



September 2025

MiC News

Join us for the 2026 MiC Annual Conference!

Secure your spot! Registration opens October 1st, 2025

2026 MIC ANNUAL CONFERENCE

March 22nd-26th, 2026

**Be The Change,
By Changing Yourself**

REGISTRATION OPENS
OCTOBER 1ST, 2025



www.mincysec.org



ADOM COOPER

Tell us about yourself.

I'm a national security and foreign policy professional, lawyer, and writer who specializes in risk management, policy development, and emerging technologies. In my career so far, I've worked with the U.S. Department of State, the United Nations, the American Society of International Law, and currently at a Department of Energy national lab. I earned my JD from Syracuse University College of Law (Go Orange!) and BA from the University of Michigan (Go Blue!) and studied abroad at the University of Western Cape in South Africa. I'm a member of Black Professionals in International Affairs, a Term Member at Council on Foreign Relations, and a member of the DC Bar.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

I'm an adventure and travel connoisseur, avid scuba diver, scribe and student of everything comic books and mythology. In 2023, I walked on my seventh and final continent. I prefer dogs over cats, am a struggling golfer, and my sports allegiances rest with Cleveland and University of Michigan. I'm a published author and I don't mind meals in solitude as long as I have a good book.

What's one key piece of advice you have for professionals seeking to transition into cybersecurity without a traditional technical background?

Think of cybersecurity as the ocean with many types of life forms contributing to the ecosystem. There are many paths into cybersecurity and many jobs/tasks that need human beings to fill. Traditional technical backgrounds tend to dominate the attention and marketing, but there are consistent needs to folks with policy, finance, law, administration, etc. backgrounds in cybersecurity as well. Don't limit yourself to thinking that a few backgrounds and skills can serve you well in cyber.



Being a MiC LEAD graduate, how did the program specifically help you navigate your career?

For me, it was the acknowledgement and constant reminder that anyone belongs in this space. Mary intimately shares her story and lets everyone know there is a place for you in cyber if you are willing to go after it. I was originally going to be part of the apprenticeship program but the opportunity to land my current role appeared and I jumped at it. I had people to speak with about navigating my transition and reassurances that there were plenty of paths to pursue. The sense of community bolstered my self-confidence and that's an unmatched benefit of the program that continues.

You have written a book so aside from your own book, if you had to recommend just one resource for someone to get up to speed on basic cyber hygiene, what would it be and why?

Pick and vet a few podcasts about cyber news/topics or ones with a cyber nexus and regularly listen. If the content is done right, it will help you continually see how cybersecurity is everywhere and involved with everything. As someone in national security, I regularly listen to Just Security's podcast to stay abreast of changes and developments in the field. There are regular cybersecurity

nexus topics that come up and it always gets me thinking. I like podcasts because I can listen to them on a walk with my dog, dropping my daughter off at daycare, at the gym, in the shower, etc. I listen to CyberWire Daily as well.

What transferable skills from your previous career were most valuable in your transition to cybersecurity?

Briefing well. Writing well. Collaboration across teams and contributors. No matter where you are or end up on your cyber journey, you will need these three skills early and often.

Tip for the month?

*Get outside and enjoy the weather.
Winter. Is. Coming.*

Any fun facts you'd like to share with our readers?

There are two things your body does both voluntarily and involuntarily: blinking and breathing. They are normally governed by reflex but you can obviously do them on command.



Mindfulness and Self-Mastery: The Path to Health, Wellness, and Balance in Cybersecurity

by Donald Gerard



Cybersecurity is a profession that asks much of those who choose it. Constant change, high stakes, and the need for vigilance can make it one of the most rewarding—and one of the most stressful—fields to work in. For participants in the Minorities in Cybersecurity (MiC) programs, who are often carrying additional responsibilities of representation and leadership, the demands can be even greater.

The question then becomes: how can we sustain health, wellness, and balance in such an environment? My answer is simple, though not always easy—through mindfulness and self-mastery.

Why Mindfulness Matters in Cybersecurity

Mindfulness, at its core, is the practice of bringing full awareness to the present moment without judgment. In the world of cybersecurity, where distractions are constant and pressure is high, mindfulness offers something rare: clarity.

When you are mindful, you notice your stress before it escalates into burnout. You catch yourself holding your breath during tense moments and consciously release it. You pause before reacting to an urgent email and instead respond with intention. This presence does not slow you down; it makes you more effective.

Research consistently shows that mindfulness improves focus, decision-making, and emotional regulation—all qualities essential in the fast-moving world of cybersecurity. But more importantly, mindfulness reconnects us to our humanity in a field where technology often dominates our attention.



Self-Mastery as the Foundation of Balance

Self-mastery is the lifelong process of becoming aware of your patterns, understanding your motivations, and choosing your responses rather than being driven by unconscious habits. In other words, it is about being the driver of your life, not just a passenger.

For cybersecurity professionals, self-mastery is critical because the work environment often pushes people into reactive modes. Alerts ping, deadlines loom, incidents flare up, and the pressure to “just keep going” is strong. Without self-mastery, it is easy to fall into autopilot—skipping meals, ignoring rest, and losing connection with what truly matters.

With self-mastery, however, you gain the ability to step back, observe your patterns, and make conscious choices. You become aware of the belief that you “always have to be available” and challenge it. You notice the impulse to prove yourself through overwork and instead honor your need for restoration. You align your daily actions with your deeper values and long-term vision.

Mindfulness and Self-Mastery Across Career Stages

Every stage of a cybersecurity career brings different challenges. Mindfulness and self-mastery can serve as guiding practices at each step.

- **For entry-level professionals**, the excitement of starting a career can be shadowed by fear of not measuring up. Mindfulness helps calm anxiety and keep perspective. Self-mastery allows you to set healthy boundaries from the beginning rather than normalizing burnout.
- **For mid-career professionals**, competing demands from leadership roles, technical projects, and personal life can feel overwhelming. Mindfulness brings focus back to the present, while self-mastery helps you prioritize, delegate, and avoid overextending.

- **For executives and the C-suite**, the challenge often lies in carrying immense responsibility while setting the tone for organizational culture. Practicing mindfulness in leadership meetings, and modeling balance in your own schedule, signals to your teams that wellness is not only permitted—it is essential.

Practical Mindfulness Practices for Cybersecurity Professionals

Mindfulness need not be complicated. It can be woven into the fabric of your day, even in high-pressure environments. Here are practices that require little time but offer lasting impact:

1. **The One-Minute Pause** – Before beginning your workday, close your eyes, take three deep breaths, and set an intention for how you want to show up.
2. **Mindful Transitions** – Use the moments between meetings, emails, or tasks as opportunities to reset. Place both feet on the floor, notice your breath, and let go of the last task before beginning the next.
3. **Digital Boundaries** – When the workday ends, shut down your devices mindfully. Take a moment of gratitude for what you accomplished and release what can wait until tomorrow.
4. **Embodied Awareness** – Every hour, notice how your body feels. Are your shoulders tense? Is your jaw clenched? A quick stretch or deep breath can release accumulated stress.
5. **Reflective Journaling** – Spend five minutes at the end of the day writing about one challenge, one success, and one lesson learned. This practice deepens self-mastery by helping you recognize patterns over time.

The WisdomWork Approach to Self-Mastery

In my work with WisdomWork Coaching, I guide clients through a process of uncovering blind spots, integrating mindfulness, and aligning daily actions with long-term vision. This includes practices like:



- **Telling Your Story** – Understanding how your past influences your present habits.
- **The Enneagram** – Identifying unconscious strategies that may drive overwork or avoidance.
- **The Essential Self Exercise** – Reconnecting with the non-physical sense of self that transcends roles and responsibilities.
- **Shadow Work** – Bringing awareness to the parts of ourselves we hide or neglect, both the limiting and the powerful.

Through these practices, professionals develop a deeper sense of clarity, purpose, and resilience. They begin to see that work-life balance is not about perfectly dividing time but about living in alignment with values, energy, and purpose.

Leading with Mindfulness

One of the most powerful outcomes of mindfulness and self-mastery is the ability to lead—whether you are leading yourself, a project, a team, or an organization.

Leaders who cultivate self-awareness make decisions with clarity rather than reactivity. Leaders who prioritize balance give their teams permission to do the same. And leaders who embody mindfulness create cultures where wellness is integrated, not outsourced.

This is especially important in the MiC community, where leadership often extends beyond the office. Many of you are role models, mentors, and trailblazers. By practicing mindfulness and self-mastery, you sustain not only your career but also the larger movement toward inclusion and equity in cybersecurity.

Moving Forward

Health, wellness, and balance are not destinations you arrive at once and for all. They are ongoing practices. Mindfulness keeps you grounded in the present, while self-mastery helps you navigate the future with

intention. Together, they form a path that sustains not only your career but your whole life.

As you continue your journey in cybersecurity, I invite you to reflect:

- Where in my life do I operate on autopilot?
- What practices help me return to presence?
- How can I align my daily choices with my deeper purpose?

These questions do not have quick answers, but they open the door to transformation. And when cybersecurity professionals commit to mindfulness and self-mastery, they don't just protect networks and data—they protect themselves, their communities, and their ability to thrive for the long haul.



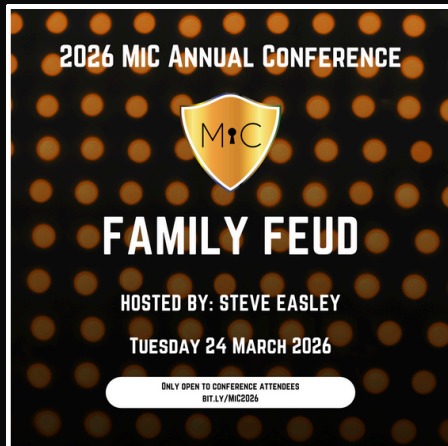
MiC Announcements

The MiC 2026 Conference is on its way!

Here's a sneak peek at what you can watch out for:

Family Feud 🎲

Get ready to battle it out for bragging rights!



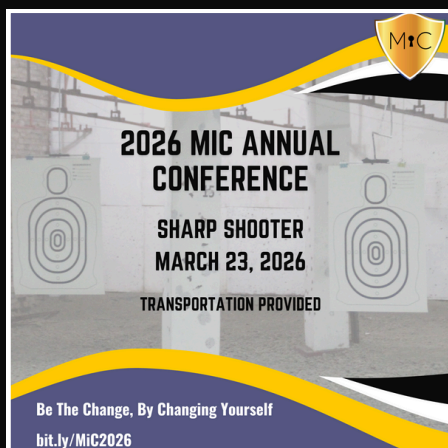
Talent Show 🎤

It's time to show off your skills beyond the office!



Shooting Range 🎯

Ready, aim, network!



Top Golf 🏌️

Swing on by for some friendly competition!



Bowling 🎳

Knock over some pins and your networking goals!



Fun Run 🏃♂️

Lace up your sneakers and get ready to go!



MiC LEAD Aspirers™ : Coming up **TODAY, September 26, 2025**

MiC Drop Prep™ Sessions: Coming up on **October 07, 2025**