

## What Mindfulness Is - And Isn't

Now that meditation has hit the cover of TIME, the Wisdom 2.0 conference has brought meditating executives to the headlines, and figures from Arianna Huffington to 50 Cent do the practice, a bit of backlash was inevitable.

But I was surprised to see my friend Tony Schwartz dissenting (at least a bit) in a New York Times blog “More Mindfulness, Less Meditation.” Tony’s sense of the working world ranks first class, but this time I think he got the facts wrong, in two ways.

To be sure, he nods to the well-established benefits of meditation: it lowers levels of the stress hormone cortisol, enhances the immune response, lifts mood, helps us recover more quickly from stress and sharpens focus.

But where he gets it wrong, in my reading of the data, is in expecting that practicing meditation should mean we experience fewer distractions. In fact the mind is wired to wander about 50% of the time, a Harvard study found (and FYI, it wanders most on your commute, while working, and when you’re looking at a digital screen).

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