

Two kinds of attention every board needs

A one-page guide from our survey of 185 Australian directors

*The chair asks for concerns. Nobody speaks. The motion passes.
 Was that agreement, or has nobody yet checked?*

Two forms of mindfulness in the boardroom

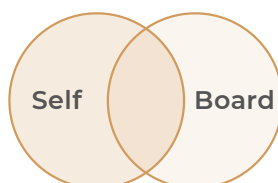
Justin Brienza, Vince Murdoch and I found two distinct forms in the answers of 185 Australian directors.

FORM ONE

Embodied Mindfulness

Attention to your own physical and emotional state, moment by moment, in the meeting.

Example item, p. 390. *"I pay attention to my body during the board meeting"*



FORM TWO

Group Attunement

A felt sense of the board as a whole, including its unspoken agendas and relational patterns.

Example item, p. 390. *"I am aware of the various agendas in the meeting"*

What we found

Both forms were linked to wisdom. Only Embodied Mindfulness tracked general mindfulness. In my view, Group Attunement is a social capacity of its own.

	Embodied Mindfulness	Group Attunement
Wisdom	$r = .33$	$r = .23$
General mindfulness	$r = .28$	$r = .03$

King, Brienza & Murdoch (2026), Table 20.4, p. 391. r shows how closely two things move together, from 0 (no link) to 1 (a perfect match). In this kind of research, .2 to .3 is a meaningful link and .03 is close to none.

"This form of 'social mindfulness' is what allows a director to discern the difference between authentic consensus and compliant silence, or to notice when a critical issue is being avoided." (p. 392)

Holding both in balance

Self-focus
dominates

Balance

Group
attunement
dominates

"In boardrooms, failing to achieve this balance risks either groupthink (if group attunement dominates) or fragmented, uncoordinated action (if self-focus dominates)." (p. 393)

Directors can learn to notice where their own attention is resting, widen it to the table and move between the two as a discussion unfolds.

Use it at your next meeting

1 GROUP ATTUNEMENT

"Are we missing any perspectives in this discussion?" (p. 394)

2 EMBODIED MINDFULNESS

"Do we need a few minutes to review the materials before deciding?" (p. 394)

3 BOTH FORMS

Before the vote, pause. Ask every director for one concern or a clear yes.

The limits. The findings come from self-report by Australian directors, and the Group Attunement measure is early, with low reliability ($\alpha = .54$). The distinction between attending to oneself and attending to the board is clear enough to use in practice.

Take the Director Score

18 questions, under ten minutes.

boardmindfulness.scoreapp.com

Read the article

How a Board Comes to Think Together

drlizking.com/metta-led-insights



Dr Elizabeth King

drlizking.com

Share it with your board.

King, E. L., Brienza, J. P., & Murdoch, V. (2026). A new framework for measuring two key dimensions of mindfulness in the boardroom. In D. Rooney, J. P. Brienza, A. Intezari, & E. L. King (Eds.), *Elgar encyclopedia of wisdom research* (pp. 380-398). Edward Elgar. <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781035302628>