friend during a workshop that was about a serious issue. Later, during the group activity I sat with her and her friend and just went back to it and asked how this topic fitted in with her own experiences and beliefs. She held back but suddenly gave us a great example of working with this issue while on her professional teaching experience. The following week I invited her to tell the class about it. Again, I was challenged and realised that what I was reading as reluctance and/or embarrassment when I invited her to do this was in fact not correct. She was pleased to be asked. While she talked I made a mind map and we used it for everyone to plan around this topic. We added to it and made it a whole group effort. Later she produced an impressively thoughtful assignment. There was a time when I would simply have read her first behaviours as superficial or avoidant. This would have been a real injustice. Mindful practice encourages me to listen to the body and also see beyond it to the spirit. That was my lesson and it reflects what happens

> in the yoga class. We are instructed to listen to the body and if something doesn't work out there is no judgement because each time is different, and each pose is a new pose. Every time I step onto the mat is a fresh experience.

Listening to the body is not easy. Each week I noted how I felt the night before class and in the morning and asked myself: what was influencing my mood, what was I communicating to the students and how did I feel afterwards? The tutorials were repeated, one after the other. It was a challenge to stay fresh, responsive and retain energy. The time for focusing and truly concentrating was too long, four straight hours, a 2-hour workshop and then another but that is how it was. I had strategies in place: get up very early (always a struggle) and have time to tune in before class begins, drink water, eat tangerines between classes (no chocolate), and avoid trying to replicate what happens in one class in another. As Langer (2000) would affirm, simple rote delivery of materials would be mindless behaviour; it simply treats the Other as the same. Being respectful of different groups makes teaching more interesting and increases rather than depletes the energy needed for successful interactions to occur.

13.5.4 The Ego

The semester was going well. I felt that simply by having mindfulness as a personal agenda that my relationship with the class was in balance. I was not being too casual because this often does not work with students from places where teaching and learning is a formal activity. My instructions were clear, and I was aware of giving more background, of making assignments and activities easier to carry out by breaking instructions down and being open to questions. There was a space outside the room and if someone needed to share something personal I waited afterwards and caught up with that person instead of rushing away or asking them to send an email. Everything seemed to be going well until the final week.

13.5.5 Karma

> I felt unwell and should have cancelled class. I failed to listen to my own body or to take the advice of family members. A few weeks later a speeding fine came in the post because I drove too fast going home after class. I even got demerit points, much worse than the hefty fine. I remember feeling terrible on the day but had to admit to myself that all this could have been so easily avoided. It is easy to put a message online and then add tutorial notes. The students were all busy with assignments and would have been relieved. Instead I got up early, drove 60 kms, felt out of balance and tired, my throat was sore. I didn't realise it was the start of a virus that would last for two weeks. I took pills, drank coffee and carried on. This was against all the careful teaching about wellbeing that I had been doing, including, not passing bugs around, being aware of others, and taking care of the self.

On this occasion when teaching and feeling unwell, I didn't feel as if I was really in the room. The notion of presence is relevant here. I was not truly present and

that vital part of the mind that is all about awareness was not bright but dull and de-energised. Strangely enough fate lent a hand. Not so many students came as they were trying to get work completed. I was able to have a more personal interaction with the ones who did come. I also gave them choices, to study in different ways, or to talk about something in depth with me, or to share ideas about their assignment. They seemed happy and some of the negative 'talk' was in my own head. Despite this, it was a moment of realisation that I have to learn to listen to myself and my own body off the mat as well as on it and that this is ongoing learning. I had fallen into the teacher trap of feeling indispensable, of feeling as if I am the only one who had to be there no matter what. I had mistaken caring for the other for its opposite and I still hope that I didn't pass that virus on.

As well as taking the lesson to take care of the self I also have to do that mindful and very difficult thing, namely, let go. This is all reflected on the yoga mat. By ignoring my own needs, I overbalanced and caring became something else, more ego-driven, even self-destructive. Every time yoga practice is like that. Just as I feel great the teacher says now look up and I overbalance, or I look at someone else and lose the pose. This was how it was in my teaching, I had lost my balance. After these experiences yoga requires you to come to the front of the mat, stand quietly, take a breath, let go. The previous pose is over, it is in the past. Take the learning and move on.

13.5.6 On the Mat

Yoga is an inner journey in a deep sense and in relation to being mindful one is always on the mat alone and confronting the self. Yoga may manifest outwardly as āsana (positions) that look better or worse, balanced or unstable depending on the day. Breathing, an important element of yoga practice, may be regular and even or stressed and ragged, building tension rather than releasing it. There is always work to be done in the philosophical and spiritual dimension. Notions of acceptance (the face of the other); keeping an open heart (alterity); being still, appreciating silence, and valuing peace within oneself, are always goals to be reached in the future by focusing on the present moment. As yoga teachers say in the standing forward bend 'hands flat on the floor, *one day*'. Yoga in many ways represents a struggle rather than a smooth path. My own struggles remind me to relate to the students as they settle into a new city, produce work in a second, third or fourth language, manage families and distances and the challenges of a busy life. We discuss the struggle and also the rewards of hard work. The qualification is earned not given and appreciating the struggle is part of the process. At higher levels of study, many students find that previous habits and shortcuts do not bring the results they want. Likewise, in the yoga world, Iyengar (1993, 1996) recommends firm foundations and continuous practice.

The practice of yoga is not something that everyone approves of and some of my colleagues are no exception. So, this work is personal and choosing to make it pedagogical is a decision that only becomes evident or open for discussion when

those evaluations are shared or, best of all, I receive an email from a student who has found that learning can be taken into life and has felt empowered to make a change for the better. Mindfulness is a more acceptable word and finding mindfulness through yoga is just a variation on the theme. Moss (2014, p. 42) says that education is a trap concerned with "quality and high returns". He suggests that in early childhood it is important to move, experiment, and transform, and not become fixed or static. I like to think that yoga supports this and it is the mode of movement that helps me regain excitement in teaching despite the challenges of what Moss (2014, p. 42) calls "bad politics": surveillance, regulatory bodies and the commodification of education. To move away from this instrumental experience of education by observing mindfulness is to desire an alternative method of doing education. When on this journey a person may experience what Iyengar (1993) says is the ideal, possible with regular practice of the physical aspect of yoga. He states that "the right method of doing āsanas brings lightness and an exhilarating feeling in the body as well as in the mind and a feeling of oneness of body, mind and soul" (p. 40).

The affective force of Levinas' words about the face of the Other moves me in another way. He writes about acceptance of the face of the Other as a responsibility. This is responsibility not in the usual sense but as Dahlberg and Moss (2005, p. 79) say, an ethic "premised on absolute and infinite responsibility for the Other". Levinas' (2006, p. 174) definition of spirituality as "responsibility for the other" can be connected to mindfulness as an orientation toward an ethical pedagogy. It is something to continually work towards and will be always unfinished and incomplete, but the important thing is to remain aware. Levinas states that "philosophy is a bringing to light" (p. 46). In life it is important to seek illumination, never to think one is the expert, there are always gaps, chasms, and times when enlightenment is required. Iyengar (1993) also used the notion of light and the title of his major work is *Light on Yoga*. My original copy is looking well used and well loved, the pages fall flat, and the corners are dog-eared: it remains a source of inspiration.

13.6 Conclusion

According to Iyengar (1993, p. 2) yoga "has also been described as wisdom in work or skillful living amongst activities with harmony and moderation". In the busy life of academia this is something to strive for. Change is constant and work/life balance is always an issue. I value teaching as a time for interaction, for relational pedagogy and it gives me the space to make a difference. This space is where mindfulness comes forward and this chapter is a form of contemplation about the way the mindful practice of yoga influenced my work. If they experience a calm and caring teacher, then this is a pedagogical approach that beginning teachers can take into their work with children. How much better for a teacher to be peaceful, listening, balanced and aware rather than stressed, sharp and directive. Children are affected by the people, places and things that they come into contact with as stated on the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia [Department of Education, Employment

and Workplace Relations (DEEWR), 2009]. In trying to achieve this sense of calm and clarity of purpose in my own life it is my wish that students/beginning teachers may find balance in theirs as they prepare to work with young children and families; always mindfully.

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Chapter 14
Casualisation, Mindfulness and the Working Lives of Academics

Sarah Pinto and Kirstie Close

Abstract Recent studies have demonstrated the ways in which mindfulness might be beneficial in higher education contexts, both for students and also, increasingly, for staff. On the one hand, mindfulness and other contemplative practices offer a way of easing some of the stress, anxiety and pressure of the contemporary university. This has the potential to give both students and staff new ways of managing what can be very difficult learning and working environments. On the other, however, the individualistic and instrumental version of mindfulness typically encountered or enacted in universities can be understood as little more than a neoliberal technology of management that does nothing to address the structural causes of stress, anxiety, and pressure in the university. Instead, this version of mindfulness relies on the individual to simply find new ways to cope. In this chapter, we use a critical sociological mindfulness framework to explore the ways in which mindfulness might be brought to bear on the problem of casualisation in the contemporary university. The increasing casualisation of the university workforce is one of the most significant and visible effects of neoliberal ideologies and policy settings in universities, and a strong contributing factor to the stress, anxiety, and pressure of university workplaces. We are a casual and a continuing academic working in similar contexts in contemporary Australia, and we come together to ask: what might happen when we pay mindful attention to the problems of casualisation?

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_14

14.1 Introduction

The turn of the twenty-first century has seen a transformation in the visions, purposes and practices of universities around the world. The scope of these transformations has been wide-ranging, reaching from the demographics and mobilities of students to the administration and governance of the university, the makeup of the academic workforce, and the production of knowledge itself. It is little wonder, then, that these transformations have sometimes been described as 'an academic revolution' (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2009), the effects of which continue to unfold. Academics have often met these transformations with alarm, particularly around the increasing influence of neoliberal ideologies and policy settings (see for example Busch, 2017; Calhoun & Rhoten, 2011; Di Leo, 2017; Giroux, 2014; Gupta, Habjan, & Tutek, 2016). One of the most significant and visible effects of these neoliberal influences has been the casualisation of university workforces, which has created an increasing division between ongoing, permanent staff and staff on casual contracts. This class divide between the continuing and the casualised is marked by strength of networks, access to resources, potential for career advancement, and financial security; in each case, casuals are losing out.

We are a casualised and a continuing academic living in Victoria, Australia, and we come together in this chapter to consider the problem of casualisation. We have worked as tutors, lecturers, research assistants, editorial assistants and in administrative roles within the tertiary sector. Between us, we have experience in various Australian and overseas universities, and similar issues have been prevalent amongst staff everywhere: increasing pressure, stress and burnout (Mountz, 2016; Taka et al., 2016), and feelings of isolation and precarity (Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Crimmins, 2016; Ivancheva, 2015; Rothengatter & Hil, 2013). With this in mind, this chapter explores the ways in which mindfulness might be brought to bear on the problem of casualisation in the contemporary academy.

14.2 Literature

The divisions caused by the managerial decisions that drive the increased casualisation of the academic workforce have been acknowledged over the past two decades. In the Australian context, it has long been suggested that casuals have increasingly formed an 'underclass' (Kimber, 2003). Kimber has traced the move towards casualised labour in tertiary teaching and research, noting that this had previously been the employment arrangement designated primarily for postgraduate students. Increasingly, since the 1970s, this is the arrangement made with people at various stages of their career. Kimber (2003) pointed to the anxieties attached to the pressures unique to the casual experience, and of not being able to achieve what was expected to get ahead. This Kimber (2003) attributed largely to the work of John Dawkins during his

time in the Education Department during the 1980s, where he established measures that increased managerialism in higher education.

Casual staff now make up more than half of the academic work force in Australia (Andrews et al., 2016, p. 1). This form of employment is believed to save money (Andrews et al., 2016, p. 4), and allows university management to respond to unpredictable student enrolments (Kimber, 2003, p. 44), but this is often at the expense of administering contract renewals, and managing stressed and discontented staff. Most academics who have taken on casual work are experiencing increased workloads, with increased class sizes, but are not being compensated financially for the growing time associated with administering and mentoring larger cohorts. Nor do they have access to the same resources as continuing staff, which includes computers, printers, telephones, professional development or support for research (Kimber, 2003, p. 46; see also Brown, Goodman, & Yasukawa, 2008; Courtois & O'Keefe, 2015; Ivancheva, 2015; Ryan, Burgess, Connell, & Groen, 2013, p. 165; Waltman, Hollenshead, August, Miller, & Bergom, 2010). This not only undermines the tertiary workforce, it also limits the quality of the teaching delivered and received. Research into the casual workforce is also inhibited by the poor management of casual workers, with universities failing to keep accurate records of their temporary staff (Rothengatter & Hil, 2013).

Mindfulness and other contemplative practices might offer a way to address some of these problems. Understandings of mindfulness vary, but they tend to coalesce around attitudes of attention and awareness that are focused on the present moment. Many draw on the influential work of Kabat-Zinn (1994), who explained mindfulness as 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally' (p. 4). Wenger (2014), for example, considers mindfulness to be a practice that 'asks for close attention, slow movement, and conscious action' (p. 30). So too, Beer et al. (2015) describe mindfulness as 'friendly, non-judging, anxiety-reducing, present-moment awareness achieved by purposefully paying attention to things ordinarily overlooked' (p. 164).

As Block-Lerner and Cardaciotto (2016a) note, momentum is building around mindfulness practices in higher education, particularly for students (Berila, 2016; Block-Lerner & Cardaciotto, 2016b; Tan & Molinari, 2017). Studies of mindfulness amongst university staff suggest a range of potential benefits, including the alleviation of stress and anger, and an increased ability to navigate the challenges of their workplaces (Baugher, 2012; Beer et al., 2015; Hugh-Jones, Rose, Koutsopoulou, & Simms-Ellis, 2017). For some, mindfulness is a wider project of personal transformation (Berila, 2016; Hugh-Jones et al., 2017; Klatt, 2017).

The mindfulness movement's focus on individual transformation, however, has not been universally welcomed. The secular and individualistic version of mindfulness that has taken hold in western cultures has been critiqued by some as a practice that obscures the operations of power (Baugher, 2014). As Purser, Forbes and Burke (2016) put it, these versions of mindfulness are 'both compatible and complicit with neoliberal values which frame mindfulness primarily as an instrumental and privatized practice' (pp. xiii–iv). From this view, mindfulness and other contemplative practices become examples of neoliberal technologies of the self that 'produce docile

bodies accommodated to an unjust social order' (Lee, 2015, p. 274). This is particularly potent in the workplace, where mindfulness programmes or practices might make people feel more able to cope with demanding or stressful working environments, but do nothing to address the causes of that stress. Caring-Lobel (2016) argues that mindfulness in the workplace is simply the latest in a long line of management-driven interventions aimed at producing happier and more productive workers, which in turn 'increases profits' (p. 204). The result is that worker stress and discontent are individualised and depoliticised, and the structural or institutional causes of this stress and discontent are obscured. This is as true of university workplaces as it is of any other.

Mindfulness, however, does not have to be such an individual or instrumental pursuit. As Loy (2016) reminds us, the projects of personal and social transformation are linked: they 'need each other', and more importantly, 'we need both' (p. 21) if we are to fully address suffering and work towards freedom. In this vein, some mindfulness scholars have advocated a kind of sociological mindfulness that looks beyond the individual to the collective or institutional. As Baugher (2014) puts it, this is a version of mindfulness that is 'understood as the capacity to see how the many things we do as individuals and members of collectivities are interconnected with the conditions of our own lives and the lives of multiple others, near and far' (p. 84). Ng (2016) has argued that even as a technology of the self, mindfulness might be disruptive, particularly if we can 'experiment with ways to better articulate and actualize the potential of mindfulness as a critically, ethically, and politically enabling practice grounded in the care of self' (p. 148).

In this chapter, we explore the ways in which a critical sociological mindfulness might be used to interrupt, disrupt or resist some of the problems of casualisation. Researchers have noted the sharp—and sharply increasing—divide between the continuing and the casualised in contemporary universities (Crimmins, 2016; Ryan et al., 2013). As a casual and a continuing academic working in similar contexts in Victoria, Australia, we came together in opposition to this trend. Instead, we engaged in a year-long conversation about our working lives, and our attempts to be mindful of the problems of casualisation, including heightened stress from insecure employment, competition, and underpayment for hours worked (Brown et al., 2008; Hall & Bowles, 2016). Our aim was to consider what, if anything, might happen when we paid mindful attention to casualisation and its effects, and particularly what might happen when we did so together. Like all the contributors to this collection, we have used Goffman's (1956) dramaturgical theory of social interaction to structure our chapter, and our conversation. Goffman theorises social interaction in terms of the theatrical performance of the self to others; or in this case, to one another.

14.3 Performance

KC: I completed my Ph.D. in 2014. I took on my first casual academic job in 2006, when I was completing my honours year, and through my Masters and Ph.D. continued as a casual, working as both researcher and teacher. Nearly all of my jobs have been organised through my networks, which I have built at the institutions where I have studied but also through attending conferences and joining professional bodies and committees. Performance has been necessary in order to market my work to the academy, to potential employers, to colleagues, and to students in order to legitimise past, current and future positions in academia. This occurs in a variety of forums: social media is one area, but it occurs in the classroom, in seminars, and at conferences, for example. People perform their busyness, showing how hard they are working, and trying to develop credibility as experts in certain fields. It can be intimidating, it can also be absurd. In my current context, working multiple jobs, and often doing the grunt work for a more senior and settled staff member, it has been difficult to forge my own niche. What ends up in the highly curated profiles of many of my friends is the seemingly glamourous adventures to far-flung places, to attend conferences in Europe, to do fieldwork in more remote localities.

It is more difficult to expose the darker side of the job, for fear of losing whatever position you do hold, or coming across like a serial complainer. Academic jobs do afford great privilege, and it is easy to lose sight of that in amongst the casualization debate. Yet, if we do not discuss the problems of casualised work, such as the absence of basic working rights like leave entitlements, then we are perpetually supporting a system that does not support the health and wellbeing of staff and their families (Rothengatter & Hil, 2013). The travel to interesting and exciting locations often comes at a high personal cost.

SP: I have been in a continuing position at a mid-level comprehensive teaching and research university since 2014. Before my current appointment, I spent 7 years as a casual and contract staff member, and this had a profound effect on me. The uncertainties of casual and contract work made for an uncertain everyday working life, and the focus of my teaching and research was constantly on the move. The juggle of jobs, which crossed disciplines, institutions and geographic locations, as well as a teaching and research focus, was exhausting. And the endless applications for the next job required the constant imagining and reimagining of the various future selves I might (or might not) have needed to become.

As Kirstie mentions, academic jobs come with great privileges. Nowhere is this more clear than in a continuing job, which includes entitlements like sick leave, a proper salary, and a stable and secure workplace. These are hugely important, but there are also less tangible privileges that have been equally important to me: my current workplace is invested in my career in a way that previous workplaces were not, and I have a much stronger sense of legitimacy as someone with an academic career, rather than as someone waiting for her career to start. There is also the privilege of turning away from the problem of casualisation, and focusing instead on other, more

personally pressing issues. The overwhelming demands placed on me as a continuing employee only encourage this, an example of how the performative culture of the neoliberal university works to distract and discourage (Pereira, 2016).

14.4 Setting

SP: I live and work in Melbourne, a city of 5 million people in southeast Australia with a thriving university sector. Goffman (1956) considers a setting to be something that 'tends to stay put, geographically speaking' (p. 13), but there is little that feels so fixed in my experiences of academia. My academic work has seen me move three times, so far, on my own: from Melbourne to Brisbane, a city of just over two million people on the east coast of Australia, 1300 km northeast of Melbourne; from Brisbane to Warrnambool, a regional city of almost 35,000 people on the southern coast of Australia, 250 km southwest of Melbourne; and from Warrnambool back to Melbourne. My academic connections and friendships extend across these three locations—and beyond—as people I know and work with have themselves moved.

This mobility reaches into my current workplace itself. This is in part because my university is spread across multiple campuses. But it is also because mobility has been built into our places and means of work. Staff at my university are issued with laptop rather than desktop computers, through which we also access our phone lines; there is nothing to tie us to a desk, office, corridor, or campus. My current office could easily be replaced with a hot desk in an open plan workspace, or timed access to another form of shared space. Contract and casual staff come and go throughout the year, sometimes to and from offices in my corridor, but more often through a common workspace in an entirely different building. As an ordinary continuing academic, I am one of the points at which the casualised encounter the neoliberal university. But that encounter is fleeting, more likely to be over email than in-person, and largely separated out from the wider, collective university contexts of a department, school, or faculty.

KC: Similar to Sarah, I am originally from Melbourne and have been able to remain in Melbourne for most of the time but I was presented with a terrific opportunity to go to Darwin a few years ago to take up a position as Director of the Graduate School at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education. The distance from my then-partner—also an academic—became too difficult, and thus I returned home. I have also taught online for universities in Papua New Guinea and Fiji, requiring travel to Port Moresby and Suva. In past and current jobs, as a casual research fellow and online lecturer, I have operated from a laptop and am expected to be contactable and movable while I work. I do paid work for two universities and am an adjunct for another, and almost-associate fellow at another.

My primary affiliations—I feel—are with the institutions that pay me: one is local and one is a university in Fiji. I started taking on more casual work from home when I was pregnant in 2016, but have been striving for an ongoing position where I am entitled to maternity and sick leave. I was not able to land a job with leave

incorporated before I gave birth to our son, so I currently work from wherever he will sleep (which is sometimes in the car). I have been afforded fantastic flexibility, but it comes with the risks associated with decreased visibility, particularly a lack of access to opportunity and resources (Reay, 2000).

14.5 Appearance

KC: Being labelled a casual has a bit of a sting—it is a term that suggests some degree of failure to obtain a more secure position. This is despite trying to meet the same measures of success as tenured colleagues. Even knowing how much pressure there is attached to a continuing position (as Sarah has noted above) it is difficult to feel as though you are recognised and appreciated while stumbling or churning through contracts. This is one of the issues that I struggle with at the moment—to try and find satisfaction despite the lack of a cohesive academic identity. While a continuing academic might be torn between projects, they are not torn between institutions in quite the same way as many casual academics. It is not clear where the allegiance should lie, or if you should even have an allegiance at all (Rothengatter & Hil, 2013).

Perhaps my first allegiance now is to my child. I had my baby while on casual contracts, and so the university I had been working for was not able to provide me with sufficient maternity leave beyond a few weeks. I, therefore, took advantage of the Australian government's paid parental leave scheme. I was unsure of what work I would be returning to after that date due to the nature of how my previous jobs had been funded. Thankfully I was offered another position towards the end of my leave. I negotiated a 12-month contract, rather than semester to semester, but it was still a casual consultancy arrangement. Coming out of maternity leave I was relieved to have work lined up. However, 10 weeks after I started the job, I still had not been paid at all by this university. I was required to travel with my 4.5-month-old, with almost no money in my account, hoping and honestly expecting that surely the university would pay me soon.

I could not afford more than one afternoon of child care while I was away, and so my boss babysat while I attended long-awaited meetings. It was not until I said that I would have to quit if I was not paid soon, that the pay was suddenly able to be transferred to my account overnight. One colleague said that they did not realise that I needed the money so badly, that they thought I had a husband looking after me. My appearance as a mother led people to assume that I was married, my husband would be the breadwinner of the family, and my wage was insignificant. That's what I took from the comments, at any rate.

Mobility is a significant factor of my academic life, and that mobility entailed significant stress. I was feeding images of this trip to the broader academic community through my social media accounts, of beautiful surrounds and a rather content looking baby, but I was so terrified about what was happening to my own and my colleagues' positions that I was presenting only a fragment of the reality, and not conveying the degree of stress I was under.

I do try to adopt mindful practice in those moments of intense stress. Often that is by attempting to get on with the job at hand, to show that I am effective and capable. This was nearly impossible last year though, and mindfulness (as I understand and practice it) utterly failed me.

SP: I try to be mindful that I am one of the lucky few who have made it to a continuing position. Most of the people I know who are working in casual or contract roles are unlikely to be so lucky. And Kirstie's experiences last year are a reminder of what this luck really means. My mindfulness practices also remind me that I am implicated in casualisation. And so I do what I can to acknowledge and ameliorate: I listen to the casualised, and try to understand their experiences; I make space for their voices, both individually and collectively; I am careful about the work that is passed along to them; I do not make promises of work that I cannot keep; and I help with applications, networking, and strategising.

But inside the walls and corridors of my own institution, amongst other continuing staff, this awareness falls away. Even in the face of stories like Kirstie's, the demands of my own workload are completely overwhelming, and the pressure to turn this job into a successful career is intense. The stress of landing a job has been entirely overrun by the stress of making good on the promise of that job; everyday, the problem of casualisation fades far into the background. On the other (continuing) side of the neoliberal university, the ground feels as unstable as ever, with shifting goalposts and moving targets as the norm. Even my continuing position can feel insecure: a restructure in my own School last year saw me reapplying for my position. Lee (2015) talks about acts of sociological mindfulness that might allow us to 'define the limits of our hypocrisy, and, having done that, make a conscious choice about how we might live with more integrity' (p. 287). But can this kind of mindfulness really have any concrete effects? Thinking about Kirstie's experiences, and my own, I am doubtful.

14.6 Manner

KC: To be honest, in this particular and most recent predicament, being mindful has meant stopping to face the reality of my situation. Mindfulness in academia has usually meant trying to manage feelings of insecurity, precarity, deficiency, rejection, and inferiority with my love of scholarship. Whenever I feel down, I remind myself why I got into the job in the first place by going back to research and writing. For me, that's often a day spent in the archives. It has not been possible to do this while my baby is so young, and while barely managing teaching commitments. I have not felt I even had time to write down and reflexively track my progress through the semester.

The events of last year forced a different kind of mindfulness to what I had previously practiced. It required confrontation, a conscious and then verbal acknowledgement, that I was struggling. My bills were not being paid. That I was almost entirely alone in a foreign city with my nearly-5-month-old who had been sick for

two weeks already and was teething. I had to make it very plain to my employers in this instance the pressure that they had put my family and I under.

SP: In my attempts to be mindful of the problem of casualisation, I often find myself trying to play the role of the calm and settled continuing staff member with the time and space to offer professional help. Without the grant money or wider influence of a more senior position, one of the main ways I try to do this is by working my academic networks. Academic networks are important both as systems of support and sustenance and as opportunities for employment. This is particularly true for women, who tend to lack access to the academic boys club of informal mentoring and support. As I listen to Kirstie's experiences, though, I realise how woefully inadequate this focus on the professional (rather than the personal) really is. I sometimes find myself talking to my students about the way second-wave feminists considered the personal to be political; it is confronting to realise how little I have integrated that sense of the political into my own working life.

At the same time, I really can't imagine doing anything more: I already feel like I'm always running to keep up with all the things I need (and want) to do in my daily working life. This is where most of my attention is directed, and where most of my mindful practices are focused. I have found the pressure of a continuing position to be intense and unrelenting. The workloads are enormous, achievements are buried under whatever is next, and we are constantly being asked to do more with less. Trying to stay with what is directly in front of me—this class, this draft, this committee, this chapter—helps, but sometimes the bigger picture overwhelms me. When I was forced to reapply for my position last year, I managed to put the stress of doing so to one side for a while. Eventually, though, this became impossible. I felt like the many years of uncertainty and instability as a casual came back to bite me, and I had to stop and seek help.

14.7 Front

SP: The work that I have tried to do around the problem of casualisation carries with it a raft of assumptions: that the effects of casualisation might be ameliorated by ordinary continuing staff; that this amelioration might be a kind of resistance or contestation; and that resistance or contestation is at all possible, or even desirable. But most importantly, my work assumes that there is—for some people, and in some circumstances—a path from casual or contract work into a continuing position. This is the script that I enact and play into, not only because it is the one I followed, but also because it is the one that most people believe in.

It is entirely possible, however, that this script simply no longer applies—assuming, of course, that it ever did. The path from casual to continuing may be almost entirely unavailable, and people who move into continuing positions now may do so through sheer random unpredictable luck. If this is the case, my mindful work at the margins is entirely pointless and has little value for anyone but myself. It becomes the work not of amelioration or resistance, but of complicity. Paying mindful atten-

tion to the problem of casualisation in this way might make me feel better about it—less guilty, less implicated, less dirty—but it can do nothing more than that. This is precisely the kind of individual and instrumental mindfulness that has been the subject of so much critique.

KC: If we move away from the hope that casual work might evolve into an ongoing position, it is almost easier to confront untenable work conditions. I decided when managing this predicament about pay last year that I had nothing to lose. I had little time to prepare for the meeting in which I took my case to the senior colleague. I was too exhausted to script anything. I decided when the senior colleague mentioned that he had lost staff previously due to bungles with Human Resources at the university that I was not able to carry on without my pay. I got more emotional than I wanted to. I had hoped that academia would be a way to a more secure future when it actually had not provided that at all.

14.8 Front Stage, Backstage, and Offstage

SP: As I have been talking to Kirstie over the last few months, I have been thinking about the things I tend not to talk about with casual academics. These are things like how life-changing I found the move into a continuing position to be (and how I could never, ever, go back). How much I learnt and gained from my time as a casual and contract member of staff, and how I wouldn't change it (now). How easy—and how common—it is for continuing staff to look away from the problem of casualisation. How many hours I actually work a week. And how much I feel I owe to a combination of luck and privilege.

Perhaps the biggest thing I avoid talking about, though, is how I feel about this job now that I have it. I love what I do, am very fortunate to be able to do it, and would change almost nothing about where I am or how I got here. But it is also just a job, in a workplace, with colleagues and managers and staff who are good and bad. Although they may not realise it, most people with doctorates have a range of other alternative options. And some—perhaps even most—of these alternatives don't ask you to give so much of yourself.

Some days, I look around my desk, and my life, and think: 'look at what they make you give'. This is a line from a movie, delivered by a dying assassin in the action film *The Bourne Identity*. And although I don't want to suggest that academe asks us to give as much of ourselves as an assassin, I do feel like these jobs ask far too much of us, all the same. I mean too much in terms of time and work and effort, of course, but I also mean something more than that. These are jobs that ask us to give something of our selves over to them. And so when, each year, I am asked to give even more, I am exhausted not only by the work itself, but also by the emotional and mental energy I have to expend in order to do it. Look at what they make you give. As I'm writing this, I look up the quote and remember the dying assassin's name is The Professor.

KC: Like Sarah, I feel that this job often demands too much. My former partner often refers to the line in the film *Heat* where Al Pacino says—with crazy intense eyes—'GIVE ME ALL YOU GOT!'. Well, I'm giving, and I do get back. I too love what I do, but I have lost time with friends and family. It may have been lessened at least had I not felt the need to keep up with the profession and the demands of publishing in the hope of securing a position where my pay is regularly in my account, without my needing to chase it, and without my having to bare my soul and my situation for it.

14.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to engage in a project of critical sociological mindfulness as a way of grappling with some of the problems of casualisation. Our starting point was the increasing divide between the continuing and the casualised, which we came together to try to alleviate through a conversation structured around Goffman's theory of social interaction. Our approaches to this project differed, and those differences can be seen in the way that each of our narratives play out. However, several key themes came through very strongly. First, it is possible to bridge the divide between the casual and the continuing and to engage with one another with understanding and mutual respect. Doing so, however, requires attention to the personal as well as the professional. Second, staff on both sides of the divide experience very high levels of stress and anxiety associated with their jobs. The relentless pressure to perform in the contemporary university is felt by everyone, and it only ever seems to be increasing. Third, casual and continuing positions currently ask too much of us, in ways that are unsustainable. And finally, there is a greater need for both casual and continuing staff to take care of themselves.

Mindfulness and other contemplative practices can be part of these strategies of care, and we have both drawn on these to help us to cope. We have worked to foster attention and awareness in the present moment in a range of ways. Some of these might be understood as more formal mindfulness or self-care practices, including meditation, contemplative work with psychologists and counsellors, and the development of techniques of present-moment awareness. Other practices are less formal or proscribed, like walks around the garden at the end of the day, or evening swims at the local pool. In all these practices, we have found new ways to manage the stress and anxieties of our academic lives. However, we have concluded that even a critical sociological mindfulness is no match for the kind of structural, institutional, gendered and managerial frameworks that cause so many of the problems of casualisation.

Acknowledgements We would like to acknowledge the funding support of the Contemporary Histories Research Group at Deakin University for assistance in the completion of this research. We would also like to thank this collection's editors for their support and encouragement, and our chapter's anonymous referees for reading and commenting on earlier versions.

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Part VI
Resistance, Social Justice and Being the Change

Chapter 15
The Right Kind of Ambition

Tseen Khoo

Abstract This chapter addresses a contradiction in conversations about academic life and career-building: deciding that not playing the game is what it takes to stay in the game. Our sector's culture is highly competitive and increasingly metricised. Career ambition in higher education is often problematically valorised and narrowly defined as wanting to climb the promotion ladder. When academics cultivate a measure of work/life balance, which necessarily de-prioritises the dominance of time given to academic activity, they are disadvantaged. This chapter argues that this inability to recognise the range and depth of experience that academic staff bring to their roles impoverishes our work culture. In particular, I discuss how universities often only pay lip-service to being 'family-friendly' organisations that prioritise their staff wellbeing. While the policies and guidelines may accommodate better ways of juggling work and caring commitments, the surrounding culture of the workplace—indeed, the whole sector—may not. I was an outputs-driven fixed-term researcher for many years, and my life circumstances have altered enough that I no longer feel able or willing to work in such a way. I have worked to create a context where I sustain a good blend of work, personal life and activism. This directly compromises my academic career progression in different ways, including being seen to be lacking in the right kind of ambition, and not being able to compete in a hypercompetitive academic environment. This chapter examines the complexities of negotiating work/life balance and discusses what systematic cultural changes are necessary.

15.1 Introduction

I feel like such a cliché. Having a family changed my priorities and perspectives on work and career. Could this story be any more typical? We very often hear about how children make everything more difficult in terms of the logistics of trying to get

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_15

on with career-building, feeling forced to make the choice between work or family commitments and the day-to-day juggling that makes life itself more complicated overall. The moment I realised I had shifted my priorities is entwined with the high point for my career at that stage: I was invited to be a keynote speaker at an international conference. We could not afford to have my partner and baby accompany me overseas. The choice was to accept the invitation and be forced to wean my baby at about seven months, or to decline. I declined.

My story in this chapter examines the lip-service that is paid to 'family friendliness' in the higher education sector—rhetoric that is not often supported by every day, local work practices or support—and it interrogates the narrow valorisation of scholarly ambition only as the desire for promotion.

I have spent almost all my working life at universities, and most of those in academic positions. I have moved between academic and professional roles several times (Khoo, 2014). I completed two research-only fellowships during which my track-record and research activities grew significantly. This was less from avowed ambition than desperation to ensure I was positioned well to apply for the next grant or fellowship. My scholarly ambitions in this phase were to establish and grow a research area and to ensure that it could achieve a measure of momentum that promised longevity. I came to realise that having two prestigious research fellowships back-to-back could mean nothing in terms of cementing a place in the academic workforce. My long-standing ambivalence about academia as a profession that bred unhealthy behaviours did not help with my failing belief that one could 'earn' a place in it.

My attitude to my work changed significantly once I had a child. I made family-centred decisions, such as declining that international keynote, that directly compromised my career opportunities. I continue to do so. My revelation was not that I would never make professor because I had children, as being a professor was never an aspiration of mine, to begin with, but that sustaining a good balance in my life would mean constantly policing my work boundaries. It meant I had to reconcile myself to the knowledge that my scholarly ambitions do not mesh with the increasingly narrow range of markers of academic success in the contemporary university culture that surrounded me.

15.2 Literature

The ongoing struggle for academic work-life balance in higher education institutions is well documented. Studies have showcased the stress, overwork, and extreme work hours demanded of contemporary scholars due to the increasing neoliberal imperatives under which we operate (Bell, Rajendran, & Theiler, 2012; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Papadopoulos, 2017) and the negative consequences of the accompanying, expanding metricisation of academic performance and institutional 'excellence' evaluations (O'Neill, 2014; Peseta, Barrie, & McLean, 2017; Wilsdon, 2016).

In 2018, in Australia, the Australian Research Council is bringing in a new research impact and engagement exercise. Many researchers feel these developments require them to present their projects in a skewed fashion, and this leads to resentment about the broader structure of their roles and careers: 'a belt of resistance to an impact agenda has been shown to be ever tightening in parallel with the loosening of academics' sense of self-sovereignty' (Chubb, Watermeyer, & Wakeling, 2017, p. 564). These expanding requirements and accountabilities for academics forces a questioning about the nature of the work academics do and the varying degrees to which this work—and by extension the institution in which it occurs—is diminished by managerialist imperatives (Chubb & Watermeyer, 2016; Smyth, 2017).

Despite the increasing competitiveness, cynicism and pressures of academia, it remains an attractive career path for many. Motivations for those who want to join the academy include elements such as role autonomy, constant intellectual challenge, believing that one's work makes a positive difference to society, and the basic 'joy' of academic work in terms of reading, writing, and sharing knowledge (Lindholm, 2004).

This career context, then, is already a fraught space that produces layers of contradiction and tension for scholars. Being a woman in the academy brings even more complication and large doses of structural discrimination. Studies show that women are more likely to be allocated workloads skewed towards less valued, time-consuming service and pastoral care areas; this affects career progression and even inclination to continue in academic roles (Acker, 2014; Barrett & Barrett, 2011; Blackmore, 2014; Morley, 2014; Probert, 2005). The pressured systems of academia amplify society's gender biases and its conditioning of women to be amenable and helpful, and this has a gendered effect on notions of ambition (Baker, 2010; Nielsen, 2017). Briony Lipton argues that some gender equity measures can even harm women's profiles in the university because it forces individuals (e.g. as representatives) to carry the burden of transforming institutional culture (Lipton, 2017).

Overall, the prospect of change on these institutional issues of gender parity in career progression and authentically striving for workers' work-life balance is not promising. As Doherty and Manfredi (2006) argue: 'universities' disinclination to tackle academic work intensification is best explained by the lack of labour market pressure to do so and the fact that sustainable [work-life balance] does not constitute part of the 'tablestakes' of academic employment' (p. 241).

When parenting or caring commitments compete with the demands of contemporary academic careers, hopes of work-life balance can diminish even further. The career-stalling consequences for academics who choose to be parents, particularly mothers taking maternity leave and/or working fractionally, are widely discussed (e.g.: Bosanquet, 2017; Williams & Ceci, 2012). Findings and implementation of policies and practices for institutional change outstrip the work cultures themselves, as has been demonstrated elsewhere in society with initiatives such as paternity leave (Halverson, 2003; Marshall, 2008; Rudman & Mescher, 2013). In this way, university workers find themselves with a range of 'family-friendly' policies and facilities but local workplace cultures that may not encourage—or, indeed, actively discourage—their use.

Creating the individual conditions for work-life balance as a parent in academia relies heavily on the role's flexibility and a surrounding culture that values a staff member's well-being. While the higher education sector is increasingly aware of workload and burnout issues that lead to attrition and broader organisational 'costs', there is little evidence so far that embedded academic expectations of (over)achievement and a 24/7 work culture are shifting.

15.3 Performance

I was on a research-only academic track for close to 10 years with those back-to-back fellowships. At the beginning of the second fellowship, I thought that I had a chance to carve out a career, longer term, as a researcher in the humanities. From the outside, I may have looked like I was on a great career track and moving from strength to strength. As mentioned elsewhere, however, the intense satisfaction and freedom of the research fellowships for my scholarly work and projects travelled alongside significant personal anxiety about what I was achieving, whether the outputs were enough, and increasing doubts about whether I wanted to stay in academia (ResBaz, 2016).

The second fellowship brought with it a variety of major career and life challenges: conducting a long-distance relationship with my partner, having two children and working with the implications of taking parental leave.

It was during the two periods of parental leave that pivotal life decisions were made, and I realised how much my approach to work and presumed career trajectory transformed. I knew my tendency to overwork and put in 12-h days regularly in the early years of my second fellowship. This was no longer possible or desirable after my partner joined me, and we had our first child.

For my first child, I felt I could not take the full 12 months maternity leave. Being in a precariously employed position as a fixed-term research fellow meant that I felt I could not afford to take too much of a career break. I was afraid to lose too much research momentum. My institution offered generous maternity leave conditions, so this was not the issue. It was my insecurity about my position and maintaining a highly productive track-record as a research fellow. It was the apprehension I felt from comments made by well-meaning senior colleagues—all women—who underscored that taking as little time out as possible was a good idea. One repeated piece of advice was to ensure that I worked hard before taking maternity leave to have several papers or chapters submitted to journals and edited books. This was so that there would be no publication gap on my CV because of the maternity leave; the publication pipeline would still be in place. The lesson I learned from this was that, while leave was offered and taken, you need to work to make sure that your track-record never *looks* as if you've taken any leave.

In addition to the major re-focusing of priorities from having children, I have had jarring career moves between academic and professional roles, with major anxiety and self-doubt before I left one role and after I took up the new one. I have always

been clear about my ambivalence about academia to my colleagues, but it took me a longer time and a couple of moves between academic and professional spaces to realise that I did indeed identify as an academic and scholar. When I missed doing research (which is the reason why I have twice returned to academia after being in professional roles), it was because I missed having supported practice and a collegial intellectual community. This movement between types of roles had consequences for how my track-record and 'seriousness' about my academic career might be perceived.

These transitions between roles brought insight into the embedded and highly status-conscious perspectives of those within universities, from both professional and academic staff. Well-meaning colleagues declare to me that I should be more recognised for the work I have done (meaning have a higher academic classification), and encourage me to go for promotion or take on opportunities that would look good to a promotion committee. I get interested occasionally in testing the systems that are in place for promotions and wondering how my track-record and activities align with it. In all my years in academia, I am yet to apply for a promotion.

15.4 Setting

Two elements are significant professional settings for me during my changing roles, particularly in terms of long-established collegial networks. During the time I have moved cyclically between academic and professional positions, I have convened a national research network (informally since 2000, 2006–2017) and the Research Whisperer (https://theresearchwhisperer.wordpress.com/) project (since 2011). Both these roles bring significant levels of recognition and lines on a scholarly CV and enabled my maintenance of an active academic profile.

I am currently a continuing academic in a teaching and research position. My primary aim with moving back into an academic role was to be able to continue doing research in a supported environment. This is the second time I have shifted from a professional role back to academia because I missed doing supported research and being more overtly a part of an academic community.

My work unit is comprised of four academics and one professional staff member, and we are co-located within a larger group that includes several administrative units. My work unit focuses on research education and development for all researchers at the institution, and I have a key responsibility towards the Early Career Researcher and Mid Career Researcher cohorts. The work I do is relatively new to me, and I have been in the role for four years. For most of my working life, I have been on fixed and short-term contracts. Occupying a continuing role still feels like a novelty at times, and I have been appreciating the chance to exhale when it comes having some measure of job security.

My university is a public research institution that has undergone repeated, major restructures in recent years. I commute three hours a day to get to work. While my role comes with the usual expectations in terms of research productivity, the position

does not map onto a traditional academic one that is positioned within an academic department or school.

Our unit is a whole-of-institution service unit. The teaching and support of research culture work within the university that is an essential part of what we do requires a measure of translation in the career narratives required for promotion. In addition, my unit materially supports only research that is felt to be directly relevant to the unit's priorities. The unit's priorities do not mesh with those of my main research area, thus the majority of my research activity is self-funded.

Research is expected, an embedded part of our academic appointment but the time allocated is not standardised. The role occupies an in-between space, part of the broader category of 'academic developers' that is an emerging presence in our universities and also a relatively new field of research. As with any new area, there are many contestations and some confusion about the positions and the academic space they occupy (Brew, 2007; Grant, 2007; Manathunga, 2007; Peseta, 2007; Peseta & Barrie, 2017). Within our unit, we are supported to work flexibly and there are practical accommodation and empathy for the demands of parenting and commuting.

15.5 Appearance

In many ways, I appear successful in my career.

I landed the mythical white whale of a continuing academic job and enjoy the work, despite the challenges of operating within a heavily flawed sector. I ran a national research network, the Asian Australian Studies Research Network (AASRN) for almost 20 years. With AASRN colleagues, I have held an Australian Research Council grant and worked over the past 15 years to establish a new field of scholarly research. I have a decent publication track-record, despite a recent period of being in a professional role that meant I had no publications for over 3 years. Since 2011, my colleague Jonathan O'Donnell and I created and manage an internationally recognised project, the Research Whisperer. The project has contributors from around the world, and it has boosted our reputations in our fields of expertise in both tangible and intangible ways.

It is within the community of the Research Whisperer and AASRN that my most enduring scholarly connections and friendships are sustained. Their supportive effects have encouraged me to find the activist spaces and communities in academia that work against the stultifying effects and fears of our sector's audit culture.

My appointment is at lecturer level (Commonwealth university system), which translates to Assistant Professor in the North American system. I have occupied this level across several roles for more than 10 years. When I was in a professional role, it was a comparable salary drop. So, in terms of how many may view 'career success', I have not progressed up the academic/university ladder. I am fine with this but get anxious when others imply that a lack of 'levelling up' is symptomatic of scholarly limitations or even failings. As I considered this issue in a Research Whisperer post about career progression and expectations, I posed the following

questions: 'Is it a case of feeling like those who aren't moving up the ladder aren't pulling their weight in some way? Is not seeking promotion seen as a sign of not doing anything, or of being incapable of reaching the next level? Can it be accepted as a *choice* that someone has made?' (Khoo, 2017). There is a fair amount of evidence that being promoted is bad for your health (e.g. Boyce & Oswald, 2012) but society more widely—and academia in particular—reifies promotion as a sole indicator of academic achievement and 'excellence'.

Part of the reason for my remaining within this level is the interrupted nature of the positions I have occupied as a fixed-term staff member. When one of the key elements in deciding what the next job might be is whether our mortgage gets paid, I did not feel I had to luxury of turning down any position I was offered, or to wait for a more ideal job to come along.

But that's only part of the reason.

Another part is that, once I had been appointed to particular academic roles, I never applied for promotion for the duration of those contracts. In retrospect, I could have convincingly done so but, at those times, applying for promotion was not a step that I considered. I have always created and managed my research plans but not career plans that focused in terms of moving across levels. That was not how I defined 'career.' I am not invested in the levels of recognition that form traditional academic careers. Lucia Lorenzi's calls for more mediocrity in academia in this way:

> I am mediocre - a neutral designation - because I do good, solid work. I'm thoughtful. Am I a scholarly wunderkind? No. That's okay.
>
> Does it mean that I don't work hard? No. Does it mean that I don't deserve a place in academia to do my good, thoughtful work? No.
>
> Does it mean that I secretly think I'm a failure? No. (Lorenzi, 2017)

Lorenzi (2017) refuses to adhere to the increasingly unsustainable demands of contemporary universities while sustaining a core belief in the value of her work and its effects. This struggle is familiar and constant to many who are playing the infinite—rather than the finite—game of the university (Harré, Grant, Locke, & Sturm, 2017). Universities demand that their academics clear higher and higher bars of achievement for relatively static rewards, and this is highly problematic, unsustainable, and not healthy for its workforce (Bell et al., 2012; Kinman, 2014). This appears to be widely acknowledged but this recognition produces lip-service to the idea of staff well-being. Actions taken are often skewed towards trying to change individuals and their personal working practices (e.g. better time management) as if lack of self-efficacy is the problem rather than unsustainable expectations, insecure work, and a normalised culture of overwork.

I am currently a participant in a 'women and promotions' program, out of both personal and academic interest, even though I am torn about participating. I know that the necessary changes in our sector will not come about by training more women to play the game better. The board on which the game sits must be transformed. I am talking here about the necessity for cultural change within our universities and academia more broadly. It is not a question of only recognising more ways of being valuable as academics and researchers, because these will only lead to more metrics

(such as measuring 'collegiality' [Kligyte & Barrie, 2014]). We need to disconnect from our sector's cultivated hypercompetitiveness and obsession with outputs, and 'resist the framing of productivity as the key goal in academia' (Pereira, 2016, p. 107).

15.6 Manner

For me, the main lever for returning to academia was to get back to doing research. Accompanying this decision, however, was a promise to myself and my family that I would return to an academic role *and work reasonable hours*. Having been in a professional role that had regular hours made me realise anew how good living a balanced life could be.

When I returned to my current academic job, I resolved where possible not to work across weekends or after-hours. I knew my potential for adopting the habits of overwork and wanted to maintain an approach that was sustainable and allowed me to enjoy life. I did not want an everyday life that felt like a constant battle to merely survive. It felt like I was asking a lot, and many colleagues were skeptical about my being able to achieve such a goal. An added degree of difficulty for these plans was the fact that the university where I work is a 3-h commute (1.5 h public transport commute each way). I work from home two days a week.

My attempt to cultivate reasonable work hours and expectations (of myself and others) involves:

- **Making my availability known**. I am direct about when I can get work done or participate in activities that held during non-standard work hours. My habit is to auto-decline anything that is held after-hours or on weekends and letting my colleagues know that this is the way it is. It's not temporary; this is the new normal.
- **Leaving work at a regular time**. In my previous roles as an academic, I lived relatively close to my workplaces and had the freedom of being a research-only scholar. I used this flexibility to its utmost and basically had a work schedule that was tailored to whatever I felt like doing. My current role is teaching and research, I'm required to be on campus more regularly and, as flagged above, the campus is a long way from home. My time is much more restricted.
- **Saying 'no' a lot more—knowing better when there really is not time**. In previous academic roles, I was used to over-committing and having more discretionary time to make sure commitments were met. Now, having two primary school-aged children and an ageing parent living with me, and a different academic role, my available time is much more limited.
- **Not looking for certain opportunities**. As a research fellow, I used to go to many conferences, regularly to international ones. Since my latest iteration as an academic and my resolve about doing it my way, I have not looked at any international opportunities. I have not submitted abstracts to overseas conferences or applications to any fellowships as I do not like to be away for more than a

few days at a time. This is my preference, as my partner is the primary carer for our children. In some ways, it is harder to assert this as it *is* a preference, not a necessity. I recognise that it is a privilege to be able to say this.

15.7 Front

I should state right at the beginning of this section that my approach outlined above has worked to a great degree. For most of the time, I am satisfied with my work-life balance.

But it is not because I have managed to adhere to every part of my self-set 'rules'. I wrote about breaking one of the key ones in 'A confession about working weekends'. I stated:

> I didn't ever really believe that I would be able to sustain it. Even as I made the promise and committed myself to the effort required to maintain that boundary, I knew I would break it when I had to. It was just a question of when. (Khoo, 2016)

This has been the case since I returned to this academic role over three years ago. The irony of completing this book chapter you are reading right now on a weekend because the time I had set aside last week as my writing time was spent being ill instead does not escape me. While one of the key rules gets broken occasionally, it is never considered normal.

When I first started telling my colleagues and academic friends that I would be returning to academia on my own terms, there was a lot of joking about doomed causes. Most of it was good-humoured but resigned—there was an air of 'sure, give it a go, but it will never work'. These days, almost four years into the position, it is rare that colleagues openly challenge or dismiss my constant policing of life balance boundaries. They can be incredulous that I do indeed have weekends and most evenings free of work activities. The more likely response is that they express envy or solidarity about my pushing back on explicit demands and tacit expectations. I have had a small number of responses where well-meaning colleagues point out that, while it's great that I am happy with my work-life balance, do I realise that it's going to get me nowhere, career-wise?

The insidious aspect of this, however, is that I will never know whether this honesty about the limits of my ambition (I am using 'ambition' here is it is traditionally understood) is actively doing me a disservice, and what potential opportunities may remain unoffered because of it. I aim to be consistently transparent about my practices and the reasons for them as a matter of personal integrity. A big part of this is because I consider it important to insert real lives into the academic sphere as regularly as possible. I will, however, temper how much I tell people about my work rules if they are not people with whom I am comfortable or familiar.

15.8 Front Stage, Back Stage, and Off Stage

It took me a while to reconcile myself to the fact that being transparent about my lack of appropriate ambition (as the system stands) has consequences that I may never see but will probably feel. Most supervisors and senior leaders would not advise against having work-life balance, but they may well comment, or provide advice, on what they think I'm doing 'wrong' in my career. It can be hard to second-guess senior colleagues who have achieved so much in their careers. It is often clear, however, that many of these advisors have been in the traditional academic system for their entire working lives, and value the rewards of the finite game of institutional career success (Harré et al., 2017).

For me, maintaining equilibrium between my work and home lives is paramount, as is the knowledge that what I do makes a difference for those within the system. It helps to consider my lectureship as a job, one that I appreciate and want to keep enjoying.

I have established practices and collegial expectations that afford me a large measure of confidence in doing my work well, within the boundaries I have set. The biggest challenge to my work-life balance in recent times was overestimating how much discretionary time I had to juggle long-standing commitments and roles I had accrued over the years. While I was a research fellow without a partner in town or children, it was easy to keep taking things on. Now, I have realised that I cannot keep do it all and gain momentum or depth in my research—there is so much less time for it.

One thing that has always helped my work-life balance is the fact my partner is not an academic and does not work at universities. Our home life and family activities take place separately from work and there is no appreciable blurring of boundaries. Many of my academic colleagues are also friends, but I only break my 'no commitments on the weekend' rule regularly for one of them, and that's only once every few months. Having a non-university context for a significant part of my life means that I retain perspective on the unique and sometimes abnormal nature of academic work. I feel no great differentiation between my work self and my home self. In fact, I have worked to ensure that the faces presented in each context are not out of alignment. I am truthful at work about my family priorities, and those closest to me at home know how important my work is to me.

15.9 Conclusion

Since I returned to academia in 2014, I have achieved my goal of 'doing' academia on my terms with minimal after-hours and weekend work. I am satisfied with my work-life balance. Though there is constant work in having to assert the boundaries and remind those around me what my availability and capacity is, it is worth it to enjoy my work and family on a consistent basis, rather than viewing these areas of my

life as constantly at odds. One of the bigger challenges is often not with convincing others of my boundaries, but reminding myself that I must also honour these rules and not take on projects or roles that I know will compromise those work-free zones.

This quality of life comes at a price, and that price will be the rate of career progression (in the sense of academic promotion). I do not think of my career as only successful if I am moving from level to level, but I recognise all too well that an academic woman's ability to enact change and influence larger activities requires the signalling authority of a higher academic rank. While I am not interested in moving up the ladder of academic promotion as a mark of 'success' and know that academic promotion can equate to more responsibility and higher expected numbers of outputs, becoming a high level academic could mean bigger, more exciting opportunities and more power to transform the way things are done both within the institution and beyond. But playing the finite game of 'career' within a university has its costs, and does not invite any sustainable change.

Significant cultural change would make our well-being an institutional priority. For this to happen, staff at universities—across all levels and types of roles—must work together (Turner, Boswell, Harré, Sturm, & Locke, 2017). It is a clear case of 'a little less adaptation, a little more (collective) action' (Pereira, 2016, p. 107).

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Chapter 16
A Glitch in the Machine or a Glimmer of What Could Be? Mindfulness as Resistance in Higher Education

Sharon McDonough

Abstract The work of academics in higher education institutions is widely recognised as having intensified in demands and in accountability measures. In the field of teacher education, this intensification also manifests in academics needing to meet the requirements of both the university and external stakeholders and accrediting bodies. In this chapter, I draw on a central narrative "A glitch in the machine" to explore the demands that academics face in contemporary higher education contexts. I use this narrative as a stimulus for considering the nature of academic work and I contend that the adoption of the principles and practices of mindfulness provides an opportunity for academics to engage in resistance that enables them to remain focused on their authentic self and purpose as academics. In so doing, I describe the strategies I have adopted in order to make mindful choices about my work and identity as an academic in this space.

16.1 Introduction: A Glitch in the Machine

The machine glides smoothly and noiselessly most of the time. The pieces shift and move together, outputs occur and the makers of the machine are assured that they are producing something of worth.

Every so often a glitch in the machine appears.

A piece of the machinery falters. It wears out, it moves to a new part of the factory, or it no longer works effectively and needs to be replaced. New pieces slide in, the machine pauses briefly and then begins humming again. Other glitches are more problematic, they cause the machine to clunk and they make too much noise, drawing too much attention to the way the machine runs and to flaws in the design. These pieces require special attention, sometimes the machine makers try to grease the pieces, to quiet the clunking and get the piece to slip back into unison with the machine. Other pieces

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_16

are more stubborn, they will not be stilled, they want to work and whir out of step with the rest of the machine. This cannot be allowed. An alert message thrums, the message says 'You are a glitch in the machine'.

You are a glitch in the machine.

The machine makers will attempt to still you, to silence you, and then, if this does not work, you will be removed from the machine.

You are a glitch in the machine.

You make life difficult. You call into question things that others want you to accept blindly. You are problematic as you do not fit the pre-designed cut-out pattern of a machine piece. They will try to blunt your edges, to reshape you. Yet, you will not be moulded.

You are a glitch in the machine.

The machine makers will tell you it is your fault. There is something wrong with you if you don't fit the machine. The machine is not broken, it is not poorly designed, look how long it has been running and all it has created. It is you, ***you*** *are the problem.*

You are a glitch in the machine.

If permitted to remain, you may make the whole machine creak and sway. Your running out of time may cause other pieces of the machine to splinter and crack. This is dangerous. ***You*** *are dangerous.*

You are a glitch in the machine.

They are right to be worried about you. You want to make the machine anew, rebuild it from the ground up. The machine makers reach in and you hold tight, your bolt is threaded and they are not going to easily shift you, not without having to see what it was that first held you in place. A glitch in the machine? No, you are not that. You are a glimmer. A glimmer of all that the machine could one day become. Hold tight, and break the machine from the inside.

I wrote the narrative "A Glitch in the Machine" in 2013 after three years working in higher education and the experiences that sparked its construction continue to resonate for me as I engage in my work. I became interested in the principles and practices of mindfulness as a new academic making the transition from teaching in a school to teaching in higher education, where I found myself subject to the multiple demands of academia and, in particular of teacher education where I sought to maintain authentic and meaningful connections with my school teaching background and with school partners. At times, I found I was being forced into undertaking roles and actions that clashed with my own personal values and assumptions about teacher education, and in this clashing, I felt like a jigsaw puzzle piece that was being forced into space where I did not fit. One of the key challenges I faced was that after 2 years working in teacher education I returned to teach in a school part-time and continued

to work at the university. When I sought to continue this work others advised me that I needed to choose between being a teacher or being an academic, the message was that I could **not** be both. This sense of having to choose between two central parts of my professional identity left me feeling like a glitch—I began to wonder if the problem was me—maybe I was not made for the world of academia? As I reflected on my feelings and experiences, I began to challenge this inward focus of thinking about what was wrong with me, to think instead, what might be wrong with the academic machine?

In institutions characterised by performativity, managerialism and the market (Ball, 2003), academics are driven to meet ever-increasing targets with Webster-Wright (2013) arguing that there is "a dearth of quiet contemplative thinking" (p. 558) in contemporary higher education settings. In the face of the compression of time for contemplation and the acceleration of multiple demands, academics risk adopting *mindless*, rather than *mindful*, approaches to their work, as they navigate through multiple projects, papers and people, becoming little more than pieces in a machine of production as described in the opening narrative. In thinking about my transition to teacher education, I began to feel the pressure of mindlessness assert itself as I joined projects without thinking clearly through my motivations, commitment and passion for the work, I knew I needed to publish and be involved in projects and I signed up for every opportunity that was offered to me. Immediately saying 'yes' to things became my new default response. Writing about contemporary culture and life Delaney (2009) describes the concept of people "churning" through life, where "restlessness was the new default speed" (p. ix), and this churning and restlessness can be seen at play in contemporary academic practice. Rather than operationalising the concept of mindfulness as an individual approach for dealing with stress and overwork, in this chapter, I draw on my own experiences to explore the way that I have adopted a more mindful approach as an act of resistance to the restlessness and churn of contemporary academic life. This mindful approach has enabled me to resist the mindlessness and enable me to navigate feeling like a glitch in the larger academic machine. I argue that adopting a mindful approach to practice as an academic offers the possibility of challenging the mindless acceleration and provides us with both the individual and collective hope of reclaiming the authenticity of our work and purpose as academics.

16.2 Literature

16.2.1 Academic Labour: Acceleration and Intensification

Academic labour is subject to what Ball (2003) refers to as the policy technologies of performativity, the market and managerialism and in neo-liberal universities academic labour is "performed in a culture of measurement" (Sutton, 2017, p. 626). According to Sutton (2017), this culture of measurement draws on quantitative mea-

sures that reduce the "complex human processes of academic labour to simplified targets and outcomes" (p. 628). The acceleration of demands and for output "haunts virtually all aspects" (Peseta, Barrie, & McLean, 2017, p. 453) of academic work with Mountz et al. (2015) contending that academics are required to produce and do "more and more" (p. 3) in compressed time frames.

This intensification and acceleration of performative demands leads to what Ball (2003) describes as an "ontological insecurity", where academics are unsure "whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others" (p. 220). In this state of ontological insecurity, academics compare themselves to their colleagues; are compelled to search for ways to improve and "are expected to become increasingly competitive actors" (Cannizzo, 2016, p. 881). This focus on competition rather than collegiality results in academics becoming isolated from their colleagues, with Manathunga, Selkrig, Sadler, and Keamy (2017) contending that the act of "maintaining collegiality in the measured university constitutes a significant act of resistance" (p. 530). In systems driven by performativity, it is not only the relationships between colleagues that are at risk of fracture but also the authenticity and purpose of the work academics undertake.

Sutton (2017) argues that in such systems new "organisational actors" are created where academics "come to want what is wanted from them" (p. 629). In this environment, academics are caught between the tension of maintaining the integrity of their work which Sutton (2017) contends involves transforming "the socio-human world and ourselves for the good of all" (p. 626), and meeting the demands of the performative system. Lynch (2010) argues that the constant monitoring, auditing and surveillance that characterises academic work is a "recipe for self-display and the fabrication of image over substance" (p. 55), that leads to a sense of personal inauthenticity. Lynch (2010) contends that the competitive, individualised nature of higher education is associated with a "care-lessness" that assumes an "idealised worker" who "is available 24/7 without ties or responsibilities that will hinder her or his productive capacities" (p. 57). Drawing on Lynch's concept of carelessness that is manifest in a performative driven system, I argue that this also leads to a *mindlessness* where academics seek to churn through papers, projects and people, and in which a mindful, purposeful approach to academia is sacrificed. Lipton (2017) presents the case study of Amy who questions why academics would pursue interesting, valuable and possibly risky, work when "you could just do something that you know will work okay. You'll get a shitty paper out of it and then you can have more shitty papers, and then everyone will think you're going good because you have twenty shitty papers" (p. 491). In the mindless, care-less academy, the machine hums along producing papers and outputs, but the academics become restless, always moving cyborgs, with their purpose stripped away. How are we then to bring a mindful focus back to academic practice in order to become more than parts of a machine? How do we move from mindlessness and adopt practices that are instead intentional, purposeful and mindful?

16.2.2 Mindfulness at Work

Mindfulness is defined as "awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally to the unfolding of experience moment by moment" (Kabat-Zinn, 2003, p. 145). This focus on being in the present and looking non-judgmentally provides a stark contrast to Ball's (2003) concept of "ontological insecurity" for academics, which results from comparison and judgement. Wells (2013) contends that mindfulness meditation provides a way of "*being* as opposed to *doing*, a way of non-striving" (p. 3) and describes ways this is unfamiliar to many educational administrators whose work is characterized as "fast-paced and frenetic" (p. 3). She goes on to describe the three principles of mindful practice as intention, attention and attitude and argues that mindfulness enables the "cultivation of nonreactivity where one may observe events without having to act on them" (Wells, 2013, p. 4). It is these principles of mindfulness practice which enable a focus on the present and a possibility for academics to resist the mindless churn of their daily work, and which I have focused on incorporating into my own practice as an academic.

16.3 Performance: Challenging the *Should* to Find a Mindful Purpose

As a teacher who moved into academia one of the greatest challenges I have faced is thinking about who I want to be as an academic, who is the "performed character" (Goffman, 1959) that I want to enact? One of my tensions as an academic in teacher education, has been addressing the multiple demands and stakeholders involved in teacher education while also seeking to advocate for different ways of working, including undertaking hybrid roles where academics work across contexts (McDonough, 2014, 2017). This desire to work in hybrid roles caused some tension with those around me, both in schools and in university contexts, as it was not considered the normal practice, I was out of step with the rest of the machine. I felt pressure to meet increasing demands to form industry research relationships and to build partnerships with schools that had benefits for teacher education (but perhaps not necessarily for the schools, teachers and students), and to raise my 'profile' as an academic. I wanted to form authentic, meaningful connections with schools where both teachers, pre-service teachers and students were all gaining benefit from their involvement. I wanted to do work that mattered, not develop a profile so that I could tick a box on a form. Billot (2010) argues there is a disconnection between academics' views of self and the roles prescribed by universities and I experienced a growing tension between how I saw my identity as an academic and the roles I was expected to perform.

One of my other key tensions has been countering the *shoulds*—the messages from some colleagues and leaders, both from within, and outside my own institution,

about the things I *should* be doing as an academic. As a beginning academic, I tried to juggle all of the demands and did not think mindfully about the kinds of things I was saying yes to, instead, I listened to the *shoulds*. I had held a view that being strategic was a negative trait and associated it with people who used others for their own gain. I came to realise that in my work as an academic I was not being strategic, rather, I was being mindless, taking on all opportunities without thinking about what this meant for me and for the kinds of work I valued, the work I wanted to be involved in and the work I wanted to be known for. I was always rushing, 'churning' from one thing to the next, and this left me asking where I belonged. I was overcommitted and was working on projects and in roles that I did not personally value, but which I had been told I *should* be involved with because they would be useful for me for promotion. I felt stretched too thin, like a piece of the machine that was wearing out and the voice in my head was questioning what the purpose of my work as an academic was.

16.4 Setting: Finding Mindfulness Among Multiple Masters

Academics working in the field of teacher education are required to have close connections with schools, however, ways of working, beliefs and assumptions in school and university contexts can sometimes be at odds with other. In Australia, teacher education has been subject to increased scrutiny following the release of the document *Action Now* from the Teacher Education Ministerial Advisory Group (TEMAG) (2014), which focused on improving the quality of teacher education and called for universities and schools to work more closely together. The Australian context reflects the international context, with Ellis and McNicholl (2015) arguing that "ITE continues to be in a state of almost continual reform, even crisis" (p. 6). An increased auditing focus on teacher education from external stakeholders is combined with the internal auditing and performative demands of the university, and so teacher educators face multiple demands from multiple masters, with this focus resulting in "a proliferation of elaborate systems preoccupied with gathering evidence" (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015, p. 16). Academics working in teacher education need to be skilled teachers; able to form relationships with school partners and with teachers in schools; support and mentor pre-service teachers; and undertake service and research work; in short, they require both "research and professional credibility" (Ellis & McNicholl, 2015, p. 49), with relationship maintenance of stakeholders identified as one of the key elements of the work. These multiple elements result in an intensification of the work of academics in teacher education, with Ellis and McNicholl (2015) describing case studies of academics who multitask constantly, taking phone calls while driving to schools, catching up on emails during meetings and taking marking and research home to do at night and on the weekends. I found myself engaged in these practices as an academic, responding to emails over breakfast or taking student phone calls in the

evening, on weekends and on public holidays when they were panicking about their professional experience placements. These work practices may not seem unusual for academics, but such practices reinforce Lynch's (2010) notion of the care-less university where even "the care of one's own emotional well-being is incidental" (p. 57). In an accelerated or intensified working context, mindlessness can become second nature, and adopting a mindful approach to work practices, requires the ability to stop and critique the ways in which we are currently working. In my own practice as an academic, in teacher education, I have had to find ways to negotiate the multiple demands and stakeholders to be able to undertake projects and work that is aligned with my own personal sense of purpose as an academic.

16.5 Appearance: Resisting *Mindlessness*

When talking about the work of teachers Shapiro (2010) argues that teachers often aim to present as the "pedagogical whiz" who appears both pleasant and calm in all situations and I adopted this appearance when I began working as an academic, presenting as calm and accommodating despite the intense workload I faced. Internally, I felt that I could not keep up with the demands, despite my external appearance and performance to the contrary. The danger of an external appearance like the one I adopted, however, is that it normalises patterns of overwork and sends implicit messages to others about what it takes to succeed in academia. Lynch (2010) argues that adopting a 'care-less' appearance that normalises this kind of academic culture can send "a strong message also to graduate students and postdoctoral scholars as to who is and is not an appropriate candidate for academic life" (p. 58). While appearing to be someone who was coping with the challenges of academic life, internally, I was constantly questioning if I was fit for academia, and in turn, it was fit for me.

In seeking to adopt a more mindful approach to academic work that enables me to be intentional about the work I do, the projects I undertake and the people I collaborate with I try and model mindful practices in my interactions with others, including colleagues and students. Along with being mindful about my interactions, I seek to be 'me' rather than performing a character—I try not to think about what it might mean to be 'an academic' but rather what it is to be me in academia. Last year, at the work Christmas party in response to the question "who made you laugh this year?", my colleagues named me, and that recognition is an important part of who I present as in my interactions with others—I like to joke, to lessen the stress with humour and encourage others in finding the humour of situations. In modelling these aspects in my interactions, I also focus on opening up a space for dialogue and conversation about why I am working in these ways and what I am hoping to achieve. It is through this use of dialogue, conversation and humour that I see we can begin to reclaim the space for discussing our work as academics and to engage in "spaces for resistance" (Grant, 1997, p. 111).

16.6 Manner: Processes for Being Mindful

In seeking to become a mindful, rather than a mindless, academic, I have employed intentional strategies, and processes. Goffman (1959) describes manner as the roles or strategies carried out and contends that it can be confronting if these roles are carried out in a way that is different to what is expected of the 'actor', and as noted above, the metaphor of the machine demands academic workers who are 'care-less' and compliant (Lynch, 2010). Resisting this requires an intentionality and focus on being in the present, and on the ways, I engage with others. While I have included three practices that I enact below, it is important to note that I do not intend these to reduce mindfulness to a list of technical acts that can be carried out to 'fix' the individual and their stress within an intensified, dysfunctional system. I agree with Purser and Milillo (2015) who critique the way mindfulness has been operationalised as a method "for subduing employee unrest, promoting a tacit acceptance of the corporate status quo, and as an instrumental tool for keeping attention focused on corporate goals" (p. 16). It is important to see mindfulness as more than a tool for employees to use in order to navigate and survive complex, challenging systems. Rather, I present these examples as representations of some of the practical steps I have taken in adopting and embedding the principles of mindfulness practice in my daily work and discuss how they enable me to focus on maintaining a sense of purpose.

Turning off the connectivity monster. In the past, I was connected constantly, always checking in and responding immediately to emails from students and colleagues. In doing so, I created an expectation for myself that I needed to do this and an expectation among colleagues and students that I would continue to reply. Wells (2013) describes a "24/7 connectivity" as a source "of pressure that create feelings of never getting away from work" (p. 6). Being constantly plugged into the system bred mindlessness for me, as I was not taking time to think carefully about the responses I was sending; everything became processed as urgent and I found I was actually dismantling the opportunities for quiet contemplation of challenging issues, by rushing into providing an email solution. I make an intentional effort to no longer check email after 5.30 pm or on the weekends and this has been an important step in reclaiming a sense that I am more than a part of a giant machine that needs to be constantly responsive. I no longer take my work laptop home at night, instead, I leave it on the dock in my office and return to it the next working day. This has been a turning point for me in being able to disconnect and remind myself that things are not as urgent as they might first seem.

Finding ways to hold space. I know that my tendency is to immediately say yes to all projects and requests I find interesting but this means that I often find myself overcommitted. I once joked that I needed a post-it note on my forehead that read 'NO!', so now I employ a mental post-it, by giving myself space to hold requests and to think mindfully about them. Taking this time for contemplation enables me to think about new requests rather than mindlessly churnings from project to project. Holding space requires that rather than constantly striving for new things, I am

instead involved in "paying attention to what is happening" (Wells, 2013, p. 7). From engaging in this process, I am able to make more mindful and intentional decisions about my involvement and this has resulted in me working in projects that are aligned with my sense of purpose as an academic rather than having my attention and focus scattered across a wider range of projects that do not hold meaning for me.

Bringing the body back into focus. There's a famous TED talk by Sir Ken Robinson where he describes academics as seeing their bodies as a form of transport for their heads. Similarly, Lawrence (2012) argues that "we come into the world as embodied beings" and that yet in formal learning is perceived as "something we do in our head" (p. 71). In mindless academia, the body is forgotten about, ignored and treated badly; bodies sit hunched over desks, heads are bowed over books, lunch is quickly eaten on the run, breathing is hurried and any feelings of disquiet that the body might seek to send are ignored. Bringing the attention back to the body involves a mindful attention on the body and on the breath. Paying attention to breathing enables a contemplation of what is happening in the present, rather than having the brain rush with the thoughts of what has just happened and what needs to happen next. As with the practices above, a focus on the body and the breath moves us back into the present moment and holds space for that presence to be acknowledged. Each day I ensure I take regular breaks from my desk, eat lunch with colleagues or outside in the sunshine and implement at least 10 min of mindfulness meditation practice. Engaging in these practices has enabled me to remain connected to how I am feeling, what I am noticing about myself and to resist a constant churning and restlessness that does not take time for rest.

16.7 Front: Front Stage, Back Stage and Off Stage

Goffman (1959) argues that situations have social scripts that suggest how the actor should behave, and that there can be competing fronts from which to select. In reflecting on my practices as an academic, I have had to consciously and intentionally select a front that employs mindful practices. This has been challenging at times, as in adopting new practices I am challenging my own inherent tendency to get caught up in the churn and to carry on despite feeling overwhelmed and stressed. Learning to not only recognise, but to acknowledge and respond to my own responses, particularly my bodily responses, has been one of the challenges I have faced in enacting a mindful approach to practice.

Goffman (1959) describes three different regions, the front stage, backstage and offstage and argues that in the offstage individuals can be truly themselves. One of the most interesting things for me to notice as I have adopted more mindful approaches to my practice as an academic is that I find the distance between the front stage, backstage and offstage personas is shrinking, I am becoming more of my authentic self in all stages. Creating the space for conversation with colleagues about the way that I have been engaging in practices that support a mindful approach to my practice has been one of the ways that I have been able to navigate the challenges.

I am lucky enough to have close connections with some of my colleagues (in fact, we call each other our work family and use affectionate terms like 'sis' and 'bro' to speak to each other) who hold similar values and we each try to employ intentional, mindful decisions in our practice. Together we are able to support each other, and I know that if I turn down a request from one of them in order to maintain a more mindful and achievable approach to my workload they will respect this. This sense of working with people who hold similar values extends to colleagues external to my own university as well, with a colleague sending an email telling me "I am celebrating your "no" moment as a wonderful narrative turn in my kind of story to live by", when I regretfully bowed out of a project recently as I found involvement in it was stretching me too thin.

One of the interesting things that have occurred for me is that since I speak more openly about the ways that I try and adopt the principles of mindfulness in my approach to work, I find myself having more conversations with my broader network of colleagues about these things. It seems that by creating the space to have these conversations we are able to share collectively the strategies that we each employ and the trigger points we all face. This collective sharing is crucially important in creating a space for considering how on a systems level, higher education institutions might be more mindful and for considering how individuals can work together in productive resistance.

16.8 Conclusion

I began this chapter with a narrative that questioned if I was a glitch in the machine of academia due to my feelings of stress, overwork and a lack of purpose. As with the conclusion of the narrative, though, I no longer think that I am a glitch in the machine—rather I am a glimmer of hope. This glimmer is in all of us who see ourselves as more than parts of a technical, standardised process focused on output, but who instead, see ourselves as being academics for the meaningful and purposeful work we can do to improve the lives of others and of the systems we work in. It is the glimmer that seeks to press pause on constant connectivity, to hold space for contemplation and to recognise both our bodily, emotional experience of what it means to be an academic. Sharing stories of the way that we resist the mindlessness and churn of contemporary academic life, gives the potential for us to see how we can rewrite the performed characters, challenge the status quo, present our most authentic selves, and ultimately, attempt to rewrite the machine from the inside.

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Chapter 17
Mindfully Living and Working in the Academy: Continuing the Conversation

Narelle Lemon and Sharon McDonough

Abstract As scholars and administrators in higher education institutions begin to implement mindfulness practices and perspectives, it is worth examining what can be learned through examining their diverse understandings and perspectives. In identifying the formal and informal mindful practices used by the contributing authors of this volume, we argue that they provide others with a basis for reflection on their own practices and perspectives. In this chapter, we present seven approaches to mindfulness as enacted by the chapter authors. We present an overview of these key strategies and approaches and suggest the possibility of such approaches for individual and collective change.

> Each time I sit down to read a chapter something in me feels unlocked. Maybe it's hope. Maybe it's recognition. Maybe it's acceptance. I feel like somehow in this collection we've managed to bring together a group of like-minded people. Reading these chapters makes me feel like maybe the academy is for me — because these people, their stories, their goals and aspirations for how they want to live and work — feel like mine. Finding yourself in the words of someone else is a beautiful form of recognition. I understand more about them and about me by reading their words. And what a gift that is.
>
> —Reflection from Sharon

> When we first talked about the place of mindfulness for us in our lives personally and professional we noticed we were talking behind closed doors — off campus, away from ear shot of colleagues, away from the higher education environment. It was like it was a secret. But why should it be like this? The hope and vision we had in this book project has so been enacted. We wanted voices of many to be heard. We wanted to shift the conversation to a more public space. We knew we would find it beneficial. We knew that others who we were having these conversations with behind closed doors would find it beneficial. There is something in the sharing that we knew would be mindful in itself. And as I read these chapters I have this overwhelming gratitude to the authors for sharing their experiences. I'm

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N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6_17

> so touched in the openness to be able to learn from these experiences, and allowing others to learn from them as well. Our vision to bring the discussion to the forefront is beginning. I feel such a sense of relief, that what I have experienced, what Sharon has experienced, and what many of my academic friends and colleagues have experienced is beginning to be revealed. I'm so excited. I'm so touched. I think this is the beginning of a collective change.
>
> —Reflection from Narelle

17.1 Introduction: Sharing Experiences and Gratitude

As editors of this book, we have been profoundly touched by the author contributions. When we envisaged this book project, it was as much for us as academics, and individuals working in higher education and developing our identity, as it was for our colleagues and those who work in the sector. We have both personally grappled with the contemporary higher education context and the finding of our place. Mindfulness through formal and informal practices has been a large part of this. Over cups of tea, Instagram, Twitter, text messages, Skype and face-to-face conversations, over a number of years, we have shared our highs and lows. We have decoded and problem-solved together. It was these conversations, and many we had with others, that sparked the idea for this book. If we learn so much through sharing our stories and lived experiences together, we believe then others will as well. Our understandings have enabled us to grow and to disrupt the everyday experiences that leave us drained, questioning and sometimes looking for time and space to reflect on where we will be in the future. Our collective sharing has also enabled us to be mindful about what it is we love so much about working in higher education; pedagogy, students, colleagues, ideas, research, impact, collaborations, different, perspectives, teaching and learning.

As we have curated this book, we have openly shared with each of the authors and publicly through social media (@MindfulAcademic on Twitter and Instagram) the experience their writing has had on us as editors. The act of curation and editing has indeed been such a learning experience for us both. We have learnt through the stories we have read; the background to the authors' experiences; the process of writing; the finding of hidden mindful moments in amongst meeting deadlines; putting words to paper and sending out chapters for reviews. We have also learnt through the life surprises; health, and moments when we have had to care for others in need; through the loss of loved ones; through job insecurity; and personal challenges. Each author has had a journey alongside us. The creation of an edited collection does not happen in a vacuum. Lives continue to unfold and play out while authors and editors craft the text. In this unfolding, each of us has had to be mindful of others, and of ourselves, and we have sought to model care and compassion through the process. It has been tremendously rewarding and we have such gratitude towards those who have contributed to this book and who have shared their lives and experiences with us. We are truly grateful and appreciative.

17.2 Working Mindfully with Our Colleagues: Insights into the Editorial Process

The editing process is also a mindful task in itself. For us, it has been thinking about our own time, what it is that we want to contribute, and how we want to bring others together. We have been mindful throughout the process—from conception, proposal, acceptance of the contract with Springer, through to invitations to authors and the timelines set. Then, there is the review process. This is heavily positioned around feedback and what comes with this in terms of valuing and appreciating the words on the page versus changes that need to be made in order to meet academic requirements. We also have had to consider how deadlines fit into already existing deadlines for ourselves, but also the authors, and indeed, the reviewers.

We wanted the experience of contributing to this collection to be a good one. We were mindful of the way the book editing, chapter writing and the review process at times can become a task to be done where it is possible to forget that sitting at the other end of the document is another person, sending their stories out to the world to be judged. Opening yourself up to critique places you in a vulnerable position and we wanted to be mindful of this as we designed and engaged in the review process. We have had uneasy experiences when writing for others, and our mindful approach to this book built from this as well as our vision of this being an opportunity for mindful reflection and growth. Throughout the process, we have had to consider the role of the writing and academic review process, and as such we have the following:

- Planned ahead of time to design and follow a well thought-out schedule of the writing and editorial process.
- Communicated openly but mindfully in an attempt not to overwhelm others.
- Sent soft reminders of deadlines and an ability to negotiate these.
- Created a longer time to write reviews than would normally be enacted.
- Created a review sheet for reviewers so time and feedback are specific and is valued. In carrying out this activity, we invited the choice to make track changes on a chapter itself as an easier means to provide feedback.
- Carefully mapped out appropriate reviewers to topics and across experience in academia to support author experience and growth.
- Provided a quick turnaround in initial response from us as editors to a chapter to those who were feeling anxious to reinforce their contribution and support any need for refinement.
- Provided clear and succinct information in a timely manner.
- Contacted the authors as editors to thank them for their contribution before reviews were completed to highlight their contribution, and the impact their lived experience has had on us as editors.
- Shared the process through social media to engage a wider audience and showcase the work being completed.
- Built relationships and trust with each of the authors.
- Kept notes on progress to value contributions and made an effort to not call on authors or reviewers to remind us of work they have completed.

- Supported and mentored early career academics new to the process of writing a book chapter or undertaking reviews for the first time.
- Supported authors and reviewers in moments of stress to negotiate revised timelines.

We consciously share this as part of our learning journey but to also mindfully support others taking on this role in the future. As Williams and Hayler (2016) argue, co-editing a book is about much more than 'administrative tasks and the reading of drafts to bring the collection to publication', rather it is 'a creative and important part of our own development' (p. 152). In ways similar to Williams and Hayler's experience (2016), the process of editing this book provided us with a reflective lens to consider the role of mindfulness in all of our practices as academics, including our role as editors. Engaging with the authors enabled us to learn and grow from their experiences, and we were also able to learn from each other in our work as editors. Sharing the mindful practices, we have employed as editors, enable us to engage in ongoing learning, while also offering an insight for others into the process of co-editing.

17.3 We Do Not Believe in McMindfulness or Uber-Mindful Practices

> Academic practice and an authentic sense of self have converged on some common interpretations of authenticity: namely that the authentic emerges from a sense of self that does not seek to imitate others, is not driven by managerial imperatives or performance evaluations, it is associated with a sense of ontological security and freedom and is understood as a moment of connection between the self and its world. (Cannizzo, 2017, p. 102)

There is no doubt that the current academic is a new 'model' that differs from stereotypical notions of what it meant to be an academic in the past. Talent, output and personal achievements must be presented in a wider array of areas, at the same time, as well as at higher levels (Austin, 2002; Beer et al., 2015; Cranton & Taylor, 2012; Kasworm & Bowles, 2012; Mountz et al., 2015; Pitt & Mewburn, 2016; Ryan, 2013; Wang & Cranton, 2012). The context of universities has changed and continues to change. These changes include who can become students and access higher education degrees; the expectations of students; costing; the growth of internationalisation; management styles; business models; campus locations (including online vs. face-to-face); partnerships the continued and growing problems of casualisation; tenure; the frequency of institutional restructures; the impacts of new technology; community expectations; government interventions and the awareness that higher education is an 'ever changing world' (Austin, 2002, p. 95).

Mindfulness is not a cure to this. It is not an intervention, a program offered through Human Resources (HR) to alleviate stress, nor is it short one day off-site training that is undertaken to 'fix' the problems that exist in contemporary higher education contexts. It does not cure stress alone. It is a not a one size fits all. It is not

a script. It is not to be used in an instrumental way to enable academics to become more productive. It is not about being told to be more mindful, or to meditate so you can display mindful qualities. It is not a microchip that is placed within one's brain that translates into actions, strategies and ways of being. Mindfulness is not just a free pilates class. These things represent an Uber-mindful approach or one that separates the deeply held principles of mindfulness, sometimes called McMindfulness. This is not what mindfulness is. Nor is this what this book is about.

17.4 Mindfulness and Self-awareness

Mindfulness does allow you the space to look at all the aspects mentioned above differently, however, and to look at them with curiosity and openness. Mindfulness is a way of being. It comes from the heart. It comes from an individual. It comes from a way of being and experiencing the world. It develops over time and can look different for different people. It can be an informal practice, formal practice, or a combination of both. According to Purser and Milillo (2015), Buddhist approaches to mindfulness have an ethical stance and involve 'cognitive transformations that dramatically lessen self-centeredness by removing mental afflictions and unhealthy states of mind, while enhancing ethical sensitivity, moral development and an altruistic concern for the welfare of all sentient beings' (p. 19).

Self-awareness is a key to mindfulness. Put 'very simply, one of the first impacts of practicing mindfulness can be the capacity to move out of an aroused, activated, stressed state into a calmer reflective, regulated state' (OpenGround Training and Consulting, 2016, p. 12). The act of being self-aware of the environment, how you are a part of your environment and how you respond is central to being self-aware. Becoming aware of what is happening in one's discipline, faculty or department is a first step to being mindful. Identifying what place, you have, and your role and responses is also key. This may seem like it would be presumed or self-evident, however, this would be a mistake. Self-awareness of the environment, and the reality of that environment, rather than accepting or replicating someone else's version of the environment is often missing in our interactions. If we navigate higher education in a state of stress, approaching experiences as this is happening to one alone, trying to control external circumstances, then experiences will forever unfold in the negative; and in feelings of, for example, frustration, anger, or resentment. Alternatively, if we come at the higher education environment from a stance of curiosity, we open ourselves up to more varied emotions, feelings, and observations that support a way of inquiry, exploring and finding out new ways of being or viewing situations. This promotes a mindfulness.

Sometimes we find ourselves out of balance, in the midst of unravelling, feeling anxious, stressed, pulled in multiple directions in several ways, not because of the work itself, but because we have forgotten to be self-aware of the environment. We have forgotten to be self-aware and to consider what options might be possible in a mindful state. Becoming self-aware of how one wants to engage with the environment

is required in order to navigate those moments when we feel out of kilter with our environment. Self-awareness does not mean, however, that you will not experience negative or challenging feelings, but it does mean that you will be conscious of your own responses and feelings rather than suppressing them. Self-awareness of how one will 'wear' or 'ride the wave' cannot be ignored. 'Mindfulness is about making what you are doing right now the most import thing in the world' (OpenGround Training and Consulting, 2016, p. 6). It is about being present, noticing and being and sitting with feelings of satisfaction, excitement, uneasiness, embarrassment, contentment or uncomfortableness, for example. Mindfulness enables us to become self-aware of our emotional responses and of our interactions with the environment around us. In this book, we have been able to present chapters that shine a light into the ways in which the authors have employed practices and principles of mindfulness that have enabled them to become more self-aware and to mindfully approach their work and interactions with others.

17.5 The Mindful Journey: More Than a One Size Fits All Approach

Just like mindfulness, this chapter is not a one size fits all type of chapter. Actually, this book is not a one size fits all publication either. It is, however, written from a space of compassion and curiosity and in this chapter, we begin to extend the dialogue about what might be possible in applying mindful practices to working in higher education. The book is a collection of chapters that begin to disrupt the conversation of current experiences and perceptions of life in higher education contexts and allows the opportunity for the reader to shed light on different ways of doing things. We hope that this book serves as an inspiration to others and that it begins to move closed-door conversations into open, collegial and collaborative conversations. In this book, we do not solve the systemic problems that exist in higher education as this problem solving cannot be done individually. We write this book from a perspective that encourages us, and readers, to examine how we can look at ourselves as individuals within the environment and how might we disrupt those environments through mindful actions and formal or informal mindfulness practices. Not one author writes from a position of having found a solution, but does, however, share insights, strategies, and approaches that provide possibilities and opportunities for others to explore what mindful practices might look like or be like for others. While we do not offer a one size fits all approach, collectively, however, we may inspire others to work in these ways or consider other possible mindful approaches.

The lived experiences, honesty, openness, curiosity shared through this collection are themselves acts of mindfulness. Each author has written through an inquiry process and the very nature of sharing personal narratives scaffolds this. Richardson (1997) argues that 'writing is a theoretical and practical process' (p. 295) through which we can reveal assumptions, challenge and change existing scripts and 'nurture

our emergent selves' (p. 295). In the process of writing these chapters, some of the authors mention the way the writing process has become an act of mindfulness that has provided them with insights for themselves (for example, Chang; Lemon, this volume)

As we have put together this collection of chapters, mindfulness has been the through line. Lived experiences framed through Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical approach have ignited the sharing of what it is like working in the academy from the perspectives of what is behind, to the side and in front. We have asked the following questions:

(1) What experiences have you encountered that caused you to pause and consider your work in more mindful ways?
(2) What do we do to survive and prosper in academia?
(3) How do you enact mindfulness in your practice as an academic? What are the possibilities of this focus?

While some of the contributors talk about formal mindfulness practices and training and refer explicitly to mindfulness as a practice, others mention informal practices that enable them to be mindful of their work. In doing so, they may not make an explicit connection to the principles or philosophical underpinnings of mindfulness. In this text, we have not judged either of these positionings as wrong or right, as what is evident in the chapters is reflection on and in action towards non-judgmental, compassionate, caring and open experiences. The act of writing these chapters has allowed for a curiosity towards academic identity, and we see the chapters as an invitation to readers to reflect with curiosity on their own practices and their responses to the chapters present within this volume. The chapters illustrate a slowing down and a becoming present in considering place, actions and contributions, with Hassed and Chambers (2014) arguing that the

> … present moment is the only moment that has any legitimate claim to reality. The past and future never actually exist, although in the present we may notice that the mind projects what it imagines the future to be or what it thinks the past was. The residual effects from past thoughts, feelings, actions and decisions may be with us now, but those effects are also only ever observable and experienced in the present moment. (p. 17)

Cannizzo (2017) reminds us that 'academic freedom emerges from one's role in an intellectual institution, passion and authenticity are read as qualities of selfhood' (p. 93). He goes on further to add that 'what is significant about academics' sense of connection to their labour is that it invokes an idea of "freedom" that influences their "self-meanings"' (p. 104). As we navigate through this idea, it is undoubtedly one of the attractions to working as an academic; that is the freedom to explore, express passion and authentically investigate, for example, learning and teaching innovations; or fields of research that are of interest but can also impact others. We all want to make a difference. Our research also informs our teaching, and thus subsequent work across engagement, service and leadership. This is one of the rewarding aspects of working in higher education. It is one of the shining lights for many of us; including us, as editors, with Cannizzo (2017) contending that the 'culture of authenticity

encourages academics (and, arguably, also students) to seek out a personal connection with their labour, creating a source of intrinsic motivation for academic labourers' (p. 103). Despite this, however, Cannizzo (2017) identifies that 'many academics were dissatisfied with the degree to which they could effectively engage in work that they perceived to be valuable' (p. 94), with Lindholm (2008) arguing that 'the main thing is to be sure one's preferences actually do express one's truest desires' (p. 66).

Academic freedom and the ability to write about the work we perceive to be valuable is associated with this book. We are privileged to be able to curate the final product, and as authors we are all are writing from a state of privilege, we have opportunities to reflect and write about the ways we have embedded mindful perspectives and practices in our work. Some of the most profoundly exciting parts of curating an edited book are the conversations that are generated, the dialogue that follows, and the thinking that emerges. We hope this book sparks many more conversations among others as well.

In the next section of this chapter, we invite you to consider the approaches and strategies that each of the authors have presented throughout the text. We have curated these in a way to support considerations and thinking. It is for inspiration and to provide an opportunity for reflection, rather than as an attempt to solve problems. We have intended that presentation of the formal and informal mindful practices illustrated by our authors might function as a tool for reflection, and possibly for the beginning of your own journey into formal or informal mindful practices. In structuring this section of the chapter, we consider seven key approaches: mindfulness is not enough; formal mindfulness practices; informal mindfulness practices; leadership; working with others; health, mind and body; and social networking and digital identity.

17.6 Mindfulness Is not Enough

Pinto and Close's chapter invites us to really think about the place of mindfulness. They tell us mindfulness is not enough in the discussion centering around casualisation in contemporary university contexts. Pinto and Close provide us with much to consider about the structural issues of casualisation as they argue that

> Mindfulness and other contemplative practices can be part of these strategies of care, and we have both drawn on these to help us to cope with our jobs this year. However, we have concluded that even a critical sociological mindfulness is no match for the kind of structural, institutional and managerial frameworks that cause so many of the problems of casualisation. (this volume)

From their standpoint, Pinto and Close encourage us to question:

> *What do we do when mindfulness does not trigger where we can go and what we need to do?*
>
> *What will we put up with?*
>
> *What do we want to change? Can we change this?*

What is the actual trigger point as individuals? What are the blockers or barriers to shifting this?

How can we conceptualise the system we work in?

As Chang argues in her chapter, it is about not being the doormat. She asks the questions:

Can observing non-judgmentally be enough?

Does it shift the anger?

Can it shift the anger?

What is the moment?

Can our experiences and understandings of these changes shift and alter over time as we practice?

As Chang reminds us sinking into numbness or repression of experience would be an unskillful application of a non-judgmental attitude. She goes on to further say

> [b]ringing an attitude of non-judgmental acceptance to formal meditation practice is not a call for passive acceptance or numbness in the rest of one's life. Again, I think of Mattis-Namgyle's (2016) call for us to ask: *What is this moment?'* (para 14). Yes, when we follow this question, we connect with an aspiration to see reality, to see the true causes of our stress. Once seen, action may be required. As a teacher of mine used to say, *the dharma doesn't mean that you become a doormat*. In other words, let's not interpret the dharma to mean that it's okay for people to walk all over us. The distinction here is between how we experience the moment (non-judgmentally), and how we choose to understand and follow through in our actions outside of formal meditation practice. (Chang, this volume)

Juicy!

Makes us think.

Hassed and Chambers (2014) in their book 'Mindful Learning' talk about three areas to work towards enlightenment in regard to the workplace:

1. Be aware and accepting of what we are working on, no matter what we think.
2. Treat others as we would like to be treated, no matter what we think of them.
3. Helping others work towards where we need to get by helping others work toward where they need to get. (p. 262)

These areas are related to self-actualisation, that is finding out about what is real for us as individuals and actualising it (doing something with it, working with it and being enlightened from a perspective of joy and contentment). They are a reminder for how we interpret and move towards mindful practices. Such an approach is underpinned by awareness and openness. From a curious stance, we open ourselves up to connecting with what we are observing. As Bone reinforces in her chapter, 'mindful practice can become a new way of *being* and present a way to think, speak, and act differently while negotiating a demanding role' (this volume).

17.7 Formal Mindfulness Practices

In presenting practices that are more formal in nature, we have focused on mindfulness as framed around the elements outlined by Hassed and Chambers (2014)

- To know where the attention is;
- To prioritise where the attention needs to be; and
- For the attention to go there and stay there. (p. 7)

In thinking about the context of higher education and the chapters presented, there have been a variety of examples shared across different contexts that support the definition of mindfulness itself. Hassed and Chambers' (2014) outline of mindfulness supports the following examples:

- Utilising the sense upon which to train the attention.
- Engaging the mind in the present moment.
- Fostering self-control through non-attachment to transitory experiences such as thoughts, feelings and sensations.
- Encouraging an attitude of openness and acceptance or being non-judgmental about such transitory experiences.
- Cultivating equanimity and stillness by being unmoved by, or less reactive to, moment-to-moment experience. (p. 6)

Formal training in these areas is often positioned around meditation, or mindfulness meditation. It cultivates a present-moment attention and attitude of acceptance (rather than a reactionary response or feeling compelled to react without choice or discernment) of moment-by-moment experiences. In the chapters by Chang; Lemon; Wilson; Binder, Martin and Schwind; Correia and Strehlow; McDonough; and Bone, formal mindful practices are connected across a variety of contexts. Each author shares a variety of experiences that led them to a formal practice. For some, it was stress, for others it was searching for a way to calm the mind and navigate anxious experiences, and for others, it was a natural progression from experiences and influences from childhood and young adulthood.

In finding a formal mindfulness practice many of these authors have mentioned formal training that sparked ongoing practice including:

- Formal sitting meditation.
- Daily practices and rituals, for example, as Chang describes 'I walked between meetings, pebble in hand, tending the anger by watching my breath' (Chang, this volume).
- Mindful movement such as stretching or walking.
- Studying Buddhism and contemplative practices.
- Japanese calligraphy practice.
- Practice with like-minded communities.
- Body and breath meditations.
- Awareness of internal and external stimuli.
- Compassion-based meditations.

- Mindful-Based Stress Reduction—an eight-week program generated by Jon Kabat-Zinn.
- Yoga practice.

17.8 Informal Conversations About Mindfulness

Along with the use of formal mindfulness practices, the authors in the collection have presented descriptions of the ways they have embedded informal practices which have enabled them to be more mindful and intentional in their academic work. We collate some of these in the following section of this chapter.

17.8.1 Self-awareness of Use of Time

In thinking about the churn of academic work not becoming a normalised practice, strategic and mindful use of time needs to be addressed. Becoming self-aware of the use of time is a mindful practice that involves friendly, non-judging, anxiety-reducing, present-moment awareness achieved by purposefully paying attention to things ordinarily overlooked. Clear boundaries and working on strategies to apply these are required to honour both personal time and work time as reiterated by Vigurs; Lemon; McPherson and Lemon; McDonough; Khoo and Fotinatos (this volume).

McDonough (this volume) asks the following leading questions:

- How are we then to bring a mindful focus back to academic practice in order to become more than parts of a machine?
- How do we move from mindlessness and adopt practices that are instead intentional, purposeful and mindful?

She further recommends that 'adopting a mindful approach to practice as an academic offers the possibility of challenging the mindless acceleration and provides us with both the individual and collective hope of reclaiming the authenticity of our work and purpose as academics' (McDonough, this volume). Her practices remind us that the act of multi-tasking does not work and so she:

- Avoids: taking phone calls while driving to schools; catching up on emails during meetings and taking marking and research home to do at night and on the weekends.
- Finds ways to negotiate the multiple demands and stakeholders to be able to undertake projects and work that are aligned with her sense of purpose as an academic.

Similarly, Khoo (this volume) specifically recommends the following strategies to protect her time and boundaries:

- Make my availability known;

- Leave work at a regular time;
- Say ‘no’ a lot more—knowing when there really is not the time to take on new projects;
- Not looking for certain opportunities; and
- Deliberate and mindful choice to not work after hours.

From a collaborative perspective, Lemon (this volume) adopts the following processes:

- Book time into complete tasks that come from a meeting, so you can meet the deadlines, and if you can’t speak up sooner rather than later to support renegotiations;
- Plan ahead of time; and
- Communicate with others how you will work and allow for ongoing conversations about this.

Likewise, McPherson and Lemon (this volume) in their approach to co-writing honour time by:

- Scheduling regular meetings ahead of time;
- Meet face-to-face and discussing the writing, while writing away from each other through shared documents;
- Know that as a collaboration they need to connect and talk ‘life’ as well as the writing, so plan for this during meetings; and
- Negotiate deadlines to align with other tasks.

17.8.2 Holding the Space

Being aware lends itself to finding ways to hold space. In higher education, there are times when we need to be ‘paying attention to what is happening’ (Wells, 2013, p. 7) from the perspective of what we are doing, who we are working with and indeed what we commit ourselves to.

McDonough (this volume) refers to employing a mental post-it note connected to the word ‘no’, which then gives her the space to hold off on replying immediately to requests and to think mindfully about them. In doing this she is:

- Taking this time for contemplation to enable the action of thinking time about new requests rather than mindlessly churning from project to project;
- Reminding herself about not constantly striving for new things; and
- Making mindful and intentional decisions about involvement that are aligned with a sense of purpose as an academic rather than having her attention and focus scattered across a wider range of projects that do not hold meaning.

Khoo (this volume) reminds us that personal time and family commitments change and in holding the space for this she:

- Reconsiders the alignment of work and personal practices;
- Is self-aware of needs; and
- Changes priorities, in a recognition that work or career do not have to be at the top of the list at all times.

Correia and Strehlow extend this further through the facilitating of formal mindfulness practices that support the reconnection to self and to find breathing space, to be mindful of *being*, and to take a break from doing. They share how they hold 'brief meditation sessions sometimes before work or during breaks, as well as with each other and with colleagues, as we seed the possibilities of mindful practice communities' (Correia & Strehlow, this volume). This practice supports the:

- Providing of a space to set, or reset intentions;
- Bringing a mindful awareness to other parts of the day;
- Enacting a mindful posture each time during practice in academic work spaces as a way of developing cues in those spaces to be more mindful; and
- Holding the 'pause' to support the de-escalation of the reactivity that can occur.

17.8.3 Turning Questioning into Curiosity

The political nature of higher education can often present many academics with the tension of experiencing conflicting values and this can lead to a questioning of place. This has been especially illuminated by many of the authors: Is this the place for me? (McDonough); adjusting to my new academic role required considerable sacrifice and patience (Fotinatos); being a FIFO academic (fly in and fly out) accompanied with the role of being a change manager through leadership (Tairi); be the change or leave (Lemon); the pressure to conform (Taylor & Klein); the pressure to 'publish or perish' (McPherson and Lemon); and the pressure to always achieve (Khoo). Morrison describes the external policy pressures that continually drive a need for change; while Pinto and Close acknowledge the issues around holding an ongoing position versus a casual contract, with Chang also discussing how working in higher education presents itself with contracts ending or going missing in the process of sign-off leaving work completed but unpaid. Each of the authors uses these experiences as a prompt for thinking more mindfully about themselves and their work environments.

In the chapters of Lemon; Bone; Pinto and Close; and Chang (this volume), we can identify the shift from moving from questioning to a sense of curiosity where they explore questions of:

What am I noticing? What am I feeling? What is making me uncomfortable?

Morrison (this volume) describes a mindful approach where he:

- Acknowledges the anger and frustrations that can be present in himself and others;
- Works to remain focused on long-term goals to position groups for success; and
- Works hard to develop the capacity to listen to concerns without providing responses and to acknowledge his part in the change process, something he

describes that can at times be 'confronting but immensely beneficial'. (Morrison, this volume).

17.8.4 Humour

The dual experiences of stress and coping in higher education are not uncommon. If the perceived demands are high and our perceived resources are low there is a mismatching of what can be expected and achieved, thus a threat emerges and is perceived. Frydenberg and Lewis (2006) talk about one coping strategy that is identified as neither non-productive or productive—that is, humour or being funny as a diversion. The authors McDonough, and Taylor and Klein (this volume) refer to this in their chapters as a way to mindfully interrupt experiences:

- McDonough uses humour as a form of dialogue and conversation to begin to reclaim the space for discussing academic work and to engage in spaces for resistance; and
- Taylor and Klein tell funny 'self-deprecating stories about ourselves that are not boastful, trying to help others see that we are humans who make mistakes, have sleepless nights, and struggle' (this volume).

17.8.5 Bringing Back Attention to Present and Being Non-judgmental

The situation presented in higher education can often bring a tension point in how to work with others, negotiate deadlines, policy, colleagues and conflicting demands. As Vigurs (this volume) reminds us, there is a need to be aware of playing to others agendas, something that requires us to be aware of our own responses.

Bringing our attention back to the present requires that we are able to notice what is happening in the present moment. Mason (2002) describes the act of noticing as a 'collection of practices, both for living in, and hence learning from, experience and for informing future practice' (p. 29). For Mason (2002), the act of noticing is an intentional stance, where one becomes aware of the present and seeks to notice without judgement. Close describes that she has become open to noticing what is happening in the present moment, writing that 'being mindful has meant stopping to face the reality of my situation. Mindfulness in academia has usually meant trying to manage feelings of insecurity, precarity, deficiency, rejection, and inferiority between a love for engagement based around scholarship' (Pinto & Close, this volume). Similarly, Fotinatos (this volume) talks about

> shifting my attention to positive focused projects (i.e.: reward and recognition projects) helped with changing the mindset into one filled with optimism and positive reflection. It

> was pivotal to accept that the mask and distractions from the actual challenges, could only last for so long.

In each of these examples, we see a focus on the present and an attempt to regard experiences in a non-judgmental rather than a critical or negative way. In order to remain focused on the present rather than caught in thoughts of the past or in future thinking authors suggest:

- Taking permission to pause through 'emotionally charged situations' (Fotinatos, this volume);
- Centering through breath and reflection while focusing attention on key priorities (Fotinatos); and
- 'Re-charge my own light' (Binder, this volume).

The notion of being mindfully present is further illuminated by Correia and Strehlow through their focus on how the work with others and within the higher education space can be engaged with through mindful awareness. They describe how in the middle of a meeting or work with students that they bring:

> attention to the present moment to notice when our attention has drifted away, or to become aware that we or others are responding reactively with stress to a trigger. It means, in the moment, consciously and intentionally bringing our attention back to being present and listening, cultivating an attitude of non-judgmental acceptance of ourselves and others, to reset our intention and act accordingly. This may also mean that we acknowledge and accept the moments when we have acted counter to our intentions and values. (Correia & Strehlow, this volume)

Across the range of chapters presented in this volume, authors have identified a range of informal practices that support a growing self-awareness that is at the heart of their mindful approach to their work and to their interactions with others. In the next section of this chapter, we consider the role of leadership from a mindful perspective.

17.9 Leadership

Sharing the journey of mindful practices has been a form of enlightenment for many of the authors, and while some hold formal leadership positions, for others they are informally leading conversations with others around the concepts of mindfulness. McDonough shared how having conversations with other about her approach to mindfully consider tasks and projects have sparked interest and action in others, while Fotinatos shared that being present with her mindfulness journey has enabled open dialogue amongst her team.

Through mindful leadership in their formal roles both Fotinatos and Tairi have reinforced that through this action there has been a curiosity that supports:

- Colleagues seeking advice and guidance;
- Requests for support resources;

- Open and honest discussions that humanise the personal challenges of leadership;
- Embedded and authentic academic and professional support mindful strategies;
- Use of short reflection writing to manage intense periods of challenge and revisit thoughts in a week and re-evaluate its importance; and
- Establishment of boundaries to complete work.

In this process, reflection and acknowledging the act of being present has scaffolded the dissemination of learnt lessons with peers in similar positional roles. This has supported a re-conceptualisation of traditional leadership behaviour within a reflective awareness model which is open, expansive and not-judgmental. The experiences shared in these chapters suggest possibilities for the potential of a mindful approach to leadership and for leaders to engage in open dialogue about the vulnerabilities, possibilities and opportunities of leadership.

17.10 Working with Others

One of the other key practices described across the range of chapters is the way that authors work with others. In this section of the chapter, we present a range of strategies, drawn from the collection, that consider ways to be mindful in: collaboration and relationships competitiveness; and working with students.

17.10.1 Collaboration and Relationships

Building relationships and connecting have been a strong through-line throughout many of the chapters. As Binder, Martin and Schwind share '[o]ur collaboration and the continuing network of like-minded professionals we have encountered contributes to stability in challenging situations' (this volume). Many authors in the chapter consider the ways in which they can be intentional and mindful in their collaborations with others with Lemon approaching collaborations by thinking about her own contribution and how she can learn from others. She presents guiding reflective questions that underpin actions of:

- Being present;
- Self-awareness of levels of commitment;
- Listening non-judgmentally;
- Building relationships;
- Learning how you can best utilise time together;
- Mutual respect;
- Flow;
- Connect, breathe and smile;
- Booking yourself in for time to complete the tasks associated with the collaboration;

- Setting clear boundaries which includes clear roles and responsibilities, and time frame;
- Always learning and being curious;
- Learning who you can collaborate with;
- Developing plans that excite you;
- Care—of self and others; and
- Having an exit plan.

Modelling what successful collaborations can look like is addressed by Taylor and Klein as they reflect on what it looks like to honour the person and the professional across all collaborative interactions. They enact:

- Growth through empathy, listening, and through giving back to one another;
- The nurturing of each other's intellectual and emotional needs; and
- Continual encouragement.

Positive relationships fuel connections and friendship in higher education, and Pinto and Close acknowledge that '[a]cademic networks are important both as systems of support and sustenance, and as opportunities for employment' (this volume). They enact actions as follows:

- Listening;
- Showing empathy and gratitude when trying to understand others' experiences;
- Making space for their voices, both individually and collectively;
- Being careful about the work that is passed along to colleagues;
- Not making promises of work that they cannot honour; and
- Providing help with applications, networking, and strategising.

Likewise, McPherson and Lemon illuminate how their co-writing collaboration is underpinned by curiosity and the act of making. They refer to mindful acts of being:

- Present in each other's company and with the co-writing process;
- Having a genuine curiosity to the research and the writing they are working on at the time;
- Compassion and honesty;
- Energised by the work and each other;
- Maintaining communication with each other in a variety of formats;
- Open to thinking, processing and being with the making and creative process away from writing;
- Helpful to each other in other areas outside the co-writing process;
- Knowing when to give each other space;
- Open to learning new things and being pushed with their thinking;
- Able to set realistic goals;
- Able to publish on their own agenda; and
- Curious about the co-writing process and sharing this with others.

In each of these approaches to relationships it is possible to identify a mindful approach to developing and sustaining relationships. The ethical stance of mindfulness to improve the conditions of others is also reflected in the spirit of reciprocity that is reflected in the strategies used by authors. This spirit of generosity and reciprocity is at odds with the competitive higher education environment.

17.10.2 Competitiveness

In the environment of higher education, competitiveness is ever present and many of the authors share insights into how they have approached this mindfully. Noticing and labelling when they identify competition has enabled them to be self-aware, present and view experiences through a non-judgmental lens while building collaborative relationships. Binder, Martin and Schwind describe:

> Finding like-minded colleagues, who share similar philosophical perspectives is like raindrops on a flat surface, coalescing with one another until they create a larger puddle, a more significant body of water. That is how we survive and how we thrive … supporting one another through the challenges and demands of academic life. (this volume)

The concept of finding colleagues who you trust and with who you share similar goals and values is also represented in the work of McDonough, who writes that

> In seeking to adopt a more mindful approach to academic work that enables me to be intentional about the work I do, the projects I undertake and the people I collaborate with I try and model mindful practices in my interactions with others, including colleagues and students. (this volume)

Similarly, Khoo who describes 'I have established practices and collegial expectations that afford me a large measure of confidence in doing my work well, within the boundaries I've set' (this volume). Fotinatos, too, writes of working 'with like-minded colleagues who have similar invested interests in reaching target goals and aspirations' (this volume). Being mindful of the goals and motivations of others is described by authors as a key to enabling them to develop positive and collegial, rather than competitive relationships.

17.10.3 Working with Students

Relationships with students of higher education is just as vital as those with our colleagues. Bone reminds us that 'by practising mindfulness in action I can influence the learning of others' (this volume) and many of the authors in the collection consider the role they can play in modelling mindful practices for their student (see for example: Bone; Binder, Martin, & Schwind; and Correia & Strehlow, this volume). In considering ways to adopt more mindful interactions with students' authors describe:

- The ways in which we as teachers can attempt to help students connect meaningfully with the course material. Curiosity is based on how do I do that thoughtfully, sensitively and with respect for each student and their experiences? How can we think about the stories of others, and about our own stories? How do we understand the dynamic of empathic connection?
- Develop trust as an essential component in creating a safe, respectful and mindful learning environment for students, particularly in those courses that explore sensitive topics.
- How to be open to moving with the students through the learning process with creativity and compassion while modelling approaches that reflect the care and the mindful practice of child and youth care work.
- At the beginning of this semester resist the easy pathway and reflect on what that might look like. It is easy, after teaching for a while, to recycle lecture notes and PowerPoint slides and to simply perform the role of lecturer without bringing passion or meaning to the role.
- Establish a clear approach that values wellbeing, taking a considered, mindful and care/ful approach, and being aware of the classroom as a microcosm of a future workplace was especially relevant to the unit I was teaching.
- Reflect upon own long-term practice of yoga as a way to approach working with students and to take a calm and middle pathway that fits the yogic tradition. Yoga is a balance between effort and ease. From this perspective, the pedagogical decision making would not be about easy/difficult dualisms but would be centered and balanced.
- Maintain the underlying scientific principles of mindfulness, but flexibly adapted the form of delivery to enhance cultural sensitivity, such as mindful walking, that promote a mindfulness mindset. This recognises the capacity of each student to practice mindfulness in a way that may enhance psychological skills in attention and awareness that may be of benefit to their study but also cultivates a socio-emotional context in which cultural heritage is respected.
- Support the learning and application of mindfulness by reflective practice in students about how mindfulness is relevant to their learning in the unit and the program, and for their own personal and life growth.

17.11 Health, Mind and Body: Care of Self and Others

In adopting more mindful practices, the scholars represented in this collection have identified the ways they engage in acts of self-care, along with care for others. Self-care in the higher education context is often a dirty word; that is something we don't talk about, it is something extra, often dropped in the fast-paced nature of work requirements (Berg & Seeber, 2016). Self- care is worthy of our attention, and mindfulness creates an awareness around this, with many of the authors talking about this concept throughout the book. Fotinatos describes that 'looking after oneself has implications for the challenges on personal health, wellbeing and team/service effec-

tiveness… [there is a need to] identify my current thought patterns' (this volume) while Tairi (this volume) highlights the personal sacrifices that can be made in pursuing career opportunities. Pinto and Close position self-care from the perspective of being staff 'on both sides of the divide' and that they both 'experience very high levels of stress and anxiety associated with their jobs' (this volume); demonstrate an awareness of the need for those in higher education to be aware of and care for others. Binder, Martin and Schwind remind us that '[a]s academics we are also seeking collegial support, a sense of belonging, and a safe place within the context of the institution to express ourselves openly and honestly—to share our vulnerabilities—to feel cared about' (this volume).

Looking after the mind, body and soul and taking time to celebrate the good in our experiences as academics is reflected in the mindful practices of authors. Taylor and Klein describe the embedding of practices that have helped them work through the strains and tensions that include:

- Encouraging each other 'to find spaces for our needs as humans in a world where constant work is the norm' (Taylor & Klein, this volume);
- Support each other in efforts to turn off email;
- Rotating the taking of vacations; and
- Working from home in a space that is nurturing.

Making time for care of self and of others is reflected in the chapters of Bone, and Lemon respectively (this volume), as they write about the power of connections. They refer to the power of:

- The smile;
- Getting to know your colleagues and students; and
- Listening and appreciating without judgement.

Similarly, McPherson and Lemon (this volume) share that they celebrate their collaboration and connection through:

- Sharing creative endeavours and new skills;
- The making process; and
- Discussing writing over coffee or a cup of tea in a cafe.

A number of authors (Bone; Chang; Lemon; McDonough; Taylor & Klein; Wilson, this volume) describe engaging in physical movement, including dance, walking, running or yoga as a means of being self-aware of the need to care for self. They identify the way movement enables a care for both the physical and emotional self. Fotinatos (this volume) describes

- Resetting positive sleeping habits;
- Making improvements in my eating routine;
- Introducing accountable routine exercise patterns;
- Increasing purposeful family and friend social interactions and activities;
- Seeking professional support and advice from a combination of medical, personal relationship and employee assisted program counselling; and

- Extending my professional learning with specific mental health training, situational leadership theory, mindful leadership practice, and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT).

She goes on to describe the ways that these mindful practices for self-care have enabled her to introduce improved workplace changes such as:

- Setting clear boundaries between my work and personal life;
- Expanding delegation and decision making with trusted members of my team;
- The incorporation of several mindfulness strategies into daily work habits including setting and focusing on one key task at specific times and days and reduced the volume of busy/unproductive work;
- Walking and developing an increased appreciation of silence and sounds of nature; and
- Increased engagement and awareness of staff conversations, meetings and key discussions.

Bringing the body back into focus has been a mindful self-care focus for McDonough, rather than detaching from the body and being in our 'heads' all the time. In mindless academia, McDonough contends:

> the body is forgotten about, ignored and treated badly; bodies sit hunched over desks, heads are bowed over books, lunch is quickly eaten on the run, breathing is hurried and any feelings of disquiet that the body might seek to send are ignored. (this volume)

Bringing the attention back to the body involves approaches such as:

- A mindful attention on the body and on the breath;
- Ensuring regular breaks from a desk, eating lunch with colleagues or outside in the sunshine and implementing at least 10 min of mindfulness meditation practice; and
- Being present and remaining connected to how she is feeling and what she is noticing about herself.

The mindful attention of being engaged in creative pursuits is represented in the work of Binder, Martin, & Schwind and in that of McPherson and Lemon.

A self-care strategy described by many of the authors is the finding of places that support mindful restorative practices. For some, this is being in nature (Binder, Martin, & Scwhind; McDonough, this volume), while for others it is through participating in yoga (Bone; Lemon; Wilson, this volume) or creative pursuits such as printmaking or craft (McPherson & Lemon, this volume).

For Taylor and Klein part of their focus on self is the attention they give to their appearance and they articulate how this is a conscious, intentional practice:

> [w]e have a reputation for wearing fierce fashion and in many ways this is our armor. We dress to the nines, disrupting the frumpiness more common of academia, and of academic women in specific – who are often urged to tamp down on their female expression. Since we have been told that our collaboration can at times intimidate, we assert ourselves through our clothing, shoes, makeup, and accessories. This is also a way for us to flaunt our womanhood with pride. Our students and university colleagues often comment about how we dress,

> remarking that they never see us in jeans, are impressed with the height of our heels, or even situate us in a fashion magazine. We are conscious of how we are perceived and therefore take care in the way we look. We each have our own unique style but we dress the way we engage in the world: boldly, taking risks with new trends, and often without fear. (this volume)

17.12 Social Networking and Digital Identity: Wider Emotional Support

As we construct our identities within the academy, there is an outward way of being that both Vigurs, and Tairi (this volume) talk about in each of their chapters, positioned around mindfully engaging with social media and the construction of their social networks. Vigurs shares her use as a 'means of being more mindful about the role of research and scholarship in the ongoing construction of my academic identity' (this volume) that she continually navigates and negotiates as a means to support her research work and identity as a researcher.

According to Vigurs (this volume) mindfully being on social media offers the possibility of:

- A sense of academic community that enables mindful interaction and the ability to evaluate how social media interaction supports the complex cognitive and emotional demands of working in higher education; and
- Being part of a network that can lead to more fluid, dynamic and creative working practices that can often be achieved in a bureaucratic, hierarchical organisation.

17.12.1 Create Your Own Approach to Professional Learning

In connecting to the possibilities of social media use in academia, Vigurs shares in her chapter how she 'join[ed] Twitter as a step towards activating wider, external networks in these fields was my way of attempting to disrupt the anxiety I was increasingly experiencing due to cultures of micro-management and managerial panic' (this volume). Both Tairi and Vigurs highlight many tips that support this approach as they build their own online network for professional learning:

- Using Twitter daily to be more mindful about research and scholarship as a core part of professional identity;
- Following a range of people to learn how Twitter could be used for learning and how to curate it;
- How to build reciprocity and durability through Twitter, through 'liking' tweets;
- Sharing of resources and moral support;
- Sharing content and experiences to contribute to the demystification of research in academia;

- Development of genuine, reciprocal relationships with researchers from different disciplines; and
- Developing an openness to online relationships becoming professional in real life. Vigurs further reiterates that some social media platforms such as Instagram can be: 'a space where I can currently share more of the back stage and off stage parts of my life, rather than focusing solely on what front stage (my academic identity) looks like. It allows a more holistic representation of myself across my different identities' (this volume).

17.12.2 Warning: Mindful Use of Social Media

In mindfully acknowledging the benefits of being connected digitally, Vigurs; Tairi; and McDonough (this volume) all mention the need to be present about boundary setting. Vigurs reminds us that there can be a spiralling into 'never switching off, always being connected—potentially further exacerbating academics' levels of stress and pressure' (this volume). Her strategies to approach this include:

- Deleting Twitter and Facebook apps during holiday periods;
- Taking a break from social networks;
- Reviewing if social media platform interaction is still mindful in nature; and
- Identifying clear boundaries for time spent on apps.

McDonough, in particular, highlights how she addresses 'turning off the connectivity monster', and does this by being aware of:

- Being connected constantly;
- Avoiding checking in and responding immediately to emails from students and colleagues;
- Taking time to think carefully about as by rushing to respond we dismantle the opportunities for quiet contemplation of challenging issues; and
- Making an intentional effort to not check email after 5.30 pm or on the weekends.

17.13 Conclusion

Living and working within higher education environments is complex and challenging, but as the authors in this collection have highlighted, it is possible to carve out the space for mindful and contemplative practices and philosophies. In this chapter, we have highlighted a range of areas in which scholars across disciplines and roles have embedded mindful practices in their work. We hope that in reading this chapter and the volume as a whole, you too may be inspired to consider the ways in which your own mindful practices might be reflected on these pages. You may be familiar with some of them, or you may be starting at the beginning of a mindfulness journey, but no matter the starting point, we invite you into a dialogue with others, to

consider how mindfulness in the academy might enable us to all be more humane, kind and compassionate; while considering how our actions might also lead to the development of more mindful systems and organisations.

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Postface

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In 1854, John Henry Newman's seminal treatise, 'The Idea of a University', portrayed the university as a place where

> … the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers. (Lowell, 1910, p. 39)

The traditional university characterised by Newman-type ideals is an elite institution for an intellectual minority. It is a far cry from universities of the early twenty-first century. In the last 40 years, in Australia, and most 'western' contexts, changes have been unprecedented in terms of what constitutes a university, who studies at university and who works as an academic. While universities have long offered degrees in vocational fields such as Medicine and Law, the 'massification' of the university system under neoliberal government policies of economic rationalism, during the 1980s, in Australia, led to increased numbers of vocationally oriented degrees and graduates for the professions and business. The purpose of higher education shifted from the "general development of individuals' mind and capabilities, contributing culturally to the community and enhancing knowledge and understanding for their own sake rather than for utilitarian ends' (Becher & Trowler, 2001, p. 5), to an increased focus on vocationally oriented subjects and degrees. Today, courses such as allied health, social work, marketing, tourism, and teacher education are represented in the course profiles of most Australian

N. Lemon and S. McDonough (eds.), *Mindfulness in the Academy*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6

universities. This has, of course, had a flow-on effect on the nature of the student body, and the work and identities of academics. At the same time, research in universities has increasingly focused on producing industry applicable results that lead to greater productivity and economic gain, rather than knowledge production for the sake of it (Becher & Trowler, 2001).

The transition to the neoliberal university has had a far-reaching impact on both the work of academics as well as academic identities. Universities are increasingly characterised by intense competition, corporatisation, entrepreneurialism and managerialism. A culture of performativity has given rise to numerous modes and methods of regulation and judgement that enable, and indeed require academics to 'perform' their value and worth in terms of their research and teaching. There is a need to compete for government and industry funding, and to attract and retain students who are seen as 'clients' and 'customers' exercising their right of choice in the marketplace. Research grant income, student numbers, students' satisfaction, doctoral completions in reduced timescales and publications in particular journals have increasingly dominated the concerns of academics at the same time as job security has decreased. Universities are pitted against each other, competing for student numbers and places on league tables. Academics are in competition with each other for resources, promotions and research and teaching rankings. The accountability and quality control measures in universities around research have become increasingly driven by auditing processes and research quality assessment exercises that influence how research is valued, what research is valued and how academics prioritise their research labour. Put simply, it has become necessary for academics to be 'all things to all people', to excel in all areas and to do more with less—much less.

For many academics, this climate poses a real risk of burnout. The stress of operating in a competitive, driven environment is the opposite of what many imagined academia to be. For some, there is a disconnect between the reality of contemporary universities and their expectations of academe. My research into academic identities suggests what had initially attracted academics to academe and what many continue to imagine as 'ideal' is rooted in a Newman-style institution (Santoro & Snead, 2013). This is the case for those who have been students in neo-liberal universities and for those who have recently joined academe from private enterprise. That Newman style characteristics continue to shape academic expectations of the ideal university is evidence that it is a powerful and an enduring image.

Being a 'real' academic (Santoro & Snead, 2013), or an 'authentic academic' (Archer, 2008) is a tenuous position, susceptible to change from one year to the next and dependant on achieving success in a competitive environment. According to Archer (2008), 'successful', authentic academic identities are rendered insecure, temporary and risky within regimes of performativity—the capacity to be seen as an authentic, successful academic is tightly constrained and dependent upon the extent to which the academic can keep delivering (producing the 'right' goods) as a neoliberal subject.

As many of the authors of a chapter, in this book, indicate, their work as academics in universities has challenged their wellbeing, sense of security, stability, happiness and resilience. However, the concept of mindfulness and mindful practice has provided them with productive ways to deal with life and life's nexus with work. Central to many of the chapters, in this book, are relationships. Contrary to traditional views of the Newman-style academic, working alone in the hallowed halls of academe, physically separated from others, immersed in their own worlds of thought and individually pondering solutions to social and scientific problems, academics in twenty-first-century universities actually work closely *with* people—most of the time. Their relationships with others shape their work as much as their relationships with ideas. Individuals under pressure relate to each other in particular ways, and often in counterproductive ways. Therefore, mindfulness and mindful practice hold extraordinary potential to enable academics to negotiate the challenges of human relationships in what are difficult times. But mindfulness does not only enable people to cope, to tolerate and to survive in a challenging context. Through change at an individual/ personal level, cultural change becomes possible at an institutional level.

The messages in this book, communicated through deeply personal and honest accounts of the authors' academic lives will have particular resonance for those who manage and lead colleagues in universities. The concept of mindfulness is potentially useful on two accounts for academic managers and leaders. First, like any academic, they are also affected by the discourses currently shaping academic work. Second, managers and leaders, especially those in middle management, contribute to the development of effective teams of academics as part of their remit. Developing and encouraging mindful communities of staff can be seen as an important step in the development of effective and productive teams of scholars and researchers. While caution is needed around viewing mindfulness as a panacea for the difficulties experienced by those in academe, the increasing interest in mindfulness as an area of research and scholarship is a positive development. It offers great potential for developing better understandings of the complexities of academic work places and those who work within them.

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Glossary of Terms

ADU Academic Development Unit

Dharma the reality or laws that the Buddha realised

HRM Human Resource Management

HR Human Resources

L&T Learning and Teaching

LGBTQI+ lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, plus

MBSR Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction

MBCT Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy

Mahāyāna a movement in Buddhism that translates as the 'greater vehicle'

Sangha can mean a community of Buddhist practitioners

Shamatha calm-abiding concentration meditation

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-13-2143-6

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