

MEDIA KIT 2015



SEARCH
INSIDE
YOURSELF
LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

CONTENTS



SIYLI Co-founders Marc Lesser (left) and Chade-Meng Tan

3	Company Overview	
4	Organizations Using SIY	
	Current Clients.....	4
	Client Testimonials.....	5
6	SIY Programs	
	Core Curriculum.....	6-7
	Employee Wellbeing Program.....	8
	Executive Leadership Program.....	9
	Two-Day Sample Schedule.....	10
11	SIY Teachers	
12	SIYLI In the News	
	New York Times.....	13-15
	Wired.....	16-18
	Fast Company.....	19
20	Contact Information	

DEAR FRIENDS,

I'd like to thank you personally for taking the time to learn about us.

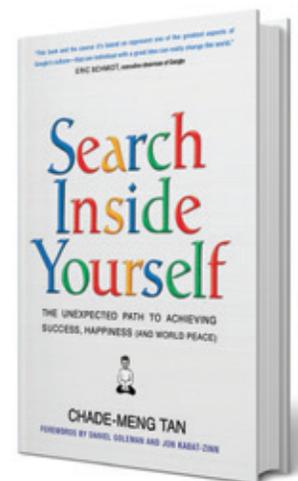
The **Search Inside Yourself** training programs are based on cutting-edge research in mindfulness and emotional intelligence—a proven track record of effectiveness which includes the importance of self-awareness, the power of optimism and resilience, and the benefits of empathy and compassion. Our trainings represent a systematic path toward becoming fully ourselves; cultivating our authentic leadership and innate creativity.

This is our goal and this is my passion—to skillfully engage with individuals and organizations to apply mindfulness-based emotional intelligence practices. With these skills we can bring greater leadership effectiveness, success, wellbeing, peace, and happiness to ourselves, our organizations, and the world.

The **Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute** is a small seed that represents the grand potential of a large, powerful, and beneficial movement.

I invite you to work together with us to open hearts and minds, as we search inside ourselves.

Best regards,
Marc Lesser
CEO and co-founder





Develop the Core Skills that Power Outstanding Leadership

Developed at Google and based on the latest in neuroscience research, the Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute (SIYLI) offers attention and mindfulness training programs that build the core emotional intelligence skills needed for peak performance and effective leadership. We help professionals at all levels adapt, management teams evolve and leaders optimize their impact and influence. Give us your attention for a few days, and we'll show you how to focus it for the rest of your life.

CURRICULUM

The SIYLI curriculum includes:

- Neuroscience
- Mindfulness
- Emotional Intelligence
- Leadership

We've implemented our programs and coaching in dozens of organizations around the world using highly practical and scientifically proven methods of mental conditioning and attention training that improve overall emotional intelligence and wellbeing, resilience, creativity, communication, productivity and personal and organizational leadership.

SIYLI offers two program tracks:

- Wellbeing (for individual contributors)
- Leadership (for managers, leaders and high performers)

These programs are taught over two full days at your location. We also offer follow up skill-building intensives, keynotes, one-on-one coaching, as well as a Train the Trainer certification program.

FACULTY

SIYLI works with some of the most skilled and experienced teachers and coaches in the business.

Our teachers have successfully helped senior executives and upper management at Fortune 100 companies, worked in the world's top neuroscience labs and held prominent executive positions in leading companies.

Our team shares a personal commitment to practice what we teach and fully embody the benefits of mental fitness and a well-balanced brain.

Following in the footsteps of Google's Jolly Good Fellow and SIYLI founder Chade-Meng Tan, our teachers are dedicated to helping individuals and institutions sustain peak professional performance with ease and grace.

OUTCOMES

Participants who complete SIYLI programs will learn foundational skills to:

- Enhance mental fitness and clarity
- Develop agile and adaptive mindsets
- Reduce stress responses
- Increase resilience
- Improve access to creativity
- Develop greater self-awareness
- Enhance emotion regulation and mastery
- Improve communication skills
- Develop better decision-making skills
- Increase engagement
- Develop greater emotional intelligence
- Experience greater overall wellbeing

Our programs were developed at Google and based on the latest in neuroscience research.

ORGANIZATIONS USING SIY

We've worked with organizations across many different industries, including technology, energy, banking, biotech, medical, insurance, automotive, plastics, gaming, telecommunications, and many more.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

“A wonderful development opportunity that will pay dividends in both professional and personal life.” (SIY participant)

“I was not sure what to expect and was somewhat skeptical, but I can see many ways this could help me in my work and personal life. I think our team will greatly benefit.”

“It would be amazing to offer this to the whole company or newly formed teams. This really shifted my perspective in how I approach my relationships and myself. I plan to make some changes adjustments to my work/life based on what I learned.”

“The most unique and introspective development skills I have ever seen. Thank you for this opportunity and investment in my development.”

“Let’s figure out how to spread this globally and make this a required class!”



“AS A LONG-TIME PRACTITIONER AND ADVOCATE OF

mindfulness and meditation, I was looking for a program that would help my colleagues at Plantronics experience the benefits of these practices in the business environment, including working more productively in the moment, establishing and enjoying more authentic relationships, having more compassion for associates and experiencing more creative and clearer thinking. I was fortunate to be introduced to Meng and received an early version of his book, *Search Inside Yourself*. Upon reading it, I knew that it was perfect for Plantronics, for it not only had all of the right principles and teachings, but it had the science behind it to make it credible.

The SIYLI team was fantastic. Their knowledge and experiences surrounding the subject matter were extraordinary. They are seasoned practitioners who embody their teachings. In addition to all the other benefits, much of the program was geared toward improving the Emotional Intelligence of our associates, which I am confident can drive business and leadership success.

The Plantronics team’s response to the class was outstanding. I have had a great many people thank me for bringing the class to Plantronics. ‘A class like none other,’ ‘lifelong skills for both their business and personal lives,’ and ‘life changing’ were some of the comments I received.

I highly recommend this training for anyone looking to improve the way their team works together, enhance their innovative thinking and clarity, reduce stress, improve general wellbeing, manage difficult conversations and be generally more at peace.”

—Barry Margerum, Chief Strategy Officer, Plantronics, Inc.

CORE PROGRAM CURRICULUM

All of our programs follow this curriculum outline, but each program is presented through a different lens depending on the audience. Pages 8 through 9 cover our dual program tracks in more detail: Employee Wellbeing (page 8) and Executive Leadership (page 9).



INTRODUCTION

Take a deep-dive into mindfulness-based practices for developing emotional intelligence. Learn practices that allow you to voluntarily bring your mind into a state that is calm, clear and focused. These practices include sitting and walking meditation, journaling, interactive exercises and mindful conversation.



SELF-AWARENESS

Develop a high-resolution perception into the process of emotional response by learning to listen to the body for emotions, and access them through meditation practice. You'll also understand the role of unpleasant emotions in emotional intelligence.

OUTCOMES

- Become aware of your emotions and comfortable with your emotional range
- Become able to accurately assess yourself
- Develop self-confidence



SELF-REGULATION

Self-regulation builds upon self-awareness. With awareness you can identify and work with emotional “triggers” and other emotionally difficult situations. In this session, you experiment with a number of practices for working in emotionally difficult situations.

OUTCOMES

- Create the capacity for emotional self-mastery
- Develop inner strength for difficult situations that test your honesty and integrity
- Decrease your discomfort with disruptive change

CORE PROGRAM CURRICULUM



MOTIVATION

The keys in using your emotional tendencies to help you reach your goals are finding alignment between what you do and what you value, knowing what you want in your ideal future, and developing emotional resilience.

- Alignment: discovering your deepest values
- Envisioning: discovering your ideal future
- Resilience: developing the optimism and emotional resilience to reach your goals

OUTCOMES

- Discover your intrinsic motivators
- Strengthen achievement drive and commitment towards your goals
- Develop healthy optimism



EMPATHY

In this session, you will develop useful mental habits and listening skills that help you increase empathy.

- Understand the neuroscience of empathy
- Develop the mental habits of kindness, goodwill and objectivity
- Learn to listen to others for feelings

OUTCOMES

- Strengthen your ability to understand others' feelings and perspective
- Increase your capacity to foster highly productive relationships based on trust and kindness



LEADERSHIP SKILLS

In this session, you will learn social skills that help you be beloved even as you become a highly effective team member or leader.

- Leading with compassion
- Influencing with goodness
- Communicating with insight

OUTCOMES

- Become skillful at communicating and influencing
- Inspire trust
- Grow into a highly effective leader

EMPLOYEE WELLBEING PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Search Inside Yourself (SIY) Wellbeing Program takes a science-based approach to develop the useful mental habits for achieving deep and long-lasting wellbeing.

Designed and tested at Google, the program helps participants integrate the key building blocks for wellbeing: mindfulness-based emotional intelligence, mental and emotional resilience and engagement.

The goal is to help participants thrive—enjoying greater productivity, effectiveness, and happiness—in all aspects of their work and outside of work.



PROGRAM DESIGN

Everyone has the capacity to develop and increase wellbeing because wellbeing is a skill, and like all skills is trainable.

The highly interactive program includes the following core components:

- Overview of the neuroscience of emotion, perception and behavior change
- Definition of emotional intelligence and its benefits with regard to wellbeing
- Attention training to enable greater emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-mastery, motivation and connection with self and others
- Principles and practices for developing healthy mental habits that accelerate wellbeing—including effective listening, generosity, empathy, communication and social skills
- Mindfulness and reflection practices that support happiness, thriving and overall wellbeing

The program is delivered over two full days or four half-days by expert facilitators who have worked extensively with leaders across multiple industries.

OUTCOMES

Participants who complete the SIY Wellbeing Program can expect to develop:

- Increased self-awareness and other core emotional intelligence competencies
- Greater alignment of personal values with actions
- More engagement and productivity at work (and beyond)
- Greater resilience, including enhanced abilities for managing adversity and disruptive change
- Tools for sustaining peak performance and motivation
- More happiness, thriving and overall wellbeing

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Search Inside Yourself (SIY) Executive Leadership Program utilizes science-based approaches that enhance the influence, communication effectiveness and organizational impact of senior leaders and managers. Designed and tested at Google, this program helps senior leaders and managers integrate useful mental habits that power the key dimensions of emotional intelligence and team organizational leadership—driving better decision-making, inspiring trust and building followership.

The result is enhanced self-awareness and authenticity, better communication skills, stronger relationship-building skills and the ability to lead with greater executive presence and impact. SIY teaches senior leaders and managers how to get breakthrough results in a way that is inspiring, engaging and compassionate.

PROGRAM DESIGN

The highly interactive program includes the following core components:

- Overview of the neuroscience of emotion, perception and decision-making
- Development of five key domain areas of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and leadership skills
- Tools for building trust and improving collaboration within and across teams
- Integration of mindfulness principles for effective leadership
- Enhancement of communication and mindful listening skills for effectively developing others, building healthy team dynamics and managing difficult conversations
- Navigational skills to manage in highly collaborative and matrixed environments
- Mental agility and resilience practices that promote wellbeing and the ability to bounce back from adversity and adapting to change
- Self-management tools that enhance personal growth, resilience and wellbeing

The program is delivered over two full days by expert facilitators who have worked extensively with leaders across multiple industries.

OUTCOMES

Executives and managers who complete the SIY Leadership Program will learn foundational skills enabling them to:

- Manage complexity more effectively
- Grow stronger relationship-building skills with teams
- Develop more inner strength and resilience for difficult situations
- Inspire trust and followership
- Enhance organizational and self-awareness to promote better execution and stronger team management
- Improve communication skills with individual team members, across the team and within the larger organization, resulting in more impactful team leadership
- Support stronger coaching skills
- Enhance their ability to quickly and easily adapt to change
- Cultivate greater resilience and sustainable wellbeing for leaders and their teams



SAMPLE 2-DAY TRAINING SCHEDULE

DAY 1

9:00	9:30	Introduction
9:30	9:55	Emotional Intelligence in Context
9:55	10:05	Break
10:05	10:35	How to Develop Emotional Intelligence
10:35	10:55	Practice
10:55	11:05	Break
11:05	11:25	Mindfulness
11:25	11:55	Practice
11:55	12:05	Q&A
12:05	12:10	Mindful Lunch Prep
12:10	1:10	LUNCH
1:10	1:20	Afternoon Introduction
1:20	2:10	Self-awareness
2:10	2:20	Break
2:20	3:20	Practice
3:20	3:30	Break
3:30	3:35	Q&A
3:35	3:50	Self-Regulation
3:50	4:15	Practice
4:15	4:25	Q&A
4:25	4:50	Practice
4:50	5:00	Closing

DAY 2

9:00	9:20	Introduction
9:20	9:40	Self-regulation
9:40	10:10	Motivation
10:10	10:20	Break
10:20	11:05	Envisioning
11:05	11:30	Practice
11:30	11:40	Break
11:40	11:45	Practice
11:45	12:15	Resilience
12:15	12:20	Mindful Lunch Prep
12:20	1:20	LUNCH
1:20	1:30	Afternoon Introduction
1:30	2:45	Empathy
2:45	2:55	Break
2:55	4:05	Leadership Skills
4:05	4:15	Break
4:15	4:45	Practice
4:45	5:00	Closing

SIY TEACHERS

MASTER TEACHERS



MARC LESSER

Marc Lesser is CEO, founder, and board member of SIYLI and author of *Know Yourself, Forget Yourself* and of *Less: Accomplishing More By Doing Less*. He co-developed the Search Inside Yourself program at Google and is an SIY Master Teacher. Marc was founder and CEO of Brush Dance, a leading publisher of inspirational calendars and greeting cards. He was a resident of the San Francisco Zen Center for 10 years and was former director of Tassajara Zen Mountain Center. He received his MBA degree from New York University and his undergraduate degree in psychology from Rutgers University.



MEG LEVIE

As an SIY Master Teacher, Meg Levie brings over 20 years of meditation practice to her work with SIYLI, along with experience teaching and working with leaders in companies such as Google, Genentech, Twitter, Zynga, and LinkedIn. A certified professional coach, she enjoys working with leaders to cultivate greater self-awareness and help create productive workplaces that support true human development. She received her undergraduate degree from Stanford University and holds an MA from the University of Texas at Austin.

LEAD TEACHERS



LINDA CURTIS

Linda spent 20 years in the corporate world where she held a variety of leadership positions at U.S. Bancorp, The Harris Bank of Chicago and VISA. For the past 12 years she has coached or consulted with hundreds of C-suite executives and their teams, high-potential leaders and successful entrepreneurs from such companies as MasterCard, NASDAQ, KPMG, and Walgreens, to deepen their capacity for presence, exercise authentic power and make their unique contribution.



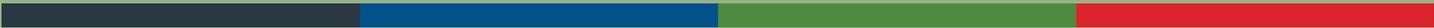
LAURA DELIZONNA

Laura specializes in developing and delivering programs that equip people with practical tools to thrive. She is a former researcher and instructor at Stanford University. Her courses in emotional intelligence and happiness are among the most popular courses in Continuing Studies. She is the co-author of *Strategic Happiness* and the forthcoming book *Thrive: Strategies to Excel in Work and Life*. She has been affiliated with Stanford since 2002 and earned a PhD from Boston University.



MARK COLEMAN

Founder of the Mindfulness Institute, Mark Coleman has been facilitating mindfulness trainings since 1997 with leading figures in the field. As a mindfulness consultant, executive coach, author and meditation teacher, Mark specializes in mindfulness consulting, coaching and training for executives and companies that include Google, Facebook, Proctor & Gamble, Ford and US Bank. Mark is passionate about teaching mindfulness and emotional intelligence through evidence-based, accessible, contemplative techniques.



SIYLI IN THE NEWS

The New York Times

O.K., Google, Take a Deep Breath



Expectations of intensity — all while having fun — are found throughout the Googleplex. Blaise Pabon, an engineer, uses a bicycle to dart among the company's buildings.

By CAITLIN KELLY

Published: April 28, 2012

Mountain View, Calif.

MAYBE it's no surprise that a yellow-brick road winds through the Googleplex.

Step onto Google's campus here — with its indoor tree-house, volleyball court, apiaries, heated toilet seats and, yes, Oz-style road — and you might think you've just sailed over the rainbow.

But all the toys and perks belie the frenetic pace here, and many employees acknowledge that life at Google can be hard on fragile egos.

Sure, the amenities are seductive, says Blaise Pabon, an enterprise sales engineer, but "when you get to a place like this, it can tear you apart" if you don't find a way to handle the hard-driving culture.

Employees coming from fast-paced fields, already accustomed to demanding bosses and long hours, say Google pushes them to produce at a pace even faster than they could have imagined. Google's co-founder and chief executive, Larry Page, recently promised on the company Web site to maintain "a healthy disregard for the impossible."

Little wonder, then, that among the hundreds of free classes that Google offers to employees here, one of the most popular is called S.I.Y., for "Search Inside Yourself." It is the brainchild of Chade-Meng Tan, 41, a tall, thin, soft-spoken

engineer who arrived at Google in 2000 as Employee No. 107.

Think of S.I.Y. as the Zen of Google. Mr. Tan dreamed up the course and refined it with the help of nine experts in the use of mindfulness at work. And in a time when Google has come under new scrutiny from European and United States regulators over privacy and other issues, a class in mindfulness might be a very good thing.

The class has three steps: attention training, self-knowledge and self-mastery, and the creation of useful mental habits.

If it sounds a bit touchy-feely, consider this: More than 1,000 Google employees have taken the class, and there's a waiting list of 30 when it's offered, four times a year. The class accepts 60 people and runs seven weeks.

Richard Fernandez, director of executive development and a psychologist by training, says he sees a significant difference in his work behavior since taking the class. "I'm definitely much more resilient as a leader," he says. "I listen more carefully and with less reactivity in high-stakes meetings. I work with a lot of senior executives who can be very demanding, but that doesn't faze me anymore. It's almost an emotional and mental bank account. I've now got much more of a buffer there."

Mr. Tan says the course has received good reviews. "In anonymous surveys, on average, participants rated it around 4.75 out of 5," he says. "Awareness is spread almost entirely by word-of-mouth by alumni, and that alone already created more demand than we can currently serve."

Mr. Tan's first book, "Search Inside Yourself: The Unexpected Path to Achieving Success, Happiness (and World Peace)," is out this month, with a foreword by his friend and S.I.Y. collaborator Daniel Goleman, author of "Emotional Intelligence." In addition to its United States publication by HarperOne, the book is to be published in 17 markets worldwide, from South Korea to Brazil to Slovenia.

"As technology pushes us faster, we have to adapt to new ways of doing business in this new millennium," says Mark Tauber, senior vice president and publisher at HarperOne. "We believe that Meng's book lays the groundwork for a new national conversation about work and what work means to us."

But what is Mr. Tan's ultimate goal? A Buddhist for many years, he says without irony that he wants to create world peace. "I was always very different from the other kids," he says. "I have an I.Q. of 156. I didn't play sports. I thought big. I thought I could achieve great things. I don't want to sound

The New York Times

megalomaniac, but my whole life is about doing something for the world, from as far back as I can remember.”

Born and raised in Singapore, Mr. Tan describes his childhood as “very unhappy.”

“It was the geek thing,” he says. He taught himself how to write software code at the age of 12. And by 15, he had won his first national academic award. At 17, he was one of four members of the national software championship team.

“In Singapore, the way to distinguish yourself is to win competitions,” he says. But public attention and external rewards brought him no satisfaction. “It wasn’t making a difference,” he says. “I wasn’t any happier. There was a compulsion to be the best.”

He grew up watching American TV series like “The Cosby Show” and “Diff’rent Strokes,” studied computer engineering in Singapore and attended graduate school at the University of California, Santa Barbara. He was offered a job, he says, within five minutes of e-mailing his résumé after graduation.

The offer was from Google.

ABOUT 50 people file into an amphitheater filled with soft, comfortable seats in the bright primary colors of Google’s logo. Mr. Tan is at the podium with his fellow teacher, Marc Lesser, a former Zen monk who is the author of two books and a successful businessman. Mr. Lesser is one of several S.I.Y. instructors hired from outside and paid by Google.

This week’s class is about motivation.

For the next two hours, employees partner up and perform exercises to identify and share emotions. The teachers set a gentle, welcoming tone, so the class offers students a place to question why and how they behave. Here, simply wielding superior technical skills or ferocious intelligence won’t cut it.

Like Mr. Tan, many S.I.Y. students are highly educated immigrants from Asia. Some of their peers are already millionaires. This course challenges them to examine how their choices affect their work and relationships.

“We need an expert,” Mr. Tan says as the class begins. “That expert is you. This class is to help you discover what you already know.” To illustrate his point, he shows a slide of a pile of four smooth polished stones, balanced atop one another. “We’re looking for alignment, finding our deepest values, envisioning how they’ll take us to our destination and the resilience we need to achieve that.”

Mr. Tan knows how to seduce his ambitious audience. He refers to successful people who exemplify these values, from Michael Jordan to the best-selling authors Daniel Pink and Tony Hsieh, the C.E.O. of Zappos. “I’m the other good-looking Chinese guy,” he jokes.

One exercise asks everyone to name, and share with a partner, three core values. “It centers you,” one man says afterward. “You can go through life forgetting what they are.”

There’s lots of easy laughter. People prop up their feet on the backs of seats and lean in to whisper to their partners — people from a variety of departments they otherwise might have never met. (Students are asked to pair up with a buddy for the duration of the course.)

In one seven-minute exercise, participants are asked to write, nonstop, how they envision their lives in five years. Mr. Tan ends it by tapping a Tibetan brass singing bowl.

They discuss what it means to succeed, and to fail. “Success and failure are emotional and physiological experiences,” Mr. Tan says. “We need to deal with them in a way that is present and calm.”

Then Mr. Lesser asks the entire room to shout in unison: “I failed!”

“We need to see failure in a kind, gentle and generous way,” he says. “Let’s see if we can explore these emotions without grasping.”

Talking about failure?

Sharing feelings?

Sitting quietly for long, unproductive minutes?

At Google?

“The notion of S.I.Y. is more radical

or countercultural here at Google than anywhere else,” says Mr. Pabon, who took the class in 2009. “The pressure here is really quite intense. It’s a place filled with high achievers trained to find validation through external factors.”

Mr. Tan’s credibility with his students and with senior management — which moved him into human resources a few years ago — stems from a few factors. He’s cool in all the ways that people in Silicon Valley want to be cool. First, he’s an engineer, like Google’s co-founders, Mr. Page and Sergey Brin. And Mr. Tan also became rich — albeit not nearly as rich as the founders — after Google went public in 2004.

Given his fortune, his street cred inside Google and the growing popularity of the course, he’s a Google star.

“People love that entrepreneur/mystic thing,” Mr. Pabon says.

MR. TAN understands that Google employees demand data, not just emotional arguments or abstract theory.

Eric Chang, 44, who took the course twice because he was too busy the first time with work demands to attend all the classes, says: “I would go to S.I.Y. with a healthy engineer’s mentality. My attitude was always, ‘Prove it!’ right up until the end. ‘We need to see a controlled experiment! We need to see proof!’”

Mr. Tan likes to refer to the example of Matthieu Ricard, a Buddhist monk once described by a British newspaper as the happiest person in the world. At first, that rang hollow to Mr. Chang. “Matthieu’s a monk; I don’t want to be a monk,” he says. “But Meng was able to make that bridge for me. He presented S.I.Y. the way we all present to one another: here’s my premise, here’s my control, here’s my experiment.”

Mr. Chang came to the course at a moment of personal and professional crisis. A software engineer at Google since 2004, he had seen colleagues burn out and quit — or work, as he did, with stress-related back pain.

“I’m from Taiwan,” he says. “Half of Silicon Valley is born elsewhere. It’s the immigrant mind-set to thrive on stress, go to the best schools, work hard. No one realized that way of working was really unsustainable.”

Then, when his mother lay dying in Toronto, his punishing schedule never

allowed enough time to visit her. “Our growth was explosive, with constant demands to keep scaling the system,” he recalls. Exhausted by his ever-expanding workload, he says he began exploding easily and often at his wife and young son.

“I knew I had to get help,” he says. “The question was when and where.”

His wife says something had to give. “I couldn’t really tell him what I was thinking anymore,” she says, “because I didn’t want to push his buttons.”

Since taking S.I.Y., Mr. Chang and his wife agree that he’s changed a great deal — becoming calmer, more patient, better able to listen. Perhaps most helpful, in a culture of 80-hour workweeks, was the camaraderie of the course’s buddy system. “You definitely need a community of support,” he says. “The energy in the classroom was important, too, thanks to the level of participation.”

One tool the course teaches is S.B.N.R.R. — nicknamed the Siberian North Railroad but really short for Stop, Breathe, Notice, Reflect and Respond.

“Business is a machine made out of people,” says Bill Duane, an engineer in rockabilly spectacles who works in site reliability, helping to ensure that Gmail works smoothly. “If you have people, you have problems. You can have friction between them or smoothness.”

Mr. Duane took S.I.Y. four years ago and considers it as sort of an organizational WD-40, a necessary lubricant between driven, ambitious employees and Google’s demanding corporate culture. Helping employees handle stress

and defuse emotion helps everyone work more effectively, he says.

Bob Sidebotham, 58, an engineer currently taking the course, agrees. “I work in a group that wasn’t very communicative, and half of them work in Germany,” he says. “What I appreciate about the class is not just learning to meditate but using it in real life. It’s more about small attitudinal changes.”

Johanna Sistek, a trademark lawyer, says the emotional skills she refined in the class help her focus on her many tasks, despite a fire hose of professional demands. Like most of her colleagues, she still faces “instant deadlines” but says they no longer freak her out.

“I think the benefit of something like S.I.Y. for anybody in any workplace is that any time you have people working together there is going to be dysfunction, people who do not communicate well,” she says. “Someone is always going to be a favorite — or not — and you can’t be unhappy about it all the time.”

For Karen May, vice president for leadership and talent, S.I.Y. is a useful tool on several levels. “We have great people,” she says. “Now how do we keep them? Teaching employees with terrific technical abilities also means helping them to develop presentation skills and communication skills, helping them to understand their impact on other people, their ability to collaborate across groups and cultivate a mentality from which great motivation can spring.”

When the executive chef Olivia Wu, now 59, arrived here after surviving

decades in the deadline-driven and collaborative fields of newspaper journalism and the food industry, she still found the company’s normal pace of doing business overwhelming. “The pace! The volume! This is the most intense place I’ve ever worked,” she says.

Even her job-interview assignment — to fix food for 20 people in three hours from a counter filled with ingredients — was spine-stiffening. After taking S.I.Y., Ms. Wu finds her job overseeing 30 cafes throughout the Mountain View campuses — “controlled chaos,” she says — somewhat less stressful.

Can S.I.Y. translate to other companies and corporate cultures? One of its tenets is mindful e-mailing. Mr. Tan says it’s too easy to focus on the message we’re sending, and not on its recipients and the possible impact on them. When recipients don’t know the intent behind the e-mail — as is often the case — they tend to assume the worst, like anger or frustration on the sender’s part. “We frequently get offended or frightened by e-mails that were never intended to offend or frighten,” Mr. Tan writes in his book. “If we are emotionally unskillful, then we react with offense or fear, and then all hell breaks loose.”

Peter Allen, a former Google employee, gave a green light to the first S.I.Y. class when he led Google U., the unit devoted to internal education, from 2007 to 2009, and Mr. Tan’s boss. Mr. Allen felt that a course focused on mindfulness was important and gave Mr. Tan the time and the budget to develop it.

Mr. Allen says: “I sent 1,000 e-mails a month all the time. In a culture where e-mail is so important, this makes a big difference. We all need the ability to connect. I think Meng will make a huge difference.”

S.I.Y. principles are vital in any workplace where value is typically based on intellectual machismo, Mr. Allen adds. In a high-I.Q. environment, he says, I.Q. itself is not a differentiating factor, but “emotional intelligence, E.Q., is.”

Or, as Mr. Pabon says: “The reason I think it will be broadly applicable is that everyone struggles. ‘Am I the smartest person in the room? What if I’m not?’ They’re worried about losing their job. Everyone’s got some fear of not being able to survive.” □



Peter DasSiva for The New York Times

ENLIGHTENMENT ENGINEERS

Meditation and mindfulness are the new rage in Silicon Valley. And it's not just about inner peace—it's about getting ahead.

PHOTOGRAPHS: BRIAN FINKE



In Silicon Valley, Meditation Is No Fad. It Could Make Your Career

BY NOAH SHACHTMAN

CHADE-MENG TAN IS PERCHED ON A CHAIR, his lanky body folded into a half-lotus position. “Close your eyes,” he says. His voice is a hypnotic baritone, slow and rhythmic, seductive and gentle. “Allow your attention to rest on your breath: The in-breath, the out-breath, and the spaces in between.” We feel our lungs fill and release. As we focus on the smallest details of our respiration, other thoughts—of work, of family, of money—begin to recede, leaving us alone with the rise and fall of our chests. For thousands of years, these techniques have helped put practitioners into meditative states. Today is no different. There’s a palpable silence in the room. For a moment, all is still. I take another breath.

The quiet is broken a few minutes later, when Meng, as he is known, declares the exercise over. We blink, smile at one another, and look around our makeshift zendo—a long, fluorescent-lit presentation room on Google’s corporate campus in Silicon Valley. Meng and most of his pupils are Google employees, and this meditation class is part of an internal course called Search Inside Yourself. It’s designed to teach people to manage their emotions, ideally making them better workers in the process. “Calm the mind,”

KENNETH FOLK

“All that woo-woo mystical stuff is so retrograde. This is training the brain.”

Meng says, getting us ready for the next exercise: a meditation on failure and success.

More than a thousand Googlers have been through Search Inside Yourself training. Another 400 or so are on the waiting list and take classes like Neural Self-Hacking and Managing Your Energy in the meantime. Then there is the company’s bimonthly series of “mindful lunches,” conducted in complete silence except for the ringing of prayer bells, which began after the Zen monk Thich Nhat Hanh visited in 2011. The search giant even recently built a labyrinth for walking meditations.

It’s not just Google that’s embracing Eastern traditions. Across the Valley, quiet contemplation is seen as the new caffeine, the fuel that allegedly unlocks productivity and creative bursts. Classes in meditation and mindfulness—paying close, nonjudgmental attention—have become staples at many of the region’s most prominent companies. There’s a Search Inside Yourself Leadership Institute now teaching the Google meditation method to whoever wants it. The cofounders of Twitter and Facebook have made contemplative practices key features of their new enterprises, holding regular

in-office meditation sessions and arranging for work routines that maximize mindfulness. Some 1,700 people showed up at a Wisdom 2.0 conference held in San Francisco this winter, with top executives from LinkedIn, Cisco, and Ford featured among the headliners.

These companies are doing more than simply seizing on Buddhist practices. Entrepreneurs and engineers are taking millennia-old traditions and reshaping them to fit the Valley's goal-oriented, data-driven, largely atheistic culture. Forget past lives; never mind nirvana. The technology community of Northern California wants return on its investment in meditation. "All the woo-woo mystical stuff, that's really retrograde," says Kenneth Folk, an influential meditation teacher in San Francisco. "This is about training the brain and stirring up the chemical soup inside."

It can be tempting to dismiss the interest in these ancient practices as just another neo-spiritual fad from a part of the country that's cycled through one New Age after another. But it's worth noting that the prophets of this new gospel are in the tech companies that already underpin so much of our lives. And these firms are awfully good at turning niche ideas into things that hundreds of millions crave.

MANY OF THE PEOPLE who shaped the personal computer industry and the Internet were once members of the hippie counterculture. So an interest in Eastern faiths is all but hardwired into the modern tech world. Steve Jobs spent months searching for gurus in India and was married by a Zen priest. Before he became an American Buddhist pioneer, Jack Kornfield ran one of the first mainframes at Harvard Business School.

But in today's Silicon Valley, there's little patience for what many are happy to dismiss as "hippie bullshit." Meditation here isn't an opportunity to reflect upon the impermanence of existence but a tool to better oneself and improve productivity. That's how Bill Duane, a pompadoured onetime engineer with a tattoo of a bikini-clad woman on his forearm, frames Neural Self-Hacking, an introductory meditation class he designed for Google. "Out in the world, a lot of this stuff is pitched to people in yoga pants," he says. "But I wanted to speak to my people. I wanted to speak to me. I wanted to speak to the grumpy engineer who may be an atheist, who may be a rationalist."

Duane's pitch starts with neuroscience and evolutionary biology. "We're basically the descendants of nervous monkeys," he says, the kind with hair-trigger fight-or-flight responses. In the modern workplace, these hyperactive reflexes are now a detriment, turning minor squabbles into the emotional equivalents of kill-or-be-killed showdowns. In such situations, the amygdala—the region of the brain believed to be responsible for processing fear—can override the rest of the mind's ability to think logically. We become slaves to our monkey minds.

Repeated studies have demonstrated that meditation can rewire

how the brain responds to stress. Boston University researchers showed that after as little as three and a half hours of meditation training, subjects tend to react less to emotionally charged images. Other research suggests that meditation improves working memory and executive function. And several studies of long-term practitioners show an increased ability to concentrate on fast-changing stimuli. One paper cited by the Google crew even implies that meditators are more resistant to the flu.

But Googlers don't take up meditation just to keep away the sniffles or get a grip on their emotions. They are also using it to understand their coworkers' motivations, to cultivate their own "emotional intelligence"—a characteristic that tends to be in short supply among the engineering set. "Everybody knows this EI thing is good for their career," says Search Inside Yourself founder Meng. "And every company knows that if their people have EI, they're gonna make a shitload of money."



As before, Meng's voice lowers and slows to a crawl. And, of course, we close our eyes. "When you breathe in, breathe in all that goodness into your heart. Using your heart, multiply that goodness by 10," he says, in a variation on a Tibetan Tonglen exercise. "When you breathe out, send all that goodness to the whole world. And if it's useful to you, you may visualize yourself breathing out white light—brilliant white light—representing this abundance of goodness." We exhale. I actually feel a buzzing on the underside of my skull as I try to imagine pure love. For a minute, I forget that we're in a room ordinarily reserved for corporate presentations.

SEARCH INSIDE YOURSELF might have remained a somewhat isolated phenomenon in the Valley if a mindfulness instructor named Soren Gordhamer hadn't found himself divorced, broke, out of a job, and stuck in the town of Dixon, New Mexico (population 1,500). Gordhamer, who had spent years teaching yoga and meditation in New York City's juvenile detention centers, was feeling increasingly beleaguered by his seemingly uncontrollable Twitter habit. He decided to write a book—*Wisdom 2.0: Ancient Secrets for the Creative and Constantly Connected*—that offered tips for using technology in a mindful manner.

The book wasn't exactly a best seller. But Gordhamer struck a nerve when he described how hard it was to focus in our always-on culture. By providing constant access to email, tweets, and Facebook updates, smartphones keep users distracted, exploiting the same psychological vulnerability as slot machines: predictable input and random payouts. They feed a sense that any pull of the lever, or Facebook refresh, could result in an information jackpot.

And so he got the idea to host a conference where the technology and contemplative communities could hash out the best ways

to incorporate these tools into our lives—and keep them from taking over. The event, billed as Wisdom 2.0, was held in April 2010 and drew a couple hundred people.

That was three years ago; since then attendance at the now annual conference has shot up 500 percent. In 2013 nearly 1,700 signed up to hear headliners like Arianna Huffington, LinkedIn CEO Jeff Weiner, Twitter cofounder Evan Williams, and, of course, Meng talk about how they run their enterprises mindfully. Gordhamer has become a Silicon Valley superconnector, with an array of contacts that would make an ordinary entrepreneur burst with envy. He now leads private retreats for the technorati, and more conferences are in the works—one just for women, another to be held in New York City. “Everywhere you turn at Wisdom,” says PayPal cofounder Luke Nosek, “it’s like, ‘Oh my God, you’re here too?’”

On an enclosed porch outside the exhibition hall at this year’s Wisdom 2.0 event, Zen-monk-turned-CEO Marc Lesser talks about his plans to take the Search Inside Yourself training to companies everywhere. Plantronics, Farmers Insurance, and VMware have already signed up. Nearby, companies promoting mindfulness apps and “cloud-based platforms for market professionals” hawk their wares while an acoustic guitar player strums. On the main stage, executives discuss how they maintain mindful practices during the workweek: One wakes up early and focuses on his upcoming meetings; another takes a moment to pause as she dries her hands in the bathroom. In the cavernous, wood-paneled main hall, oversize screens show a silhouette of a brain connected to a lotus flower and the logos for Twitter and Facebook.



AT SEARCH Inside Yourself, Meng starts with a seemingly small request for Googlers to pair off and take turns meditating on each other’s happiness. I sit across from Duane, the tattooed former engineer, and do my best to send him good vibes. Not only is he a nice guy who’s been through some pain, he’s at least indirectly responsible for the tools I use a thousand times a day. I want him and every other Googler to be their highest selves—centered, focused, calm, and content. Perhaps I can help head off a future Google Buzz.

But Meng has another goal in mind for this exercise: to help his colleagues develop mental habits conducive to kindness. It’s these sorts of meditations, Meng tells me later, that ultimately led him to “discover the ability to access joy on demand. After a while, it became a skill.” He smiles and gives me a look as if to say: No, seriously.

Maybe I shouldn’t be surprised at the claim. Last year Meng published a Search Inside Yourself book. The introduction proclaims him to be “a closet Bodhisattva”—a Buddhist saint, next in holiness to Siddhartha himself.

Despite the language of neuroscience and business advancement, Search Inside Yourself is ultimately an attempt to replicate



Mindfulness coach Chade-Meng Tan.

Meng’s elevated mind-state—first in Googlers and then in the rest of us. “We can all become saints, because saintly habits are trainable,” he tells the class. “I hope you all do.”

And if we start such training, Meng insists, we won’t just be helping ourselves. “My dream is to create the conditions for world peace, and to do that by creating the conditions for inner peace and compassion on a global scale,” he writes. “Fortunately, a methodology for doing that already exists ... Most of us know it as meditation.”

Suddenly acid-inspired Kenneth Folk seems downright grounded in comparison. It’s hard to deny that meditation can have remarkable benefits. But world peace? Sainthood? That may be a bit of a stretch. Steve Jobs spent lots of time in a lotus position; he still paid slave wages to his contract laborers, berated subordinates, and parked his car in handicapped stalls.

One of Meng’s students raises her hand. This saintly training, this randomly wishing for others’ happiness—it doesn’t seem all that genuine, she says: “It felt like I was saying the words, but I wasn’t actually doing anything by thinking that.”

Duane tells her it’s OK to feel that way. The practice will help you later, he says, even if it comes across as empty at the time. “There’s definitely a fake-it-till-you-make-it aspect to it,” he says.

Oh no, Meng answers. It’s the first time in the whole class he’s corrected anyone. “It’s not faking it until you make it,” he says. “It’s faking it until you become it.”

The session ends and we walk out into the sun feeling slightly dazed. The next lesson begins in five minutes. ●

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Photographs by Brian Finke

FAST COMPANY

UNPLUG

3 REASONS EVERYONE AT GOOGLE IS MEDITATING

The search giant is getting onto the meditation cushion. And this #unplug isn't about enlightenment.

BY DRAKE BAER

Yes, Google asked the most renowned living Zen master launch to their Mindful Lunches. But that doesn't mean all the Googlers are renouncing their earthly searches — they're just getting mindful to get productive.

That is according to a new *Wired* feature by Noah Shachtman. To begin, he traces the feelings of learning to meditate:

We feel our lungs fill and release. As we focus on the smallest details of our respiration, other thoughts — of work, of family, of money — begin to recede, leaving us alone with the rise and fall of our chests.

Shachtman's narrative is framed around Chade-Meng Tan, who was Google employee 107 back when we was hired in 2000. He has since launched their hugely popular Search Inside Yourself class (and wrote a book of the same name). Tan had been trying to pitch meditation to his fellow Googlers for years, he says, but he didn't see interest jump until he framed his pitch around emotional intelligence — a sign of the workplace value of mindfulness.

Emotional Intelligence

As you may have read, emotional intelligence (EI) helps you to understand your colleagues' motivations. The other-centricity that meditation breeds can boost your trajectory: in a place like Google, Meng has said, having a high intelligence quotient isn't a differentiating factor, but having high emotional intelligence is.

"Everybody knows this EI thing is good for their career," Meng tells *Wired*. "And every company knows that if their people have EI, they're gonna make a shitload of money."

Resilience

Ongoing worklife stresses can lead to burnout — and for some Googlers, a meditation practice bolsters their resilience. Bill Duane, a tattooed former engineer, designed Neural Self-Hacking, an intro to meditation class. How got started with the practice while he was leading a 30-person team and his father had life-threatening heart disease.

[Image: Flickr user Elise Ramsey]

"My typical coping strategy — the bourbon and cheeseburger method — wasn't working," he says. He attended one of Meng's classes and soon started his own practice, one that helped him better handle his father's eventual passing away.

Focus

Beyond that emotional self-regulation, Duane says that his meditation practice helped him to focus — which he reports is part of the reason that he landed a promotion placing him in charge of nearly 150 people. He's since left that position, Shachtman reports, to focus his efforts on suffusing meditation throughout the company.

Which the Google executives were OK with. Why? As the *Times* reported, mindfulness is becoming a center of the search giant's internal training coursework.

What's the motivation? One Googler's testimony from taking Tan's Search Inside Yourself class gives a clear argument, as the *Times* reports:

Johanna Sistek, a trademark lawyer, says the emotional skills she refined in the class help her focus on her many tasks, despite a fire hose of professional demands. Like most of her colleagues, she still faces "instant deadlines" but says they no longer freak her out.

"I think the benefit of something like S.I.Y. for anybody in any workplace is that any time you have people working together there is going to be dysfunction, people who do not communicate well," she says. "Someone is always going to be a favorite — or not — and you can't be unhappy about it all the time."

So if you're going to unplug and search inside yourself, you may want to start here. ■

Enlightenment Engineers



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