

September 2020

Mindful of Connection

By Nancy Miller



It can be challenging to stay mindful in difficult times, but that's when we need it most.

From Google headquarters to military base camps, “mindfulness” is everywhere. “McMindfulness” is what Professor of Management Ronald Purser calls it. It’s also the title of his 2019 book: *McMindfulness: How Mindfulness Became the New Capitalist Spirituality*.

I’ve only read excerpts, but it’s easy to see how mindfulness in the military might lose sight of the practice’s non-violent origins. The English word “mindfulness” stems from the Sanskrit word *smirti* (in Pali, *sati*), which means to recall, remember, to bear in mind. In a Buddhist context, that refers to keeping the *dharma*, or core teachings, in mind. Everything is interdependent. We are all connected.

Perhaps there is no clearer indication of how connected we truly are than the speed in which a virus from a market in China has spread to nearly every corner of the globe. With our daily lives now disrupted by drastic changes in the economy, we need each other now more than ever before.

“We practiced uninterrupted listening, speaking with fewer but more purposeful words...”

The virus may be driving us two metres apart, but it is also bringing us closer together. As independents, our

livelihoods depend on networking. But as human beings, we crave connection that nurtures all aspects of our lives.

Earlier this month, PIC hosted a different kind of social: A Mindful Meetup. We encouraged members to connect in a relaxed, mindful way. We practiced uninterrupted listening, speaking with fewer but more purposeful words and discussing what might make things a little easier for us all throughout these unusual times.

For most of us, the pandemic has disrupted the natural rhythm of our lives. Since most of us are now working from home, our work feels continuous. The coffee chat uptown or business meeting downtown—activities that once brought us out our front door—now take place on

PIC and IABC/Toronto stand firmly against racism. In our online and in-person activities, we aim to provide an inclusive space that is welcoming to all and fully representative of the diversity in Toronto. We see you, we hear you, and we are with you. We also welcome your comments and suggestions on how we can do better. Please email our chair, **Nkiru Asika**, at toronto-sig@iabc.to.



Members at our Mindful Meetup on September 17.

our laptops. Business, family and leisure time (should we be lucky enough to have it) bleed mercilessly into one another. The task of maintaining work/life balance has grown all that more difficult.

"...it can be a feat to self-nurture. Whatever 'self-care' means to you..."

Amidst that continuous flow of work, not to mention the non-stop surge of bad news, it can be a feat to self-nurture. Whatever "self-care" means to you—a walk in the forest, a trip to the gallery or a night spent with a novel—these days you may need to post notes strategically around the house to remind yourself to tend to your own wellbeing.

And with the cold coming, new concerns arise. What will a January look like under lockdown? What if I—or one of my relatives—fall into a depression? Canadian winters are enough to manage without a pandemic let alone with one.

Mindfulness (minus the Mc) offers

tools that can help to address those concerns. But keeping in mind the main principle of the practice—that we are all connected—PIC wants you to know that you are not alone. We're not a medical team, but we are a supportive community.

As a long-term practitioner of mindfulness, a certified NeuroCoach who uses brain-based and evidence-based mindfulness strategies to support clients, and a former yoga teacher who has co-led several retreats, I have put together [a few online resources](#) (updated since PIC's Mindful Meetup) to address some of the concerns raised by members. These include:

- 1 Mindful ways to nurture self-compassion
- 2 How to stay relaxed (and productive) throughout the workday
- 3 How to soothe your anxieties around the Canadian winter using mindfulness tools

Also, as a PIC Director of Communications, I'd be delighted to host Mindful Meetups more regularly if enough members think that might help. Please reach out to me or any of the PIC team with your interest. It's also a chance for us to mindfully meet and listen to you.



Nancy Ellen Miller is the director of [InsightEd](#), a research, marketing and coaching service that bridges technology and innovation ventures to the education sector and helps people lead their business and lives more mindfully. She is the Director of Communications for PIC.

PIC PERSONALITY:

Meet Florencia Panizza

By Nancy Miller

Florencia Panizza is Principal of Claro Communications, an agency that brings clarity and focus to marketing communications. Building brands and engaging stakeholders, Florencia helps her clients to define and target key audiences and to develop and execute communications strategies across multiple internal and external channels. Learn more about Florencia on her [website](#) and on [LinkedIn](#). She can also be reached by [email](#).

When did you launch your independent business and how did it come about?

I officially launched my business about 18 months ago. I moved to Canada from New York in 2017 and wanted to have more time and flexibility while we got settled. I was lucky enough to get a long-term internal comms project with one of the big banks, and I found that I enjoy the pace and the freedom of being a consultant. I thought I would see if I could make it work over the longer term.

What do you enjoy most about being an indie?

The variety of work and people. I've worked on projects and in sectors that I likely would not have encountered if I hadn't been independent. I also appreciate the flexibility, which has given me more time to explore other things. I recently joined the board of the Ontario chapter for the Society for Ecological Restoration ([SER.org](#)). This summer I also



completed a certificate in Landscape Ecology online. I'd like to do more in the fields of conservation and sustainability, so I appreciate the flexibility to learn as much as I can.

What don't you like about being an indie?

I miss the friendships and connections that you make organically when you work within an organization. And I miss having others to bounce ideas off. The creative process is quite iterative, so it can be harder when you are working by yourself.

What advice would you give someone new to independent life?

Networking is key—opportunities can spring from

the most surprising places. It's a little harder these days with COVID for sure, but I've found that most people are in the same boat—we are all craving connection—so I am trying to work harder at building and maintaining contacts remotely.

“..it's important to always be learning and hearing about what others are doing.”

How long have you been an IABC and PIC member? What value do you get from your membership in IABC? Since you are new to PIC, what value do you hope to get from it?

I've been a member for almost

two years. I appreciate the insights and opportunities for education. I think especially as an independent it's important to always be learning and hearing about what others are doing.

PIC Personality randomly profiles our members, who offer a range of talent, from coaching and media relations to video production and writing. Nancy Ellen Miller is the director of [InsightEd](#), a research, marketing and coaching service that bridges technology and innovation ventures to the education sector and helps people lead their business and lives more mindfully. She is the Director of Communications for PIC.

Member news

Mary-Ellen Hynd, MBA, CPCC, PCC, recently received a badge to recognize her designation as a Professional Certified Coach (PCC), awarded December 2018 by the International Coach Federation. PCC-level coaches complete at least 125 hours of training and must have 500 hours of coaching experience with a minimum of 25 clients. Mary-Ellen says, "I'm proud to have achieved this advanced coaching credential as it signifies my experience and commitment to coaching, which quite honestly can be a confusing landscape to navigate."

...

Nancy Ellen Miller, PhD, PGCE was recently certified as a NeuroCoach, completing a year-long training in coaching that employs brain-based, evidence-based and mindfulness-based

strategies to enhance anyone's intuitive ability to calmly find creative solutions to almost any challenge. "I've found it gratifying to apply mindfulness and neuroscience to help people meet their personal and professional goals, reduce anxiety and overcome the effects of trauma," Nancy says. She can be found at InsightEd.ca.

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Beveridge Marketing is a boutique Aurora-based marketing communications agency run by member **Elena Fordham**, who is looking for one or more PIC members to cover a six-month mat leave contract. Clients include an insurtech startup, a professional HR services firm and a hospital foundation.

You must have 10+ years' experience developing and implementing

strategic marketing communications plans; effective client management, relationship-building and business development skills; and a university degree and a PR or Marketing certificate from a reputable college.

You are skilled at using Microsoft Office, shared drives, Dropbox, Google Drive and MailChimp; have an understanding of Squarespace, Canva, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google Adwords and YouTube; and are able to make occasional site visits within York Region and North Toronto. Pay is \$65 to \$110 per hour depending on your experience and the clients you would serve. See more details in [Elena's post on LinkedIn](#). Please email your resume/ CV by Thursday, October 8 to elena@beveridgemarketing.com.

Creative and Inventive Ways to Market During a Pandemic

In this timely session, popular IABC - PIC presenter **Alison Garwood Jones** will discuss and demonstrate creative marketing strategies for reaching audiences in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sign up now to reserve your spot.

Thursday, October 15, 6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

This will be a live videoconference hosted on the Zoom platform.

Registration Information:

IABC members: No Charge

IABC non-member rate: \$20 plus HST



REGISTER NOW

Buzz about The Buzz

On the [July/August issue](#):

"Thanks [to] the PIC Executive team, who all keep *The Buzz* a hive of communication insights and activity!"
– **Cathy Ledden**

"Great issue, thank you...PIC team for the profiles and the 'insider' PIC perspectives!" – **Ellen Gardner**

Make sure you're on the PIC member list by Oct. 1

We're reminding IABC/Toronto members they can turn to PIC members for help during the pandemic with an ad that we're running in the bi-weekly chapter e-Lert and posting online. Since we're directing people to the [PIC member list](#), make sure your name is on it. Send your updates to PIC's Director of Membership, [Kathy Lim](#). The next update is due **Oct. 1**.

See you on social media

Build and strengthen your connections with other PIC members, advance your communications business, discuss business issues and network with PIC on social media: on Twitter at [@pictoronto](#); LinkedIn, [IABC Toronto Professional Independent Communicators](#); and Facebook, [Professional Independent Communicators \(PIC\), part of IABC/Toronto](#). Recent posts include COVID-era tips to find clients, how to find your niche and insider tips to get hired by agencies.

THE INDEPENDENT VIEW

Look to PIC for connection and community

By Nkiru Asika

"A man who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because of the moon. Every man can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so."

—Chinua Achebe, [Things Fall Apart](#)

This quote from legendary Nigerian author Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* speaks to our deep-seated universal craving for connection and community.

Connection and community are the reasons why many of you joined PIC and the reasons why you stay. As **Nancy Ellen Miller** shares in her piece on page one and as evidenced at the Mindful Meetup last week (thanks again to Nancy for leading a great session), we could all use a little more of both.

The COVID-19 world can be a lonely one. Even for those who are used to working from home, the pandemic has left many feeling more isolated than they might have anticipated.

Despite what the job title "communicator" suggests, I bet the majority of our members are introverts. We work well alone, enjoy our own company and find ourselves drained by too much interaction.

However, we do need each other, both professionally—as referral sources, pickable brains and sounding boards—and personally—as friends, trusted colleagues and occasional shoulders to cry on over any "life of an indie" stuff that your nearest and dearest just may not understand.

The PIC executive wants to ensure that whenever we gather—whether for a social or PD event—we take a little time to feel the pulse of how everyone is doing.

We encourage you to reach out to fellow PIC members online and on social media—you can search for people directly and you can engage in our social media groups on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

We are also looking to set up an informal buddy system, so you can pair up with a fellow PIC member for mutual support, accountability and connection. We're still working out the kinks, so I

welcome all your suggestions about how such a buddy system might work and whether it is something you would find beneficial.

In the meantime, plan to join your PIC peers at the upcoming PD event on October 15. We can't promise you a feast by the light of the moon, but we can promise genuine connection.

As always, if you have any ideas for professional development topics, possible speakers (including yourself) or any questions, concerns or ideas about PIC, please don't hesitate to reach me at toronto-sig@iabc.toronto.

Onwards and upwards,

Nkiru Asika

Chair, PIC;
VP, Special Interest Groups,
IABC/Toronto



[Professional Independent Communicators](#) (PIC) is a special interest group of [IABC/Toronto](#). PIC's mission is to support independent IABC/Toronto communicators through professional development, networking and marketing. [IABC](#) connects communicators from around the world with the insights, resources and people they need to drive their careers and the profession forward.

The Buzz informs members about upcoming events, shares professional development tips from past meetings and keeps us connected. Editor this issue: [Nancy Miller](#) | Design: [Ilan Sivapathasundaram](#)

Want to recap a meeting or contribute to *The Buzz*? Contact [Nancy Miller](#).

THE BUZZ

Quick links

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PIC executive

Contact any of us with questions, comments and ideas for speakers or topics:

Chair: [Nkiru Asika](#)

Communications: [Nancy Miller](#)

Membership: [Kathy Lim](#)

Programming: [Judy Irwin](#), [Sharon McMillan](#)

Social Media: [Sue Horner](#)

Design: [Ilan Sivapathasundaram](#)

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