



Practicing mindfulness and being present: Dr. Amara Pope's journey to bliss

AMARA POPE /
PERSONAL JOURNEYS

2024

In a world where distractions are constant and expectations are high, practicing mindfulness and being present is necessary for success. This practice has fueled my journey as a minority woman breaking barriers in academia and industry. Before turning 30, I had [completed a PhD](#) in Media Studies, given a [TEDx Talk](#), gained [press coverage](#) of my research and career (NBC, iHeartRadio, CBC, CTV, VICE, and more), worked as lecturer at a college and [guest lectured](#) at many universities, taught internationally, sold [artwork](#), and garnered over ten years of paid [work experience](#) in marketing and communications.

Breaking barriers

During my academic journey and employment experience in marketing and communications, across sectors including finance, tech, and construction, I long found myself the youngest, the “brown-est” and the only woman in the room. Although it could be intimidating, after many years, I learned to listen, make myself become heard and seen, and found this as a source of inspiration to

break barriers. I gained a sense of confidence in being strategic with my voice, to add value, and contribute to discussions in ways that were unique to my viewpoints, experiences, and expertise. I found ways to turn my age, race, and gender differences into a superpower.

Staying motivated with movement

During my PhD, I completed a Yoga for Stress Relief course at the University of Western Ontario's Wellness Center. This certification was not just a milestone but a transformative experience that deepened my understanding of mindfulness. The practice of yoga has become integral to my daily routine, offering me a structured way to decompress and re-center.

Meditation, yoga, and regular exercise have been my tools for staying centered. I go to the gym around five times a week, balancing a physically active lifestyle with moments of indulgence.

Multifaceted life

As a PhD graduate, self-author, fine artist, full-time marketing communications manager, and board member for Elmira's BIA and CAFKA Contemporary Art Forum, I wear many hats. Additionally, I am a dedicated daughter, sister, friend, and wife. Balancing these roles requires mindfulness and presence, both in my time alone and in my interactions with loved ones. Creating art while listening to music allows me to reflect on memories and critically think about future steps. This creative process is a form of meditation, helping me stay grounded and focused.

Practicing mindfulness

Mindfulness is about finding moments of solace and enjoying my own company. It's about being present in each activity, whether it's painting, exercising, or simply being with family and friends. Practicing mindfulness helps me maintain a strong focus on self-love and personal growth. This practice enables me to give love to others more fully. Each moment of reflection, each session of meditation, and each yoga practice has contributed to my resilience and success.

Take-aways

Mindfulness and being present are not just practices but a way of life that brings bliss. Through grounding myself in the present, I have navigated challenges, celebrated achievements, and found joy in the journey. As I continue to balance multiple roles and responsibilities, mindfulness remains my guiding light, helping me stay centered and true to myself.



Pope

Amara Pope

Dr. Amara Pope is an educator, marketing genius and artist who helps champion representation in the Canadian music industry. With over a decade of experience in marketing, brand management, and digital media across several industries, Dr. Amara Pope also holds a Ph.D. in Media studies from Western University.