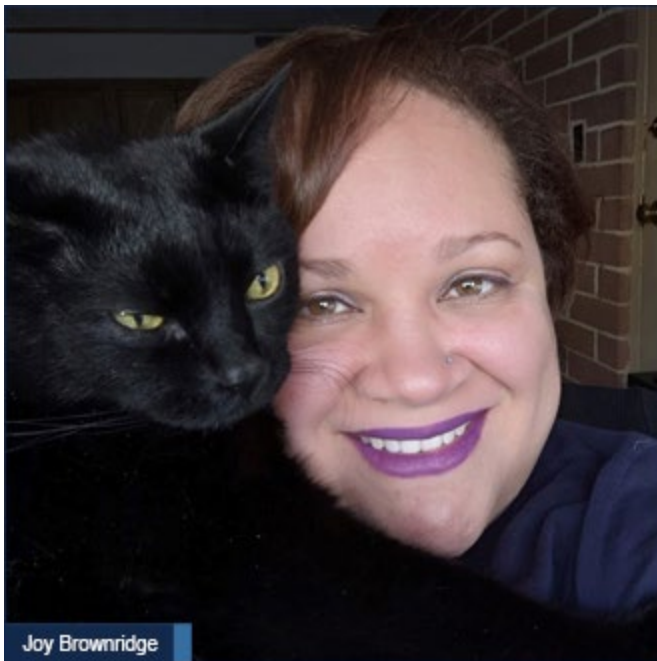


WELLNESS CONNECTION

LIVE WELL. WORK WELL.

MARCH 2021

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT - Joy Brownridge, Administrative Aide for System Human Resource Services



By Seth Yoder

Q. Joy, can you tell us about your role in the System Office?

A. I am an administrative aide for System Human Resources. I have been with System HR for about two years and, in my role, I manage most of the general office tasks like scheduling meetings, assembling meetings documents, monitoring incoming and outgoing mail, etc. In addition to these office management tasks, I also assist in the planning and prep for the Professional Staff Leadership Academy (PSLA) and supporting some wellness activities. For

example, I facilitate a meditation each morning of the PSLA session.

Q. What got you interested in meditation?

A. In 2007, I saw the film “The Secret” and while I did not necessarily agree with every aspect of the film, I found the idea of meditation and calming myself really resonated with me. At the

time, I was living in Chicago and I was curious to learn more about some of these principles. I found a church that helped me gain a greater understanding of how I might be able to bring more aspects of meditation into my life. Through these lessons, I began to realize that meditation has a lot of misconceptions and the more time I took to understand meditation and how it could be used, the more I wanted to share this gift with the people I care about.

Q. What type of impact have you seen in your life as a result of incorporating meditation into your daily routine?

A. I think the biggest impact I have seen is more about my overall stress level. I just do not get as stressed about things as I used to. In the past, I was somewhat of a social smoker. What people often don't realize when they smoke because of stress, it is the act of smoking that causes you to breathe deeply and that has a calming effect. The chemicals and nicotine may be the primary reason why people get addicted to smoking, but the breathing habit is certainly something that will calm your nerves. Having the ability to use meditation instead of smoking to calm myself in stressful situations allowed me to control my anger in a far healthier manner.

I have also become much more honest with myself about who I am, which I was not always able to do before I began a meditation practice. In my previous life as an engineer, I did not allow myself to admit who I truly was. Through meditation, I was able to recognize that I did not want to waste my time doing things I did not love. I have also developed a much deeper empathy and understanding of others because I understand myself better. I can understand when people struggle with controlling their emotions because that used to be me.

Q. What type of advice would you give someone interested in including meditation in their daily routine?

A. I would tell anyone interested in trying meditation to find a playlist of soothing music (preferably with no lyrics) and carve out 5-10 minutes a couple of times a week. Spend that time sitting quietly with no distractions (e.g., TV, smart phones, email). While sitting quietly for 5-10 minutes, pick a phrase or word to repeat in your mind. This will help stop your mind from wandering to the laundry list of things you have going on in the background.

This is a very basic way to get started with meditation. You can also search for different types of meditation – there are walking meditations and even laughing meditations. Like with all new routines, **the key to success is repetition**. The more you practice meditating, the more you will be able to identify your tastes and preferences.

Another thing to keep in mind is learning to meditate when you need it the most. Tap into how you are feeling. Maybe you've had a stressful meeting or you know that you are going to have a

difficult conversation later in the day. That is when you can take a few minutes to do some deep breathing with intention or any other kind of meditation that will help bring you back into a better emotional state. It is always important to keep in mind that there is no one right way to meditate, so find what works for you and incorporate it into your life in a way that strengthens YOU.

