

The ENGINEERING CAREER COACH PODCAST SESSION #67

How to Meditate As An Engineer Without Moving To The Himalayas

Show notes at: engineeringcareercoach.com/mindfulness

Episode Intro: This is *The Engineering Career Coach Podcast*, the only podcast dedicated to helping engineers succeed in work and life. This show is hosted by engineering enthusiasts, Anthony Fasano and Chris Knutson. Both are professional engineers who found success early in their careers and now work together to help other engineers do the same. Now, it's show time!

Chris: Hey listeners! This is Chris Knutson and this is the show for engineers who want to succeed in both work and life. If you have listened to the show before, you know from all of Anthony's episodes and the ones that I've been on that we really believe that it's up to oneself to engineer success in one's career. If you're new to the show, that's what we believe. Each of us has the same number of hours in a week that our branded genius to bring our version of greatness to the world. That's what we try to do in the show is that to help you unlock your greatness.

And in today's solo episode, I'm going to discuss a subject that's maybe a little of use to us engineers. It's the topic of meditation and more appropriately, mindfulness mediation. I'm covering this topic because it's one that has been an absolute game changer for me with respective focus, manner of resiliency and the ability to deal with the friction of life, and most importantly, arm myself with the tactics that I can use to my mind and anxiety under control. And I have that one book specifically, one that I'd recommend to anyone that is just interested about learning a bit more about mindfulness meditation.

Go out and get your hands on the copy of *Search Inside Yourself* by Chade-Meng Tan. He's also known as the jolly good fellow at Google and he built a classic Google which led to this book and drew on that insight in the mind of people like Daniel Goleman who is the author of *Emotional Intelligence* which is a book that I think has come up in previous episodes. It's also one that I'd recommend for any engineer leaders that are looking to grow their communication skills and empathy and really getting along with people.

And then, also the works of Jon Kabat-Zinn who's the recognized contemporary western world expert in mindfulness meditation and you're going to hear that name come up over and over again in today's episode. I'm specific because of the influence that he's had and this is a personal topic. One that Kabat-Zinn cautions people not to discuss with others primarily because it is a personal journey and a personal endeavor. But, if you have ever heard and never heard of mindfulness meditation or if you

have and you don't really know where to begin or it happened to be a bad first attempt at it, you have to learn about it somewhere, so today's the day. Before we get into the main segment of the show, I want to take a moment to recognize our sponsor for today's episode.

If you're thinking about taking the FE, PE or SC exam this year, I recommend that you check out PPI. They are the leader in engineering exam preparation. For a special 15% discount, you can use promo code **coach** at ppi2pass.com/coach. That's again ppi2pass.com/coach and use the promo code **coach** and check out for a 15% discount on your order.

Alright. Now, I want to give you a quote related to today's topic to bring us into the show. This one comes from Jon Kabat-Zinn out of his book *Wherever You Go, There You Are* and he tells us that: "Meditation is the only intentional systematic human activity which at the bottom is about not about trying to improve yourself or get anywhere else; it's simply to realize where you already are."

Coaching Segment:

Chris: Now it's time for the main segment of our show. And for today's main segment, I'm going to cover Chade-Meng Tan's book, *Search Inside Yourself* as well as give you some additional insights from Jon Kabat-Zinn, the teacher, scientist and inclination who first demonstrated the benefits of mindfulness within mainstream western medicine and he is a major influencer of the *Search Inside Yourself* book and really someone that I have studied that last couple of years through some meditation groups that I've been working in.

For the past eight years, I have developed profound and fell off the wagon, got back on and up way built for this mindfulness practice that I am convinced has been the single greatest game changer in my career and in my life and I know that because of my ability to focus, my ability to feel gratitude, my ability to deal with the friction of life, and really my mental resilience have benefited amazingly from developing in this mindfulness practice. What's interesting is that I was in my mid 30's before I even had heard of mindfulness meditation. I mean, I have heard of meditation before and completely had it wrong as to what it is and what it can do for somebody. So, this is something that I've really taken into my routines and who I am as a person in just the past few years.

So, the show notes for today's show are going to be found at teccpodcast.com. Look for Episode 67. That's teccpodcast.com. And the show notes are going to contain a summary of all the key points that I have discussed in today's episodes as well as links to all the resources, the websites, books mentioned during the show. There is also going to be a guided meditation in there for you as well as the book note on the *Search inside Yourself* book so you better go and take a look at the book note for that.

So, before I get into the material from Tan's book *Search Inside Yourself*, I want to share another

quote from Jon Kabat-Zinn and then you're going to hear me refer too often in this episode because again, this guy is really the person who has brought mindfulness meditation into the mainstream in the US. And this quote helps to spell out and clear text what mindfulness meditation is and one probably what it isn't.

And so, here is the quote and again this comes from the book *Wherever You Go, There You Are*. And it goes like this: "When we speak of meditation, it is important for you to know that this is not some weird cryptic activity, as our popular culture might have it. It does not involve becoming some kind of zombie, vegetable, self-absorbed narcissist, navel gazer, "space cadet," cultist, devotee, mystic, or Eastern philosopher. Meditation is simply about being yourself and knowing something about who that is. It is about coming to realize that you are on a path whether you like it or not, namely, the path that is your life. Meditation may help us see that this path we call our life has direction; that it is always unfolding, moment by moment; and that what happens now, in this moment, influences what happens next."

So, I think that really provides a good context like I have already mentioned what meditation is and what it isn't. And I'll include the full quote in the show notes specifically so that you can go back and take a look at that, especially if you are not really understanding what meditation is and maybe having a hard time wrapping your mind around it because again, this was something that was hard for me to really understand initially and I really got into it.

Like I said, I started back probably about in the 2005 time frame. It was really kind of the first time I've heard about it and I heard about it through the work of a Brian Johnson through his philosopher's notes and I had listened to a couple of his book reviews and book notes on some of the books that he had read on meditation, specifically mindfulness meditation and then just started wanting to find out more and more about what that could do, and I saw that there were athletes and business moguls and all these other people who were coming online and a lot of those others who started paying attention to these stuffs saying, "Hey, I have got this mindfulness practice and it's doing all these great things for me and my ability to focus and my ability to be mentally resilient, you know, these mental bullet-proof mentality abilities to be able to do more in life."

And I started getting really more into wanting to read more about it, learn more about it and eventually, after nearly a decade of playing around with it, it's becomes this indispensable part of my day of my life. So, when I learned that an engineer at Google, this gentleman named Chade-Meng Tan who is also known again as a jolly good fellow had created a course on mindfulness, I thought it was pretty ecstatic. I was pretty ecstatic. Here is an engineer who has made this similar type of a connection between the benefits of mindfulness and what it can do for a person, an engineer in their career.

So, I jumped into this book and what I'm going to do is kind of go through a real brief synopsis of what is contained in this book and I've really got two major points that I want to hit. And the first out of that

book was of course the question, why being mindful? So, as I mentioned, Meng Tan is an engineer, steep in science and has this scientific method and that's what he uses, is he unpacks the mindfulness meditation practice and what it really truly means at the neurological level. He starts at the neurological level, goes through a lot of details about what it is and what it does to us at that level and what it can do in how we operate in the world around us. And it's with this background, the scientific background that he undertook the task to create a course, this course called *Search Inside Yourself* at Google that taught people that mindfulness practice in a way in which it can be applied to everyday life.

So, as I already mentioned, from Kabat-Zinn's definition, it's not navel gazing. It's about bringing focus and clarity in your mind, observation of your thoughts and installing a gap between every stimulus that we experience in and then what our responses are. And so, it's really about being attuned to other people. And Tan was able to tap into some of the greatest minds that are out there working right now and are contemporary psychology, temporary neuropsychology and another individual that he was able to get involved and put in together in his course was Daniel Goleman, who is the author of the book *Emotional Intelligence*, which is another great one to read for all engineers that are looking to develop a better understanding on how to operate and get along with other people.

And so, this idea of mindfulness meditation is also about getting yourself attuned to other people by being observant and more present and more in tune with others. You end up contributing more to the bottom line of your organization because you are clear about what you're doing and why and you're able to connect with other people, which I think is pretty awesome. So, the other really major point that is covered in this book is this concept of being emotionally smart. And so, emotional intelligence again really contributed in the mainstream today to Goleman's book, this *E.I.* which is the emotional intelligence as it sounds, is the key part of mindfulness and it's important to businesses just as strong.

So, three things that I think really tie this idea in this emotional intelligence to business in your work, in your engineering career are that it contributes to stellar work performance and there is a lot of research that's out there on and out that shows us that emotional intelligence is two times as important as pure intellect in expertise which is a massive change in concept, perhaps for most engineers who we really rely on our technical skills, our technical know-how and to do that is what's going to really propel us in our careers and in fact, having this ability to be able to interact with other people to develop connections, create relationships, to be able to communicate with another person is often times much more important than really how much you know and what your level of skills are.

So, I think that's an important key concept. And a key take-away for most people is that spending that time in being able to develop yourself to be able to communicate and interact with other people can really be a game changer for your career, your engineering career; something that we definitely think about. And again, this is work that can be done through mindfulness meditation. It really again comes down to your ability to be able to just be very present and very aware of what's going on around you.

Another key element in why being emotionally smart is important in the business realm is that over 80% of the qualities of effective leaders are linked to emotional intelligence. So, these are things like being able to listen, being able to perceive, political activities are going on so being politically astute in the organization or your firm, the ability to be able to focus on activities that you are involved in; these are all really really important qualities that effective leaders have. And another one is empathy, this ability to be able to connect with other people. And I think anyone who has ever worked for a leader who is empathetic and have this ability to connect with other people knew that that leader was way, way better than other individuals that they may have come across who were not quite as empathetic and as attuned and connected with the people that they were trying to lead.

And the third key point that really ties again this concept of emotional intelligence, emotionally smart individuals to business output is this ability to create the conditions for happiness. So, emotional intelligence gives you the tools to apply mindfulness practice of your observations of your thoughts and by doing that, when we are tied into what's going on in our mind and have those ability to be able to observe what's happening as opposed to just being on auto-pilot, once you start to do that, it's a lot easier to be fulfilled in what's going on in your life. And another that probably comes across is maybe a major stretch but I can attest to this because as I developed my practice, just like Goleman said, this massive wave that hit me; one day I wasn't mindful, the next day I was mindful and all of a sudden I had this greater ability to be fulfilled and happy in my life.

But what it has done over the months that I have developed this practice since now, almost coming up to a year of daily practice, is I truly can sense my greater connection to what's going on. I'm much more observant, much more aware of what's happening inside my own head and how that changes my view of what's going on around me and that ability to be able to do that is just huge. So, I've been able to create these conditions for happiness purely by being able to observe what is going on in my own head and being able to look at the thoughts that are taking place in my brain and say, "Okay. Is that a thought that's going to help me and serve me, and help and serve another or is it there as a thought that's not going to be helpful to anyone?"

And that's another key concept that comes out of the mindfulness practice, is that as you begin to observe your thoughts and you begin to look at the thoughts, you don't necessarily judge it so you're not saying, "Well, that thought is good or that thought is bad." It's just it is, it's there. Our brain is a muscle, if you will, and the brain's purpose is to generate thoughts. That's all it's ever going to do, is generate thoughts. And that's a good thing. We don't want our brains to not be generating thoughts.

But, these conditions for happiness and fulfillment comes when we can essentially accept that our brain is going to generate thoughts and it's going to be constantly going to be generating thoughts and then we can determine whether or not that's the thought that's going to be of use and benefit or if it's not going to be of use and benefit. If it isn't, we don't label it good or bad. We just go ahead. Not necessarily a very helpful thought. Thank you very much, brain. But, I'm just going to put that one off

to the side and not going to do anything with it.

So, that's really huge and this all again comes under this concept, under this umbrella of emotional intelligence. So, I really think that emotional intelligence and mindfulness are intellect in combine and they allow one to be a uber effective in everything they undertake. So, the bottom line out of this book *Search Inside Yourself* is that mindfulness extends beyond just sitting on a cushion and observing your thoughts and breath. It has to, in order to be of any use in our daily life and for myself, I've got a specific routine that I go through in the morning when I wake up. I will either do a 15-minute mindfulness meditation session before or just after I work out, I do my physical workout. I look at the meditation as my mental workout for the day and I'll touch in a moment on what this whole mindfulness meditation sit in there, what's it really like and to try to kind of dispel some of the rumors about that.

But, I can tell you that this is going to be one area that's going to boost your success immediately as in communications. Again, this act of mindfully listening to another person is an act that can be applied today in any kinds of meetings you have with clients, field visit to a job site, at home with your spouse, children; and success of happiness can and must be developed from your inside. Otherwise, what you have on the outside still might not be adequate. And as we are trying to develop and create these engineering careers of success and fulfillment, you have got to be very, very happy and grateful and accepting of where we are right now so that we can make better determinations and understand where we really want to go.

So, I want to share a couple of quotes with you from the book or that are tied to the book and then I'm going to cover seven key points, essentially just seven key points; you can take out a pencil and write these down if you want, you can go to the show notes for today's episode and pull down this book report; and then I want to just cover a couple of things about what the actual act of sitting in a cushion or sitting on a chair, whatever it is, that wherever you are going to sit, exactly what's happening mentally and physically is you're doing this mindfulness practice. And then I've got a couple of books I want to share with you and then we are going to go into the final portions of the Take Action Today segment of the show.

So, one quote that's useful and comes out of the book is by the author Meng Tan which says: "Mindfulness is the quality of mind that we all experience and enjoy from time to time, but it is something that can be greatly strengthened with practice and once it becomes sufficiently strong, it leads directly to the intentional calmness and clarity that forms the basis of emotional intelligence." So again, this linkage between mindfulness and emotional intelligence is there. And another one that comes from a powerhouse Ralph Roland Emerson: "What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters to what lies within us." So, another one of this other tie back to the fact that mindfulness takes us within and we do that internal work. That internal work is going to be able to be reflected on the outside in the successes and the opportunities that we create for ourselves.

So, there were seven key take-ways that I want to share with you here. I'm going to do this in sentence formats so you can take out a pencil and write these down if you want. The first one is that mindfulness is the best mental app for developing your emotional intelligence. So, we are all trying to find the shortcut to become better at a skill, better at a particular knowledge area, trying to find out what's the quickest way for us to get from point A to point B. I can tell you that mindfulness isn't going to be this process that you are going to enter into it. You are going to develop this practice. It's going to take hold like this week and all of a sudden, like the day after that, you're going to all of a sudden have this massive increase in emotional intelligence and happiness in fulfillment and I'm here to tell you that's not going to happen. It's going to take time but it is the best way to develop emotional intelligence that I'm aware of and that is again by doing this internal work.

Second key take-away is that every emotion has a co-relation in the body. And so, that's a huge one. And if you really begin to start being mindful, I know that for myself, when I become anxious, I can feel this tightness in my chest and if I become anger, I can feel my face become warm and my hands, I can literally feel the tips of my fingertips. And these are emotions that are on every one of us. We all feel anxious. We all feel anger at some point. We also feel happiness and elation and lug; all these are other emotions is literally hints of emotions that every human has the ability to be able to feel and to experience that each of these have co-relations in our body. And through mindfulness, we have this ability to be able to develop this connection, this feeling and understanding of what's going on. It's pretty awesome.

The third key take-away is that self-confidence comes from emotional awareness and an accurate self-assessment. So, I think for any person, any engineer who is looking to develop themselves and to become more effective, that feeling fulfilled and having this successful engineering career has to be able to be confident. And when we are aware of what's going on within ourselves, we have an accurate self-assessment of what are the emotional states, how do we feel as far as our ability to be able to perform our technical work or to be able to perform in a presentation to a public entity or whatever it is; that we are really tied into what's going on within ourselves and we have what we feels a very good assessment of who we are. Our self-confidence is going to go way up. And again, this is something that comes from, it's a fringe benefit of doing this mindfulness work, of being again just very self-aware of what's happening within yourself.

Fourth key take-away, and this one is huge because I'm going to touch on this a little bit more, we are talking about how do you actually begin your mindfulness meditation practice and that is, begin your meditation practice with two minutes. So, Meng Tan in the book tells us that there is no sense in saying to yourself, "Hey, I'm going to jump into this mindfulness meditation. I'm going to jump into the deep end and I'm going to go all out. I want to do 15, I want to do 20 minutes in the morning and all of a sudden, I'm just going to start reaping these benefits." What he cautions and what he teaches in his course is to say, "Hey, just start with two minutes." Even if you're pretty confident that you're going to have this ability to do five minutes or ten minutes or six minutes, or whatever it's going to be, just do two minutes and then come back on the next day and do two minutes.

And the reason that we start with just two minutes or it could even be a minute, is you need to build the habit of actually entering into the practice first. And I know this again from personal experience having thought that I jumped into the deep end and start with a ten-minute or a fifteen-minute session and then that lasted maybe for about two weeks or a week, this time and a month that time. It's only been those last year that I've been able to be able to actually do this and be able to fulfill it through continuous repetition, to be able to enjoy practice that occurs every day for fifteen minutes.

But, it didn't start at fifteen minutes. It started when I really got back into this and made the determination that basically I had committed myself to doing this every day. I started off with five minutes. Of course this was before I read Meng Tan's book. Maybe would have been two minutes, but at least, I started with five minutes and I built that up to fifteen minutes in the morning and now I'm in the process of building into developing my habit towards the 15-minute session in the evening. Right now, I'm at five minutes and I've been successful with that for about 6 months.

So, step number five is don't try to avoid emotions to what makes us human. So, all too often, when we start feeling anger or anxious or really, really happy, it just seems to be maybe this cultural norm to not expose others to those emotions. We can only expose to people who are really, really close to us to our emotions. We are trying to subdue or to be able to push into a table the emotions that we have that are going on. And what we want to do is we go through this mindfulness practice, is to not avoid them; to be able to accept the fact that maybe we feel fear or that we feel vulnerable, or that we feel happy, or that we feel loved.

Whatever these emotions are, to not avoid those and to be able to accept them and we can do that when we are in our own mindfulness practice because this is something that you're doing on your own. This is not group or team exercise. This is a solo work that you're doing. So, you've got this ability to be able to be vulnerable to yourself and to be able to feel these emotions and to be able to feel fully what they are. And eventually, as you develop your meditation practice and you become much more aware of yourself, you can begin to unpack where all those emotions are coming from. Pretty powerful.

And the last key point here is that motivation grows from alignment, envisioning resilience. And so, having again some experience in this myself, as we become aligned between what we are doing on a day-to-day basis and what our goals are, what our vision is, and we have this ability to be able to envision what our future success might look like, what the idea maybe look like; and then developing this mental cavalla, that I'm just a strong believer comes from mindfulness meditation. This ability to be mentally resilient, to have challenges in life tossed at you but to be able to accept the challenge for what it is and to be able to step back and allow yourself to choose the right response; this alignment that comes from envisioning and from understanding where we are and where we are trying to go and being mentally resilient is a massive generation of energy. It's pretty awesome. And again, I'm really convinced that it comes and has come through my mindfulness meditation practice.

So, with that, I want to step into now, kind of touch a little bit on what we are really talking about on this whole meditation. And so, again if you go to the show notes for today's episode and you download the two-page document that's going to be provided there for you, it's going to be on the front page. It's going to cover for you these key points and the other material I've pulled out of Meng Tan's book. And then on the second page, it's going to give you mindfulness and six of these steps. So, I've gone through the effort of trying to be able to pack for you in just one page how to step into a mindfulness practice. So, as I mentioned, Meng Tan tells us to just start with two minutes. Don't go into this for a long period of time when you're first starting out. That's okay and that's really the best way to do it.

The other key points I'll bring to you on this is that you don't have to be sitting in in yoga-style on the floor with legs crossed and so on and so forth. You do need to find a place where you could sit comfortably and for some people this may be on a chair, not on a cushion or the floor. It could be on the cushion or the floor, if that's comfortable to you. That's part of maybe your yoga and you're into that kind of, you have that ability to be able to do that. That could be part of your practice. But for some, it's sitting on a chair. For others, it would be sitting on the edge of the bed; wherever it is but to find a place where you could sit that you're comfortable but then you're not certainly leaning on something because again, you'd want to be purposeful and intentional in how you're sitting and what you're doing. Not necessarily laying down on a bed or kind of sitting in the lazy boy relaxed with your legs kicked up because maybe it is intentional, but it's not where we are trying to go with this.

So, you sit down on the edge of the bed, let's say you sit on the edge of a chair, the best way to actually sit for a posture stand point is to think of yourself as a majestic mountain. That's something that I picked up from Kabat-Zinn's work but what that really means is that you want to sit and think of yourself as this strong, powerful individual and sit with dignity. That's another way that I can think of trying to pass it along is to sit with dignity and sit with confidence. And what that means essentially is that you're going to be sitting upright and your upper body is going to be straightened but you're not going to be stiffened. Each of our spines has this natural curvature so just let that be and your head and shoulders can comfortably rest on your vertebrae.

And then your hands, you put your hands that you can either rest on top of your legs. They could sit in your lap. You don't want to have them too far forward because you don't want to able to hunch yourself over and again, you don't want your hands and your arms to be too stiff. With your legs, you want to have them situated, not crossed. You want to have your feet, for sitting in a chair you want your feet flat on the floor. If you are sitting with your legs crossed, it could be half-lotus or full-lotus or neither no-lotus, just your legs crossed; that's another way to do it as well. And then, some people enjoy closing their eyes as they go into it. Some people don't close their eyes. They fixate on the focal point. I know a couple of colleagues that I have that meditate using candle and that's what they use as a fixation point, but it could be anything else that you decide that you want to use.

And then what you're going to do is you're going to be following your breath. And that's it. You're going to bring your attention to your breath and follow your breath in and follow your breath out. And what I will tell you is going to happen is your mind is going to go everywhere. It's going to be a crazy monkey. It's going to run after thoughts about how much you don't enjoy sitting there. It's going to run through thoughts about what you could be doing. It's going to run thoughts about what you should be doing. Your mind will go everywhere and that's okay. Just let it do what it's going to do. Where the practice of mindfulness comes in is that you understand and accept and observe the fact that your mind is generating thoughts and going off in different directions and then you bring it back to your breath because your breath is always there.

It's the foundation that is always happening in your body. Your breath is life and as you bring your attention back to your breath, you just accept the fact that your mind is distracted and it was ruminating. It was running off fantasizing, that's okay. Don't worry about it. But then, you bring back your attention and your focus to your breath and you repeat the process. And if you're doing this for two minutes as you are starting off, then that's what's going to happen. And I'll tell you from personal experience that even if you have years' worth of practice on your belt, your mind is still going to be running around. Mine still does. But, I'm also able to find that I have longer periods of time during my meditation session where my mind is fully focused on my breath. That's it.

But then it runs off at things about having to put together the next podcast or writing an article or emails that I need to send or phone call that I have got to make or an event that I've got to take care for my family. So, it's going to happen. That's the way it is and that's acceptable. But, when you have these opportunities where you're able to focus on your breath, first time that that happens, all of a sudden you will realize, "Wow! Holy smokes! I was really focused on my breath. I was just really into it." It was pretty powerful. And I think the real interesting piece is that some days you will have an exceptionally good meditation or actually, as you rate them.

But, you can have mindfulness sessions that you come out and go like, "Wow! That was awesome!" And then you're going to have other ones where you're going to walk out of it and say, "Man, that was holy smokes." We were looking at a clock as a countdown clock, which I do, where it's only been like two minutes and then I keep looking at the clock. It's just interesting because usually what I found out myself is that when that happens, I've got a lot of things going on in my life and actually, that practice of mindfulness at that point is like perfect because it's really forcing me to realize the fact that you need to just take and eat, drink some water, get a breath and get yourself wired back into what's going on in your life.

So, it's a quick overview of what mindfulness is. Again, go check out the book note that's going to be attached to the show notes. It gives you the step by steps for how to enter into a mindfulness practice. Again, just two minutes to start with. You can build your practice. It's really a.k.a. a habit from that. You can add more time to it but again like I mentioned, I've got a 15-minute session going on every morning but it didn't happen through peer well power. I know myself, that's not how I do

things. I can't force myself into a habit but it was also a habit that I built up slowly over the months, over the years and like I mentioned here, for the last year now, I've been working on this 15-minute session in the morning. It's just absolutely awesome.

So again, go check out the book note that's attached in the show notes for today and I'm also going to include a short guided meditation session that you could tap into. That would be in MP3 format. You can download that. So, I think you might enjoy both of those. I'll tell you that the guided meditation is longer than two minutes, but that's okay. A lot of people and myself included benefit from a guided meditation. Often times we do around 8, 10, 15, 20 minutes but just by having this voice, they are helping to guide you through the process. It can be reassuring and beneficial and there is some good news that could come from that.

So, as I mentioned, Meng Tan's work is really heavily influenced by Jon Kabat-Zinn and in fact, Kabat-Zinn contributed to the *Search Inside Yourself* course at Google. Because my practice is heavily influenced by Kabat-Zinn's teachings and his concepts and methodology for mindfulness, I want to share a couple of other books that you might want to tap into if you want to explore this mindfulness meditation in more detail and the first one is mindfulness for beginners. And again, the links for all these books are going to be on the show notes. But this book is really a great breakdown of Kabat-Zinn's material. It's a nice introduction in his teachings and concepts about mindfulness. So, you're going to learn about the value of coming back into your bodies, in our senses over and over again, how your thoughts self-liberate when they are touched by awareness and moving beyond our stories in to direct experience.

It really kind of gets into his deep mojo about what he really thinks about mindfulness and again, how to unpack that for the beginner. Another book which I here completed reading here probably about four months ago, but I actually carried with me. I'm in the process of moving right now. It's been a book that's come with me because I tap back into it and read sections of it. That book is again by Kabat-Zinn and it's called *Wherever You Go, There You Are*. This book is so dog-eared from reading it that I didn't even bother to make a one-page book summary, which I normally do after every book that I read because I was overwhelmed by how I was going to take all of the great insights and wisdom out of this book and jam it into one page.

I mean, there was just really any way I'm looking through it right now is I'm talking and I've got sections that are highlighted, underlined in red ink, dog-eared; I mean, they are just some amazing wisdom that's in that book that goes beyond just mindfulness is really kind of his way of approaching life. So, it was pretty awesome. A couple of key take-aways he gets into what patience truly is and he also talks about the fact that if mindfulness is important to you that every moment that we live is an opportunity to practice. And he tells us that meditation isn't romantic. It is again, I've already mentioned this, it is not navel gazing or spending with our life, our daily routine; it's developing skill sets that we need to have to operate consciously in the life that we have now so that we can grow where we are in order to become the ideal of life. So, it's pretty heavy stuff.

Another great book that I'll recommend, and especially if you listen to the guided meditation I provide here and you're like, "Wow! This is some good stuff. I want to tap into more guided meditations." This book is a really good one. I used it in the meditation group that I was in about a year ago and it was just a phenomenal group. It is a 8-week guided book that steps you through the introduction to mindfulness meditation. And it's very heavily influenced by Kabat-Zinn's work as well. And what's awesome is that the audio guided meditations, there is 8 of them, one per week that come with the book.

I actually downloaded them onto my app on my iPhone and I'll tap into periodically. And this is no joke – the pace of the narrator's voice and the fact that he has got really awesome English accent are seriously soothing. So just listen to this guy. This guy do his guided meditation and it's pretty relaxing itself. And then another book if you want to get into somebody who is a little more contemporary is Russel Simmons and if you don't know who Russel Simmons is, he is the man behind Def Jam Records.

So, he was a major hip hop local back in the 80's or 90's; very successful monetarily. He is got a couple of different books that are out there that are just phenomenal. One of them is *Success Through Stillness, Meditation Made Simple*, which is his book, his walkthrough how he came to approach and really was introduced to mindfulness meditation and how it became this game changer in building his successful businesses and keeping him grounded while so much craziness was happening early in his career because of the music industries.

So, it's a really good book that he really unpacks how it's been able to help him become the exceptional business mogul that he has become. So, there is four good books that you can dive into for more goodness on this whole mindfulness meditation concept and I hope you enjoyed all this information that I provide. It's a primer, if you haven't heard about anybody before and if you have heard about mindfulness meditation, hopefully you have picked up a couple of pointers here. Maybe some books that you want to go check out or read through and use as you develop a practice. So, if you enjoyed what you heard, let Anthony and I know by sending us an email. If you'd like to have more information on mindfulness meditation, let us know that. We will work to get some professional practitioners and experts as guests.

And so, for our future episodes, you can get into the science behind meditation or the neuropsychology, the brain functioning level which is very scientific. There is a lot of sciences behind all this now. So, it's not just eastern philosophy but there is a lot of western science that has gotten into the benefits of meditation in a person's life and in their career. So, we can get some of those people to come out in the future episodes or simply just to help us build some practices to take our engineering career to a whole new level. And with that, let's jump into the Take Action Today segment of the show and I'll give you one simple action that you can take to make yourself bulletproof.

Take Action Today Segment:

Chris: Now it's time for our Take Action Today segment of the show. I've got one piece of informational provided and I've packed this concept of making one's self bulletproof. But before I do that, I'd like to offer a word from our sponsor today from PPI.

Our listeners often ask us what exam prep materials or review courses they should use when preparing for the FE, PE or SC exam. Hands down, we recommend PPI. If you plan to take your exams soon, we have a special promo code for listeners of our podcast. Use promo code **coach** for 15% off your order at ppi2pass.com/coach. Again, that's ppi2pass.com/coach and use the promo code **coach** and check out for a 15% discount on your order.

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For today's Take Action Today segment, I want to unpack this concept of making one's self bulletproof. So, maybe it's natural that a military guy picks that terminology. I think it gives the right context of what I mean, that in our life we are going to be facing a lot of stress. Some of them will be physical, others are going to be mental; and if you aren't prepared or isn't physical and mental cavalla, then we might very well take hits that we are not going to be able to recover from. So, we down our physical cavalla whenever we do the essentials for our health. So, I'm talking about eating right, having an exercise regimen, get out there and exercise in movement, getting a really good night's sleep, ensuring that we are properly hydrated, ensuring that we have recuperation time that we schedule margin into our weekly schedule in our life.

So, that is just time to be versus always doing. So, I know you're busy. Your engineering career is hectic probably like mine and when you add in family a lot of outside pursuits, something has to give and eventually what is going give is going to be you unless you take the steps to put the cavalla on so that when you take these shots, the stresses that are going to come up in life that you're able to be able to work through it and then be able to be resilient to recover. So, we got our mental cavalier where we learn something new, we eat right, give our brain the feed that it needs to be able to operate at peak proficiency and allow our mind time to focus on activities and you guessed it, you bring mindfulness practice into your life in some fashion.

So, it might be through meditation like I talked about in the main segment of today's show or it could

be a gratitude exercise which is something that Anthony has mentioned with his 5-minute journal, or it could be something as simple as, and this comes from the book *10-minute Toughness*, and out of that book, there is this 15-second breathing awareness exercise and it could be something just as simple as that where you breathe in for six seconds, you hold it for two and you breathe out for seven seconds; and you repeat that four times. So, over period of a minute, you're just doing this very deep breath. And so, even simple exercises like that help us to develop this mental cavalla, this ability to be able to be bulletproof to the stresses that every one of us is going to face in our engineering career.

So, that's your Take Action for today segment and I know from personal experience that without this physical and mental resilience in place that we build over months of daily practice, stresses in life that are going to take us out from the game and that's something none of us want to happen. We want you in the game. We want you bring in your craft, your art, your awesomeness to the world and we want you to succeed in your engineering career. So, hope you enjoyed today's episode. We would love to hear your feedback, comments and questions. Go to the engineeringcareercoach.com/mindfulness or teccpodcast.com, Episode 67. We monitor all the comments and we are going to respond if you leave us one. And until next time, please continue to engineer your own success.

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